

16th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Statement by Denmark on agenda **item 8**: Tenth Anniversary of the United Nations Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: measures taken to implement the Declaration.

Thank you Madam Chair,

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was a major milestone and a landmark in recognising the status and rights of indigenous peoples. It has laid the foundation for a new partnership in action at the United Nations and around the world. Fulfilling the objectives of the Declaration requires continuous and consistent work. The World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014 reaffirmed the recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the outcome document of the Conference constituted a significant stock taking in terms of areas where full attention is needed if the rights of Indigenous Peoples are to be realised. The commitments made at the World Conference still call for action and our concerted efforts.

Denmark recognizes with appreciation that several important measures to implement the Declaration have been taken and initiatives have been launched in follow-up to the World Conference. But challenges still remain and we need to continue to explore ways to ensure implementation of all the valuable and still very relevant recommendations made by the Permanent Forum over the years.

Recommendations have little or no value, if they do not become a reality on the ground and in fact changes the lives of Indigenous Peoples.

Madam Chair,

I would like to give some examples of implementing the Declaration from our own context.

The establishment of the Self-Government system for Greenland in 2009 is in itself an illustration of the Kingdom of Denmark's efforts to strengthen the rights of indigenous peoples. A principal objective of inducing Self-Government has been to facilitate the transfer of additional authority and thus responsibility to Greenlandic authorities. In the preamble to the Self-

Government Act, it is recognised that the Greenlandic people is a people pursuant to international law with the right to self-determination. Accordingly, the Act is based on an agreement between Naalakkersuisut (Government of Greenland) and the Danish Government as equal partners. The Act provides for Greenland to assume a number of new fields of responsibility and thus opens for expansion of further competences and responsibilities to Greenland. It introduces arrangements regarding respectively mineral resource activities in Greenland and the economic relations between Denmark and Greenland. The Act affirms that the Greenland Self-Government authorities exercise legislative and executive power in the fields of responsibility taken over.

Denmark and Greenland also work closely together at the international level to promote the rights of indigenous peoples. The Kingdom of Denmark's international human rights policy maintains as one of its priorities the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples. In some cases, the situation of indigenous peoples is therefore raised in the Universal Periodic Review of other states or in bilateral dialogues. The situation in Greenland is described in the Kingdom of Denmark's periodic reports to UN human rights treaty bodies. Denmark and Greenland also participate in a number of UN fora where the rights of indigenous peoples are discussed and work actively to ensure references to the Declaration and the rights it contains in relevant documents such as resolutions adopted by the Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly.

Indigenous peoples are also a general focus area in Denmark's development cooperation that follows a human rights-based approach to development, and the Kingdom of Denmark continues to provide financial support to a number of organisations and funds that promote the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Finally, Denmark, as an EU member state, contributes actively to bringing EU cooperation policies in line with the UNDRIP.

Let me conclude by referring to article 41 of the Declaration that states that "The organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations

shall contribute to the full realization of the provisions of this Declaration through the mobilization, inter alia, of financial cooperation and technical assistance. Ways and means of ensuring participation of indigenous peoples on issues affecting them shall be established“.

Denmark considers it of utmost importance that Indigenous Peoples’ representatives, organisations and institutions have the possibility and space to exercise their right to participate in meetings of all relevant UN bodies on issues affecting them. This right should not be limited to only ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies.

To ensure effectiveness in Indigenous Peoples’ participation, the participatory status of their representatives and institutions should be considered in detail. We underline the need for Indigenous Peoples to participate as such, and not as NGOs. The already existing ways of participation do not seem to adequately reflect the unique features of Indigenous Peoples. We, therefore look forward to a positive and significant outcome of the ongoing process on Indigenous Peoples’ participation at the UN.

Thank you Madam Chair.