



Human Rights Council 24rd Session, 17 September, 2013

Half-day panel discussion on the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

Statement by ESTONIA

Madam High Commissioner, Mr. President,
Distinguished panelists, Dear colleagues,

Estonia would like to thank H.E. Navi Pillay for her opening address, and all the panelists for their valuable contribution.

The protection and promotion of the human rights of indigenous peoples has always been and will remain among the top priorities for Estonia. We highly value the possibility to have a discussion on the forthcoming World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in the Human Rights Council as the rights of indigenous peoples constitute an integral part of the Council's agenda. We see the Conference as a stocktaking event in the realization of the objectives of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. When talking about indigenous peoples rights we always stress the importance of their participation in decision-making processes at local and governmental level but also at the United Nations. Having this principle in mind Estonia has regularly contributed to the UN Fund for Indigenous Populations. We use this opportunity today and invite also other states to do the same and contribute to the indigenous peoples effective participation. The Conference can only be a success when indigenous peoples themselves can take part in the Conference as well as in the preparatory phase of it.

Distinguished panellists,

Amongst existing challenges Estonia would like to stress the importance of cultural and linguistic rights of indigenous peoples in preserving their identity and traditions. With this regard we highly value the framework of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. We would appreciate the views of the honourable panellists on the prospects of including the recommendation to join the Convention to the Conference outcome document.

Regarding the indigenous peoples rights in general but also their participation in decision-making processes we would like to refer to the opportunities offered by modern information and communication technology. We would invite the panelists to elaborate on the potential the access to new technologies can provide and share their views, and if possible, examples, about how new technologies may help to encourage and increase participation in sociopolitical life, including in preparing for the World Conference.

Thank you!