



International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs

Kathrin Wessendorf
Programme Coordinator

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Arctic Council Secretariat
Att. Johanna Lammi
Unit for Northern Dimension
P.O.Box 176
FIN-00161 Helsinki
Finland

Application for Observer Status to the 3rd Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Inari, Saariselkä, Finland, October 9-10, 2002.

In 1968, scholars concerned about the destiny of indigenous peoples founded IWGIA as an international organisation. Since that time IWGIA's activities have focused upon research, documentation, publishing and project work in cooperation with indigenous organisations and communities. Our main spheres of activity are within the areas of human rights, developmental and environmental issues and other types of activities of interest to indigenous peoples.

The international secretariat of the organisation is based in Copenhagen, Denmark. Today, the secretariat has a staff of 12-15 persons. IWGIA was recently turned into a membership organisation and is headed by an international board of 7 persons, currently with representatives from Norway, USA, the Netherlands and Denmark.

IWGIA has UN ECOSOC consultative status.

IWGIA receives funding from the Nordic Ministries of Foreign Affairs, EU and a number of private foundations and institutions.

From the outset, the Arctic has been one of IWGIA's regional priorities. This has been reflected in several activities:

Our publications on issues relating to indigenous rights and sustainable development have been prominent. Most recently we have published a document on Nunavut, which aroused great interest in Nunavut and is already sold out. We are now considering a reissue. A publication in cooperation with the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) about indigenous peoples in Russia is on its way. Our last newsletters have touched upon issues such as self-determination (Indigenous Affairs 3/2001), sustainable development (Indigenous Affairs 4/2001) and international relations (Indigenous Affairs 1/2002). The issue on sustainable development was published as an introduction to the World Summit on Sustainable Development from an indigenous perspective.

Over the years, IWGIA has organised, co-organised or facilitated conferences and meetings dealing with indigenous and Arctic issues. One of the first major meetings was when IWGIA co-organised the first Arctic Peoples Conference in 1973. More recently IWGIA facilitated a workshop on indigenous participation in national political processes in Iqaluit, Canada, in October 2000, and a seminar on self-government in Northeast India and in the Arctic with participants from Sápmi, Alaska, Canada, India and Malaysia, which took place in Sabah, Malaysia in December 2001. We are currently working on co-organising a project that aims at focusing on protected areas in Russia as a continuation of similar projects in Asia and Latin America that IWGIA has supported.

IWGIA has a close working relationship with many indigenous organisations of the Arctic such as RAIPON, the Saami Council, ICC, the Arctic Athabaskan Council and the IPS, as well as with research institutions such as the Nordic Saami Institute (Kautokeino), the Institute for Environmental and Minority Law (Rovaniemi) and College of Rural Alaska, University of Alaska (Fairbanks).

IWGIA's work in Russia is primarily concentrated around the Moscow branch of RAIPON. In close association with RAIPON, members of IWGIA based in Moscow work on environmental and legal issues by publishing and lobbying in the Duma. These activities have most recently been supported by funding from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. IWGIA also supports RAIPON in a capacity building project on the rights of indigenous peoples in Russia.

This application should be seen as a result of a deliberate wish to bring IWGIA's general knowledge about indigenous and environmental issues into practical use in matters relating to the Arctic. Similarly, we find that there is a significant need among indigenous peoples in other parts of the world to become acquainted with Arctic processes that relate to sustainable development, indigenous knowledge and self-government. These goals can be achieved through

- IWGIA's publishing activities (in English, Spanish, Russian, French and other languages),
- Organising conferences,
- Facilitating indigenous meetings,
- Using our ECOSOC status to facilitate indigenous participation in UN meetings,
- Project cooperation with indigenous organisations.

IWGIA's participation in Arctic Council meetings as ad-hoc observers has shown that many issues discussed in the Arctic Council are of daily concern to the organization and of special interest to our work not only with indigenous partners in the North but also in the

Southern hemisphere. The Arctic Council is a forum where IWGIA has the possibility to contribute with the organisation's own experience in the Arctic and in international processes. IWGIA is also following other regional processes such as the African Commission on Human Rights and the Organisation of American States.

There has always been a strong presence of Arctic expertise within IWGIA. Currently, the Chairperson of IWGIA, Georg Henriksen, is a professor at the University of Bergen who worked for many years with the Innu of Labrador and in Saami communities in Norway. The undersigned director of IWGIA, Jens Dahl, was for many years associate professor at the Department of Eskimology at the University of Copenhagen. He is on the scientific advisory board to the Institute of Environmental and Minority Law, University of Lapland, external faculty member, College of Rural Alaska, University of Alaska, former Chair of the International Arctic Social Sciences Association (IASSA) and former board member of the Nordic Saami Institute. A position with special responsibility for the Arctic was created in the international secretariat of IWGIA in 2000 and has since then been occupied by Kathrin Wessendorf.

