

**PERMANENT MISSION OF DENMARK
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**



Statement by

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On behalf of the Nordic and Baltic Countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden,
Norway, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia

**14th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous
Issues**

Statement by Denmark on agenda item 6:

**"Comprehensive dialogue with United Nations agencies
and funds"**

New York
Thursday 23 April 2015

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Joint Statement on behalf of the Nordic Baltic Countries
Delivered by Denmark

Thank you Madam Chair,

First, on behalf of the Nordic Baltic countries: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Iceland and my own country Denmark together with Greenland, I would like to thank the UN agencies that have submitted comprehensive reports to this fourteenth session.

The UN agencies can make a major contribution to the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples through the mobilization of technical assistance and financial cooperation. We encourage all these agencies to engage in dialogue with the Forum.

The Nordic Baltic countries highly appreciate the ongoing efforts of some dedicated UN agencies to integrate indigenous peoples' rights through policies and operational guidelines. We find it important to reiterate that sufficient funds should be allocated for the implementation of the policies; budgets should be allocated to ensure full and informed participation of indigenous peoples in UN programmes that affect indigenous peoples.

This year several UN agencies have submitted comprehensive reports and should be acknowledged for having done so. From Denmark's perspective we are encouraged to see UN Women being actively engaged in using the strategic intervention areas as catalysts for the implementation of UNDRIP. We would also like to acknowledge that UNDP's Youth Strategy specifically recognizes indigenous youth, and we hope to see the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks reflecting actions to implement this strategy.

The World Bank has undertaken one of the most thorough consultative processes ever in the history of the Bank in relation to the Safeguard Policies' Review. Many good and constructive comments have been submitted by indigenous peoples' organisations and representatives

during the dialogue with the World Bank. The World Bank's safeguard policies are central to achieving the goals of ending extreme poverty and share prosperity in a sustainable manner, and also a comparative advantage of the World Bank.

Our countries have - in a common Nordic Baltic Position of 23 February 2015 - underpinned the importance of the inclusion of commitments made by states, to consult and cooperate in good faith with indigenous peoples in order to obtain the free, prior and informed consent for affected indigenous peoples. While recognizing that it is clearly not the task of the World Bank to monitor human rights performances in a country, we believe it is very much so the responsibility of the World Bank to ensure that its projects do not, in any way, cause harm through discrimination and exclusion. The Bank's policies and practices should be in line with the goal and objectives of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Moreover, we also expect the World Bank to respect the obligations assumed by its clients under international human rights and environmental law, and that the Bank refrains from supporting activities that may contribute to violations of these obligations.

In our view a proposal to introduce an alternative approach to the standard on indigenous peoples (ESS7) poses a risk to internationally agreed indigenous peoples' rights and might derail a process that has gradually increased countries' recognition of indigenous peoples' rights. Realising that an alternative approach is a great concern also to indigenous peoples' organisations, including their representative bodies and institutions, we have suggested that the provision on alternative approach be removed. In exceptional cases where this policy cannot be applied, the Board can always grant a waiver. A waiver still leaves the bank and its borrower with the possibility of not applying the standard.

We believe that keeping to agreed language in the UN's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples could help facilitate agreement on this issue.

Thank you for your attention.