

EMRIP 10th session

12.7.2017

Agenda item 7

Indigenous peoples' participation in the United Nations system

STATEMENT FROM THE ARCTIC CAUCUS TO THE EMRIP 10<sup>TH</sup> SESSION ITEM 7

Mr./Madam Chairperson,

I speak on behalf of the Sámi Parliaments in Finland, Sweden and Norway, the Inuit Circumpolar Council and the Saami Council.

It is with great concern we receive reports from the intergovernmental negotiations from New York not enabling the participation of Indigenous Peoples' representative institutions in relevant meetings in the United Nations' system on issues affecting them.

It seems to be so that under the intergovernmental negotiations, the process has received significant changes. We are concerned that the intergovernmental negotiation process does not anymore reflect the process and discussion where we have participated in good faith together with the member states in order to find common ground on enhancing the participation of Indigenous peoples in the UN. Further let me also express our concern that the UNDRIP itself seems to be not respected and followed by the recent developments of the intergovernmental process.

It could seem that some states more or less disregard the long and exhausting but constructive consultations with Indigenous Peoples during the last year, and entered into a discussion on a minimum solution, rather than a consulted solution.

Let me recall the position formed by Indigenous Peoples gathered in Bangkok, Thailand on the 11-12 November 2016 to consider and consolidate their positions and strategies with respect to the specific issues raised in the PGA's final compilation report (A/70/990).

It calls that **Indigenous peoples should be able to participate at the UN at all levels including the General Assembly, its subsidiary bodies and conferences convened by the GA.**

It further calls to **Establish permanent observer status within the UN system enabling indigenous peoples and nations direct participation through their representative institutions, including their governments, parliaments, traditional councils and other authorities, recognizing that the situation varies from region to region and taking into account various historical and cultural backgrounds.**

In light with current developments, we would like to stress that it is of utmost importance that Indigenous peoples are able to discuss and analyze the current situation globally.

We strongly recommend to the Expert Mechanism under its new mandate to express its support to the importance of enabling Indigenous peoples' participation in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them, in accordance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples article 18.

We further recommend to the EMRIP to be active especially towards the UN Human Rights Council to enable enhanced participation of Indigenous peoples, including Indigenous people's representative institutions.

However, we would like to remind that it is the responsibility of the Indigenous peoples , including their representative institutions, to themselves continue to be active in the UN General Assembly process and other possible UN processes on enhancing Indigenous peoples participation in the UN.

Thank you.