

INDIGENOUS ISSUES

The place and plight of indigenous people throughout the world has received increased attention in Canada and in international fora. The U.N. Commission on Human Rights (CHR), the Sub Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) and the International Labor Organization have all devoted considerable time to questions of importance to indigenous people resident in many countries. The Canadian government has participated in these discussions, and has been instrumental in encouraging and facilitating the participation of indigenous organizations from diverse parts of the world at gathering relevant to their concerns and aspirations. Participation by representatives of Canadian aboriginal groups is an important ongoing characteristic of international indigenous meetings.

THE WORKING GROUP ON INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS

The WGIP of the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, a subsidiary body of the CHR, is a body of independent experts established in 1982. It meets annually for five days prior to the meeting of the Sub-Commission in order to:

- a) review developments pertaining to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous populations and
- b) give special attention to the evolution of standards concerning the rights of indigenous populations.

Since its establishment, there have been seven annual meetings of the WGIP. Representatives of Canadian indigenous organizations as well as officials of the Government of Canada have attended all meetings.