

## STATEMENT



WIPO IGC 39th session

Thank you Mr. Chair, representatives of the member states, indigenous sisters and brothers,

My name is *Paavvâl Taannâl Tiina*, Tiina Sanila-Aikio, and I'm the President of the Sámi Parliament of Finland.

I thank Canada for your important contribution to fund the Voluntary Fund. I think it will have a remarkable impact to the result of the negotiations.

Traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples encompasses knowledge, know-how, skills, innovations and practices. TK also encompasses traditional cultural expressions, including dances, songs, handicrafts, designs, ceremonies, tales, or other artistic or cultural expressions.

Within the current system of western law, the Saami handicraft tradition is generally unprotected from misuse. The tradition is exploited, and products, manufactured in countries of cheap imports, are sold as genuine Saami handicrafts. The Saami dress is also misused in many ways. Products resembling the Saami dress are sold as souvenirs. Imitations of the Saami dress are also used in tourism as employees' dresses and for tourists to dress up. This misappropriation of our cultural heritage by the tourism industry disregards the rights of the Saami people to our cultural property and has damaging effects on our identity and self-image, which especially affects our youth and young people.

Intellectual property protection mechanisms have great potential to protect traditional cultural expressions of the Saami against misappropriation and enable communities to control and benefit collectively from their commercial exploitation. Existing national and international mechanisms to protect intellectual property of the Saami are insufficient and lack the necessary cultural sensitivities and understandings of the traditional protections of immaterial cultural heritage. The Saami and other indigenous people, should have, and States should support, the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions as the article 31 of The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states.

## STATEMENT



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I am appreciative of the possibilities offered to indigenous peoples to participate in the WIPO ICG – the chance to give an opening statement, to participate in ad hoc expert meetings, informals and contact groups, the possibility to share with the IGC the experiences and views of indigenous peoples through the Indigenous Panel.

However, indigenous peoples must be even more involved, as they are the creators and holders of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions and their views are of critical importance for the hopefully soon to be reached agreement on protective instrument(s) of traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions. This is all about participatory rights.

Indigenous participation is crucial for the IGC process. The results of the discussions at the IGC will particularly affect the cultures and lives of indigenous peoples. The IGC should not only take into consideration the indigenous views, but respect and genuinely listen to the opinions and understand the indigenous world views. The views of indigenous peoples should be the foundations of the future instrument(s).

I have noted with regret that the WIPO Voluntary Fund is currently empty. I would like to thank countries which have already contributed to the fund, especially Australia and Switzerland. I call for contributions from the Member States, including countries in which the Saami live to the fund. Indigenous participation is a key element not only for the substance of the IGC's work but also for the credibility of the IGC process.

Finally, I would like to emphasize the importance and meaning of the work of the IGC for indigenous peoples, including for the Saami people. We would like to see results of reaching international protection for our traditional knowledge and cultural expressions soon.

Thank you for your attention!