

Forum for Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples  
Conference 2004  
“Indigenous Rights and Gendered Representations”  
<http://www.sami.uit.no/forum/>

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## Preface

The fifth annual Forum for Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples conference was held September 27-29, 2004 at the University of Tromsø, Norway. Following up the themes from the May 2004 session of the UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues, the title of the conference was *Indigenous Rights and Gendered Representations*. The speakers, panelists, and audience participants included local and international academics, activists, students and bureaucrats with an interest in the field.

The Rector of the University of Tromsø, Jarle Aarbakke, opened the conference and welcomed the audience to the new building which housed the event. He emphasized the relevance and importance of hosting such conferences at the University of Tromsø due to its commitment to international cooperation and its designation as an indigenous focused University located in the “heart of Sápmi”. Sidsel Saugestad, chair of the Forum for Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, welcomed the audience and introduced the keynote speakers.

The conference was divided into four sessions. The purpose of the first session, on the *indigenous rights agenda and gendered participations*, was to examine local and global mechanisms that influence male and female political participation in indigenous arenas. *Traditional indigenous knowledge systems and gender* was the topic of the second session, and *local realities and strategies for women’s participation and indigenous recognition* was the focus of the third session. The *Forum update* session included news on current issues and also reflections on the project initiated by the Sámi Council called *Indigenous People to Indigenous People Cooperation*. The conference ended with a panel discussion where some themes that had had come up through discussions were used as the point of departure for final analysis and for potential future networking.

In addition to the quality of the presentations, and hopefully the pleasure of meeting old friends and making new acquaintances, this conference will probably be remembered mainly for the minor chaos caused by an airline strike that lasted all of first and most of the second day. Speakers were given the floor when they arrived, rather than according to their place on the programme, but amazingly everyone had their say.

This report is prepared in an abridged first person format in the hopes of representing as authentically as possible the voice of the speakers. This report as well as news and updates regarding indigenous issues and future events can be found in Norwegian, Sámi and English on the Forum for Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples homepages: [www.sami.uit.no/forum](http://www.sami.uit.no/forum)

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## *Opening Session*

### **Sidsel Saugestad, Forum for Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples *Welcome and Background for the Conference***

It is with tremendous pleasure I am welcoming you all to the fifth conference convened by the Forum for Development Cooperation, this year in cooperation with the University's Center for Research on Women, Kvinnforsk.

It seems we are succeeding in meeting one of the main objectives of the forum. It is meant to be a meeting place for academics and activists, NORAD bureaucrats and NGO stalwarts, indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, and indeed men and women: A special welcome to our students following the Master Programme in Indigenous Studies here at the University of Tromsø.

The establishment of this Forum came as part of a package from the Ministry of Foreign affairs five years ago with the rather cumbersome title: *Plan for the follow-up to work with indigenous peoples as part of the development assistance*". The funding for this forum comes from NORAD, and within this University we are located as part of the Centre for Sámi Studies.

There is a board consisting of myself, present chair, Henry Minde and Kristin Jernsletten from the University of Tromsø, Georg Henriksen from the University of Bergen, Hans Petter Hergum of Norwegian Church Aid, and Leif Halonen from the Sámi Council.

The initiatives that have been taken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have resulted in a number of activities in the last five years in addition to the establishment of this Forum. Among them an innovation within the NORAD system, namely the appointment of an advisor for indigenous peoples' rights, Turid Arndegaard. We are happy that there is now an address and a person within NORAD who has the formal responsibility to think about indigenous issues.

The development of a strategy has taken a long time, and became part of the larger project of restructuring the relationship between the Ministry and NORAD. But it may also be the case that the very slow process of formulating a commitment demonstrates a more general tendency: that the concept *indigenous* is still a difficult concept to integrate or to translate into formal bureaucratic structures and policy guidelines. However, I am very pleased to announce that Ingunn Klepsvik, head of the Department of Rights, Agents of Change, and Civil Society, will share with us the completed official document.

Each year we have selected a special topic for examination at the Forum meeting. Three years ago the topic was competence building and indigenous peoples, two years ago the

focus was on the Strategy of the European Union for support to indigenous peoples and last year's conference was focused on the UN system. This year's forum has joined the more prestigious UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in focusing on the role of indigenous women.

In formal systems and many bureaucracies, the concepts of indigenous peoples and women as categories in policy formulations share a common feature: they go against the commonly cherished ideas of equality taken to mean equal treatment. They are often perceived as cumbersome concepts to operationalize. We find similarities in the analytical work required, as well as in the political challenges involved, in working out the justifications for affirmative action and preferential treatment; to achieve - as the saying goes - "fairness, not favours"

A very special welcome to the three keynote speakers from overseas: Mililani Trask, Pacific Representative to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, who will address mechanisms that influence male and female political participation in national and international indigenous fora, Sumitra Gurung Mahandar, from Plan International, Nepal, who will give a gendered analysis of the struggle for recognition of indigenous nationalities in Nepal, and Yvette Abrahams, from the University of the Western Cape, who will talk about Sarah Bartmann and Khoekhoe indigenous knowledge systems and their relevance to South Africa women today.

These three women demonstrate a very fruitful combination of activism and academic discourse. Thematically as well as geographically, they come from some of the frontlines of indigenous struggle. Mililani has made the system of global organizations her battleground, Sumitra's paper unravels the complex situation in Nepal and its dangerous mix of ethnic and political alliances and Yvette comes from South Africa, one of the few countries on the African continent where indigenous issues are at least addressed in public debates. They represent important networking links that reflect the priorities of this university, and they promise opportunities for different forms of contact and cooperation in the future.

The same expression of priorities applies to the two speakers who will bring in some experiences from within Sámi communities. It is one of the premises for the Forum for Development Cooperation to draw on experiences from Norwegian – Sámi relations, both on the role of the discarded Norwegianization policy, and the policy of the last decades that herald integration and tokens of mutual respect.

Globally, the Sámi are considered extremely successful examples of indigenous entrepreneurship. However, a figure that calls for interpretation is the number of female representatives in the Sámi Parliament in Norway, which declined from a total number of thirteen to seven in 2001. I trust Eva Josefsen, who will speak on mechanisms that influence male and female political participation in the Norwegian Sámi Parliament, and Gudrun Eliissá E. Lindi, will shed some light on the complexities of Sámi women's participation in public arenas.

Finally, we have a session which we call “Forum update” which provides brief up-to-date presentations of current activities. We have put together a package of cases that illustrate and inform us about a model of wide general interest known as ‘Indigenous People to Indigenous People’ cooperation. The Sámi Council will share with us some of their experiences in cooperation with Tanzania and Botswana and we will hear reflections from representatives from Botswana and Tanzania to get both sides of the dialogue.

You are all most welcome.

**Ingunn Klepsvik,**  
**Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, NORAD.**  
***The Indigenous Dimension in Norwegian Development Aid***

Dear Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to congratulate the Forum on having established itself as an important arena for exchange of information, analysis and experiences regarding the situation for indigenous peoples worldwide, in which it is an honor and a pleasure to participate. I congratulate the University of Tromsø on this elegant and functional new building which must have added significantly to enhancing the working conditions for everyone at the institution.

It is my task to talk about the *Guidelines for Norwegian support to indigenous peoples*. The elaboration of the guidelines has been a long process, and many of you present here today have participated actively in its production. The final version was ready and approved by the Minister last week, and we bring with us copies to this conference.

All relevant stakeholders/groups have participated in the process: NGOs, research institutions, the Sámi Council and the Sámi Parliament; and their comments and contributions have been greatly appreciated and included in the final document. The final document has undergone some technical changes, but the essence and the political and normative elements are almost the same as the last version you all commented upon. The recent extensive changes in Norwegian development cooperation administration are also reflected in the new guidelines. NORAD has been given the main responsibility for following up the guidelines and to lead the thematic group on indigenous peoples’ issues, whereas the Ministry maintains its role regarding policy development and overall coherence of Norwegian development cooperation towards the target group.

I would like to start by saying that Norway has a long history of support to indigenous peoples, and has dedicated around 200,000,000 NOK per year to different programmes and projects for and by indigenous peoples. A special Indigenous Peoples program in Latin-America has been going on continuously for twenty years and been subject to various positive evaluations. Support to indigenous peoples is therefore nothing new in Norwegian development cooperation, but this is the first time we have developed comprehensive guidelines for this important part of Norwegian development assistance.

I would like to inform you very briefly on the following issues relating to the process and the contents of the new guidelines:

1. Briefly about the process of elaborating the guidelines
2. The main contents. The administrative set up. Thematic group
3. The thematic focus
4. The geographic concentration

The main element in the future support to indigenous peoples will be:

- *comprehensive approach* allowing us to cooperate on issues that will enhance the efforts of indigenous peoples themselves and assist in programs that will have the highest relevance and best impact on the groups in focus,
- *coherence* in terms of how we work, where we work, and with whom we work,
- *coordination of support* to indigenous peoples programs in order to ensure that we avoid overlap, that we cooperate closely with all other actors nationally and internationally within this area, and that efforts within each country or region are based on thorough knowledge about what other actors, both national and international, are doing.

### **Broad approach**

The previous, Norwegian Programme for Indigenous Peoples will now be replaced by a comprehensive programme opening up the possibility of support to indigenous peoples all over the world.

### **The approach will be rights based**

Taking as a point of departure indigenous peoples' own definitions of their needs and priorities, and strengthening the organizations of indigenous people based on their needs and requirements. There will be a strong focus on capacity building and self-organizing.

The work in NORAD and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be organized in a Thematic group led by NORAD and coordinated by NORAD's adviser on indigenous peoples' issues. This group will ensure good coordination of support through the different channels of funding as well as frequent contact between the different stakeholders and institutions with competence and responsibility in Norway regarding indigenous peoples' issues. Norwegian embassies, the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, and the Sámi Parliament will be consulted as and when appropriate.

The channels for support will be as before:

- NGO's , both Norwegian and international (including international indigenous peoples' organizations)
- Bilateral assistance
- Multilateral assistance (the Development Banks and the UN-organizations)

A major part of the cooperation with NGOs is channeled through NORAD which gives us a unique opportunity to coordinate and see the different issues in the widest possible

context. Good thematic dialogue has already been established between NORAD and Norwegian NGOs working on these issues.

### **Geography**

The approach will be more open, with a continued focus on marginalized groups, including LICs and at the same time maintaining a focus on MUL-countries. Latin-America will still be an area of heavy concentration, but the ambition is to strengthen the support to countries in Asia and Africa as well, with a focus on South Eastern Asia and African countries.

### **Thematic Focus**

- As mentioned before, a strong focus will be on strengthening self organization and capacity building in indigenous peoples' organizations.
- Biodiversity and follow-up to the Johannesburg declaration
- Gender related support as a transcending issue in all development cooperation

The guidelines will be translated into English, Spanish and the Sámi language and will be given wide distribution. We look forward to coming back here next year and inform this Forum on all the support that already goes on in this area in Norwegian Development Cooperation and how far we have come in implementing the new guidelines.

## ***First Session: The Indigenous Rights Agenda and Gendered Participations***

### **Mililani Trask, Pacific Representative to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

#### ***“Mechanisms that Influence Male and Female Political Participation in National and International Indigenous Fora”***

Good morning everyone, I'm Mililani Kanaka Maoli and I am a Native Hawaiian. I would like to thank those of you at the University and those from the Sámi culture who have invited me to come once again to this University and to Saamiland. I wanted to begin by recognizing and thanking the Sámi people for their leadership in the cause of human rights and for the rights of indigenous people. I would also like to thank Sidsel for giving me a topic that allowed me the flexibility to address the mechanisms that influence male and female political participation in national and international indigenous fora. In all indigenous cultures, gender roles and responsibilities flow from and are part of a broader socio-cultural environment. That is to say that indigenous peoples and societies



delineate between the roles which women and men assume based on the cultural protocols and survival needs of their collective society (WHO). The essential feature of a peoples' socio-cultural environment is 'meaning'. As Goldschmidt (1990) states:

*Each culture provides pathways by which individuals may satisfy their needs for positive affect, prestige and meaning. Small-scale, hunting-gathering societies provide several such pathways: excellence in hunting or story-telling or as a healer. More complex societies offer a greater array of 'careers'. Whatever its size, complexity or environment, a central task of any culture is to provide its members with a sense of meaning and purpose in the world.*

“Gender” is a sociological concept which encompasses economic, social and cultural distinctions between women and men as manifested in their differing roles, authority and cultural undertaking.

In recent times there has developed an understanding that gender roles in indigenous cultures establish who in that society (male or female) is the keeper of traditional knowledge. In traditional societies women are the keepers of certain knowledge systems and make use of different resources than those used by men. Where women might gather healing herbs or edible fruits from trees, men would more likely be employed in the timber industry.

For several years, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has explored the relationship between gender and food security, agro-biodiversity, and sustainable development. FAO's research and development projects have documented the important role which indigenous women play in these three critical areas. FAO's findings are as follows:

1. *Through their different activities and management practices, men and women have developed different expertise and knowledge about the local environment, plant and animal species and their products and uses. These gender-differentiated local knowledge systems play a decisive role in the in situ conservation, management and improvement of genetic resources for food and agriculture. It is clear that the decision about what to conserve depends on the knowledge and perception of what is most useful to the household and local community.*
2. *Women's and men's specialized knowledge of the value and diverse use of domesticated crop species and varieties extends to wild plants that are used as food in times of need or as medicines and sources of income. This local knowledge is highly sophisticated and is traditionally shared and handed down between generations. Through experience, innovation and experimentation, sustainable practices are developed to protect soil, water, natural vegetation and biological diversity. This has important implications for the conservation of plant genetic resources.*

3. *Through their daily work, rural women have accumulated intimate knowledge of their ecosystems, including the management of pests, the conservation of soil and the development and use of plant and animal genetic resources.*

4. *It is estimated that up to 90 percent of the planting material used by poor farmers is derived from seeds and germplasm that they have produced, selected and saved themselves. This means that small farmers play a crucial role in the preservation and management of plant genetic resources and biodiversity*

5. *In smallholder agriculture, women farmers are largely responsible for the selection, improvement and adaptation of plant varieties. In many regions, women are also responsible for the management of small livestock, including their reproduction. Women often have a more highly specialized knowledge of wild plants used for food, fodder and medicine than men.*

The critical role which indigenous women play in maintaining biodiversity, conservation and promoting sustainable development is acknowledged in two international instruments and the action plan of the FAO. The Convention on Biological Diversity (UNEP, 1993) and FAO's Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant and Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (1966) acknowledge the role played by generations of men and women farmers and by indigenous communities in conserving and improving plant genetic resources. Two key objectives of Chapter 24 of Agenda 21 (UNCED, 1992) are to promote the traditional methods and knowledge of indigenous people and their communities, emphasizing the particular role of women relevant to the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of biological resources and to ensure the participation of indigenous women and peoples in the economic and commercial benefits derived from the use of such traditional methods and knowledge.

The CBD and the FAO Global Plan also affirm the need for women to participate fully in conservation programs and at all levels of policy making.

Despite these legal pronouncements and the existence of other international instruments which specifically prohibit discrimination against women (CEDAW, Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) indigenous women continue to be marginalized and excluded from policy making and program services.

FAO reports the following:

*.....little has yet been done to clarify the nature of the relationship between agrobiological diversity and the activities, responsibilities and rights of men and women. Women's key roles, responsibilities and intimate knowledge of plants and animals sometimes remain "invisible" to technicians working in the agriculture, forestry and environmental sectors, as well as to planners and policy-makers.*

*The lack of recognition at technical and institutional levels means that women's interests and demands are given inadequate attention. Moreover, women's*

*involvement in formalized efforts to conserve biodiversity is slight because of widespread cultural barriers to women's participation in decision-making arenas at all levels.*

*Modern research and development and centralized plant breeding have ignored and, in some cases, undermined the capacities of local farming communities to modify and improve plant varieties. With the introduction of modern technologies and agricultural practices, women have lost substantial influence and control over production and access to resources, whereas men often benefit more from extension services and have the ability to buy seeds, fertilizers and the necessary technologies.*

FAO's conclusion in the area are verified by the work of the LINKS project (Norway) in Africa

*For a long time, despite an increased recognition at the international level, the importance of local knowledge and gender in agriculture has been neglected in policies and development programmes related to agriculture and natural resource management. Modern research, science and national policies undermine even further the capacities of local farming communities to sustain and manage agro-biodiversity and secure food production. In this context, contributions that bring farmers' perspectives, their practice and knowledge of biodiversity into focus are important for a constructive policy dialogue on sustainable management of natural resources.*

It is clear that sexism, racism, and poverty operate in the UN System and broader Civil Society to marginalize indigenous women. These negative forces need to be acknowledged and addressed as a matter of urgency and as a high priority because of the nexus between women's traditional knowledge and their role in maintaining biodiversity and ensuring food security.

