

12.12.2007

Questions by Finland

Mr. Pekka Aikio, the Saami Parliament in Finland

On the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, Mr. Rodolfo Stavenhagen (A/HRC/6/15)

Thank you Mr. President,

I have the honour to address this distinguished Council not only as a member of the delegation of Finland, but also as a representative of the Saami Parliament in Finland. It is an elected body with autonomous decision-making functions, through which the self-determination of Saami people is exercised in Finland. We wish to join others in sharing the assessment of the Special Rapporteur that one of the most important ways of improving the rights of indigenous peoples is indeed by involving the indigenous communities in the decision making process.

I wish to thank the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Stavenhagen, for all your work on this matter and for your latest report to the Council. Finland would like to make the following questions in that regard:

- We appreciate the focus you place in your report on the economic, social and cultural rights. Could you elaborate further on the need to place particular attention to vulnerable and marginalized groups within the indigenous communities, which you mention in the report?
- My second question relates to your proposal to elaborate a manual on application of a human rights based approach to development activities in relation to indigenous peoples. This is an interesting proposal and we would like to hear whether you have had any initial reactions to it.
- Finally, you mention in your report the essential role of the indigenous peoples in identifying the priorities and strategies in relation to development. What is your assessment so far on the implementation of Millennium Development goals in relation to the indigenous peoples?

I wish to take this opportunity to convey to the Special Rapporteur the continued support of Finland to his mandate and to his work.

I thank you Mr. President.