

UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

14th session,

New York, 20 April – 1 May 2015

Agenda item 3 (a)

*Statement by the President of the Sami Parliament of Norway,
Ms. Aili Keskitalo*

Thank you, Madam Chair.

I speak on behalf of the Sami Parliament of Norway. First of all, I would like to congratulate you on your election as the Chair of the 14th session of the Permanent Forum.

The Sami Parliament welcomes the outcome of the World Conference, although, we did not achieve everything indigenous peoples aimed for. Nevertheless, we regard the outcome as an important step forward towards full and effective implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We are pleased that Member States, through the adoption of the Outcome Document, have agreed that the Declaration is not merely an aspirational document, and that it is required with implementation measures.

The Sami Parliament is proactively engaged in discussion about the follow-up of the Outcome Document, at both the national and international levels. At the national level, we have raised the issue of national follow-up with the Government of Norway. The Sami Parliament is in the process of preparing a submission to the Government, as to what we see as required national follow-up, including required legislative, policy and administrative measures to achieve the ends of the Declaration. Such measures, in combination with a national action plan, are crucial in making the Declaration a reality on the ground. We look forward having constructive discussions with the Government of Norway on these and other issues related to the follow-up of the World Conference.

At the international level, the Sami Parliament has been working closely with other Indigenous Peoples to promote an effective follow-up at the United Nations. Although we regard all UN-related aspects of the Outcome Document as important, we have given priority to the follow-up of Operative Paragraphs 28 and 33 of the Outcome Document. In March 2015, we were one of four co-hosts of an open-ended meeting of Indigenous Peoples on the follow-up to the World Conference, held in Geneva. The meeting brought together an ad-hoc group of representatives of indigenous peoples from all seven regions. The outcome of this meeting, which focused on Operative Paragraphs 28 and 33, has been submitted to the Forum, and made available for Indigenous Peoples and Member States. Last week, the Sami Parliament, together with some other Indigenous Peoples' institutions and organizations, carried out valuable informal bilateral

discussions with Member States in Geneva, with regard to the follow-up of Operative Paragraph 28.

The Sami Parliament is of the view that the Human Rights Council should, as soon as possible, formally initiate, preferably by resolution or a decision, the process of reviewing the mandate of EMRIP as called for in OP 28 of the Outcome Document; in a way which ensures the participation of Indigenous Peoples in the review process. The Human Rights Council's session in June provides an opportunity to initiate the process, set the timeframe for the review and agreed upon other modalities for the process. An improved EMRIP should complement the mandates of the Special Rapporteur and the Permanent Forum. The report from the open-ended meeting in March contains concrete proposals with regard to how the mandate of Expert Mechanism could be remodeled.

With regard to the issue concerning indigenous peoples' participation at the United Nations, addressed in OP 33 of the Outcome Document, we support the proposal that a new category of observer status be created for Indigenous Peoples' representative institutions, including indigenous governments and parliaments. For further details on this matter, and other issues related to the World Conference, I draw your attention to the Sami Parliamentary Council's written response to the UN questionnaire on the World Conference follow-up. The Sami Parliamentary Council is the joint body of the Sami parliaments of Finland, Norway and Sweden.

In conclusion, we strongly encourage Member States to ensure that Indigenous Peoples are given the opportunity to effectively participate in direct discussions with Member States on the follow-up of these matters in the Human Rights Council, ECOSOC and the General Assembly. It is required with discussions that go beyond the dialogue during the annual sessions of the Permanent Forum and EMRIP. The views and recommendations of the three UN mandates on Indigenous Peoples' rights and issues, the Permanent Forum, EMRIP and the Special Rapporteur, are relevant and should be taken into account, but the final solutions on these matters need to be reached through direct talks between Member States and Indigenous Peoples.

Thank you, Madam Chair.