This can be achieved in several ways:

1. UN Agencies and Specialized Bodies as well as States and their subsidiary bodies to adopt gender responsive policies and provide financial and other support to indigenous agronomists (as FAO has).
2. Specific projects should be supported and undertaken which strengthen and improve women farmers' access to land and water, education, extension training, credit and technology.
3. Agricultural policies should provide incentives for sustainable use of genetic resources through in site conservation;
4. Indigenous peoples, nations and communities need to affirm and support the direct involvement of indigenous women agronomists in policy and project development within their nations.

Indigenous women have maintained the traditional knowledge systems of the worlds' cultures since time immemorial. Their knowledge and practice directly relate to biodiversity preservation, food security and sustainable development not only for their

respective peoples but for all human kind. States and civil society must work to create opportunities for indigenous women to participate fully and meaningfully in local, national and international fora where sustainable development, biodiversity conservation and food security are on the agenda.

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## **Eva Josefsen, Norut NIBR Finnmark** ***Mechanisms that Influence Male and Female Political Participation in the Sámi Parliament in Norway***

### **Introduction**

I first want to thank the organizers for the opportunity to participate in this conference. The basis for my discussion will be the findings of a year-long project financed by the Norwegian Research Council, which addresses the question of the Norwegian Sámi Parliament as an arena for promoting gender equality policy.

This lecture addresses connections between gender, premises for the formulation of policy and political participation in the Norwegian Sámi Parliament.

The main focus of my lecture will be the Norwegian Sámi Parliament as a political arena, the plenary sessions and how to understand the policy on gender equality that is formulated in that arena. The empirical data for this is taken from the official documents

and resolutions of the Norwegian Sámi Parliament on gender equality and the plenary debate on this policy from February of 2004. It is the Norwegian Sámi Parliament and its thirty-nine actors that are the subject of my inquiry. I have not looked at the influence of actors outside the Sámi Parliament or the role of the administration in initiating, analyzing and implementing policy. I hope this presentation will shed light on mechanisms that may be relevant for and applicable to the concerns of indigenous peoples and their institutions other than the Sámi Parliament in Norway.

### **The Sámi Parliament in Norway: A Brief Introduction**

Established in 1989 and elected every fourth year concurrent with the Norwegian Parliamentary elections, the Norwegian Sámi Parliament is organized according to Parliamentary principles. Thirty-nine representatives are elected from thirteen jurisdictions where Sámi are registered in the Sámi census as eligible voters. Plenary sessions, held four times a year, decide on the main lines of policy and priority. In law only an advisory body to the Norwegian government, the Sámi Parliament has nonetheless from its inception exerted significant influence on the government and on public opinion in Sámi society.

The position of Sámi culture is vulnerable vis-à-vis Norwegian cultural dominance. Thus, the Sámi Parliament is faced with the challenges of protecting and promoting Sámi language, culture and way of life, yet, it is also obligated to follow Norwegian law, including the law on gender equality and its provisions and obligations to promote gender equality.

The number of female representatives has been decreasing steadily from an initial total of thirteen in the initial term, (1989-1993) to the current (2001-2005) with its seven female representatives, out of a total of thirty-nine.

| Election Term          | 1989-1993 | 1993-1997 | 1997-2001 | 2001-2005 |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Female Representatives | 13(33%)   | 12(31%)   | 10(26%)   | 7(18%)    |
| Male Representatives   | 26(67%)   | 27(69%)   | 29(74%)   | 32(82%)   |

The above development has attracted a great deal of attention when gender equality has been the subject of debate.

### **Individual Rights within the Framework of Collective Rights**

Gender equality in indigenous societies can be framed in terms of both individual and collective rights. The Sámi are entitled to collective rights as an indigenous culture. Collective rights are necessary insofar as indigenous cultures lack adequate protection simply by guaranteeing individual members of the group their own rights. Collective rights enable cultural groups to make their own choices from their own cultural positions and strengths. (Kymlicka 1989)

At the same time, most cultures are permeated by practices and ideologies linked to gender, most often involving support for various forms of power and control over women (Okin 1999). Thus, the rights of indigenous women must be protected through the collective framework of human rights. This implies the right of Sámi women to political participation on a par with Sámi men - a right which in turn implies an equally strong societal obligation to promote equality of Sámi culture and way of life with that of Norwegian culture.

### **Equality, Power and the Formulation of Policy**

Organizations will generally strive for an appearance of gender neutrality through mechanisms that are redefined, hidden and suppressed. Women and men will be represented as abstract actors acting within gender-neutral frameworks (Acker 1993). Structural and socially created gender differences will not explicitly appear within organizations but will be detectable in concrete actions and statements. Gendered relations of power will be embedded in both formal and informal structures.

When the policy of the Sámi Parliament on gender equality is discussed and adopted in the plenary arena, an authoritative exercise of power has occurred as decisions have been made by legitimate decision-makers within a legitimate political framework. Power should be understood as the power of someone to change and influence the lives of others. The exercise of political power will thus be anchored in the proceedings of political institutions and the forms of organizations and regulations of their decision-making processes (Hall 1991).

The institution of the Sámi Parliament is – over and above its formal structures and organizational frameworks - also a product of attitudes and actions that are taken for granted (Selznick 1997). Attitudes and acting will be a part of the institutional factors that influence one's view of what constitutes a problem. A great degree of power is embedded in the position of being able to define what constitutes a problem, what the agenda should be and how it is decided. Power can also be embedded in interaction and relations of actors. This kind of power is not linked to legality or formal positions but is based on communication and knowledge (Engelstad 1999). Power is not - according to a student of Michel Foucault - a given entity but is related to the positions in which power is expressed and ascribed to someone by others (Sandmo 1999). The power to determine the content of politics will flow from the ascription of the power of definition, that is, the power to interpret reality, define problems and solutions. This kind of power does not necessarily depend upon formal positions in an organization but is movable among actors depending on content and the issue at hand.

### **Differing Perspectives on the Phenomenon of Equality in the Sámi Parliament**

There are generally three main perspectives on the phenomenon of equality: the equality perspective, the women perspective, and the gender perspective (Lotherington 2002). All of these understandings are present within the Sámi Parliament and are found in formal documents, interviews, and in the plenary debate of sami gender equality policy that was held in February 2004.

In the “*equality perspective*”, the question of equality can be seen in terms of women and men being equal in principle and any existing inequalities between the genders are viewed as a result of discrimination against women. Equality can be achieved by giving women equal opportunities with men, e.g. by providing benefits that compensate for past discrimination. One of the informants put it this way:

To me equality means equal treatment when it comes to work, pay, participation and in social affairs of life.....and therefore, in order to treat women and men equally, we have to make some moves so that there will be a level playing field for women and men.

Part of this perspective can be understood in view of women’s desire for access to the arenas of men where the goal is to get in position and gain access to the already existing arenas. In this approach neither the formal nor the informal organizational structures are problematized but are accepted at face value as given entities.

In the “*women perspective*” women and men are seen as fundamentally different and equality can only be achieved through special ways of working and a special women’s policy. This implies a view of women as a community that transcends biology. In this view, being a woman in and of itself is tied to a set of common interests and a shared political position, outlook, and understandings in contrast to the interests of men. Isak Mathis O. Hætta - a member of the Sámi Parliament - put it this way:

The women often look at issues and solutions in a completely different way than we men do. (*Ságat* September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2003).

On *NRK Oddasat*, we find another example of this understanding about why the proportion of female representatives in the Sámi Parliament ought to increase. Vice President Ragnhild Nystad’s reason for wanting more women in the Sámi Parliament went like this:

Women have a right to be heard. The views of women should be a part of the debate; women have a right to their own styles of debate, discussion and should be part of our discourse. Issues women are concerned with should be addressed. (*Oddasat*, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2004)

A reasonable reading of these two quotes is that women constitute a unitary group with common interests and ways of working that transcend biology. The women perspective presupposes a distinct political “woman agenda” in which the only people qualified to take responsibility are women.

The third approach to equality –“*the gender perspective*” - is built on an assumption that gender is culturally conditioned, dependent on processes of socialization. Thus, gender will be understood not as biologically but socially defined. Gender as a category will draw attention to the pressure of gendered processes in organizations that can account for

the skewed gender-based access to *power* and *resources*. In this view of equality, the focus is on how gender-based power is embedded in both the formal and informal organizational structures. Individuals will need to be conscious of how gender roles and processes of socialization direct and distribute power and resources. Gender as a category draws attention to socially created differences between women and men. Also, there may be equally as great of differences within the genders as there is between them. (Acker 1993) As one of the informants put it:

I understand equality as something that is more like equal worth. So equality doesn't necessary mean the same thing for each individual but that women and men can act differently, live different lives but still live lives of equal worth. And that also implies a right to be different. Being female will involve something that women have in common-and that is the fact that they are women.

The quote above highlights the fact that there are differences between social and biological gender. From their point of view, the gender based skewed distribution of political power cannot be remedied *solely* by focusing on access to the arenas of men or by making specific arrangements for women. In the gender perspective, equality is - on the contrary - achieved by challenging the gendered power embedded in the structures and cultures of the organization.

### **Main Features of the Sámi Parliament Policy on Gender Equality**

Every year the Sámi Parliament takes up a report on gender equality for consideration which provides them with an opportunity to discuss its importance and policy considerations for gender equality in a general discussion. Through the report and the oral debate we can determine the main thrust and emphasis of the Sámi Parliament's politicians on this issue. I will therefore first give a short presentation of the policy of the Sámi Parliament on gender equality.

The main goal of the policy is stated as follows in the document titled *Action plan on equality - Focusing on the position of Sámi women*: "Sámi women and men shall have equal rights, duties and opportunities in all areas of social life" (Sámi Parliament 1999 p.8). This goal can be seen as informed by the gender perspective. In addition, the action plan contains two main strategies: 1) integration of the equality and the woman perspectives<sup>1</sup> in all aspects of the Sámi Parliament 2) developing special measures benefiting Sámi women.

An integration strategy also presupposes the Sámi Parliament's willingness to identify the mechanisms that establish and maintain inequalities between the genders. An integration strategy also presupposes the investment of resources and that the participants are knowledgeable in regard to the issue of equality and policy considerations.

In the current term the Sámi Parliament has taken up for consideration two written reports on the policy of gender equality submitted by the Council of the Sámi Parliament.

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<sup>1</sup> In the 2001 this was changed to the equality and gender perspective.



The 2002 report (Sámi Parliament 2002) addressed the themes of women in politics and women in cultural and economic life. The first theme focused on the low proportion of women in the Sámi Parliament and the Sámi census and had measures that could be taken to improve the situation. The theme of women in cultural and economic life mainly dealt with how women could receive a larger portion of the programs of financial support at the disposal of the Sámi Parliament. The report also stresses the need to recruit more men to work at daycare centers and possible recruitment campaigns. The rights of access inform both the campaign to elect more women to the Sámi Parliament and to recruit more men for daycare jobs. The Sámi Parliament is on record advocating that a greater share of funds go to women which is in part supposed to come about by informing women about the existence of these programs.

In spite of the explicit strategy of integration on record, the report fails to examine the programs of financial support in view of the existing practice to mainly target support for areas of economic activity traditionally dominated by men. Thus, the report fails to challenge the established structures of power in terms of the social ideology that undergirds the control of economic life.

The approach of the 2004 (Sámi Parliament 2004) report is different from that of the 2002 report. In 2004 there is an expressed desire for an orientation outward towards Sámi society by “focusing a debate about the issues of gender equality in civil Sámi society.” The report draws attention to gender roles and processes of change that shows the “hidden structures that sort all of us according to gender”, a formulation that points to the fact that structures and relations may be gendered, that gender may be understood as socially constructed and that the distribution of power and positions in society may flow from attitudes and prejudices linked to gender. The report describes gender roles and various approaches to the problems and themes of prostitution, sexuality, wage-based employment versus primary industry employment, and the transition from a nature-based society to a society based on formal education. There are incipient tendencies to include aspects of gender equality by way of the discussion of gender roles in society.

The tenor of the plenary debate that followed the report of the Council can be seen as a result of this failure. The debates mainly focused on previously discussed themes – female representation and women’s share in various financial support programs. There was also some discussion of special arrangements to ease the participation of women in the Sámi Parliament, such as rooms set aside for breastfeeding, playrooms for children, and the need for courses to train female politicians to participate in debates and to deal with the media. The topic of gender roles in the debate was mainly limited to stories limited to the home domain which were largely unpoliticized or were not placed in a larger social context. Thus, the policy of the Sámi Parliament on gender equality can fairly be characterized as having a focus on women per se. That is to say, equality is synonymous with women, the focus is directed inward at how the Sámi Parliament in its internal operations can ensure women the same opportunities as men, by way of financial support, how women will be elected to be representatives in the Sámi Parliament and how the Sámi Parliament can ease the participation of women as members of the Sámi Parliament.

However, neither the written report of 2004 nor the oral debate in February of 2004 succeeded in developing *new* policy lines that could be pursued. The descriptions were not politicized in any significant degree, resulting in a difficulty to discern an expanded understanding of the policy on gender equality that encompasses gender in social structures, processes, and relations.

### **A Women Focus and an Organizational Focus**

Having a “women focus” on gender equality without also encompassing asymmetrical relations of power between the genders means that women become the “main problem” who require special ameliorating measures. The standards of men constitute the norm; the standards of women become the deviations from that norm. “A women focus” does not problematize the standards that have set the desirable norm which has come to be seen as natural. Problematizing and analyzing the relations of power between women and men in the Sámi Parliament and in Sámi society means being able to discern the actual significance of gender in apparently gender-neutral concepts, structures and decisions. Thus, the Sámi Parliament has made several organizational changes without having discussed these changes in relation to such terms (Josefsen 2004).

The Sámi Parliament’s policy on gender has also had an organizational focus on gender equality within the institutional framework of the Sámi Parliament itself. This perspective encompasses the Sámi Parliament’s own programs of financial support, measures to ease the political participation of women during plenary sessions and electoral processes and procedures. But there has been little concern with the impact of the norms, values and social structures of Sámi society on equality, political power and the distribution of economic resources between genders.

### **Responsibility and Institutionalization**

So far this account has demonstrated that the Sámi Parliament has chosen to focus its attention on women mainly in terms of its own political activity almost exclusively informed by a perspective on gender equality as measures directed at individuals.

In the final analysis, the perspectives of the individual representatives will have consequences for who is assigned the *responsibility* for policy in this area. One of the male informants put it this way: “Our female representatives here in the Sámi Parliament are very concerned with [gender equality] and maybe they feel that us guys are not that concerned with it”

The focus on women and the failure to discuss the connections between gender and power in the Sámi Parliament can probably account for the assignment of responsibility for the policy on gender equality to be given to women. As one of the women put it: “It is always up to you as a woman to have to remember about equality.” Equality and gender become a *woman thing*; where women have to bear the responsibility to push the issue and political agenda forward..

In the debate on representation we come across a “we-you” kind of thinking. When the Council’s report on gender equality was debated in the February 2004 plenary, several participants used the conceptual pairing of “we” and “you” - categorized along the lines of gender membership. Statements like “we [men] are concerned with rights and livelihood, the women have a different view of things” - demonstrated that women’s concerns are different - an assumption built into the “women perspective”. This rhetoric contributes to the creation of images and forms of consciousness that explain and legitimize gender division (Acker 1993). Participants are placed in two clearly defined categories which are not based on individual qualities but based on notions that gender constitutes different political perspectives. Even though some reject this conceptualization, it still demonstrates a view held by both female and male representatives that gender can be conceived of in these terms. Likewise, the linkage between gender and the political sphere of interest referred to in the quote below can explain the feeling of female representatives that it is their responsibility to advance these issues:

Many a time I believe women get the feeling it is up to them to raise their voices about this business of gender equality - something which ought to be everyone’s responsibility.

Such dichotomization is also a kind of definition power. Women are assigned responsibility in a two party division but are also given the power to define the meaning of equality; defining the problem will deter the solution that is envisioned. The question is whether it is in the interest of both male and female representatives to define equality in terms of women. For if one succeeds in defining equality as a matter that is only of concern to women, then the existing power bases of men will not be challenged. In connection with a proposal to create four “equalizing seats” for the underrepresented gender – and that is women – the election system as such was not being challenged. And this was done in spite of the fact that skewed gender representation in the Sámi Parliament can be traced to the existing system of election as such, which has been pointed out innumerable times both in the Sámi Parliament and in the media. Instead of discussing the electoral system from a perspective of power and resources, one opts to use the mechanism of the “equalizing seats” to guarantee that – as it is called - “the voice of women to be heard.” Again, the existing systemic power of men is unchallenged and a special solution tailor-made for women is chosen.

