

Indigenous peoples participation in the framing of a new policy for the Arctic

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Mr Chair!

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

First of all I'd like to thank the organizer of this seminar, the North Norway European Office, for the invitation and to be given the possibility to address this distinguished audience. It's a great honour.

The High North (Arctic) has a geographical, political and a mental orientation. Our understanding of the High North is an embedment of these dimensions. Generally speaking, there are two competing visions on the North. One is the notion of the North as frontier, - an open area with easily accessible natural recourses and available space for additional settlers, where personal freedom can potentially be developed and achieved in relation to new open opportunities (Brox 1984 and Aas 1998). The second is the North as homeland, - the perspective of those who reside in the north, and see themselves as the current representatives of peoples who have lived in the area. The differences between these two notions are contrasted in terms of main features in the table below (Kassam 2001:433-455):

Frontier:	Homeland:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern roots, with focus on exploiting natural recourses • Production of raw materials, industrialisation • Simplified and compartmentalized view on the society • Bust and boom economy • Main focus on delivery of commodities to southern markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Origin in people who live, work and have their mental orientation in the north – particularly among indigenous peoples • Traditional lifestyle – subsistence • Understand and respect diversity in demography, culture and economy • Sustainable long term economy • Circumpolar cooperation across national borders to face global challenges

To be conscious on this phenomenon, is important both for the policy framing on the Arctic and development of knowledge as basis for the future community development in the High North. This is particularly significant to indigenous peoples². The purpose behind highlighting this point is to conduce to;

- The strengthening of the human dimension in the current and future policy of the High North, and

- The merging of these to visions for mutually benefit, - people living in the north and in more urban areas further south.

In Norway, we are experiencing that the contemporary debate on future development of non-renewable resources, as oil and gas in the North, almost is stuck in a stalemate of opposing arguments from the oil and gas companies and the environmental organisations on the national level. There's little room for local population's and indigenous peoples' voices. So, I note with interest that the European Commission has opened up for input on this field in its recent Communication on the Arctic (2008). We consider this as a challenge and an opportunity. On the other hand, my conclusion so far in a clear and plain-spoken way is that;

- Several arctic states need to diversify their approach to large scale industry development as oil and gas in the High North. This with the purpose to include the local, regional and indigenous peoples' needs for security, social, cultural and environmental concerns, jobs, infrastructure and revenue sharing seen in a short and long term perspective, also beyond the moment when non-renewable resources are running out.
- The human dimension in the Communication needs to be strengthened in general and particularly with regard to governance.

Being in Brussels, I can't resist speaking of the proposed EU banning of trade in seal products, mentioned in the Commissions communication. The indigenous peoples, and probably a lot of others as well, don't understand the reason why, - nor the magnitude of political efforts behind this proposal. The message from the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) is that this proposal has a direct negative impact on Inuit:

"While the EU maintains that an exemption would be given to Inuit who hunt seals in a traditional way and to sealers who do not practise "cruel hunting methods," ICC maintains that the EU's ban will hurt the small sustainable, community-based market development by Inuit across the Arctic. Exemptions for Inuit have not worked before, and ICC's position is that exemptions will not work this time around either." (Lyng 2008).

My last comment on this issue is that, if the western world continues the current trend of anthropomorphizing the seal, we will end up in the future, with the seal as the Arctic equivalence to the sacred cow in India. In addition, the EU will so unnecessarily continue to loose credit among people in the High North.

The starting point of the indigenous dimension in the Arctic is that there are living more than 40 indigenous peoples in the region. They are very diverse regarding vulnerability and sustainability in facing future challenges in their societies, as the cumulative impacts of climate change, the new geopolitical situation, increased industry and transportation, globalization and the indigenous peoples' position regarding rights and protection within their respective nation-state, which is very diverse.

