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EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Pursuant to resolution 12/13 of the Human Rights Council (HRC), the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) was mandated to prepare a study on “indigenous peoples and the right to participate in decision-making”. The EMRIP will submit a progress report on this subject to the Human Rights Council at its fifteenth session in 2010, as well as the final study at the eighteenth session of the HRC in 2011. The progress report will be discussed during the Expert Mechanism’s third annual session that will take place from 12 to 16 July 2010.

At the request of the EMRIP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) asked governments, indigenous peoples, NGOs, academics, UN mandate holders, UN agencies and institutions and any other relevant organizations to submit written submission to contribute to the study.

Members of the EMRIP participated in an international indigenous expert seminar organized by the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) and the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs in Chang Mai (Thailand) from 20 to 22 of January. The purpose of the seminar was to kick-start the work on the study. In addition, OHCHR organized a two-day Technical Workshop in Geneva that took

place on 23 and 24 March 2010 to further contribute to the draft progress report. Participation included four members of the Expert Mechanism, the Vice-Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and representatives of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the OHCHR, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, as well as indigenous representatives and academics.

In cooperation with IWGIA, OHCHR produced a promotional video on EMRIP. This video is available on OHCHR website.

Please note that registration to the third session of the EMRIP is now open.

More information available on the following link:<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/ExpertMechanism/index.htm>

INTERNATIONAL EXPERT MEETING—NHRIS

An International Expert Meeting on the Role of National Human Rights Institutions in Promoting the Implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples took place on 16-17 December 2009 in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting brought together selected national human rights institutions (NHRIs) from all regions to share good practices and to propose ways in which the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples could be invoked more regularly in the work of NHRIs. In addition, a number of indigenous peoples representatives took an active part in the meeting and provided their views and proposals as to the role of NHRIs in promoting the Declaration. Although the focus of the discussions was on action and challenges at the country-level, the meeting also provided an opportunity to move towards stronger engagement of NHRIs in the UN

mandates devoted to the implementation of the indigenous rights. The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people as well as representatives of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues made proposals as to how NHRIs could co-operate with these mandates and address indigenous peoples’ rights more consistently. In addition, the participants were invited to draw up a “road map” for 2010 and beyond, containing follow-up actions that various actors can pursue to enhance NHRIs’ engagement in the implementation of the Declaration.

More information available on the following link:<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/seminar.htm>

ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people participated in the third regional seminar on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that took place from 1 to 3 December 2009. This seminar was sponsored by the Regional Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Panama. Participants included Government agencies and indigenous organizations from the Caribbean region. The Special Rapporteur also undertook a visit to Ecuador from 7 to 9 December at the invitation of the Government. He provided technical assistance in the development of coordination and cooperation mechanisms between indigenous and ordinary justice as well as monitoring a dialogue with indigenous peoples in Ecuador to discuss the implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples guaranteed by the new Constitution.

More information available on the following link:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/rapporteur/>

UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTARY FUND FOR INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS

The 23rd session of the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund was held in Geneva from 8 to 12 February 2010.

In accordance with the mandate of the Fund, the Board considered applications for travel grants from representatives of indigenous organizations and communities to attend the 9th session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the 3rd session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Fund allocated 64 travel grants for the Permanent Forum session and 37 for the Expert Mechanism session.

More information available on the following link:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/about/funds/indigenous/>

CO-ORDINATION MEETING OF THE THREE MECHANISMS DEALING WITH INDIGENOUS ISSUES

On 15 January 2010, the three mechanisms dealing with indigenous issues, namely the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues as well as their Secretariats met in New York to discuss ways to enhance coordination of activities between their mandates. The meeting was co-organized by OHCHR and the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN ISOLATION OR INITIAL CONTACT: MISSION TO ECUADOR AND COLOMBIA

OHCHR Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Section undertook a mission to Ecuador and Colombia from 14 to 28 March 2010. The overall objective of this mission was to seek contributions from various stakeholders on draft guidelines developed by the OHCHR on indigenous peoples in isolation or in initial contact in the Amazon region. Consultations were organized in cooperation with the Governments of Ecuador and Colombia, indigenous peoples, NGOs and other experts. Two visits to regions where indigenous peoples in initial contact are located as well as consultations with UN agencies, the security forces, academics and NGOs also took place.

