

Saami Council Position Paper.

Adopted by the Saami Council 11.10.2015
Sápmi, Murmansk, Russian Federation.

“ The Arctic, including traditional Saami territories, is facing more rapid and large scale changes than ever before. The Saami people and our livelihoods are impacted by climate and environmental changes. The Saami people are also impacted by adaptation and mitigation strategies put in force by the national states. The Saami Conference calls for full and effective participation by the Saami people in decision-making processes concerning land use change and climate change policies.” –The 20th Saami Conference.

We offer to share with humanity our Traditional Knowledge, innovations, and practices relevant to climate change, provided our fundamental rights as intergenerational guardians of this knowledge are fully recognized and respected. We reiterate the urgent need for collective action.

The ongoing climate change in the Arctic causes significant changes in water, oceans, snow, ice and permafrost conditions, with cascading effects on biodiversity, ecosystems, economic and human living conditions in the Arctic with repercussions around the world, substantial cuts in emissions of CO₂, Methane and other greenhouse gases are necessary for any meaningful global climate change mitigation efforts. We call for reduction of the short-lived climate pollutants emitted within and beyond the borders of the Arctic States that have substantial impact on the Arctic health of humans, animals and environment.

Many of the ‘green’-energy projects as hydropower dams, windmill parks and development of green-technology are all demanding big areas, often on indigenous peoples land. Therefore it is of outmost importance to ensure special safeguards for indigenous peoples and to promote the respect of their rights to **Free, Prior and Informed Consent, with the right to say “No”**, in all decisions that will affect our lives and generations to come, as spelled out in the UN Declaration Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) adopted in 2007.

We call on the States to have the political will to commit to identified targets that will keep the Global temperature increase below 1.5 °C. All parties must uphold the common but differentiated responsibilities with clear commitments and actions.

Noting with concern the findings of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (UNIPCC) that the Arctic will continue to warm at twice the rate of the global average, increasing the likelihood of multiplied severe impacts in the Arctic and around the world, and recognizing that ambitious global and national action is needed to reduce climate risks, increase prospects for effective adaptation, and reduce the costs and challenges of long-term mitigation.

The overconsumption, contaminations and extraction industries in the world are violating the earth, the people and the generations to come. It also contributes drastically to climate change and therefore we urge all of humanity to take individual responsibility of our consumption patterns, not to contaminate the nature and minimize your technology requirement without ceasing development.

In the national, regional and international processes, such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), where climate change mitigation policies are discussed, negotiated and designed, indigenous peoples have found it very difficult to get their voices heard and their concerns taken into consideration. It is of great importance to ensure communication and partnership between the states and the Indigenous peoples in the collaborative work on climate change.

Therefore we call upon the UNFCCC's decision-making bodies and processes to establish formal structures and mechanisms (*as within Convention on Biological Diversity*) to ensure the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples within the work of UNFCCC. Recognize and engage the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change (IPFCC) and its regional focal points in an advisory role within UNFCCC decision- making bodies and processes.

Also, Immediate appoint Indigenous Peoples representatives and advisors within UNFCCC funding mechanisms and the Green Climate Fund.

