

The 2nd session of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Statement by the Saami Council

Agenda item 3: Study on lessons learned and challenges to achieve the implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples to education

Thank you Mdm Chairperson,

First, allow me on behalf of the Saami Council to congratulate you on your appointment as Chairperson of this important body. Congratulations also to the vice-Chair.

Mdm Chairperson,

The Saami Council further congratulates you and your colleagues for producing this insightful study on indigenous peoples' right to education, in particular in light of that little resources were made available to you for producing this study. We trust that the Human Rights Council will welcome the study and that the Council will further ensure that all relevant parts of the UN system make use of the conclusions and findings in the study in all their activities directed towards indigenous peoples, pursuant to Article 42 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Mdm Chairperson,

We find the Annex to the study – the so called EMRIP Advice No. 1 (2009) – particularly interesting. We are in agreement with all your conclusions in the Advice No. 1. As the Special-Rapporteur, Professor Anaya, we would like to particularly agree with Conclusions No. 2 and 14 – that the effective enjoyment of the right to education constitutes a pre-condition for indigenous peoples being able to effectively exercise their

right to self-determination, enshrined for instance in Articles 3 and 4 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In addition, we place emphasis on Conclusion No. 11, which importantly underscores that for most indigenous peoples – including the Saami – the right to education is intrinsically linked with our traditional use of our lands and natural resources. Finally, we are in complete agreement with your conclusions that the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples does not establish any new rights to education. Rather, it affirms already existing rights, interpreting them into an indigenous context.

Mdm Chairperson,

We think that Advice No. 1 sets an excellent precedent for the future work of the EMRIP. The Saami Council is looking forward to the EMRIP producing similar advices on all the rights and provisions enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We believe that by producing these kinds of Advices, the EMRIP will in a very useful way flesh out and concretize the general rights enshrined in the Declaration.

We further call on the UN system and member states to provide the EMRIP members with the financial, personal and administrative support necessary to enable the EMRIP members to produce such studies.

We thank you, Mdm. Chairperson.