

Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Statement by Samia Slimane, Human Rights Officer, Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Section, OHCHR and Broddi Sigurdarson, Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

BRODDI SPEAKS: Thank you Chair and congratulations on your election as the Chair of the Expert Mechanism.

OHCHR and DESA are working together on the follow-up to the outcome document of the World Conference which remains a priority for us.

One of the most important elements of the outcome document is the call to develop and implement national action plans to achieve the ends of the Declaration.

Several UN entities are providing support to the development and implementation of these action plans and we are also doing our part. Building on OHCHR's extensive experience in supporting national action plans, including action plans on human rights and on combatting racial discrimination, we are currently developing a guidance note for States on national action plans to achieve the ends of the Declaration. This guidance, while specifically designed for States, will also be useful to policy makers carrying out a variety of measures related to indigenous peoples.

We are developing this guidance note in close consultation with indigenous peoples and other stakeholders. In June of this year, we disseminated a questionnaire to indigenous peoples, States and National Human Rights Institutions, which aimed to collect practical examples and good practices on national action plans, national strategies and national development frameworks. A selection of the responses received to the questionnaire will be included in the guidance note in order to provide further practical guidance. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the stakeholders, in particular the indigenous peoples, who took the time to respond to the questionnaire.

A second round of consultations will take place in August of this year. We encourage all stakeholders to contribute to the development of the guidance note by participating in this second round of consultations. Please regularly check the OHCHR and DESA webpage on indigenous peoples for updates on this consultation.

SAMIA SPEAKS: Mr. Chair,

A national action plan can be an invaluable tool for States to give effect to their international human rights obligations in relation to promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples and therefore achieving the ends of the Declaration. While the process and content of national action plans need to be tailored for specific country situations, there are several common features that should, in our view, be reflected in all efforts to draw up national action plans to achieve the ends of the Declaration.

Let us briefly mention four such factors:

First, all articles in the Declaration are interconnected and important to ensuring respect and equality for indigenous peoples. For this reason, it is important that the national action plans reflect a broad range of articles in the Declaration from land rights to self-determination and the principle of free, prior and informed consent.

Second, the national action plans should reflect the fact that the Declaration is an integral part of the larger normative framework for human rights. This means, for example, that the action plans should take into account the findings and recommendations of international human rights mechanisms in so far as they relate to the rights of indigenous peoples, such as the human rights treaty bodies, special rapporteurs and the UPR process.

Third, the participation of indigenous peoples in all stages of developing and implementing the national action plan is essential. This participation must go well beyond requests for inputs and consultation, and involve true participation that always respects indigenous peoples' own decision-making processes.

Fourth, national action plans should take into account the concerns of those indigenous peoples whose rights and participation have all too often been overlooked. This requires close partnership, for example, with indigenous peoples with disabilities, indigenous youth and indigenous women.

Mr. Chair,

We look forward to working with the Expert Mechanism to build plans that lead to true action to achieve the ends of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.