

# The Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Introduction  
Rights at Stake  
International Instruments of Protection  
UN organs for Indigenous People's Human Rights  
Resources

**"Indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development"**

Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 3

## I. Introduction

### Who are Indigenous Peoples?

People who inhabited a land before it was conquered by colonial societies and who consider themselves distinct from the societies currently governing those territories are called *Indigenous Peoples*.

As defined by the United Nations Special **Rapporteur** to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are

"those which having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop, and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems."  
(Martinez-Cobo, 1984)

Indigenous Peoples worldwide number between 300-500 million, embody and nurture 80% of the world's cultural and biological diversity, and occupy 20% of the world's land surface. The Indigenous Peoples of the world are very diverse. They live in nearly all the countries on all the continents of the world and form a spectrum of humanity, ranging from traditional hunter-gatherers and subsistence farmers to legal scholars. In some countries, Indigenous Peoples form the majority of the population; others comprise small minorities. Indigenous Peoples are concerned with preserving land, protecting language and promoting culture. Some Indigenous Peoples strive to preserve traditional ways of life, while others seek greater participation in the current state structures. Like all cultures and civilizations, Indigenous Peoples are always adjusting and adapting to changes in the world. Indigenous Peoples recognize their common plight and work for their self-determination; based on their respect for the earth.

Despite such extensive diversity in Indigenous communities throughout the world, all Indigenous Peoples have one thing in common - they all share a history of injustice. Indigenous Peoples have been killed, tortured and enslaved. In many cases, they have been the victims of genocide. They have been denied the right to participate in governing processes of the current state systems. Conquest and colonization have attempted to steal their dignity and identity as indigenous peoples, as well as the fundamental right of self-determination.

## Indigenous People or Indigenous Peoples?

The United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights state that all *peoples* have the right of **self-determination** by virtue of which they “freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development”. (Part one, Article one, 1966) However, because there has been dispute over the exact meaning of the term “peoples”, it is not clear exactly to whom “peoples” refers. Some state governments oppose use of the term “peoples” in regards to Indigenous Peoples because they fear its association with the right of secession and independent statehood. Those states would prefer the terms “tribes” or “populations”, which do not have those associations. On the other hand, Indigenous Peoples use the term “peoples” because of its association with inherent recognition of a distinct identity. “Indigenous People” is a compromise between these two positions. Indigenous Peoples and their advocates find the denial of being described as “peoples” and the inherent entitlement to self-determination a form of racism and continued discrimination.

## **II. Rights at Stake**

Despite international recognition and acceptance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which guarantees the fundamental rights of all human beings, in practical fact Indigenous Peoples’ human rights remain without specifically designated safeguards. To this day, Indigenous Peoples continue to face serious threats to their basic existence due to systematic government policies. In many countries, Indigenous Peoples rank highest on such underdevelopment indicators as the proportion of people in jail, the illiteracy rate, unemployment rate, etc. They face discrimination in schools and are exploited in the workplace. In many countries, they are not even allowed to study their own languages in schools. Sacred lands and objects are plundered from them through unjust treaties. National governments continue to deny Indigenous Peoples the right to live in and manage their traditional lands; often implementing policies to exploit the lands that have sustained them for centuries. In some cases, governments have even enforced policies of forced assimilation in efforts to eradicate Indigenous Peoples, cultures, and traditions. Over and over, governments around the world have displayed an utter lack of respect for Indigenous values, traditions and human rights.

In international discussions on the protection and promotion of Indigenous People’s human rights, some States have argued that a more conscientious application of human rights standards would resolve the issue. On the other hand, Indigenous Peoples argue that such international human rights standards have consistently failed to protect them thus far. What is needed, they argue, is the development of new international documents addressing the specific needs of the world’s Indigenous Peoples. Although the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is designed to protect the human rights of all individual human beings, international law concerning **collective** human rights remains vague and can fail to protect the **group** rights of Indigenous Peoples.

## **III. International Instruments for the Protection of Indigenous Peoples’ Human Rights**

International legal instruments take the form of a **treaty** (also called agreement, convention, covenant, protocol), which may be binding, on the Contracting States. When negotiations are completed, the text of a treaty is established as authentic and definitive and is “**signed**” to that effect by the representatives of states. There are various means by which a state expresses its consent to be bound by a treaty. The most common are ratification or accession. A new treaty is “**ratified**” by those states that have negotiated the instrument. A state, which has not participated in the negotiations, may, at a later stage, “**accede**” to the treaty. The treaty **enters into force** when a pre-determined number of states have ratified or acceded to the treaty.

