



SOUTH AFRICAN STATEMENT
EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
TENTH SESSION
NEW MANDATE OF THE EMRIP
10 JULY 2017
GENEVA

My delegation joins all previous speakers in congratulating your appointment and the co-chairs of the Session.

We are encouraged by the increased participation of Indigenous Peoples which should be maintained in all relevant structures of the UN on issues affecting them, their plight and welfare. South Africa welcomes this discussion on the revised mandate of EMRIP as set out in Resolution 33/25. The enhanced activities of EMRIP include providing expertise and advice to both States and indigenous peoples with a view to support the vision of a ensuring a better life for indigenous

peoples. The proposed methods of work should thus correlate with Resolution 33/25. The EMRIP sessions have already provided a unique platform for facilitating dialogue among various stakeholders and we are hopeful that this will be strengthened in the coming sessions. The three United Nations bodies have different roles and complement each other to ensure improved recognition and respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and their dignity. The golden thread that runs through these different mandates is the Declaration that inspires Indigenous Peoples throughout the world.

Mr Chairperson,

The South African Constitution is predicated on the fundamental notion of non-discrimination and equality and forms the basis for restoration of the dignity, integrity and the selfworth of our people, including Indigenous Peoples. It serves to unite out diverse cultural communities to be able to realize the ideal of "unity in diversity". In implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, South Africa is informed by the imperative need to implement policies and programmes aimed at addressing the inequalities of the past and ensure a better life for all South Africans. There are significant achievements by the South African Government in the last ten years. Key among them is the progress made on the Traditional Khoi-San Leadership Bill which seeks to regonise the Khoi-San or indigenous leaders, structures and communities.

Finally Chairperson, South Africa will continue to support the work of the EMRIP and looks forward to the deliberations during the coming days.

I thank you.