

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

**19 April 2018**

**Delivered by:  
TBC,  
The Norwegian Permanent Delegation to the UN**

Thank you chair,

The loss of a language is a serious loss of the link to history and culture – and therefore also a loss for future generations. On behalf of the Norwegian Government, I wish to emphasise the importance of facilitating the preservation and development of indigenous languages.

In our region, Sami languages are used across the borders of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Cross border cooperation is therefore vital for the efforts to revitalise and strengthen Sami languages. The Sami Parliaments in Norway, Sweden and Finland cooperate on a project that aims to establish a common Sami language center – Sámi Giellagáldu. The Norwegian Government supports this initiative.

In order to strengthen the development and use of the Sami languages in Norway the Government established a Sami language Committee in 2014 – in close cooperation and consultations with Sámediggi (the Sami Parliament). The Committee presented its report to the Minister of Local Government and Modernisation and Sámediggi in 2016. The Language Committee proposes

several schemes and measures in a number of areas within the public sector. The report has been submitted to broad public hearing, and the Government is now collaborating with Sámediggi on the follow-up of the report.

Chair,

There are still challenges. One important challenge in Norway is the lack of Sami speaking teachers, translators and personnel with knowledge in Sami culture and languages in municipalities and in the health service. However, in order to improve the situation the Government has now, in cooperation with Sámediggi, initiated new measures.

The initiative of the Permanent Forum to organise the international year for indigenous languages 2019 is an encouragement for all of us to continue the work to facilitate the strengthening of indigenous languages. Finally, we wish to highlight that effective participation by the indigenous peoples themselves is crucial when states develop measures regarding their languages.

Thank you.