**Statement by Norway**

**Item 7 International Decade of Indigenous Languages**

**17th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

Thank you, Chairperson,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank UNESCO for their efforts to organize the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, as well as all the language users, activists, governments and across the globe striving to implement the goals of the decade.

Indigenous Peoples’ languages represent unique worldviews, histories, and cultural identities. Yet, these languages often find themselves on the margins, struggling for recognition, preservation, and revitalization.

Norway has joined the newly established ad hoc group on digital equality and domains, together with representatives from several other UN member states who recognize that digital communication is crucial for the preservation and promotion of Indigenous Peoples’ languages. This is especially important as younger generations embrace technology. Failure to adapt to digital formats may lead to further marginalization and the eventual disappearance of these languages.

Our goal must be that Indigenous Peoples’ languages shall be alive and in active use in all domains. To succeed in this, we must make it easy to use these languages. Indigenous Peoples’ languages are often not present or easily accessible in digital media.

On the positive side, steps have been taken in recent years to develop language tools for indigenous languages. But the work is not complete. It is still difficult to integrate indigenous languages into the most widely used digital platforms and appliucations. The main challenge is the reluctance of big tech companies to allow indigenous language technologies developed by third parties inside their systems.

We want to encourage larger actors in digital communication and information to increase their awareness of indigenous peoples’ languages and the importance of providing access to their languages on digital platforms.

I hope we can inspire each other and join forces to ensure Indigenous Peoples’ rights to preserve, revitalize and promote indigenous languages in our digital age.

Thank you.