When a state ratifies or accedes to a treaty, that state may make **reservations** to one or more articles of the treaty, unless reservations are prohibited by the treaty. Reservations may normally be withdrawn at any time. In some countries, international treaties take precedence over national law; in others, a specific law may be required to give an international treaty, although ratified or acceded to, the force of a national law. Practically all states that have ratified or acceded to an international treaty must issue decrees, amend existing laws or introduce new legislation in order for the treaty to be fully effective on the national territory.

Not all international instruments are legally binding treaties. For example, some of the most important human rights instruments are declarations. A declaration does not have any legal power to enforce compliance, but rely purely on the moral weight it carries.

Indigenous Peoples rights overlap with many other human rights. Many important Indigenous Peoples rights are not framed in specific Indigenous Peoples rights treaties, but are part of more general treaties, like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

## **United Nations**

### □ **Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

This is the most comprehensive statement of the rights of Indigenous Peoples to date, establishing collective rights to a greater extent than any other document in international human rights law. It establishes the rights of Indigenous Peoples to the protection of their cultural property and identity as well as the rights to education, employment, health, religion, language and more. It also protects the right of Indigenous Peoples to own land collectively. Although States are not legally bound by the Declaration, it will exert a considerable amount of moral force when adopted by the **General Assembly**. Consisting of 45 Articles, the draft Declaration is divided into nine parts:

Part 1. Fundamental Rights	Part 6. Land and Resources
Part 2. Life and Security	Part 7. Self Government and Indigenous Laws
Part 3. Culture, Religion, and Language	Part 8. Implementation
Part 4. Education, Media, and Employment	Part 9. Minimum Standards
Part 5. Participation and Development	

Originally drafted by the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, the world's largest human rights forum, in 1985, the draft Declaration was adopted by the United Nations Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in 1994. From there, the draft was submitted to the Commission on Human Rights, which established the Working Group on the draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Working Group, in which more than 200 Indigenous organizations participate, meets once a year. Its goal is to facilitate the General Assembly's adoption of the Declaration by 2004, the final year of the **International Decade for the World's Indigenous Peoples**.

### □ **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (1948)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the first international document that states that all human beings are "equal in dignity and rights." (Article 1) Everybody is entitled to the rights in the Declaration, "without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status." (Article 2)

### □ **Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide** (1951)

Genocide means any of the following acts which have the intention of destroying, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group: “killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent birth within the group; forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.” (Article 2)

- **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** (1966)  
This **Covenant** outlines the basic civil and political rights of individuals. There are also provisions for collective rights. “In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.” (Article 27)
- **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** (1966)  
This Covenant describes the basic economic, social, and cultural rights of individuals. It also has provisions for collective rights.
- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination** (1966)  
“Racial discrimination” is defined as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.” (Article 1)
- **International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 169** (1989)  
The ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention was the first international convention to address the specific needs for Indigenous Peoples human rights. The Convention outlines the responsibilities of governments in promoting and protecting the human rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- **Convention on the Rights of the Child** (1990)  
The Convention contains regulations and suggestions relevant to Indigenous Peoples on the non-discrimination of children (Article 2), the broadcasting of information by the mass media in minority languages (Article 17), the right to education, including education on human rights, its own cultural identity, language and values. (Article 29) Article 30 states that children of minorities or indigenous origin shall not be denied the right to their own culture, religion or language. (Article 30)
- **Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities** (1992)  
This Declaration deals with all minorities, which includes many of the world’s Indigenous Peoples. It only concerns individual rights, although collective rights might be derived from those individual rights. The Declaration deals both with states’ obligations towards minorities as well as the rights of minority people. Topics that are dealt with include the national or ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic identity of minorities (Article 1); the free expression and development of culture; association of minorities amongst themselves; participation in decisions regarding the minority (Article 2); the exercise of minority rights, both individual and in groups (Article 3); and education of and about minorities. (Article 4)
- **Rio Declaration of Environment and Development and Agenda 21** (1992)  
These two documents are connected to the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. In them, the special relationship between Indigenous Peoples and their lands is acknowledged. Indigenous Peoples have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their traditional knowledge and practices. (Rio Declaration, Principle 22) In order to fully make use of that knowledge, some

