

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Eleventh session

Agenda item 8: Half-day discussion on Central and Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia.**Statement by the Arctic Caucus**

Mr Chairman

Members of Permanent Forum

Ladies and gentlemen

Allow me to briefly outline some remarks under Agenda Item 8. This region covers some part of the traditional Sámi territory, the Russian Arctic and large areas where reindeer herding is practice.

When the UN General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, September 13th 2007, only 4 states voted against, among them Arctic states as USA and Canada. In recent years this 4 states have changed their position, and now fully support the principles in the declaration. Russia abstained, together with some other states in Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Transcaucasia. All though Russia abstained the Russian government have been working in the spirit of the declaration, especially in questions concerning the rights of indigenous peoples in relation to extractive industry. We of course welcome an elaboration and clarification of the Russian positions vis-à-vis the UN Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples.

In this context it we want mention that the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, James Anaya, has recommended that, in the Russian, "Special attention should be paid to ensuring the successful implementation of legal guarantees at the local level for all Indigenous communities, such as by establishing reliable ways to monitor implementation and to remedy breaches of the guarantees. He also noted: the need for "certainty to the various laws that concern the right of indigenous peoples and particularly their access to land and resources";

the impact of extractive and other industrial activities; lack of opportunities for political participation, selfgovernment, protection for traditional economies; and substandard conditions for health and education.

During the present session 2 studies have been presented partly covering the region of to Central and Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia. Both PFII members Anna Naykanchina, study on the the impacts of land use change and climate change on indigenous reindeer herders' livelihoods and land management and PFII member Dalee Sambo Dorough study of examples of good practice, of the indigenous participatory mechanisms in the Arctic covers some of the concerns in the region.

The Arctic Caucus support the conclusions and recommendations made in the earlier mentions studies.

In this context the Arctic Caucus want to make the following recommendation.

1. Request the Permanent Forum has to appoint Mrs Anna Naykanchina, members of the Forum, to undertake a study on *Resilience, traditional knowledge and capacity building in Arctic and Sub-Arctic indigenous reindeer herding communities, with a focus on good practises and opportunities*, to be submitted to the Forum at its 12th session.
2. Request the Permanent Forum to recommend Russia and the other states in the region to clarification their positions vis-à-vis the UN Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples
3. Request the Permanent forum to recommend the government in Central and Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia take steps to ensure that Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decisionmaking institutions(Articlet 18-20, UNDRIP).