



European Union

**UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**7th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
(7 to 11 July 2014)**

Item 7 – UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

**Statement
on behalf of the European Union**

Geneva, 9 July 2014

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

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EU Statement

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The European Union is pleased to address the seventh session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, we have followed the current session with great interest and look forward to its proposals and thematic advice to be submitted to the Human Rights Council. EMRIP is an important forum for discussing indigenous issues and we consider its contribution to be of great value to the Human Rights Council. We appreciate the complementarity and close cooperation of the three core UN mechanisms addressing indigenous issues, notably the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples. EMRIP and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and encourage fostering synergies between their respective roles.

The EU welcomes the presentation of the final summary of responses to the questionnaire seeking views of States and indigenous peoples on best practices regarding possible appropriate measures and implementation strategies to attain the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We reaffirm our support to the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which marked a significant milestone for all of us – member states and indigenous peoples. As we have noted previously, the Declaration is an important instrument for promoting human rights. However, the realization of the Declaration rests upon on the determination and continued commitment to the implementation of its objectives. We encourage all efforts to achieve the objectives of the Declaration so as to ensure full respect for the rights of indigenous peoples.

The respect for human rights and equality are core principles of the EU and its global action includes combating discrimination and exclusion. The EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, adopted in 2012, reiterates the EU commitment to the protection of

the rights of indigenous peoples, particularly in the context of combating discrimination. The EU acknowledges the particular vulnerability and acute repression that defenders of indigenous peoples' rights face in many countries around the world.

The EU has incorporated the cooperation with and assistance to indigenous peoples as part of its broader development agenda. The EU continues to support civil society organisations working on indigenous issues, in particular through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). In addition to local funding to various projects, the EIDHR has helped to support the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in advancing the implementation of Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in countries which have ratified it. Furthermore, the EU is also supporting civil society projects under the theme "Combating discrimination against indigenous peoples" of the EIDHR.

The EU has, in the context of its Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy, undertaken to review and further develop EU policy relative to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, also with a view to the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. We reiterate our full support to the Conference and reaffirm our call for the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and civil society. We recall, in this regard, the commitment of the General Assembly – which we strongly share - to ensure consultations with the Member States and representatives of indigenous peoples to ensure a meaningful and inclusive process.

To conclude, we join colleagues in underlining the importance of the successful realization of the World Conference. We believe that it should make a strong contribution to the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples and the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the EU will continue to engage constructively in the discussions on the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.