

Nordic Statement
EMRIP-7 Item 3
World Conference on Indigenous Peoples
Monday, 7th July 2014

Nordic Statement on the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples
Delivered by Denmark

Mr. Chairperson,

Distinguished Members of the Expert Mechanism, Representatives of Indigenous Peoples and organizations and State Delegates.

On behalf of Finland, Norway, Sweden, Island and my own country, Denmark, let me start by congratulating the new members of the Expert Mechanism and you, Mr. Chairperson, on your election.

The Nordic countries are very pleased with the recent progress achieved in the preparation of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. In particular, we noted with appreciation the constructive and active engagement by both States and Indigenous Peoples at the informal hearing on 17th and 18th June.

Our countries have been active in the early stages of the process and will continue to be so in its final stages. Our countries have hosted meetings, contributed with concrete suggestions for the future outcome document of the World Conference and provided financial support to allow direct participation of representatives of Indigenous Peoples in the process. In that regard, we reiterate our call for an official action plan for the final stages to be announced to allow full and effective participation by all stakeholders.

Mr. Chairperson,

On 11 June this year, a successful meeting was held in Copenhagen amongst Nordic governments and Indigenous Peoples, including Arctic Indigenous Peoples organisations as well as the Sami parliaments, to discuss the World Conference.

There was common agreement amongst the participants that the overall goal of the Conference is to reach agreement a concise, action oriented outcome document that shall contribute to the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples.

In other words, the first and foremost task should be to further the progressive implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples through dialogue and in good faith. Whatever institutional framework is in place, it is the situation on the ground where Indigenous Peoples live and work that counts as the ultimate test of success in our common efforts to advance the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Other key issues raised, besides the key theme of improving implementation of existing rights, were language rights, indigenous women's rights and empowerment, the principle of non-discrimination and traditional knowledge.

Another important issue that our countries believe should be considered at the World Conference is the participation of representatives of Indigenous Peoples in UN fora on issues affecting them. We find that a process should be initiated to consider this important question, as proposed by the Secretary General in his report on Ways and means of promoting participation at the United Nations of indigenous peoples' representatives on issues affecting them. The process should result in a decision by the General Assembly on the participation of indigenous peoples in relevant UN fora during its 69th session.

Finally, the Nordic Countries consider that annexing the Alta Outcome Document to the final outcome document of the World Conference would be a way to ensure adequate reflexion of the priorities of all Indigenous Peoples.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished Members of the Expert Mechanism,

The Nordic countries have taken note of the suggestion made by the Arctic Indigenous Caucus and echoed by other indigenous groups that the Human Rights Council should consider amending the mandate and altering the composition of the Expert Mechanism to enable it to better enhance the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We call for the need to make better and faster progress in the realization of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and therefore encourage the Expert Mechanism to consider ways and means to pursue this objective. In this regard, we encourage the Expert Mechanism to contribute to the preparations for the World Conference.

I thank you for your attention.