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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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Agenda item 23

RIGHTS OF PERSONS BELONGING TO NATIONAL, ETHNIC,  
RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

Comments received from Governments  
pursuant to Commission resolution 14 A (XXXIV)

Addendum

REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

[Original: Spanish]  
[4 March 1980]

The Government of Panama considers that the provisions contained in articles 19, 85, 102, 113 and 116 of the National Constitution of the Republic of Panama guarantee and protect the rights of minorities.

We consider that the following stipulations laid down in our Constitution may serve as a basis for the discussion of a declaration on the rights of minorities:

"Article 19. There shall be no personal prerogatives or privileges or discrimination based on race, birth, social class, sex, religion, or political ideas.

Article 85. The State recognizes and respects the ethnic identity of national indigenous communities and shall carry out programmes to develop the material, social and spiritual values of their individual cultures. It shall establish an institution for the study, preservation and publicizing of such communities and their languages and for the promotion of their all-round development as human groups.

Article 102. The State shall provide education and instruction programmes for indigenous groups, since they have their own cultural patterns, in order to ensure their active participation in civic affairs.

Article 113. The State shall pay special attention to rural and indigenous communities with a view to promoting their economic, social and political participation in national life.

Article 116. The State undertakes to reserve for indigenous communities the land they need and guarantees them the collective ownership thereof in order to ensure their economic and social well-being. The law shall regulate the procedures to be followed for this purpose and the boundaries within which the private appropriation of land is prohibited."

On the basis of these general principles, the Government of Panama is laying the foundations for the formulation of a national policy relating to indigenous communities.