

**18<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**  
**Agenda item 4: Implementation of the six mandated areas of the Permanent**  
**Forum with reference to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous**  
**Peoples**

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

**Nordic statement**

Delivered by:

Anne Karin Olli, Deputy Minister to the Minister of Local Government and  
Modernisation

Thank you Madam Chairperson,

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries:  
Denmark together with Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country  
Norway.

Promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples are longstanding  
priorities for the Nordic countries, including through self-governance. The  
UNPFII's Secretariat's note to this agenda Item has highlighted the Greenland Self-  
Government Act [of 2009 [para 16], which recognizes the right of the people of  
Greenland to self-determination under international law. The Act is based on an  
agreement between the Governments of Greenland and Denmark as equal  
partners. In Finland, Norway and Sweden, Sami autonomy and self-government are  
implemented through the respective Sami parliaments, which are officially  
recognized in national legislation ([para 17]).

Madam Chair,

We are very concerned about the increase in attacks against indigenous human  
rights defenders, including those standing up for rights relating to the enjoyment of

a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. These violations must be stopped. To this end, we encourage all stakeholders to implement the recent resolution adopted by consensus in the Human Rights Council, “Recognizing the contribution of environmental human rights defenders to the enjoyment of human rights, environmental protection and sustainable development”.

As we strongly condemn all forms of violence and attacks against indigenous peoples, we would also like to recognize the importance of addressing issues relating to violence and abuse in indigenous communities, including gender based violence.

Nordic research shows that indigenous women more often are exposed to violence. Nordic studies also indicate that indigenous peoples experience both linguistic and cultural challenges in their interaction with the police and support services. This reflects the importance of victims being able to communicate in their own language when speaking to public officials.

We believe that these challenges are not unique to the Nordic countries, and that stronger efforts are needed globally - in all countries and communities - to prevent and combat domestic violence. This should include measures to help and protect the victims, and to treat and prosecute the perpetrators.

Thank you