

**UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

Ninth Session

Geneva, 11 – 15 July 2016

Agenda Item 3: WCIP Follow-up

Thank you Mr. Chair,

I speak on behalf of the following Arctic indigenous peoples' organizations and institutions: Inuit Circumpolar Council - Greenland, Saami Council, Sami Parliament of Finland, Sami Parliament of Norway, Sami Parliament of Sweden, and Sami Parliamentary Council.

As stated on earlier occasions, we regard the outcome of the World Conference as an important step forward towards improved implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We attach great importance to the World Conference's call for the modification and improvement of EMRIP's mandate, so that it can more effectively promote respect for and monitor the implementation of the Declaration. The OHCHR report on the Expert Workshop to review the mandate of EMRIP provides a useful basis for the Human Rights Council's consideration of the issue. We look forward to engaging in the work of the Council on this issue at its next session. We urge the main sponsors to ensure that Indigenous Peoples are involved in the discussions throughout the consultation process.

The greatest limitation to the current mandate of EMRIP is the exclusive focus on thematic studies. In our view, EMRIP should also be able to – on a voluntary basis – engage with States and Indigenous Peoples to assist them in addressing country-specific situations, and to be permitted to seek, receive, gather and consider information from all sources, including on specific cases and matters of concern for the rights in the Declaration.

We agree that one should consider possible ways of strengthening the institutional links between the two mandates, including the possibility of giving the Special Rapporteur a seat in EMRIP, and the possible development of an internal referral system for the two mandates.

However, we don't support the idea to merge the mandates of the Special Rapporteur and EMRIP. We believe that having both a special procedure mandate on indigenous peoples' rights - through the mandate of the Special Rapporteur – as well as maintaining EMRIP as a unique subsidiary body of the Council, with an enhanced mandate, would strengthen the Council's capacity to promote and protect indigenous peoples' rights.

Mr. Chair,

The PGA lead process on possible measures to enable the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives in relevant UN meetings on issues affecting them is also a matter we consider being important for the promotion and protection of Indigenous Peoples' rights. It is crucially important that Indigenous Peoples can participate in discussions on issues affecting their lives.

We support the call for granting of observer status in the General Assembly for Indigenous Peoples' governance institutions, as articulated in the 2013 Alta Outcome Document. We are pleased that the PGA lead consultation process clarifies that there are no legal obstacles preventing the Assembly granting such status to Indigenous Peoples.

We would like to use this opportunity to thank the PGA's team for its excellent work, and for presenting the final compilation at this meeting. In our opinion, the compilation and the addendum containing potential elements for discussions, provides a constructive basis for the continuation of this process during the 71<sup>st</sup> session of the General Assembly. We look forward to engaging in these discussions, and we urge the incoming PGA to reappoint the current team of co-advisers, so that the process can continue smoothly and without any delays.

In conclusion, we would like to draw your attention to the need for national follow-up to the World Conference. We have repeatedly urged the respective governments in our region to initiate national follow-up processes, including by developing and adopting measures called for in OP 7 and 8 of the Outcome Document. Unfortunately, we are not in a position to report about any major national level progress in this regard.

Thank you.