

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

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Statement by H.E. Mr. Hannu Himanen

Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations Office in Geneva

Mr President,

Finland thanks the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, Mr. James Anaya, for his excellent report. We highly appreciate his reflections on the relationship between his mandate and other UN mechanisms dealing with indigenous issues. Working methods can always be developed. Finland particularly appreciates the Special Rapporteur's effort to incorporate the gender perspective in his work and to pay special attention to the vulnerabilities of indigenous children.

The Report's focus on consultation and cooperation by States with indigenous peoples is commendable. Finland stresses the need to consult indigenous peoples and to provide them with real opportunities to participate in decisions having an impact on their living conditions. We appreciate Mr. Anaya's visit to the 19th Saami Conference held in Rovaniemi, Finland, in October 2008. We hope that the Saami mechanisms can provide a good example on how indigenous people can exert influence on matters affecting their lives and communities.

Further, we agree with Mr. Anaya that an important component of efforts to build good practices is a commitment to advance the rights of indigenous peoples in accordance with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Declaration can indeed be a very useful tool for further cooperation and partnership with indigenous peoples.

I thank you Mr. President.