New York, Tuesday, 17 May 2016

Item 5: Discussions on the theme: “Indigenous Peoples: conflict, peace and resolution”

Presentation by Mr. Runar Myrnes Balto, Political Adviser of the Sami Parliament of Norway

Thank you Chair,

I speak on behalf of the Sami Parliament of Norway.

In Norway, the Sámi people faces many challenges. These are often connected to the lack of implementation of our rights, as recognized under international human rights law, including the UNDRIP. We believe that the implementation of these rights, including the rights of indigenous women, is important and conflict preventing in our society.

In addition to national political tools for implementing our rights, such as the follow up of the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples, which is a process that is being started up now, the Sami Parliament is also calling for a reconciliation process for the Sámi people in Norway.

We hope to achieve a mutual understanding with the state of Norway on how to deal with the historical assimilation politics forced upon the Sami people over several decades, and that still is affecting our people.

We would like to support the recommendation made by the Saami council to the Forum that they urge Member States to establish and follow up Truth and Reconciliation processes.

Chair, we would like to express our solidarity with indigenous peoples in their efforts to achieve peace and reconciliation.

Norway is one of the facilitators for the ongoing peacemaking negotiations in Colombia. As Colombia has ratified ILO No 169 and endorsed the UNDRIP, we encourage negotiating parties and facilitators to respect and implement the indigenous peoples’ rights during the process of the negotiations, in the outcomes of the negotiations, and in the follow-up of a possible future peacemaking agreement.

Furthermore, the Sami Parliament of Norway urges the Government of Bangladesh to ensure effective implementation of the following core elements of the Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT) Peace Accord of 1997:

1) Demilitarization of CHT;
2) Devolution of political power;
3) Resolution of indigenous peoples’ land rights through the CHT Land Commission; and
4) Rehabilitation of internally displaced indigenous peoples

Thank you, Chair.