



Addressee: Member States

Paragraph #83 Session #8 (2009)

Full Text

The Permanent Forum recommends that States establish, where it does not already exist, a national dialogue with indigenous peoples on human rights, based on the Declaration.

Comments

Finland reports (2010): The status of the Sámi as an indigenous people was recognized in the Constitution of Finland as part of the so-called the fundamental rights reform carried out in 1995. According to Section 17 of the Constitution, the Sámi, as an indigenous people, have the right to maintain and develop their own language and culture. The word “culture” has a broad meaning in this context and thus covers also the traditional livelihoods of the Sámi, such as reindeer herding, fishing and hunting.

Sections 17, subsection 3 and Section 121, subsection 4 of the Constitution safeguard the Sámi people’s linguistic and cultural self-government within the Sámi Homeland area. Detailed provisions on the self-government are included in the Act on the Sámi Parliament.

According to Section 5 of the Act on the Sámi Parliament, the task of the Sámi Parliament is to look after the Sámi language and culture, as well as to take care of matters relating to the status of the Sámi as an indigenous people. For this end, the Sámi Parliament may take initiatives and make proposals to the authorities, as well as issue statements. In matters pertaining to its tasks, the Sámi Parliament represents the Sámi in national and international connections. The negotiation obligation and the promotion of the rights of the Sámi people as

an indigenous people is discussed above under Recommendation 19. The Sámi Parliament is represented in various administrative boards, working groups and other organs dealing with matters that concern also the Sámi people or the status of the Sámi people as an indigenous people.

In addition, the Sámi people are heard in the national Parliament with regard to Government Bills or other matters affecting them. According to Section 37 of the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament, the Sámi are heard in the context of the preparation of a matter by a parliamentary committee, because at this stage it is still possible for them to influence the subject matter of the legislative proposal.

Spain reports (E/C.19/2010/12/Add.9) that the Spanish Government provided support in the amount of 100,000 euros for the El Salvador Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman project, entitled “Strengthening of the Permanent Committee on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman”. The aim of this project is to strengthen organizations for promotion and protection of indigenous peoples’ rights in El Salvador and to promote their participation in political activities and their involvement in pursuing efforts to ensure recognition of their rights.

Similarly, Spain made a contribution of 120,000 euros in support of the Fray Bartolomé de las Casas Centre for Human Rights proposal entitled “Capacity building

for the defence and promotion of the human rights of indigenous peoples in Chiapas (Mexico)”. The Centre won the eighteenth Bartolomé de las Casas Prize, awarded by the Spanish Secretariat of State for International Cooperation and Casa de América.

Area of Work

Human rights