

Resolution from the 1st Barents Indigenous Peoples' Congress 2010
Kirkenes, February 4-5

Noting recent developments in international law affirming indigenous peoples' rights to represent themselves in all matters of relevance to them,

Noting further that this development pertains also to international affairs,

Recalling the establishment of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues through Resolution 2000/22 as a high-level UN body where indigenous peoples and states come together and share decision-making powers in matters of common interest to them,

Recalling further the establishment of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples through Resolution 6/36, taking particular note of that of the first set of members to the EMRIP, a majority are of indigenous origin,

Underlining that the Permanent Forum and the EMRIP constitute affirmations of that indigenous peoples constitutes peoples and shall be allowed to participate as such in international affairs,

Welcoming the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples through Resolution 61/295,

Foreseeing the imminent adoption of the Nordic Saami Convention in the efforts to harmonize the rights of the Saami people living in Finland, Norway and Sweden, and in common efforts with the Russian Federation give effect to the indigenous peoples right to maintain and develop contacts, relations and cooperation with their own members as well as other peoples across international borders.

Underlining that these two instruments affirm indigenous peoples' status as peoples with the right to self-determination and participatory rights also in international affairs,

Noting with appreciation indigenous peoples' status as Permanent Participants in the Arctic Council pursuant to Article 2 of the Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council and Part II, Paras. 4, 5 and 21 of the Arctic Council Rules of Procedure,

Underscoring the formalized participatory role of indigenous peoples in the Arctic Council is a reflection of indigenous peoples' right to take part in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights.

Further noting with appreciation the Constitutional guarantees afforded according to the universally recognized principles and norms of international law to the indigenous small peoples in the constitution of the Russian Federation, Article 69, and the participatory rights stated in the Constitutional Act Article 3 (2).

Underscoring finally that enhanced participation by the Nenets, Saami and Vepsian peoples in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council would greatly contribute to the work of the BEAC and the BRC.

Resolve that:

1. As indigenous peoples, the Nenets, Saami and Vepsian peoples are entitled to the right to self-determination.
2. By virtue of the right to self-determination, the Nenets, Saami and Vepsian peoples have the right to represent themselves in international affairs, which includes participatory rights in international bodies that address issues of relevance to them.
3. At the very least, this participatory right amounts to the level of participation indigenous peoples enjoy as Permanent Participants to the Arctic Council.
4. The Nenets, Saami and Vepsian peoples' participation in the BEAC and the BRC must first and foremost be achieved by them each being granted status as Permanent Participants to the BEAC and the BRC.

By implementing the right to self-determination as Permanent Participants, the Nenets, Saami and Vepsian peoples are entitled to full and active

participation within the BEAC and the BRC. This principle applies to all meetings and activities of the BEAC and the BRC, from ministerial meetings to regional meetings. They shall be represented by Heads of Delegations from their peoples appointed by them, and be provided with ample time for right to speak at each meeting.

Each of these peoples must in other words be allowed to represent itself directly in these bodies, and not only through the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples.

5. The BEAC and the BRC are both under duty to give all opportunities and would benefit from participation in all their activities by the Nenets, Saami and Vepsian peoples.