



9 August 2014 - Greenland's Inuit and Finland, Norway and Sweden's Sami are among the world's indigenous people whose International Day is celebrated today on 9 August.

[The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples](#) comes at a critical moment as the world endeavours to meet the Millennium Development Goals, forge a new vision for sustainable development, and prepare the groundwork for the adoption of a new legal climate agreement – all by 2015.

“Indigenous peoples have a central interest in these objectives – and can act as powerful agents of progress,” says UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his message on the International Day.

“In order for them to contribute to our common future, we must secure their rights”.

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples was first proclaimed by the General Assembly in December 1994. The focus of this year's International Day is "Bridging the gap: implementing the rights of indigenous peoples".

The theme aims to highlight the importance of implementing the rights of indigenous peoples through policies and programmes at both national and international levels - working together towards this common goal with Governments, the United Nations system, indigenous peoples and other stakeholders.

A special event was held at UN Headquarters in New York yesterday (8 August) to celebrate the International day, featuring the UN Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly, and the Vice Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

The first [World Conference on Indigenous Peoples](#) will be held on 22-23 September 2014. The meeting will be an opportunity to share perspectives and best practices on the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples, including pursuing the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples establishes minimum standards for their survival, dignity, well-being and rights. But huge gaps remain between those ideals and the reality on the ground.

“As we prepare for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in September, I urge all Member States to work in full partnership with indigenous peoples and their representatives to improve their lives and opportunities,” says Ban Ki-moon in his message. “On this International Day for the World’s Indigenous Peoples, I call on all partners to join the United Nations in promoting and protecting their rights which are essential for our common future.”