

..-914<sup>th</sup> session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP)  
Regional meeting on the Arctic; Central and Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and  
Transcaucasia

## **JOINT STATEMENT**

Delivered by Denmark

July 13<sup>th</sup> 2021

*[Check against delivery]*

I have the honor to make this statement on behalf of Canada, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, and my own country Denmark together with Greenland.

We congratulate EMRIP on the holding of its 14<sup>th</sup> session. It is important to keep momentum within the constraints of the pandemic, which has disproportionately affected indigenous peoples around the world.

We commend EMRIP for the draft reports before us on the Rights of the Indigenous Child under UNDRIP and on Implementing UNDRIP, especially focussing on the Right to Self-Determination. We support many of the observations and recommendations contained in these reports.

The discussion on indigenous peoples' self-determination is complex both in a national and international context.

As rightly stated, self-government and autonomy are important constituent elements of the right to self-determination for indigenous peoples. They facilitate significant political, economic, social and cultural gains for indigenous peoples that have realized them and can be exercised in several ways.

This, for instance, is the case for the Kingdom of Denmark, where Greenland is a part, but the people of Greenland is a people pursuant to international law with the right to self-determination. A principal objective of introducing Self-Government in Greenland has been to facilitate the transfer of additional authority and thus responsibility to Greenlandic authorities.

Self-determination may also to a large part be realized through article 19 of UNDRIP, which is an important method for implementing the right to self-determination and deals with the consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples through their own representative institutions. It can for example be implemented through a consultative process between institutions representing indigenous peoples and governments and through participation in democratic systems.

As pointed out in the study on the Indigenous Child, the capacity of indigenous peoples to meet their children's needs depends on their ability to exercise their right to self-determination and is essential when considering existing gaps in areas such as education and child welfare. This is a critical issue, which requires a proactive approach placing the rights and needs of children center-stage.

Turning to the report on implementing the Right to Self-Determination, we agree with the observation that the tendency in statements and documents to group "indigenous peoples" with "local communities" may have the impact of undermining the rights of indigenous peoples under UNDRIP. Both these groups have important roles to play in the context countering climate change, environmental destruction and loss of biodiversity. It can make good sense to mention them together. But we also need to be clear about the difference. And we should counter efforts to water down the special status that indigenous peoples have achieved in international law,

The States behind this statement reiterate our efforts to achieve the ends of the UNDRIP and upholding its principles. We look forward to hearing the testimonies of indigenous peoples as well as the best practices from other states.

Thank you.