

Statement by the Danish Delegation
UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 13th session, Item 4 (a)
UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
Tuesday, 20 May 2014

Statement by the Danish Delegation

Thank you Madame Chairperson,

Denmark and Greenland are pleased once again to participate in the annual discussion of the Permanent Forum on the issue of human rights.

First, we would like to reiterate our appreciation and support for the work done by States, regional organizations and the different UN mechanisms to advance the human rights of indigenous peoples. Not least the Permanent Forum plays an important role in promoting respect for these rights.

Denmark remains among the most **active donors to the UN system** regarding support to indigenous peoples' issues. We have recently increased our support to this agenda through contributions to the UN Trust Fund and the UN Voluntary Fund to mention but a few channels of support. We encourage other Member States to also increase their financial support to the different initiatives to improve the situation for the indigenous peoples world-wide.

Madame Chairperson,

Looking briefly beyond the UN system, this year we celebrate the **25 years anniversary of the ILO Convention No.169** on indigenous and tribal peoples. This instrument is,

along with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a cornerstone of the international framework seeking to ensure that indigenous peoples enjoy their fundamental human rights. However, the Convention is not widely ratified. We encourage States which have not yet done so to consider ratifying Convention No. 169.

With the adoption in 2007 of the **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** we committed ourselves to improve the human rights conditions of the world's indigenous peoples. This commitment needs, in our view, to be renewed by us all.

Despite expressions of commitment to the Declaration and significant positive developments worldwide, much remains to be done before all of the objectives of the Declaration can be said to have become a reality in the lives of indigenous peoples all over the world. We simply need to advance its implementation. Neither States nor key UN actors must shy away from addressing the challenges that hinder its implementation.

These challenges may have a political or economic nature or even simply be due to misunderstandings regarding the content and status of the Declaration. Some States and other actors regrettable continue to hold certain positions and assertions about the status and content of the Declaration that weaken their commitment to it. It is thus at times asserted that the Declaration does not have a legal status, that it fosters inequality by providing special privileges to a certain segment of society and that it may destabilize a country. The previous Special Rapporteur, Mr. Anaya, has in his final report to the UN General Assembly addressed these questions in a helpful way. It should now be clear to us all that that the Declaration does have legal significance, that it is founded in equality and human rights, and that it plays a role as an instrument of reconciliation and social harmony.

Mr Chairman,

A final issue we would like to highlight is the need to address the recommendation from the Permanent Forum to the parties to the **Convention on Biological Diversity** and the Nagoya Protocol to adopt the new terminology “Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities” and to reach a final decision on this issue at next Conference of Parties, COP 12. We consider this issue to be of great importance in fully respecting and protecting the human rights of indigenous peoples. We therefore look forward to the independent analysis of the legal implications of the use of this terminology for future decisions and secondary documents under the Convention. We urge representatives of State Parties to contact in their home countries the authority that will be negotiating at COP 12 to make them aware of this issue.

Madame Chairperson,

In conclusion, we reaffirm today our full support to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as the principal statement of the United Nations on indigenous rights, and we hope to see a successful World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in September leading to a renewed strong global commitment to the Declaration and its full implementation.

I thank you, Madame Chairperson.