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Fifty-first session
Agenda item 107PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL
DECADE OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLEStatus of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for
Indigenous PopulationsReport of the Secretary General

1. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 40/131 of 13 December 1985, with the purpose of providing financial assistance to representatives of indigenous communities and organizations who wish to participate in the deliberations of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. The Working Group, which was established pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/34 of 7 May 1982, is a subsidiary organ of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and meets annually at Geneva. The Group has a twofold mandate: to review developments pertaining to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples and to evolve international standards concerning indigenous rights. The reports on the Working Group's thirteenth and fourteenth sessions are issued as documents E/CN.4/Sub.2/1995/24 and E/CN.4/Sub.2/1996/21.

2. In its resolution 50/156 of 21 December 1995, the General Assembly decided that the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations should also be used to assist representatives of indigenous communities and organizations authorized to participate in the deliberations of the open-ended inter-sessional Working Group established in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 1995/32 of 3 March 1995. This Working Group has the sole purpose of elaborating a draft declaration, considering the draft contained in the annex to resolution 1994/45 of 26 August 1994 of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, entitled "draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples" for consideration and adoption by the General Assembly within the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. The report on the first session of the Working Group is issued as document E/CN.4/1996/84.

3. The Voluntary Fund is administered by the Secretary-General in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and other provisions relevant to this Fund. 1/ In this task, the Secretary-General is advised by a Board of Trustees composed of five persons with relevant experience on indigenous issues and serving in their personal capacity. The members of the Board are appointed by the Secretary-General for a three-year term, renewable in consultation with the Chairman of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. At least one of the members of the Board of Trustees shall be a representative of a widely recognized organization of indigenous peoples. The report on the first session of the Board of Trustees was presented to the General Assembly at its forty-third session, in 1988 (A/42/706).

4. The Board of Trustees held its eighth session from 24 to 28 April 1995, and its ninth session from 22 to 26 April 1996. During both its eighth and ninth sessions, the Board was composed of Mr. Leif Dunfjeld (Norway), Mr. William Ole Ntimama (Kenya), Ms. Lois O'Donoghue (Australia), Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz (Philippines) and Mr. Augusto Willemsen-Díaz (Guatemala), who has served as the Board's Chairman at all of its nine sessions.

5. The General Assembly, in its resolution 40/131, laid down certain criteria that beneficiaries of assistance from the Fund must meet. The Board of Trustees has developed more detailed elements for selection criteria, and these criteria are reflected in a questionnaire sent out with letters informing indigenous peoples about activities of the Voluntary Fund prior to the meeting of the Board.

6. In its resolution 40/131, the General Assembly foresaw funding by means of voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations and other private or public entities. Between 1 May 1994 and 21 April 1996, in response to requests issued by the Secretary-General, contributions had been received from the following Governments:

Donor	Amount in United States Dollars	Date
Canada	10 948.91	6 November 1995
Greece	5 000.00	17 May 1994
	6 000.00	4 April 1995
Japan	20 000.00	28 October 1994
Netherlands	37 831.86	6 November 1995
New Zealand	19 952.63	12 June 1995
	16 680.00	12 June 1995
Norway	76 518.42	14 November 1994
	73 331.76	12 December 1994
Saint Lucia	300.00	1 June 1994

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7. In addition, during the same period, contributions were received from the following non-governmental sources:

Donor	Amount in United States dollars	Date
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission	22 033.65 14 378.00	4 November 1994 14 July 1995
J. Walker	100.00 148.39	1 March 1995 10 March 1995
Mashantucket Pequot	1 000.00	7 February 1995
Shimin Gaikou Centre	1 500.00 1 500.00 1 500.00	17 May 1994 4 April 1995 14 March 1995

8. At its eighth and ninth sessions, the Board examined requests for financial assistance for 91 and 171 indigenous representatives, respectively. In the light of the funds available, it recommended at its eighth session the awarding of 53 travel and subsistence grants. The 53 beneficiaries came from 31 countries. At its ninth session, it recommended the awarding of 22 travel and subsistence grants for representatives to attend the fourteenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. The beneficiaries came from 17 countries. In addition, the Board recommended the awarding of four travel and subsistence grants for representatives to attend the second session of the Working Group established in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 1995/32. The beneficiaries came from four countries.

9. The tenth session of the Board of Trustees is scheduled to be held from 21 to 25 April 1997.

Notes

1/ See E/CN.4/Sub.2/1983/20.
