



PRESS RELEASE

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INDIGENOUS LEADERS CONVERGE AT THE UNITED NATION TO DISCUSS FUNDING CHALLENGES

FREDERICKSBURG, VA — International Funders for Indigenous Peoples' held an informational session on "Learning Strategies and Techniques to Increase Funding for Indigenous Communities" at the Fourth Annual United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The event was held on May 17th in New York City and discussed challenges Indigenous peoples face in securing funding for development initiatives.

Rebecca Adamson, President of First Nations Development Institute, spoke during the session on the importance of establishing lasting relationships with funders. Adamson recommended several strategies to increase an organization's chances of obtaining long-term funding. Some recommendations include submitting required reports in a timely manner, accomplishing all funding objectives, and having a global vision with an understanding of how issues are often interrelated.

Other speakers included Christine Halvorson of the Rainforest Foundation and Joênia Batista de Carvalho, a Rainforest grantee and Brazil's first female Indigenous lawyer. Batista de Carvalho and Halvorson spoke about the importance of creating and maintaining working partnership between funders and Indigenous organizations. They also discussed the leading role of the Indigenous Council of Roraima (CIR) in Brazil's demarcation movement due to its strong grassroots base and global network of support.

At the United Nations session, IFIP distributed 300 English and Spanish versions of its new *Indigenous Peoples Funding and Resource Guide*. The second edition of the complimentary guides provide practical information to assist grantseekers in their efforts through 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

"Producing the guide was a collaborative effort between IFIP and First Peoples Worldwide," said IFIP Director Evelyn Arce-White. "The guide is becoming widely used by Indigenous organizations and provides a comprehensive listing of funding possibilities for grassroots community projects. It also clearly informs Indigenous grantseekers on the best approaches for securing financial backing."

International Funders for Indigenous Peoples

IFIP surveyed Indigenous representatives through a questionnaire on specific funding challenges and received suggestions that can assist in improving their access to potential funds. There was an overall belief that international funders are reluctant to support Indigenous development projects and many issues, such as the registration process and having an account with a banking institution can impede applying for a grant. There was also a lack of knowledge on how to prepare grant proposals, an identification of funding sources, and how administrative functions and reporting requirements often redirects critically needed resources from the project itself.

To improve access to funding opportunities, Indigenous participants recommended direct funding be made available without any competition, improved communication from funding agencies, fewer restrictions and guidelines, development of a funders database and guide specifically for Indigenous peoples, a standard grant proposal and access to other successfully funded projects.

“IFIP is currently working on several of the recommendations Indigenous leaders provided at the UN session,” noted Arce-White. “The development of a grantmaker's guide, database of international funders and Indigenous projects are some of IFIP's goals for the next year, as well as a common proposal for Indigenous projects.”

The questionnaire also revealed a number of funding priorities for the majority of representatives from an Indigenous community, including: protection of intellectual property, environment, language, art and culture; alleviating poverty; addressing health, children and women's issues; and improving education, human rights, access to technology and medical services in remote regions.

For more information on IFIP or its *Indigenous Peoples Funding and Resource Guide*, visit www.internationalfunders.org