Summary of Thematic Workshop on Indigenous Peoples and the Information Society

Tuesday, 11 May, 11:15-13h, Room M

In the first part of the thematic worshop, Kenneth Deer, from the International Indigenous ICT Taskforce, gave a short overview of the development of Indigenous Peoples' issues in light of the WSIS outcomes and the impact of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on the WSIS agenda. Kenneth participated in the panel via skype and conference call, which allowed an important Indigenous voice to be heard. Following Kenneth Deer's overview, several panelists shared their experiences in the development of ICT projects for and with Indigenous Peoples. **Dev Kumar**, Sub-Editor of The Kathmandu Post, provided an indigenous view of struggles and pathways in developing indigenous media in Nepal. **Kamal Naim**, IT Officer and Head of Electronic Publishing and the IT Unit in the Information Services Section of UN-HABITAT/Nairobi, provided an overview of the use of ICTs for social and economic development. This allowed for further reflection on how such ICTs could possibly target indigenous communities particularly. **Teanau Tuiono** from the Local and Indigenous Knowledge Section within the Science Sector of UNESCO presented a selection of UNESCO initiated ICT projects that support Indigenous Knowledge (Climate Frontlines, The Canoe is the People). **Sasha Rubel** from UNESCO's Culture Sector provided an overview of a project carried out by the Culture and Communication and Information Sector of UNESCO in partnership with indigenous filmmakers and media companies entitled ICT4ID (ICTs for Intercultural Dialogue), with a particular focus on the video/film industry as it relates to Indigenous Peoples' self-determined development and self-representation. **Roxanne Widmer-Iliescu**, ITU's youth programme officer and focal point for assistance to indigenous peoples, provided an overview of the main achievements of the ITU Development Bureau's initiatives dedicated to the specific ICT needs of indigenous peoples based on tradition and preservation of their cultural values.

In the second half of the thematic workshop dedicated to discussion and exchange between the panelists and participants, ideas were shared regarding possible ways of advancing the WSIS commitments as they relate to Indigenous Peoples. Several central points were raised. An emphasis was placed on the need to focus on capacity building between and within indigenous communities based on already existing capacities in the communities. The need to promote a kind of development based on consultation and dialogue with particular reference to ICTs within indigenous communities was also stressed. Questions participants raised included how ICT's could be used specifically for wealth generation and economic development in indigenous communities, what the real outcome of the use of ICT's for development is, and the need to differentiate between the notion of "indigenous peoples" and the need for "local content" in debates regarding the information society. Another question included UNESCO's concrete involvement in C8 and C9 of the WSIS agenda, and possible ways forward regarding the use and innovative development of ICT's within Indigenous communities despite financial constraints.