

**Sub-Group on Indigenous Children and Young People**  
**Monday May 22, 2006**  
**2 United Nations Plaza, New York**  
**1:15 – 2:45**

Participants

Cindy Blackstock – First Nations Child and Family Caring Society (Canada)  
Kenn Richard – Native Child and Family Services of Toronto (Canada)  
Ngima Tendup Sherpa – Sherpa Association of Nepal (Nepal)  
Yolanda Terán – Organización Andes Chinchansuyo (Ecuador)  
Shalini Podimattam – International Office for Justice and Peace, Good Shepherd Sisters (India, Nepal, Italy)  
Vandana Lobo – Good Shepherd Sisters (India, Nepal)  
Maureen Catabian – Sisters of the Good Shepherd (Philippines)  
Grigurieva Alexandra – (Russia, Canada)  
Ana Maria Guacho – Fundación Guaman Poma de Ayuda (South America)  
Myriom Sanchez – Fundación Educativa “CISA” (Ecuador)  
Judith Rae – University of Toronto, Faculties of Law and Social Work (Canada)

Materials Provided to Participants

- Copies of powerpoint presentations on literature review and on the ISG
- Copy of the draft code of ethics including proposed roles for the convenor and co-convenor and conflict of interest guidelines
- Copy of the draft criteria for the expert writer for the ISG
- Copy of briefing note on the proposed structure of the literature review and contact information to submit comments and resources
- Agenda for the meeting

Note: all documents in English - whisper translation made available in Spanish, French and Russian.

Meeting Points – Led by Cindy Blackstock

*For additional information on the meeting content, please refer to the 2 sets of slides distributed in hard and electronic copy.*

Ms. Blackstock reviewed the **history and structure** of the ISG, noting particularly:

- The ISG is a new sub-group of NGO Group, which is an NGO based in Geneva working in child rights that liaises with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child respecting child rights. Its roots began in the Day of Discussion on Indigenous children held by the Committee in 2003, and it held its first meeting in Toronto in October 2005. The Convenor is Roy Laifungbam and the Co Convenor is Cindy Blackstock.

- The NGO Group meets in Geneva and most member NGOs are international groups working with children and youth in some capacity. The central functions of the NGO group are based in Geneva. This poses a significant barrier to the full participation of Indigenous peoples' organizations as well as other organizations located in other parts of the world. Ideas on how the NGO group could be more inclusive of NGO's working in other areas of the world are currently under discussion.
- The current members of the ISG are:
  - o FNCFCS (Canada)
  - o CORE (India)
  - o Action for Children and Youth (New Zealand)
  - o International Psychologists Association
- The mandate of the ISG is to promote child rights within an Indigenous framework, and inform a General Comment on Indigenous children to be issued by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. It is not a representative organization, but rather a knowledge-sharing and networking group.
- Ms. Blackstock noted that the membership of the ISG needs to be much more diverse, and that "observers" have the same ability to participate as "members" though only members of the NGO Group can be official members. She indicated that the Convenor and Co-Convenor positions should be rotated.

Ms. Blackstock reviewed the discussion on **membership** and the **Code of Ethics and Duties** from the morning meeting, in particular:

- Need for diversification
- Equal participation of observers
- Requirements:
  - o indigenous individuals and organisations
  - o accountable to indigenous communities
  - o agree to share knowledge about the ISG
- Need to involve young people

Mr. Sherpa reiterated his offer to explore the possibility of hosting the **next ISG meeting** in Nepal in fall 2006.

Ms. Rae discussed the **literature review** underway, and encouraged group members/observers to contribute research material and to notify her regarding problematic material. Some group members noted that the review should accommodate oral traditions as well as written documents, and the group agreed that orally recorded information could be submitted. The group also noted that a discussion of harmful customary practices should be included in the review as well. The literature review is scheduled for completion by July 15<sup>th</sup> 2006.

Ms. Blackstock reviewed the proposed structure of the **General Comment** and the steps taken thus far in its development. She noted the following upcoming steps:

- Confirm dates and process with UNCRC

- selection of expert writer (May 30<sup>th</sup> 2006), and beginning writing (June 15<sup>th</sup> 2006)
- completion of literature review (July 15<sup>th</sup> 2006)
- review of drafts and submission of suggested text by group members
- final deadline: hopefully the General Comment will be passed by the UN Committee by January 2007

The group discussed the criteria for the **Expert Writer**, and approved of the draft criteria.

- Ms. Blackstock indicated that the expert writer would be paid 7000 Euros and work under contract with FNCFCS.
- Some members of the group voiced the opinion that it would be preferable to have a group write the General Comment rather than a single individual. Ms. Blackstock indicated that the procedure typically required an individual writer, however, she noted that the writing process will involve extensive consultation with the ISG.
- Some group members indicated that prior knowledge of international law affecting indigenous peoples, as well as practical knowledge of Indigenous peoples issues, were essential criteria. The group agreed that the writer needed the skills to be able to start working right away without a steep “learning curve”. The importance of speaking from an international perspective, rather than the perspective of one people or country, was emphasized.
- Ms. Blackstock noted that applicants must submit applications to her by May 28<sup>th</sup> 2006, and applications will be forwarded to the UN Committee by May 30<sup>th</sup> for selection. The expert writer is scheduled to begin work on June 15<sup>th</sup> 2006. Ms. Blackstock and Ms. Rae encouraged group members to seek out candidates as soon as possible. The group agreed that it would be best if an ISG member could prioritize candidates by the number of criteria met.
- Again the need to confirm times and process respecting the proposed role of the ISG in supporting the UNCRC in developing a General Comment respecting Indigenous child rights was indicated.

Participants were provided contact information for both Ms. Rae and Ms. Blackstock and encouraged to contact us should they have any questions.

### Closure

Ms. Blackstock thanked the group members for participating and reminded members of upcoming deadlines.

### **KEY DEADLINES:**

1. **May 28<sup>th</sup> 2006 – nominees for the Expert Writer must submit applications to Cindy Blackstock**
2. **June 12<sup>th</sup> 2006 – literature review documents must be submitted by this date**

- 3. June 15<sup>th</sup> 2006 – Expert Writer begins work**
- 4. July 15<sup>th</sup> 2006 – literature review complete**