

9th session of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
Geneva, 11 – 15 July 2016

Arctic Indigenous Caucus Intervention on agenda item 6: **“Human rights of indigenous peoples in relation to business enterprises”**

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Thank you Mr. Chair allowing me to speak to this important item on human rights of indigenous peoples in relation to business enterprises. I'm speaking on behalf of the Arctic Indigenous Caucus.

As the outset, I want to draw your attention to the fact that the outcome resolution of the UN World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014 in its paragraphs 23 and 24 mentioned major development projects, transnational corporations, business enterprises and extractive industries operating within the indigenous peoples lands and territories in relation to the rights of indigenous peoples. Among others the paragraphs also talk about that the states intend to work with indigenous peoples to address the impact or potential impact on them of major development projects, including those involving the activities of extractive industries, including with the aim of managing risks appropriately. One important point is also the responsibility of transnational corporations and other business enterprises to respect all applicable laws and international principles and operate transparently and in a socially and environmentally responsible manner. The states also commit themselves to take further steps, as appropriate, to prevent abuses of the rights of indigenous peoples.

In this regard, we want to recommend to EMRIP that they do efforts to work for implementation of these two important paragraphs which we feel are very important. The Arctic Indigenous Caucus wants to draw your attention to the following principles with regards to the agenda item.

Recognizing the huge and growing interest in exploiting and exploring the rich arctic reserves of living and non-living resources, the Arctic Indigenous Caucus encourage all businesses, investors, human rights movements, environmental organisations and businesses, animal rights movements, religious societies and all others interested in involving themselves in activities within or outside of the Arctic, to pay attention to some main principles:

Every resource development activity in the Arctic must be grounded in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP). Resource development on indigenous lands directly engages indigenous peoples' right to self-determination, and many other provisions of the UNDRIP. Central to the Arctic indigenous peoples is the requirement that the indigenous peoples must be active and equal partners in policy-making and decision-making affecting their homelands. Essential is that every resource development project is based on the principles of *Free, Prior and Informed Consent*.

It is also essential to the Arctic indigenous peoples that all resource development projects are securing a respectful and proper handling of historic, ancestral, religious or symbolic areas on land and water. All resource development projects must secure a fair share for the indigenous peoples and their homelands. Arctic indigenous peoples expect that all resource development projects will contribute to an improvement in both social and material well-being of the indigenous peoples. This includes that revenues derived from all phases of resource development should be distributed in a

fair and visible way, which includes funding for unplanned or unintended environmental consequences, for negative impacts and for improvement of living standards and overall well-being.