

2019-04-23

**Statement under agenda item 9: Discussion on the theme “Traditional knowledge: Generation, transmission and protection”**

Madame/Mr Chair,

I am speaking in my capacity as the President of the Sámi Parliament in Sweden on behalf of the Sámi Parliaments in Norway, Sweden and Finland, the Sámi Parliamentary Council and the Sámi Council.

Traditional knowledge is embedded within our languages, our cultural customs and practices, kinship, our traditional livelihoods and use of land and our relationship with nature. In addition, our traditional knowledge can provide important contributions in a number of challenges we are faced with today – climate change, loss of biodiversity, unsustainable use of resources. We are willing to share and use our knowledge in order to help address these challenges. However, this must be done with recognition of our rights, and obtaining our free prior and informed consent. In addition, traditional knowledge must be given equal status with science.

In 2017 the Sami Parliament in Sweden was assigned by the Swedish government to propose suggestions on how to strengthen and improve the implementation of article 8(j) and related provisions of the UN Convention on Biodiversity. Our findings and recommendations were presented in March 2018 suggesting more than ten measures, including making the Sámi Parliament the national focal point for article 8(j) related issues and Sámi traditional knowledge. One year has passed and still not a single proposed measure has been addressed by the Swedish government. We urge the Government to do so without further delay.

Last year we addressed the draft Nordic Sámi Convention which contain several articles on the protection and use of our traditional knowledge. We were hoping to be able to report progress on this matter and to have received the Governments response to the amendments submitted by the Sámi Parliaments last year. Regrettably, we want to bring to the attention of the members of the forum that we are unable to report such progress.

However, progressive work on the protection and respect of traditional knowledge is carried out globally in various UN fora: such as the Convention on Biodiversity and the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (under WIPO). We are also pleased about establishment of the Facilitative Working Group under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to operationalize the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform.

We encourage increased synergies and cooperation between these bodies with the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in order to further advance the full recognition, respect and protection of our traditional knowledge.

Thank you for your attention