Indigenous Peoples might need greater control over their land, self-management of their resources and participation in development decisions affecting them. (Agenda 21, Chapter 26.4)

□ **Convention on Biological Diversity** (1992)

The Convention calls upon its signatories to “respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices;” (Article 8(j))

□ **Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action** (1993)

The Vienna Declaration is the closing declaration of the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights held in Austria. It “recognizes the inherent dignity and the unique contribution of indigenous people [sic] to the development and plurality of society and strongly reaffirms the commitment of the international community to their economic, social and cultural well-being.” (I.20)

Furthermore, the declaration called for the completion of the draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the renewal and updating of the mandate of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations and the proclamation of the International Decade of Indigenous Peoples. (II.28 – 32)

□ **Report of the International Conference on Population and Development** (1994)

At the Conference it was agreed that the perspectives and needs of Indigenous Peoples should be included in population, development or environmental programs that affect them, that they should receive population- and development-related services that are socially, culturally and ecologically appropriate. (Paragraph 6.24) Another important decision was that Indigenous Peoples should be enabled to have tenure and manage their land, and protect the natural resources and ecosystems on which they depend. (Paragraph 6.27)

□ **Durban Declaration and Programme of Action** (2001)

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action has a specific section dealing with Indigenous Peoples issues. Perhaps more important than all the recommendations is the fact that the Declaration is the first United Nations document that uses the phrase “Indigenous Peoples” rather than “Indigenous People”.

## **European Union (EU)**

□ **Council Resolution on Indigenous Peoples within the Framework of the Development Cooperation of the Community and Members States** (1998)

This resolution provides the main European Union guidelines for support of Indigenous Peoples. It calls for the integration of Indigenous Peoples’ interests in all levels of development cooperation and the full and free participation of Indigenous Peoples in the development process. The resolution states: “Indigenous cultures constitute a heritage of diverse knowledge and ideas, which is a potential resource for the entire planet.”

## **Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)**

□ **OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities**

The Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities was established in 1992 to identify and seek early resolution of ethnic tensions that might endanger peace, stability or friendly relations between OSCE participating States. The High Commissioner has no specific Indigenous Peoples mandate, but treats Indigenous Peoples like any other national minority.

## **Organization of American States (OAS)**

### □ **Proposed American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

The draft Declaration outlines the human rights that are specific to Indigenous Peoples. Items covered include, among others, the right to self-government, indigenous law and the right to cultural heritage. A Working Group of the OAS is still discussing the Declaration.

## **World Bank**

### □ **World Bank Operational Directive 4.20** (1991)

This **Operational Directive** outlines the **World Bank's** definition of and interest in Indigenous Peoples. It also addresses economic issues (technical assistance and investment project mechanisms) concerning Indigenous Peoples. The Bank's narrow definition of Indigenous Peoples and ambiguity concerning its role in their economic development has resulted in much criticism from Indigenous Peoples' human rights advocates. Consequently, the World Bank is currently in the process of revising it. A draft of the new Directive 4.10 is available on the World Bank website.

## **IV. United Nations Organs for Indigenous People's Human Rights**

### **UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations**

The United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, a subsidiary organ of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, is the first and only UN body involved exclusively with matters concerning the human rights of Indigenous Peoples. It reviews national developments concerning the promotion and protection of Indigenous Peoples' human rights and develops international standards for Indigenous Peoples' human rights and freedoms. The Working Group also undertakes studies on a variety of issues affecting Indigenous Peoples. Nearly 700 persons regularly attend the Working Group sessions, including observers for Governments, Indigenous Peoples, non-governmental organizations, and scholars.

### **UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

In 2000, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), one of the six main organs of the United Nations, established the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to consider a wide range of issues affecting Indigenous Peoples. The Forum, which includes eight Indigenous experts, is the first and only international body in the United Nations that has Indigenous Persons as members. It meets once a year for ten working days and submit annual reports to the Economic and Social Council. The first meeting was May 13-24, 2002. The Permanent Forum serves as an advisory board to the Economic and Social Council, discussing Indigenous issues relating to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health, and human rights. From these discussions, the Forum provides expert advice and recommendations to the Council, raises awareness of Indigenous issues within the UN system, and prepares and disseminates information on Indigenous issues.

