



**PERMANENT MISSION OF FINLAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS**  
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Statement by Finland at the  
High-Level Event of the General Assembly to mark the Tenth Anniversary  
of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Statement by

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(check against delivery)

Mr. President,

It is an honour to address this High-Level Event to mark the Tenth Anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The promotion and protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples are longstanding priorities for Finland. The adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was an important milestone for the recognition and advancement of Indigenous Peoples' rights. Fulfilling the objectives of the UN Declaration requires continuous and consistent work both nationally and internationally. The World Conference on Indigenous Peoples made an important recommitment in this regard.

Finland is particularly pleased that the General Assembly celebrates this anniversary together with representatives of Indigenous Peoples. The participation and voices of Indigenous Peoples today reinforces our joint commitment to the Declaration. Meaningful participation by Indigenous Peoples in matters affecting them is vital to ensure informed and viable decisions by the UN.

The General Assembly is undergoing important consultations concerning ways to enable Indigenous Peoples' representatives and institutions participation in UN meetings in matters affecting them. These consultations have been defined by a spirit of respectful partnership between Indigenous Peoples and Member States. Finland is honoured that the President of the General Assembly has appointed the Permanent Representative of Finland (Ambassador Kai Sauer) as one his advisors in this process. We look forward to working towards a consensual outcome that takes into account both the views of Indigenous Peoples and Member States.

As regards our national situation, Finland is committed to ensure the Sámi, as an Indigenous People, their constitutional right to maintain and develop their own language and culture. As all countries, we have also challenges in achieving the goals of the Declaration.

The Government pursues the objectives of the UN Declaration, for example, through a second National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights that was adopted in February. The Action Plan includes a project that seeks to improve the participatory rights of the Sami nationally.

In the preparations for the chairmanship of the Arctic Council starting in May 2017 Finland has taken into account the unique role that Indigenous Peoples have in Arctic cooperation.

Mr. President, to conclude,

Today we rejoice over the accomplishments of the United Nations in advancing Indigenous Peoples rights. Finland is committed to working with everyone to enhance and uphold the enriching voices of Indigenous Peoples also in the years to come.

Thank you.