There is an implied recognition in statements made by members of the Sámi Parliament that it is the formalized procedures for the Parliamentary order of business and the formulation of policy-making that prevail; these issues are not addressed in a routine manner. “Problems that cannot be dealt with according to established routines will often be negated” (Olsen 1978:48). On the one hand, the lack of formalized routines and procedures to capture gender equality issues may explain why some members have questioned the performance of the administration when it comes to gender equality. However, there is on the other hand little evidence that the politicians raise questions which would enable the administration to pick up on political moves coming from the Sámi Parliament. As a result there has been an inability to anchor gender policy as a normal part of the political rhetoric of the Sámi Parliament. Even though the president of

the Sámi Parliament is responsible for dealing with this issue and is required to submit an annual report on the state of gender policy, the issue of equality has not become a normal part of the political activity of the Sámi Parliament and dealing with the issue has not been institutionalized. One informant put it this way:

Perhaps the original structures that the Sámi Parliament is built upon and that even today lay down the premises for its day in and day out business, have not been particularly friendly to women. So it takes a great deal of energy to change this.

The quotes above demonstrate that routines for the initiation of handling of questions relating to gender equality have been established in limited degree. The responsibility for representing this set of issues has also been privatized because of limited utilization and institutionalization combined with limiting their relevance, assignment of responsibility and advocacy to women.

### **Ethnic and Cultural Explanations**

That issues of gender equality in the Sámi Parliament is a phenomena limited to women, the responsibility of women and constitute politics only dealt with sporadically, is also explicable in terms of the processes, challenges and expectations that the Sámi Parliament faces within Sámi society. From this perspective both the minority/majority dimension as well as the geographic/cultural dimension will be significant.

In the minority/majority perspective, equality with Sámi will not be limited to gender equality. The basic element of the previous processes of government mandated Norwegianization was precisely the inequality of Sámi and Norwegian culture-the need for Sámi to change their identity and become Norwegian. The struggle for cultural rights and the recognition of Sámi culture is not yet over, a reality that can be exemplified through the varied experiences of parents of children in their relationship with the system of education and through the debate surrounding the proposed Finnmark Act. A by-product of this is its effect on the perception of the Sámi Parliament's members of their own function and role - any disagreement about the role of the Sámi Parliament may provide a partial explanation. Several informants looked at the role of the Sámi Parliament as an advisory body to the Norwegian Parliament and the cabinet as crucial-illustrated by the following quote:

I look at the Sámi Parliament as an arena or venue for initiatives and proposals for the Norwegian Parliament and thus getting a discussion going with the [Norwegian Parliamentary] cabinet. I consider this role of the Sámi Parliament the most important.

Others have emphasized the role of the Sámi Parliament as an opinion maker and mirror of Sámi society. At the same time, social change within Sámi society is not uniform, with different areas benefiting more from economic resources aimed at maintaining and developing the strength and viability of Sámi culture at the local level. For example, many people outside of inner Finnmark view the Sámi Parliament as a political assembly

for Sápmi (Samiland), but limited to the inland part. (Andersen 2003). Thus, from the standpoint of representing vital interests, the representation of women is a less essential concern than the fair representation of the different parts of Sápmi. This may be reflected in the relatively strong focus on the electoral system and the mapping of jurisdictions.

Another indicator that is the central concern of Sámi politicians - the very survival of Sámi culture vis-a-vie majority society - is the strong focus on the material basis of Sámi culture, that is, the primary industries and land rights. This prioritizing reflects both Sámi priorities at the local level and the fact that the Sámi Parliament informants felt little grass roots pressure to change the direction and content of their overall policy on equality.

Thus it is likely that issues related to gender equality are symbolically charged - discussion and resolutions are only sporadically translated into public policy. The policy of the Sámi Parliament on equality is therefore rarely operationalized when it comes to political demands and initiatives put before the Norwegian government and to issues that may come up in local Sámi communities. This means that the policy on equality is limited to a special set of issues independent of indigenous peoples' political frameworks. Consequently, explanatory value of ethnic and cultural factors, the potential for political change will depend on the historical background to this set of political issues, the degree of institutionalization in competition with other issues as well as the understanding and knowledge about these issues.

### Conclusion

I have tried to offer various explanations as to why the policy of the Sámi Parliament on gender equality appears to be relatively static and limited to particular issues. The restricted policy of gender equality that has been the subject of my discussion versus a more expanded perspective that would make gender equality a major concern of the Sámi Parliament can be represented as follows:

|   |       |  |
|---|-------|--|
| Women Focus                                   | ▶▶▶▶▶ | Gender Focus   |
| Individualized and privatized responsibility  | ▶▶▶▶▶ | integration and institutionalization of gender equality issues |
| Women's Responsibility                        | ▶▶▶▶▶ | Collective responsibility                                      |
| Dependent on number of women representatives  | ▶▶▶▶▶ | Independent of number  |
| Women's representation as a matter of utility | ▶▶▶▶▶ | Women's representation as a matter of justice                  |

Moving beyond the insular perspective of the Sámi Parliament as an institution to focusing on Sámi society at large, the Sámi Parliament will be in a better position to

discern the causes as to why so few women are elected to be representatives. An orientation outward toward Sámi society could also lay the groundwork for a Sámi policy of gender equality with an indigenous people's perspective.

The approach the Sámi Parliament has taken on the issue of gender equality is in large measure similar to that of Norwegian and the rest of western society. When the council in its plenary session's consideration of its report on gender equality tries to orient itself outward toward Sámi society, this may constitute the beginnings of a gradual evolution of a policy on gender equality that is informed by an indigenous people's perspective. However, this presupposes a stronger orientation toward the common challenges faced by indigenous peoples in regard to gender equality and recognition that the Sámi Parliament - more or less as a matter of course - adopt Western definitions of the issues of gender equality.

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## *Second Session*

### *Traditional Knowledge - Gendered Dynamics*

**Yvette Abrahams, University of the Western Cape**  
***Sarah Bartmann's Natural World: Khoekhoe Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Their Relevance to South African Women Today***

*!Gaitses!* (Greetings)

*(As Yvette began her lecture her colleague Bianca Robertson distributed an ethereal oil to the audience.)*

It is common in our culture when we go visit people that we bring a gift and I had to think of something that goes around to all the people. And you know that the smell of flowers does not go away. Put it where you like. It is a symbol of the Divine generosity. I guess another word for it is sustainable development - no matter how much you take, there is always some there.

I write about this oil for my paper: rose for heart's ease, jasmine for rest, chamomile for tranquility, mint which both warms and cools for oneness, khoegoed for home and buchu for spirit.

I am writing a biography of an indigenous woman who was born somewhere between 1788 and 1789, and who died somewhere between 1815 and 1816. In trying to access the mind of this woman one of the questions I asked myself was what were her favorite scents. I started looking at things like Khoekhoe oils, soaps, talcum powders and deodorants, to get an idea of what she thought I had to understand what she smelled. This is as close as I can get, so what I am distributing is what I think were Sarah Bartmann's favorite scents.

The indigenous woman's name is Sarah Bartmann and we are doing the research at the University of the Western Cape to try to write her biography.

I got into studying indigenous knowledge systems of the Khoekhoe not just because it's something that I love but because there is so little evidence about indigenous women in the archives and even less about any specific indigenous women such as Sarah Bartmann. So I had to begin to study as much as I could about the society around her. I had to look at how she lived, what she would eat, what kind of flowers she liked, what she built her hut with and how she built it, and what kind of medicines she took when she was sick and what kind of illnesses was she afflicted with. In the end it's going from cosmetics to indigenous knowledge systems. What was this woman's natural world?

I am going to start with the Khoekhoe approach to time. The circle is a Khoe religious symbol, the symbol for oneness and the Divine. The Divine is above gender because the Creator created the species that have one gender and the species that have two and those that have three. So if I refer to the Creator as her, this is obviously my human approach, not that anyone is trying to claim that our Creator is purely female. Our Creator is above gender.

Automatically, the Khoe approach to history starts with God. The Khoe think of time as circular. The best example [ for comparison] is the western post-enlightenment approach to time, where time is linear, and you will find all great western theorists use this form from Marx to Darwin. On one end you have primitivism - hunter-gatherers, then pastoralism, industrialism, and so on. It's one directional and moving towards some unspecified end. But if you look at Khoe art, specifically rock carvings you will see that time is circular. It is still unidirectional, you can't go back and undo what has been done because that is against God. God creates. So whatever is created stays created, but eventually through moving forward you are only going to get back to where you were.

In a way when I write history I am charting a map. I'm saying that we have got to move forward, we have to learn how to fly, use microphones, we have to speak in front of huge audiences, but the reason we are doing it is to get back to where we were before we were colonized. We move forward to go back. It's the Khoe approach to time. It revolutionizes how you think about things, but it is the basis for Khoe indigenous knowledge system's approach to history.

Since I had to undo my academic education even in the way historians think about time I thought I might as well change the way I think about everything else. This is going to be about indigenous knowledge systems and an indigenous approach to indigenous knowledge systems and I am going to do it in a Khoe manner. I am going to be speaking through metaphor and example instead of a post -enlightenment scientific paper that starts in one place and goes to another. I am going to use all kinds of metaphors and examples to explain my points.

The organizers have kindly provided a metaphor for me, it is the South African plant sitting on the table, a *gladioli*. It was taken from our country somewhere in the 1700s to Holland where it was hybridized and made into this beautiful plant you see here today. What I want to explain here is that I don't want to do to our indigenous knowledge systems what has been done to this plant. It is a beautiful plant, its bulbs are edible. The Khoe word for it is *baboon bulb* because the baboons love to dig it up and eat it. The Khoe like to eat it as well, you dig it up, you wash it, you put in the ashes of the fire and you roast it and then eat it with butter and salt, it's very nice. What has happened to this gladiolus is that it has been colonized, it's been taken from its country, its roots have been cut off and it's stuck together with a whole bunch of plants and it looks very nice. I am very happy for you to have the beauty here in Tromsø of this and four other South African plants I have seen since I arrived here, but I do want you to understand that the bulbs are left behind at home, nobody can eat this plant, and that is exactly what I don't



want to happen to our indigenous knowledge systems. I am happy that you enjoy it, but there is so much more to this plant that you are not getting. It's the same if I talk about a particular herb or a particular woman's life, I would not like you to cut it off and take just a part and arrange it with plants from other countries. You have to see it in its entirety; you've got to see it with its roots in its environment to fully understand the plant.

In the same way when I started writing about Sarah Bartmann, the first thing I said was that I don't want to write a western history of Sarah Bartmann. "Western" here used in the context from Africa, west from us, I could also use the term, north from us, and we all know what I am talking about. What has been done is that white academics have been writing about Sarah Bartmann since 1948 and they've all focused on writing about her, without getting a toss about what she thinks of her own history. We come up against a cultural divide; as far as white science is concerned there is nothing that she can say about her own history because she's dead. But of course in the context of Khoe culture there is a lot she can say about her own history because she's an ancestor. If we really wonder we can go ask her about her own history, it's not a question without an answer. I suppose you could call it empiricism if you want to but in terms of Khoe knowledge systems it doesn't really matter. We believe what we believe.

I started out by going through fifty years of historiography of what has been written about Sarah Bartmann and what I noticed is that only three black women had written about her when I started doing my research in 1994 - only one was South African, only four white women, interestingly enough, and one black man from America. So there was racial and gendered inequalities even in how many people had approached her history and historiography. So I was the first Khoe woman to write about this Khoe woman. I had to start by asking myself, what is wrong with this picture? I don't want to go into that, but *voice* to me is a huge issue. The one thing you can generalize beyond Sarah Bartmann is that we want to talk about our own history. I don't know if it's contentious here in Norway, but it is extremely contentious in our history.

We have to date three black women with PhDs in history in the whole of the country and that is after ten years of democracy. I'm the only one of African descent; one is an African American who studied in Zimbabwe. So it shows you right there how our history is still being written and represented fundamentally by other people who don't have a clue as to how we think. As long as that happens how do we come up with strategic solutions? If I am accepting your word about my history then I am going to also allow you to tell me what to do, because I assume that you have the knowledge. So it's about taking our voice back. It's about saying that actually what you have to say is very interesting; nobody has a problem with a Norwegian writing a history of South Africa, it's neither better nor worse, but it's not the same. We have to wonder about a system where there are so few of us writing about our history and so many of you writing about our history. I hope that makes sense to everybody.

Those are the steps that I walked in when I began to write a history of Sarah Bartmann that would come as close as possible as to what she might have thought about her own

history. I go forward to come back, I do it with computers, I word process, I drive a car, all those sorts of things but I do it to get back to that world of 1788 and how she thought.

In 2002 it this woman was in the news. She was born in the Southeastern Cape, she was taken as a slave to Britain, she was exhibited there between 1810 and 1814, then she was taken to Paris where she was sold to another keeper and very similar things happened and she was finally examined by three French scientists in 1815 and she died in Paris toward the end of 1815 or the beginning of 1816. Her history does not end there and to us Khoe this is not odd. You do not die when you die, you just move on to somewhere else. It's quite natural to us to talk about Sarah Bartmann's history after 1816.

What happened after 1994 with black majority rule was that many Khoe of every tribe and clan wanted to get her body back. As long as you are not buried your spirit is not at rest and therefore we shall not be blessed. It took about two years to get the South African government to take up this issue as a national demand, and it took another six years for the French to actually listen. So in May of 2002, Sarah Bartmann finally came home and was finally buried on August 9<sup>th</sup> 2002. This happened to be not only the South African International Women's Day but also on the World Indigenous Peoples Day. So this was a great great day for us. The week after she was buried we had floods in the Eastern Cape, we were so blessed with rain. Who is to say that Khoe science is wrong, when empirically it worked.

That is Sarah Bartmann. After she was buried we are trying to recover and write her history and also to bury the other bodies. There were at least six other "Hottentot Venuses" - that was the name for her - in France alone. There may be one or two left in Britain. And in South Africa there may be over eight hundred bodies being kept in various museums and medical schools. We are trying to bury all of them in good time and between global warming and the greenhouse effect we need all the water we can get.

Sarah Bartmann is interesting not just from a South African or Khoe point of view; she is very interesting because her body was used as the basis for scientific racism. The medical exams that were done of her, the autopsies, the exhibitions of her were all done to prove or disprove the theory that the Khoekhoe were not part of the human race. If you look at it from a Khoe perspective it was this incredible European anxiety about who was human and where you draw the lines. It gets back to indigenous knowledge systems; we like boundaries but we are less concerned about drawing lines around different groups of people. From the point of view of European enlightenment science this was extremely important. That is how she got famous and that is why academics have been studying her for over fifty years, because what they were studying was the origins of scientific racism - and for that matter scientific sexism. She is very interesting from a gender perspective as well because of the racialized ideas of gender. What black women were, what African women were, and what indigenous women were supposed to be came out of her time, and much of the medical and scientific evidence that was put forward was from her body. That was her world-wide importance. Part of what I am doing in terms of indigenous knowledge systems is to say that there is a little bit more to her than that. There are more interesting things about her than the autopsy report. So she leads me in strange ways.

Take for instance the origin for particular oils. I was reading contemporary travel writings, trying to figure out more about her life. Everyone who came across the Khoekhoe [in the travel writings] for the first time mention “these greasy dirty people.” I wondered, what is this grease they are referring to? Where does this oiliness come from? I read in another source: “They make this oil, olive oil” - which is indigenous and there is beeswax which is indigenous, and a number of herbs which do wonderful things and most importantly they protect you from fleas! I think, no wonder when they see one of these European travelers who have not bathed for three months, the first thing they do is to protect themselves from fleas. Perfect sense. I would too, because at that time the Europeans did not believe in bathing more than twice a year. So there is the explanation for this greasiness. It makes perfect lucid sense. It also protects you from evil spirits and puts you into touch with the Divine and has all kinds of other benefits.

That is how I got interested in indigenous knowledge systems. When you see it from the point of view of this French traveler, it is not making any sense, but when you see it from the point of view of the Khoekhoe it makes perfect sense. None of us like fleas.

In the paper I have defined indigenous as people who have never been anywhere else, and that is a very simple concept. Khoe are indigenous to South Africa because they have always been in South Africa. Not so long ago they found a human foot print that was 117 000 years old. When I say very long ago, it’s very long ago. Very long is very long.

This definition made sense to me while I was in Cape Town, but the moment I got off the plane I thought well, indigenous to South Africa also has another meaning depending on the geographical boundaries. It can also mean indigenous to Africa - meaning that the Africans never got off their continent and colonized anybody else. In other words, some of us are indigenous to Southern Africa, some of us are indigenous to Africa and then there are whole bunches of people who are not.

The word Khoekhoe: Khoe means person and when you double it, it just means more of it. So it translates as “people of people” or human beings, as opposed to the animal people and the plant people. That is very funny because it is one of the few meeting points between western science and us – we are both concerned with humanity. A humanity we tend to take for granted. Who are you? We are the human beings and who the heck are you?

I am also using this quite specifically to denote all of southern African indigenous peoples. To my mind there is a problem that is not being created by the indigenous people; but was created by non-indigenous anthropologists who have cut us up and said that there is fundamental difference between those of us who hunt and gather for a living and those of us who herd cows for a living. Because of that fundamental difference “we [non-indigenous anthropologists] are going to call you one name and you another name”. In old anthropological language you will see this referred to as the “Hottentots” - those who kept cattle, and the “Bushmen” - meaning the people who didn’t. The problem with

that is that we are defined by what we do; we are not defined by how we do what we do. If you look at the way we do things there' is a lot more that puts hunters and gatherers and pastoralists together than what divides them.

