

Parliament of Greenland Foreign Policy and Security Committee

Statement at Indigenous Peoples' consultative meetings of 11th May and 18th May at 10, UN Head Quarters, New York

Dear Advisers and Indigenous people from all over the world

I represent the Foreign Policy and Security Committee of the Parliament of Greenland, Inatsisartut. As you know, Greenland is a self-governing nation in the Arctic. Our population is approximately 56.000, our island about 2 million square kilometers. Our people, the Greenlandic people, are recognized as a people according to international law, when we after some years of negotiations extended our self-autonomy in 2009. Our country held Home Rule Government from 1979 to 2009 until our Self Government agreement, thus Greenland has expanded our self-determination widely over time, and with the Self Government Agreement, we also initially have the right to declare ourselves independent if we so wish in the future. On our last fall assembly in 2015 at Inatsisartut – Parliament of Greenland, 25 out of 31 members voted yes to initiate our own Constitutional Committee.

Our situation today, though, is still, that we as a nation still do not hold full sovereignty. We, the people of Greenland, to a large degree identify as Inuit and our culture is an Inuit culture. Our parliament and government are legislatively public, but de facto, our political leadership is indigenous as is a majority of our people.

The Foreign Policy and Security Committee fully support the call for permanent observer status for indigenous governments and parliaments, traditional councils and authorities.

As described for the Sami Parliament the Parliament of Greenland, Inatsisartut, and the Government of Greenland, can only participate in United Nations meetings as part of a state delegation. We call for the United Nations to be more inclusive of indigenous peoples' own representative institutions such as indigenous parliaments, governments, traditional councils and authorities.

For indigenous peoples to be heard and included in decision making processes affecting them, participation at UN level is essential.

We thus also support the proposal by the Arctic Indigenous Peoples organizations that a new and independent body, e.g. a working group under the General Assembly, be established and assigned the responsibility of considering requests from Indigenous Peoples' institutions for granting of

observer status, composed by an equal number of representatives of Member States and Indigenous Peoples, appointed by the President of the General Assembly.

We from the Foreign Policy and Security Committee of the Parliament of Greenland hope, that the UN Member States and the UN system will respond positively to the call for inclusion of indigenous peoples in the UN work.

Thank you.