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Structural
Analysis of
Cultural
Systems

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
First session

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Statement on Item 4

Methodologies for Research

Thank you, Chair

According to resolution 6/36 of the Human Rights Council, indigenous rights have to be dealt with by focusing mainly on studies and research. Therefore, I would like to briefly point out some aspects that are central for methodological considerations.

Firstly, the validity of studies on indigenous issues is the greater, the more they take the reality of indigenous life into consideration.

Secondly, indigenous contexts have been destabilised to different extents by the dominant global culture.

Thirdly, depending on the fragility of the indigenous social system, research itself can contribute to destabilisation, if the invasiveness of its methods is not minimised.

Therefore, the more intact an indigenous social system is, the more it is necessary to carry out the investigations in an integrative, non-destabilising way. The need for carefully designed research methodologies is also given by Articles 8 and 31 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which grants the right of the protection of indigenous culture.

As we have demonstrated in several field studies of our own, the invasiveness of researchers can not only be minimised, but an integrative methodology can even contribute to the re-stabilisation of indigenous cultures. I would like to point out that such a re-stabilisation also conforms to Article 11 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Thank you, Chair