



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединённых Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

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Today

On the occasion of celebrating the World Science Day for Peace and Development 2011, three events are organized:

Knowledge Systems, Knowledge Diversity, Knowledge Societies: Towards a UNESCO Policy on Engaging with Indigenous Peoples

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m., Room IX

As part of formulating a UNESCO policy on engaging with Indigenous Peoples, UNESCO will hold a side event featuring indigenous spokespersons at the highest-level from the three foremost UN institutions dealing with the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The event, to be hosted by Ms. Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, is organized in the framework of the 10th Anniversary of the UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity and to mark the Celebration of World Science Day 2011 for Peace and Development.

Launch of the Publication LHC (Large Hadron Collider)

1:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m., Room IV

The publication LHC (Large Hadron Collider), co-published by the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), Lammerhuber and UNESCO Publishing, richly illustrates the inner workings of CERN's Large Hadron Collider, showing the human dimension of this great scientific enterprise which aims to help us understand the origins of the Universe.

Demonstration of Microscience Kits and the Chemistry Global Experiment by Students

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., Open UNESCO (Hall Ségur)

36 GC

Thursday, 10 November 2011

Let's not lose the opportunity to act, advocates UN Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The issue of Indigenous Peoples is a basic human rights consideration, says James Anaya, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Speaking on the eve of a side event titled "Knowledge Systems, Knowledge Diversity, Knowledge Societies: Towards a UNESCO Policy on Engaging with Indigenous Peoples", Mr Anaya called on UNESCO to help "close the implementation gap" in programmes benefiting Indigenous Peoples. He noted that the issue was no longer about persuading governments and people to "understand" the importance of the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

"What is at stake is a human rights consideration shared by everybody", he argued, adding that the UNESCO policy would help guide "appropriate action in a way that makes for coherence and harmony".

Mr Anaya, who is also Regents' Professor and James J. Lenoir Professor of Human Rights Law and Policy at the University of Arizona in the USA, said "without a coherent policy, there was a real danger that the opportunity to act may be lost". He observed: "Developing such a policy should be relatively easy because many of the issues that appear difficult have been resolved, such as the right to self-determination and the right to culture".

He pointed to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, saying that they had undergirded some of the key judicial and policy decisions made in favour of Indigenous Peoples in America and other countries.

He further highlighted the example set by the Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic in ratifying the ILO Convention and enacting appropriate national laws to protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples in those countries.

But even amidst such positive signs, there were countries, Mr Anaya contended, which were still "ambivalent about the usefulness of the issue, perhaps because such an attitude gives them policy latitude in terms of their vested economic, political and other interests". He was quick to point out, however, that things had improved tremendously, adding that even those countries which had initially opposed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples had rescinded their decisions.

He emphasised that the trend was thus "in favour of greater recognition of the issues", adding that there was now need for countries to domesticate existing international conventions and declarations at the national level. For this reason, he explained, it was an opportune moment for UNESCO to marshal its competencies and experiences on the ground to have greater impact on Indigenous Peoples.

Fackson Banda

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