

**Report of the
International Expert Group Meeting on Urban Indigenous Peoples and Migration
Santiago de Chile, 27-29 March 2007**



**United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)
Latin America and the Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) – ECLAC
International Organization for Migration (IOM)**

Summary

The Expert Group Meeting on Urban Indigenous Peoples and Migration was an activity of the United Nations Housing Rights Programme (UNHRP) co-organized by UN-HABITAT, Secretariat of UNPFII, OHCHR, Latin America and the Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) – ECLAC, in cooperation with IOM. The meeting, hosted by ECLAC in Santiago de Chile, and fully financed by the Government of Canada, constituted the first international expert-level meeting on the challenges of improving the quality of life of urban indigenous peoples and the ongoing rural-urban migration process.

The meeting aimed to facilitate better understanding of the situation regarding the living conditions and rights of indigenous peoples in urban areas through the generation of more comprehensive knowledge based on latest research, and to elaborate policy recommendations for improving the living and human rights conditions of the members of indigenous peoples in urban areas as well as identifying practical approaches to address this population in their efforts to enhance their quality of life.

The meeting brought together about 75 participants, including members of relevant UN agencies, and organizations and observers from various countries. Experts who made presentations were from the following regions: Africa; Arctic; Asia; Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia; Latin America and the Caribbean; North America; and Pacific.

Amongst diverse recommendations, the experts highlighted that greater attention by the relevant authorities is required to address rights of the members of indigenous peoples in urban areas which is fundamental and an integral part of actions to be taken to improve their living conditions. Public authorities need to understand the multiple identities of indigenous peoples within urban areas and their continuing relationship to their traditional lands and natural resources. Indigenous peoples should not be seen as divided between urban and rural, but rather as peoples with rights and a common cultural identity as well as facing similar challenges in adapting to changing circumstances and environments. To respond adequately to this complex reality, States need to adopt sensitive policies based on the recognition of religious, political, social, cultural, spiritual rights, including of indigenous peoples' sacred sites. In a complementary fashion, States must also work in collaboration with various stakeholders to adopt policies that enable indigenous peoples to take full advantage of the opportunities that exist in urban areas.

The report of the Expert Group Meeting will be submitted to the sixth session of the UNPFII and there will be a special session to discuss issues addressed by this initiative and its conclusions and recommendations.

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I. Introduction

1. The global urbanisation process increasingly includes indigenous peoples. Although, globally, the majority of indigenous peoples¹ still live in rural areas the limited available data shows that more and more of them are voluntarily or involuntarily migrating to urban areas. This migration can be temporary or permanent. Thus, urbanisation is affecting indigenous peoples in many countries, both developed and developing, with diverse impacts. A number of push and pull-factors have been prompting migration of indigenous peoples to urban areas: land² dispossession, displacement, military conflict, natural disasters, the overall deterioration of their traditional livelihoods for various reasons coupled with the absence of viable economic alternatives, and the prospect of better economic opportunities in cities. Migration for work - international and/or national – has become an important way out of poverty for indigenous peoples.³

2. At the same time, many indigenous peoples are strongly attached to their traditional lands and territories, making migration a delicate decision with far-reaching implications, including the possible loss of traditional land rights. Most members of the indigenous peoples living in urban areas⁴ support the families they left behind in their areas of origin. Remittances of indigenous migrant workers have become a very important source of income for many rural indigenous communities. Members of the indigenous peoples living in urban areas maintain close ties with their communities of origin, but, over time, their attachment to their traditional lands can become weaker and land-related issues may be less important, as other concerns arise. However, in many instances members of indigenous peoples living in urban areas maintain their indigenous identities for several generations⁵. Yet, identity can be

¹ Even though there is not an universal definition for indigenous peoples, the ILO Convention 169 on indigenous and tribal peoples define indigenous peoples as “peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions. 2. Self-identification as indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provisions of this Convention apply.”

² When land is mentioned it should be understood in the comprehensive context of also territories and natural resources

³ UNHRP (2005), Indigenous peoples’ right to adequate housing: A global overview. UNHRP Report Series No. 7. This report can be downloaded from the Housing Rights section of the UN-HABITAT web-site at www.unhabitat.org.

⁴ In this text, the use of the phrase “members of indigenous peoples” is meant to signify that though their population may be divided between rural and urban areas, they are the same indigenous group and does not in any way signify the colonial notions of ‘tribal membership’ The term “members of indigenous peoples” should be used in the same context as is used in ILO Convention No 169 Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries.

⁵ Related to this issue, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples stated that “A question frequently asked of indigenous peoples is whether their cultural identities can survive in a de-territorialized environment, that is, in dispersed settlements and urban centres where indigenous migrants live interspersed with non-indigenous populations. The answer to this question depends on the particular circumstances and is contingent on the specific definition of indigenous identity in each case (see below). It may be argued that to the extent that cultural rights are universal, they are not subject to any kind of territorial restriction. The right of any individual or group of individuals to

variable, particularly within the urban situation, as evidenced by the phenomenon of ethnic mobility (intra- and inter-generational), i.e., of changes in reported self-identity, both within the same generation, and across generations. Given the multicultural realities of urban centres, the accommodation or the reality of multiple identities is more accepted among urban dwellers. The evolution, change and maintenance of indigenous identities is a critical dynamic, not to be overlooked in shaping the size and composition of indigenous populations within urban areas.⁶

3. Despite a few benefits such as proximity to social facilities, in many cases indigenous peoples have substantial difficulties in urban areas. Lack of employment and income generating activities, racism/discrimination, limited access to services, and, very importantly, inadequate housing, are the main challenges that members of the indigenous peoples living in urban areas face. In general, disrespect for a wide range of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples is often the main underlying cause for persisting poverty among urban indigenous communities. In most cases, they try to organise themselves to better cope with the new economic and social conditions, which are often hostile and characterised by discrimination. There are, however, also good examples where members of indigenous peoples in urban areas have better opportunities to improve their lives. In Canada, for example, it is reported that over the last twenty years, a growing number of Aboriginal people have completed post-secondary education. This is important because the statistics indicate that the employment gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in urban areas disappear for those who have completed post-secondary education, especially university.

4. Most recent work in this area includes: (i) a 2005 research initiative by UN-HABITAT and OHCHR through their joint UN Housing Rights Programme (UNHRP) that resulted in a book entitled “Indigenous peoples’ right to adequate housing: A global overview”⁷ of which the findings were reported to the fourth session of the UNPFII in 2005; and (ii) the Expert Seminar on “Indigenous peoples and migration: Challenges and opportunities”, organised by IOM and the Secretariat of UNPFII and held in Geneva from 6-7 April 2006.

5. The meeting was a response to UNPFII that recommended in its fourth session in 2005 that an Expert Group Meeting on this topic be organised⁸. At its fifth session in 2006,

preserve, practise and develop their own culture is not dependent upon territoriality but rather related to self-identification” (E/CN.4/2002/97 §70).

⁶ Report of the Expert Seminar “Indigenous peoples and migration: Challenges and opportunities”, held in Geneva from 6-7 April 2006 by International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Secretariat of UNPFII.

⁷ This report can be downloaded from the Housing Rights section of the UN-HABITAT web-site at www.unhabitat.org.

⁸ Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Report on the fourth session (16-27 May 2005), Economic and Social Council, Official Records, 2005, Supplement No. 23 E/2005/43 E/C.19/2005/9 Paragraph 37. The Forum, taking note with appreciation of the conclusions and recommendations of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights joint publication entitled “Indigenous peoples’ right to adequate housing: a global overview”, recommends that UN-HABITAT, jointly with the Office of the High Commissioner, organize an expert group meeting in 2006 to review the status of progress on indigenous peoples’ housing rights

UNPFII reiterated its recommendation to expand the scope of this endeavour beyond the field of housing, and to cover urban issues comprehensively under the general title of “Urban indigenous peoples and migration”⁹.

II. Background and objectives

6. The overall objective of the meeting was to contribute to improving living conditions and the realisation of human rights of members of the indigenous peoples living in urban areas. Specific objectives were to assess impacts of the migration process on indigenous peoples; to analyse living conditions and human rights situation of indigenous communities settled in urban areas with the aim of generating comprehensive knowledge based on latest research findings; and to evaluate current policies and practices and their effects on living conditions and the realisation of human rights of members of the indigenous peoples living in urban areas. This was to lead to the elaboration of recommendations on how to improve living conditions of members of the indigenous peoples living in urban areas and to contribute to the realisation of their human rights.

