Welcome address Arctic Indigenous Peoples' Dialogue

- Ubmeje 4 oktober 2019



[Introduktion på samiska]

Firstly, I want to welcome you all to my homeland Sápmi. It is a great pleasure to see you all here.

Indigenous Peoples are in a unique position to lead transformative change and restore harmony with nature and all life forms. The reason for this being our knowledge systems and holistic understanding of interlinkages between nature and culture and our ways of living reciprocally with our lands, territories, and resources. This was recently addressed in Indigenous Peoples global commitments for Action on Climate which was presented at the climate summit in New York last week.

With the current rapid climate and environmental changes in the Arctic this message is more urgent than even before. As such, the themes of today's presentations and dialogue "learning from the Arctic" could not be more timely.

In eallinbiras, our living environment programme, which sets the fundament of all our work, – we have a vision of a resilient and sustainable living environment for all. In a Sámi context this vision expresses our wish to live in a resilient Sápmi which is rooted in both a healthy nature and a thriving Sámi culture. Where people and nature have long term capacity to renew themselves and to sustainably evolve even in times of significant change. And where both nature and culture enrich the surrounding world. The tree pillars or sub-goals – to use modern terminology – of this vision are

- Ealli eallinbiras juohkeaktii Nature as a vital habitat and living environment. Where what we take from nature is in balance with what it can give.
- Arbevirolas máhtu Traditional knowledge. Where our indigenous knowledge and knowledge systems are equal to science.

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• Dássálas ovdanahttin – Balanced development. Where we lead a sustainable lifestyle and high quality of life without causing negative impacts on nature and environment.

We all know that historically Indigenous Peoples have not been allowed to sit at the table to discuss and influence decisions that concern our future. Step by step this is changing. Indigenous Peoples are now represented within various procedures. Such as the work on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, protecting biodiversity and addressing climate change. The OECD project "Linking Indigenous Communities with regional development" is an additional example. Another is the establishment of the Indigenous Peoples Platform and its Facilitative Working Group under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Momentum and development in the international arena, with increased recognition of indigenous peoples' rights, practices and contributions will surely reinforce and encourage improvements at regional and national levels. Currently, we can see this in the

- Swedish proposal on an Act on Consultation on matters concerning the Sámi.
- In the ongoing work on establishing truth and reconciliation commissions in Sweden,
 Norway and Finland
- In the joint achievements towards a Nordic Sámi Convention.

At EU level the European Parliament resolution of last year *on violation of the rights of indigenous peoples in the world, including land grabbing* is another example.

However, there are limitations for us to fully and meaningfully participate in relevant decision making processes and have our voices heard and listened to. For that reason, for a like this are needed in order to put indigenous issues on the agenda and address priorities and needs of the Indigenous Peoples' of the Arctic as well as highlighting good examples on how to move forward.

I hope the following presentations and discussions can provide toolkits to better understand and recognize our importance and contributions to face sustainability challenges in the Arctic region and the EU. And I want to encourage you all to learn from us Indigenous Peoples, to engage with us and let us lead the way forward.

Thank you! Giitu!

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