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NORWAY

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Fifth Session**

Item 3

**Special theme: The Millennium Development Goals
and the Indigenous Peoples: Redefining the Goals**

STATEMENT BY

**Mr. Johan Mikkel Sara
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Thank you, Madame Chair,

My delegation would like to emphasize that a **rights based approach** is fundamental to the development of strategies for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

With the Millennium Development Goals, the world has an historic opportunity to make real progress towards reducing poverty. Norway, however, is concerned that the general framework for development that exists today, which includes the MDGs and national poverty reduction strategies, does not explicitly address the poverty situation of indigenous peoples and poverty structured along ethnic lines. This development framework, moreover, does not address the obstacles that indigenous peoples face in achieving their fundamental rights / social, economic and cultural rights.

It is of vital importance that issues relating to finding solutions to indigenous peoples poverty are included in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) that are to be the main tools to reduce poverty and achieve the MDGs in the poorest countries. At the moment few, if any of these PRSPs address the obstacles indigenous peoples meet when it comes to **participation**.

The MDGs cannot be understood without the Millennium Declaration, which recognizes and reaffirms human rights treaties. In short, the MDGs cannot be achieved without a **rights based approach to development, including the right to land and resources** with the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples. Without such an approach, indigenous peoples may be left out of achieving the MDGs.

Madame Chair,

Meaningful and effective participation of indigenous peoples in decision-making processes is essential for achieving **good governance**. Indigenous peoples' participation is of fundamental importance for ensuring that their rights and interests are protected.

Norway fully supports the guiding principles for addressing the issues of the MDGs, indigenous peoples and good governance, as they are presented in the report from the International Expert Group Meeting on this topic in January this year. Of many important areas in this report, I would like to concentrate on the issue of full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in matters concerning their lives.

The **ILO Convention No. 169** is an important reference point for good governance and partnership. The Convention may be seen as a tool for dialogue between indigenous peoples and governments, as it puts special emphasis on government's obligations to follow the principles of consultation and indigenous peoples' right to participation.

The draft UN Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples also underscores the principle of full and effective participation of indigenous peoples. Norway is of the opinion that the adoption of the draft declaration, however imperfect, will help to promote the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples worldwide. Once a declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples is adopted,

it can potentially serve as a comprehensive framework for **partnership** between States and indigenous peoples.

The issue of good governance is explicit in the eighth and final goal of the MDGs: “**Develop a Global Partnership for Development**”. This is a very broad goal which relates to a great variety of issues, but, in principle, it concerns the establishment of genuine partnerships that reaffirm indigenous peoples’ fundamental rights. Achieving goal 8 remains a challenge for most countries.

Madame Chair,

This is also the case regarding my country, Norway. We have developed a range of political initiatives aimed at improving the partnership between the Sámi people and the State. Last year an arrangement for consultations between governmental agencies and the Sámi Parliament was finalised. These consultations are supposed to ascertain the rights of the Sámis to be consulted in matters of direct importance to them. Although this procedure come a long way in recognizing the need for full and effective participation of the Sámi people in matters concerning their lives, many challenges remain before all parties are entirely satisfied.

As mentioned yesterday by the representative of the Sámi Council, a group of experts has made a draft for a future Sámi convention which will regulate the rights of the Sámi populations in the three countries, Norway, Sweden and Finland. My delegation looks forward towards a positive process towards a future possible adoption of such a convention. In this process both the governments of the three countries as well as the three Sámi parliaments will be involved.

Thank you, Madame Chair