

JOINT NORDIC STATEMENT
by Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and Finland

delivered by
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Agenda item 4
(Six mandated areas of the UNPFII)

New York, 27 April 2021

(check against delivery)



**Permanent Mission of Finland
to the United Nations**

Thank you Chairperson.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Denmark together with Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country Finland.

The COVID-19 pandemic puts the spotlight on everyone's right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and continues to affect health and wellbeing across the globe. At the same time, indigenous peoples face specific risks and challenges.

While responding to the acute crisis, it is important to ensure the continuity of access to social and health services and to essential public health functions. The promotion of mental health and psychosocial resilience must be included in the global response. In this work, digital tools and innovations can provide support, especially in rural and remote areas where many indigenous peoples live.

We see it essential to maintain close dialogue with indigenous peoples and to enhance their meaningful participation to better support resilience of their communities. For example, the Arctic Council has stressed the importance of indigenous knowledge and community-based approach in response to the pandemic. Similarly, enhanced participation in the UN is crucial.

Furthermore, we need to pay attention to the consequences of climate change on health and wellbeing of indigenous peoples.

The Nordic countries underline the need to pay special attention to protect and empower indigenous women and girls who still suffer from multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, both as women and as indigenous individuals. Many are subjected to extreme poverty, lack of education, and to violence, which all affect their health. We encourage this forum to exchange information on this issue.

Thank you.