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State of Indigenous Peoples' Rights in the Russian Federation

Oral intervention by
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on behalf of
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Cultural Survival (CS)
Society for Threatened Peoples (STP)
International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA)

Greetings, everyone.

My name is Yana Tannagasheva, I am a representative of the Shor Indigenous People from Southern Siberia. I am honored to speak today on behalf of : International Committee of Indigenous Peoples of Russia, Cultural Survival, Society for Threatened Peoples, and International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs on State of Indigenous Peoples' Rights in the Russian Federation.

The Russian Federation is home to [47 legally recognized](#) Indigenous Peoples, known as "[Indigenous small-numbered Peoples.](#)" Many other Peoples, such as Buryats, Altaians, and Yakuts, have the characteristics of Indigenous Peoples but are not legally recognized as such by the government. Their rights are continually violated.

During the Third Cycle, the Russian Federation supported the following recommendations, which have not been meaningfully implemented:

- Nicaragua recommended: Step up efforts to promote and preserve the languages of indigenous peoples, including through the education system and via the adoption of relevant measures to safeguard intangible cultural heritage.
- South Africa recommended: Strengthen the legal framework to ensure the sustainable socioeconomic and cultural development of indigenous peoples.
- Bolivia recommended: Continue strengthening policies for the promotion and protection of indigenous peoples' rights.

Indigenous Peoples' rights in the Russian Federation are continually violated. Federal registration of Indigenous Peoples entails an inaccessible process which excludes Indigenous persons who do not meet the criteria. Domestic protections are only extended to *registered* Indigenous people, thus, the Registries' limitations diminish access to subsistence practices. Indigenous territories are increasingly subject to industrial development.

Many Indigenous children cannot access education in their native languages and/or are forcefully sent to boarding schools, challenging intergenerational knowledge exchange and threatening cultural survival.

The closure of medical facilities in small rural settlements in the North endangers Indigenous Peoples' access to health, including emergency services and services for Indigenous women.

Indigenous Peoples are facing serious consequences of climate change more frequently.

The Russian government uses intimidation tactics like the threat of criminal prosecution to dissuade Indigenous rights activists. In December 2022, a stricter “foreign agent” law was passed. Many Indigenous organizations who participate in international fora risk being labeled as “foreign agents.”

The Russian Federation has not endorsed the UNDRIP and violates many rights enshrined therein.

We call upon states to make the following recommendations to the Russian Federation:

1. Endorse and implement the UNDRIP and ratify ILO 169.
2. Ensure Indigenous Peoples can self-determine their members by consulting them on practices for federal registration of individuals belonging to Indigenous Peoples. Resource this process and remove barriers to free self-identification.
3. End the practice of declaring NGOs and Indigenous Peoples’ organizations as “foreign agents” and establish a legal framework to allow them to operate independently.
4. Ensure access to traditional food, high quality healthcare, including emergency services and services for Indigenous women in remote areas, in every Indigenous community. Make these available in culturally appropriate formats, including for small nomadic communities.
5. Ensure access to education in every Indigenous community, in their languages, including via formats adapted to the needs of small and nomadic communities, to ensure that Indigenous children are not separated from their families, ways of life, or languages.
6. Ensure Indigenous Peoples have priority access to biological resources, fishing sites, and hunting grounds, as guaranteed in national legislation, without unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles and in consultation with Indigenous Peoples.
7. Guarantee Indigenous Peoples’ unrestricted use of their lands and territories and legislate the obligation to apply Free, Prior and Informed Consent in any activity on the lands, territories, and waters of Indigenous Peoples.
8. Develop and implement a climate change mitigation program in consultation with Indigenous Peoples, supporting their traditional ways of life and economic activities and considering regional specifics.
9. Fulfill its obligations under the Paris Climate Agreement.

Thank you.