### **UN Working Group on the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

This Working Group of the Commission on Human Rights meets once a year and is responsible for reviewing and debating the draft Declaration. The Declaration will be non-binding for States, however, it will serve as a powerful statement of universally accepted norms as it will be adopted by consensus of all member states of the UN and will provide a strong basis for arguing for greater legal protection for indigenous rights in many countries.

## UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples

Rodolfo Stavenhagen was appointed as the first Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples on 24 April 2001. His mandate is as follows: to gather information on violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous Peoples, to formulate recommendations to prevent and remedy such violations and to work together with other experts of the UN Commission on Human Rights and of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. The Rapporteur cooperates closely with the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

### **V. Resources**

#### Principal Websites Devoted to Indigenous Peoples' Human Rights

##### **Center for the World's Indigenous Peoples**

[www.cwis.org](http://www.cwis.org)

The Center for the World's Indigenous Peoples is a research and education organization dedicated to an appreciation of the knowledge of indigenous peoples. It serves to promote greater understanding of the social, economic and political realities of indigenous nations. The Center aims to foster better understanding between peoples and to establish cooperation between nation as well as between nations and states. The Center's website contains information on education programs and conferences, publications, research and domestic and international policy concerning Indigenous Peoples. The website also includes links to The Center for Traditional Medicine, the Fourth World Institute, The Fourth World Journal, and the Fourth World Bookstore.

##### **NativeWeb**

[www.nativeweb.com](http://www.nativeweb.com)

NativeWeb is an international educational organization that uses telecommunications to disseminate information about indigenous nations, peoples, and organizations around the world. NativeWeb enables indigenous communities all over the world to communicate, share resources, and coordinate on projects and initiatives. NativeWeb's on-line Resource Center includes a nations index, geographic regions index, news/events, legal issues, books and music. Links at this site provide pathways to detailed information concerning nearly any Indigenous issue.

##### **Cultural Survival**

[www.culturalsurvival.org](http://www.culturalsurvival.org)

Cultural Survival is an organization dedicated to developing new strategies for responding directly to the critical needs of the world's indigenous populations. It analyzes and publicizes examples of how indigenous peoples have successfully responded to the serious crises. These case studies are the central issues of Cultural Survival's research, education and advocacy program. They are discussed in Cultural Survival's conferences, in its publications and on its web site.

##### **The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Centre**

[www.itpcentre.org](http://www.itpcentre.org)

The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Centre aims to foster a better understanding of Indigenous Peoples' values, knowledge, practices and education. The Website provides links to resources that enhance understanding of current developments on relevant issues and provide information important for informed participation between various sectors of society and in decision-making processes. Four of the Website's

main topics are: promoting sustainability, traditional cultures and values, legal frameworks and Indigenous Peoples, and Indigenous Peoples, Mother Earth and the Spirituality Project.

### **Indian Law Resource Center**

<http://www.indianlaw.org/default.htm>

The Indian Law Resource Center engages in legal advocacy for the protection of Indigenous Peoples' human rights, cultures and traditional lands. On the site are descriptions of the Center's casework, archives to newsletters and links to relevant organizations and documents. The Center deals with cases in North and Central America.

### **Survival International**

<http://www.survival-international.org/>

Survival International is a worldwide organization supporting tribal peoples. It stands for their right to decide their own future and helps them protect their lives, lands and human rights. Survival works by educating the people of 'The West' about Indigenous People and by providing Indigenous People with the information and means they need to preserve their way of life in the face of contacts with the Western world and Western companies.

### **Indigenous Nations and Governance Bodies**

Assembly of First Nations (Canada): [www.afn.ca](http://www.afn.ca)  
Inuit Circumpolar Conference: [www.inuit.org](http://www.inuit.org)  
Metis Nation of Ontario: [www.metisnation.org](http://www.metisnation.org)  
Navajo/ Hopi and Black Mesa: [www.blackmesais.org](http://www.blackmesais.org)  
Navajo Nation: [www.navajo.org](http://www.navajo.org)  
Sami News: [www.saamiweb.org/](http://www.saamiweb.org/) (in Sami)  
Sami Parliament: [www.sametinget.se/](http://www.sametinget.se/) (In Sami)  
San of South Africa: [www.san.org.za](http://www.san.org.za)  
Haudenosaunee Homepage: [www.sixnations.org](http://www.sixnations.org)  
Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs: [www.ubcic.bc.ca](http://www.ubcic.bc.ca)

### *Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations*

### **United Nations Office of the High Commission for Human Rights**

[www.unhchr.ch/indigenous/main.html](http://www.unhchr.ch/indigenous/main.html)

The Office of the High Commission for Human Rights' Indigenous Peoples website provides an extensive overview of Indigenous Peoples and the UN systems. This site also provides links to the Working Groups, the Permanent Forum, Special Rapporteur, UN documents, funding, and the UN system.

