



**PERMANENT MISSION OF FINLAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS**  
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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
17<sup>th</sup> session

Item 4: Implementation of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum with reference to the  
United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Statement by Finland

Addressed by

H.E. Mr. Kai Sauer  
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations  
Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations

New York, 19 April 2018

(check against delivery)

Thank you Chair,

Finland is committed to the goals of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We continue to attach great importance to the work of the UN mechanisms enhancing the rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Government of Finland was pleased to welcome - together with the Sámi Parliament - the Expert mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to its first-ever country mission in February. The mission contributed to the ongoing work to revise the Sámi Parliament Act, which Finland aims to amend before the next Sámi Parliament elections in 2019. EMRIP's contribution is considered by the Committee for the revision of the Act on the Sámi Parliament, which has been appointed by the Ministry of Justice. The Committee is due to finalize its work by the end of April.

Chair,

The Arctic Council is the leading intergovernmental forum for circumpolar cooperation between Europe, Asia and North-America. Finland is chairing this Council in 2017-2019. Developing the Arctic for its people in the areas of environmental protection, education, connectivity and meteorology are Finnish chairmanship priorities. Cooperation and participation of Indigenous Peoples is a central element in the work of the Arctic Council. During a UN High Level Political Forum side event we are planning to highlight the Arctic council's work for sustainable development and its unique example as a forum where Indigenous People's work closely with Member States.

The long-term development of the Arctic region depends in large part on a sustainable and efficient infrastructure and transport and communications network. The opportunities of building new railway routings to the Arctic Ocean via Rovaniemi (in Finland) and Kirkenes (in Norway) are being examined further by a joint Finnish-Norwegian Task Force. It is critically important that the views of the Sámi Parliament and the Skolt's Village Association are heard on this issue. The Government will look at appropriate ways of ensuring that the representatives of the Sámi people and local communities are informed and consulted on this development project at its different stages and that they are given platforms to present their views on the sustainable development of the Arctic region.

Thank you.