



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN
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**The 21st session of the Human Rights Council
Panel Discussion on Access to Justice for Indigenous Peoples**

**Statement by the Delegation of Finland
18 September 2012**

Madam President, Panellists,

Finland welcomes the discussion on indigenous peoples' access to justice and in this context, wishes to pay particular attention to the situation of indigenous women and girls who often encounter significant barriers in accessing justice both within indigenous justice and formal state justice institutions. Discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity and history, structural violence and poverty are among the root causes of indigenous women's lack of access to justice. For example, indigenous women and girls with disabilities are the least likely to have access to remedial measures and structures.

Indigenous women and girls seeking redress for violations of their rights are sometimes resorting to formal state justice institutions when their own traditional institutions fail to respond to their needs. However, formal state justice institutions may lack a culturally sensitive perspective on indigenous women's rights. The coordination between traditional indigenous and formal state justice institutions is often weak.

We would like to invite the panellists to share examples of good cooperation and dialogue between formal state justice and traditional indigenous justice institutions with the aim of improving access to justice for indigenous women.

Next week, in the context of the UN High Level Rule of Law Meeting to be held in New York, Finland, South-Africa and UN Women are organizing a high-level event on access to justice for women. Participants are invited to make concrete commitments to action and highlight initiatives to address key challenges in women's access to justice, for example in the areas of legal reform, women's rights and access to justice within traditional and informal justice systems, or in conflict and post-conflict contexts.

Thank you.

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