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**Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

**Third session**

**Item 4 (d)  
Human rights**

**Statement by the Delegation of Finland**

**New York  
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*Government*

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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me first of all to congratulate you and the other members of the Forum on your choice of indigenous women as the special theme of this third session of the Forum. As has been mentioned by previous speakers, this theme is both timely and pertinent, given the approaching ten-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action, and the acknowledged need for a more systematic approach to addressing gender perspectives in policies and programmes focusing on indigenous peoples. In the following, I would like to make just a few remarks on the interplay between the indigenous and gender aspects in Finnish human rights policy.

For Finland, both gender equality and the rights of indigenous peoples are high priority areas, both at home and in international cooperation. In Finnish human rights policy, special emphasis is given to the rights of women, children, minorities, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities. In the context of discrimination, we highlight multiple discrimination, e.g. that often faced by indigenous women: discrimination based simultaneously on gender and on ethnic origin.

Our aim is to mainstream both the rights of women and of indigenous peoples in the work of the UN. In practical terms, this has meant highlighting indigenous issues for example at the World Conference Against Racism in Durban and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. The Durban Programme of Action was the first UN conference document to include a reference to multiple discrimination. In the Beijing Platform for Action, on the other hand, there are several paragraphs relating directly to indigenous women.

As a part of our policy of mainstreaming, Finland will in the future focus additional attention to the rights of the Sámi in its periodic reports on the implementation of human rights conventions. Based on these reports, the UN human rights treaty bodies will be able to identify problems in the protection of these rights and recommend measures for more efficient implementation of our treaty obligations. The most recent recommendations of the treaty bodies concerning the Sámi have been translated into the Sámi language. Our fifth regular report to the CEDAW committee, submitted this spring, includes a special section on Sámi women.

Mr. Chairman,

We fully support your view, expressed at the High Level Panel on Monday, that the promotion of gender equality should not be left to women alone, but that men can and should engage in it as well. After all, they stand only to gain from it, since improved gender equality has been shown to bring about social and economic benefits for all members of society, men and women, indigenous and non-indigenous alike.

In concluding, Mr. Chairman, it is my pleasure to announce that the Finnish Government has decided to support the work of the Permanent Forum by making a financial contribution to the Voluntary Fund established for that purpose. The contribution reflects our satisfaction with the work of the Forum so far, and our firm belief in the relevance of its activities for the future.

Thank you.