



European Union

**UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**6th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
(8 to 12 July 2013)**

Item 6 – UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

**Statement
on behalf of the European Union**

Geneva, 10 July 2013

- 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 sixth session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We commend the skillful chairmanship of Chief Littlechild, and are confident that this session will provide thematic advice and proposals to the Human Rights Council. We also take this opportunity to reiterate our support to the three core UN mechanisms on indigenous issues, notably the Permanent Forum, the Special Rapporteur and EMRIP. We appreciate the complementary manner in which these mechanisms continue to work to promote a coherent approach to the challenges faced by indigenous peoples. We encourage further reflection on the opportunities to strengthen this.

The EU's longstanding engagement on the rights of indigenous peoples is anchored in the context of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The EU considers the Declaration an important instrument for promoting human rights. Indigenous peoples' rights, as defined in the Declaration, form an integral part of all aspects of the EU's human rights policy. While we welcome the increased international consensus on the Declaration, its full implementation remains key to the actual enjoyment of these rights.

The EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on human rights and democracy adopted in 2012 reiterates the EU's commitment in this field, in particular as regards combating discrimination. In line with the Strategy, we are in the process of taking a new look at our policy and further developing it in the context of the UN Declaration and in preparation for the high level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in

2014. In connection hereto, the EU is furthermore mindful of the importance of the Post 2015 Agenda and the role the World Conference can play in this regard.

The EU welcomes the presentation of the first summary of responses to the questionnaire on best practices and encourages discussion on the further implementation of the Declaration. The summary provides a few positive examples of the progress made, but also refers to major challenges in ensuring respect for these rights, such as the lack of awareness and knowledge of the Declaration and other international instruments. There is no doubt that much more needs to be done to close the gap between the promises of the UN Declaration and the reality on the ground.

Against this background, the EU will continue to work towards achieving the Declaration's full implementation. We call on all partners to make contributions in this regard by stepping up their efforts to ensure full respect of the rights of indigenous peoples.
