**Expert workshop on possible ways to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples in the work of the**

**Human Rights Council**

**Opening remarks, Ambassador Tine Mørch Smith**

**21 November 2022**

* I am (very) honored to have been asked to co-facilitate this important workshop as a representative of states. I am also pleased to share the role with representative of indigenous peoples Ms. Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine. With your impressive background/competence and experience as former chairperson of Permanent Forum in New York, I feel confident we will together lead us through these days.
* I am also glad to share the floor with:
  + Representative of OHCHR, Ms Peggy Hicks,
  + President of the Human Rights Council Mr Federico Villegas,
  + Chair of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Mr Binota Moy Dhamai;
  + Chair of the Permanent Forum Mr Dario Mejia Montalvo;
  + and Special Rapporteur Mr Francisco Cali Tzay.
* Our joint presence here today, here in the room or virtually, shows our joint commitment to the rights of indigenous peoples.
* The summer of 2013 hundreds of Indigenous Peoples, representing the 7 global regions, including representatives of the women’s caucus and the youth caucus, met in the traditional territories and lands of the Sami people at Alta in the North of Norway. The Alta Outcome Document led to the first, and so far only, World Conference on Indigenous Peoples held in 2014.
* We meet to discuss an important topic: how to enhance the participation of Indigenous People in the work in the Human Rights council.
* This Expert workshop is long awaited. It is part of a process that has been going on for many years in the UN, to follow up a key recommendation made in the Alta conference, and the outcome document from the World Conference. All with the goal to ensure greater participation from Indigenous people in United Nations bodies on issues affecting them.
* I think it’s worth noting that the outcome document was adopted by consensus in the General Assembly, which shows a broad support among UN member states to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples
* In October 2021, the Human rights Council adopted resolution 48/11 in which it requested OHCHR to organize the present expert workshop which aims at facilitating the discussion between Indigenous Peoples’ representatives and States’ representatives on the measures necessary enhance the participation of Indigenous Peoples in meetings of the Human Rights Council.)
* At the onset of our workshop, I would also use this opportunity to thank the OHCHR Secretariat led by Maria Giovanna Bianchi for your hard work in preparing this workshop and the invaluable assistance you will provide through these days.
* I also recognize the leadership of Guatemala and Mexico as penholders of the resolutions on indigenous peoples in HRC.
* This workshop represents an important occasion to continue the process of consultations and keep the dialogue open between States and Indigenous Peoples.
* The four key topics identified for discussion are: a) venues of participation; b) participation modalities; c) selection mechanism and d) selection criteria are important topics. We will urge the participants to concentrate their interventions on these topics.
* The outcome of this expert workshop will be a summary report which will be submitted to the Human Rights Council prior to its 53rd session in 20XX
* I therefore hope that the discussions will be concrete and productive, conducted in constructive manner, and lead to a summary report that will contribute to clarify the modalities for Indigenous participation and show us a way forward.