

Thank you very much Madam.

It's a pleasure for me to participate in this forum on minorities and I would like to thank the organisers of the forum as well as the independent expert Ms. McDoughall for her work and dedication to this issue.

I was chair of the expert mechanism of indigenous peoples, I will give you very quickly an idea about the work of research to ensure participation of indigenous people in decision making and participation in policy making and I will concentrate on one element from the expert paper which is the significant participation which is of such importance to indigenous people.

The expert mechanism is a new mechanism, on the rights of indigenous peoples, it was set up as a subsidiary body to the HRC made up of 5 members with a mandate of providing the HRC with the specialised information on the rights of IP. The present work of the mechanism is IP and the right to participation in decision making and the HRC asked in September for us to examine good practices in participation by IP in decision making at all levels.

The mechanism presented the first paper and is open for suggestions and recommendations to finalise the report. The mechanism and the study say that one of the main obstacles for the participation of IP is access to information. IP and minorities in order to participate in decision making therefore need the information and to debate the information, there should be culturally appropriate and timely, especially with regard to new issues, or economic issues which require skills or access to technology, that IPs do not always have. Access to information is therefore of the utmost importance to be able to bring to bare influence on decision making and economic policies, for example large scale activities and here you need the effective participation of IP in the consultation process so that they can give free prior informed consent. And they often have to interface with international organisations financial banks and many times these projects are carried out without the consent of IP and drastically affect their rights.

The declaration on the rights of IP says that IP are entitled to self-determination and so what is needed then is the process to comply with free prior informed consent, has to take place through negotiations with mutually agreed goals and objectives so the expert mechanism, the minority forum and the independent expert together could in synergy on this sharing best practices and strategies to overcome these obstacles.

Thank you very much.