

2008 04 30/249/Johan/ikm 9 / pmr



NORWAY

**Economic and Social Council
Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Seventh Session**

Check against delivery

STATEMENT

By

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New York, 30 April 2008

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Madame Chair,

May I ask for your indulgence in touching upon issues related to more than one item on the Forum's agenda.

Indigenous peoples are – regrettably – only rarely considered in the academic, policy and public discourse on climate change. This is all the more dismaying as they are greatly impacted by these changes.

Indigenous peoples are – in their own right – primary actors in global climate change monitoring, adaptation and innovation. At the same time, however, indigenous peoples need the support of both national authorities and the international community in order to continue their role as traditional caretakers of unique and fragile ecosystems.

The Arctic is one of the regions that are experiencing the accelerating impact of climate change. As recounted by a number of indigenous representatives at this forum, climate change has serious implications for the indigenous peoples of the region and their traditional lifestyles.

Madame Chair,

The Arctic climate impact assessment (ACIA), initiated by the Arctic Council, paints a broad picture of the effects of climate change. The findings call for action at several levels in order to adapt to environmental changes.

I would like to underline three pertinent considerations;

1. Participation; indigenous peoples should be involved in national processes on how to adapt to a changing climate.
2. When planning climate change response activities, both mitigation and adaptation, due concern to indigenous peoples and their territories, traditional knowledge and socio-economic factors should be addressed.
3. Due regard should be paid to the potential value of traditional knowledge in our common efforts to combat the effects of climate change.

As a follow-up of the Convention on Biological Diversity the Norwegian Government and the Sámi Parliament are now documenting traditional knowledge in the Sámi areas in Norway. We should make use of this relevant knowledge. It is of utmost importance that the Sámi Parliament take on the responsibility concerning the rights to this knowledge.

Madame Chair,

We know that unique ecosystems, ranging from the Arctic in the north to tropical rainforests in the south are already profoundly impacted by existing climatic variation.

We need to recognise the role of indigenous knowledge in mitigating the effects of these changes. A case in point is the ability of indigenous peoples in many countries to prevent deforestation through responsible management of rainforests.

Their continued ability to do so depends – in no small part – on recognition of their tenure rights. Research from the Amazon concludes that demarcated and ratified indigenous territories are the only barrier to deforestation. The collective organisation and common-property resource management regimes of many indigenous societies contribute to forest conservation and preservation of biodiversity.

Madame Chair,

Preventing deforestation is not only a biodiversity issue but also a global climate issue. Norway co-operates with several developing countries with the aim of securing conservation and sustainable management of forest in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

The Norwegian Government has pledged to increase to 500 million US dollars its support for deforestation reduction programmes in developing countries.

Our motivation is threefold:

- to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases from deforestation,
- to enhance biological diversity and sustainable development
- to address the rights and livelihoods of local and indigenous peoples.

Our increased efforts to prevent deforestation in developing countries form part of Norway's contribution towards the implementation of the Bali Action plan. These efforts will also provide input to the negotiations at the meeting of States Parties in Copenhagen in 2009. In this process it is of utmost importance that the indigenous peoples' needs and rights are given priority as is foreseen in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Madame Chair,

This is the first session of the Permanent Forum since the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The adoption of this important document marks a turning point in the efforts to secure the world's indigenous peoples their rights. The adoption of the Declaration is however, only the first step.

Norway concurs with the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Stavenhagen who earlier in the current session inferred that there are great possibilities in applying the Declaration on

the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for the promotion and protection of indigenous rights.

All stakeholders must endeavour to reduce the implementation gap between the principles contained in the Declaration and the lives of indigenous peoples in many countries. A key factor in this regard is to develop a workable mechanism to co-ordinate the work of the Permanent Forum, the Human Rights Council with its new expert mechanism and the Special Rapporteur.

In closing, Madame Chair, I would like to extend my Government's appreciation for the high quality of the work and the dedication to the cause shown by the Special Rapporteur Mr Rudolfo Stavenhagen. While thanking Mr Stavenhagen, we welcome the appointment of the new Special Rapporteur, Mr James Anaya and we look forward to co-operating with him in the years to come.

Thank you Madame Chair