

EU statement

Agenda Item 7: Indigenous Peoples' participation in the United Nations system as follow-up to the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

Geneva, 12 July 2017

Mr/Ms Chair,

The EU is pleased to take the floor on agenda item 7 on “Indigenous Peoples’ participation in the United Nations’ system”.

In our recently adopted EU Council Conclusions on Indigenous Peoples, the EU underscores that further dialogues and consultations with indigenous peoples are important to ensure that the EU’s commitments to UNDRIP as well as the Outcome Document of the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples are taken into account in the EU’s evolving policy commitments. Today’s statement is a reflection of this commitment.

Over the past months and weeks, indigenous peoples and UN Member states have worked tirelessly in fulfilling the request of the General Assembly resolution 70/232, which *inter alia* consists of two requests to the President of the General Assembly.

- Firstly, to conduct timely, inclusive, representative and transparent consultations with Member states, indigenous peoples’ representative institutions from all regions of the world and existing relevant mechanisms of the UN on the possible measures necessary to enable the participation of indigenous peoples’ representative institutions in meetings of relevant UN bodies on issues affecting them.
- Secondly, to prepare a compilation of the views presented during the consultations, including on good practices regarding indigenous peoples’ participation, which would form the basis for a draft text to be finalised and adopted by the General Assembly during its 71th session.

This work has resulted in a compilation of possible measures necessary, including procedural and institutional steps and selection criteria. This result would not have been produced if it wasn’t for the able leadership of the then President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr Lykketoft of Denmark and his four advisors: the Permanent Representative of Finland Mr Sauer, the Permanent Representative of Ghana Mrs Pobee as well as the two indigenous advisors Dr Charters from the Pacific region as well as Dr Anaya from the North America Region. On the basis of this compilation, the advisors have continued consultations and presented a draft resolution for consideration under the proficient leadership of the current President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr Thomson.

The EU wishes to thank wholeheartedly the four advisors for their creative and relentless efforts in seeking to bridge the differences and in attempt to find common ground. Despite

progress in the form of a rich proposal, the UN Member states have unfortunately not yet come to an agreement on the precise measures to enable the participation of indigenous peoples' representative institutions in meetings at the UN on issues affecting them.

In line with its long history of consistently supporting the evolving practices and procedures of non-state actors' participation in the UN, including indigenous peoples, the EU also engaged actively and constructively in this process with a view for a consensual outcome. Regarding venues, the EU has been supportive of enhanced participation in all General Assembly meetings, in meetings of its 2nd and 3rd committees, as well as in ECOSOC and Human Rights Council meetings.

The fact that UN Member states have not been able to agree on definite measures does not mean that the EU has lost sight of the end goal. The EU therefore looks forward to working on and supporting a procedural resolution that will be adopted during the remainder of the 71st session of the GA to allow for future deliberations of this issue by UN Member states on the basis of the work already done and in consultation with indigenous peoples. The EU is committed to contribute to a solution that upholds the achievements of UNDRIP and respects the universality of human rights as well as the principles of the UN Charter.

EMRIP took an active part in starting and contributing to the discussions on the ways and means of ensuring participation of indigenous peoples on issues affecting them in relevant UN meetings. We owe EMRIP recognition for those contributions. The EU also believes that EMRIP with its expertise and knowledge - together with the contributions of indigenous peoples' organisation, its academic friends, National Human Rights institutions, NGO's and Member states participating in its meetings - continues to have a crucial role in informing all choices and decisions in pursuit of this important goal.

Thank you Mr/Ms Chair.