

**Questionnaire to Governments  
UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

**Questionnaire on the report of 14<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Permanent Forum on  
Indigenous Issues**

**Response by the Government of Finland**

**April 2015**

Finland sincerely apologizes for not having met the deadline for submission of answers to the questionnaire on the report of the 13<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Finland wishes to submit the following contribution to the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

**Question 1**

*Briefly state what recommendations from the Thirteenth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)<sup>1</sup> 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.*

With respect to information on the situation of indigenous women, Finland would like to refer to the seventh periodic report of the Government of Finland on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (available at [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=CEDAW/C/FIN/7](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=CEDAW/C/FIN/7)) as well as the list of issues and questions in relation to the seventh periodic report of Finland (available at [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=CEDAW/C/FIN/Q/7/Add.1](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=CEDAW/C/FIN/Q/7/Add.1)).

As regards paragraph 63 of the report of the 13th session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Government of Finland would like to inform that a Government bill for the adoption of the ILO Convention number 169 was submitted to Parliament last fall. Consideration of this proposal will continue in the Finnish Parliament elected at the April 19th parliamentary elections.

In September last year the Government submitted a bill to revise the Act on the Sámi Parliament, including its definition of a Sámi which determines a person's eligibility for inclusion into the electoral roll of the Sámi Parliament. In particular, the proposal for a new definition of a Sámi aroused a lively debate for and against at Parliament. Subsequently, Parliament rejected the proposed revision in March this year. The proposed revision as presented by the Government and the Sámi Parliament were a central part of the Government bill and therefore the preconditions for passing the proposed bill have elapsed. Wishing to respect the views of the Sámi Parliament, the Government withdrew its proposal to revise the Act on the Sámi Parliament in March.

**Question 2**

*At its fourteenth session in 2015, the Permanent Forum will review the following areas:*

- (a) Outcome of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, also known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples;*
- (b) Post-2015 Development Agenda;*
- (c) Youth, self-harm and suicide.*

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<sup>1</sup> The following paragraphs of the Report on the Thirteenth Session of the Permanent Forum (E/2013/43) contain recommendations addressed to Member States: 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 30, 33, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, 49, 53, 62, 63, 64, 65, 73, 74

*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.*

The Outcome document has been translated into Finnish and three Sámi languages (North Sámi, Skolt Sámi language and Inari Sámi language). It has been distributed to relevant authorities, the Sámi Parliament as well as other actors. The Outcome document is also available on the website of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

A national meeting on the follow-up to the WCIP is planned.

Finland organized a Nordic expert meeting on the follow-up to the World conference on Indigenous Peoples with the participation of indigenous representatives from all Nordic countries in Helsinki in December 2014. At the meeting two key priorities for the Nordic countries and indigenous representatives were discussed: how to strengthen the mandate of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the question of participation of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations.

For a more complete answer, please consult the contribution submitted in April 2015 by Finland on the UN Secretariat questionnaire on the implementation of the Outcome Document on the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples.

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

Finland aims at a universal Post-2015 Agenda, which in our view should be based on human rights and particularly pay regard to the principles of equality and non-discrimination. This approach entails a strong focus on the reduction of inequalities, underlining the need to eliminate discrimination and to pay attention to the barriers that those that are marginalized or excluded face in society. In this regard, it is essential that the needs of the indigenous peoples are properly taken into account on the future sustainable development agenda, also in the form of means of implementation and follow-up and review. Finland finds it important that the proposal of the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development goals (especially goals 2 and 4) address the needs of the indigenous peoples and underlines its strong support for goal number 10. To be successful in our efforts to leave no one behind, we need to insist on the collection of disaggregated data and on monitoring of the progressive reduction of inequalities between social groups.

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

The Ministry for Social Affairs and Health allocates a yearly appropriation (in 2015 the sum is 480.000 euro) to secure social- and health services in the Sámi Homeland. The Lapland Regional State Administrative Agency (AVI) is the regional steering, licensing and oversight authority in the social welfare sector and health. The Sámi Parliament enters into agreements on steering the yearly allocation with the municipalities in the Sámi Homeland. In this way the Sámi Parliament can influence on how they yearly appropriation is steered. Elderly care and health services have been prioritized.

In addition, Finland's Slot Machine Association (RAY) grants funding for the basic operations, investments, and projects of health and social welfare organisations. Funding is granted annually based on applications. Through this funding SámiSoster, a registered association focussed on social and health care of the Sámi in Finland, has executed projects such as the promotion of the welfare and inclusion of Sámi reindeer herders. This project aims to create an operations- as well as a peer support model that supports the social well-being of the reindeer herders, is organization-based and professionally steered and that is compatible with the yearly cycle and circumstances of reindeer

herding. Another project that has been funded is a project that focuses on the treatment of substance abuse of Sámi persons.

Finland cannot provide statistical information on youth, self-harm and suicide, since by law statistics are not differentiated by ethnic group.

According to information provided by the Sámi Parliament in Finland Sámi young people can get mental health and social problems as a result of the following conditions: difficulties in engaging in traditional livelihoods, emigration from the Sámi Area, racist writings and hate speech against the Sámi, and intoxicants. Currently, there is only one Sámi-speaking psychiatric nurse working in Finland, in the municipality of Utsjoki.

SANKS in Norway, the Sámi National Competence Centre on Mental Health Care (Samisk nasjonalt kompetansesenter – psykisk helsevern, SANKS), is the only unit of special nursing competence that provides psychiatric services based on the Sámi language and culture for children, young people and adults. Under the centre, there is a Psychiatric Outpatient Department for Children and Young People (Barne- og ungdomspsykiatrisk poliklinikk). After acquiring a referral from a medical doctor, Finnish Sámi can be treated at the SANKS. The Sámi Parliament in Finland has expressed its concern that patients are not sufficiently informed about the possibility to be treated at SANKS. In this regard, Finland would like to inform that Finland and Norway have engaged in discussions – most recently in Inari, Finland on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015 – on the possibility that Finland would buy health care services from Norway. The cooperation between Finland and Norway is linked to the planned reform of the Finnish social and health services sector.

### **Question 3**

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

The number of adopted recommendations per session is relatively high. More targeted, precise and implementable recommendations would facilitate their consideration and implementation at the national level. Recommendations should be focused on areas that the Permanent Forum sees as priority issues for consideration at a given point in time.

### **Question 4**

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

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### **Question 5**

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

The UNDRIP has been translated into Finnish, Swedish and the three Sámi languages (North Sámi, Inari Sámi and Skolt Sámi) in Finland. The Declaration is considered a policy document, which has a guiding effect in the work of authorities as well as in legislative work.

In Finland all ministries are responsible for legislative drafting, issues pertaining to research, development and monitoring, and international affairs in their own administrative branches. Thus,

human rights are integrated into all sectors of government and administration. A human rights-friendly interpretation is applied.

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