

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 12th session
May 20 – 31 2013
Arctic Indigenous Peoples' Statement

Item 6: World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

Thank you Mr. Chairman;

As an Arctic member of the Global Indigenous Coordinating Group (GCG), I have the pleasure of informing you about the Arctic indigenous peoples' preparations towards the high-level plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly, to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. Since the establishment of the GCG, with the aim of coordinating, preparing and securing indigenous peoples' participation in the World Conference process, the Sami and Inuit representatives have been actively involved in the work of the GCG, and the process as such, with the objective of promoting and securing effective indigenous participation in all aspects and phases of the process, including the work on the outcome of the World Conference.

The Sami and Inuit organizations and institutions welcome the General Assembly's resolution A/66/296 - on the organization of the World Conference - adopted in September 2012, as it contains constructive ways of ensuring indigenous peoples' substantive participation in the world conference process. The consultations on the modalities resolution were facilitated by a representative of Member States and Indigenous Peoples respectively; this arrangement was crucial for the discussions on the organization of the World Conference. We strongly recommend that this arrangement is continued in the substantive phase of the World Conference process.

In the Arctic region, two indigenous preparatory conferences have been held, with the objective of preparing the Arctic regions' indigenous peoples' contribution to World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

A pan-Sami preparatory conference was held in Inari, Finland, from 27 - 28 June 2012, where Sami representatives from Finland, Norway, Sweden and Russia adopted a comprehensive set of recommendations, as contained in the Inari Declaration.

Moreover, an Arctic Indigenous Peoples' Regional Preparatory Conference for the United Nations' World Conference on Indigenous Peoples was held in Nuuk, Greenland, 23 – 24 October 2012,

attended by Sami and Inuit representatives; this conference adopted an Arctic Declaration on the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, known as the Nuuk Declaration.

The Nuuk Declaration contains specific and concrete recommendations for inclusion in the final outcome document of the World Conference, structured under eight overarching themes, which represent the most pressing and urgent matters for the Arctic indigenous peoples. The themes are the following:

1. Indigenous Peoples' Right to Self-determination;
2. Indigenous Peoples' Rights to Territories, Lands, Waters, Resources and Traditional Livelihoods;
3. Extractive Industries;
4. Optional Protocol to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
5. Further measures for the implementation of rights of indigenous peoples;
6. Culture, Language, Education and Health;
7. Indigenous Peoples' Cross-border Rights;
8. The United Nations System and International Cooperation;

Mr. Chair,

As you know, indigenous peoples have established a global drafting group, mandated to consolidate recommendations from the seven geo-political regions of the world, the indigenous youth and women caucuses respectively, in preparation of the Global Indigenous Preparatory Conference for the World Conference, to be held in Alta, Norway, from 10 - 12 June 2013. The Arctic region is taking part in the work of the drafting group, alongside with the other regions and the two caucuses. We are very pleased with the progress of the work, and we believe the recommendations from the global indigenous drafting group will provide a solid substantive basis for the discussions at the Global Indigenous Preparatory Conference in Alta, and eventually for indigenous peoples' action oriented recommendations for inclusion in the final outcome document of the World Conference in 2014.

Mr. Chair,

In conclusion, the Arctic region would urge the members of the Permanent Forum – when developing possible recommendations to the Economic and Social Council on the World Conference – to take into account that the global indigenous consultations on the substantive and thematic aspects of the World Conference are yet to be completed.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.