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Report of the Working Group on the Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Russian Region Indigenous Peoples' joint statement

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Mr. Chairman!

I am taking the floor on behalf of the Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation (RAIPON), which unites more than 40 Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East. Our peoples live in 27 regions of the Russian Federation, which amounts to 2/3 of Russia's territory.

Today I have the honour to address the distinguished members of the Human Rights Council on behalf of, and in the service of, the leaders of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation, who held their meeting in Moscow on June 5-6, 2006. Twenty-three organisations of Russia Indigenous Peoples supported the statement by a large group of the world's Indigenous Peoples to adopt, as soon as possible, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as recommended by the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

I am charged to appeal to all member States of the UN and all members of the Human Rights Council to give their full support for the adoption of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as proposed by Mr. Luis-Enrique Chavez, Chair of the inter-sessional Working Group on the Draft Declaration, whose statement we have heard today.

Many of the persons present here have taken an active part in the Working Group debates. We all remember very well the difficulties of the negotiation process between Governments and Indigenous Peoples. We know the price of compromise formulas. But it was clear for everybody that full consensus would be difficult to reach. And this is primarily because of the opposition of a small group of states such as the USA, Australia and New Zealand.

Indigenous Peoples of the North of the Russian Federation consider that the text presented by the Chairman does the best job of balancing the interests of States and Indigenous Peoples. This text is supported by many States. Indigenous Peoples also give their full support to the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as proposed by the Chairperson.

It is my pleasure to express my gratitude and support to the initiative presented by Peru's government, as well as to the large group of States that elaborated the Human Rights Council draft resolution on the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous Peoples of the North of the Russian Federation are disappointed by the absence of the Russian Federation in this group of States. During all the years past, Russian diplomats reassured us that they would be giving their support to Indigenous Peoples rights, and to the necessity to adopt, as soon as possible, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Today we are surprised to learn that the Russian position has changed. With the end of the 21-year process of elaborating the Declaration being over, and the time having come to adopt it, the Russian delegation proposes to return to the negotiating table.

On behalf of RAIPON and Indigenous Peoples leaders of the North of the Russian Federation, I appeal to the Russian delegation to abstain from this resolution.

Thank you for your attention !