There are several important matters of principle concerning indigenous peoples, we have to pay attention to, when developing a future policy on the High North. Let me mention six (Sami Institutions Network on High North Affairs 2008:9-11):

1. Mind and orchestrate the internal and external perspectives of the indigenous dimension in the High North. This encompasses the collaboration between indigenous peoples

themselves (internal) and the cooperation between indigenous peoples and other peoples (external).

2. Make the indigenous dimension an integral part of the High North policy as a cross-cutting theme, and give it particular reference when necessary. Equal status, partnership and gender equality are central elements in this connection.
3. To overcome the weakness with impact assessment studies and to meet international human rights standards, the principle of full participation and free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples should be implemented in the High North policy³. I have noticed with satisfaction that this is a key principle in of EU development policy (European Commission 2008:4). The next step could be to extend this principle beyond the indigenous dimension by including coastal communities regarding plans on oil and gas exploitation in coast near areas.
4. Integrate the indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge in the development of knowledge on – and governance of the High North. Simultaneously integrate the indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge on – insight in – and comprehension of adaptation into planning, stewardship and monitoring of the High North. This in order to enhance the arctic people's ability to adapt, promote research, exchange experiences and result for developing sound strategies in managing peoples' health, culture, economic life and well-being in the North.
5. To prepare for a development in the High North that allows the indigenous peoples themselves, in a proactive way, on their own require, meet and take advantage of the options future industrial utilization of natural resources can provide, when simultaneously the traditional industries, culture, languages and community life of indigenous peoples are safeguarded and developed in a sustainable manner. This in order to safeguard the viability of the indigenous peoples' communities when non-renewable recourses run out.
6. Develop sustainable institutions to preserve and develop the collective memory, traditional knowledge and languages of indigenous peoples as basis for the enhancement of the activities in such institutions.

Regarding the Northern Dimension (ND) I have noted with great interest that the First Ministerial meeting of the renewed Northern Dimension “*underlined the growing importance of the Arctic Region and instructed the Steering Group to consider further ways in how the Northern Dimension could contribute.*”⁴ On the Nordic Council of Ministers conference on the Arctic, September 9th-10th 2008, the First vice-president of the Russian Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON), Pavel Sulyandziga, addressed the need to adjust the Northern Dimension to the new challenges of the Arctic and the Indigenous Peoples. Among other matters he recommended that a “*Working Group on the indigenous peoples be established within the framework of the ND.*” (2008:127). I echo that suggestion. There are a number of indigenous peoples' issues that in partnership with Canada, Greenland and USA in a transpolar perspective, with advantage could be addressed within the ND. As example, let me briefly mention three issues, a couple of them previously mentioned by Barlindhaug at this seminar (2008):

- a. There are several weaknesses with the current impact assessment study regulations in Norway. The development of oil and gas industry in the North raises the question on replacing or altering-amending these regulations with vulnerability and adaptation capacity studies. The basic idea is to put more effort on the human dimension on large scale resource extraction in the High North, and open up the space for comprehensive assessments on the communities involved, and to identify what kind of measures have to

be implemented in order to develop the needed capacity to adapt to changes. This could lead to an approach more in line with the needs of indigenous peoples in the North, and I presume local inhabitants in coastal communities in areas concerned as well. The IPY cross-border project EALAT⁵ on arctic reindeer-herders traditional knowledge, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, will provide us with valuable experience in this context, and could probably contribute to the next step on this issue.

- b. With the expected increase in the industrialization and transport in the Arctic due to easier access to natural resources because of the climate change, it is necessary to develop and implement common standards concerning indigenous peoples with respect to rights and participation in decision making to apply to all economic activity in the High North (Corell 2008:30, Nystø 2008:140). Arran Lulesami Centre and Galdu Resource Centre for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples⁶ have taken the initiative, with Bodø University College⁷ as main partner, to develop a cross-border circumpolar project on this issue. Worth mentioning is also a new project *Governance in a Rapid Changing Arctic*, hosted by the Heinz Center in Washington, DC which will focus on Arctic governance and development of governance systems, including indigenous participation⁸.
- c. The change in the overall economic structure and the influence of globalization are affecting the household structures as well as the settlement pattern in the High North. We are facing a substantial out-migration of indigenous peoples from their traditional areas to urban places. The urbanisation process is not a current challenge facing only the indigenous peoples of the north. Professor Rasmus Ole Rasmussen states that northern communities in general are facing a new phase in the demographic transition; different gender and generation responses to changes.