When you are a historian instead of an anthropologist and you see things along a period of time you see that everyone hunted and gathered. Whether they had cattle or not everyone hunted and gathered. In fact gathering - which is what the women did - would supply something like 75% of the food supply for the Khoekhoe. If you are adopting a gender perspective for the Khoekhoe and say that 75% of the food supply was gathered by women, you will also note that everyone had access to these skills. So at one point in history a group of people would be pastoralists, and then they might lose their land and become hunter-gatherers, then they would become semi-urbanized indigenous people and then they would get some grazing land on the corners of a municipality and then again they would be pastoralists. People would go back and forth between these different modes of living.

It has been shown that Khoekhoe had knowledge of agriculture and they had knowledge of hunting. My great-grandmothers' people were iron workers so the whole idea of South African indigenous peoples as hunters and gatherers who did nothing else is a bit odd. It is like arguing that the coastal Sámi and the inland Sámi are not the same people because the inland Sámi herd reindeer and the coastal Sámi fish, therefore they are different people. This is what has been done by western science and my way of trying to undo it is by saying: It is not even about that. It is not about what we do; it is about how we think about what we do. The fact that I write history for a living today does not make me any less Khoekhoe. Tomorrow I could be driving a taxi for a living, it does not matter, I am still going to be Khoe, still going to be human.

I want to talk a little about what the situation is today in South Africa in regards to indigenous rights. As I seem to be the only South African on the programme it is kind of my responsibility to talk about this. It would have been a whole lot better if you could have seen the video of Sarah Bartmann's funeral. One of the symbolic things which is a Khoe custom was that everybody laid a rock on her grave. We put rocks on the grave, everybody from president Mbeki to whole bunches of ministers, anybody who was anybody in the South African government, regardless of what people they belonged to, we laid a rock.

I can sum up the South African situation by saying that we get respect, and that is very important. What we do not get is rights. We do not get recognition. In your indigenous knowledge system, you know what is more important. There are lot of symbolic acts. Our language is not constitutionally recognized but it is on our national coat of arms. It is the only language on the coat of arms, so we are getting the respect. What we are not getting is to teach our language in schools to our children. We can not get an education in our language, we can not have Khoekhoe teachers, we can not get Khoekhoe writers, because from what intelligentsia are they going to arise? We are just now getting a couple of dictionaries, but that is still a far step from a Khoe literate culture. We are literate in English; we are not literate in our mother tongue because it is not a constitutionally

recognized language. My feeling is that until we get that going - that is, building from the bottom primary to high school, children being able to pass at school in their own language - none of that other stuff is going to happen. But we get respect.

It is the same thing with regard to the land. The great irony here is that the post-apartheid land restitution laws only go back to the 1913 Land Act, because the text of that act was the first that was racially phrased. The problem is that the Khoekhoe have been colonized and therefore losing land since 1656, and in fact with the 1909 Missions and Reserve Act one could pretty much say that the colonization of Khoe land was complete. So we have got beautiful land restitution rights that does not apply to us because our land was basically lost by 1909.

This has meant is that the majority of Khoekhoe land claims for land restitution have been urban claims. It has been people who have been dispossessed of their land in the rural areas and then moved into the city and bought a house and then were disposed of that house. You can not lay a claim to the house because that probably happened during the 1950s so they still lay claim to the regional farm. Unlike the Sámi and unlike many of the Native American peoples we are landless indigenous people. This also means that we are highly urbanized indigenous people. You have the choice of being a farm worker on a white mans farm - even though that land may have belonged to you four generations back- or being an urbanized factory worker, or one of a few academics.

I am not sure if it makes us so different, but one thing that people need to understand is that our indigenous knowledge systems are not practiced on our indigenous lands for the simple fact that we do not have land. The most ironic part of this is that the land restitution act was part of Mandela's plan, who has a Khoekhoe grandmother and he acknowledges this quite freely. But at the same time, he was passing laws that made it impossible for the Khoekhoe to get any land restitution. Through Khoe struggle, and partly because of this respect thing, there has been a couple of exceptions to the land restitutions act, concerning some parcels of land set aside before 1913. Most importantly, the =Khomani San have been awarded land in the Trans-Kalahari National Park. Other lands where claims have been were owned by white farmers - not by the government - so they lost those claims. There's been other claims made to some missions and there was one judgment in the Northern Cape where the Nama Khoe have been restituted the surface land but the government has refused to grant them the mineral rights to the diamonds. So they own what's on top- but not what's underneath.

Is land restitution one of our major political issues? Myself, I don't think so, not at this point in time, and I think that is where we differ from other indigenous groups. Yes, we need constitutional recognition. Yes, we need recognition, but as long as we are getting respect, we are still getting quite a lot without constitutional recognition. Are we going to get the land back? Strategically, a lot of us are not prepared to fight. And in a lot of ways the government has appeared as our friends and not as our enemies, so indigenous peoples' struggles are geared towards other enemies. The reason for that is quit simple. Of the 87% of the land that was owned by white people in 1994, only 5 % of it has been redistributed. In other words, 5 % of the population is still sitting on most of the land.

My worry is that in too many parts of the world, when people talk about indigenous knowledge systems, they do it like with this plant [the gladiolus]. They do a chemical analysis of it. They say “Oh, this plant can kill cancer!” Why? “Because it contains an active ingredient. We are going to find a way to take out this active ingredient and we are going to put it into a little pill form and we are going to give it to everybody and we are going to save the world.” This is intellectual strip-mining. It is taking a little bit of indigenous knowledge from its natural environment and selling it for profit, and I have a problem with that. We have lost our land, we have lost our cattle, we have lost our language and our culture and almost all we have left is our knowledge, and now they are strip-mining that as well. What are we going to do then? What are we going to do when all of our knowledge is gone?

What this is doing to our indigenous knowledge systems is exactly what was done to Sarah Bartmann. It is taking her out of her natural environment and reducing her to a scientific object of study. It is putting a microscope over her and saying this proves this and that, and she died of this and that. What it is not asking is: What is Khoekhoe pharmacology? What is an indigenous approach to this particular plant? What is its natural context? Like this beautiful plant, the gladiolus, it is not related to anything around it, it is just there for beauty. In the same way we are exporting *buchu* to Switzerland where they are making pills out of it and selling it back to us. We are exporting *khoegoed*. Nobody who grows it knows that it is a medicinal plant; nobody knows what *khoegoed* means or what it's about. This is strip-mining our species, it is strip-mining our knowledge. It is not paying us any respect and it is not changing the world.

The Khoekhoe approach to pharmacology operates on the principle of the circle, it is holistic in meaning. We have got very good herbs, but they need to be used holistically and fit into a social system. Herbs would often be offered in mixtures so that the same herb would appear in seven different mixtures for seven different diseases. So instead of looking at one single magic bullet for one single disease, when you begin to look at the chemistry of Khoe medicine you have to look at the way the different herbs work in different combinations. The only way to look at this is to study it holistically.

What applies to Khoekhoe pharmacology also applies to revolution. As the Khoekhoe tend to think holistically, the same analysis can be applied to methods of struggle. We can not be fighting for constitutional recognition and giving it all our energy; we also have to look at how it fits into education, moral regeneration and gender equality. If you were to use indigenous knowledge systems as a method of struggle, the first thing you would have to do is you would have to look at it holistically. You have to look at how the different struggles fit together. And let me put it categorically - I have no problem making dollars, I like dollars. But I have a problem leaving my Khoekhoe knowledge system behind to go to conferences where I am only supposed to talk about one thing. I want to be at that conference and I want to be Khoekhoe and talk about all the different things and how they link together and how we are going to move forward in order to get back to where we were.

## ***Third Session***

### ***Local Realities and Strategies for Recognition***

**Gudrun Eliissá E. Lindi, Forum of Sámi Women**

***Aspects of Equality: Sámi Women's Participation in Public Arenas***

Hi,  
 I'd very much like some information on the number of Sámi women living in Norway. Could you please give me a call - telephone number xxxx?  
 Sincerely,  
 NN  
 Senior Project Leader/Consultant  
 Norwegian Gallery Institute

A few years ago I received this e-mail message, perhaps because I had worked with questions relating to equality and women in politics in Sápmi for quite a few years. It was not addressed to an institution but to me personally.

I was a little taken aback at this, for a couple of reasons:

1. Firstly because I thought: Am I the only person that is capable of answering questions like that in all of Norway?
2. Secondly, because I did not know the answer. And there and then it dawned on me that if we are not pinned down in numbers, we are invisible. Sámi women are invisible - an irrelevant category.

Later I arrived at the conclusion that because our work is not institutionalized and thus lacking in formal competence - it is still a private undertaking - it will have no impact as a factor in the evolution of Sámi society.

#### **Introduction**

On behalf of Sámi Nissan Forum/Sámi Women's Forum, I want to thank you for inviting me to talk here. SNF appreciates the fact that this arena provides an opportunity for us to participate in the public sphere.

In fact, this is what my talk will deal with: the participation of Sámi women in public arenas. It is a large and comprehensive theme. On this occasion, I will only address a couple of the issues related to the politics of gender equality in Sápmi where I am active in SNF-Sámi Women's Forum, an international organization in four countries and has been in existence for eleven years. SNF has also been asked to represent FOKUS Forum at this conference, which is an umbrella organization for women's organizations working in Norway and internationally.

This talk could have dealt with my struggle to appear publicly during this moose hunting season, and being the mother of four and self-employed I still managed to organize my day to stand before you and deliver these remarks. But this is not what this talk will be about. This will not be a “at my house” report.

I am no more to be pitied than individual men who are supposed to be *victims* in the Sámi struggle for equality. I do not like hearing that I am marginalized as a woman, or as a Sámi. It does not do me any good. I would rather accept the challenge and insist on my rights. But then I have to know what my rights are.

Part of that challenge is to examine what structures, what mechanisms of power make it impossible to control one’s day to day life to the degree one ought to. And most importantly: in whose interest is it that the situation is like that? As others have said before me - one has to know these mechanisms, they must be identified.

We have to understand that this also limits the opportunities of men. Like women - men adapt to a role they are expected to play, accept a system, and take on role models. Be it as a Sámi politician *or* in other roles. Structures are limiting for everybody -they hold people captive.

### **The Interests of Sámi Women**

The ILO convention recognize indigenous peoples’ desire for control of their own institutions, their way of life, their economic development and their right to keep and develop their identity, their language and their religion within the framework of the states where they live.

This must apply to Sámi women as members of an indigenous people in one of the richest countries in the world. If the frameworks of the nation-states only promote the goals and needs of Sámi men, then Norway does not adhere to the ILO convention or other international conventions it has ratified. Thus, there must be an evaluation of how Norwegian and Sámi institutions promote the goals and needs of Sámi women - goals and needs that have been recognized through, among other things, human rights.

To a large degree, the institutions have to look at this in relation to the work that Sámi *women’s organizations* do, to make up for the inadequate contributions of institutions for the benefit of Sámi women as a group. This work encompasses the special contributions that women make to cultural diversity, to harmonious social and economic conditions for Sámi people, to international cooperation and to the understanding of the situation of Sámi as a people in four countries

This is a global phenomenon. *Stella Tamang* also emphasized this during the annual meeting of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York in May this year, where the theme also was indigenous women. Stella Tamang is a profiled indigenous peoples’ leader from Nepal who heads the South Asia Indigenous Women’s Forum and was one of the main speakers in New York.



To quote her:

*Indigenous women, through our cultural and traditional management and use of natural resources, which we have accumulated and posse, transmitted to us through generation, play a vital role in the sustainable use of the natural environment.*

This means that Sámi women be given - or must take - a seat at the table where the premises of Sámi resource management are laid down.

The Norwegian Parliamentary proposition no. 102 concerning the 76<sup>th</sup> international labor conference in Geneva 1989, says in Article 5:

*When the resolutions of this convention are implemented, measures must be taken to reduce the problems these people will experience in relation to changes in the conditions of life and work, with the participation of and in cooperation with people who are impacted.*

As a group, Sámi women are impacted in other ways than men. If there is to be equality, other measures must be undertaken so that Sámi women will feel that these measures come about on their premises. If the measures that are implemented only are adapted to the needs of men and boys, Sámi women and girls will suffer discrimination. From now on, attention must be given to this issue in the work of Norwegian and Sámi institutions on indigenous peoples' issues.

Many emphasize the fact that Sámi women are highly educated, which - of course - benefits society. But nothing is made of the fact that we have limited access to the benefits of living off, with, and in nature and of earning a reasonable income from this to the degree that men do. We have to marry men who own a permit to herd reindeer while working full or part time in another income producing job and make the best of the situation. Many women work themselves half to death doing this.

A young reindeer herding wife said her husband was away from home half the year. He herded the reindeer and did other work related to the business of reindeer herding. She had kept a record of this and counted the days. She herself owns and runs a beauty parlor - and in this manner the two of them together invest in the future of their children as reindeer herders.

This is the story of women in fishing, reindeer herding and farming. A newly released report from the Sámi parliament on the fishing industry failed to raise this issue as a problem. I will come back to this report later.

Again to quote Stella Tamang:

*Indigenous women throughout the world are among the most marginalized groups due to combined factors of colonization, the spread of western-style capitalism, and top-down and paternalistic approaches to development. Indigenous women are faced with more serious problems as many governments are getting into globalization.*

This also applies to our own areas in Scandinavia and Russia, where we live under regimes as widely different as those of the Scandinavian and Russian states. I also think this fact should be emphasized here.

### **To Participate in Public Arenas**

- Arenas must be created that make room for the activities, the content and the experience that Sámi women in all their diversity and with their different backgrounds represent.
- The competence of women must be held up for all to see and must be rewarded with initiatives.

Today this is left to private organizations and to the private sphere. Female Sámi culture - to a lesser degree than male Sámi culture - is attended to by the existing institutions. This is the problem of gender equality in Sápmi today.

Knowledge and competence anchored outside an institution earns no status. Knowledge and competence anchored in an institution do earn status. Therefore, institutionalized activity is important.

- Women are not represented equally, an undemocratic practice.
- Therefore, we have had to - within the framework of a Sámi women's organizations - work the way we do and make room for ourselves in the public sphere.

It should be a matter of course that both women and men are visible in public arenas. It is also natural that both genders enjoy representation of *equal worth*. The problem is that *equally* represented does not mean representation of *equal worth*. Achieving equality means more than having an equal number of women and men in various forums, committees and delegations. SNF sees as the greatest challenges for Sámi organizations and institutions to develop insight and competence in this matter.

This year I have learned that the Sámi Council thinks their commitment to gender equality cannot be questioned, "since, as everybody can see, we have x number of women in the delegation." In the same manner, one of the middle managers at the Sámi Parliament, Norway, made the following statement at a public conference:

There are certainly problems when it comes to the representation of women at the Sámi Parliament, but the fact that women are in the majority among employees in the administration shows that the situation isn't all that bad.

In order to integrate equality as an ongoing concern in its work, the Sámi Council is struggling in the final phase of a project to find a formulation that will "protect the interests of women," something á la "the Honningsvåg declaration," a statement that will be passed at the eighteenth Sámi conference to be held next week at Honningsvåg.

Paragraph 7 says:

Emphasizes the importance of all parts of Sámi society being able to participate effectively in the formulation and implementation of Sámi self-determination, including *the elderly, women and young people*. (emphasis added).

In many ways, I think the debate on gender equality has been in the doldrums for the last decade, there is no understanding for the need to enlarge our knowledge when it comes to equality. The problem is well illustrated in the Norut NIBR's report of 2004:4 *Gender and Ethnicity in Fishery policy*.

Several female politicians in the Sámi Parliament have had important positions in the process of formulating fishery policy. The equality of women and men is nevertheless not an integrated part of the fishing policy of the Sámi Parliament.

This means that even if women are chosen members of boards, committees, and councils, gender and the need to create the conditions that will promote the goals and needs of women never become a theme. It is necessary to recognize this.

The Norut NIBR's report also says:

There is a great deal of parallel argumentation between those who are working to expand the fishery policy to include women, and the argumentation of the Sámi Parliament to make room for an indigenous peoples' perspective in Norwegian fishery policy. This linkage has not been exploited.

The same applies to reindeer herding. SNF has on many occasions pointed out that there are many parallels between so-called "samifying" the public sphere and the work we are doing to "gender" the public sphere. I am happy to see that Norut NIBR is saying this explicitly. Perhaps this is one step in the right direction to gender the Sámi public sphere.

Our strategy is therefore participation in activities in the public space, and we want to resist the massive privatization of the culture of Sámi women. Privatization leads to the stigmatization of women in terms of what they are preoccupied with, busy with, what they habitually do, know, and want, but are not given a voice or a face - as in the arenas where men are over-represented, as in the Sámi Parliament system.

