



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

Speech by Jennie Nilsson

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Opening remarks by Minister for Rural Affairs, Jennie Nilsson at the Arctic Indigenous Peoples' Dialogue, Umeå, 4 October, 2019.

Dear friends of the Arctic,

It's an honor for me to welcome you all to Umeå for this meeting. In my view Umeå is a very good location for this year's Arctic Indigenous Peoples' Dialogue.

For a long time Umeå has been an important place for Sami culture. For twenty years, the Umeå Sami week has been highlighting Sami arts and culture and their contributions to the cultural life of the region.

Earlier this year the Sami Cultural Policy Summit was held here in Umeå. When Umeå was the European Capital of Culture five years ago, Sami culture was at the very core of the activities.

And let me say that in this year's official communication around the International Year for Indigenous Languages, it is clearly stated that without the indigenous languages on this planet, the world would be a poorer place.

So many stories would be lost forever. So much knowledge and so many perspectives would disappear. Indeed, it is necessary to continue to strengthen the use of indigenous languages worldwide.

We are happy that the Swedish Sami Parliament is a partner to the International Year for Indigenous Languages and the Swedish government is joining in the efforts to highlight this initiative.

Dear friends,

I want to take this opportunity to stress the importance of the Annual EU Arctic Indigenous Peoples' Dialogue. At a time when the Arctic region is facing major challenges, not least the escalating effects of the climate crisis, the indigenous voice is crucial.

We all have a lot to learn and you have a lot to teach us. About sustainable development. About a true circular economy. On how to continue to go forward despite the face of change.

We must listen and we need to respond when Arctic change erodes the basis for your livelihoods and traditions for future generations.

At today's dialogue we will discuss how we can learn from the Arctic and what the needs of the Arctic is.

We look forward to the presentation of the OECD study on Linking the Indigenous Communities with Regional Development - a project that has closely involved Indigenous leaders and communities in Australia, Canada and Sweden.

Until now no joint study has ever been conducted on how existing tools, initiatives and regulations in rural development and regional growth work for Sami society and businesses. This study is unique.

I want to assure you, that the report will serve as a valuable foundation in upcoming working processes.

Let me also welcome the Commission Joint Research Center report "Arctic: Traditional Knowledge, Livelihoods and Community Engagements" that we will have an opportunity to discuss today.

Dear friends,

Once again welcome to Sápmi – and before this year's dialogue starts - let us remember the words of famous Sami poet Nils Aslak Valkeapää;

All of this is my home; these fjords, rivers and lakes

the cold, the light and the rugged weather,

the night and sun,

of the wilderness expanses, joy and sorrow,

all these things are my home, and I carry them in my heart

Thank you!