

## PRESS RELEASE

### **South African lawyer for human rights visits Europäische Akademie GmbH: *Lecture on “Equity in Governance – Challenges for Indigenous Peoples’ Trusts”***

Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler, 20 July 2009. – On 20 July Professor Doris Schröder, Ph.D., and Roger Chennells, LL.M., gave a lecture at the Europäische Akademie GmbH on “Equity in Governance – Challenges for Indigenous Peoples’ Trusts”.

Benefit sharing is a technical term which was popularised by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The CBD was the first international treaty to recognise that the conservation of biodiversity is a “common concern of humankind”. The custodians of biodiversity are often indigenous communities in developing countries whose rights were strengthened by CBD Parties when it was decided that access to traditional knowledge should be subject to prior informed consent and benefit sharing.

Traditional knowledge is an important resource in the health care sector, which has led to significant research leads for pharmaceutical and food supplement industries. Following the adoption of the CBD, indigenous communities can expect a share in the benefits of such research, often in the form of royalties paid into trust funds. Two such examples are the trust funds of the San and the Kani people. Despite laudable intentions to increase equity for all through benefit sharing, such trusts often face the considerable difficulties. The lecture introduced the two cases and gave an assessment of the challenges faced.

Schröder is Professor of Moral Philosophy and Director of the Centre for Professional Ethics at the University of Central Lancashire (England) and Professorial Fellow at the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics at the University of Melbourne (Australia). From July to September 2009 Schröder is visiting the Europäische Akademie GmbH for a sabbatical as a research fellow. Her fields of interest are: international justice, mainly with respect to benefit sharing with developing

**Kontakt für die Presse:**

Europäische Akademie zur Erforschung von Folgen  
wissenschaftlich-technischer Entwicklungen Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler GmbH  
Geschäftsführer: Professor Dr. Dr. h.c. C. F. Gethmann  
Amtsgericht Koblenz HRB 13717  
Wilhelmstraße 56 • 53474 Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler  
Telefon: (0 26 41) 97 33 00 • Telefax: (0 26 41) 97 33 20

**Friederike Wütscher / Katharina Mader**  
friederike.wuetscher@ea-aw.de  
katharina.mader@ea-aw.de  
www.europaeische-akademie-aw.de

countries and access to essential medicines, and human rights to health as well as applied ethics, in particular global and food ethics.

Chennells is founding partner of Chennells Albertyn, a firm practising human rights law in Stellenbosch and Cape Town. For over 15 years, Chennells has been assisting indigenous communities around the world (e.g. South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Australia, Jamaica) with their rights to land, heritage and intellectual property. He has been legal advisor to the San peoples since 2002. Chennells holds human rights awards from the British and the US American government and has represented indigenous communities at the United Nations.

*The Europäische Akademie zur Erforschung von Folgen wissenschaftlich-technischer Entwicklungen Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler gGmbH was founded in 1996 by the Bundesland Rhineland-Palatinate (Land Rheinland-Pfalz) and the German Aerospace Center (Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt e.V. – DLR). Managing director of the company as well as the director of the academy is Professor Dr. phil. Dr. phil.h.c. Carl Friedrich Gethmann, who is a full professor of applied philosophy at the Universität Duisburg-Essen. The Europäische Akademie is concerned with the scientific study of the consequences of scientific and technological advance for individual and social life and for the natural environment. The main focus is on the examination of foreseeable mid- and long-term processes that are especially influenced by natural- and engineering sciences and the medical disciplines. As an independent scientific institution, the Europäische Akademie pursues a dialogue with politics and society.  
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