

**Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
11th session**

**New York, 7-18 May 2012**

**Item 7: World Conference on Indigenous Peoples**

**Arctic Caucus presentation:**

Thank you Mr. Chair,

The Arctic Caucus welcomes the UN resolution (A/C.3/65/L.22/rev.1) to establish a World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014. The World Conference will give states, indigenous peoples and interested parties a chance to review and assess issues related to indigenous peoples with new eyes and minds.

Indigenous Peoples' involvement in the preparations of the World Conference have been in process for a while and the Arctic Caucus welcomes the resolution adopted at the open-ended Indigenous Peoples' Brainstorming Meeting held in Copenhagen, Denmark, 13 - 14 January 2012. The resolution says, among other things, that the purpose of the WCIP must ensure the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in all levels in the preparatory process and within and after the conference itself and must be consistent with the standards established by the United Nations for acknowledging and respecting the rights of the Indigenous Peoples of the world. Also, it must meet the standards set by the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Copenhagen meeting established a WCIP Global Coordinating Group with membership of all seven indigenous regions of the world. The Arctic Caucus is in full support of this modality to coordinate indigenous peoples' efforts in the World Conference, and pledge our commitment to back up the Coordinating Group in any way we can.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Arctic Caucus is further appreciative to states for officially recognizing the status of the indigenous peoples coordinating committee, e.g. by appointing Mr. John Henriksen - representative of the Sami Parliamantarian Council - as co-facilitator of the WCIP process, together with Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba of Mexico. We are appreciative towards these two excellencies for taking on this important task. The precedent of appointing one

indigenous and one state representative as co-facilitator is significant, as it signals that the UN is committed to ensure direct participation of indigenous peoples at all levels of WCIP process, including at the Conference itself.

Mr. Chairman;

The Arctic Caucus is satisfied with the process of preparation of the WCIP and we appreciate the initiatives conducted by the Indigenous Global Coordinating Group. We wish the group good luck of its work ahead.

The Arctic Caucus supports and endorses the following recommendations presented by the Indigenous Global Coordinating Group to the Permanent Forum members:

1. That the World Conference be funded within existing UN budgetary resources and voluntary contributions.
2. That all meetings of the World Conference be co-chaired by representatives of member States and Indigenous Peoples.
3. That UN funds and programs and the specialized agencies actively engage in the process leading to the World Conference by prioritizing concrete ways to support the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in the World Conference.
4. That IFAD actively support Indigenous preparatory processes of the World Conference.
5. That an evaluation of the gains and failings of the plan of action of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples (2005-2014) be included in the work of the World Conference.
6. That the mandate of the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations be expanded so that it can assist representatives of Indigenous Peoples to participate at the World Conference, including in the preparatory process, and that member States and others, including the private sector, donate funds to the Voluntary Fund.
7. That accreditation to the World Conference and the preparatory processes needs to realize the principle of full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and that Indigenous Peoples not organized as non-governmental organizations, including nations, councils, parliaments and governments, as well as traditional governments be accredited to participate in the World Conference. This is in keeping with Articles 18 and 41 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

And, in particular,

8. That prior to the World Conference, thematic interactive hearings are held, in order to facilitate the development of a concise action-oriented outcome document.
9. That a drafting committee, comprising of representatives of member States and Indigenous Peoples be established, in order to draft the outcome document of the World Conference.
10. That outcome documents of Indigenous preparatory processes leading up to the World Conference be official documents at the World Conference in order to recognize the global, regional and local perspectives of Indigenous Peoples.

Finally, Mr. Chairperson, the Arctic Caucus is aware that High-Level segments of the UN General Assembly do not always produce very pro-active outcomes. We have noted that some states are concerned that indigenous peoples' expectation level with regard to the World Conference is high. We ask of states, however, not to be overly locked in in conventional expectations and thinkings for the High Level segment, and work with us in trying to make it an event that truly further beneficial coexistence between indigenous peoples and states. We ask of the indigenous coordinating group to, as a matter of priority, establish a dialogue with all interested states to, as early as possible, establish a general understanding of what should be the level of outcomes of the World Conference.

We thank you.