It is our sincere hope that this application will be positively received.

For further information, please do not hesitate to make contact with the undersigned.

Sincerely yours

Jens Dahl
Director

Kathrin Wessendorf
Coordinator

IWGIA STATUTES

General

1. The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) is a non-profit politically independent international human rights organisation. Place of registration is Denmark. The Head office is in Copenhagen. IWGIAs financial year follows the calendar year.
2. The aim of IWGIA is to defend and endorse the rights of indigenous peoples in concurrence with their own efforts and desires:
 - by investigating and disseminating information about their present circumstances,
 - by furthering international understanding, knowledge and involvement in the cause of indigenous peoples,
 - by influencing political and economic powers nationally and internationally to:
 - prevent physical and cultural oppression
 - fight racism
 - secure cultural, political, economic and social rights
 - establish and secure indigenous peoples' traditional rights and support their struggle for self-determination,
 - by arranging human rights projects and other forms of support to indigenous peoples and organisations with a view to strengthening their social, cultural and political circumstances.
3. The work of IWGIA should reflect the main lines of its policies and strategies by giving as far as possible equal attention to the local community and to the regional, national and international dimensions of the indigenous struggle for human rights.
4. IWGIA was founded in 1968 by anthropologist and other concerned individuals with an expertise on indigenous issues and dedicated to defend the rights of indigenous peoples. In the year 2000, IWGIA became a membership organisation, based on these principles.
5. Amendments to IWGIAs statutes can be made provided that they are submitted in writing to the International Board one month in advance of an international board meeting and if two thirds of the international board agree on them. The new statutes must be approved by the members in writing. The changes are adopted when a simple majority of the votes casted are in favour.
6. Dissolution of the organisation can only be effected provided that, given written warning of three months, two thirds of the Board are in agreement. Should this be the case the Board shall decide by simple majority how the organisation's funds should be used. Funds should go to one or more organisations or individuals working on a non-commercial basis for the protection of indigenous peoples' political, economic and social rights.

7. The present statutes came into force on May 27th 2000, and replace the statutes of May 28th 1994, which replace the statutes of December 1989, which replace the statutes of June 1st 1985, which replace statutes of February 20th, 1981 and March 10th, 1978, which replaced the rules and directives that had been in force since IWGIA started its activity following its constitution during the International Congress of Americanists in August, 1968.

Membership

8. IWGIA is a work group, the core of which is an active membership base. Members pay an annual membership fee, the size of which is stipulated every year by The Board. Membership follows the calendar year.
9. The members of IWGIA are committed to IWGIA's principles. The members shall not be held personally liable for debts or liabilities incurred by IWGIA.
10. Applications for membership are addressed to The Board. In order to be approved an application should be supported by at least two members of IWGIA and been approved by The Board. The board may reject any application at its own discretion.
11. The international secretariat keeps the membership list.
12. A group of members of IWGIA can establish a local group or an interest group. The rights and responsibilities of these groups are decided upon by The Board. Such groups can establish their own by-laws to be approved by the Board. The Board can choose to establish general guidelines for local groups and interest groups
13. The Board can decide to exclude members of the organisation and to dissolve local groups and interest groups. Members can be excluded and groups dissolved if they are deemed by the board to act in ways contrary to the principles or laws of the organisation, or do not pay the membership fee. A group that no longer accomplish the criteria for being a group for more than one year can be dissolved by The Board.

Governing structure

14. The International Board (The Board) is the highest governing body of the organisation.
15. The Chairperson's signature binds IWGIA's activities. In case of the Chairperson's absence, the Vice-chairperson will take over the chairperson's duties.
16. Once every year, all members are called for a general meeting, the Annual Forum. The Forum has consultative status as an advisory body to The Board.
17. The executive body of the organisation is the International Secretariat (the Secretariat) which is based in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The Board

