

Agenda Item 9: In depth dialogue on thematic areas and other cross-cutting issues WG8j

2017-12-16

How can science and traditional knowledge come together for the best knowledge to address global issues of biodiversity loss, unsustainable development, and climate change?

Dear Madam Chair,

My name is Per Olof Nutti. I am Sami and I am the President of the Sámi Parliament in Sweden. I am also a reindeer herder. I appreciate this opportunity to share a bottom up initiative from the Sami communities in the Swedish part of Sápmi - the Sami land – on the integration of traditional knowledge, science and modern technology.

In the Swedish part of Sápmi there are 51 Sami communities covering half of Sweden. A Sami community is an economic association created to organize reindeer herding within its geographic area.

One of the main challenges faced by the Sami communities and the Sami people is that the use of our traditional lands is infringed by commercial exploitation of land and extractive industries. This has a serious impact on the biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources fundamental to our culture and traditional occupations, such as reindeer husbandry, hunting and fishing. Reindeer husbandry is one important element of the Sami culture and traditional livelihood and is vital for us to be able to pursue our culture, traditions and maintain our languages. The negative consequences arising from conflicting use of our lands without our free prior informed consent are further aggravated by the ongoing climate change.

In order to ensure our participation in decision-making and other processes concerning for instance the creation of protected areas, and mining activity. In order to document, communicate, and strengthen traditional knowledge including cultural expressions. In order to revitalize lost traditional knowledge and sami languages the Sami communities have developed Reindeer Husbandry Plans.

Reindeer husbandry plans are detailed plans that each sami community develops, based on their traditional knowledge about sustainable reindeer husbandry, hunting and fishing, lands of special importance and cultural customs and expressions including joik, languages and handicraft. The sami communities decide the content of their reindeer husbandry plan and decide what knowledge to share with external actors. In using a technological mapping tool based on GIS (geographical information systems) physical, biological as well as intangible cultural heritage, also from a historical perspective is being documented and correlated to geographical locations. In the plans the traditional knowledge is then combined with satellite pictures, maps and descriptions on other land use and public data on biodiversity related to ecosystem services and biological cultural heritage.

The Reindeer Husbandry Plans thus serve as a clear example on the important synergies between the protection of indigenous rights, IPLC's traditional knowledge and customary use, and the protection of biodiversity in the true spirit of article 8(j) and its related provisions.

Thank you