

11th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP)

NORDIC STATEMENT
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Item 10: Future work of the Expert Mechanism, including focus of next annual study.

12 July 2018

[Check against delivery]

Thank you Chair,

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries: Norway, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, and Denmark together with Greenland.

The Nordic countries supported Human Rights Council Resolution 33/25 whereby the mandate of EMRIP was revised, *inter alia*, to put greater emphasis on UNDRIP itself. One key element of the new mandate was the decision to focus the annual study on one or more interrelated articles of the UNDRIP. Focusing on specific articles of the Declaration will serve to identify, disseminate and promote good practices and lessons learned regarding the efforts to achieve the ends of the Declaration. The new annual studies are as such different in the scope from the previous thematic studies.

In line with the resolution, we herewith present a number of suggestions for the consideration of EMRIP for its future annual studies. The below order is not an expression of any prioritization on our part and, naturally, the final decision on the articles chosen is at the discretion of EMRIP. We welcome in this regard the choice of the study on free, prior and informed consent – the first focus decided by EMRIP.

Our first suggestion is a study of the concept of autonomy. UNDRIP article 4 *inter alia* states that indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have a right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs. In supporting the work towards a common understanding of the interplay between the key concepts of this article, we suggest that EMRIP carries out a study of the concept of autonomy, including its relationship with self-determination and self-government.

Our second suggestion is a study of the access to media. UNDRIP article 16(1) *inter alia* states that indigenous peoples have the right to have access to all forms of non-indigenous media without discrimination. Access to information, including through relevant media, is a prerequisite for the effective exercise of free, prior and *informed* consent. We suggest that special focus should be given to the question of access to the internet, which both serves an increasingly important role as facilitator of access to the more conventional media as well as providing a source of information in itself.

Our third suggestion is a study of labour laws. UNDRIP article 17(1) states that indigenous individuals and peoples have the right to enjoy fully all rights established under applicable international and domestic labour law. Work is an essential element not only to ensure conditions of life, but also to support integration – and the importance of equal access to employment and the enjoyment of resulting rights applies *a fortiori* to indigenous peoples that often belong to the most marginalized groups of society.

We thank EMRIP for its important studies on the different articles of UNDRIP providing important knowledge on status of the rights of indigenous peoples worldwide – and look forward to continuing the fruitful cooperation.

Thank you.