

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Estonia, Sven Jürgenson at the 15th Session of the United Nations' Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Agenda item 4

Mister Chair, as it is the first time that Estonia takes the floor during this session please allow me to congratulate you on your election as the chair for the Permanent Forum. Estonia values highly the work of the Permanent Forum. We are glad to see the high number of indigenous peoples attending the Forum each year which proves the relevance of this Forum. The Forum is a unique body in the whole UN system, providing an opportunity for genuine discussion between the indigenous peoples and the Member States. We should make full use of this and facilitate by all means available the participation of Indigenous Peoples at the Forum as well as at other relevant meetings. Estonia strongly supports the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)** and we urge all states to follow it as a road map in their relations with the indigenous peoples.

We would like to commend the efforts of the Permanent Forum in ensuring the effective follow up of the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples outcome document. This document included clear deliverables for UN to further improve indigenous peoples' rights. United Nation has taken these mandates seriously, and **at the opening day of the Forum we witnessed the formal launch of the Action Plan** for ensuring a coherent approach for achieving the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We look forward to implementation of the rest of the recommendations of the outcome document as more needs to be done to raise awareness about the Declaration and about the situation of indigenous peoples throughout the world.

Estonia believes that **participation of indigenous peoples' representatives** in the relevant UN fora to address different issues of institutional nature and solve questions is very important. Therefore we were among those who supported establishment of consultations with indigenous peoples' representatives.

Mister Chair,

For Estonians, the **future of Finno-Ugric peoples** with whom we are linked in kinship and language is particularly close to our hearts and we follow closely, often also with concern, the developments in their traditional territories. To support our kindred-nations, the Estonian Government launched the Kindred Peoples Programme in 1999. Currently its 4th cycle is in force (lasting from 2015 to 2019) through which a total of 1.27 million euros will be allocated for cultural and educational projects to support our kindred Finno-Ugric peoples. An example of a project that has been supported by the Kindred Peoples' programme is Finno-Ugric Capitals of Culture, an initiative of Youth Association of Finno-Ugric Peoples (MAFUN). We are pleased

that last year's Finno-Ugric Capital of Culture Seto village of Obinitsa in South Estonia did not only introduce this little village and its people but all cultures of Finno-Ugric peoples to the world. Seto community hosted more than 25 000 guests, and there were more than 60 cultural events. As to **the year of 2016**, let me commend the activities of Finno-Ugric Capitals of Culture - **Iszkaszentgyörgy village and the city of Veszprem** in preserving the long-standing tradition of Capitals of Culture.

We also believe that **UN Fund on Indigenous Populations** is important and we will continue to support that initiative in the future.

Another important topic I would like to outline is that Indigenous Peoples' organizations should be based on the development and need of their peoples and **should not** be linked to **political agenda**. Communication between indigenous peoples organizations and people- to-people contacts are essential vis-à-vis preserving languages and cultures and should therefore be supported by all Member States as a key feature.

In conclusion, Mister Chair, let me also use this opportunity to welcome this year's theme focusing **on conflict, peace and resolution**. With regard to this we would like to emphasize that gender perspective in conflict resolution is very important to Estonia. We have adopted our second National Action Plan for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in Estonia 2015-2019. Estonia's second action plan focuses on improving the situation of women both in conflict and post-conflict areas, raising awareness, and enhancing co-operation and information exchange.

We have heard many good ideas during this session which, I hope, will transform into the concrete recommendations of the Forum and will be implemented swiftly in the near future.

Mr. Chair. Thank you and I wish you successful continuation of the session!