7. The meeting undertook the following activities: (i) A review of the current state of research and data availability to identify knowledge gaps; (ii) an analysis of living conditions and human rights situations of indigenous peoples settled in urban areas through case studies on themes such as: housing, employment, education, transition/settlement services, identities and ethnic mobility, cultural and linguistic continuity, and human security, particularly indigenous women and youth; (iii) an assessment of policies and good practices and underlying factors, patterns and characteristics regarding migration to urban areas by indigenous peoples, with special focus on the violations of their rights; (iv) recommendations for further research and for evidence-based, relevant and effective measures and policies towards improvement of living conditions of members of the indigenous peoples living in urban areas and the realisation of their human rights; and (v) outline of a roadmap for the follow-up of the findings and recommendations of the meeting.

globally and identify and document best practices, and report on the outcome and recommendations of the meeting to the Forum at its sixth session.

⁹ The Permanent Forum recommends that an expert group meeting on urban indigenous peoples and migration be organized by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) in cooperation with the secretariat of the Permanent Forum with the participation of the members of the Permanent Forum, experts from indigenous organizations, the United Nations system and other relevant intergovernmental organizations and interested Governments, for the purpose of formulating recommendations for consideration, as part of its preparatory work for the sixth session. The Permanent Forum requests donors to provide financial resources for this expert group meeting. The Permanent Forum invites the International Organization for Migration to assist in the preparations for this meeting (Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Report on the fifth session (15-26 May 2006), Economic and Social Council Official Records Supplement No. 23, E/2006/43 E/C.19/2006/11, paragraph 161).,

III. Summary of deliberations, case study presentations and related discussions

8. During the Opening Session speakers emphasized the challenges that local and national governments as well as the international community are faced with as a result of indigenous peoples' increasing migratory flows and mobility. They drew particular attention to the often difficult conditions under which indigenous peoples in urban areas live and the discrimination they suffer from in many cases, which is frequently reflected in marginalization, exclusion and poverty. Statements were made by Mr. José Luis Machinea, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); Mr. Salinas Juan Alberto Parra, National Director of the Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena (CONADI); Mr. Fred Caron, Assistant Deputy Minister for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada - Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians; Ms. Carmen Rosa Villa, Regional Director of OHCHR; and Mr. Selman Ergüden, Head of Shelter Branch, UN-HABITAT (on behalf of the co-organizing agencies). A message from Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, was read on her behalf. Mr. Pablo Yanes and Ms. Octaviana Trujillo were respectively elected as the Chairperson and Rapporteur of the Expert Group Meeting. Mr. Dirk Jaspers, Director of CELADE – ECLAC, chaired the Opening Session.

9. The second session, Introduction to the key issues, pointed out that while the urbanization of indigenous peoples is garnering the attention of governments and the international community little is known about the migration process for indigenous peoples. Because of this absence of data there is a lack of adequate government policies towards indigenous peoples and their urbanization. Over the last few decades, indigenous peoples' movements have strengthened, and with their stronger voice they have gained more political participation and recognition. The session also provided an overview of indigenous peoples in the urban setting and explained the pull/push factors that drive the urbanization process of indigenous peoples.

10. The following sessions provided a review of living and human rights conditions of indigenous peoples in urban areas through case studies presented by the invited experts.

11. Latin America and the Caribbean: For Latin America, there was an additional focus through a regional analysis. Based on the 2000 census, Latin America's indigenous population is estimated at over 30 million. Though census data is available, ethnographic studies specific to certain communities add additional value and more of them should be produced. There are sharp differences in social indicators between indigenous peoples and non-indigenous peoples. Although most of the States of Latin America have made constitutional and legislative changes to recognize indigenous peoples' rights, an assessment covering the last few decades raises some critical issues, since there is evidence that standards have either proven to be ineffective or have been breached. The analysis still points to the immense challenge on the complexity and diversity of indigenous peoples' population dynamics. Recognition of indigenous peoples' identity, world view and human rights will garner the elimination of inequities. For example, the case study on Mexico highlighted that socio-economic indicators for indigenous peoples

were well below those for non-indigenous Mexicans. Indigenous men are worse off than non-indigenous women, and indigenous women are in the worst position. Mexico City was founded on traditional indigenous lands, and city officials consult with indigenous peoples (Council for Indigenous Consultation) to include broader participation, realization of human rights, social equality, and adequate housing.

Regarding the specific case of Chile, it was reported that more than 50% of the total indigenous population lives in Santiago. Experts highlighted the problems the indigenous movement of Santiago has faced, since indigenous persons, when arriving in Santiago, were discriminated against and some of them had difficulties in claiming that they were of indigenous origin. However, over the years, members of indigenous peoples living in Santiago have promoted some of their cultural traditions, including religious ceremonies and sports, and were able to coordinate joint actions for claiming their rights. In Chile, some of the traditional indigenous sports have been revitalized first in Santiago and then reintroduced in rural areas. Indigenous experts highlighted that in some cases people in rural areas may have felt ashamed of practicing their sports or traditions but, when they realized that those sports or traditions are also practiced in Santiago, they felt more comfortable practicing them again.

The Government of Chile is discussing a new law that affects members of indigenous peoples living in urban areas. Experts and indigenous organizations criticized that the participation of indigenous organizations in this process has been very limited. This criticism was rejected by government representatives as being inaccurate.

12. Arctic region: The case study on Greenland informed on the government policy that encourages rural-to-urban migration because subsidized development and service delivery in the villages in rural areas (“settlements”) is considered to be economically unsustainable. The presentation emphasized the potential and need for sharing best practices in relation to re-thinking industry and trade, according to new settlement patterns and climate change. Various opportunities in the context of urbanisation of indigenous peoples should be explored further, such as for the return of indigenous peoples to their home communities and for those who remain in the rural areas.

13. North America: High population turnover in many communities - rural and urban - has disruptive effects on individuals, families, communities, service providers. It appears, in Canada, for example that for now the most important considerations of indigenous mobility and migration are not redistribution of the population, but more the high rate of movement or “churn” - both migration “to and from” reserves and urban areas, as well as high residential mobility within cities. High mobility of the members of indigenous peoples “to and from” and within urban areas exacerbates problems of adjustment to urban life, notably through discontinuity in service delivery. This affects particularly families most in need for support, especially those of single female parents who are among the most mobile and yet often in most need. Most services are organized and delivered on a neighbourhood basis, particularly in the areas of health, employment and education and ways should be explored as to how to better deliver services to a highly mobile population. Within Canada, this is further complicated when the movement is

between reserve communities and urban centres due to the fact that the primary responsibility for the delivery of services involves more than one order of jurisdiction. Therefore, ways should be explored to minimize disruptions in educational programs and schooling for students, who change schools frequently by developing strategies that would provide academic continuity and help build social and academic skills, including ways to incorporate language and cultural dimensions within urban schools. Further, a better understanding is required of how the interplay among personal characteristics of potential movers, and characteristics of communities of residence, and those of potential destinations can affect the decision to move, particularly by age groups (e.g. youth) and gender. There is a need to equalize funding formulas between reservation/reserve based indigenous peoples and members of indigenous peoples living in urban areas for service delivery (including housing) without penalizing rural/reservation communities. Some observers also pointed out other social problems indigenous children and women may face, including the violations of their right to education.

14. Pacific: The case studies pointed to limitations of blanket cultural methodologies and analytical frameworks. As culture continues to change, the patterns of urban migration and the definitions of 'urban' change, too. Pacific indigenous communities living in urban areas are heterogeneous which requires caution in placing them under labels and categories that wrongly homogenise their diverse experiences. Therefore, multiple identities should be seen as asset and not as liability. In order to improve analysis of members of indigenous peoples living in urban areas in and from the Pacific, it is important to locate and acknowledge non-published and oral and multi-media narratives; incorporate collective and personal insights to better address intra-cultural differences; examine urban migration and urban indigenous peoples from a resilience framework; acknowledge the progress, positive features and unique and innovative developments by urban indigenous generations; and include and validate youth perspectives in order to maintain contemporary view of urban migration settlement experiences from local, urban, indigenous, global, trans-cultural and diasporic contexts.

15. Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia: The case study on the Crimean Tatar community revealed the need to hold consultations with the Crimean Tatar representative body Mejlis and Council of representatives of the Crimean Tatars under the President of Ukraine; to adopt a law on restoration of rights of persons deported based on their ethnic origin as well as a law on the status of the Crimean Tatar people in Ukraine; to hold just restitution of property of Crimean Tatars that was withdrawn under deportation; to revise the situation in the south coast of Crimea regarding land that was illegally distributed among enterprises; to provide the homeless Crimean Tatars with land on south coast of Crimea; to create a special land reserve for returning Crimean Tatars that would enable them to obtain land for building houses; and to study the situation of indigenous peoples in democratic countries and take their positive experiences into consideration.

16. Africa: The case study on South Africa elaborated that indigenous peoples who migrate to urban areas face the challenge of alienation processes that destroy their indigenous identity, belief systems, language and culture. The result of this alienation

processes is the demoralization and often social disintegration of indigenous communities in cities evidenced by domestic violence, abuse of women and children, youth gangsters involved in criminal activities and prostitution and an increase in teenage suicides as they become statistics among thousands of others, based on the loss of their sense of human dignity and self-respect. Extensive research is currently being conducted to develop comprehensive information on legal and constitutional provisions for indigenous peoples. Once this data is collected, reviewed and reported, discussion could be facilitated among stakeholders on the needs of indigenous populations to plan future actions in this regard. Urbanisation of pastoralist societies in western and eastern Africa has led to severe problems of these indigenous urban communities, experienced most strongly by women. In eastern Africa, the livelihoods of pastoralists living in towns depend mainly on income generated through activities in the urban informal sector such as selling arts and handicrafts; performing cultural dances for the tourist market; and preparing and selling traditional medicine. The commoditization of indigenous culture and skills bears the risk of violation of indigenous property, intellectual and cultural rights. Costly and cumbersome license and clearance requirements from city authorities and medical boards, coupled with poor marketing skills due to lack of training, constitute additional challenges for pastoralists in the urban economy. Nevertheless, there are also positive effects of rural-urban migration in eastern Africa where pastoralists living in urban areas benefit from more safety and wider availability of food aid. Moreover, the remittances they send to their areas of origin help alleviate poverty. Little data exist on the urbanization process of indigenous peoples in Niger and other Sahel countries. The establishment of a regional or a number of local observatories could contribute to the collection of relevant data.

17. Asia: In India, there is no mechanism that deals with indigenous peoples' issues comprehensively, particularly in view of keeping the culture and history of indigenous peoples intact and alive. The case studies were based mainly on experiences and social interactions of the authors with people from urban indigenous communities. Existing studies on urban indigenous peoples are too scattered and insufficiently systematic or structured. Therefore, comprehensive analysis producing systematic data is needed. This would allow for monitoring of the inflow of indigenous populations into the metropolitan cities. Since most of the available data does not differentiate between indigenous peoples and other religious and ethnic minority groups studies and data collection have to focus on specific indigenous populations. Women are particularly affected by the negative sides of urbanization and need special support including protection against physical and emotional harassment and to counter the risk of vulnerable individuals, particularly women and children, being lured into sex work. In the case of the Philippines, a document about the city of Bangui prepared by the NGO Cordillera Peoples' Alliance was read. The document expressed the problems indigenous peoples in the region have faced due to the increasing growth of this city and how the city absorbed indigenous lands in close areas and how it affected the indigenous peoples in their living conditions and cultural identity. Furthermore, the importance of the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives in decision-making processes was highlighted.

IV. Summary of general debate and follow up

18. The following remarks, ideas and suggestions were amongst the outcome of the general debate for devising a roadmap for follow-up and further research needs:

19. Rural vs. urban: It is crucial not to divide urban and rural members of indigenous peoples as this might divide attention and resource flows in a biased manner. Indigenous peoples' rights are to be considered wholly, i.e. they must be realised wherever indigenous peoples live. It is important to keep in mind in this connection that those members of indigenous peoples migrating to urban centres do not leave their identity behind. Accordingly, the necessary approach to guarantee the survival and well-being of indigenous peoples is the combination of realization of their rights to lands and resources in their ancestral territories with systematic improvement of rights and living conditions in urban areas. In this context, one expert noted that indigenous people migrate to cities consciously to ensure the survival of the traditional way of life in their territories through urban-rural remittances. In many cases, commercialization of indigenous arts, crafts, dances, medicines are undertaken equally consciously. Indigenous peoples are aware that life in their territories based on subsistence agriculture only is no longer possible. Nevertheless, mechanisms have to be developed to make sure that members of the indigenous peoples living in urban areas can still benefit from the natural wealth of their ancestral lands. While it is important to acknowledge the connection between rural and urban centres, it is equally important to recognize that increasingly many members of indigenous peoples, particularly in North America, have known no other home than the urban centre and there needs to be space within the dialogue to consider their views and issues. The failure to do so would exclude a large (and growing) number of indigenous peoples. As more and more indigenous peoples become urban dwellers, it is important whether their issues will be the same or different from their indigenous brothers and sisters that are newcomers to urban centres or those living in rural communities.

20. Push/pull factors: The driving forces behind the urbanization process need to be further understood and documented. The mapping of origin-destination flows of indigenous peoples, as done in Winnipeg, Canada, is important for a better understanding of their problems and needs. Local or regional observatories can help collect needed data and thus monitor the urbanization process. Certain data can only be gathered by census in cooperation with indigenous peoples at the grassroots level, for example on the increasing numbers, settlement and mobility patterns of indigenous families that move closer to jails where their relatives are inmates.

21. Positive impact/potential of urbanization: While adequate attention needs to be paid to the problems and challenges of indigenous peoples' migration, the positive effects and potentials should also be considered. Two experts proposed experience exchanges at national or regional levels, including programmes specifically tailored for the youth, could contribute to this purpose. Another expert put forward the idea of organizing a symposium on local government best practices in multi-cultural cities to identify and promote the participation and integration of indigenous peoples into the governance process.

22. Research: More research and documentation is needed. One expert advanced the idea of creating an award to promote relevant more research. Another expert stressed the importance of researchers feeding back their findings into the communities they studied; guidelines for this need to be developed. Another research consideration put forward during the EGM was the need to identify best practices through various exchange forums, especially through regional discussions.

22. Addressing the issues of indigenous peoples more effectively: It was noted by an expert that the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people has not given enough attention to members of indigenous peoples living in urban areas. It was suggested that he produce a special report on this issue. A participant from UN-HABITAT noted that ECLAC could set guidelines for other UN regional commissions on how to work on urban indigenous issues and with members of indigenous peoples living in urban areas. This has to be seen against the fact that only few UN organizations have clear mandate in this area.

V. Conclusions¹⁰

23. The urbanization of indigenous peoples is garnering the attention of governments and the international community. Increasingly, human rights advocates and organizations, including human rights treaty bodies and special procedures of the Human Rights Council are addressing the impact of urbanization of indigenous peoples including their rights to health care and adequate housing. However, little is known about the migration process and impact of urbanization on indigenous peoples. The international Expert Group Meeting represented the first effort by the international community to understand and reflect upon the situations of the rights of the members of the indigenous peoples¹¹ living in urban areas who now represent more than half of the indigenous population in many countries.

24. The experts concluded that greater attention by the relevant authorities is required to address the issues and rights of indigenous peoples whose members live in urban areas. In so doing, public authorities need to understand the multiple identities of indigenous peoples within urban areas and their continuing relationship to their traditional lands, natural resources and environments in rural areas. In this sense, indigenous peoples should not be seen as divided between urban and rural, but rather as peoples with rights and a common cultural identity adapting to changing circumstances and environments. The complexity and diversity of situations of indigenous peoples whose members live in

¹⁰ These conclusions reflect consensus based on the previous recommendations and statements made by experts and observers during the previous sessions.

