

UNPFII 14TH SESSION

20 April to 1 May 2015

Denmark and Greenland

Question 1

Briefly state what recommendations from the Thirteenth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) or recommendations from previous sessions (not included in previous reports) that have been addressed by your Government. Where possible, also provide information on the situation of indigenous women.

While few of the recommendations stemming from the 13th Session are directly applicable to the context of Denmark/Greenland, the recommendations of the UN Permanent Forum may be used to provide guidance for e.g. policy making and law drafting.

In relation to the Permanent Forum's 13th Session, the primary focus has been recommendation 44 and 64 (see below), in addition to recommendation 53 as Denmark and Greenland actively supported the use of the Alta Outcome Document during the elaboration of the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

As regards the situation of indigenous women, reference is made to the Eighth Periodic Report by the Government of Denmark on Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women submitted in June 2013 (<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N13/621/60/PDF/N1362160.pdf?OpenElement>) and in particular the annexed report by the Government of Greenland on the implementation of mentioned Convention. This report provides concrete information on all areas of the convention, including access to education, the situation in the labour market, health, rural women and critical situations.

In regard to measures aiming at preventing violence and supporting victims of violence, the Government of Greenland has provided shelters and counselling centres since the 1980s for women or men, who have been victims of violence and threats of violence or other domestic crisis. In the autumn of 2013, Inatsisartut (Greenland Parliament) adopted a strategy and an action plan for 2014-2017 to combat violence in the domestic as well as in the public sphere.

Question 2

Please briefly state how your Government deals with these issues in regards to indigenous peoples.

a) Implementation of the Outcome of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, also known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

Denmark and Greenland welcomes the outcome document of the World Conference highlighting issues of particular importance to indigenous peoples that are of a global nature. It will serve as guidance for future actions at all levels to promote, protect and respect the rights of indigenous peoples.

Since the adoption of the outcome document, Denmark has co-sponsored an international seminar on ILO Convention No. 169, held in Geneva on 27-28 November 2014. The seminar *inter alia* aimed to develop concrete recommendations for improving implementation of the

Convention, as a contribution to the follow-up to the outcome document of the World Conference.

Furthermore, a Nordic expert meeting was held in Helsinki on 16 December 2014 with the participation of indigenous representatives. The focus of the Nordic countries is in particular on the question of indigenous peoples' participation at the UN and the review of the mandate of EMRIP. These are questions of crucial importance to indigenous peoples in the Nordic countries and therefore the aim is first and foremost to contribute constructively and actively to the realization of these elements in the outcome document.

b) Post-2015 Development Agenda and the inclusion of indigenous peoples in this process.

Denmark works for an ambitious post 2015-agenda focussing on eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development. It is about advancing progress, but also ensuring that no one is left behind. For this reason, Denmark has advocated that economic, social, and environmental sustainability should be integrated into all goals. The post 2015-agenda should be founded upon a human rights based approach ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all, and lead to action to combat inequalities and discrimination.

Denmark therefore works to defend the promotion of human rights, including those of indigenous peoples, within the post-2015 agenda. During the sessions of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development, Denmark actively worked for the inclusion of references to indigenous peoples specifically in relation to education and biodiversity. In this process, Denmark has consulted relevant civil society organisations, among others IWGIA (International Work Group of Indigenous Affairs), and major groups in the UN representing the interests and concerns of marginalised groups and those of indigenous peoples.

c) Youth, self-harm and suicide and how this is being addressed.

The Greenland Self-Government has taken over the responsibility in all domestic areas in Greenland, including the areas of social affairs and education. A number of initiatives have been taken in recent years. For instance, Greenland and UNICEF Denmark entered into a cooperation agreement in 2010 with the objective of strengthening cooperation and efforts for creating the best possible opportunities for children and youth in Greenland. Moreover, in the spring of 2012 Greenland's first Children's Rights Institution with a spokesperson for children was established in Greenland.

