

The Second Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

New York 13 to 24, May, 2003

Agenda Item 4 (f) - Education

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

The Saami Council underlines that all children and youth have the right to a quality education that fully respect their cultural identity, as highlighted by e.g. the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the recently adopted UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

We call on the Permanent Forum to recognize that owing to historical discrimination, among other factors, indigenous children have often had disproportionately less access to education compared to non-indigenous children. We ask the Permanent Forum to recognize also the importance of indigenous children receiving education in their mother tongue and having access to mass media in such in order to be awarded the possibility to preserve and develop their indigenous language as well as their identity as indigenous and for developing a sense of belonging.

We also call on the Permanent Forum to note the importance of non-indigenous children receiving education regarding indigenous cultures within their state, in order to enhance respect for and recognition of indigenous cultures.

Therefore, the Saami Council recommends that the Permanent Forum:

Encourage UNESCO to conduct a study on the connection between indigenous children and youth receiving education in their mother tongue and having access to mass media in such and them being able to speak their indigenous

language and identifying themselves as indigenous and developing a sense of belonging, and in doing so, to pay particular attention to national curriculums.

Encourage UNESCO to conduct a study on to what extent non-indigenous children and youth receive education about indigenous peoples' cultures within their state.

Recommend UNESCO and UNICEF to promote linguistic diversity in cyberspace.

Urge UNICEF to continue to battle the discrimination between indigenous and non-indigenous children and youth as regards access to education.

Urge UNICEF to conduct a study on indigenous children's access to education to be presented at the third session of the Permanent Forum.

The Saami Council will handle in these recommendations to the Permanent Forum in writing.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.