

## United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Fourteenth Session

New York, 20.4.2015-1.5.2015

Statement by Suoma Sámi Nuorat, Saami Council and Sáminuorra.

Item 7: Human rights b) Dialogue with the special rapporteur on indigenous peoples

Thank you Madame Chairperson;

This is a joint statement of the national Sámi Youth organizations in Finland and Sweden along with the Saami Council.

Allow me first of all to commend the important work carried out by special rapporteurs on rights of indigenous peoples and their efforts to also highlight the human right situation of the Sámi peoples living in the republic of Finland. We request the Special Rapporteur kindly to consider to follow up this timely case.

In this context we are very disappointed to report that the Parliament of Finland so far has shown a lack of good faith regarding the implementation of UNDRIP and once again failed to ratify ILO 169 despite the fact that this was one of the primary goals in attempting to update their indigenous policy announced by in Finnish Government 2011.

The Parliament of Finland also rejected the renewed Act on the Sámi Parliament, an Act that would have been a step towards reaching the standards of both ILO 169 and the UNDRIP. In its recent Act-reforming process, the Finnish Parliament's constitutional committee failed to address the concluding remarks of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to Finland of 2012, in which the committee recommended Finland respect the Rights contained within UNDRIP Article 33. Surprisingly these latest CERD remarks were not even mentioned in the constitutional committees work. As a result a large majority of the Finnish Parliamentarians have voted in further violation of UNDRIP Articles 3, 8 and 33. We would like to hear why Finland chose to do so, just after the adaptation of the WCIP Outcome Document.

The Parliament of Finland justifies such action by saying that it is unclear who is Sámi in Finland, and the State continues to insist on keeping the power to define who is Sámi within Finland to the State itself. We are curious to know if there is international human rights law that supports Finland's view that Finnish people can legally define who belong to Sámi people, without their free, prior and informed consent.

We are worried that despite remarks from the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on 2011, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 2012, and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on 2014, Finland is still failing to take these necessary steps to secure the self-determination of Sámi in Finland.

We now call for continued help from above mentioned Human Rights treaty bodies, the United Nations and its Member States to convince Finland to take the necessary steps regarding this critical Human Rights situation. This is a very important time, since a new Government is being formed in Finland as we speak, and a new Government program will be written in the near future.

We recommend that the Permanent Forum approach and advise the Government of Finland, through an open letter, to finally ratify ILO 169, and to fully implement the UNDRIP, and to further raise specific concern regarding Finland's continued decisions in violations of UNDRIP Articles 3,8 and 33.

And finally, in the morning session we heard the statement of the Nordic states delivered by Denmark. We are encouraged that Nordic states pointed out the importance of indigenous peoples land rights, yet we must remind that the land rights of Sámi people within Nordic countries in many cases have not been resolved

We thank you, Madam Chairperson.