

Statement by Arctic Caucus

5th session of the Expert Mechanism on the rights of indigenous peoples
Human Rights Council

July 10th, 2012

Geneva, Switzerland

Arctic Caucus, representing Inuit Circumpolar Council and Saami Council welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Expert Mechanisms report. Language, culture, right and identity are a strong focus in our work. This focus is evident in many of our initiatives, including an Arctic Council endorsed project (2011-2015) called *Assessing, Monitoring, and Promoting Arctic Indigenous Languages*, led by Inuit Circumpolar Council with support of other Arctic Indigenous peoples' organizations.

We would recommend that this initiative be followed by the UN bodies since the preliminary symposium in Tromsø 2008 already had some recommendations which still are in actuality.

This project will enhance the following areas of concerns for the Arctic indigenous languages:

- * Survey of languages policies by the indigenous peoples and the Arctic states on the Arctic indigenous languages.
- * Surveys on the vitality of the Arctic Indigenous Languages.
- * Methods for language acquisition and language learning

Arctic Caucus would like to pay attention that some of the Inuit self government entities like Nunavut and Greenland language legislations such as *Nunavut Official Languages act* and *Inuit Language Protection Act* constitute positive examples, taking primary responsibility for the promotion and revitalization of indigenous languages.

Arctic Caucus concur with Nunavut Government's trouble by a reference to paragraph 40 of the Expert Mechanism's Study suggesting that its language legislation may discriminate against those Inuit of Nunavut who do not speak their indigenous language. This statement is from ICC submission "The Role of Language Promotion and Protection of the Rights and Identity of Inuit: Compilation of Research." According to the legislation no one can be discriminated against on the basis of language.

For the conclusion we can say that Arctic indigenous peoples are cautiously optimistic to receive support and recognition in our effort to recognize ~~the~~ that language rights ^{are} not limited to cultural rights but are part of the general human rights.

Thank you -Qujanaq

Carl Chr. Olsen, puju – Vice Chair of Inuit Circumpolar Council International