

Statement and Recommendations on the Protection of Northern Indigenous peoples in Russia

Made by Greenpeace Russia and The Rescue The Pechora River Committee (Russia)

Dear Chairman, dear colleagues. I represent two organizations Greenpeace and The Rescue the Pechora River Committee which presents the interests of local communities and Komi indigenous people who practice traditional land use in the Pechora river basin.

Russian Federation abstained The Declaration in spite of numerous problems with indigenous peoples right including the right to the protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands and resources (Art. 29.1) For example for a few years we have campaigned against numerous oil spills in Russia reaching 1.5 million tons a year. Every year a few hundred thousand tons of oil products ends up in the Arctic ocean via Northern rivers.

The same situation is happening with coal exploration in Kemerovo province where the Shor and the Teleut people live and lose their homelands because of new coal mining.

Indigenous people lose their culture sacral sites constantly, as is the case now in Western Siberia at Imlor and Numto lakes.

In its 2010 report the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights of indigenous people in Russia recommended that “The federal legislature should develop standards and models for consultation mechanisms between indigenous peoples and industrial and extractive industries...”, but these recommendations were not implemented.

And situation is getting worse.

We recommend to Expert Mechanism Members and Special Rapporteur to take into account in their reports **the issues** affecting the Northern indigenous communities in Russia. In particular we draw your attention to the following issue:

1. the need to replace leaking oil pipelines and to stop activities of coal, gas and oil companies dramatically destroying nature landscape;
2. the need to avoid amendments to the Russian federal law “On the territories for indigenous traditional use...” and to guarantee that indigenous representatives should be fully involved in the development of industrial projects that affect their interests before plans for construction are finalized which corresponds to Art. 8b and 26 of UN Declaration on the rights of Indigenous people;
3. the need to dismiss the industrial development plans including oil exploration on the most valuable territories for indigenous communities, including the “Numto” natural park in Khanti-Mansiyski Region. Ironically this natural park was mentioned in Report of the Special Rapporteur for Russia in 2010 as a positive example of a territory free from industrial exploration. But since that time this natural park was open for oil exploration after 2010.

Dear Chairman, dear colleagues! I just got a call from the Pechora Rescue Committee. They say that new media attack began against them. They accused of acting against Russia in favor of foreign states, including Switzerland. Unfortunately, this is a very typical situation. In this room, I see my colleagues from Russia who defend the rights of indigenous peoples and who lost their

jobs and even received a threat of physical harm to their families because of their strong position. To be fair, this situation occurs not only in Russia, but also in other nations, such as the United States where we saw a controversy over the Dakota Access Pipeline.

I would like to address to representatives of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Russian parliament who take part at the session and say that this situation is unacceptable. Believe me, the main thing that indigenous peoples would like to have is pure water, clean land and guarantee to the next generations the choice of how to live.

I would like to return to the idea of Dr. Albert K. Barume who yesterday: “we need trust, we need a dialogue”. We have a huge gap between the state and business, on the one hand, and the indigenous peoples on the other hand. And we must fulfill this gap as quickly as possible. We believe we are ready for such a dialog.

Thank you!