¹¹ In this text, the use of the phrase “members of indigenous peoples” is meant to signify that though their population may be divided between rural and urban areas, they are the same indigenous group and does not in any way signify the colonial notions of ‘tribal membership’. The term “members of indigenous peoples” should be used in the same context as is used in ILO Convention No 169 Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries.

urban areas requires States to adopt culturally sensitive policies and models to respond to these needs.

25. The experts were conscious of the push-pull factors that lead to the movement of indigenous peoples to urban areas, both domestically and internationally. It was noted that there are common factors that lead to the forced or involuntary movement of indigenous peoples from their lands and territories, and these were related to many issues including poverty (which covers inadequate housing), environmental factors, conflict, inadequate legal protection over lands and resources, and the absence of services. Moreover, members of indigenous peoples move to urban areas because they are motivated by opportunities for improved employment, health, housing, education, political participation, social recognition and visibility or other benefits that they may lack in their territories. It was recognized that the impacts of urban areas on indigenous peoples could vary greatly. Some are able to adapt and improve their situations considerably without loss of cultural identity; in other cases, indigenous peoples are subject to discrimination, exclusion, violence, etc. Notwithstanding, urbanization is a phenomenon that requires immediate attention and States have obligations to ensure that indigenous peoples are not forcibly removed or driven from their homelands, nor subject to discrimination once in urban areas.

26. Over the last few decades, indigenous peoples' political, economic, cultural and social movements have strengthened their organizations. With their increased voices as a consequence of moving to urban areas, they have gained more political participation and recognition. Within urban areas, there needs to be recognition of religious, political, social, cultural, spiritual issues and rights, including recognition of sacred sites, for indigenous peoples to not be subject to further discrimination. The value of cultural diversity, multiple identities and contributions to cultural pluralism needs to be recognized in a context of increasing equality and social inclusion.

27. The impact of indigenous self-identification and the phenomenon of ethnic mobility (changes in self-reporting of indigenous identity over censuses) have increasingly affected the demographic (e.g. population size) and compositional (e.g. socio-economic characteristics) attributes of urban populations. These impacts need to be recognized with respect to trends in growth and socio-economic indicators of urban peoples.

28. Finally, the participants expressed their gratitude to the Government of Canada for providing the funds that have made possible this Expert Group Meeting and to ECLAC for hosting the event. It was suggested that all efforts should be made to mobilize support from other governments also for the follow up. Similarly, suggestions were made to invite ECLAC for the mobilization of other Regional Commissions to strengthen their focus on indigenous peoples and issues and particularly to the implementation of the recommendations of this EGM.

VI. Recommendations

The Expert Group Meeting formulated the following recommendations.

Recommendations to Governments and Local Authorities

29. Participation in decision-making processes: Governments must ensure that indigenous peoples are included as equal partners in all decision-making processes in urban areas, in all issues that are important to or may affect them. In doing so, governments need to recognize that indigenous peoples should have the resources and the capacity to effectively participate in these processes. Participation and consultation of indigenous peoples should follow the principles of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by the Human Right Council at its first session (29 June 2006), including the application of the principle of free, prior and informed consent in any issue that may affect them.

30. Budgets: Governments should ensure adequate funding is available for the benefit of indigenous peoples living in urban areas, taking into account that in many countries more than half of the indigenous populations live in urban areas. These funds should be additional funds and not at the expense of indigenous peoples in rural areas. When possible, governments should consider how to work in partnership with indigenous organizations with representation in urban areas, to deliver programmes and services to their members (including ensuring that these organizations have the necessary capacities).

31. International conventions: The governments should ratify ILO Convention No. 169 and for those who have already ratified them, guarantee their fulfilment and permanent evolution in its implementation. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples should also be adopted and adhered to by governments.

32. Promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples: Governments and local authorities should implement with the active and effective participation of indigenous peoples and their organizations, specific policies for the guarantee, promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples in their lands, in urban areas and in other countries, and fill the gaps of inequality and exclusion due to their distinct identities. Furthermore, indigenous peoples should be able to reflect their views and preferences in the design and implementation of projects regarding public spaces in urban areas.

33. Discrimination and inequality: Governments should ensure that indigenous peoples are not subject to any form of discrimination and/or exclusion in urban areas, including through affirmative action. Governments should encourage cultural awareness and understanding between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples within urban areas.

34. Rights to development and to social well-being: Governments should grant the right to development and social well-being of indigenous peoples, and should also guarantee and protect their inalienable rights to their lands and resources. Governments have to

ensure that indigenous peoples retain access to their lands and to other productive resources such as credit and loans, and education and training. Governments should develop specific economic policies that stimulate fair and equal employment opportunities.

35. Furthermore, Governments should:

- (i) Ensure that special attention be paid with respect to the unique needs of indigenous women. Any programmes, service delivery guidelines or policies must facilitate an integration of a culturally-relevant, gender-based analysis specific to the needs of indigenous women. Holistic reforms to improve the socio-economic conditions of indigenous women are necessary. Governments must ensure that indigenous women and their children have access to safe and secure housing in urban areas.
- (ii) Support indigenous youth in their capacity as future leaders through capacity building programmes and activities related to the development and affirmation of cultural identity, cultural knowledge and awareness-raising of social concerns that affect them.
- (iii) Provide health services and health training that is culturally appropriate, in consultation and participation with indigenous organizations. Governments should also acknowledge indigenous health practices and recognize them as legal and complementary to other health systems, without diminishing indigenous peoples' rights to the national health system. Special attention should be paid to indigenous children's health, and the reproductive health of indigenous women.
- (iv) Guarantee the right to high quality education that is culturally appropriate, adequate to the daily experience of life and mobility of indigenous children and youth, including the right to have education in their own indigenous languages, of their cultures and histories, in consultation with and participation of indigenous organizations.
- (v) Develop strategies in consultation with indigenous organizations for the delivery of social and public services for highly mobile populations, for the indigenous homeless and for indigenous peoples in poor living conditions.
- (vi) Promote and exchange best practices in several areas including health, education, housing, employment and social well-being that allow development of indigenous peoples.

36. Housing: Governments and housing providers must take steps, to the maximum of their available resources, to achieve the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing, particularly to eliminate homelessness of indigenous peoples. Effective housing delivery for indigenous peoples should be developed and include opportunities for home ownership and promotion of rental housing that meets the needs of indigenous urban dwellers, especially for indigenous women and elders. Governments should also invest in the development of indigenous expertise in the full range of technical capabilities for effective housing programme design, delivery and management. In this connection, it is important that the development and use of indigenous building materials and technologies be supported. To ensure that housing is culturally adequate for

indigenous peoples, they must participate in the design, development and implementation of housing projects.

37. Evictions: Indigenous peoples should not be displaced from their lands, territories and homes, for example, through development projects, extreme poverty, expansion of urban areas or armed conflict. Governments must respect the principle of free, prior and informed consent prior to planning projects affecting indigenous peoples and their lands, territories, natural resources and means of subsistence.

38. Sacred sites and ceremonial grounds: Governments and local authorities should ensure early identification, access, control and privacy of indigenous peoples to their sacred sites and ceremonial grounds. Governments should also return and protect sacred sites and ceremonial grounds to indigenous peoples.

Recommendations to International Community including the United Nations

39. The United Nations system and other relevant intergovernmental organizations are encouraged to address the needs of the members of indigenous peoples residing in urban areas. The United Nations Country Teams are encouraged to include programmes and activities that address the needs of the members of indigenous peoples residing in urban areas, including in particular, assisting States in their efforts to combat discrimination and exclusion, and ensuring that members of indigenous peoples residing in urban areas are included in national poverty reduction strategies targeting the attainment of the MDGs.

40. The Inter-Agency Support Group is invited to take into account these recommendations in the formulation and implementation of programmes for indigenous peoples. As an example, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues should consider having urban indigenous issues as a standing item.

41. The co-organizers of this EGM are invited to consider the elaboration of guidelines for governments and local authorities to assist in the development of public policies related to indigenous peoples and their challenges faced in urban areas.

42. Human rights treaty bodies and special procedures are invited to pay particular attention to the issues of the members of indigenous peoples who live in urban areas.

43. Any development project within the territories of indigenous peoples should ensure their right to self-determination and the integrity of their lands and natural resources. This information should be clearly expressed in a human rights assessment.

