

Norway
Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.
Item 6. Human Rights.
Statement by Mr. Petter F. Wille.



Mr. Chairman,

The Permanent Forum has a broad and challenging mandate and its establishment has been met with great expectations, not least from indigenous peoples themselves. Human rights is definitely one of the areas where the expectations are high. This should come as no surprise to us as we are in a situation where indigenous peoples around the world are faced with many problems related to their enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

As we are all aware, the mandate of the Forum includes giving advise and making recommendations on economic and social development, culture, environment education, health, and human rights. Actually, not only the latter, but all these issues have human rights aspects that are relevant and important for indigenous peoples. These aspects cover civil and political, as well as economic, social and cultural rights.

Mr. Chairman,

In her statement yesterday, the representative of the HCHR mentioned how the Office implements a range of mandates, activities and technical co-operation programmes which focus on indigenous issues. The permanent Forum was invited to consider how the different parts of the human rights system can develop their potential to promote and protect human rights of indigenous peoples. These are examples of areas in which the permanent Forum can play an important role.

In conclusion, the mandate of the Permanent Forum, as well as the situation for indigenous peoples, show that human rights should have an important place in your work.. The way in which you manage to integrate human rights and address human rights aspects of the various parts of your mandate, will in many respects be crucial to the success of this Forum. It should, however, also be kept in mind that the Forum should not become an additional human rights body. You have a broad mandate which goes beyond human rights and gives you a unique position in the UN-system in your work for indigenous peoples worldwide.