

**Intervention by Mr. Tuomas Aslak Juuso**

*Acting President, Sámi Parliament in Finland*

*Agenda Item 9 – Enhancing the Participation of Indigenous Peoples in the United Nations*

Madam Chair, distinguished members of EMRIP, dear colleagues,

I deliver this intervention on behalf of the Arctic socio-cultural region.

To meaningfully enhance the participation of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations—particularly in the Human Rights Council—it is essential that the process be firmly grounded in Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination and self-identification, as guaranteed under Articles 3 and 33 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

This means that Indigenous representative institutions—be they elected parliaments, traditional councils, or other authorities, as specified in the Alta Outcome Document—must be recognized without imposing externally defined models. Collective representation must be a guiding principle in any future accreditation framework.

The Arctic region has identified several gaps in the recent intersessional report, particularly the lack of emphasis on accountability and respect for existing regional accreditation processes. Despite these concerns, we believe the report can still serve as a useful foundation for advancing the enhanced participation process and the development of a relevant resolution.

It is essential that the report includes meaningful reference to Indigenous representative institutions and their key role in ensuring accountability. Accredited entities must uphold transparency and remain accountable to the Indigenous Peoples they represent.

We recommend the following key actions:

1. Request the Expert Mechanism to recommend to the Human Rights Council to decide on the enhanced participation of Indigenous Peoples in the work of the Human Rights Council, based on the joint-report as reflected in HRC/59/35 with the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples from the seven Indigenous socio-cultural regions.
2. From the Arctic perspective, we support advancing a resolution in the September session or, alternatively, initiating an intergovernmental negotiation process. This should include a clear roadmap with timelines, designated facilitators, and reference to models such as the EMRIP mandate review (A/HRC/RES/30/11).
3. Indigenous Peoples must have the right to select their own representatives and be recognized through a new permanent observer status at the Human Rights Council. The accreditation process must reflect diverse governance systems, with fair, inclusive, and transparent criteria overseen by an Indigenous-led body that respects regional and cultural diversity.

We remain committed to working collaboratively with all Indigenous Peoples and States to advance a principled, inclusive, and lasting solution.

Thank you.