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Addressee: Member States

Paragraph #49 Session #12 (2013)

Full Text

Recalling the recommendations made in paragraphs 4 to 11 of the report on its tenth session (E/2011/43-E/C.19/2011/14 and Corr.1) and the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Permanent Forum expresses alarm regarding the contemporary application of the erroneous and discredited “doctrine of discovery” and its underlying assumptions, which promote the purported inferiority of indigenous peoples. This doctrine was applied in June 2012 by the British Columbia Court of Appeal to deny the land rights and title of the Tsilhqot’in to their traditional lands and territories by stating that “European explorers considered that by virtue of the ‘principle of discovery’ they were at liberty to claim territory in North America on behalf of their sovereigns”. The Forum strongly recommends that States, human rights bodies and judiciaries denounce the “doctrine of discovery” and discontinue its use and application.

Area of Work

Human rights