

Check against delivery

**Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
Tenth Session, 10 – 14 July 2017**

**Item 6: Ten years of implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights
of Indigenous Peoples: good practices and lessons learned**

12/13 July 2017

Statement by Finland

Chairperson,

Finland is committed to the goals of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Likewise, we attach great importance to the work of the UN mechanisms enhancing the rights of Indigenous Peoples. The UN Member States made an important re-commitment to the UN Declaration at the General Assembly High-Level Plenary Meeting known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

The renewed mandate of EMRIP is an important step in the follow-up to the World Conference.

The UN membership is now considering ways to enable Indigenous Peoples' representative institutions' participation at UN meetings on issues affecting them. Finland is honoured that the President of the General Assembly appointed the Permanent Representative of Finland (Ambassador Kai Sauer) as one of his advisors in the consultation process on this topic.

We are yet to wait for a conclusion of intergovernmental negotiations. Finland is convinced that a viable, consensual outcome on enhancing Indigenous Peoples' participation at the UN can only be achieved in a respectful partnership between Indigenous Peoples and Member States.

Chairperson,

This spring the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) had an enriching dialogue on the empowerment of Indigenous women. Also EMRIP has been exemplary in ensuring a gender perspective in its work. We encourage other UN bodies to stress the importance of empowering Indigenous women. To enhance positive change, the central role of Indigenous women in decision-making must be promoted and a gender-perspective incorporated in the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of relevant programmes and projects.

Chairperson,

At the end of 2016 the delegations of Finland, Norway and Sweden achieved a preliminary result in the negotiations on a Nordic Sámi Convention. The Convention was negotiated jointly with representatives of the three States' Sámi Parliaments. It strengthens and consolidates the rights of the Sámi and cross-border cooperation. Before the States can sign the Convention, the Sámi Parliaments in Norway, Sweden and Finland will have to formally decide on whether to accept it.

Finland is committed to ensure the Sámi, as an Indigenous People, their constitutional right to maintain and develop their own language and culture. We recognize that challenges to reconcile the views of the Government and the Sámi Parliament exist in Finland and continuously work to overcome such challenges.

The Government pursues the objectives of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, for example, through a second National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights that was adopted in February. The Action Plan includes a project that seeks to improve the participatory rights of the Sami nationally. Another project provides training to civil servants who handle Sámi affairs. This training will be provided in cooperation with the Sámi Parliament and the University of Lapland.

We look forward to hearing others' experiences on enhancing Indigenous Peoples' rights in the tenth anniversary of the UN declaration.

Thank you.