



Press Release

Maastricht/Geneva, 17 October 2011

Principles on Extra-Territorial Human Rights Obligations Adopted

The Maastricht Centre for Human Rights of Maastricht University and the International Commission of Jurists are pleased to announce the adoption of the **Maastricht Principles on Extra-Territorial Obligations (ETOs) of States in the area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**. These international legal principles clarify the human rights obligations of States beyond their own borders.

The Principles cover all economic, social and cultural rights, including among others the right to just and favourable conditions of work, social security, an adequate standard of living, food, housing, water, sanitation, health, education and participation in cultural life.

The Maastricht Principles constitute the outcome of the deliberations of a group of 40 distinguished experts in international law and human rights from all regions of the world. The expert group includes present and former members of international human rights treaty bodies; present and former special procedures mandate holders of the United Nations Human Rights Council; and leading academic and civil society legal experts. The experts met in Maastricht from 26 to 28 September 2011 at a conference co-convened by the Maastricht University and the ICJ and considered legal analysis conducted over a period of four years by the ETO Consortium, consisting of academic, civil society and other independent experts on economic, social and cultural rights.

The Principles take as their starting point the conviction that the human rights of individuals and peoples are necessarily impacted substantially in both negative and positive ways by the conduct of States other than their own. The Principles affirm that States are obliged to cooperate and assist other states in realizing economic, social and cultural rights of all people. They also make clear that States may be held responsible for the adverse effects that their conduct brings to the enjoyment of rights beyond their own borders.

The experts stressed that economic globalization and the increasing shift in decision-making competency and authority to international bodies were placing great strain on the capacity of each State to realize human rights of their own nationals and residents, and that all States acting singly or jointly must act to ensure that human rights do not become a casualty of this trend.

The Maastricht Principles complement and build on the 1986 Limburg Principles for the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on the 1997 Maastricht Guidelines on Violations of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. They constitute a significant contribution towards the achievement of the historic promise made by States in the Charter of the United Nations to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

The text of the Maastricht Principles is available at:
www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/humanrights and www.icj.org