



- Dássálas ovdanahttin – Balanced development. Where we lead a sustainable lifestyle and high quality of life without causing negative impacts on nature and environment.

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 procedures. Such as the work on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, protecting biodiversity and addressing climate change. The OECD project “Linking Indigenous Communities with regional development” is an additional example. Another is the establishment of the Indigenous Peoples Platform and its Facilitative Working Group under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Momentum and development in the international arena, with increased recognition of indigenous peoples’ rights, practices and contributions will surely reinforce and encourage improvements at regional and national levels. Currently, we can see this in the

- Swedish proposal on an Act on Consultation on matters concerning the Sámi.
- In the ongoing work on establishing truth and reconciliation commissions in Sweden, Norway and Finland
- In the joint achievements towards a Nordic Sámi Convention.

At EU level the European Parliament resolution of last year *on violation of the rights of indigenous peoples in the world, including land grabbing* is another example.

However, there are limitations for us to fully and meaningfully participate in relevant decision making processes and have our voices heard and listened to. For that reason, fora like this are needed in order to put indigenous issues on the agenda and address priorities and needs of the Indigenous Peoples’ of the Arctic as well as highlighting good examples on how to move forward.

I hope the following presentations and discussions can provide toolkits to better understand and recognize our importance and contributions to face sustainability challenges in the Arctic region and the EU. And I want to encourage you all to learn from us Indigenous Peoples, to engage with us and let us lead the way forward. Thank you! Giitu!