

# INDIAN LAW RESOURCE CENTER

CENTRO DE RECURSOS JURÍDICOS PARA LOS PUEBLOS INDÍGENAS

## 24th SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM 3: GENERAL DEBATE

In conjunction with more than 40 civil society organizations, the Indian Law Resource Center asks the Council to consider actions aimed at specifying the international obligations and responsibilities of international financial institutions - including multilateral development banks - for human rights violations that stem from projects they finance.

Often, poor and marginalized communities and individuals suffer human rights violations as a result of these projects. For instance, many Maya Achi indigenous communities have been massacred and evicted from their lands as a result of a hydroelectric project financed by the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. We are all aware that, today, many communities are exposed to similar situations. However, these institutions consider themselves exempt from the application of international human rights law.

It is necessary that binding legal rules be established in a clear and direct manner, in reference to and that apply to these institutions. All actors involved in economic and development processes must be held accountable before the law. These financial institutions, which were created and are governed by States, must not be the exception.

Therefore, we urge the Council to address this issue within the framework of a panel discussion in one of its future sessions. Such a panel must look at the connection between the activities of financial institutions and their responsibility to ensure that human rights are respected and protected. The options available for States, through the work of the Council, to specify clear legal rules that apply to these institutions must be considered in a constructive dialogue. These issues and recommendations have been addressed in written statements submitted to the Council.