44. The United Nations system and other relevant intergovernmental organizations are invited to assist Governments in their policies, programmes and activities with respect to indigenous peoples, as relevant.

Recommendations for indigenous peoples and their organizations

45. Indigenous communities are invited to explore ways to revitalize and maintain continuity of their cultural and spiritual identity and language, taking into account the high number of members of indigenous peoples living in urban areas.

General Recommendations

46. Citing a paucity of data pertaining to members of indigenous peoples living in urban areas, universities, research institutions as well as international organizations, Governments and NGOs, are encouraged to collect detailed and accurate qualitative and quantitative information regarding the living conditions and experiences of the members of indigenous peoples in urban areas. All information should have a rights-based approach, and be disaggregated by sex and by the name of the specific indigenous group. Where possible, these statistics should be compared with non-indigenous populations. This should be done in consultation and with the effective participation of indigenous peoples and their organizations, and use where appropriate, their own research methodologies. All data should be made available to the indigenous peoples concerned.

ANNEX A

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS¹² Expert Group Meeting on Urban Indigenous People and Migration 27-29 March 2007, ECLAC, Santiago de Chile

Name	Organization	Email
GOVERNMENT OF CHILE		
Salinas Juan Alberto Parra	Director Nacional, Corporación Nacional	aparra@conadi.gov.cl
GOVERNMENT OF CANADA		
Anzolin Susan	Indian & Northern Affairs Canada - Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	anzolins@inac.gc.ca
Caron Fred	Indian & Northern Affairs Canada - Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis	caronf@inac-ainc.gc.ca
Clarke Allan	Canadian Heritage – Aboriginal Affairs Branch	Allan_Clarke@pch.gc.ca
Gibbard Paul	Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade - Aboriginal and Circumpolar Affairs Division	paul.gibbard@international.gc.ca
Kozij John	Aboriginal Strategy Policy	John.Kozij@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca
Norris Mary Jane	Indian & Northern Affairs Canada	norrism@inac.gc.ca
Phillips Brian	Canadian International Development Agency	brian_phillips@acdi-cida.gc.ca
Smith Keith	Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade – Aboriginal and Circumpolar Affairs	keith.smith@international.gc.ca
Torbitt Allan	Indian & Northern Affairs Canada - International Relations Directorate	torbitta@inac.gc.ca
EXPERTS/PRESENTERS		
Abelsen Maliina	Home Rule of Greenland, Dept. of Foreign Office	maab@gh.gl
Akien Xavier ¹³	Cordillera Peoples Alliance, Philippines	cpa@cpaphils.org
Ambrosi Eugenio	International Organization for Migration	eambrosi@iom.int
Boucha Mohamed	Nomades d'Afrique, Agadez - Niger	boucha_mohamed2002@yahoo.fr
Burger Julian	OHCHR	jburger@ohchr.org
Del Popolo Fabiana	CELADE-Population Division, ECLAC	Fabiana.delpopolo@cepal.org
Ergüden Selman	UN-HABITAT	selman.erguden@unhabitat.org
Fazylov Yashar	Foundation of Research and Support of Indigenous Peoples of Crimea	yachar.fasylov@laposte.net
Hagan Stephen	University of Southern Queensland	hagans@usq.edu.au
Jaspers Dirk	ECLAC	Dirk.Jaspers@cepal.org
Kipuri Naomi ¹⁴	Arid Lands Institute	kipuri3000@yahoo.com
Langeveldt William	CRL Rights Commission, South Africa, UNPFII Member	langeveldt@crlcommission.org.za; langeveldtw@yahoo.com

¹² This list was compiled according to registration and with corrections from participants. There were however some unregistered participants.

¹³ Could not personally attend. His paper was presented by the Secretariat.

¹⁴ Could not personally attend. Her paper was presented by the Secretariat.

Llancapan Calfucura, José Ignacio	Fondo Indígena, Santiago de Chile	josellancapan@hotmail.com
Llancaqueo, Victor Toledo	Public Policy and Indigenous Rights Center, Santiago de Chile	geoinfo2000@yahoo.com
Machinea Jose Luis	ECLAC	secretaria.se@cepal.org
Martin David	OHCHR	dmartin@ohchr.org
Muedin Emel	International Organization for Migration	AMUEDIN@iom.int
Oyarce, Ana María	CELADE-Population Division, ECLAC	Anamaria.oyarce@cepal.org
Precht Rasmus	UN-HABITAT	rasmus.precht@unhabitat.org
Rodriguez Gabriela	International Organization for Migration	grodriguez@iom.int
Rodriguez Jorge	CELADE-Population Division, ECLAC	Jorge.rodriguez@cepal.org
Sema Khetoho E.	Asian Indigenous Peoples Network	enatoli@gmail.com
Smallacombe Sonia	UNFPII Secretariat	smallacombe@un.org
Trujillo Octaviana V.	Northern Arizona University	octaviana.trujillo@nau.edu
Tupuola Anne-Marie	Centre for Psychiatry, Wolfson Inst. of Preventive Medicine	a.tupuola@qmul.ac.uk amtupuola@yahoo.com
Yanes R. Pablo	Department of Social Development of the Mexico City Government/Federal District Government	pyanes03@prodigy.net.mx
Villa-Quintana Carmen Rosa	OHCHR	carmenrosa.villa-quintana@cepal.org
OBSERVERS		
Bourguignat Mathilde H.	National Corporation for Indigenous Development (CONADI), Chile	
Calfío Margarita	National Corporation for Indigenous Development (CONADI), Chile	maigokalfio@gmail.com
Caniqueo Sergio	Intercultural Hospital of Imperial, Region of the Araucania, Chile	
Cardinal Lewis	Urban Aboriginal Issues, Canada	lewiscardinal@shaw.ca
Martínez Casas, Regina	Research and High Studies Center in Social Anthropology (CIESAS)	regina@ciesasoccidente.edu.mx reginamc@ciesas.edu.mx
Dinsdale Peter	National Association of Friendship Centres, Canada	pdinsdale@nafc.ca
Hito Lenky Atan	Rapa Nui Leader, Chile	
Jara, Camila	Independent Consultant	
Jobin Shalene	University of Alberta, Canada	sjobin@ualberta.ca
Mariman Pablo	Mapuche Liwen Studies and Documentation Center, Chile	
Mark Melanie	Urban Native Youth Association, Canada	Melanie.Mark@gov.bc.ca
Milmine Barbara	Calgary Urban Aboriginal Initiative, Canada	barbara.milmine@calgary.ca
Nahuelcheo Yolanda	Seremi (Regional Secretariat of the Ministry of Health), Region of the Araucanía, Chile.	yolmongen@yahoo.es
Prevost-Derbecker Sonia	Ndinawemaaganag Endaawad Inc., Canada	soniaprevost@shaw.ca
Quilaleo Fernando	Coordinator of the Policy for Urban Indigenous, (CONADI)	fquilaleo@origenes.cl
Valdés Marcos	Independent consultant	
Valenzuela, América	CIESAS Student	
Valenzuela, Rodrigo	Director de la Fundación Henry Dunant /	

	América Latina	
Yucra Eliseo Huanta	Aymara National Council, Metropolitan Region (II up to VI Region), Chile	
Mackenzie, Armand	Lawyer, Congress of Aboriginal People	
Brazeau, Patrick	National Chief, Congress of Aboriginal People	
Parellada, Alejandro	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA)	ap@iwgia.org
Beldi de Alchutara, M. de Lourdes	University of Sao Paulo	loubeldi@uol.com.br
Morales, Lucimar	Asociación de los Jóvenes Indígenas	
Souza, Kennedy	Asociación de los Jóvenes Indígenas	
Panij Tabobondung, Vera	President, National Association of Friendship Centres	nafegen@nafe-aboriginal.com
Minuto, María Cristina	OIM-CHILE	mminuto@iom.int
Huenafil, Rossana	P.I.D.I. (Programa de Promoción e Información de los Derechos Indígenas) CONADI	rhuenafil@conadi.gov.cl
Canio Nanculeo, Jeanette	Agrupación de Mujeres Mapuches, XANALAWEN	janekeokanio@gmail.com
Bello, Alvaro	Observatorio de Derechos Indígenas, Chile	alvaro.bellom@gmail.com

