



## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release:  
June 8, 2005

For more information:  
Evelyn Arce-White  
International Funders for  
Indigenous Peoples  
Tel: (540) 371-5615 ext.14  
Fax: (540) 371-3505  
Email: ifip@internationalfunders.org

### **Philanthropic community responds to the importance of Indigenous issues**

FREDERICKSBURG, VA — International Funders for Indigenous Peoples' (IFIP) *Linking Circles IV* held its fourth annual meeting, “*Transforming the Landscape of International Grantmaking for Indigenous Peoples*” in New York City at Open Society Institute on May 19 and 20, 2005. The event coincided with the Fourth Annual United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues.

“It was a historic and whirlwind of a week, in that five foundations (Ford Foundation, Aveda Corporation, American Jewish World Service, Moriah Fund and Honor the Earth) had donor sessions on Indigenous issues before IFIP’s annual conference. We are seeing the philanthropic community take notice of Indigenous issues. Issues that have been dreadfully ignored in the past,” said IFIP director Evelyn Arce-White.

Since IFIP held its first *Linking Circles* meeting in 2001, interest has grown from two dozen Indigenous leaders and funders to nearly 100 in 2005. IFIP's network of funders dedicated to becoming more effective in their international Indigenous grantmaking portfolios continues to grow.

“We hope that future meetings attract even more participants and continue to expand funding opportunities for Indigenous Peoples around the world.” stated Arce- White

Rebecca Adamson, President of First Nations Development Institute in Fredericksburg, Virginia and founder of IFIP, spoke about how IFIP was born from a need that was voiced eight years ago at a funders meeting at the Annual Council on Foundations. “After working in the national arena for decades, it was clear that the international arena had an even greater need to increase resources for Indigenous Peoples.” said Adamson, “IFIP’s network has successfully grown to over 200 and is working toward becoming an independent organization by the end of 2005”.

Mililani Trask, Executive Director of Gibson Foundation and former Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues Advisory Committee remarked “I am happy to be apart of this effort that is long overdue and the effort to bridge the gap between those in the funding world and those that carry issues of critical importance not only for Indigenous Peoples but for the whole world. We live in a world that is overpopulated, over taxing of resources, that is beset of violence and terrorism and there are a few voices that are forming partnerships and are addressing issues of diversity and allocation that give rise to social movements when states can not address them adequately.”

One of IFIP's funder participants, Assistant Program Officer of the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, Katie Wilson quoted. "It was great to meet with so many people working on different ways to approach justice and social equity for indigenous people. I really appreciated the diversity of the group- not just global diversity- but also the differing kinds of funders, NGOs, working groups, and networks. I learned a lot on different topics and I appreciated the breadth of the topics covered."

IFIP also had a session at the United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues in which IFIP distributed 300 complimentary copies of the new "Indigenous Peoples Funding and Resource Guide," Second Edition in Spanish and English. "Producing the guide was a collaborative effort with IFIP and First Peoples Worldwide (FPW) to develop a superbly useful guide to provide funding possibilities for indigenous community projects that informs Indigenous peoples' organizations on the best approaches for securing financial backing and includes three components, elements of writing a proposal, how to research foundations and a listing of over 200 foundations that support Indigenous projects and grassroots projects internationally. explained Arce-White

Representatives of the Ford Foundation, New England Biolab, Moriah Fund, Mitsubishi International Corporation Foundation, American Jewish World Service, and many other foundations attended along with Indigenous leaders from Africa, Asia and North, South and Central America.

The gathering was made possible with financial support from the Open Society Institute, Levi Strauss Foundation, W. K. Kellogg Foundation, The Christensen Fund, Aveda Corporation, Garfield Foundation, Reebok Human Rights Foundation, Ecologic Development Fund, and New York Regional Association of Grantmakers.

For a complete report of the conference, email Evelyn Arce White, IFIP Director, at [evelyn@internationalfunders.org](mailto:evelyn@internationalfunders.org)

For more information on the International Funders for Indigenous Peoples, visit [www.internationalfunders.org](http://www.internationalfunders.org)