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Half-day panel discussion on Indigenous Peoples
Human Rights Council 27th Session, 17 September, 2014
Contribution of ESTONIA

Mr. President,
Distinguished panelists,
Dear colleagues,

Estonia would like to thank the (Deputy) High Commissioner for Human Rights for her opening address, and the panelists for the ensuing insightful discussion.

Estonia acknowledges the importance of today's topic devoted to the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples in disaster risk reduction.

We emphasise the indigenous peoples right to participate in decision-making in matters that affect them, as stipulated in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. That applies also while planning risk reduction, prevention and preparedness initiatives.

In this context we cannot ignore the man-made disasters that are the result of industrialization of lands used traditionally by indigenous peoples without their free prior and informed consent. Especially extractive industries have the most negative impact on indigenous peoples' traditional ways of life and rights. The connection between the industrialization of indigenous peoples' traditional lands and disasters is most obvious. The ^{more}reckless is the attitude of industrial companies towards the indigenous peoples' rights the bigger is the risk to have an environmental damage and also disasters. At the same time these are the risks that could be most easily reduced by involving indigenous peoples already in the planning phase of the projects that affect them.

In this regard we commend the efforts of the OHCHR in facilitating dialogue between indigenous peoples and Governments on issues concerning land, territories and resources and welcome technical assistance provided. We also praise the extensive work of the special rapporteur on the issue of extractive industries.

However we are of the opinion that awareness-raising of indigenous peoples rights needs to be intensified as well as their full engagement in all the spheres affecting them, including disaster risk reduction.

There are definitely good practices on the matter that we hope could be of great value in the future.

Thank you!