

EMRIP12 – 15-19 July, 2019
Item 3 - Intervention
Study and advice on Indigenous peoples' rights in the context of borders,
migration and displacement

FINAL AS DELIVERED

Woliwon, Woligisket. Thank you. It is a beautiful day Madame Chair , first I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election today.

The Government of Canada recognizes the challenges that borders can pose to Indigenous peoples in Canada and around the world, with implications for many communities in their daily mobility, traditional practices and economic opportunities. Borders can also affect family and cultural ties with Indigenous communities in neighbouring countries.

We welcome this study which provides a valuable overview of the nexus between migration and Indigenous peoples and offers important advice to States.

It encourages States and international and regional organizations to develop innovative solutions in partnership with Indigenous peoples.

It underlines that participation and dialogue are essential.

In the spirit of Article 36 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and in keeping with its commitment to a renewed relationship with Indigenous peoples, the Government of Canada is working closely with Indigenous communities to address their concerns relating to our international borders.

Drawing on an eight-month engagement process with representatives from more than 100 Indigenous communities located near the Canada-United States border, the Government of Canada is implementing a number of initiatives to help address border-related challenges.

- Strengthened training, recruitment and outreach activities by the Canada Border Services Agency; and
- The addition of a machine-readable zone to the Secure Certificate of Indian Status (SCIS) to help facilitate border crossing for individuals who use this card as identification at land and sea ports of entry between Canada and the United States.

These actions illustrate the study's advice to work with Indigenous peoples to ensure that government officials are representative and receive training and that we adopt measures to better identify Indigenous people at the borders.

But there is more to be done.

Canada has committed to a longer-term process with concerned First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities to discuss potential solutions to a number of more complex border crossing issues.

Canada will continue to review the analysis and the advice of the Expert Mechanism's study as we continue discussions with Indigenous peoples and States on this important issue.