

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

15th session

Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Chair of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

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Statement by

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on behalf of Nordic and the Baltic countries***

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Chairperson,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries: Denmark together with Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and my own country Finland.

The Nordic-Baltic countries have a longstanding commitment to the promotion and protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples. The achievement of the goals and objectives of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples requires continuous work at the international, regional and national levels. The support to this work by the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) is invaluable.

We highly appreciate this opportunity to engage in a dialogue with Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, the Special Rapporteur, and Mr. Aleksey Tsykarev, the chair of EMRIP.

First, to the Special Rapporteur: the Nordic-Baltic countries wish to express our appreciation for the Special Rapporteur's active work to ensure constructive dialogue with Member states and Indigenous Peoples in the realization of her mandate. We welcome the efforts to ensure follow-up to earlier recommendations, including by undertaking follow-up country visits. In this regard, we look forward to the report of the visit of the Special Rapporteur to the Sámi Homeland region in Norway, Sweden and Finland last fall. **We encourage the Special Rapporteur to continue considering carry out country visits to assess the human rights situation of the Inuit, Sami and other Finno-Ugric Peoples in all countries they are living and in their traditional territories.**

The Special Rapporteur's report to the Human Rights Council focusing on the situation of indigenous women and girls globally, will serve as an important contribution to discussions on advancing the enjoyment of all human rights by women in several UN fora. The focus area of the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women will be the empowerment of indigenous women. In this regard, we would like to enquire, what are most pressing obstacles to be removed to achieve full empowerment and enjoyment of human rights of indigenous women in the Special Rapporteur's view? And what good practices should we draw upon in preparing for the Commission's session?

The Special Rapporteur is currently working on a report on International Investment Agreements. Are there any conclusions of this work, the Special Rapporteur can already share on this topic?

Turning to Mr. Tsykarev, the Chair of EMRIP, the Nordic-Baltic countries wish to thank the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for its thematic advice to the Human Rights Council, including for its most recent study on cultural heritage. The Expert Mechanism has an important year ahead of it with the discussions on the review of its mandate coming up in the Council.

Our aim is to strengthen the mandate of EMRIP – in terms of its focus, interdependence and working methods. We recommend that EMRIP focusses its work on promoting the objectives of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As a subsidiary body to the Human Rights Council, the EMRIP has a comparative advantage and special competences vis-à-vis promoting the rights enshrined in the Declaration. We enter the discussions with the ambition to create an enabling environment for cooperation on the international level, aiming at real impact on the ground.

In the view of the Chair of the EMRIP, what are the key elements by which the mandate of the EMRIP could be improved to better assist to achieve the goals of the Declaration?

The Expert Mechanism is currently working on a study on the right to health and indigenous peoples with a focus on children and youth. What are the main areas of concern, especially in relation to indigenous children and youth that Member States and Indigenous Peoples have so far expressed in your consultations with them?

Thank you.