### **Equality presupposes an inclusive practice**

An inclusive practice is necessary in order to achieve equality. Politics is *not changed in practice* in spite of decisions that are taken in relation to equality as e.g. seminars, action plans and conferences on equality. Inclusion as a concept is not easy to define but it is fair to say it involves expressing in words some overarching normative ideological perspectives.

Historically in the western world, there have been two courses that could be pursued, one for women, the elderly and children (e.g. the Honningsvåg declaration mentioned above) and one for grown men. There have been two different spheres with the social order where women and men have worked and been active.

When women nowadays – supported by law and public policy and human rights criteria - start moving over to participate in men's arenas, *they do not bring along their norms, but leave it to men to decide in their arena*. Women's arena are, however, changed when men move in to them. Many voices are raised calling for men to be admitted to the care-giving sector and into the home! The result is that men decide in both arenas. As in many other contexts, pay is a measurable indicator.

This is one reason why we have to work with *interpersonal relations* in the male arena in order that equal worth and not equality be the norm. Equal worth between women and men presupposes difference and different conditions because there are differences between women and men. The differences involve different norms, values, focus of communication, priorities, strategies, rules of the game etc.

### *Conclusion*

Sámi Nissan Forum has tried to *influence* Sámi and Nordic authorities to take seriously questions relating to women and equality. We have tried to contribute with knowledge and also affirmed that we lack much knowledge in this area. To take up a few main points in this presentation:

A dialogue is necessary - a practice of inclusion. We need meeting places and arenas to discuss these questions. We do not have that today. The meeting places we have are often not on women's premises, so women won't participate. It is taboo and stigmatizing to discuss equality. There is no career in it for you. As my *gáibmi* (name-sister) Gudrun Schyman, Swedish politician on the left, says in the journal *Genus* no. 3-4/04: "Not all women want to change the patriarchal structure. They know they won't get anywhere with those questions, one makes no career in partisan politics." (p.13)

Women must get access to different fora – be represented. Who represents Sámi women today? Delegations that have upwards of 40% women as members may claim to be representative because they count the number of women. But are they committed to these issues? It takes experience and insight. Men are said to represent everybody, i.e. both genders whereas women represent women. However, do women as a matter of course have insight in issues of gender and equality? A representation of women does not mean that the perspective on gender equality is taken care of.

Demand for insight and knowledge. How long is one going to discuss equality in Sápmi without insight? The way the situation is today one basically has to start from scratch. And one must be willing to admit this. Eva Josefsen's research is an important contribution, and something which should be used.

We have to look at the situation in Russia. Equal worth means that certain standards and infrastructures must be developed. We have to make a contribution in this regard. A Swedish EU politician was on the TV yesterday demanding a

stronger commitment from politicians in the Barents region. I support this criticism.

Financial inputs are called for and the work must be institutionalized. SNF is of the opinion that the solution is to establish a Sámi resource center for gender equality. Among other things, this will be a theme at a conference on gender equality that SNF is organizing this November in Karasjok. The conference will also focus on the centennial goals of the UN and cooperation between indigenous women.

In conclusion, I want to say that there is no shortage of tasks that await a Sámi center for gender equality. It is one thing to get an accurate count of Sámi women in Norway, in answer to the e-mail I quoted at the beginning of these remarks. It is a bigger task to identify and evaluate the elements that create an imbalance - that cause the lack of equal worth between the genders in Sámi social developments today. This work must be *institutionalized* in order to be recognized as knowledge.

**Sumitra Gurung Mahandar, Plan International, Nepal**  
***A Gendered Analysis of the Political Struggle for Recognition of Indigenous Nationalities in Nepal***

In this power point presentation I will demonstrate here the problems the indigenous people have in Nepal are rooted. The indigenous movements have been going on for the last ten to fifteen years. My analysis seeks to understand where the current problems began, and what has happened in the course of the movement for indigenous rights.

Last year, during the cease-fire [between Maoist insurgency and the government army], me and two friends visited the areas where the Maoist movements are located to see what has happened with their demands for rights. What is the position of these indigenous people, or basically, the minorities, in the country?

The 'ethnic map' of Nepal shows considerable diversity. The government has officially recognized fifty-nine indigenous groups, but there could be more, as some groups may not have been identified in the official surveys. Nepal is a country with a variety of peoples with their own languages, their own cultures and traditions. People have come from the western side, the eastern side, and a long time ago they have also come from the Mongolian side. In the Himalayan area we have people who are quite similar to Tibetans. The Aryans have come from the western side, and they are the caste groups, basically the Hindus, of the ruling class. In the 2001 census the indigenous people are 37%, representing fifty-nine groups, and the occupationally untouchable Dalit group make up 14%. Among the other elite groups you have the ruling 12% Brahmin and 16 % Chhetri who form the government.

Much of the indigenous movement is focused on getting rights from the ruling classes. The background for the movement started 236 years ago, when one of the Shah Kings, unified all the little kingdoms and said that Nepal is actually *Asli Hindustan*: the real Hindu kingdom. This King decided that Nepal was the actual idol because of the Muslim movement in India. So when the rules and laws started to be built they were aligned to the Hindu religion. The majority of indigenous communities are non-Hindu, and that is where the problems lie.

During a period around 1856 attempts were made to stratify the people vertically. There was a civil code which was largely guided by the Hindu religion. We can see that the code is pretty discriminatory. For a crime committed by a Hindu the punishment is very light compared to the non-Hindu or lower caste group whose punishment would be very severe. The rules and regulations were rooted in the civil code from 1856, which was amended in 1964. But people continue to discriminate [regardless of the amendment of the code]. Because of this historical background, we have a system where gender, caste and ethnicity are the rule of the game, and where people still informally act with discriminatory behavior – in spite of what the policies say.

During the *Panchayat* period there was this Panchayat King who was very repressive and the discussion of indigenous peoples rights was not allowed in the country. They were not allowed to speak their languages in the country, and they were also prohibited in India. It was very hierarchical. The indigenous people used to be called the drinking group because among indigenous people liquor has a significant place. Because they drink they are branded in a very derogatory way - called *Matwalis*. In the last several years now, the movement has given them some status and they have been recognized as indigenous people. According to the Hindu system you have the “touchable”, “untouchable”, and “enslavable” - all groups have been stratified. The categories are also Hindu, non-Hindu, indigenous, Tibetan, and there are different categories of religion including Buddhism, Animism, and Shamanism.

**Table 1. Hierarchy**

|   | Hierarchy   | Traditional Habitat | Belief/Religion  |
|---|---|---------------------|------------------|
| <b>A</b>  | <b>WATER ACCEPTABLE (PURE)</b>                      |                     |                  |
|   | <b>1. Sacred thread/Tagadhari (Superior)</b>        |                     |                  |
|   | Upper Caste (Parbatya)                              | Hill                | Hinduism         |
|   | Upper Caste (Madhise)                               | Tarai               | Hinduism         |
|   | Upper Caste (Newar)                                 | Kathmandu Valley    | Hinduism         |
|   | <b>2. Matwali Alcohol Drinkers (Non-enslavable)</b> |                     |                  |
|   | Gurung, Magar, Sunuwar, Thakali, Rai, Limbu         | Hill                | Tribal/Shamanism |
|   | Newar   | Kathmandu Valley    | Buddhism         |
|   | <b>3. Matawali Alcohol Drinkers (Enslavable)</b>    |                     |                  |
|   | Bhote (Including Tamang)                            | Mountain/Hill       | Buddhism         |
| Chepang, Gharti, Hayu                               | Hill  |                     |                  |
| Kumal, Tharu  | Inner Tarai/Tarai                                   | Animism             |                  |
| <b>B</b>  | <b>WATER UN-ACCEPTABLE/Pani Nachalne (IMPURE)</b>   |                     |                  |
|   | <b>4. Touchable</b>                                 |                     |                  |
|   | Dhobi, Kasai, Kusale, Kulu                          | Kathmandu Valley    | Hinduism         |
|   | Musalman  | Tarai               | Islam            |
|   | Mlechha (White Man)                                 | Europe              | Christianity     |
|   | <b>5. Untouchable (Achhut)</b>                      |                     |                  |
| Badi, Damai, Gaine, Kadara, Kami, Sarki (Parabatya) | Hill  | Hinduism            |                  |
| Chyame, Pode  | Kathmandu Valley                                    | Hinduism            |                  |

Why is there all this discontent in the country? I started to look to the constitution of the country because you don't see the impact - the actual physical part - of development because things are rooted right down into the constitution. We have had five different constitutions starting from 1947- since the modern Nepal - and all of these have been led by the king, rather than by the community where the sovereignty lies. The constitutions recognize the sovereignty of the people, but the people had no direct say.

With the last constitution, written in 1990, discontent increased. The efforts for a democracy process managed to bring the King under the constitution, but it did not really pay attention to laws. The committee which put together this constitution did not give much regard to the minorities' requests. There has been huge demonstrations demanding for a secular state because much of the problems are rooted in the saying that "We are a Hindu kingdom". This was influenced from India, because the Hindu religion does not have a "home" so they wanted Nepal to be the Hindu kingdom for the world. Saying "We are a Hindu kingdom" provides a legitimate way to discriminate against those who don't fit into that system.

In all constitutions since 1947 we can categorize discrimination in five categories:

**Positive, but inadequate provisions;**

- *Article 1 (3) states that the state shall not discriminate [against] its citizen[s] based on religion, race, gender, caste/ethnicity and ideological faith*
- *Persons who have their domicile in Nepal shall be deemed to be citizens of Nepal*

**Direct discrimination;**

- *Article 4 (1) declares Nepal as a Hindu kingdom. It is a direct discrimination against Animists, Bon, Buddhists, Muslims, Christians etc.*
- *Article 9 (4a) States that provided he can speak the language of Nepal, (or the Nepali official language)*

**Indirect discrimination;**

- *Article 18 (2) prevents communities to provide education in mother tongue in Grade 6 and above*

**Silence means denial/discrimination;**

- *Federalism*
- *Ethnic autonomy*
- *Right to self-determination*
- *Multi-religious society*
- *Land Rights*
- *Customary Rights*

**Discrimination against international instruments of human rights. (Ratified by Nepal):** CEDAW, ICERD, CRC, ICCPR, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, etc.

An example of the indirect discrimination in the constitution is where it says that “Persons who have their domicile of Nepal shall be deemed to be the citizens of Nepal”. This operates in a different way for the Madhese area because there is a belief that they may be Indian. There is a crisis of identity and unless the Madhese people are proven otherwise they will be non-Nepali. And in the same constitution it says about another group, the Hill communities, that unless proven otherwise, they will be Nepali. In other words, the same constitution acts in many different ways. Many of the indigenous people of the Madhese do not get citizenship because they have to prove that they own the land, but the confusion is such in the country that unless you have citizenship you can not own property, yet you can’t be a citizen unless you own property.

There is also a silent version of discrimination, which denies rights but without speaking; this has to do with federalism and the rights to self determination. The constitution declines the freedom of religion; it declines land rights of indigenous peoples, and customary rights. There are also laws that go against all the ratified conventions which are supposed to be amended. Yet the people that wrote the constitution in 1990 claim that this is the best constitution. In my opinion, you cannot have the best constitution in the world, because the values in the contexts are variable; if it is to be good it has to be good for the local peoples.

The more I looked into this I realized that I am basically a development activist. I have been asking: Why hasn’t development policies really delivered? Out of my own curiosity I started to look into it, asking: “Where is the problem?” I sort of landed on this



constitution and these informal practices that we have. I started to realize that we have this constitution which is made like a round ball or something ideal, but it regards all the different people as a square box, with a lot corners and a lot of differences.

Because of the inadequacy of the constitution, regarding women and the indigenous people and minorities, women have taken to the streets. The constitution denies property rights for women and for children born out of the country who are not given citizenship. This is direct discrimination against women and against property rights. And together with the women, the indigenous people and the Madhise have all this discontent which has been spelled out. The movement for democratization confronts exclusions, human rights violations and violations of indigenous people's rights.

Nepal tries to say that it is a "sustainable development success story" saying that sustainable forestry really developed in Nepal and that a lot of countries are trying to replicate the community forestry program of Nepal. The government says that user rights have been given to the people. But now the forestry program has been said to be successful for fifteen years, and community forestry is really a covert way of alienating the indigenous people from their access to forestry. The indigenous peoples do not conform to the official system of education, and they have been alienated because only those who can read and write become members of the committees for the forestry program.

Looking at the human development index we find that discrimination is reflected in the human development indicators . We find that the Hill Janajatis (indigenous people) fall below the national averages for all of the index categories, and also the Madhises and the Hill Dalits (minority groups). Many of the indigenous Newars have moved into the city, into the capital, but because of their indigenousness and language - they don't speak Nepali - they have lost rights and access to information about rights and language.

**Table 2: Human Development Index of Different Groups**

| Human Dev. Indicators           | Nepal        | Bahun        | Chhetri      | Newar        | Hill Janajatis | Madhise      | Hill Dalit   | Muslim       | Other        |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Life expectancy (yrs)           | 55.0         | 60.8         | 56.3         | 62.2         | 53.0           | 58.4         | 50.3         | 48.7         | 54.4         |
| Adult literacy (%)              | 36.7         | 58.0         | 42.0         | 54.8         | 35.2           | 27.5         | 23.8         | 22.1         | 27.6         |
| Mean yrs schooling              | 2.3          | 4.7          | 2.8          | 4.4          | 2.0            | 1.7          | 1.2          | 1.4          | 1.9          |
| Per capita income (NR)          | 7,673        | 9,921        | 7,744        | 11,953       | 6,607          | 6,911        | 4,940        | 6,336        | 7,312        |
| Per capita PPP (US\$)           | 1,186        | 1,533        | 1,197        | 1,848        | 1,021          | 1,068        | 764          | 979          | 1,130        |
| 1. Life expectancy index        | 0.500        | 0.597        | 0.522        | 0.620        | 0.467          | 0.557        | 0.422        | 0.395        | 0.490        |
| 2. Educational attainment index | 0.295        | 0.490        | 0.342        | 0.462        | 0.280          | 0.221        | 0.186        | 0.178        | 0.226        |
| 3. Income index                 | 0.179        | 0.237        | 0.181        | 0.289        | 0.152          | 0.160        | 0.110        | 0.145        | 0.170        |
| <b>Human Dev. Index</b>         | <b>0.325</b> | <b>0.441</b> | <b>0.348</b> | <b>0.457</b> | <b>0.299</b>   | <b>0.313</b> | <b>0.239</b> | <b>0.239</b> | <b>0.295</b> |
| Ratio of national HDI           | 100          | 135.9        | 107.3        | 140.7        | 92.2           | 96.3         | 73.6         | 73.7         | 90.9         |

There has been a lot of talk about poverty reduction strategies. An analysis shows that the development implications of discriminatory systems are:

- higher poverty incidences among indigenous peoples
- 10% of the population controlled 43% of the resources in 1991 and by 2001 it had increased to 53%, which accounts for loss of resources on the part of indigenous people and minorities
- loss of citizenship, property, trafficking, child labor, alienation from natural resources, denial of access to education

With regard to indigenous women in discriminatory systems we find:

- Hindu cultural dominance leads to religious assimilation, imitation of Hindu culture at the cost of one's own culture
- Deprivation of income generating alcohol production, while state itself opens factories
- Media presents indigenous women as amenable to sexual exploitation
- Indigenous women are in non-decision making positions
- Deprivation of education and further marginalisation from executive system

We also find that after so many years of discrimination there is a denial of access to education. The level of education among indigenous people is very limited compared to the higher ranking castes. For example: among those with a Bachelor degree or higher, more than 86% belong to the higher castes. As people without an education do not get access to the civil service or any of the levels of the decision-making body, the concentration of power lies with the higher educated caste groups.

