

SWEDEN



STATEMENT

by

**H.E. Ambassador Mr. Olof Skoog
Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations**

on behalf of the Nordic Countries

at the

The fourteenth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

**Item 3b): Follow-up on the recommendations of the Permanent Forum:
Post-2015 development agenda**

United Nations

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-CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY-

Thank you Chairperson,

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark with Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Finland and my own country Sweden. We take this opportunity to express our support to the Forum as an important venue for the promotion of dialogue between governments, indigenous peoples and the UN system. We welcome the active discussions during this session of the Permanent Forum and the valuable inputs provided by all participants and look forward to a continued active dialogue in the coming days.

“We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children” – this saying captures the essence of sustainability as seen by many of the world’s indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples have much to share with the rest of the world about how to live, work and cultivate in a sustainable manner that does not jeopardise future generations.

Even though improvements have been made in recent decades, indigenous and tribal peoples as well as other ethnic minorities continue to be among the poorest and most marginalised people in the world. About 15 percent of the over 370 million indigenous peoples in the World live in poverty.

Poverty eradication is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, and is a matter of basic justice. Growth remains essential for development and poverty reduction, but it must be pursued in an inclusive, environmentally and socially sustainable way that focus on lifting the poor out of poverty. Sustainable results cannot be achieved unless we tackle the root causes of poverty, marginalization and exclusion, by placing the human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination at the heart of the Agenda.

As guardians of the world’s natural resources and vehicles of traditions over the years, indigenous peoples have developed a holistic approach to sustainable development, which has been highlighted not least by the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz.

Based on handing down lands and territories to new generations without exploiting them for maximum profit, the livelihoods of indigenous peoples are today in danger of for example climate change and third party exploitation.

Melting glaciers, floods in coastal areas, hurricanes, drought and desertification as a consequence of climate change, is increasingly affecting indigenous peoples. Moreover, climate change is already affecting the spread of infectious diseases and is threatening human health and biodiversity worldwide.

Chairperson,

The future development agenda must leave no one behind. As a basic principle, the agenda must therefore ensure that *all* persons – including the most vulnerable and marginalised – are able to enjoy their fundamental human rights and basic economic opportunities.

In order to ensure a truly universal agenda, we must ensure that the implementation of future goals and targets focus on reaching those excluded groups, including indigenous peoples. In the area of sustainable management of natural resources, we must ensure that the rights of indigenous peoples and their relation to lands, territories and natural resources are taken into consideration. In particular, the agenda should reflect indigenous peoples' key concerns and possible solutions for environmental sustainability and promote the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in the management of natural resources, including the principle of free, prior and informed consent.

All individuals have a right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health. This human right is very relevant to indigenous peoples and is therefore also mentioned in article 24 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The rights of indigenous peoples, as articulated in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, are relevant to all goals and targets of the future development agenda.

Chairperson,

Climate change may affect food systems in several ways when changes in rainfall leading to drought or flooding, or warmer or cooler temperatures leading to changes in the length of growing season. Even though the relative importance of climate change for food security differs between regions, it is clear that climate change affects indigenous peoples particularly hard when threatens the access to traditional foods and adequate water. This causes not only hunger and disease but sometimes also force indigenous communities to relocate.

Human rights standards also require free, active and meaningful participation in matters of public affairs, including development planning. Close involvement, participation and consultations with indigenous communities in development and decision-making processes is therefore not just a human right, but a necessary element in finding sustainable solutions to the underlying causes of poverty and exclusion.

A holistic approach which also includes support for indigenous peoples' food systems is much needed. Indigenous peoples have lived in a sustainable way for centuries and have been able to produce food without damaging the environment, which constitutes yet another reason to preserve their culture.

Chairperson,

It is of outmost importance that the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda will facilitate the economic and social empowerment of poor rural groups and indigenous peoples, notably women and children. The agenda should encourage both governments and other actors to do so. Not least since indigenous peoples often suffer from marginalisation from political processes and gender-based discrimination.

In conclusion, giving the voice to indigenous peoples and their concerns and priorities in the post-2015 agenda represents a true window of opportunity for development.

The Nordic countries would like to reiterate the appreciation and support for the work done by indigenous peoples, States, regional organizations, NGOs and the different UN Mechanisms, notably the Permanent Forum, in advancing indigenous peoples' rights, and look forward to future collaboration.

I thank you.