

Structural Analysis of Cultural Systems

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United Nations
Human Rights Council
Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
Twelfth session

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Date

Geneva, 15 July 2019

Name of Speaker: Arnold GROH
Organisation: Structural Analysis of Cultural Systems

Intersessional interactive dialogue on ways to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of the Human Rights Council on issues affecting them (pursuant to paragraph 11 of resolution 39/13)

Identifying obstacles of representativity

Thank you, Mr. Chairman / Madam Chairperson,

To explain the following statement, our organisation's work is based on qualitative and quantitative studies, in particular field research, but also on theoretical approaches relevant to indigenous issues, in order to maintain high relevance to reality. With regard to indigenous peoples' participation in meetings of the Human Rights Council, there is a structural discrepancy that touches a pivotal point. On the one hand, the UNDRIP implies the acknowledgement of ways of life, values and worldviews that differ very much from globalised lifestyles and thinking. On the other hand, only those are capable to participate in the UN system, who have been socialised to ways of thinking and arguing that are specific to highly globalised contexts. The identities that go along with such competencies contrast very much from those that can generally be found in indigenous real-life, and they are often incompatible with indigenous lifestyles, which to pursue is granted by the UNDRIP. Furthermore, the question of representativity cannot simply be answered with yes or no. Rather, persons' perspectives and decisions are positioned within a spectrum, which, in our case, reaches from indigenous to globalised attitudes. Considering the complexity of the issue, it would be helpful to continue the discussion, as it has also been done during the Interactive Hearing on 25 April 2019. Although an entire solution is not in sight, one strategy to decrease the problem and to ensure that indigenous commonality is represented would be to focus on the involvement of elders, which generally conforms to indigenous customs, anyway.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman / Madam Chairperson.