**EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

***What is the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP)?***

The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) was established by the Human Rights Council in 2007 in its [resolution 6/36](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/6/36) as a subsidiary expert body of the Council. The mandate was amended in 2016 by Council [resolution 33/25](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/HRC/RES/33/25). The Expert Mechanism is now made up of seven independent experts on the rights of indigenous peoples and it provides the Human Rights Council with expertise and advice on the rights of indigenous peoples as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and assists Member States, upon request, in achieving the ends of the Declaration through the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the rights of indigenous peoples.

***How are the independent experts appointed?***

The independent experts are appointed in the same way as other special procedure mandate holders, but for a three-year term renewable once.

***Which regions are represented in the Expert Mechanism?***

In its resolution 33/25, the Human Rights Council decided that the Expert Mechanism would consist of seven independent experts, one from each of the seven indigenous sociocultural regions. These regions are:

* Africa;
* Asia;
* Central and South America, and the Caribbean;
* the Arctic;
* Central and Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia;
* North America;
* the Pacific.

***How are the seven indigenous sociocultural regions defined?***

The seven indigenous sociocultural regions were determined following broad consultations with indigenous peoples during the process to establish the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic and Social Council established by its resolution 2000/22. There is no definition of these regions stating which Member States belong to which region. The seven regions are determined so as to give broad representation to the world’s indigenous peoples.

***Who is indigenous?***

The question of who is or is not an indigenous group has been difficult to address. There are some countries that say they have no indigenous peoples living within their borders, while groups of people living in those countries who have distinct languages and cultures consider themselves indigenous to the lands on which they live, and are actively seeking to protect their cultures and their right to their lands and resources. A description of indigenous peoples found in the study by Special Rapporteur José Martínez Cobo is often cited:

*“Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems.”*

This historical continuity, he says, may consist of occupation of ancestral lands, common ancestry, common culture, language, or other relevant factors. On an individual basis, an indigenous person is one who identifies himself or herself as belonging to such a group, and who is accepted by the group.

***For which vacancy/region should interested candidates apply?***

Candidates should be experts of indigenous origin or experts with recognized competence and experience in the rights of indigenous peoples of a certain indigenous sociocultural region. Candidates are requested to indicate, in their Word application form, for which indigenous sociocultural region they are applying and to include in the motivation letter why they are applying for the specific indigenous sociocultural region. Candidates may submit up to three reference letters in support of their application. Candidates are encouraged to consider submitting letters from organizations or entities representing indigenous peoples.