“As a result of this process there seems to be developing a divide between village life and large scale extractive industries, both dominated by males, while towns and cities increasingly are characterized by 3rd sector activities, actively chosen by females through a “step-stone” process of migration, from villages to towns, from towns to regional centres, further on to the capital regions, and eventually out of the country.” (Rasmussen 2008:64).

This development needs to be further addressed in a transpolar perspective.

In closing, let me enter into my final points by referring to the Commissions communication on the Arctic once again. It is stated that indigenous peoples in the EU are protected by special provisions under European Community Law, the protocol 3 to the Act of Accession of Sweden and Finland. With the renewed focus on the Arctic region in the EU, may be now's the time for considering the protocol 3 implemented in the EEA Agreement, as the Sami Right Commission II in Norway has recommended (2007:284). Commission member Else Grete Broderstad have expressed that this would be in line with the EU policy on indigenous peoples and Norway's sami policy⁹. In the light of the view that the new Northern Dimension Policy can be regarded as an impairment of the former Northern Dimension Policy regarding indigenous influence, she raised the following question in her PhD dissertation:

“Given the salient role of Norway in recognition and integration of Saami rights, what are the prospects of Norway to be conductive in developing an indigenous voice in Northern policy? The reason to expect Norway to take a leading role is based on experience gained. The Finnish and Swedish experience reveals that despite in EU-request for ratification of ILO-169, neither of the two states has ratified the convention.” (Broderstad 2008:207).

The quoted question bearing upon Norway's role regarding future indigenous policy in the North concludes my intervention. Thank you for your kind attention!

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¹ www.arran.no

² The Sami Parliament of Norway has emphasized, on 30th November 2008 issue 49/06 Report on international areas of commitment, Section 4.3.2 prior to “Priority measures” that (my translation):
 “An equal co-operation between the states in the High North and between the states and indigenous people’s representative bodies are crucial in facing the challenges of the north in a sound manner. The areas of the High North are not undiscovered land, neither a frontier. These are indigenous people’s homeland since time immemorial, where we are going to stay, live and fashion the good and purposeful life.” (The report is available only in Norwegian and Sami language).

³ For additional information on human rights, international law and corporate social responsibility, cf. Fjellheim 2006.

⁴ Joint Statement from the First Ministerial meeting of the renewed Northern Dimension:

➤ http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/north_dim/doc/joint_statement_revisednd_281008_en.pdf

⁵ Information on the Ealat project: www.ealat.org

⁶ www.galdu.org/web/?giella1=eng

⁷ www.english.hhb.no/index.php?ID=14578&lang=eng

⁸ A new project - *Governance in a Rapidly Changing Arctic*, will discuss Arctic governance arrangements together with a range of concrete proposals for specific alternatives. A particular focus of the project is to explore the roles that science and traditional/local knowledge can play in invigorating collaborative efforts within and among the Arctic states through existing mechanisms like the Arctic Council and, in the process, contribute to the development of governance systems for the Arctic capable of meeting the conservation and geopolitical challenges of the coming era (personal communication Else Grete Broderstad, January 6th 2009).

⁹ Personal communication: Else Grete Broderstad, Desember 15th 2008.

¹⁰ Northern Norway: From common land into a colony.

¹¹ Establishment of the Sami Institutions Network on High North Affairs. Report September 3rd 2008 on the work conducted June 29th 2006 – June 30th 2008 (only in Norwegian and Sami language).

¹² The New Sami Right. Report from the Sami Rights Committee to the Ministry of Justice and the Police. NOU 2007: 13 A and B. The report is in Norwegian, but chapter 2 Summary is also in English.

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