### **United Nations Development Programme – Indigenous Peoples**

<http://www.undp.org/csopp/CSO/NewFiles/ipindex.html>

This site details how the UNDP works together with Indigenous Peoples. It includes information on Indigenous Peoples' issues, the UNDP's programs and objectives regarding Indigenous Peoples, and a resource center containing documents, information on conferences and contacts at the UN.

### **World Conference Against Racism/UN Guide for Indigenous Peoples**

<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/racism/00-indigenousguide.html>

The United Nations Guide for Indigenous Peoples includes twelve leaflets on Indigenous Peoples and the UN system. Some of these include: Indigenous Peoples, the UN and Human Rights, Human Rights Treaty Bodies and Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Children and Youth, and Indigenous Peoples and the Environment.

### *Indigenous Peoples and the European Union*

#### **European Union Human rights and Democratisation Policy – Promoting and Protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples**

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/human\\_rights/ip/index.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/human_rights/ip/index.htm)

The website has a link to the EU Council Resolution on Indigenous Peoples. It also contains information on some of the EU programs that affect indigenous peoples. It lists names and email addresses of relevant EU people and has links on international organizations and indigenous NGOs.

### *Indigenous Peoples and the Organization of American States*

#### **Inter-American Commission on Human Rights**

<http://www.cidh.oas.org/DefaultE.htm>

This is the website of the Human Rights Commission of the Organization of American States. Most information relates to human rights in general, but under the heading ‘Publications’ there is a link to the Proposed American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

### Human Rights Education

#### **UN Treaty Reference Guide**

<http://untreaty.un.org/ola-internet/Assistance/Guide.htm> - treaties

Human rights are treaty-based. This UN site explains (in very formal language) the terms used in UN treaties. It is not human rights centered, but it helps to understand the terms and procedures that show up in every human rights treaty.

#### **University of Minnesota Human Rights Center**

<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/hrcenter.htm>

The principal focus of the Human Rights Center is to help train effective human rights professionals and volunteers. The Human Rights Center assists human rights advocates, monitors, students and educators through five primary programs: Applied Human Rights Research, Educational Tools, Field and Training Opportunities, Human Rights On-line and Learning Communities and Partnerships.

#### **The People’s Decade of Human Rights Education**

<http://www.pdhre.org/rights/indigenous.html>

The People’s Decade of Human Rights Education (PDHRE) is dedicated to increasing awareness of human rights in order to strengthen and invigorate efforts for change. PHDRE teaches how the human rights framework can be used to address social and economic injustices throughout the world. The Indigenous Peoples’ component of the PDHRE website provides a concise overview of Indigenous Peoples’ human rights and a comprehensive explanation of governments’ obligations and commitments to ensuring the human rights of Indigenous Peoples with specific text citations. It also includes a wide variety of lesson plans and strategies for human rights education.

## **Researching Indigenous Peoples Rights Under International Law**

<http://intelligent-internet.info/law/ipr2.html>

The last time this site has been revised was in 1999. It is, therefore, not up to date. However, it is valuable as an introduction to fundamental human rights issues. The site has a clear layout and features an overview of important issues, legal documents and a wide-ranging bibliography (up to 1998).

## **Human Rights Education Associates**

[www.hrea.org](http://www.hrea.org)

Human Rights Education Associates is an organization dedicated to quality education, educational material development, training educators and activists, research and development, and fostering on-line community building. The on-line HREA offers courses via distance learning for human rights workers, tutorials that introduce a number of human rights issues in an interactive mode, study guides, and discussion boards.

## **United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education**

<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/1/edudec.htm>

The UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) website offers a wide variety of practical activities for primary and secondary schools as well as a link to Assisting Communities Together (ACT), a UN program that offers financial support for grassroots activities in the field of human rights carried out by community-based organizations and individuals.