**Table 3: Caste/Ethnicity Index of Participation in Governance**

| High Level Officials in:             | Bahun/<br>Chhetri | Hill<br>Janajatis | Madhise       | Hill Dalit   | Newar        | Others     | Total       |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Judiciary                            | 190               | 3                 | 9             | 0            | 33           | 0          | 235         |
| Constitutional bodies & commissions  | 181               | 4                 | 18            | 0            | 32           | 0          | 235         |
| Council of ministries                | 14                | 2                 | 3             | 0            | 6            | 0          | 25          |
| Public administration                | 20                | 4                 | 5             | 0            | 3            | 0          | 32          |
| Legislature                          | 159               | 36                | 46            | 4            | 20           | 0          | 265         |
| Political party leaders              | 97                | 25                | 26            | 0            | 18           | 0          | 166         |
| Local government                     | 106               | 23                | 31            | 0            | 30           | 0          | 190         |
| Industry % trade                     | 7                 | 0                 | 15            | 0            | 20           | 0          | 42          |
| Education sector                     | 75                | 2                 | 7             | 1            | 11           | 1          | 97          |
| Cultural organizations               | 85                | 6                 | 0             | 0            | 22           | 0          | 113         |
| Science & Technology                 | 36                | 2                 | 6             | 0            | 18           | 0          | 62          |
| Civil society                        | 41                | 1                 | 4             | 0            | 18           | 0          | 64          |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>1011</b>       | <b>108</b>        | <b>170</b>    | <b>5</b>     | <b>231</b>   | <b>1</b>   | <b>1526</b> |
| <b>Percent</b>                       | <b>66.36</b>      | <b>7.104</b>      | <b>11.124</b> | <b>0.261</b> | <b>15.18</b> | <b>0</b>   | <b>100</b>  |
| <b>% Nepal's population</b>          | <b>31.6</b>       | <b>22.2</b>       | <b>30.9</b>   | <b>8.7</b>   | <b>5.6</b>   | <b>0.1</b> | <b>99.1</b> |
| <b>Proportional difference index</b> | <b>2.1</b>        | <b>0.32</b>       | <b>0.36</b>   | <b>0.03</b>  | <b>2.71</b>  | <b>0</b>   | <b>5.52</b> |

The discontent comes from all of these social indicators discussed in this table. The movement for rights has erupted into this conflict, which started in 1996, after the new constitution was formed. The communist groups hold that the constitution is not fair, and needs to be revisited. It was written without consent from the communities. They say that their claim to have rights under the constitution was denied. In 1996 it was hushed up that there existed a Maoist movement, but if you pick up any newspaper today you will find 90 % of the news is about the Maoist movement.

The Maoists hold cultural mobilization events which are held in different areas and many of the people you see participating in these events are women. We find that 33 % of the Maoist movement participants are women who are discontent, who have been denied of their rights. They are in the militia, the cadre and in the Maoist political party.

The Maoists are claiming that Nepal should have ethnic autonomous regions based on ethnic predominance. They are claiming this for nine regions. There is a lot of discussion of a multi-cultural democracy going on in Nepal. Should it be based on language or regional or ethnic predominance in the population?

We witnessed a tremendous amount of suffering in the areas where the Maoist movement has taken hold. When the army began to mobilize the violence really started. The Maoists claimed that this is a people's war and "you are the people and therefore you have to be a part of this war". They say that suffering is necessary to bring about social transformation and reduction in long standing social inequality between men and women, and between different castes, classes and ethnic groups. But what did we observe? What are the positive and negative social changes?

Since the emergence of the conflict and violence in 1996, the state has been responsible for more deaths than the Maoists. Between the period of February 13, 1996 and February 16, 2003, 73% of the deaths were attributed to the state, while 27 % were attributed to the Maoists.

There is an ethnic dimension in this conflict in that the state army is killing more people of minority and indigenous backgrounds. Because the movement started in the Magar area, people who are from the Magar area have experienced high death rates. The security forces tend to treat Janajati and Dalits as potential rebels as they are not found in the mainstream state apparatus.

We find that the local people and particularly women are victimized by both sides of the conflict. In the villages where the conflict is occurring, frequent security search and military operations fill people with extreme fear of:

- arbitrary killing and arrest
- torture
- rape
- beating and verbal abuses
- destruction of food, animals and houses

There is an embargo from both sides of the conflict. In the conflict areas you find the people have lost access to essential items such as food, matches, kerosene. The state has an embargo on these goods to those regions so that they are denied to the Maoists. The people are also victimized by the state embargo and by the Maoists refusal to allow the State health workers into the autonomous areas claimed by the Maoists.

Security forces tend to treat Janajati and Dalits as potential rebels as they are not found in mainstream state apparatus.

Some of the experiences the people face from the Maoists side of the conflict include:

- though reduced, Maoists continue to take “donation” and seasonal taxes in cash and kind from villagers
- women are asked to provide food to Maoist cadres as “contribution to revolution”
- people are killed as “people’s enemy” or “suspected informants”
- villagers suffer from forced participation in Maoist mass meetings
- young people are recruited for the people’s war

The women and villagers are particularly victimized in the conflict. They are left behind and if the women cook food one day for Maoists - and they do not really have a choice - then the next day the security forces come and break the women’s eyes. There are tons of stories of torture; in every landscape there is a story of violence.

The movement started for the rights of language and culture, but as a result of the movement it has denied government access to operate in the ‘hotbed’ areas. The Maoists have said that people should only use their own language, which leaves the district education superintendent helpless to provide any education in those areas. The women have no access to the state health system as NGO’s and state health workers are denied access to the Maoist controlled areas. The youth have been pulled into the Maoist movement into the cadres, so often it is the old women and the children who are left behind and they are quite vulnerable. The women have also joined the movement, yet some are left behind with the burden of the work that used to be that of the men.

But underneath this violence, the old issues that women used to suffer, like domestic violence, polygamy and discrimination, often associated with drinking and gambling, have decreased dramatically in the villages. Women joining in the Maoists movement have brought a major break in social consciousness. Old stigmas and taboos, like that women were not supposed to plow, have been challenged by the movement. Equal wage rates for men and women have been promoted across the Maoist controlled districts and are enforced. However, due to the men leaving the villages, old people and women’s work burden has increased as they have had to take on the burden of trading as well as working the family farm.

There was a whole feudalistic system called “*kamalya*” of bonded labor for a group of people who own the land which has now been banned by the Maoists. Because of the movement, the land owners have left the areas and left the land for the people. Merely by the land owners leaving, the peoples’ work burden has not decreased. They still have to

work the land and then carry the food back to the area where they live, in reality their work has increased yet the economic level has gone down, so many of the children are forced to go into the cities to be child laborers.

In conclusion, I would like to demonstrate that there is a lot of discourse from various minorities and from women about what the constitution should look like and how the electoral system should be run in the interest of the people. Currently it is a Constitutional Monarchy, but there are various claims and justifications for a new constitution and electoral system.

**Table 4. Positions of minorities regarding various elements in the Constitution**

| Elements of constitution      | Present constitution         | Women's Commission                              | Federation of Indigenous Nationalities  | Dalits                                       | Madheshi's                                   |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| <b>King</b>                   | Constitutional Monarchy      | Constitutional Monarchy                         | Constitutional Monarchy   | Constitutional Monarchy and Republican       | Constitutional assembly to decide            |
| <b>State(unitary/federal)</b> | Unitary                      | Unitary   | Federal System  | Federal System                               | Federal system                               |
| <b>Electoral System</b>       | Majoritarian                 | Proportional representation                     | Proportional to Population in Federal System                                  | Proportional to Population in Federal System | Proportional to Population in Federal System |
| <b>Religion</b>               | Hindu State                  | Hindu State                                     | Secular State   | Secular State                                | all religion to be equally treated           |
| <b>Language</b>               | Nepali as Official Language  | Nepali as Official Language                     | Multi-Language Policy   | Multi-Language Policy                        | Multi-Language Policy                        |
| <b>Reservation</b>            | 5% in Parliament + Candidate | 33% in all elected bodies                       | Reservation for marginalized groups   | Reservation / proportional to Pop.           | Reservation/ proportional to Pop             |
| <b>Citizenship</b>            |                              | From mothers side also                          | from women's nationality also   | Citizenship without land ownership           | Citizenship without land ownership           |
| <b>Equality</b>               |                              | Eliminate all gender discriminatory provisions, | Constitution should mention equal rights to all caste, religions and culture. | Equality to all, abide by ICERD              | Equality and recognize Madrasa               |

## *Forum Update*

**Dikka Storm, University of Tromsø**

***Women and Traditional Knowledge, Network and Recruitment.***

*Gendered Knowledge under Pressure: Challenges to Sámi/Indigenous Women as Carriers of Traditional Knowledge*

It is a privilege to be here today. I will present some information about some work I am doing along with some others who were unable to be here today. One person has come from Finland especially for this event and to participate in the project, and as Gudrun said, to establish arenas where women can meet. Our project is about women and traditional knowledge and we want an arena to meet and we want the question of recruitment to be discussed.

Gendered knowledge and women's role as carriers of traditional knowledge is under pressure and faced with challenges amongst Sámi women as well as amongst other indigenous women. We have a focus, which is enormous, it has to do with gender and how women transmit traditional knowledge about reindeer herding, nomadic and pastoral culture here in Norway, the Nordic countries, in the Himalayas, India, Nepal and China.

Our backstage has been in the Sámi area which is under pressure due to the changes in administration, laws and bureaucracy, and how the pastures are connected to questions of land and water rights. As you can see there are lots of questions and we do not see that women are included in these discussions.

We want to focus on how the following topics relate and how they relate to gender:

- Sámi traditional knowledge
- The rights of traditional knowledge
- Land
- Old reindeer society

These topics are seldom presented and contextualized in discussions in the majority society's bureaucracies. In the organizations discussions about these issues we see that there is a lack of understanding of women's situation and also of women researchers' knowledge about these plans and regulations which are going on today.

So our questions are as follows:

1. How are women, gender, and gender construction discussed, interpreted, and handled in view of the changes in the modern use of pastoral areas ?
2. What emphasis is given to language, culture, and tradition ?

We want to focus on these questions and how gender - masculinities and feminities - are interpreted and discussed in view of changes in reindeer herding society in modernity. These questions are very important to look at in discussions of equality.

**Dieudonné Kapupu Diwa Mutimanwa, LINAPYCO (Ligue Nationale des Associations Autochtones Pygmées du Congo)**  
***Mobilizing Pygme Grassroots Communities***

Hello Everybody,

Thank you to the organizers of this event and for inviting me to speak about the situation of the Batwa/Bambutu people in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Batwa/Bambutu are the first inhabitants of Central Africa. They live in the forests of the Congo basin - the second largest lung of the world - second to the Amazon only.

It has been six years that our country has been at war, and the situation is very bad for the indigenous Batwa/Bambutu population in Congo, particularly in the Big Lakes area. There are Batwa/Bambutu people in nine countries in central Africa; the negative name is "Pygmies". I will speak about our experiences and I will present the situation regarding gender.

The women are traditionally the ones who keep the culture of the Batwa/Bambutu people in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It has been that the women constructed the huts and the men were hunting. We traditionally have been living from hunting, fishing and gathering. Women were playing a very important role. In Europe they talk about women's emancipation, but for us indigenous peoples, Batwa/Bambutu, the emancipation was already there. A long time ago, even with all the wars, while the men were hunting, the women were fishing and gathering mushrooms, herbs, roots, and insects. The women were also looking after the children and the family and looking after that certain traditions were kept.

Indigenous women's situation since the war started is such that 1 782 indigenous women have been raped; many have been killed or handicapped. One particular woman was raped, had her arm cut off, she's been strangled; she lost parts of her body. There are pictures I can show of how the women have been raped by the military and others. Everybody is doing bad things to the Pygmy women.

In the old days, [it was believed] that Pygmy women were like medication. If a man was sick, he could have sex with a Pygmy woman and he would be healed. The women were made into an object, abused, not treated like human beings. In our culture women had a central place, but now they are being abused as objects of art and as tourist objects. The traditional culture that the women were keeping has been hidden and changed by religion. Missionaries taught them that everything they were doing with medicinal plants was "devilish". Our culture is on the verge of extinction, because our religion has been colonized, particularly by the Christians, who have tried to take away the culture from the indigenous peoples.

Even while all this happened in the east of the Republic, in the Kyvo, where we have our movement, the women have been organizing themselves on the local level into groups. There are territorial committees that the women are leading and coordinating.

One out of a hundred women knows how to read and write, but even if they are without alphabet, we try to get them involved and active in the associations and also to start agriculture. Because we, the indigenous peoples of the Democratic Republic of Congo, have been chased away from our homes in the forests, they have become National Parks, like where you have the gorillas, the second largest park of the world.

With all this [war and forced removal from land] the indigenous people suffer. There is a high birth rate and a high death rate. There is no access to health services during pregnancy so many women die in childbirth and pregnancy. Everybody has to pay for their own healthcare costs but the Batwa/Bambutu have very little money; they cannot pay for the health services.

Many children die between the ages of zero and six years old. For instance, I did research and found that in one family the woman gave birth to twelve children and there are only two children alive today. Either they got sick or they were stillborn. The number of Pygmies is not growing, and also because of the war they have been decimated. They cannot stay in the villages; they have become refugees because of the war.

That is the very short version of the situation of the Batwa/Bambutu during the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Now I am going to talk about our organization, *LINAPYCO (Ligue Nationale des Associations Autochtones Pygmées du Congo)*

LINAPYCO is the first association created and developed by and for the Pygmies themselves. We have 6 000 members and work in different fields: human rights, community development and the environment. We can not talk about indigenous people without talking about ecological issues. So how do we work at the grass-roots level with people who have no degrees, are totally marginalized and have no money? We are socially, politically, religiously and economically marginalized. We are totally excluded, that was our experience.

We created our organization. Our modest speaker was the first one to study at the university, among 6 000 Pygmies who live in Congo, he was the first one and he found sixteen Pygmies among the 60 000 000 people in the DNC who are studying at the university. We have created our organization to improve the living situation of the Pygmies. We have a committee, coordinating committee and local committees. The key of the organization is based at the grass-roots level. We are an experiment for the whole of Africa; we involve all the local committees and the locals choose the animators and elect supervisors in every territory. In every territory they have a large committee that represents all the local committees. The women are involved in the local committees. We have to look after ourselves; we cannot work without the women. With their life experience they have lots of wisdom. The men are really brutal, but when we work with



women it is more peaceful, there is more water in the wine. If it is only men we fight and we do the revolution, but the women are calming our meanness.

What are the achievements? The women have helped us a lot in this process. We have identified progressive families in the work of development, but we can not work with everybody. In the last hundred years there have been priests and missionaries that have worked with the Pygmies but they never manage to organize people and improve the situation. The situation is still really bad, so we work with the progressive families and in every village there are women's groups. They have opened offices in villages to work with indigenous peoples by having training sessions, radio sessions, a newsletter and legal assistance.

Our lands have been taken away by the State and other people. There are a lot of difficulties we can discuss later. There was very little communication between the Pygmies with no roads and no money. It is still difficult to publish things and we do not have the experience to exchange things with other indigenous communities like in Nepal or with Sámi or Bushmen. We also have this situation in the Great Lakes region with ten years of war; even the indigenous people are killing each other.

That was a short description. To talk about the life of a people usually needs a week.

Thank you very much.

### **Gunhild B. Sara Buljo, Sámi Council**

#### ***Indigenous People to Indigenous People Cooperation: A Sámi Perspective***

First I would like to thank the organizers for asking us to share some information with you about the project of the Sámi Council on developing competence and strengthening indigenous organizations in Africa "indigenous people to indigenous people". Our aid projects in Tanzania and Botswana are supported financially by NORAD.

#### **Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Africa (OIPA)**

In Tanzania, we are cooperating with the organization OIPA, which is an umbrella organization for indigenous groups in eastern and southern Africa. OIPA is actively engaged in promoting land and human rights for many indigenous groups.

Our cooperation began in 1999 when a human rights course for indigenous groups of Africa was organized by PINGOS Forum (a pastoralist organization in Arusha supported by Sweden) and the Swedish section of the Sámi Council; the course was partially funded by the EU.

The four week long course led to the formation of a new forum – OIPA - which is now active in many parts of Africa. This year the Sámi Council has again received support from NORAD for human rights courses in both Asia and Africa.

I became involved with this work in the summer of 2002; we were faced with challenging tasks. Prior to undertaking this project, the Sámi Council had received financial support to do a feasibility study in Botswana and Tanzania. In August 2002 we set out on our trip to conduct the feasibility study in Arusha, Tanzania. The goal of our trip was to initiate formal cooperation with the Maasai and we were able to start organizing our cooperative project. Just a few months after the project was underway. OIPA's representative, Mr. Edward Porokwa, together with Mr. Mathambo Ngakaeaja, representing FPK, Botswana, came to do a feasibility study in Kautokeino and the Sámi Council in Finland.

When our African cooperating partners came to visit the Sámi, we submitted a joint application for Peace Corps Cooperation as Peace Corps participants. We were turned down but chose to continue our efforts to strengthen the bonds of friendship between the Sámi and the indigenous peoples of Africa.

We resubmitted our application, and in 2004 we received the good news that we will have funding for two participants in the Peace Corps. The Sámi Council signed an agreement of cooperation with the Peace Corps and at the same time an agreement of partnership with OIPA. Today, a young Maasai, Mr. Navaya Ndaskoi, is working at the Resource Centre for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Kautokeino. As part of our cooperation we sent a young Sámi woman, Anette Smuk, to OIPA in Arusha. She will work in the OIPA administration, and in addition, she will map and collect documentation with a view to realizing the OIPA goal of establishing a resource centre for indigenous peoples in Africa that parallels the centre that has been established in Kautokeino.

During this period, annual meetings have been held every year with OIPA and FPK. A major course was given in conjunction with the World Park Congress in 2003 in South Africa, which enabled OIPA to send a big delegation to Durban. It is in keeping with our goals that OIPA be able to participate in national and international conferences including active participation in the UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues and other UN forums. Our goal is to be part of the effort to build a network of national and international organizations for indigenous peoples and other NGO's working for indigenous peoples all over the world.

