

PF17 Pasi Pöysäri Item 3 0427



PERMANENT MISSION OF FINLAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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Joint statement by the Nordic Countries
at the 16th session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Follow-up on the recommendations of the Permanent Forum: (Item 3)
(a) Empowerment of Indigenous women
(b) Indigenous Youth

Addressed by

Mr. Pasi Pöysäri
Minister-Counsellor
Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations

New York, 27 April 2017

(check against delivery)

Chairperson,

On behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark together with Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country Finland, I would like to thank the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for its continued attention to the empowerment of Indigenous women as well as to indigenous youth.

We welcome and applaud the contribution of women and youth, including from our own region, the Arctic, also here in the Permanent Forum. Their participation will help to ensure that the work of the UN is based on a holistic view of their situation. While working to enable the full participation of indigenous women and youth in society, it is crucial to be attentive to their aspirations and needs.

Indigenous women are active agents of change. They also play an important role in passing on indigenous culture and language to future generations. The active participation of indigenous women, in all sectors including governance, should be seen as an opportunity and a great asset.

We welcome that the UN System-Wide Action Plan to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes the role of Indigenous women. The plan is firmly rooted in a human rights based approach and gender equality, which must also be carried forward in its implementation.

To ensure true empowerment of everyone, the differential impacts of policies and programmes on women and men and boys and girls must be considered. Identifying and addressing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, as well as addressing the causes and consequences of violence against Indigenous women and girls, goes to the heart of promoting gender equality and empowerment. Collaborative research can play an important role in informing policy.

Attention must be given to the protection of their rights, including indigenous women's sexual and reproductive health and rights. It is important to acknowledge that the possibility for women, including indigenous women, to freely make informed decisions over their own bodies is crucial for ensuring health, well-being and empowerment. For actions to be successful those Indigenous women and girls affected need to be meaningfully involved in the planning process. Furthermore, indigenous men and boys need to be engaged in the promotion of gender equality.

Beyond the UN forums on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, we encourage also other UN bodies to address the empowerment of Indigenous women. It is central to promote their participation in decision-making processes at all levels. In this regard, the dialogues focusing on Indigenous women both at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and in the Human Rights Council have been encouraging steps to address Indigenous Peoples' rights comprehensively.

Thank you.