THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

A CONFERENCE AND CONSULTATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, JAMES ANAYA
The conference will feature discussion and consultation with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Professor James Anaya, in the context of his official visit to the United States to examine the situation of indigenous peoples in the country, in light of the standards expressed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
The purpose of the conference is to facilitate in-depth interaction on the content, meaning and implications of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the United States. The conference will seek to draw out specific examples of where conditions are in line with the Declaration and where they are not, as well as specific proposals for needed reforms.

This discussion will assist the Special Rapporteur in his examination of the human rights situation of the indigenous peoples in the country, in accordance with his mandate from the United Nations Human Rights Council to “examine ways and means of overcoming existing obstacles to the full and effective protection of the rights of indigenous peoples… and to identify best practices,” and to “gather, request, receive and exchange information and communications from all relevant sources, including Governments, indigenous peoples and their communities and organizations, on alleged violations of the rights of indigenous peoples.”

Of particular relevance to the Special Rapporteur’s official country visit from April 23 through May 4, 2012 are the implications of the United States’ endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in December 2010. The Special Rapporteur, through meetings and consultations with federal, state, and Indigenous representatives, will assess ways in which standards of the Declaration are currently reflected in U.S. law and policy, domestically and abroad, and identify areas of needed reform in light of the Declaration. Following the visit, the Special Rapporteur will prepare a report containing his observations and recommendations which will be made public and presented to the Human Rights Council.
The agenda for the conference, which will take place April 26-27, 2012, will be organized around the following issues:

- **lands and resources**
- **social and economic development including health and education**
- **self-government**
- **language, culture, and sacred sites**

The issues will be introduced by panels of indigenous experts and participants will have an opportunity to provide statements during each of the panels. In addition to the panel issues, there will be an open session during which registered participants may raise other issues or concerns to the Special Rapporteur. The Special Rapporteur invites discussion of the rights and special concerns of indigenous women and children in relation to the issues addressed.
PARTICIPATION

Representatives of indigenous governments and organizations will have the opportunity to make oral submissions to the Special Rapporteur, within the constraints of time. Representatives who wish to make a statement at the conference should register in accordance with the instructions below.

Registrants will be asked to indicate which topic or topics they would like to address or whether they wish to participate in the general consultation session. Please note that, due to time limitations, not all those wishing to make a statement at the conference may be able to do so. **Speakers lists will be posted in advance of the conference.**

Speakers will be placed on the speakers lists for the conference in the order in which they register and indicate their desire to make an oral statement and priority will be given to those who submit written information in connection with the subjects they wish to address. Speakers are encouraged to register as soon as possible.

The conference will be webcast live and arrangements will be made for indigenous representatives to submit commentaries or questions to the Special Rapporteur via webcast. Please check the website for updated information on the live webcast as it becomes available.
REGISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

Representatives of indigenous peoples and organizations should register for the consultation conference by April 9, 2012 at: www.law.arizona.edu/depts/iplp/UNSRConference. Information will be updated on the website as it becomes available.

In addition or in lieu of participation in the conference, written information can be submitted to the Special Rapporteur at: indigenous@ohchr.org. For guidance on how to present written information to the Special Rapporteur, please see: www.unsr.jamesanaya.org/comm/submitting-information-to-the-special-rapporteur.

Note: travel, hotel accommodation and transportation are the responsibility of participants.

ABOUT THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR

James Anaya is a Regents’ Professor and the James J. Lenoir Professor of Human Rights Law and Policy at the University of Arizona, James E. Rogers College of Law (USA), where he teaches and writes in the areas of international human rights, constitutional law, and issues concerning indigenous peoples. In March 2008 Professor Anaya was appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council as the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples.

For more information on his work as Special Rapporteur see: www.unsr.jamesanaya.org
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR:

Human Rights Council resolution 15/14

www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/SRIIndigenousPeoples/Pages/SRIPeoplesIndex.aspx

For more information about the conference contact:
iplpsrconference@gmail.com