



Addressee: Member States

Paragraph #43 Session #5 (2006)

Full Text

The Permanent Forum recommends that social and environmental impact assessments, including human rights impact assessments and poverty impact assessments, of financial investments and trade agreements directly affecting indigenous peoples be undertaken, and that the resources for those assessments be provided by the sources of the investments and the parties to trade agreements.

Comments

The Government of Switzerland states: “a) In its current form, the recommendation in paragraph 43 is confusing and needs further clarification. Switzerland has strong reservations concerning this paragraph. First of all, it is unclear whether it refers to private and/or public financial investments, and whether those investments are made by States or international organizations. Furthermore, it is not clear why reference is made exclusively to financial investments, given that there are other forms of investment that can affect the interests of indigenous peoples to a similar degree. b) As far as trade agreements are concerned, the basic objective is that all measures in the social and environmental fields do not constitute hidden protectionism and that they are not contrary to the principle of national treatment. All measures taken in this field thus have to be consistent with the rules of the World Trade Organization, of which Switzerland is a member. Switzerland asks for clarifications on the creation, via the current formulation, of a possible form of conditionality in this field. c) Regarding officially supported export credits, Switzerland follows the

environmental guidelines (“common approaches”) of the Export Credit Group of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The guidelines include the requirement that, before taking decisions on officially supported export credits, the members of the Group identify and evaluate the environmental impact of projects, including the impact on indigenous people. If an environmental impact assessment is needed, the applicant (in this case the exporter) is responsible for providing one.”

Area of Work

Economic and Social Development