The reputation of the Sámi Council has spread quickly; this year we received an application from KIDUPO, (Integrated Development Peoples Organization, Loliondo, northern Tanzania) they want us to support the following projects:

1. HIV/AIDS prevention projects, especially targeted towards women and youth
2. Make schooling available for twenty young Maasai people - ten boys and ten girls. (Millennium goal no. 6)

The Sámi Council project to develop competence in Africa is somewhat special. Our current agreement with NORAD prevents us from applying for funds to pay tuition, we are instead committed to seeking private sources to fund education.

*The cost per pupil* is approximately 3000 NOK a year. We are still working on recruitment. As of now, we are only able to pay tuition for ten children; and if I know the Sámi elite as well as I think I do, there will perhaps be support for the remaining ten young people!

Our goal is to raise the means for twenty young people to attend four years of secondary education. There are no state run schools in Loliondo in northern Tanzania. The Maasai in the area run private schools and every year they collect money to build schools and gain admission for children and young people. They realize the importance of this as an element in building a stronger infrastructure in their local communities. (Millennium goal no. 2, 3)

### **The First People of the Kalahari, FPK**

And now I will say a few words about the situation in Botswana and for the First People of Kalahari. The contact between the Sámi Council and the FPK was first made in 2000. The representatives of the Sámi Council who attended a conference in Botswana became familiar with the situation of the San people and a network was being built from then on.

The cooperation between the FPK and the Sámi Council had actually been proposed for the Sámi Council by NORAD. In the spring of 2002, the IWGIA (International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs) had withdrawn from cooperation with the FPK. The story of the FPK is a long one and I am not going into it here and now.

The last three years we have experienced both ups and downs because the projects in Africa – and especially in Botswana - are time-consuming, complicated and difficult, because of the economic situation of indigenous peoples in particular. In many countries indigenous peoples are the poorest of the poor, living under extremely difficult conditions.

Today FPK has a large office in Gantsi, partially equipped with communication facilities and furniture. Much can still be done to improve the situation. A temporary coordinator has been hired but the hope is to be able to hire a qualified coordinator in a full-time position.

FPK's first coordinator, Mr. Mathambo, has also been on a feasibility study with the Sámi - both in Finland and in Norway. The Sámi Council submitted an application for a Peace Corps agreement for its cooperation with FPK at the same time that we applied for OIPA. We were turned down on the grounds that FPK had to be strengthened with regard to both personnel and administration. Another attempt was made in 2004, with the same negative response. We are duly cognizant of this.

It is important that the political leadership of the organizations also be familiar with the cooperative organizations. In this connection, OIPA had invited the Sámi Council President Geir Tommy Pedersen and the president of the Board of FPK, Mr. Dauqoo Xukuri to a council meeting in Arusha in April of this year. It was quite an occasion that both could participate. One of the goals in the development of competence and strengthening indigenous organizations in Africa is the building of networks and participation at national and international conferences (such as these in Tromsø). We feel that the cooperation has been strengthened after this meeting.

In conclusion, I would like to express a wish about how indigenous peoples' projects can come to fruition and succeed:

- to improve *the overall conditions* for the work of indigenous people
- to foster greater understanding both nationally and internationally
- to make room for greater opportunities to develop projects on our own premises

The greatest challenge is, however, to make those in possession of financial resources

- understand why indigenous people are committed to this kind of cooperation
- understand that while a cooperation is time consuming and difficult, those appropriating funds do not always know that this cooperation is time consuming and difficult

My wish is for better over-all conditions for indigenous peoples' projects and I am therefore happy to see so many people here today who can tell us about their own situation.

Thank you.

**Navaya J. Ndaskoi, Organization for Indigenous People of Africa (OIPA)**

***Facing the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Indigenous Peoples Challenges***

On behalf of Organisation for Indigenous People of Africa (OIPA), I wish to express the gratitude we feel to the Sámi Council and to all those whose support and help has culminated in my presence here today as a representative of indigenous peoples of Africa.

The environment for human rights in Africa is severely polluted by the ramifications of colonialism and neo-colonial social and economic relationships in which we are compelled to pursue our development and sovereignty in a global system replete with injustices and exploitation. Indigenous peoples in Africa lost their massive territories for:

- Wildlife conservation
- Large and small scale farming
- 'Development'
- 'National interest'
- Mining and lumbering.

This is, unfortunately, still the case to this day. The Maasai, the Ogiek, the Hadzabi, the Samburu and others are facing this threat in East Africa. The 'Bushmen' in southern Africa face the same bitterness.

However we are optimistic. The United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples gave us the right to join in search for understanding and harmony between the peoples of the world. In trying to meet this responsibility the struggle of the Organisation for Indigenous Peoples of Africa will be based on underlying faith in humanity and on four principles of action which follow from it. With your indulgence, I would like to state those principles.

First and foremost, the basis of our actions, internal and external, will be an attempt, an honest attempt to advocate for the dignity of man. We believe that indigenous peoples have a right of self-determination.

Secondly, we are conscious that there is unfair distribution of world resources. More importantly, there is a very unfair exploitation of resources belonging to indigenous peoples. Take Tanzania for example.

The beneficiaries of wildlife in Tanzania are largely foreigners. For example, foreign investors own about 80% of the entire tourist hotels and lodges. They own nearly 90% of the air travel and about 90% of tourist hunting business and transport. And they own about 60% of all tour operator firms (*Business Times* December 28, 2001/January 4, 2002). Remember that tourism is based on wildlife conservation. And the main wildlife conservation - tourist magnet - areas in Tanzania are in what is, or was, indigenous peoples' land.

Indigenous people lack even the basic infrastructure. No schools. No hospitals. No roads. They lack almost everything 'good for life' that you mention. OIPA is struggling to see that this unfair state of affairs be abandoned.

The third basic principle which I want to take this opportunity to state is again a simple one. It is our basic and continued opposition to eviction of indigenous peoples from their territories anywhere on our continent or in any other part of the world, under any cover. Evictions have caused *serious social disintegration*.

The fourth principle of our action will be to appeal for all those who believe in social justice, wherever they are, to help us in our struggle. The challenge we are facing is overwhelming. We are determined to co-operate with fellow human beings in an endeavour to achieve this goal, social justice. First, I convey from Africa the message of unity and resolute determination to consolidate the strive for our common course. Some organisations and individuals have already spoken in favour of our struggle. We are merely adding our voice to theirs, and our efforts to theirs. It is exceedingly unlikely that we will win in isolation.

I thank you for affording me the opportunity to state the principles by which OIPA intends to be judge in the future and I thank you for the kindness and the courtesy with which you have listened to me.

**Edward Porokwa, Organisation for Indigenous People of Africa (OPIA)**  
***Indigenous People to Indigenous People Cooperation: The Case of Tanzania***

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to see that we are discussing a topic that is actually what brought all of us here together; the cooperation of indigenous people to indigenous people. When we talk of cooperation of indigenous people, we are talking about unity of different peoples, of different diversities, aiming at the same thing, which is self-determination and recognition.

When we talk about Africa and indigenous people we are actually talking about different concepts that are very important to the livelihood of the people. These concepts include: resource depletion, discrimination, cultural attachments, marginalization, distinctiveness of individual groups, low education and [access] to social services, and a very high vulnerability. This is the situation that most of the members of our organization face specifically and commonly in Africa.

On the other side, these people also share strategies that they have for gaining recognition and for other purposes. On the same side, when we talk about oppression of the indigenous people we are talking about the governments which take away their rights in accordance with their inherent given rights. In policy, specifically African governments' policy, we should recognize that they do not even recognize the existence of indigenous people. In the north, the governments are better, in that they recognize that there are indigenous peoples. But to the government in most places in Africa they do not recognize that there are indigenous people, except very few, like the South African government.

Indigenous people, specifically in Africa, are associated with a lot of things including "backwardness". Even the government's policy will talk about backwardness of the indigenous people, that their way of life and culture is backward. Indigenous people in Africa are associated with primitiveness, arrogance and lack of cooperation to the mainstream, land distribution, refusal to go to school or to use social services, destruction of the environment and natural resources, lack of flexibility and for sticking to one mode of production.

Cooperation between indigenous people is a concept that becomes necessary to get to be heard. If you want to be heard alone, I think you need to use a lot of energy to be loud. Cooperation between indigenous peoples allows them the experience to come with

common grounds and try to express their own feelings. That is how different organizations and different indigenous peoples fight for their own cause.

OIPA is an organization that started for those who were in a similar situation. There had always been a need to come together. It happened in 1999 at an international workshop for human rights and political standards, funded by the EU. They decided to form an organization that would give them an opportunity to air their views. The main objectives of the organization were very clear: to bring together all of the indigenous people of Africa to give their voice and fight for their rights.

The organization has managed to draw in members from different parts of Africa: eastern Africa, a little bit in western Africa and in southern Africa. Currently the number of member organizations is sixteen. The organization has encountered a lot of problems including a lot of failure to cooperate with the governments in different countries, and trying to advocate for the rights of indigenous people because of lack of resources has been very difficult work.

You should also be aware that cooperation with indigenous peoples' groups worldwide has always been - associated with what I have mentioned before - that indigenous people cannot even manage their own projects. Donor committees, governments and big corporations have the idea that indigenous people can not manage their own projects.

In recent years the indigenous people of Africa have begun organizations and have begun to cooperate with other indigenous organizations, specifically the Sámi Council. One of the projects is called "*Indigenous People to Indigenous People Cooperation*" and one of the projects is aiming to show that indigenous people in the North can manage their affairs without any other cooperation. One of them was the running of the exchange program for volunteers and currently there is one volunteer from OIPA in Kautokeino, and one from the Sámi council working in Tanzania. The program is expected to run in the next few years and is trying to show that cooperation can work, not only between the indigenous people on the local level, but even internationally, between north and south.

Briefly, that is what I can say about what we are trying to do .  
Thank you.

**Father Gariel Olle Killel, KIDUPO, Tanzania**

### ***Improving the Lives of the Maasai***

I'm very pleased to be here today to say something about improving the lives of the Maasai people in Tanzania. Tanzania is home to 13 000 000 people and 200 000 of them are Maasai who live mostly in northern Tanzania, in three districts of the Arusha region, and some in Kenya. They are the indigenous pastoralist who keep cows, goats, sheep and

donkeys and of course dogs. For centuries they have been surviving through the domestic occupation of their animals.

I can explain about this organization by describing its context. The name of this organization is KIDUPO, in Maasai it means: we shall succeed using our own strengths; we shall recover using our own strengths.

KIDUPO is a Maasai NGO and is a typical community based organization in the rural area. It has 10,000 members and covers two wards of the Ngorogoro district. It was formed by the people in order to bring development and improvement to their lives. It is registered with the central government of Tanzania in Dar es Salaam.

The Maasai did fund raising where they sold their sheep, their cattle and their goats. The poorer women sold their firewood and they went into the bush and gathered firewood and sold it to the urban people and gave the money to the KIDUPO organization. That's how they had funds to register their NGO with the Minister of Home Affairs in Dar es Salaam.

There is a constitution and regulations that guide this instrument. This NGO is well organized and structured according to the Maasai way of life because KIDUPO is run by the Maasai. Members of the Sámi Council came to the Maasai areas in Ngorogoro and saw that this was a community organization, a people's organization organized by and for the people to change their way of life. This organization has a good structure because it has a general assembly which includes all the elders of the Maasai people, both the men and the women, a central committee, a board of trustees, board of directors, a central committee, and a director who is in Ngorogoro,

The Maasai themselves did fundraising last year and they contributed the money to build the KIDUPO community center, with an office where all the committee members can come together. They built several kindergartens and several simple schools with the rest of the money and to create awareness for Maasai to see the value of formal education. Because the Maasai are marginalized people, a forgotten people in rural Africa, Tanzania, it's important that they came together to formulate their own instrument as a way to improve their lives. Yes, the church can help them, the government can help them, but for them to have their own NGO, their own instrument is very important. The rest of the projects that KIDUPO has done work on include: working on a water hole for the cattle (with support from an American organization) modernizing the community, mobilizing the women and the elders through workshops and seminars, improved their pastoral way of life by having water and medicines for the cattle.

Since the establishment of the KIDUPO NGO, as a Maasai priest from that area, I have seen that the Maasai way of life is changing and improving. This community based NGO can improve the living [conditions] of indigenous people in their own territories.

Thanks again for the opportunity to be here in Norway and Tromsø through OIPA and the Sámi Council and for this opportunity for the Maasai pastoralists to join the world in this way.



**Mathambo Ngakaeaja, Working Group for Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA)**

***The Court Case about the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) in Botswana***

Fellow Indigenous Brothers and Sisters and the house at large, I am bringing you warm greetings from the Bushmen of the Kalahari. I would like to thank the organizers for giving us the opportunity to talk to you.

I represent a group of people who are commonly referred to as the Bushmen or the San or Basarwa. They are a hunter gatherer type of society that speaks so-called click languages; this is how the anthropologists have decided to identify us. They typically refer to us as short people with big buttocks and light complexion, but although I may have a big body and I am not very light, I ascribe myself to be a Bushman in line with the UN principles.

I would like to share with you the situation involving the Bushmen of southern Africa. They are found throughout the countries of Namibia, Botswana, South Africa, Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and the learned people tell us that we are about 100 000 in all, with most living in Botswana. Where found, Bushmen have a very disadvantaged way of life characterized by lack of education and they are not participating in the mainstream, the government, structures, the job market and various public sectors. They have a lower education due to various factors. The biggest problem is the continued loss of traditional lands as we are a hunter gather society, and we are highly dependent upon the land that is our life. The men hunt and the women gather, so if you alienate us from the land, you have basically killed us.

I can give examples throughout the region of such alienation or dispossession of land, including, the Kalahari Trans Frontier Park in South Africa, Etosha National Park in Namibia, the Central Kalahari Game Reserve in Botswana, Hwange Park in Zimbabwe, and many areas that have been declared protected areas in areas that have traditionally been Bushmen territory. As a result our access to subsistence is very low and our viability is threatened. Women, being the ones who look after the family most of the time, are disadvantaged because if you can not gather then your food base is diminished and your livelihood is at risk and so are that of the children and those generations who come after. People drop out of schools, the language is disappearing, the culture is disappearing, We have all these challenges to deal with.

The lady from South Africa [Yvette Abrahams] was talking about issues of assimilation which is quite a challenge for us in Botswana because the government policy is to assimilate us into the mainstream society. They feel they have this obligation to develop people on the governments terms. It simply means that they are making them lose their cultures and languages and become what they call 'one nation'. A current example is the Central Kalahari Game Reserve where people are being evicted because the government thinks this will develop the people: "we think that place is wrong for you to live in so

you must leave and come and live here”. There are also issues of health, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis is very high amongst our people. The policy environment is also not inclusive of us in society in general, and we are found in the lowest parts of the hierarchy of the country.

But since I have been asked to talk about the Central Kalahari Game Reserve then I will limit myself to that. I will correctly say it is the third largest game reserve in the world, and it was declared during British Colonial Protection in 1961 as a place for the Bushmen. During colonial times it was assumed that the first peoples would conserve nature and a second reason was to preserve land to be used by the hunter gatherer communities that were residing in the game reserve area.

The present government when it stepped into the shoes of their colonial masters took up a policy of trying to remove the Bushmen because they were perceived as a threat to conservation of natural resources - that nature which they had been the guardians and custodians of. In 1986 the government embarked on a “fact-finding mission” to find out the effects on the environment by the Bushmen in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve..

Basically after the fact finding mission, the government made the decision to relocate 4 000 people from the game reserve, and the Bushmen, with the help of various Europeans, have been in resistance to this move by the government to remove them from their land. They have started a campaign that you have learned about from my friend, which is called the First People of the Kalahari (FPK). They have managed to advance the issues of the Bushmen and to resist the relocation. This went on and on until in 1997 the government decided to evict up to 4 000 Bushmen against their wishes.

I am aware that the international community has been told that the Bushmen have been consulted thoroughly and that they had considered moving, and I am here to tell you that that is not the case. Although I will agree that some of them have consented to move, a large majority of them did not and they were moved against their wishes because a lot of trickery was used in the consultation. Also a lot of threats were used in the consultation.

The latest event saw the Bushman taking the government to court in a case that was raised in July 2002, which was dismissed due to technical reasons. Our lawyers did not pack their briefcases properly and the case was thrown out of court. We appealed to the Court of Appeal who ordered the High Court to listen to the case with its merits so that the Bushmen can come to the courts and say their story. The case started in July 2004 and is at the moment in recess, it was postponed due to unavailability of funds to continue. I think one of my purposes is to come and inform the world and to drum up support, both morally and financially, so that the court case can resume in November 3. Then we will be calling more Bushmen as witnesses to tell their story. The government will later deploy its ex and current officials to try to protect its stands.

Thank you for your attention.

**Dauqoo Xukuri, First People of the Kalahari (FPK), Botswana**  
***Indigenous People to Indigenous People Cooperation: The Case of Botswana***

Thank you very much to the conference organizers, I am very grateful as a San person to have been invited here. I would like to speak with you about the origins of our organization. My name is Dauqoo Xukuri and I come from an organization called FPK (First People of the Kalahari).

