



Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples

21st session of the Human Rights Council
Contribution of Estonia, September 18, 2012

Madame President,
Distinguished Rapporteur,

On behalf of Estonia I would like to express our appreciation to the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, Mr. James Anaya, and commend him for the comprehensive report as well as for all the work done last year.

The protection and promotion of the human rights of indigenous peoples have always been and will remain among the top priorities of Estonia's human rights agenda. For years Estonia has contributed with its expertise to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and regularly provided financial support to the UN Fund for Indigenous Populations. We are glad to note that indigenous peoples' issues are gaining ever more importance in the framework of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) as well.

We find that special attention should be paid to the protection of women and children. Promoting the participation of women in political and economic life would help to increase the importance of women in society. Combatting discrimination and violence, including sexual violence against women, should continue on a more intensified level. It is important that indigenous women should be guaranteed their political, social, economic and cultural rights.

Distinguished Special Rapporteur, looking into the 21st century, I would like to draw your attention to the opportunities offered by modern information and communication technology. Recent developments around the world have shown the significance that the

Internet and social media hold in promoting sociopolitical life. We encourage the Special Rapporteur to pay closer attention to access to new technologies for indigenous peoples so that they can freely exchange ideas and promote their culture.

Estonia would like to commend the OHCHR for organizing the workshop on indigenous peoples' language and culture in cooperation with the University of Brunel Law School, which brought a very valuable contribution to the discussions held during the 5th meeting of Expert Mechanism in July last summer. The role of the language and culture of indigenous peoples cannot be overestimated. The establishment of an informal academic friendship network with academics working on indigenous peoples' issues at the international and local level by the Expert Mechanism is a very important step to further promoting and protecting of the rights of indigenous peoples. We hope that valuable new input will be brought by this new tool.

We would like to commend the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for their constructive proposals and great value.

Estonia welcomes the thematic discussion on indigenous peoples and access to justice during the HRC21st Session and is looking forward to it.

Thank you.