II. ACTIVITIES REGARDING MINORITIES

VISIT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXPERT ON MINORITY ISSUES TO COLOMBIA

The Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Ms. Gay McDougall, undertook an official visit to Colombia, between 1 and 12 February. During her visit, the Independent Expert had the opportunity to study a wide array of issues, challenges and barriers to the full realization of the rights of Afro-Colombians in rural and urban areas.

More information on: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/minorities/expert/index.htm>

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON MINORITIES

The Human Rights Council, in its Resolution A/HRC/RES/13/12 adopted on 25 March 2010, requested the High Commissioner to present an annual report to the Council containing information on relevant developments of the United Nations treaty bodies and mechanisms as well as on the activities undertaken by OHCHR at headquarters and in the field to promote and respect the provisions contained in the Declaration of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.

AFRODESCENDANTS PROJECT

The Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Section has supported since 2009 a project on the promotion of Afrodescendants' human rights in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru, aiming at strengthening the institutional capacity of Afrodescendant organizations in the Andean region to enable them to better defend their human rights. In this context, a national workshop in Peru and a regional human rights training of trainers' took place from 9 to 12 February 2010 in Lima, Peru in collaboration with OHCHR field presences in Bolivia, Ecuador and the regional office in Chile. A manual on minority rights as well as a compilation of recommendations by Treaty Bodies addressed to protect and promote the rights of Afrodescendants in those three countries were put together for the activity.

III. ACTIVITIES OF COMMON INTEREST

2010 INDIGENOUS AND MINORITY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMMES

The English speaking indigenous fellowship programme will take place at OHCHR Geneva from 12 April until 23 July. The following candidates will participate in the programme:

Ms. Cheryl Ann DEWITT, USA (Tlingit, Alaska)
Ms. Karen Wheturangi WALSH-TAPIATA, New Zealand (Maori)
Mr. Dev Kumar SUNUWAR, Nepal (Sunuwar)
Mr. Joram Jurgen USEB, Namibia (San)
Mr. Misiwaini QEREQERETABUA, Fiji (Itaukey)

The English speaking minority fellowship programme will take place at OHCHR Geneva from 12 April until 11 June. The following candidates will participate in the programme:

Mr. Muhammath Yamani YOOSUF LEBBE, Muslim from Sri Lanka
Ms. Nathalie AHANDA, Afro-descendant from France
Mr. Terhemem Benjamin UTIM, Christian from Nigeria
Ms. Ana GOMEZ BAOS, Roma from Colombia

The other linguistic versions of the 2010 Indigenous Fellowships will take place as follows:

Spanish speaking indigenous fellowship: 12 April - 25 June (University of Deusto Bilbao, Spain). 28 June - 23 July (OHCHR Geneva, Switzerland).

French speaking indigenous fellowship: 25 October - 19 November (OHCHR Geneva, Switzerland).

Russian speaking indigenous fellowship: 18 October - 12 November (Peoples Friendship University of Russian, Moscow, Russian Federation). 15 November - 10 December (OHCHR Geneva, Switzerland).

The other linguistic version of the 2010 Minority Fellowships will take place as follows:

Arabic speaking minority fellowship: 22 November - 17 December (OHCHR Geneva, Switzerland).

Deadlines for the 2011 Fellowship Programmes have already been posted on OHCHR Website.

You can find more information on the Indigenous Fellowship Programme on the following link:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/fellowship.htm>

For more information on the Minority Fellowship Programme, please visit the following link:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/minorities/fellowprog.htm>

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (CERD)

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) held its 76th session in Geneva from 15 February to 12 March 2010 during which it considered Argentina, Cambodia, Cameroon, Guatemala, Iceland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Monaco, the Netherlands, Panama and the Slovak Republic. Concluding observations and recommendations regarding the rights of indigenous peoples were addressed to Argentina; Cambodia; Japan; Panama; Guatemala and Cameroon. Concluding observations and recommendations regarding the rights of minorities and ethnic groups were addressed to Argentina, Cambodia, Japan, Panama, Kazakhstan, Netherlands and the Slovak Republic.

More information available on the following link:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/cerds76.htm>

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW)

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) held its 45th session in Geneva from 18 January to 5 February 2010 during which it considered the following countries: Botswana, Egypt, Malawi, Netherlands, Panama, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan. Concluding observations and recommendations regarding the rights of indigenous peoples were addressed to Panama. Concluding observations and recommendations regarding the rights of minorities and ethnic groups were addressed to Egypt, the Netherlands, Panama, Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates.

