

Item 3

**Indigenous participatory mechanisms in The Arctic Council,
The Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Resource Development
in Inuit Nunaat and the Laponia Management System**

Arctic Caucus intervention on behalf of the
Sami Council
and
Inuit Circumpolar Council

Thank you Mr. Chair. This statement is on behalf of the Sami Council and the Inuit Circumpolar Council. Since it is my first intervention I want to congratulate you with your appointment to this sessions Chair. Also congratulations to the other elected officers of the UNPFII.

We want to welcome the comprehensive study and thank the member of the Forum Mrs Dalee Sambo Dorough for the informative report.

I will not dwell on the specific points as they speak for themselves. But comment on the Arctic Council activities. As many of the delegates would know the Arctic Indigenous peoples inclusion as Permanent Participants in the 8 Arctic States cooperation started in 1996 after long negotiations that Inuit, the Sami and the RAIPON of Russia took part in. We were since joined by the Aleut, Athabaskan and the Gwich'in.

The most important participation takes place in the 6 working groups of the Arctic Council. This requires resources and scientific support. In order to fulfill our obligations we are therefore in constant move to strengthen our capacity, which requires a great deal of fundraising as well. Both the Danish and Greenlandic governments support the AC's Indigenous Peoples Secretariat placed in Copenhagen that help us connect to the Russian speaking area of the Arctic.

But it is up to the 6 indigenous peoples organizations to plan there own activities. For that we align ourselves with other international players. In the future the main Arctic Council secretariat will be permanently placed in Tromsø, Norway.

The capitol of Greenland, Nuuk hosted the first Arctic states Foreign Ministers meeting in May 2011. This resulted in the first legally binding agreement negotiated under the auspices of the Arctic Council on Cooperation in Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue. In the face of the growing marine traffic by tourist liners all over the Arctic and the growing oil and gas activities offshore it was a timely decision.

This unique institution where Indigenous Peoples organizations and government representatives are working together could be an ideal model for many of the worlds Indigenous peoples, if there respective countries were democratically motivated. But the very existence of the Permanent Participants status as in this fine institution where we now meet under the UN is a testament that cooperative arrangements can help the Indigenous peoples advancing our aspirations. The next step could be developing regional arrangements that are based on this model and or these principles.

The climate change in the Arctic have created a situation where oil companies and the extractive industries are talking about what they call the Last Frontier. The multinational companies with no ethical considerations or respect for our homelands are pressing our governments and its people to go ahead with projects that in some areas could result in the degradation of the environment and threaten our communities through an abrupt change in demography, as a result of import of cheap foreign labor for large scale projects. We applaud the Greenland Governments opinion not to allow

social dumping in the extractive industries if they should operate in Greenland. We also welcome initiatives to ask Denmark to adopt the ILO Convention 176 on the protection of mineworkers. This is crucial for the development of the many mining operations that will soon pop up all over the Inuit homeland.

In June the Arctic Parliamentarians that consist of members of the parliaments of the 8 Arctic states will convene in Nuuk, Greenland to discuss the implementation of the decisions of the Arctic council. It is our hope that the increasing cooperation with elected officials not only on executive level but also on the legislative level can develop new cooperative arrangements, that will give the indigenous peoples a voice and a real change to be part of the decision making process in all matters concerning our daily life.

The report also refers to the Laponia World Heritage site in Northern Sweden that ensures a formal regime in which the Sami have a direct role in the conservation and management of 9.400 sq km of national parks and nature reserves. This arrangement is based on the recognition of the importance of Sami reindeer herding, recognition of the biological diversity, as well as Sami culture and spiritual connections to their lands, territories and resources. We look forward to have a closer look at this important arrangement and hopefully to use the model in other Arctic areas.

Mr. Chairman, we support the report's recommendation to convene a UN arranged expert group meeting on Arctic development and a debate centered on the indigenous human needs.

Let me reiterate my statement last month at the convention in Montreal ending the International Polar Years from 2007-08. The world needs to know that the Arctic is already inhabited. It is not a scientific laboratory, it's not a refugee for oil- or mining companies, it's not a museum. **The Arctic is our home!**

Thank you Mr. Chair

Aqqaluk Lyngé,

International Chair,

INUIT CIRCUMPOLAR COUNCIL