

UNGA 70, Third Committee, Item 69

Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Nordic statement

Monday October 19th 2015

Mr. Chairperson,

I have the honor to make this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark with Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Finland and my own country Sweden.

A year ago, UN Member States agreed by consensus at the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples to undertake commitments to further promote the realization of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Outcome Document of the World Conference provides States with a useful road-map for the realization of Indigenous Peoples' rights and it's in the interest of us all to continue to work onwards.

For us, the Nordic countries, the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples have been and continue to be longstanding priorities. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was a milestone in recognizing the status and rights of Indigenous Peoples. Fulfilling the objectives of the UNDRIP requires continuous and consistent work both at the national and international level.

Mr. Chairperson,

Let me take this opportunity to highlight a few issues of certain importance to the Nordic countries:

Firstly, I would like to stress the importance of enhanced participation of indigenous peoples' representatives in relevant UN fora. The cooperation between the United Nations, its membership and Indigenous Peoples in the run-up to the World Conference paved good ground for translating the commitments in the Outcome Document into concrete measures. Now we need to see an inclusive process in the follow-up of these commitments, where indigenous peoples through their representatives and institutions have an important role to play.

In this regard, we welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the progress made in the implementation of the Outcome Document of the World Conference and hope to see that the recommendations therein, not least regarding enhanced participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in relevant UN fora, are duly considered. Furthermore, we find it very positive that Indigenous Peoples were invited to contribute to the report and that 425 responses from Indigenous Peoples' representatives and organizations were received.

Secondly, the Nordic countries support the work of the three UN mechanisms for the protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples: The Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

The three mechanisms are and should remain complementary, and it's important to make further efforts to strengthen the coordination between them in order to avoid duplication of work and to enable synergies.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Special Rapporteur, Vicki Tauli-Corpuz, for her report as well as her consistent engagement to strengthen the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The review of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is important in this regard, as stated in the Outcome Document of the World Conference. The review gives us an opportunity to provide constructive proposals to enhance the work of the EMRIP. We see the review as a potential to form a relevant and useful platform for dialogue on indigenous issues with all relevant stakeholders to further achieve the ends of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Thirdly, we would like to put specific emphasis on the importance of safe-guarding the rights of indigenous women and girls. The Special Rapporteur concluded in her report on this issue, that indigenous women and girls experience complex, multidimensional and mutually reinforcing human rights violations. Indigenous women also suffer from different forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence. Therefore, the Nordic countries see it as vital that these human rights violations, including causes and consequences of violence against indigenous women and girls, be thoroughly addressed.

Mr. Chairperson,

Finally, as we now set out to implement our new agenda for sustainable development – the 2030 Agenda – it continues to be crucial that the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including indigenous women and girls, are duly considered in national and international efforts. The Human Rights Based Approach to development that we are all committed to in our development agendas, also recognize and promote the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

It is important that the United Nations develop a system-wide approach to the Indigenous Peoples rights, including in the context of implementing the 2030 Agenda. We therefore reiterate our support and encouragement to the Secretary-General in his work to develop a system-wide action plan to achieving the ends of the UNDRIP and for the realization of the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Thank you.