



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN
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**Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
Sixth Session, 8-12 July 2013
Item 3**

**Statement by the Government of Finland
8 July 2011**

Mr Chairman,

Let me first thank the *Indigenous Global Coordinating Group* (GCG) and the Sami Parliament of Norway for organizing and hosting the Alta conference. Finland attended the conference as observer.

The promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples is a longstanding priority for Finland.

We believe that the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples will offer us an opportunity to build new multi-stakeholder partnerships while strengthening the key existing ones. Candid sharing of challenges and new visions of the future are essential for the productive and successful outcome of the World Conference.

We also believe, and this is extremely important, in an inclusive process where all stakeholders – states, indigenous peoples, entities of the UN system, non-governmental organizations and others – contribute to the preparations of the World Conference.

The adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007 was an important milestone in recognizing the status and rights of indigenous peoples. However, fulfilling the objectives of the Declaration requires continuous and consistent work. In this regard, we are content that the Conference will “share perspectives and best practices on the realization of the rights of the indigenous peoples, including on pursuing the objectives of the UNDRIP”, as confirmed in the relevant General Assembly Resolutions 65/198 and 66/296.

Finland finds it essential that the new approach introduced by the Declaration on emphasizing the participation of indigenous peoples, is reflected in the World Conference. Finland supports indigenous peoples' full and effective participation and consultation both in preparation for the Conference as well as during the Conference, stressing the vision of indigenous peoples' self-determination and their free, prior and informed consent.

At national level, in order to pursue this participatory approach, the government of Finland is committed to consult indigenous issues with the Sami Parliament in Finland. At international level, we continue to support the participation of indigenous peoples in various UN fora, including by voluntary funding to the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations (VFIP), the UN Indigenous Peoples Partnership (UNIPP) as well as to the UN Trust Fund on Indigenous Issues.

However, in preparation for the World Conference, we still need to do more. In our view, indigenous peoples' own preparatory meetings are essential. Like the conference in Alta, they enable the consolidation of indigenous peoples' strategies and inputs for the World Conference. Finland has therefore decided to channel additional support to the activities of the *Indigenous Global Coordinating Group (GCG)* and wishes in this way to contribute to inclusive and broad participation, including also of indigenous youth and women.

Madam/Mr. Chair,

Despite important progress made, there still remains much to do to close the gap between the ideals of the Declaration and the implementation on the ground. We hope that the World Conference will help us to narrow this gap by producing a concise, action-oriented outcome document, aimed at strengthening our commitment and efforts to ensure the full realization of the rights of indigenous peoples, on the basis of equality and non-discrimination.

Finland looks forward to working to this end with all partners.

Thank you.