



European Union

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

8th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Item 8 – UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Geneva, 23 July 2015

- 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 eighth session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP), which is held in the context of the follow up to the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) last year. As this is the first time that the EU is taking the floor during this session, allow me also to congratulate M. Tsykarev on your election as the Chair.

We have followed this session with keen interest, and will pay close attention to EMRIP's proposals, thematic studies and advice, which are of great value to the Human Rights Council. Whenever possible, we continue to encourage synergies between the three core UN mechanisms addressing indigenous issues, notably the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, EMRIP and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. We take great interest in the mandate of EMRIP, and have therefore taken close note of the views expressed on the issue in this ongoing session.

We foster all efforts to achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples so as to ensure full respect for their rights, and reaffirm our full support to the Declaration in this regard. While the Declaration is an important instrument for promoting human rights, its realisation rests upon on the determination and continued commitment to the implementation of its objectives.

At the World Conference, the EU actively contributed to the adoption of the action oriented outcome document, with a view to bringing positive changes to lives of indigenous peoples. The outcome document provides guidance for further action needed to fully make the UN Declaration a

reality. The EU welcomes concerted global efforts in this regard, including the recommendations of the outcome document which call on the UN Secretary-General to develop a System-Wide Action Plan to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the UN Declaration and ask United Nations agencies, funds and programs, where appropriate, to support the implementation, upon request, of national actions plans, strategies or other measures. We look forward to the presentation of the Action Plan by the end of the 70th session of the UN General Assembly.

For many years the European Union has paid particular attention to the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples across the globe. As a way of improving our work, the EU has launched a review aiming at strengthening relevant EU policies. This review has been greatly inspired by the World Conference outcome document. In the context of the review, we have so far organized two well-attended consultations with the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and experts from all regions of the world, and are grateful for their valuable feedback and comments. A strengthened EU policy is expected to be in place by early next year.

To conclude, let me mention that last Monday the EU adopted a new Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015-2019. This Action Plan addresses indigenous peoples amongst its objectives, both in the context of our reinvigorated approach to fight discrimination, and from the perspective of social and economic rights. Our work towards the respect for the rights of indigenous peoples as proclaimed in the 2007 UN Declaration will continue, and we count on close cooperation with indigenous peoples' as the concerned rights' holders as well as all other partners and stakeholders, in particular civil society and human rights defenders, that tirelessly work towards this end.