ANNEX B

Programme¹⁵

International Expert Group Meeting on Urban Indigenous Peoples and Migration

27 – 29 March 2007, Santiago de Chile, ECLAC, Conference Room Raúl Prebisch

Day 1 Tuesday, 27 March

8:30 – 9:30	Registration of participants
9:30 – 11:00	Opening Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming statement by Jose Luis Machinea, Executive Secretary of ECLAC • Juan Alberto Parra Salinas, National Director of the Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena (CONADI) • Fred Caron, Assistant Deputy Minister for the Office of the Federal Interlocutor, Government of Canada • Message from Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT • Carmen Rosa Villa-Quintana, Regional Director of OHCHR • Selman Ergüden, UN-HABITAT (on behalf of the organizing agencies) • Introduction of participants • Election of chairperson and rapporteur • Adoption of the agenda, and organisational matters • Brief presentation of the background reports/documents
11.00 – 11.15	<i>Coffee</i>
11.15- 13.00	Introduction to the key issues <p><i>Indigenous Peoples and Urban Migration: An intercultural analysis and current trends</i> Gabriela Rodriguez and Eugenio Ambrosi, International Organisation for Migration (IOM)</p> <p><i>Indigenous peoples in the urban setting</i> Sonia Smallacombe and William Langeveldt, United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)</p> <p><i>Rights of Indigenous Peoples: opportunities and challenges in the urban context</i> Julian Burger, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion
13:00 – 14.30	<i>Lunch</i>

¹⁵ As revised during the meeting

14.30-16.00	<p>Review of living conditions of indigenous peoples in urban areas: Presentation of case studies</p> <p>Latin America: Regional perspective</p> <p><i>Living conditions of indigenous peoples in urban areas in Latin America</i> Fabiana del Popolo, Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE), ECLAC Population Division</p> <p><i>Spatial distribution and internal migration of indigenous peoples in Latin America</i> Jorge Rodríguez Vignoli, Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE), ECLAC Population Division</p> <p><i>The work of Fondo Indígena on urban indigenous issues</i> José Ignacio Llanccapan Calfucura, Fondo Indígena, Santiago de Chile</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion
16.00 – 16.15	<i>Coffee</i>
16.15-18.00	<p>Presentation of case studies from Latin America and the Caribbean</p> <p><i>Enforcing the human and political rights of urban indigenous peoples</i> Victor Toledo Llancaqueo, Public Policy and Indigenous Rights Center, Santiago de Chile</p> <p><i>Equality in diversity: agenda for the urban indigenous peoples in Mexico</i> Pablo Yanes, Department of Social Development of the Mexico City Government/Federal District Government</p> <p>Carlos Enrique Batzin Chojoj,¹⁶ Indigenous Council of Central America, Guatemala</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion
18.30 – 20.30	Reception for all EGM participants and other guests

¹⁶ Did not participate.

Day 2 Wednesday, 28 March

9:30 – 11:00	<p>Presentation of case study from Arctic region</p> <p><i>Urban Indigenous Peoples and Migration. Case study Greenland</i> Maliina Abelsen, Department of Foreign Affairs, Greenland Home Rule Government, Greenland</p> <p>Presentation of case studies from North America</p> <p><i>Aboriginal Mobility and Migration in Canada: Trends, Recent Patterns, and Implications, 1971–2001</i> Mary Jane Norris, Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada</p> <p><i>Transformation of an Indigenous Community: Urbanization envelopes the Yaqui of Guadalupe, Arizona</i> Octaviana V. Trujillo, Department of Applied Indigenous Studies, University of Northern Arizona USA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion
11.00 – 11.15	<i>Coffee</i>
11.15 – 13.00	<p>Presentation of case studies from Pacific</p> <p><i>Pasifika Edgewalkers: Urban Migration, Resilience and Indigenous Trans-cultural Identities</i> Anne-Marie Tupuola, Centre for Psychiatry, Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine Barts and The London, Queen Mary's School of Medicine, United Kingdom</p> <p><i>The migration of racism</i> Stephen Hagan, Kumbari/Ngurpai Lag Higher Education Centre, University of Southern Queensland, Australia</p> <p>Presentation of case studies from Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia</p> <p><i>Indigenous Peoples of Crimea - Crimean Tatars - in Contemporary Urban Conditions</i> Yashar Fazylov, Foundation for Research and Support of Indigenous Peoples of Crimea, Ukraine</p> <p>Rodion Sulyandziga¹⁷, Russian Indigenous Training Center, Russian Federation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion

¹⁷ Did not participate.

13.00 – 14.30	<i>Lunch</i>
14.30 - 16.00	<p>Presentation of case studies from Africa</p> <p><i>Urban Indigenous East African Pastoralists: distinct peoples with distinct needs</i> Naomi Kipuri¹⁸, Working Group of Experts on Indigenous Populations/Communities for the Africa Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR), Kenya</p> <p><i>The challenge of the alienation of Indigenous Peoples in urban South Africa</i> William Langeveldt, United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)</p> <p><i>Case study of the urbanisation of pastoralists in West Africa</i> Mohamed Boucha, Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee (IPACC), Niger</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion
16.00 – 16.15	<i>Coffee</i>
16.15 – 17.15	<p>Presentation of case studies from Asia</p> <p><i>Indigenous Peoples in India: Struggle for Identity, Equality and Economic Progress</i> Khetoho Enatoli Sema, Asian Indigenous Peoples Network, India</p> <p><i>A Research on Urban Indigenous Peoples in the City of Baguio, Cordillera: The Realization of Human Rights for Indigenous Peoples in the City</i> Xavier Akien¹⁹, Cordillera Peoples Alliance, Philippines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion
17.15 – 18.00	<p>General debate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts of the migration process on indigenous peoples • Living conditions and human rights situation of indigenous peoples in urban areas • Current policies and practices and their effects on living conditions of urban indigenous peoples

¹⁸ Did not attend personally. Her paper was presented by the Secretariat.

¹⁹ Did not attend personally. His paper was presented by the Secretariat.

Day 3 Thursday, 29 March

9.30 – 11.00	General debate (continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impacts of the migration process on indigenous peoples• Living conditions and human rights situation of indigenous peoples in urban areas• Current policies and practices and their effects on living
11.00 – 11.15	<i>Coffee</i>
11.15 – 13.00	Discussion and drafting of recommendations
13.00 – 14.30	<i>Lunch</i>
14.30 – 15.30	Discussion and adoption of recommendations
15.30 – 16.00	Conclusions and closure of the expert group meeting
16.30 – 19.30	Study Tour/ Site Visit (optional)²⁰

²⁰ Had to be cancelled following the advice of UN Security on demonstrations taking place in the city centre.

ANNEX C - Statements at the opening session

**Opening statement by
José Luis Machinea,
Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America
and the Caribbean (ECLAC)**

I take great pleasure in welcoming you and in seeing that experts from all around the world are meeting here to consider the situation of indigenous peoples, their living conditions in urban areas and migration issues.

Indigenous peoples are one of the social groups that have become a focus of worldwide attention. Through their organizations and activities they have taken on their role as political stakeholders and have succeeded in making their demands for recognition as differentiated collectivities –as peoples– a matter of public debate. On that basis, they are calling for new statutes to safeguard their existence and their rights. These demands entail the formation of new social covenants and a broader definition of citizenship.

Latin America is undeniably a multi-ethnic and pluricultural region whose States now recognize 671 different indigenous peoples. Although they still generally reside in rural communities and maintain their ties to their ancestral lands, it is nonetheless true that they live in a variety of situations in both territorial and demographic terms. Many indigenous people live in urban areas and in some countries (Bolivia, Brazil and Chile) the majority live in towns. But the common denominator in all these cases is the structural discrimination they suffer from, which is reflected in marginalization, exclusion and poverty. A more positive common denominator, no doubt, is the indigenous peoples' ability to maintain and recreate their collective and cultural identities, to resist and adapt the homogenizing effects of dominant cultures, and to ensure that the preservation of diversity is included on their countries' new development agendas.

