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Statement by Greenland in cooperation with Denmark on agenda item 3 c:

Follow-up on the recommendations of the Permanent Forum

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Madame Chair and members of the Permanent Forum, my delegation wishes to congratulate you on your election and appointments to this important United Nations body. Allow me also to extend our sincere appreciation to all the previous members of the Forum for their important contributions over the years, and to congratulate the new Chief of Office upon her appointment.

On behalf of both Denmark and Greenland, I wish to start by reporting on the successful completion of the Danish chairmanship of the Arctic Council culminating with the co-hosting by Greenland and Denmark of the 7<sup>th</sup> Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in Nuuk on May 12.

As previously reported, the Arctic Council is a high level forum of Arctic States and Permanent Participants representing the Arctic Indigenous Peoples. The Council focuses on the issues of capacity building and sustainable development, impacts of climate change and environmental issues.

The representation of indigenous peoples in all Arctic Council bodies has a unique and valuable role in shaping the activities of the Council in all areas. This was also highlighted by the Foreign Affairs Minister of Denmark in her concluding statement underlining that it was with concurrence of the indigenous peoples' organizations that it was agreed to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the Arctic Council in order to prepare for future developments in the Arctic.

The Premier of Greenland, in his opening remarks to the Arctic Foreign Affairs Ministers expressed hope that: (and I quote) "If we – together – can formulate guidelines and minimum standards for new economic activities, the indigenous peoples of the Arctic will be better off in terms of their conservation of traditional knowledge, social structures, cultural practices and, in particular, mental health. What is needed in general is a more balanced approach to the realities of the indigenous peoples in the Arctic." (unquote).

My delegation would therefore like to echo the recommendation put forward by the Arctic Caucus yesterday – that the Permanent Forum study the indigenous participatory mechanisms in the Arctic Council.

art. 18 + 19

Madam Chair,

In underlining the importance of self-determination, allow me to put Greenland on the map in the context of Denmark: On 21 June 2009, Greenland celebrated the inauguration of Greenland Self-Government. Greenland is the world's largest non-continental island. It is located in the Arctic, some 4.000 km from Denmark. On 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2011, Greenland had a total population of 56,515 of which the indigenous people, Inuit, constitutes a large majority of 88 percent, whereas Danish and others make up only 12 percent.

The Government of Greenland is a public government rather than an indigenous self-government, however, with the majority of the population being of Inuit decent, the Government and Parliament of Greenland, who are all Inuit, places great emphasis on the rights of indigenous peoples. The Government of Greenland strongly endorses the UN Declaration on the Rights Indigenous Peoples and is making efforts to ensure the implementation of relevant provisions in its everyday work.

On 1 January 2010, as a matter of high priority and to help provide a sustainable economic foundation for future development of Greenland, the full mineral resources area was taken over by the Government of Greenland.

The principle of collective ownership to land in Greenland also applies to natural resources; hence the Government of Greenland recognizes the importance of civil society involvement in decision making, not least concerning oil and minerals extraction and major development projects. In response to concerns raised mainly by the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), the Government of Greenland has invited the ICC to assist in the development of effective and appropriate hearing mechanisms.

This work was initiated by ICC in hosting an Inuit Leaders' Summit in Ottawa in February 2011, where Inuit leaders and experts from across the Arctic region discussed and shared experiences on oil and minerals extraction in the Arctic. Government of Greenland, having requested constructive input with respect to the engagement of civil society has offered to co-host the next meeting in Greenland with ICC.

Establishing good practices with respect to consultation and participation in decision-making with respect to resource development is extremely important but also a very challenging process given the often highly complicated technical nature of such development. In Greenland, experts will be looking at how improve the hearing processes in order to allow for greater participation as well as to avoid negative impacts for indigenous peoples and the general public.

My delegation recommends that the Permanent Forum together with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and relevant bodies of the UN continue to study and address the challenges and good practices of transparency and full engagement of indigenous peoples in decision-making concerning resource development. art 32

Thank you for your attention.