

Intervention by Anne Nuorgam at the Arctic Council Ministerial-meeting in Suoločielgi, Inari 10th October 2002

Mr Chair

The Saami Council is developing a system of intentional agreements with Saami research institutions and bodies to take responsibility for the Saami participation in the various specialized working groups. We are doing this to engage our experts-community in the important work of the Arctic Council. The Saami civil society is ready to engage also in future Arctic reports and projects. This strategy will hopefully give needed input to the reports as well as contribute to the capacity building and knowledge exchange between the Saamis and our neighboring peoples.

We welcome the development of guidelines in the SDWG for the Arctic Council projects for the participation of Indigenous Peoples. In earlier days we were included on a very late stage, and are satisfied to see that there is positive development in this respect.

Firstly we have to increase our efforts in addressing the global climatechange issue. All monitoring efforts within the Arctic cooperation indicate an accelerating development threatening all of us. The Arctic region is proved to be an indicator of the speed of the development, and we as indigenous peoples of the Arctic feel the consequences of the rapid changes. We commit ourselves in line with the ambition of the Inari-declaration to advocate the need for urgent action in all relevant decisionmaking bodies both nationally and internationally, regarding policy-changes to stop global warming.

Secondly we strongly support the development of the Arctic Human Development Report, and urge donors and governments to support indigenous peoples participation and initiatives as core inhabitants of the Arctic. One concrete challenge in that respect is the development of relevant statistics also on the basis of ethnicity. The Saami people is split in 4 countries in which non of them have statistical systems identifying us based on our ethnicity.

Thirdly we would like to highlight the need for action against the release of radioactive substances in the Arctic. There is an urgent need for reducing the radioactive contamination of our areas, and this is a challenge that all memberstates have to adress.

Forthly we commit ourselves to advocate for a wider international support for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. Recent reports from the Arctic show that POPs pose one of the most significant threats to indigenous peoples depending on large mamals for their subsistence.

Fifthly we support the outcomes of the Taking Wing conference on gender issues, and would like to reiterate the need to increase the focus on indigenous womens rights and situation in the Arctic.

Finally we would like to increase the efforts in Capacity building among indigenous peoples in the Arctic as a focalpoint of the Arctic Councils work. The need for capacity building is evident and the ability for indigenous peoples to participate on an equal level in all fields of

the cooperation is to a large extent dependent on increased financial and human capacity in order to take necessary responsibility in this cooperation.

Thank you!