

Members and Secretariat of the Permanent Forum, member states,
our Indigenous brothers and sisters, and their ancestors here in spirit.

My name is Lars Olaf Soevndahl Petersen, I'm an Inuk from Greenland.
I'm giving this statement on behalf of the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus.

Today we celebrate the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Declaration is the embodiment of principles that we all must strive towards in order to ensure the protection of rights of Indigenous Peoples.

This Declaration was born out of actions of our ancestors fighting for the same rights, specifically in this context, the actions of Chief Deskaheh of the Cayuga Nation who attempted to make an appearance at the League of Nations in 1923 as a means of representing the views of his people.

We are gathered here from all around the world in respect of these principles where we can not only advocate for our rights much like Chief Deskaheh wanted, but also make connections to different Indigenous Peoples around the world. Even though there is still so much further for all of us to go for our rights, we can still use this opportunity to see how far we have come from generation to generation.

The Global Indigenous Youth Caucus meets here, on these grounds every year for two main reasons-- One is to advocate for the protection of Indigenous children and youth, who are some of the most vulnerable groups of peoples in the world, and to promote their right to participate in international and domestic mechanisms. The second is for us to engage with those participating within these mechanisms. We talk to, learn from, sometimes argue with, but ultimately build lifelong relationships with these Elders and our fellow youth; they are experts and leaders who have spent their generation learning and seeking to improve from the last.

We hope that those here today can use this anniversary to reflect on the times they learned from their Elders to be heard and guided; how they were also supported by those when they could not afford to come to these life-changing events, or did not know how everything worked; how they were guided by their Elders and had their views respected, especially when they came from a background with no funding at all, or where their government still would not even recognise their existence. This was to carry on the torch for advocating the rights of Indigenous Peoples. As we

celebrate our fifth anniversary of the Declaration, we also honour our role in receiving the future responsibility to address still outlying violations of Indigenous rights.

In the spirit of this, it is most important that Indigenous youth are empowered to participate as experts of their own Indigenous youth issues, and that we are recognised for our opinion within these international and domestic mechanisms. This includes the availability of necessary space for our meetings and side events--- and endorsement to participate.

It is also important that the governments of the countries we reside in, acknowledge our identity and our right to have our own mechanisms to accommodate the rights of Indigenous Peoples within their lands.

We celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Declaration, but we also honour the need for our rights to our lands; our cultures; and our identities that could be protected by the implementation of the Declaration by member states and UN agencies, not just its adoption. We feel that everyone in the Forum not only honours this, but also the contributions our predecessors have made to us to continue our journey for full recognition of Indigenous rights.

Thank you.