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**Structural  
 Analysis of  
 Cultural  
 Systems**

United Nations  
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 Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples  
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*Statement on Item 3*

**Dominance effects on indigenous peoples' participation in decision-making**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Firstly, I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate you to your election, and then briefly comment, from a research perspective, on the indigenous peoples' right to participate in decision-making. This right, which has been defined in several international conventions, as synoptically described in the EMRIP Progress Report of 17 May 2010 (A/HRC/EMRIP/2010/2), is especially required in situations, where indigenous peoples are exposed to external destabilising factors; whereas in situations, where the indigenous peoples' autonomy, both with regard to their social systems and to their territories, is respected, there would be no need to call for the observance of this right. Unfortunately, the majority of indigenous peoples are now subject to destabilising external factors, as they are exposed to the dominance of the ongoing globalisation. The basic idea of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples with regard to the right to participate in decision-making is to obviate any threats, and to ensure that indigenous peoples retain control on their own fate. There has been much research on group and inter-group mechanisms, which is highly relevant to this issue. If we zoom closer to the sociological and psychological processes of indigenous peoples' participation in decision-making, we can detect some potential perils. Persons with some indigenous background, who have been socialised in the external, non-indigenous and dominant context, are more likely to take the role of an indigenous participator in decision-making than indigenous persons without such a socialisation. This can bring about the problem that positions could be favoured, which are in line with the dominant context, whereas genuinely indigenous positions take a back seat or are not represented at all. Therefore, special attention has to be paid to these dynamics, in order to ensure that it is actually the indigenous people's interests that are represented within such a participation in decision-making.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman