

Concept Paper¹

Inter-American Week for Indigenous Peoples – 2018

I. Background

The significant presence and contribution of the indigenous peoples of the Americas have been central in the development, plurality, and cultural diversity of the Hemisphere. However, historically, indigenous peoples have been and are victims of discrimination and exclusion, and are faced with many challenges in exercising their human rights. They are also potential victims of forced displacement since they are often excluded from consultation processes on projects that would appropriate their land for commercial activities, such as natural resource exploitation.

In that context, it should be noted that the United Nations and other international organizations have expressed concern regarding the vulnerability of indigenous peoples.

The Organization of American States (OAS), through its General Secretariat, and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Summits of the Americas Process have repeatedly expressed concern regarding the inclusion, respect for the human rights, and attention to the needs of this vulnerable group.

In June 2016, after 17 years of negotiation, the OAS General Assembly adopted the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In 2017, the General Assembly adopted the Plan of Action for implementation of the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2017-2021). In February 2018, the Permanent Council declared the week around August 9 of each year as the Inter-American Week for Indigenous Peoples. In that regard, the preliminary schedule of activities below is proposed to mark the 2018 Inter-American Week for Indigenous Peoples. The member states have proposed “**Indigenous languages of the Americas**” as the theme for the commemoration of the Week. However, a series of virtual consultations will be held with indigenous peoples of the region, through the indigenous peoples coalition to the OAS, civil society organizations working with indigenous peoples, the recently established American Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP),² and the OAS member states on the theme, the suitability of the dates proposed to mark the Week – bearing in mind that events will be held at the same time in the United Nations framework – and the orders of business for the different events proposed.

¹ Document prepared by the Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity at the request of the Office of the Assistant Secretary General of the OAS.

² The American Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP) was established in April 2018, in Lima, Peru, in the framework of the Indigenous Leaders Summit of the Americas.

II. Proposed schedule of activities³

Week of August 6 to 10, 2018 – Art exhibition on indigenous peoples

- It is proposed to hold an art exhibition on indigenous peoples in the Marcus Garvey Hall of Culture.
- Paintings, [pottery] photographs, sculptures and textiles will be on loan from OAS permanent missions, permanent observer missions to the OAS, the OAS General Secretariat, and staff members of the Organization [pottery display subject to consultation with the Columbus Memorial Library on suitability of using the display cases located outside of the Simon Bolivar Room.].
- The aim of the exhibition is to celebrate the wealth of cultural diversity and raise awareness of the history and reality of the indigenous peoples of the region.

Wednesday, August 8, a.m. – Visit to the National Museum of the American Indian

- It is proposed to invite the permanent representatives to the OAS, high-ranking General Secretariat staff members, and indigenous representatives to visit the National Museum of the American Indian. The visit will take place from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.
- The aim of the visit is to raise awareness of the history and reality of the indigenous peoples of the region.

Thursday, August 9 – Special meeting of the Permanent Council on indigenous peoples [The Order of Business will be defined in collaboration with the Chair of the Permanent Council and the Regional Coordinators].

- **Special meeting of the Permanent Council on indigenous peoples**, with attendance by indigenous peoples and member state national authorities with responsibility for policy on indigenous peoples.
- The aim of the special meeting is to promote dialogue on forward-looking policy regarding the need to implement the rights of indigenous peoples, and to promote their social inclusion in the Americas.
- Regional representation among the participants who will speak at this meeting of the Permanent Council is to be promoted.

³ The suitability of the proposed dates will be evaluated, bearing in mind that the UN will mark the event at the same time, which may impact the availability of indigenous participants and panelists.

Friday, August 10

Inter-American Forum : Indigenous Peoples of the Americas

- It is proposed to hold a **forum with discussion panels** that will include indigenous representatives, national authorities with responsibility for policy on indigenous peoples, and representatives of international and/or specialized organizations, the academic community, civil society, and the private sector.
- The possibility of including a performance by folkloric groups or a traditional ceremony at the onset or at the end of the Forum will be assessed.
- For the Forum discussion panels, consideration could be given to disseminating existing and future initiatives in areas such as:
 - The next international year of indigenous languages of the Americas;
 - Indigenous businesswomen and/or the human rights of indigenous women;
 - Corporate social responsibility with regard to indigenous peoples (indigenous private sector, among others).
- The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights will be invited to discuss the topic of the human rights of indigenous peoples, and the Inter-American Commission of Women to discuss the reality of indigenous women.
- Member states willing to do so will fund the participation of indigenous panelists from their respective countries.

Reception:

- It is proposed to offer, following the Forum, a reception in the Aztec Patio.
- The reception will be funded from voluntary contributions from member states.

III. Virtual consultation

The Relations with Civil Society Section of the Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity of the OAS will hold a virtual consultation on the theme of the Inter-American Week for Indigenous Peoples and on proposed topics for discussion during the Inter-American Forum on Indigenous Peoples. The virtual consultation will take place from July 4-14, 2018.