Although the inclusion of ethnic groups has always been an aspect of the work of ECLAC, activities in this field have been greatly stepped up in the past five years. Through CELADE, our Population Division, we have conducted research on socio-demographic aspects of indigenous peoples in three countries of the region. We have also held training and dissemination workshops on our findings' policy and programme applications in which many members of indigenous groups have participated. The outputs of these studies have included the preparation of socio-demographic atlases for the three countries covered by this research project.

We have, in addition, continued our efforts to respond to new demands for information, with particular reference to one of the recommendations of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. We have also recently inaugurated the System of Socio-demographic Indicators for Indigenous Peoples and Populations of Latin America. This

system, which we developed jointly with the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, can be consulted on our web page. The system comprises over 50 indicators, including some on migration and territorial location, and has been designed to permit the identification of ethnic, generational and gender gaps.

Studies have also been conducted on the living conditions of the indigenous population. One such analysis is described in the 2006 edition of the ECLAC publication *Social Panorama of Latin America* in a chapter entitled “Indigenous peoples of Latin America: old inequities, mixed realities and new obligations for democracies in the twenty-first century.” This is a type of study without precedent in the region in terms of both the information compiled and the analyses on which it is based. It hones in on the socio-demographic inequalities affecting indigenous peoples within the context of structural discrimination and their cultural specificities, and it approaches this subject from the perspective provided by the new international standards on those peoples’ individual and collective rights.

A project on health policies and programmes for the indigenous peoples of Latin America is currently under way with a view to identifying the areas where progress has been made, describing the most significant advances and difficulties encountered in their development and implementation, highlighting and disseminating best practices, and identifying opportunities and formulating recommendations for future action in conjunction with all political and social stakeholders for the design and implementation of health policies and programmes for indigenous peoples. The project’s main findings will be discussed in the 2007 edition of the *Social Panorama*.

In addition to CELADE, a number of other divisions have made substantive contributions. The Social Development Division has prepared a number of country studies. It has also published a Spanish-language document on ethnicity and citizenship in Latin America that calls for further reflection regarding the ways in which indigenous conflicts and demands in the region relate to the concept of citizenship. This analysis also argues that, in order to build citizenship, States must recognize the specific rights of indigenous peoples. The Women and Development Unit of ECLAC has, among other activities, added demographic, employment and poverty indicators, classified by sex and ethnic status, to its system of gender statistics and indicators. All the information produced by ECLAC will be made available to you or can be located on our web page.

As for the specific subject that brings us here today, I would note that the new circumstances associated with the global economy have led to an increase in migratory flows and mobility as well as altering their significance and content. In the past 20 years we have witnessed the transformation of indigenous territories as their populations migrate to a variety of destinations within and, increasingly, outside national borders.

We know that each indigenous people has a strong sense of “belonging” to its members’ territory. This bond with the land, its natural resources and territoriality is the pivotal focus for research on the dual dimensions of migration by indigenous peoples: the

impoverishment which forces them to seek new means of survival and the reconfiguration of their ethnic-cultural identity outside their territories.

Indigenous migrants are not a homogenous group in terms of their peoples, their cultures or their places of origin or their destinations. The pattern and density of these processes, in both communities of origin and host communities, are bringing about a complex, multifaceted and dynamic “diaspora” of indigenous peoples whose depth, characteristics and particularities are not yet known.

This meeting will certainly shed new light on the subject, broadening our knowledge of indigenous migration and its implications for the peoples themselves and for the cities where they settle. The challenge for public policy, and especially for urban management, is to include ethnic and cultural diversity as a necessary component in the construction of a type of social citizenship that upholds the rights of indigenous peoples. This is the challenge we are facing today.

I am grateful to all of you for being with us here. I wish you every success in this meeting and a very pleasant stay in Chile.

Thank you.

**Statement by
Fred Caron, Assistant Deputy Minister for the Office of the Federal Interlocutor,
Government of Canada**

Buenos dias!

It is with great honour that I am here amongst such a wonderful group.

I would like to express my gratitude to all those involved in putting this event together. In particular, I want to acknowledge the collaboration of all of the various organizations within the United Nations - the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), the Secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Latin America and the Caribbean Demographic Centre and the International Organization of Migration. I know that working across organizations is not always an easy feat and thus I think the fact that we are here today is a great success.

I know that the next few days will allow us to think beyond our individual experiences and expertise thus leading to a wonderful exchange of ideas. To that end, I want to congratulate the organizers for inviting a cross-section of exceptional speakers.

The Government of Canada is proud to support this event. In fact, it was less than a year ago that Canada hosted an informal luncheon gathering on urban indigenous issues as part of the 5th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples.

I have been involved in international indigenous issues and urban indigenous issues for many years and over the last year, I have seen an exceptional growth in interest in urban indigenous issues. It is my hope and belief that this week will serve as an excellent platform for raising the awareness of urban indigenous issues beyond just those of us lucky to be here today.

The global village is growing. About 60 % of the world's population lives in cities. Each day, about 180,000 people move into cities. This movement from rural areas to cities is a result of the fact that cities have become focal points for investment, communication, commerce and consumption - in essence they are the destination of hopes and dreams for a better life. Unfortunately, many of our cities across the world are struggling to meet these goals.

Like Chile, Canada has a remarkable variety of landscapes. And yet, while many continue to think of Canada as a land of wilderness - Canada is one of the most urban countries in the world.

However, the trend to urbanization for Canada's Aboriginal population is a fairly recent phenomenon. It is only over the last few decades that increasing numbers of Aboriginal

people have called or reclaimed the city as their home. Today almost 50% of Aboriginal people in Canada reside in cities.

As such, city life is an integral component of Aboriginal people's lives in Canada and Aboriginal people are an integral component of Canadian urban life.

Yet, despite the significant number of Aboriginal people living in cities across Canada, many policy-makers, researchers, media and Aboriginal organizations continue to focus their attention and resources on an outdated concept of who is an Aboriginal person and where they live. I want to be clear that I am not suggesting to policy-makers that less funding be directed to Aboriginal issues in non-urban areas. This is not a solution - doing so, would cause conflict and friction among Aboriginal peoples based solely on one's residency.

To add further complications to an already complex policy area, Canada's Aboriginal population is diverse - it includes First Nations, Métis and Inuit. And this diversity is most notable in cities across Canada. Also, many Aboriginal people move - and move frequently - sometimes between their home communities and cities, but more frequently within cities. From a government perspective, this issue is important because governments and other service providers have not yet found a way of delivering services and programs in a seamless manner to Aboriginal people who move.

All of this requires a greater effort by all interested parties to work better together:

- We need pro-active and strong partnerships with provinces and municipalities;
- We need closer working relationships with Aboriginal stakeholders -- groups and Individuals; and
- We need better connections with community and business leaders.

I believe the current environment is more conducive than ever to enable this to happen in Canada.

I sense that federal, provincial and municipal governments are now more willing than ever before to "park" our respective jurisdictional disputes at the door, while we all focus together on practical solutions. And we are seeing greater interest from the private sector too.

There is no doubt that the socio-economic conditions facing many urban Aboriginal people are serious and complex. However, it is important that governments - federal, provincial and municipal - not view Aboriginal issues as being intractable and so complex that they lead to inaction or indifference.

Instead, Canada's urban Aboriginal population offers the promise of a young and growing labour force that could alleviate some of the labour shortages that are currently being experienced and that are expected to worsen in certain trades in western cities, as well as general employment opportunities.

In 1998, the Government of Canada established the Urban Aboriginal Strategy in hopes of better addressing the serious socio-economic needs of urban Aboriginal people. It was designed to improve policy development and program coordination at the federal level and with other levels of government.

It was also designed to tailor government programs to the local needs and priorities of Aboriginal people living in cities. Most recently, the Government of Canada renewed the Urban Aboriginal Strategy for another five years. This long-term commitment will allow us to continue to build partnerships to respond to the needs of Aboriginal people living in urban areas. Along with the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, the Government of Canada supports a number of important programs and services that are directed specifically to the needs of urban Aboriginal people.