Our organization was started in 1993, and I would like to emphasize that it was initiated by the San people themselves; it was not an imposition from outside. There are a number of issues which motivated the initiation of our organization. The first issue was poverty amongst the San people and their marginalization in the Botswana society. There were violations of their human rights, and marginalization of the San in spheres of development. Our traditional system of support or livelihoods included hunting and gathering, so another issue that led to the development of our organization was landlessness - the forced removal from our ancestral lands. Also of great concern was the lack of involvement in decision making. When I talk about marginalisation I am referring to the absence of San people in parliament, in the leadership structures of communities and in employment. In important sectors of the economy we are not visible.

Another problem we face is the lack of basic education because education in Botswana is not culturally appropriate. The educational system is hostile, if you look at the fact that we were the first people and we are not even recognized. We find that our culture is not respected and it has been taken away. I'll give you an example of how our culture is disrespected: our cultural artifacts, our form of music and dance and clothing are all sold and yet we are not respected as a people.

Yesterday and today a lot of people gave presentations where you looked at gender and looked at issues facing indigenous people through a gender lens. In our context, San women face double discrimination because they are not just women, they are also San. If they are given children by people outside of our communities they do not get maintenance. Our women are raped.

I am going to speak very briefly about the objectives of our organization. As many of you know, we are diverse in Botswana and we want to increase knowledge about our oneness and promote unity amongst one another. Another objective is to establish an organization that will represent the interests, rights and land rights throughout Botswana.

As one of the first persons working in this organization I can say that it has been a challenging role, but we have had a number of successes. One of our successes is that our organization is truly indigenous, led by the San themselves. Our leadership is made up of San people who represent the interests of our communities. Another major success is that we have planted a seed in the areas of San settlement, and it is my belief that the seed will germinate into a plant and the plant will bear fruit. As you know we lack representation in the mainstream political system in Botswana, but now the San people know where to

go with issues that they feel need to be challenged. FPK has handled a number of cases where a violation of San rights has taken place and we tried to get legal recourse. Some of the cases we have handled have been where San people had been imprisoned unjustifiably, where they had been beaten, and where they had not been paid for their labor. We San are generally a peaceful people, in the past there were people who would not raise their voices against discrimination, so another success is that through FPK we now have people who have learned to stand up against discrimination and oppression and fight for their rights.

I told you earlier that our people have been hunter-gatherers in the past and the government has restricted us through laws, and because of these restrictions there are people who have been wrongly accused of poaching and imprisoned. But as First Peoples we now can prove that they have been accused and imprisoned wrongly. We have been involved with the case of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve; the San people know that FPK also stand for land rights.

A source of pride is that although we may not be educated and we do not have technical skills, we are proud to say that we run our organization ourselves. We see collaboration as important, but we want to lead ourselves. Our vision for the future is that our organization will get stronger. Even though education is difficult for our children, they drop out or are kicked out, we envision our children getting educated because we see education as a way out of this oppression. It is our hope that our educated children will take over the leadership of the organization.

We have also had success in putting our issue on the international agenda and we have participated in a number of international and regional forums. From time immemorial we have tried to negotiate unsuccessfully with the government and hit a brick wall. We did not go straight to the international community. At the national level we have tried to dialogue and negotiate and have gone through several presidents and various officials and it has been difficult to get a resolution for our issues of concern.

A major success over the years is the building of linkages with other indigenous organizations, and other first peoples like the Sámi Council. We have learned from the Sámi struggle. We say that because indigenous people, especially the Sámi here, they have had similar experience and we believe that through sharing we can reach our goals as well.

We still have challenges today. One of them is that there are several organizations that are fighting for the rights of the San and they are competing with one another. In the end it is the San who suffer. We need to promote solidarity between these organizations. I have mentioned that the San are peaceful and not vocal and tend not to fight which makes it hard for us to promote their rights at the local level. We are something of a political organization, so often people think we are opposed to the government and they get afraid.

Marginalization from the development starts at an early age. Our children are taken from their homes at the age of six and sent to schools where their own culture is not

appreciated and where they can not speak their own language. In our culture we do not beat our children, but in the schools our children are beaten. It is very difficult for us to get an education because of this educational approach.

The issue of finances is another challenge in the development of human resources. We are a human rights organization - we do not build houses or distribute food - and the lack of financial resources is a major constraint. Even when we our major funder, IWGIA, stopped funding us and we were in a crisis, we did not die, we went on the back of donkeys, we went on. Finances are not the only thing to make our organization move forward; we will not give up because our struggle is too important. The successes are the motivation that keeps us going.

Sustainability is another challenge; we do not sell anything as a human rights organization so we are donor dependent. We hope to find some strategy in the future. There is a problem that things that we could be generating income from, other people have gotten there before us. They are non- indigenous people and they are trading and earning income from our culture and our artifacts.

I would like to say in conclusion that we need your support, ideas, and solidarity, and if there is funding available we would gladly accept that. But what we need the most is your solidarity. We got an office that is running even when we thought all was lost. We want to thank the Sámi Council for their support and solidarity and we want to ask for continued support and for their prayers. We want to again thank the Sámi Council for crying with us, because we know that they as an indigenous people know our concerns.

Thank you very much.

## ***Panel Discussion***

**Discussion led by Gunhild Hoogensen, University of Tromsø**

**Panelists: Joyce Green, University of Regina, Canada  
Jorunn Eikjok, FN-sambandet, Norway  
Yvette Abrahams, University of the Western Cape, RSA**

***Gunhild:*** I am Gunhild Hoogensen and I'm a political scientist here at University of Tromsø. I will raise a few questions which are meant not just for the panel participants, but for all of us to think about. We do not have time to discuss this as a group, but the panel will take threads that they wish to raise from these questions to present.

Gender and indigenous perspectives. What is the relationship between gender and indigenous perspectives, both where these perspectives lie in solidarity, but also where there are tensions? And how is gender understood and played out in the various but diverse contexts that we have spoken about so far?

The role of capitalism. This has been lying somewhat under the presentations that we have heard. We have heard a little about the role of globalization and clearly the economic equalities. What is the role of capitalism in the processes of colonization and decolonization?

Solidarity. At some point there was discussion where one could sense indigenous peoples' strong solidarity, but no mention of potential tensions between indigenous communities. We are talking about very diverse groups from around the world. Are there tensions that we need to know about to be able to strengthen solidarity and move forward.

And last, something to think about, what sort of alliances can be build between gender researchers and movements and indigenous researchers and movements? Are these alliances possible and how does one build these alliances?

***Joyce:*** Good morning. I want to begin by locating myself. I'm here at an international conference, but I come from a long line of women who had no voice, who within their own communities had no voice and who were marginalized by the dominant society. So I invoke my mother, grandmother and daughter in hopes that we are finding space to speak our minds as best we can so that other women may know them.

I want to raise three problematics. I have no final answers to these problematics, but my colleagues and I feel that we need to raise these issues and think about them. The first one is misogyny and sexism which exists both within indigenous communities and between indigenous and colonial communities. That has been the case in Canada and it has been the case within my family. That is why all of these women have been silenced. They have been silenced by colonial society which uses racism and sexism instrumentally to silence people. But they have also been silenced within our communities, so that is a problematic

we need to think about. In other words, indigenous societies are not only repositories of wisdom but also repositories of oppression; we are not only one thing.

We need to be critical internally and we need to have a measure of safety for that, otherwise we will not be able to be honest with ourselves.

Secondly, we need to think about the next problem of identity. Identity is an important component for our well-being and for our future and it is a political tool which can also be used as a form of tyranny. Who determines who we are, who says what is authentic, and who says what kinds of practices can be deployed? And in this, I'm always reminded of what one Canadian legal scholar and member of the Chippewa of Nawash First Nation said "we are traditional people, we are modern people, and we are post-modern people". So for this scholar, we must make space for all of these and all of them are authentic.

The third problematic I want to raise which so many of the speakers have intimated at but have not named and that is capitalism and its relationship to colonialism and patriarchy. In my country, colonizing societies and colonizing interests came in search of profits, and that profit was the resources and land that was rested from the people that were there. And that relationship has muted over time but that motive has not, so today when we look for measures of self determination, we find that indigenous people have to define self-determination in terms of and in a context of global capitalism. And that has placed some impossible tensions on our communities.

Let me offer you just two examples briefly: the Lubicon Lake Cree of northern Alberta have had their traditional economy destroyed fairly recently in the 1970s. They had hunting, fishing and trapping economy and then oil was discovered under their traditional territories and I bet you can figure out what happened next. The government of Alberta leased out this land to international oil companies who went exploring for oil and the way you do that is you explode seismic testing every hundred meters or so and that has the effect of totally destroying the hunting and trapping. The Lubicon Lake Cree were not asked permission nor were they asked to be part of the new economy. So now they are a decimated society struggling for a measure of survival within one of the richest countries of the world, Canada.

But contrast that, if you will, with some of the Dene First Nations in the Northwest Territories. They have become participants in an oil and natural gas pipeline going across their traditional territories where their choice has been to buy into the dominant economy. In other words, what it means to be indigenous is becoming very contested and problematic and it places contestation between indigenous communities.

In the Yukon, however, we find that the people in the Northwest Territories are buying into a paradigm which will destroy the caribou herd in which they [the people of the Yukon] rely. The oil and gas pipeline will disrupt the porcupine caribou herds. All these things compel us to be conceptually very clear and very clear strategically on the politics of alliances, and when we choose them, and for what purpose.

**Jorunn:** Gender has been and still remains a very sensitive topic in the Sámi community and in the public and political debate. To a small extent the concepts of femininity and masculinity have been taken into the debate in Sámi society. In trying to understand the diversity of the Sámi society we still have a way to go. There are a lot of generalizations and we do not see differences and similarities related to gender. If we were to use the possibilities that gender perspectives offer, we would discover diversity of identities and different aspects of masculinity and femininity. And I would like to mention that a topic such as self-determination has not really been theorized in a gender perspective.

Globalization is representing a huge challenge for understanding between peoples. But this also happens internally within indigenous peoples and their societies. I can give an instance from Sápmi: symbols are taken in from the outside and intermingled with traditional Sámi symbols and then totally new cultural symbols arise. We see this in contemporary Sámi society, especially within the last ten years. Modernization influences women in Sápmi and in indigenous societies in different ways. Today we see a diversity of different male and female identities. There is very little focus on the understanding of the diversity and these diverse modes of expression. I really wish that the gender perspective had been taken better care of, but as I already said, this taboo is very sensitive.

What is happening at present is that the right to industry is very limited in many parts of the Sámi area. This has to do with the liberal global market economy and state policies. Another phenomenon is that the right to industry is closely linked to male identity. This process took place when Sámi society became more strongly integrated into the majority society. When you travel in Sámi society you see that men become losers, because they lose the rights to natural resources and to industry and that leaves them with nothing. This is symbolic for masculinity and you see this in the media.

A survey was conducted last year by Siv Kvermo, a Sámi psychiatrist, which shows that there is a huge number of drop-outs among Sámi men from secondary school. And 40% of them had a background from primary industries and had envisioned a future in primary industries. At the same time we know that there is a strict limitation on the access to this livelihood. This shows that the right to industry and proximity to the primary industries is very important for the male Sámi identity. When they are losers in the traditional areas, they try to make up for it in new areas.

My question in regard to this is whether what we are seeing in the Sámi Parliament is actually a symptom of the need for men to hold onto nature as a symbol and make it into a bastion for themselves. Whereas women to larger extent are dominating in Sápmi in modernity; 80 % of the students in Sámi institutions are women. There's no doubt that young women have a grasp of modernity in Sámi society. What I am concerned with is that we will get a social, cultural and even economic void in parts of the Sámi society in which men come out as losers within the traditional industries and do not have a status anymore. In turn, the women master modernity and so we get a social and economic void.



We talk about the “traditional mother earth” as if women are the allmighty mothers of culture. What is of concern to me is if women are the ones who master the future of the society does that mean that they get a new role in being the carriers and protectors of the culture?

*Yvette:* This past day and a half has been very exciting for me. I’ve learned so much and I want to thank all of you for being my teachers. I am going to try and manage to identify my anxieties about a number of issues. Once I am able to name them, then I can begin to start thinking, if not about solutions, at least about how I’m going to go about finding solutions.

I am going to focus on the first question that we have and that is the relationship between gender on the one hand and indigenous on the other and I am going to discuss these two ideas and identities at different levels. Firstly, conceptually and secondly also strategically. I am far from action in my thinking so let me start with those two levels. Because one of the things that have plagued me about this conference is that we did not really have a discussion on defining gender. When your conceptual world is not clear then your strategies are not clear either and I am raising this as an issue and as a question.

I am not entirely sure that the various strands of western feminism are the answer. Likewise, I am kind of advertising for what is an indigenous women’s definition of gender, one that encompasses all our differences but at the same time manages to identify our sameness in a positive manner. Of course the minute you begin to raise a question like that you come against the indeterminism in the concept of indigenous.

I myself proposed a definition but the more I am sitting at this conference the more I am realizing that the concept of indigenous is slippery; it doesn’t mean the same thing to everybody. It means the same thing in a negative sense - we are all people who have been colonized. The moment you try to pose it positively we vary so incredibly; some of us are indigenous people in the first world with a first world level of income, some of us are indigenous people in the third world with an incredible level of poverty. We are all poor compared to the colonizers, but poverty does not mean the same thing to all of us. So is there a positive meaning to indigenous? Is there something that we are in and of ourselves - that we would be even if we had not been colonized - that unites us? And again this is a question that I am posing, but far from answering. Strategically as well I think those conceptual uncertainties continue to bedevil our work.

I will to unite this particular discussion under the concept of assimilation because the concept of assimilation is one that indigenous peoples know very well. I am going to highlight the way that indigenous women are forced to assimilate in very specific ways. Strategically, we are having a huge discussion in South Africa. Do we have development driven politics that rests on the funding we can get from the international donor agencies or do we have- thank you Mama Gunhild [Sara Buljo] - indigenous people to indigenous people cooperation? What a beautiful concept. We have been talking about it in terms of women too, but how do we make it realistic considering that we are all poor? And that is not a negative question. How realistic is it and how far can we get working with

indigenous people to indigenous people? I would like to see how far we can get by actually exploiting that in practice over the next years. It does not mean we must turn our backs to donor driven politics; it is not that at all. I think of that as something we have a right to, it is not charity. The world has been taken away from us, so taking a few dollars in exchange doesn't bother me in the least.

But I do think about the terms and conditions under which we get this money. We go to these international fora, and like Sarah Bartmann we have to act the exotic animal. We become the exoticized "oh what should we do, we have to have some indigenous people talking for our publication" or "well we've got to have a couple of indigenous peoples' articles". It is tokenistic and it is working into colonial stereotypes. On the one hand - and I admire those of you who came here in t-shirts and jeans and refused to play the exotic game - on the other hand t-shirt and jeans are not exactly very indigenous. So how do we grapple with that contradiction? Because to refuse to assimilate is in a way to play to into what is expected of us, but to assimilate as we all know means death. Where do we stand in all these things? We each find our own solutions.

At the same time as we are eroticised, we are expected to play the game, we hold microphones, we deliver papers, we chair sessions, - the format and the structures in which we participate are so completely not indigenous. We are assimilating. One of the things that donor driven politics means is that it means a certain level of assimilation. How do we grapple with that? Food security for the people at home is important. On the other hand it requires that I am literate and can use e-mail.

This leads me to the way indigenous women are required to assimilate. Assimilation is a very patriarchal notion of indigenusness. We have had lots of discussions about who dominates the Sámi Parliament; I am still wondering who dominates the Sámi Council. Certainly the situation in South Africa is that indigenous organizations are male dominated. We have two female leaders and all the rest are male. So when we begin to define our indigenusness, in a lot of ways in Southern Africa, it is the men who decide what indigenous means. We are being forced to assimilate into a patriarchy, and it is ironic that it is happening within indigenous peoples' communities themselves. You know it was done to us, and now we are doing it to each other.

It is not just a conceptual approach, there is also a strategic approach to all this. In Cape Town we formed the Sarah Bartmann Cultural Council and it was an attempt to form an all woman Khoekhoe cultural group. Cultural groups are the way that Khoekhoe clans are recognized in South Africa and our government could not deal with this. They took one look at us and they said to be a cultural group you have to have men. I thought, but why? Obviously, if we can not be a cultural group than we can't raise money, not even from our own provincial government. So even to put a female stamp on the concept of Khoekhoeness is kind of locked in this battle that says indigenusness must include an element of patriarchy otherwise people can not relate. I have no idea how that plays out internationally but that is our local experience.

So I am going to leave you with that. There are more questions than answers. The more I ask, the less I know.

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Please note:

Because of the airlines strike during the first part of the conference, there may be people on this list who had registered but who failed to arrive in Tromsø.

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