



*International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs*

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**HUMAN RIGHTS COUCIL, 11<sup>th</sup> SESSION**

**AGENDA ITEM 6: CONSIDERATION OF UPR REPORTS – RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Speaker: Kathrin Wessendorf

Thank you Mr chair

On behalf of the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to the situation of the so-called indigenous, small numbered peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation. This term refers to 40 ethnic groups, which traditionally use and inhabit about two thirds of Russia's land mass. It is from their territories that the bulk of natural resources such as oil, gas, timber, gold and diamonds is extracted which make up almost all of Russia's export revenues.

On 20 August 2008, the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) expressed its concern about the situation of Russia's indigenous peoples and made a series of specific recommendations. These include for the Russian Federation to seek the free informed consent of indigenous communities and give primary consideration to their special needs prior to granting licences to private companies and to ensure their priority right to territories of traditional nature-use (TTP) and to natural resources. CERD urges Russia to withdraw support for the Evenkiiskaya dam, which would displace thousands of indigenous Evenks, and from other similar large scale projects.

During the 4<sup>th</sup> session of the UPR, the Russian Federation stated that it had adopted a national plan for the implementation of the CERD recommendations and that by the end of this year a first interim report on the realisation of this plan would be presented.

IWGIA welcomes this initiative and we would like to express our hope that the plan will address the

above mentioned specific concerns raised and recommendations issued by CERD. At the same time, we would like to note that the indigenous umbrella organisation, RAIPON, has no information on the existence of such a plan nor on its status. We would like to receive clarification regarding the status and time line of this document, including its title and availability and urge the government to actively consult with and seek the participation of indigenous organisations in the implementation process.

Thank you Mr chair