In fact, I am joined by a number of colleagues within the Government of Canada who provide additional support to urban Aboriginal people, through important programs like: the Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program, the Urban Multipurpose Aboriginal Youth Centres, Aboriginal HeadStart, the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy, the Aboriginal Justice Strategy and the Urban Aboriginal Homelessness Initiative. I encourage you to take the time to ask them about their good work. I also want to take this moment to introduce the other members of the Canadian delegation. I am joined by a number of Aboriginal representatives from across Canada. In my opinion, these individuals share a number of important qualities: they are dedicated and committed to raising the awareness of urban Aboriginal issues; and they embody the fact that one need not deny one's Aboriginal heritage and one's sense of self when living in an urban environment.

I am looking forward to listening and discussing these important issues. It is not often that we have the time to examine these issues in a thoughtful and comprehensive manner, nor do we always have the opportunity to have access to such a cross-section of expertise. As such, I know I will make the most of the next three days to learn from each of you.

Thank you!

**Message from
Anna Tibaijuka,
Executive Director of UN-HABITAT**

Mr. Jose Luis Machinea, Executive Secretary of ECLAC,
Mr. Salinas Juan Alberto Parra, National Director of CONADI,
Honorable Mr. Fred Caron, Assistant Deputy Minister for the Office of the Federal
Interlocutor, Government of Canada,
Distinguished Participants, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I sincerely regret not being able to attend this important event, for it is another excellent opportunity to strengthen our focus on the needs of indigenous peoples and to contribute to improving their living conditions.

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to see that this challenging endeavour has finally materialized after a long preparatory process. At the outset, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Canada for their generous support that has enabled this endeavour to happen. I also wish to express my sincere appreciation to Mr. Machinea and to all ECLAC colleagues for hosting this event in this beautiful city.

This year marks a turning point in human history. For the first time, most of humanity will live in cities, and this trend in urbanisation is irreversible. On the positive side, cities are the engines of social, economic and cultural development and the realization of human rights. But cities can also generate and intensify social exclusion for disadvantaged and marginalised groups, including indigenous peoples. The majority of indigenous peoples still live in rural areas. But we know that more and more of them are voluntarily or involuntarily migrating to urban areas. The global urbanisation process is increasingly affecting indigenous peoples both in the developed and developing regions.

A number of push and pull-factors have been prompting the migration of indigenous peoples to urban areas. Push factors include land dispossession, social or armed conflict, and natural disasters. They also include environmental degradation that destroys traditional livelihoods. Pull factors include the prospect of better economic and social opportunities in cities. The end result, however, is too often poverty, social exclusion and cultural alienation.

The reasons for this alienation lie in the fact that many indigenous peoples face substantial difficulties when they move to urban areas. They are often at a disadvantage when it comes to employment opportunities. They face numerous obstacles in accessing credit to start a business or income generating activities.

But most importantly, they suffer from inadequate housing. In parts of the developed world and countries with economies in transition we have seen indigenous people become truly homeless. In most cases, as in the majority of developing country cities, indigenous migrants find themselves joining the ranks of slum dwellers.

Our recent research shows that the living conditions in slums are as bad if not worse than those found in poor rural areas. Slum dwellers are more prone to disease, more at risk when it comes to HIV/AIDS, suffer as much as their rural counterparts from malnutrition and hunger, and are more vulnerable to natural and human made disasters such as floods, fires and landslides. The illegal status of slums prevents many slum dwellers from accessing basic services such as water and sanitation, energy supply, health and education. When we add to this already daunting range of factors, the violation of the basic rights and fundamental freedoms, we begin to see and understand the underlying causes of persistent poverty and social exclusion among urban indigenous communities.

In recognising these challenges and with the objective of furthering our research, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has given UN-HABITAT the mandate of organizing this expert group meeting. I am confident that the deliberations and recommendations of the next three days will constitute a key step in addressing the needs of indigenous peoples in urban areas. Our goal is ambitious goal, but it can be reached if we keep focused on our mission to help realise the full capacities and potential of indigenous peoples and the full respect of human rights.

I wish to thank all participants for joining us in this challenging endeavour. I also wish to thank all our colleagues who have worked hard to organize this event. I wish you every success in contributing to the struggle of making the world a better place to live for all. In this connection, I would like to recall the inspiring assertion contained in paragraph 15 of the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the Habitat Agenda.

“...As we move into the twenty-first century, we offer a positive vision of sustainable human settlements, a sense of hope for our common future and an exhortation to join a truly worthwhile and engaging challenge, that of building together a world where everyone can live in a safe home with the promise of a decent life of dignity, good health, safety, happiness and hope.”

I thank you for your kind attention.

**Statement by
Carmen Rosa Villa-Quintana, Regional Director of OHCHR**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, it is a great pleasure to warmly welcome you to Santiago de Chile. I would like to thank you for your participation in this International Expert Group Meeting on Urban Indigenous Peoples and Migration.

The Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the High Commissioner for Human Rights was established in Chile in the year 2000, with the mandate to promote and protect human rights in the region. Since its opening, the Office has focused on the situation of the most vulnerable groups, in particular Indigenous peoples. According to reports issued by different agencies of the United Nations system, such as the World Bank and the ILO, in Latin America poverty and human rights violations affect Indigenous peoples more than non Indigenous. These reports recommend the adoption of specific measures to promote Indigenous peoples' empowerment.

The Regional Office believes that this Expert Group Meeting in Chile represents an excellent opportunity for this region. The gathering of such an important number of experts in Latin America and especially in Chile, where the majority of indigenous people live in urban areas, is an invitation to this region to strengthen its work and efforts to protect human rights of urban Indigenous people.

Therefore, I encourage you to adopt concrete recommendations that can contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of urban Indigenous people around the world.

Thank you for your attention.

**Statement by
Selman Ergüden, Head of Shelter Branch
UN-HABITAT**

Distinguished Participants, Dear Colleagues:

After the very informative and inspiring statements made by the previous speakers who eloquently set the framework for this Expert Group Meeting, my short statement, on behalf of the co-organizing agencies namely, UN-HABITAT, OHCHR, Secretariat of UNPFII, IOM, and ECLAC, will focus on the programme, activities we plan to undertake and what we expect to accomplish.

But before that, and on behalf of co-organizers, I wish to express once again our gratitude to the Government of Canada, particularly to Fred Caron and Susan Anzolin, who tirelessly worked for the facilitation of this endeavour. We hope that this support will be sustained in the future to assist us in the implementation of the recommendations that will come out of this meeting. Special thanks also to the Government of Chile and ECLAC for hosting us in this beautiful facility.

As elaborated in the aide-memoire, we are aiming to contribute to the improvement of living conditions and the realisation of human rights of urban indigenous peoples. Our specific objectives are:

- To assess impacts of the migration process on indigenous peoples;
- To analyse their living conditions and human rights situation in urban areas with the aim of generating comprehensive knowledge based on latest research findings;
- To evaluate current policies and practices and their effects;
- To elaborate recommendations on how to improve urban indigenous peoples' living and human rights conditions.

We also wish to devise a roadmap for the follow-up on the findings and recommendations of this initiative.

As you are aware, the report of this meeting will be submitted to the sixth session of the UNPFII, which will have a specific half day meeting on this theme on 21 May 2007. We will, furthermore, prepare a publication containing all presentations, proceedings and recommendations of this initiative, to be made available also at the websites of the co-organizers.

The meeting is structured into 5 half-day substantive sessions and an optional study tour at the end. After the opening session, we will have an introduction and discussion of the key issues centred on the topics of “indigenous peoples and migration”; “indigenous peoples in the urban setting”; and “human rights of urban indigenous peoples”.

During the second and third sessions, we will hear and discuss case studies from Latin America and the Caribbean; Africa; Asia; Eastern Europe, including Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia; the Arctic Region; North America; and the Pacific. The afternoon of the second day and the morning of the third day are allocated to in-depth discussions of the findings and elaboration of recommendations. During the final session, we will finalise the recommendations and devise a road map for follow-up and future action.

I would like to conclude by thanking all colleagues in the UN family who have worked very hard for this initiative. A special thank-you to Dirk Jaspers, Barbara Chadwick, Fabiana del Popolo, Elsa Stamatopoulou, Sonia Smallacombe, Amy Muedin, Carmen Rosa Villa, Julian Burger, David Martin, and Rasmus Precht. Without their very valuable efforts and excellent guidance, this truly inter-agency, inter-continental as well as multi-cultural initiative could not have been materialized.

I thank you for your attention.