## **Amnesty International Human Rights Education**

<http://www.amnesty-volunteer.org/usa/education/index.html>

The Amnesty International Human Rights Education website offers a wide variety of human rights education resources: classroom materials and resources, frequently asked questions about human rights, sample lessons, resource notebooks, human rights syllabi, a manual for starting human rights education, a resource center on-line catalog for human rights education materials. The website also contains an extensive list of actions that students can take to effect change in their communities and throughout the world.

## **VI. Terms Commonly Used when Speaking about Indigenous People's Human Rights**

<b>Rapporteur</b>	An expert entrusted by the UN with a special human rights mandate, acting in his or her personal capacity. ( <a href="http://www.un.org/rights/HRToday/">http://www.un.org/rights/HRToday/</a> )
<b>Colonization</b>	An act of colonizing, meaning to establish a body of people living in a new territory but retaining ties with the parent state. ( <a href="http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&amp;va=colony">http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&amp;va=colony</a> )
<b>Self-determination</b>	The right of a cohesive national group ("peoples") living in a territory to choose for themselves a form of political and legal organization for that territory. ( <a href="http://www.law.auckland.ac.nz/learn/ilaw/docs/lecture_10_04.ppt">http://www.law.auckland.ac.nz/learn/ilaw/docs/lecture_10_04.ppt</a> )
<b>Collective</b>	Denoting a number of persons or things considered as one group or whole. ( <a href="http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary">http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary</a> )
<b>Group</b>	A number of individuals assembled together or having some unifying relationship. ( <a href="http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary">http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary</a> )
<b>Treaty</b>	A contract in writing between two or more political authorities (as states or sovereigns) formally signed by representatives duly authorized and usually

ratified by the lawmaking authority of the state. (<http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary>)

**Signed**

To write one's [country's] name as a token of assent, responsibility or obligation. (<http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary>)

**Ratify**

Ratification defines the international act whereby a state indicates its consent to be bound to a treaty if the parties intended to show their consent by such an act. The institution of ratification grants states the necessary time-frame to seek the required approval for the treaty on the domestic level and to enact the necessary legislation to give domestic effect to that treaty. (<http://untreaty.un.org/ola-internet/Assistance/Guide.htm-treaties>)

**Enter into force**

When it enters into force, a treaty is legally binding on all parties that have ratified the treaty. A treaty usually goes into effect when a certain number of member states have ratified it.

**Accede**

"Accession" is the act whereby a state accepts the offer or the opportunity to become a party to a treaty already negotiated and signed by other states. It has the same legal effect as ratification. Accession usually occurs after the treaty has entered into force.

(<http://untreaty.un.org/ola-internet/Assistance/Guide.htm-treaties>)

**Reservations**

When a state makes a reservation to a treaty, it means that the state considers itself bound to the treaty, except for those provisions to which it makes the reservation. A reservation enables a state to accept a multilateral treaty as a whole by giving it the possibility not to apply certain provisions with which it does not want to comply. Reservations must not be incompatible with the object and the purpose of the treaty. Furthermore, a treaty might prohibit reservations or only allow for certain reservations to be made. (<http://untreaty.un.org/ola-internet/Assistance/Guide.htm#treaties>)

**General assembly**

The General Assembly is the main deliberative organ of the United Nations. It is composed of representatives of all Member States, each of which has one vote. The General Assembly passes resolutions on important issues concerning everything from outer space to disarmament. (<http://www.un.org/ga/57/about.htm>)

**International Decade**

An International Decade is a ten-year period in which the UN focuses on a specific topic (for example: Indigenous Peoples) and tries to fulfill important goals regarding that topic.

**Covenant**

A usually formal, solemn, and binding agreement. It is similar to a treaty. (<http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary>)

**Operational directive**

World Bank Operational Directives contain a mixture of policies, procedures, and guidance on how the Bank deals with specific topics.

**World bank**

The World Bank is a development assistance bank. It provides strategies and loans to developing countries to help them "improve living standards and eliminate the worst forms of poverty." (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/0,,contentMDK:20040559~menuPK:34560~pagePK:34542~piPK:36600,00.html>)

The University of Minnesota Human Rights Center

N-120 Mondale Hall, 229 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue South

Minneapolis, MN 55455

612.626.0041

[www.hrusa.org](http://www.hrusa.org), [www.umn.edu/humanrts](http://www.umn.edu/humanrts), and [www.indigipeoples.org](http://www.indigipeoples.org)