

**EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

**Statement on expert seminar and inter-sessional meeting**

*Pretoria, South Africa*, *30 September to 4 October 2019*

The United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) held an expert-seminar hosted by the Centre for Human Rights, Faculty of Law, Pretoria University, South Africa, from 30 September to 1 October, and an inter-sessional meeting, from 2 to 4 October, Pretoria, South Africa.

The purpose of the seminar was to gather information for the EMRIP’s study on the, “Right to Land under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: A Human Rights focus” (resolution 33/25, para. 2a, of the Human Rights Council). The seminar provided an opportunity for exchange among academics, practitioners and other experts on this issue.

The purpose of the inter-sessional meeting was to plan for the EMRIP’s forthcoming activities including requests received for country engagement under its new mandate and related working methods and policies. Requests for country engagement include: repatriation of ceremonial objects; implementation of regional court decisions; implementation of Universal Periodic Review recommendations; eviction of indigenous peoples from their land; the protection of indigenous children; the implementation of legislation recognising indigenous peoples; and traditional fishing rights. Information on country engagement missions to be undertaken will be provided on the EMRIP’s webpage and reported upon during the EMRIP session from 8 to 12 June 2020.

The EMRIP decided to develop a report on the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, focusing on the repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains (resolution 33/25, para.2b, of the Human Rights Council). The EMRIP is thankful to the University of British Colombia, which will hold a seminar on this theme, in cooperation with the EMRIP, in March 2020.

Requests for inputs to the study on the “Right to Land under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: A Human Rights focus” and the report on repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains, have been announced on the EMRIP’s webpage. Drafts of these reports will be discussed and finalized by the EMRIP during its 13th session in June 2020, before being presented to the Human Rights Council during its 45nd session in September 2020.

The EMRIP decided that its annual study for 2021 (resolution 33/25, para. 2a) will focus on the rights of indigenous children, and its report for 2021 (resolution 33/25, para. 2b) will focus on self-determination, as expressed in the Declaration.

The EMRIP takes this opportunity to thank the University of Pretoria for its excellent collaboration in hosting the expert seminar.

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*The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) is a subsidiary body of the Human Rights Council mandated to provide the Council with expertise and advice on the rights of indigenous peoples as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and assist Member States, upon request, in achieving the ends of the Declaration through the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the rights of indigenous peoples.*