

**STATEMENT BY SUOMA SÁMI NUORAT, THE FINNISH SÁMI YOUTH ORGANIZATION
27.4. PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES, 16th SESSION**

SPEAKER: Petra Laiti, chair of the organization

Thank you madame chair,

Distinguished members of the permanent forum, distinguished representatives and leaders, indigenous brothers and sisters, my name is Petra Unni Risten Laiti, and I'm giving this statement on behalf of the Finnish Sámi Youth Organization.

I come to you with a message of fear and unrest within the Sámi youth in Finland. This spring, the states of Finland and Norway signed a treaty regarding the border river Deatnu, which runs entirely through Sámi territories. In the treaty, permission for use of traditional fishing methods were decreased by a staggering 80%, whereas tourists were actually **granted** fishing rights they didn't previously have. The fishing treaty removes the rights to traditional fishing **specifically** for people who don't live in the area in question.

As 70 % of Sámi youth live outside of Sámi territories, in search for education and work, this development has our youth extremely worried. The transmission of traditional knowledge in the fishing culture has become severely endangered by the new legislation, and risks a very immediate extinction of a culture that goes back thousands of years.

In the making of this treaty, the Sámi were not properly consulted. I said this at the Permanent Forum last year, and I'll say it again. The state of Finland has given itself the right to simply **ignore the inherent human right of Indigenous Peoples** to free, prior and informed consent. Despite being a prominent supporter of indigenous rights in the presence of the international community, Finland domestically, continues to show nothing but indifference towards the Sámi. I would also like to highlight to the Permanent Forum, that Finland has not ratified ILO 169, and the State continues to withhold the right to self-determination, and the ability Sámi people to freely self-identify in line with Article 33 of the UNDRIP.

The Sámi youth urge the permanent forum to call upon the state of Finland to recognize the irreparable damage caused by this treaty, and to re-negotiate the treaty with full, equal and effective participation by the Sámi in general and Sámi youths in particular. The current negotiating process has violated UNDRIP articles 4, 11, 18, 19 and 32, and can therefore not be accepted. I would like to urge the state of Finland, as well as all member states, to take into account and immediately implement the World Conference Outcome document, especially including operative article 15.

I also wish to express my concern for the effects that this treaty has in terms of Sámi youth wellbeing. This insecurity for the survival our culture is an extremely heavy burden for those who have now been stripped of their rights to traditional fishing. I should know, I am one of those people.

Ollu giitu, thank you very much.