More information available on the following link:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/cedaws45.htm>

COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC)

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) held its 53rd session from 11 to 29 January 2010 in Geneva during which it considered the following countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mongolia, Norway, Paraguay and Tajikistan. Concluding observations and recommendations regarding the rights of indigenous peoples were addressed to Cameroun, Norway and Paraguay. Concluding observations and recommendations regarding the rights of minorities and ethnic groups were addressed to Burkina Faso, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mongolia and Tajikistan. In the same session the CRC also considered the following countries under the Optional Protocol (OP) to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography: Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia and Mongolia. Concluding observations and recommendations regarding the rights of indigenous children were addressed to Ecuador. Concluding observations and recommendations regarding the rights of minorities and ethnic groups were addressed to El Salvador and Mongolia. The following countries were considered under the OP to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict: Ecuador, Israel, Liechtenstein and Mongolia.

More information available on the following link:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/crcs53.htm>

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

The Human Rights Committee (CCPR) held its 98th session in New York from 8 to 26 March 2010 during which it considered the following countries: Mexico, Argentina, Uzbekistan and New Zealand. Concluding observations and recommendations regarding the rights of indigenous peoples were addressed to Mexico and Argentina. Concluding observations and recommendations regarding the rights of minorities and ethnic groups were addressed to New Zealand.

More information available on the following link:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/hracs98.htm>

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND MINORITIES ISSUES AT THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

The 13th session of the Human Rights Council took place in Geneva from 1 to 26 March 2010. During this session the fifth annual report of the Independent Expert on Minority Issues was presented. The report provides a summary of activities undertaken by the Independent Expert since the submission of her previous annual report. Over the last 12 months, the independent expert has undertaken three official country missions, to Kazakhstan, Canada and Colombia to consult on minority issues and consider national legislation, policy and practice relating to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.

Following Human Rights Council resolution 12/13, the reports of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people and of the EMRIP will be presented during the 15th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council, from 13 to 30 September 2010.

More information available on the following link:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/13session/>

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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL AND THE UPR

At its 13th regular session (1 to 26 March 2010), the Human Rights Council adopted the reports of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review on 16 countries: Albania, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Norway and Portugal. Observations and recommendations to countries regarding the rights of indigenous peoples were addressed to Cambodia, Norway, Dominica, Brunei Darussalam and Costa Rica. Observations and recommendations to countries regarding the rights of minorities and ethnic groups were addressed to Eritrea, the Dominican Republic, Cambodia, Norway, Albania, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Portugal, Bhutan, Dominica, Brunei Darussalam, Costa Rica, Equatorial Guinea and Ethiopia.

The 9th session of the UPR Working Group is scheduled to take place from 1 to 12 November 2010. The following countries will be reviewed: Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Maldives, Marshal Islands, Mauritania, Micronesia, Andorra, Bulgaria, Croatia, Honduras, Jamaica, Mongolia, Panama and United States of America.

The 10th session of the UPR Working Group is scheduled to take place in January 2011. Stakeholders are invited to submit their contributions by the following deadlines:

- 5 July 2010 for submissions on Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal.
- 12 July 2010 for submissions on Oman, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Australia,

IV. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

19 – 30 April 2010: Ninth (9th) Annual session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

26 – 30 April 2010. The 12th session of the Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW) will take place in Geneva. During the session the State report of Algeria will be considered.

26 April – 14 May 2010. The 44th session of the Committee Against Torture (CAT) will take place in Geneva. During the session State reports of the following countries will be considered: Austria, Cameroon, France, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

3 – 21 May 2010. The 44th session of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) will take place in Geneva. During the session State reports of the following countries will be considered: Algeria, Colombia, Mauritius, Kazakhstan and Afghanistan.

25 May-11 June 2010. The 54th session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) will take place in Geneva. During the session State reports of the following countries will be considered: Argentina, Belgium, FYR of Macedonia, Grenada, Guatemala, Japan, Nigeria, Tunisia.

12-30 July 2010. The 46th session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) will take place in New York. During the session State reports of the following countries will be considered: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Russian Federation, Turkey.

12-16 July 2010: Third (3rd) annual session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Issues.

12-30 July 2010. The 99th Session of the Human Rights Committee will take place in Geneva. During the session State reports of the following countries will be considered: Cameroon, Colombia, Estonia and Israel.

2-27 August 2010. The 77th session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) will take place in Geneva. During the session State reports of the following countries will be examined: Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, France, Iran, Morocco, Republic of Slovenia, Romania and Uzbekistan.