There are several initiatives in Greenland regarding suicide prevention. Most recently in 2013, when the Government of Greenland launched a national strategy on suicide prevention in Greenland (2013-2019). There are also private initiatives such as the Project Inuuneruna Iggoraarsuk, which is initiated primarily by youth and seeks to prevent suicide through a page on Facebook. Greenland is also participating in the Arctic Council project *the Evidence-Base for Promoting Mental Wellness and Resilience to Address Suicide in Circumpolar Communities*. These initiatives concern Recommendation 44.

Question 3

What are some of the obstacles your Government has encountered in implementing the recommendations of the Permanent Forum?

Recommendations from the Permanent Forum are numerous and can be difficult to implement as the situation of indigenous peoples is context driven. This means also that many recommendations are not or not fully applicable in the context of Denmark/Greenland. Moreover, some recommendations have a very broad scope and may require significant measures such as legislative changes. Thus, implementation may in some cases take several years. An example is the recommendation in paragraph 62 in the report of the 13th Session regarding the conduct of an independent audit of constitutional and other laws, policies and programmes and to amend these if needed to remove all forms of discrimination.

Denmark repeated at the 13th Session of the Permanent Forum the call by the Arctic Caucus that the Permanent Forum should have a maximum of 50 outstanding recommendations, meaning that the Forum should not adopt any further recommendation until outstanding recommendations have been implemented satisfactorily. Continuous follow-up to key recommendations is important to ensure accountability and impact on the ground.

Question 4

What are some of the factors that facilitate your Government's implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum?

First of all, the Government of Denmark and Greenland participate in every session of the Permanent Forum and are hence fully aware of its recommendations. Not all recommendations are implemented. This is due to the fact that some recommendations are found to be less relevant in the context of Denmark/Greenland, as mentioned above. Other recommendations concern issues that have already been or are being addressed on the national level. An example hereof is recommendation 44 and the initiatives taken in Greenland regarding suicide prevention (question 2).

In the day-to-day work on indigenous issues the point of departure is mainly the UNDRIP and other human rights instruments. Implementation of the recommendations is thus facilitated to the extent that the recommendations are in line with these commitments.

Question 5

Please provide information on how your Government currently promotes and/or implements the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

International level

Denmark's international human rights policy maintains as one of its priorities the rights of indigenous peoples. In some cases, the situation of indigenous peoples is therefore raised in the universal periodic review of other states or in bilateral dialogues.

Denmark and Greenland participate also in a number of UN fora where indigenous peoples' rights are discussed and work actively to ensure references to UNDRIP and the rights it contains in relevant soft-law instruments such as resolutions adopted by the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly. A recent example is the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, which Denmark and Greenland participated actively and constructively in throughout the process and continues to focus on the follow-up to the agreed outcome document.

Furthermore, in November 2014, Denmark sponsored together with Mexico an expert workshop in April to celebrate the 25th anniversary of ILO Convention no. 169. The workshop took stock of the Convention's contribution to rights-based development as well as to revitalize interest in and strengthen implementation of the ILO Convention.

Indigenous peoples are also a general focus area in Denmark's development cooperation that follows a human rights-based approach to development. The first strategy for Danish support indigenous peoples was prepared already in 2004 reflecting Denmark's international commitments such as ILO Convention 169. The principal strategy elements are 1) international processes, 2) bilateral and multilateral development cooperation and 3) cooperation with indigenous peoples' organisations and NGOs. The strategy was supplemented by a technical guidance note in 2011. Denmark continues to provide financial assistance to a number of organizations and funds that promote indigenous peoples' rights.

Finally, Denmark as an EU member state contributes actively to bring EU cooperation policies in line with the Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples. For instance, Denmark has provided the EU's External Action Service with a senior national advisor on indigenous issues to support an update of the EU's policy and guidelines on indigenous peoples.

National level

Denmark and Greenland work closely together to promote indigenous peoples' rights also at the national level. The establishment of the Self-Government system for Greenland in 2009 is in itself an illustration of Greenland and Denmark's implementation of and commitment to the UNDRIP. This co-operation concerns Recommendation 64 from the Permanent Forum's 13th Session.

The situation in Greenland is described in Denmark's periodic reports to UN human rights treaty bodies. This means that there is continuous international monitoring of the human rights situation in general in Greenland.