

## DENMARK



Second Session of The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues  
New York 12-23 May 2003

Statement by the Danish Delegation on the methods of work of the Forum.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is a matter of great satisfaction to my delegation to see how the Permanent Forum is now up and running under the regular budget of the UN. That fact is primarily due to the imminent group of personalities comprising the Forum. But they alone could not make the Forum work without the active support of a secretariat unit now headed by a most competent and devoted officer, Mrs. Elsa Stamatopoulou. We very much welcome her and her staff in our midst and allow me, Mr. Chairperson, to add that the documentation provided for this session within such a short time-span is most pertinent and useful.

Mr. Chairperson, our vision for the work of the Forum has been the creation of a UN organ in which government and non-government experts will work in partnership, on an equal footing and conduct themselves on the basis of the principle of consensus. Addressing indigenous issues is in many respects controversial. Therefore, a holistic approach towards solving these issues through consensus should be the trademark of this Forum.

It is our hope that the Forum will soon have established itself as the UN authority on matters affecting indigenous peoples. As the Forum consists of the most experienced experts themselves it does not, in our view, need to appoint special rapporteurs to assist it. Rather, we see the Forum as drawing on existing expertise within the UN system, not least the UN-special rapporteur on human rights issues Mr. Rodolfo Stavenhagen. Through an active dialogue with the various UN agencies the Forum will be well positioned to raise awareness of the situation facing the worlds indigenous peoples and to make relevant recommendations to Governments and the respective UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes for further action. The idea of - addressing a specific theme during each session of the Forum is helpful in this respect. Some of the dialogues may be conducted by way of convening a workshop on the subject-matter, such as for instance on the matter of preserving languages.

In order to further the work of the Forum one may consider to establish a short-term and a long-term programme of work and to adopt a step-by-step approach in order to be able to produce concrete results in the advancement of indigenous peoples' situation and role in society.

In support of the work of the Forum the Danish Government has decided to make a financial contribution of 1 million DKK without any conditions attached. The amount will soon be transferred to the Voluntary Fund established for the Forum.

I thank you Mr. Chairperson.