

Statement by
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Issues**

Statement by Denmark-Greenland on agenda item 8:

**“Study on the right to participation of indigenous youth in
the Nordic countries in decision-making processes”**

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Thank you Mr. Chair,

My delegation - representing Denmark and Greenland - commend Ms. Eva Biaudet on her important and informative study on the right of indigenous youth in the Nordic countries to participate in decision-making.

We take note of the many challenges experienced by Greenlandic youth in both Greenland and Denmark and the regrets expressed with respect to access to participation in decision-making.

In the interest of complementing the study concerning opportunities for participating in decision-making for young people in Greenland, allow me to share some additional information.

The Parliament and Government in Greenland are democratically elected. Persons from age 18 are eligible for election to public office and can vote at general elections to parliament and municipal councils. The major parties of the party political system have active youth organizations, which normally attend the national party congresses. During election campaigns political debates are frequently arranged at high schools in the towns in order to engage the youth in these debates.

As it was also mentioned in the study, the Parliament of Greenland – Inatsisartut – arranges biannual Youth Parliaments. In February of this year, the 5th Youth Parliament under the theme “languages” was held in Nuuk with the participation of 35 young people from all of Greenland. During the session, the youth may draw upon the political, academic and business leadership in Greenland in preparation of their debates and recommendations, which are broadcast and published by national media.

Greenlandic students in Denmark have their own organization. The students are frequently invited to participate in conferences and political debates organized by either the Greenland members of the Danish Parliament, the Greenlandic Friendship Centers or their own organization. The students frequently meet with politicians and representatives of the labor - and employer's unions and business leaders to promote that the youth take an interest in society and are interested in returning to Greenland after graduation.

Greenland has an umbrella youth organization – SORLAK – with 3500 members from different youth organizations. Through seminars, workshops and projects SORLAK helps to provide a platform for children and youth to contribute to the public debate and to create awareness in public authorities and society about children and youth problems and needs. SORLAK was last year invited to become affiliated with the national labor union SIK, in order for the youth to benefit from SIK's organizational and other training activities. SORLAK is involved in international projects and has partner organizations in different countries.

Greenland youth is actively participating in the International Circumpolar Youth Council, ICYC, which is a branch of the Inuit Circumpolar Council. In 2010, ICYC was instrumental in organizing

an international youth conference on suicide prevention in parallel to the Arctic Council “Hope and Resilience” conference in Nuuk, which was hosted by the Government of Greenland in cooperation with ICYC.

There have been several initiatives concerning the lives and hopes of children and young people in recent years. Youth mentorship programmes designed and run by youth representatives are encouraged and widely supported. NAKUUSA is a 5 year project carried out in cooperation between UNICEF Denmark and the Government of Greenland. Central to NAKUUSA is the input of the children and youth panel established in May 2012 as a result of NAKUUSA Youth Forum in October 2011, where children and youth from all of Greenland met to discuss the good life of children and youth in Greenland. The panel made 10 recommendations concerning childrens rights and parent responsibilities, which feed into a campaign under the theme: "More Mom and Dad."

The study also makes reference to the children’s rights institution – MIO – which has been established to ensure the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The institution is established on the basis of Greenland Parliamentary Act no. 11 of 22 November 2011 and was inaugurated 1 March 2012. MIO replaces a former research center for children and youth and consists of a Children’s Spokesperson and a Children’s Council.

The Spokesperson is appointed by the Cabinet and the objective is to promote the interests of children and youth in the society by, inter alia, collecting and disseminating information on children and youth, encourage youth to participate in public debates and propose initiatives, which support and enhance the conditions of children and youth in society. The overall objectives of the Children’s council is “Participation, Protection and Development” with 6 subthemes including - participation in decision-making – as selected by the above mentioned children and youth panel in 2011.

Two weeks ago 80 experts on children and youth were gathered for a conference at the University of Greenland under the theme “A Changing Childhood – Perspectives on the Child in the Family and the Institution.” Of the many recommendations coming out of the conference, one was to develop a comprehensive strategy for children and youth, and as such very much in line with recommendations in the study presented here today.

In closing, Mr. Chair,

My delegation wishes to reiterate the importance of the study in bringing attention to the situation and views of indigenous youth in the Nordic countries. The wellbeing of children and youth remains a high priority for the Government of Greenland and special efforts to improve their opportunities in life will continue to be implemented in cooperation and consultation with them.

Thank you for your attention.