



Sámediggi
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Saemiedigkie
Sametinget

2018-11-06

Statement on adoption of country case study of Sweden at the meeting of the OECD Working Party on Rural Policy

First of all, I would like to thank the OECD for having us on this meeting and letting us share some of our thoughts on the *Linking Indigenous Communities with Regional Development* project and the country case study of Sweden.

My name is Per-Olof Nutti and I am the President of the Sami Parliament in Sweden.

The Sami Parliament has followed and participated in this project from the very beginning at the 2016 meeting of the Working Party on Rural Policy, the 2017 launch in Wendek, Quebec, the missions to Sweden and Canada this year, the Policy workshop in Brussels as well as yesterday's workshop. We are happy to now see its outcomes: the global thematic report and the country case studies. We hope to follow the next steps and continuation of the project.

The OECD is an influential institution deriving its legitimacy from its member states. Its work cuts through many themes and sectors. As such the OECD is an important actor in strengthening indigenous peoples' voices. Especially in areas, such as business and economic development, where our rights and needs are usually not addressed.

We all know that historically indigenous peoples have not been allowed to sit at the table to discuss and influence decisions that concern our future. Step by step this is changing. Indigenous peoples are now represented within various UN procedures such as the work on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and addressing climate change. The international recognition of indigenous peoples' rights, cultures, traditions and livelihoods is reinforcing and encouraging changes and improvements at a national level. We strongly believe that in a Swedish context, the country case study can further facilitation of such improvements.

During the OECD mission to Sweden it became clear that there is a common goal and motivation shared by the Sami Parliament, the County Administrative Boards and Regions in strengthening Sami inclusion in regional and rural development efforts. It is our believe that the country case study can help translate this motivation into action. Not the least through its recommendations on improving engagement with Sami society in the context of regional and rural development; about annual dialogues, agreements and duty to consult.

We welcome the report on Sweden where Sami perspectives are in the center. Where our right to self-determination and right to development are the points of departure. Where our understanding of economic development and what measures are needed guide the recommendations.

For the Sami Parliament, the report and its recommendations are highly valuable. Both as a tool for our own current and future initiatives and actions to create an enabling environment for Sami businesses and livelihoods and build our internal capacity. But also as a roadmap on what actions are required by the government in order do so. In this regard we find the recommendations on improving data collection and dissemination especially crucial.

However, we would also like to stress that for us this report is not just about the recommendations. To us, the constructive dialogues and information exchange that the OECD mission to Sweden facilitated are very valuable. Especially, in terms of establishment of new contacts between the Sami Parliament and representatives from the government, regional agencies, academia and industry. In addition, we also appreciate the opportunities provided through the peer-reviewer mechanism to link indigenous communities with indigenous communities and open doors to learn from each other.

The report and its recommendations echo issues that the Sami Parliament has already brought to the government's attention but have not yet been adequately resolved. For example, I can mention enhancing the role and activities of the Sami Parliament in statistics collection, the need for a Consultation Act, increased Sami land management, amend EU funding requirements to better match the needs of Sami businesses. With the OECD report reaffirming the need of changes being undertaken we expect the government to take its responsibility and actively implement the recommendations. We invite the government to carry out this work in close partnership with the Sami Parliament and the Sami people.

Through our contacts with the OECD before, during and after the mission to Sweden we have gotten an insight in OECD's modus operandi. We would like to take this opportunity to compliment the OECD secretariat involved in the case study of Sweden for its transparency, cultural sensitivity, inclusiveness and responsiveness to our views. We are thankful for the opportunities given by the OECD to provide input on the report.

We strongly encourage the OECD to keep up this work and extend the project to include other states and indigenous populations. This, in order to continue the sharing of guiding practices, to keep learning from each other and create links and partnerships between states and indigenous peoples. With this I would like to conclude and say we look forward to receive and read the final version of the report and to participate at its launching, hopefully in my homeland Sápmi.

Thank you for your attention!