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NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

26 February, 2014

Excellency,

As a follow-up to the meeting between the President of the General Assembly and the Chairs of the Regional Groups on Tuesday, 25 February, 2014, I have the honour to forward herewith an Aide Memoire on the decision outlined by the President during said meeting.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Paulette Bethel
Chef de Cabinet

To the Chairs of the Five Regional Groups

H.E. Mr. Mamadi Toure
Permanent Representative of Guinea
Chair of the African States Group

H.E. Mr. Norachit Sinhaseni
Permanent Representative of Thailand
Chair of the Asia-Pacific States Group

H.E. Mr. Ferit Hoxha
Permanent Representative of Albania
Chair of the Eastern European States Group

H.E. Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota
Permanent Representative of Brazil
Chair of the Latin American and Caribbean States Group

H.E. Mr. Geir O. Pedersen
Permanent Representative of Norway
Chair of the Western European and Other States Group

AIDE MEMOIRE

Meeting of the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. John W. Ashe
With Chairpersons of the UN Regional Groups to discuss Preparations for
the
World Conference on Indigenous Peoples
25 February 2014, 3:15pm, OPGA

The President of the General Assembly (PGA) met with the Chairpersons of the five regional groups on February 25th 2014, to share with them collective responses to the proposals which he had presented earlier regarding the appointment of Co-facilitators for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and to communicate his decision regarding the start of the consultations called for in paragraph 12 of General Assembly resolution A/Res/66/296. These proposals are contained in the Annex to this Aide Memoire.

Responses Received from Regional Groups

The PGA informed the representatives of the regional groups that he had received written communication from all the five (5) groups, two (2) of which indicated that they would not entertain a process co-led by a Member State and a non-Member State.

One regional group was unable to reach consensus on any of the proposals, but individual Member States communicated their preferences directly to the PGA or to his staff.

One regional group expressed a preference for Proposal No. 2, which was put forward by a Member State.

One group returned with a new proposal for equal representation of Member States and indigenous peoples, totaling a maximum of four facilitators – two Member States and two Indigenous Representatives.

The PGA also noted that he had received several written presentations from various Indigenous Groups/Representatives but without any consensus on a way forward.

President's Decision

In the absence of such a consensus, the PGA indicated his decision to assume overall authority for the consultations called for above. In this context, he would identify representatives from Member States – one from the North and one from the South – to conduct consultations with Member States on his behalf. A letter describing these arrangements will soon be transmitted to Member States, and the consultations will formally commence during the week of March 3.

The PGA also indicated that he would request the Indigenous Groups, through the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, to identify appropriate representatives to undertake consultations with the Indigenous community on his behalf. These representatives would report directly to the PGA on the outcome of those consultations, and will also be invited to share the outcomes of their consultations with Member States. The PGA further informed that he would be responsible for any text/outcomes resulting from the aforementioned consultation process which member States will be requested to consider.

Regarding the interactive civil society briefing called for in paragraph 7 of A/Res/66/296, it is anticipated that the Permanent Forum will assist in organizing this briefing. In this regard, member States may wish, for the duration of the aforementioned consultations, to utilize the practice of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, whereby civil society representatives are encouraged to convene meetings prior to the start of related intergovernmental discussions and to share the outcomes of their deliberations directly with member States.

The PGA informed the Regional Chairs that, H.E. Mr. Crispin Gregoire, the former Permanent Representative of the Commonwealth of Dominica, will be joining the staff of the OPGA as of 3 March, 2014 and has been designated as the Focal Point within the Office of the PGA for all aspects pertaining to the aforementioned consultations.

Annex

Proposal from the PGA

The President of the General Assembly proposes the traditional arrangement of one (1) co-facilitator from a member State of the North and one (1) co-facilitator from a member State of the South. To address the prevailing concerns of Indigenous Peoples and several delegations, the President of the General Assembly also proposes to name one (1) Advisor, chosen from among Indigenous Peoples to play a substantive role in the informal consultations. The President of the General Assembly will circulate a letter to all member States outlining the position of the Advisor, noting that (s)he will provide counsel on all substantive matters, participate in all informal consultations, and will be seated alongside the member State co-facilitators throughout the preparatory process.

The President also informed the Regional Chairs of two additional proposals that he had received from a member State during a recent bilateral meeting as follows:

Proposal No. 1 from a member State

A tripartite arrangement with one (1) co-facilitator from a member State of the South, one (1) co-facilitator from a member State of the North and one (1) co-facilitator chosen from among Indigenous Peoples. In this option there is no distinction between the three co-facilitators as the co-facilitator chosen from the Indigenous Peoples would be on equal footing as the two facilitators representing member States.

Proposal No. 2 from a member State

The President of the General Assembly will not appoint co-facilitators, but instead personally would conduct the informal consultations. At his discretion, the President may call upon a member State(s) and/or a representative of Indigenous Peoples to conduct the proceedings on his behalf, if and when required.