

Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 17th Session
Item 10: Future work of the Expert Mechanism, and follow up to thematic studies and advice
Khmers-Kampuchea Krom Federation
Speaker: Putheany Kim

Dear Madam Chairperson and Distinguished Colleagues,

On behalf of the Khmer-Krom people of the Mekong Delta, we would like to take this opportunity to recommend a future thematic study for EMRIP. We ask that states ensure active and effective participation in the discussion of sustainable development with the respect to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. With regards to the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development goals, the growing challenge we face today as indigenous brothers and sisters is climate change. Our sacred waters and territorial lands are adversely affected by eroding waters due to global warming and hotter weather affecting the way we use the land. A future thematic study we would like to purpose is “Climate Change and its Effects on The Environment and Indigenous Peoples”.

Relating to the environment and human rights, we believe there is important research and analysis that is crucial to promote and protect human rights of indigenous peoples. We believe that climate change and human rights dialogue has evolved since our initial studies and questionnaires in the UN Working Group on indigenous Peoples in 2004.

We believe a study on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and indigenous Peoples involvement is essential to examine the impact of climate change in the homelands of indigenous peoples from the Arctic to Oceania. I believe we can contribute to the common goal of protecting the global environment by cooperating with the Arctic region. The melting of polar ice caps contributes to rising sea levels, posing a grave threat to our indigenous Khmer-Krom communities in the Mekong Delta—a region already vulnerable to flooding due to its low-lying nature. As sea levels rise, saltwater intrusion contaminates freshwater supplies, jeopardizing agriculture and livelihoods. The consequences of floods and droughts become more severe, causing a lack of fresh water for our communities, disrupting agriculture, and displacing families. Our traditional ways of living are under threat. A series of studies and workshops should take place over multiple years that is hosted by indigenous peoples in the seven regions of the world so we can see and experience climate change firsthand.

Another recommendation focuses on human rights of indigenous peoples in the regional human rights mechanisms. A study should be conducted to review the legal cases already decided and also examine how indigenous peoples can engage with the regional commissions and courts from

the new ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights to the American and African Commissions and Courts along with the European Court of Human Rights. A workshop could bring together commissioners and indigenous peoples to discuss new developments in international human rights law.

The final recommendation is a study on the jurisprudence of the international human rights treaty bodies relating to the human rights of indigenous peoples. A workshop could also be conducted that brings together committee chairs and experts serving on the various committees along with indigenous peoples that have already engaged in the UN human rights treaty bodies.

Thank You