

DOCIP'S VOLUNTEER NETWORK

AUGUST 2017 NEWSLETTER

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO



Summer finally arrived in Switzerland and for Docip it's now time to take a break from all the activities it has been running since the beginning of the year. As each year, the spring term is busy in terms of UN conferences: The Technical Secretariat has been present during five conferences to provide in-person support for indigenous delegates.

We started in February with WIPO's 33rd Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC) in Geneva, which was followed by IGC34 in June. The June conference was of crucial importance for indigenous peoples, as the mandate came to an end without reaching a common agreement on the text. The General Assembly (GA) in October will decide if the negotiation that has been held since 1999 should continue and under what form. If the GA decides to change the format of the conference, this could have severe implications for the participation of indigenous peoples.

In April, we were thrilled to go to the annual UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in New York. We reached a new record with providing interpretation services during 40 side-events in two weeks. The translators worked on 73 documents translating no less than 36'693 words in our four working languages, and finally, our volunteers supported over 500 delegates who came to our office for administrative support, orientation and other support services. Without your help, it would not have been possible! This year, for the first time, our Publication Manager was also present with some volunteers at UNPFII in order to publish the summary note on the conference for all delegates who could not attend. You can read it [here!](#)



After New York, we immediately participated at the intersessional Conference of Parties (COP) in Bonn on Climate Change, where we supported the work of the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change, which we will also be accompanying at COP23 in November.

In June, our Brussel team was really busy. As part of our mandate to facilitate relations between the EU and indigenous peoples, Docip provides direct assistance to delegates who wish to inform the EU of local issues having an impact on their communities. Last year, the office in Brussel worked on more than 35 cases. During a 4-day visit to the European institutions this June, 14 indigenous delegates from the 7 regions presented the main issues affecting indigenous peoples of the world to the EU and also participated in the "European Development Days" organised by the European Commission.



The first half of the year came to an end in July with the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) taking place in Geneva. In light of the new mandate there were a lot of discussions around the modalities of work and the development of the mechanism. You can find some more information below. A highlight was our annual reception during EMRIP, where we mingled with indigenous delegates, volunteers, UN staff and

members of NGOs to enjoy some delicious food, listen to some kanakee chanting and could exchange with each other around a little handicraft market held by representatives from Ecuador, New Caledonia and North Africa.

WHAT'S COMING UP

There are several activities coming up in the next months and we'll be looking to our volunteer network for help. We're currently looking for interpreters, online translators and volunteers for the **36th session of the Human Rights Council**, held in **September**, for the **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change COP23**, taking place in Bonn **from 6-17 November**, and finally for the **6th annual Forum on Business and Human Rights from 25-27 November** in Geneva.

If you are able to help out, please do not hesitate to contact Karen at karen@docip.org.

The agenda of the Technical Secretariat from August to December 2017

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|------------------------|
| 2017-09-11 2017-09-29 | 36TH SESSION, HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL | Geneva, Switzerland |
| 2017-11-06 2017-11-17 | CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION (UNFCCC) AND MEETINGS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES | Bonn, Germany |
| 2017-11-27 2017-11-29 | 6TH SESSION, FORUM ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS (HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL) | Geneva, Switzerland |

The full annual agenda of conferences relevant for Indigenous Peoples is available [here](#).

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' ISSUES: THE INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL LEVEL

There have been a lot of happenings in regards to indigenous peoples during the first term, particularly at the UN level.

- This year is the **10th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** (UNDRIP), which was also the annual theme of UNPFII. In light of this anniversary, the UN held a commemoration on April 25th with the objective to take stock of achievements made since its adoption, to identify ongoing persistent challenges and obstacles and to consider good practices. It provided an opportunity to review the commitments made by Member States in the outcome document of the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. Participants had an opportunity to make concrete commitments to further increase their efforts to implement the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

- Another important happening has been the **EMRIP**, which for the first time took place under its **new mandate** that has been adopted last year in September. EMRIP's new mandate provides the Human Rights Council with expertise and advice on the rights of indigenous peoples as set out in UNDRIP, and assists Member States in achieving the ends of the Declaration through the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the rights of indigenous peoples. From this year on, EMRIP is also able to choose itself the theme of its annual study, whereas before it received the mandate from the Human Rights Council. This allows a greater flexibility for the mechanism. Another new feature are the country visits with the purpose to assist indigenous peoples and/or member states with technical advice regarding the development of domestic legislation and policies regarding the rights of indigenous peoples. Finally, the number of experts was expanded from five to seven members. More information can be read [here](#).
- On a regional level, there has been an important decision taken in favour of indigenous peoples in Kenya in May. After eight years of battle, for the first time the **African Court of Human and Peoples Rights** (operating since 2006) has ruled on an indigenous people's rights, which is by far the largest case brought before the court. The Ogiek live in the Mau Forest Complex in the Rift Valley of Kenya. They are one of the last remaining forest-dwelling communities and among the most marginalised indigenous peoples in Kenya. They alleged eight violations (right to life, property, natural resources, development, religion and culture) by the Kenyan government under the African Charter, which Kenya signed. In recent years, indigenous groups in general have increasingly turned to the courts as non-litigation tactics such as protests have failed to protect their lands from seizure and their communities from eviction. For more information, visit: <http://en.african-court.org/index.php/news/press-releases/item/155-african-court-on-human-and-peoples-rights-to-deliver-judgment-on-african-commission-v-republic-of-kenya-on-friday-26-may-2017>
- **Standing Rock: where are we now?** In the last newsletter we talked about Standing Rock, and since the Standing Rock Sioux filed a lawsuit against the construction of the 1'172-mile Dakota Access pipeline, a year has passed. The lawsuit alleged that authorisation of the pipeline violated various acts by failing to adequately conduct an efficient environmental assessment and skipping an environmental impact statement altogether. The case has gone viral and 380 tribes around the world – from New Zealand's Māori to the Ecuadorian Amazon's Kichwa – came forward to stand with the water protectors. It became a movement with the support of spirit and prayer camps outside the reservation. After a first victory in 2016, President Trump revived the pipeline, ordering the expedited approval of the final permit just four days after taking office. By now, the project has been completed and carries crude oil from North Dakota's Bakken oil fields to an export terminal in Illinois. Moreover, the Oceti Sakowin encampment was closed down in the beginning of the year – but the struggle continues. The Standing Rock Sioux tribe is challenging the case in court, where it is still pending, and continues to be the tribe's last hope to protect its water and land! For further insights the collision between energy development and tribal rights, an interesting film recently came out: <https://www.beyondstandingrock.org/watch/>

For more information on current issues on the ground, there are several online sources that can be consulted. Here a few list of interesting media on the topic of indigenous peoples:

- <http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous>
- <http://www.globalissues.org/news/topic/693>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/indigenous-peoples>

DOCIP IN PICTURES



UNPFII

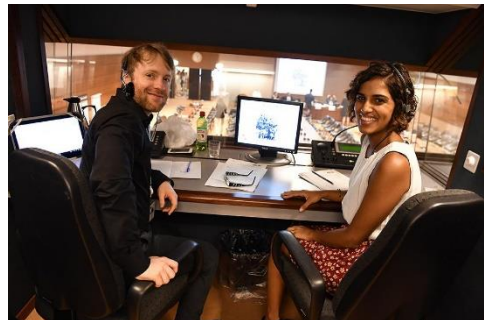


Docip volunteers at work @UNPFII





after work ...



EMRIP





Docip Reception