18. The Board has a membership of seven. Six are elected by and among all members with more than one year's membership, and one Board member is elected by and among permanently or contractually employed persons in the Secretariat, who have worked there for at least one year. The executive director of the Secretariat is the secretary of The Board.
19. The Board decides upon all matters of principle. Among the functions of The Board are the tasks to supervise and decide upon editorial, legal and financial matters of IWGIA. Under no circumstances, except when provided by law, shall the members of The Board be held personally liable for debts or liabilities incurred by IWGIA. Members of The Board are also expected to utilise their position to provide specialised information and knowledge about their respective fields within indigenous affairs.
20. Decisions are usually made according to consensus and in cases of indecision a vote will be taken. Voting is made by simple majority (except in case of dissolution of the organisation) and in case of equal votes the Chairperson's vote is decisive.
21. The Board constitutes itself. The Chair and Vice-chair make up the Executive. The Chair or the vice-chair cannot be occupied by the secretariat appointee.
22. The Board forms a quorum when more than half of the board is present.
23. The Board is called at least four times a year. One of the meetings takes place in connection with Annual Forum. In the interim periods between Board meetings, urgent matters are dealt with by the Executive.
24.
 - The agenda of the Board meetings will include the following:
 - Reports on current work of all Board members
 - Future plans for IWGIA
 - Indigenous Affairs
 - Date for the next board meeting
24. The Board approves the annual account and the annual budget. The Board makes an annual report. This is circulated to the IWGIA members.
25. The board elects an auditor general.
26. All personnel matters are handled by the Executive.

Election of the Board

27. Election to the Board by the members takes place in writing in November every year. The election is called by the Secretariat from the membership list. All persons who have been a member for at least one year prior to the election and have paid their annual fee when the

election is called can vote. To be elected to the Board a person must have been a member for at least one year prior to the election

28. Candidates to the Board must be recommended by three members. The name of the candidate(s) including the signature of the candidate and three recommending members must reach the Secretariat in writing no later than two weeks before the election is called. Before that, notice of the election should be given to all members no later than four weeks before the election is called. Notice is usually announced on IWGIA's website.
29. Board members are elected for three years. Election takes place on staggered terms so that two positions are up for election every year. Incumbent Board members can be re-elected. Board members are elected in their personal capacity and have no alternates.
30. In the case that a Board member leaves before his/her period expires or that he/she is absent from 3 consecutive Board meetings, the Board can decide to call for an extraordinary election or to increase the number of persons to be elected in the first ordinary election.
31. Each member has as many votes as the number of positions to be filled in the election. A voting member can only give one vote to one candidate.
32. The result of the election is announced by the Chair at the Board meeting and before the opening of the Forum. The Board constitutes itself immediately after the announcement of the result of the election, and before the end of the Forum.

The secretariat

32. IWGIA's daily work is coordinated by the Secretariat. The Secretariat works on a co-operative basis with ultimate responsibility and decision-making in the hands of the executive director. The administrator has the responsibility for keeping the accounts and drafting the budget. Matters of dispute can be brought to the Executive and to the Board if necessary.
33. The executive director and the administrator of the Secretariat are employed by The Board. All other positions are nominated by the director upon consultation with the relevant staff members and the employment approved by the Executive.
34. The Secretariat is responsible for keeping communication and information to members and local groups.

April 2002

Signed by the board

Georg Henriksen

Birgitte Feiring

Espen Wæhle

Andrea Mühlebach

Jenneke Arens

Søren Hvalkof

Diana Vinding

The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs

IWGIA is a non-profit, politically independent, international membership organisation. The aim of IWGIA is to support indigenous peoples worldwide. IWGIA's activities focus on human rights work, documentation and dissemination of information, and project activities in co-operation with indigenous organisations and communities.

The world's indigenous peoples account for more than 350 million individuals, divided into at least 5000 peoples.

Indigenous peoples are the disadvantaged descendants of those peoples that inhabited a country prior to the formation of a state. When immigrants from Europe settled in the Americas and Oceania, and when new states were created after colonialism was abolished in Africa and Asia, certain peoples became marginalised and discriminated against because their language, their religion, their culture and their whole way of life were different and seen by the dominant society as being inferior.

This situation still prevails today. Many indigenous peoples are still excluded from the society and often even deprived of their rights as equal citizens of a state. Nevertheless indigenous peoples are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories and their ethnic identity.

Their continued existence as peoples is closely connected to their possibility to influence their future and to live in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems.

Nowadays, indigenous peoples face serious difficulties such as the constant threat of territorial invasion and murder, the plundering of their resources, cultural and legal discrimination, as well as lack of recognition suffered by the indigenous institutions.

IWGIA's aims and activities

IWGIA co-operates with indigenous peoples all over the world and supports their struggle for human rights, their right to control of land and resources, their cultural integrity, and their right to development. The aim of IWGIA is to defend and endorse the rights of indigenous peoples in concurrence with their own efforts and desires. An important goal is to give indigenous peoples the possibility of organising themselves and open up channels for indigenous peoples' own organisations to claim their rights.

IWGIA works at local, regional and international levels to further the understanding, knowledge and involvement in the cause of indigenous peoples.

Through publications, human rights work, networking, conferences, campaigns and projects, IWGIA supports indigenous peoples in their struggle to improve general life conditions, to improve relationships with the nation states of which they are part, and to influence the global economic and political forces that affect their lives.

IWGIA's approach is holistic

IWGIA has a holistic approach to its activities. This implies a combination of documentation and publishing, development projects, human rights work, conferences and meetings, research and lobbying. All these activities are an integrated part of each other. The holistic approach has led to a high degree of respect and trust between IWGIA and its partner organisations. It has also shown to have a clear synergetic effect, to be efficient and to lead to long lasting relationships with indigenous organisations.

Network of indigenous organisations

IWGIA has established a tight network of indigenous organisations and works exclusively with indigenous peoples.

The relationship is founded on the creation of an equal partnership based on thorough knowledge and respect. Partnerships with the indigenous organisations are built up through close contact and regular networking trips. Networking trips are both undertaken by indigenous persons and by IWGIA's project coordinators. It is important for IWGIA that indigenous persons and persons with a solid knowledge of the peoples and issues are involved in whatever is being done. Focus is therefore put on involving indigenous researchers, experts and leaders in IWGIA's activities.

Women & Gender

IWGIA has for years supported indigenous women groups, and will also in the future advocate the rights of women to participate in indigenous organisations and national and international meetings. IWGIA has developed a women & gender policy with the aim to implement it in all IWGIA's activities.

IWGIA publications

Publication and dissemination of information have been the core activities of IWGIA from the very beginning. IWGIA has for more than 30 years published a substantial amount of books mainly in English and Spanish and continues to aim at being at the forefront of reflecting the most crucial issues of concern to indigenous peoples. IWGIA's publications are written by indigenous and non-indigenous experts on culture, society, colonial history, international law and human rights.

IWGIA publishes an annual book *The Indigenous World* and a quarterly journal –*Indigenous Affairs*. A number of books thematically focusing on indigenous issues are published each year.

IWGIA's publications are available through subscription or for sale on an individual basis via the website or by ordering by e-mail or fax through the secretariat.

Human Rights

IWGIA's main activities within the human rights field are centred around the Commission on Human Rights and its various working groups.

IWGIA plays an important role in facilitating indigenous peoples' participation in meetings at the United Nations. This is done by financial support to cover travel expenses for the participants and by accreditation of indigenous representatives on the basis of IWGIA's consultative status to the ECOSOC (the United Nations Economic and Social Council). The funding of indigenous peoples' participation in UN meetings is facilitated via the *Human Rights Fund for Indigenous Peoples*, which IWGIA operates in collaboration with four other non-governmental organisations.

Projects

IWGIA collaborates with indigenous organisations in the planning, implementation and monitoring of projects. Generally the projects aim at empowering indigenous peoples to build and develop their own organisations and influence their future. Capacity building, education and/or legal assistance in asserting human rights, land rights and the right to sustainable development are the main components of IWGIA's projects.

IWGIA is engaged in projects with indigenous groups on all the continents. IWGIA supports a few large scale and a number of smaller projects throughout the world.

Conferences

IWGIA facilitates indigenous participation at meetings and conferences on indigenous issues both within the UN and on a more regional basis. Most regional conferences are organised in collaboration with indigenous organisations. Conferences are seen as an important part of a strengthened dialogue between indigenous peoples and their governments.

Dissemination of information and dialogue are the foundation of IWGIA's political lobbying. IWGIA actively initiates and maintains conversations with government representatives, politicians and influential

persons. Political lobbyism is seen as an important way of putting indigenous issues on the political agenda and to monitor that the policies are being acted upon.

IWGIA library

IWGIA's extensive collection of literature on indigenous issues is open to the public. The library is situated at the secretariat Classensgade 11 E. DK-2100 Copenhagen, Denmark. The library also keeps an article index of all articles published in *Indigenous Affairs* from 1971 until the most recent issues of the journal. The article index can be accessed on IWGIA's website at <http://www.iwgia.org>

History

Since its foundation, IWGIA has followed the indigenous movement and continuously increased its activities and expanded its network with indigenous peoples worldwide.

The initiative to establish a network of researchers and human rights activists concerned about indigenous peoples' affairs came about when, in 1968, news broke out in the international press of the genocide of Indians in the Amazon. The first links established were with Brazilian and Paraguayan activists. Soon, North American Indian activists and people from the Arctic, Oceania and Asia joined the work. Today, indigenous peoples of Russia and Africa are also involved in IWGIA's global network.

The Organisation

IWGIA is an international membership organisation whose core consists of an active membership base. The IWGIA members are concerned researchers, activists, students, and others with an interest in indigenous issues.

The board consists of seven members and is the highest governing body of IWGIA.

The secretariat is the executive body of the organisation. The secretariat is responsible for planning and carrying out the daily work. Communication and information to the members of IWGIA is taken care of by the secretariat.