

## **VIRTUAL NORDIC EXPERT SEMINAR: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY & PROTECTION OF SÁMI TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE 22 OCTOBER 2020**

### **MODERATED PANEL DISCUSSION ON CURRENT TOPICS AHEAD OF THE EVENT DURING PRESIDENCY OF NORDIC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS 2021**

**Aili Keskitalo, President of the Sámi Parliament in Norway, Opening speech (translated by John Utsi)**

Good people, both you in the digital world, and you in Helsinki. I am especially happy that we are discussing these topic today. I am very pleased that the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture - - and the Finnish Copyright Association so actively has lifted and worked with the Sámi themes. I have understood that the ministry has supported this project and that it increases the understanding of today's topic. I am also happy that the ministry has such good cooperation with my college in Finland, the Finnish Sámi Parliament.

As you all know we have for a long time lacked good juridical protection for our traditional knowledge and culture in the public room. And this is certainly not anything new in Finland. For a long time we have been missing an examination in a seminar like this. Offensive exploitation of the Sámi culture effects us in a many negative ways, one is that it creates fake stereotypes that we must try to correct. The exploitation of Sámi traditional knowledge and intangible cultural heritage also consumes the lustiness of our subsistence. We have acted against exploitation of Sámi cultural resources for a long time. So I would like to thank and praise our college for this work.

Our starting point has been and still is; self-determination. We have always said that we have the right, and we should have real possibilities to maintain, develop and protect our traditional knowledge and intangible cultural heritage.

This issue has been in discussions for a long time within the Nordic cooperation, even before the Sami Parliaments were established, as a representative for the civil society has Sami Council lifted the issue in the Sami Conference. This question has been debated about at Nordic level since 1950 and furthermore in 2008. Also the Sami Parliamentary Council made a statement about this in 2008, and we in the Sami parliaments has made our point regarding this during the consultations in the Nordic Sami Convention.

Our starting point has been, and still is, self-determination. All along we have stated that we have the right, and we should have real possibilities, to maintain, protect and develop our traditional knowledge and our intangible cultural heritage. We have tried to protect them from being misused. However, this issue is wider than a question of only sensitive utilization.

This is also a matter of property and we have the same right as others to protect our property and the same right as others to have an equal protection of our property. In different occasions we have stated that when our traditional knowledge or cultural

resources are used this should, in same way also be beneficial to us. This comprehension of property is written and implemented in the cooperation agreement for the joint project that we accomplished with Walt Disney Animation Studio. Rune Fjellheim, who lead this cooperation will tell more about this later today.

Internationally we have actively participated in the CBD- process. Here we have good result, which Norway and Finland have implemented on a national level. According to these statutes is our ownership of the genetic resources in traditional knowledge protected by national laws. And there are also basic processes that honor these ownership rights, and if someone else than Sámi intend to use these knowledge, it must be settled with the holder of the traditional knowledge and the condition for such agreement must be acceptable for the Sámi holder. The real implementation of these laws is still a long internal process, and we are working on that.

Internationally we have, to some extent, taken part in the work of WIPO's IGC work, but as we know, this work has been challenging with very limited results. We are therefore very happy that Finland, and other Nordic countries, are willing to look at and investigate the possibilities to find means of protection on a Nordic level. If we would be able to find such solutions together it might be something that could be a model for other countries too.

We Sámi are now working with our part of this task. The Sami Parliamentary Council has begun, according to its action plan, making a thorough investigation of the situation for the cultural heritage and traditional knowledge. Our goal is to produce a joint Nordic Sami idea of how to manage and utilize Sami cultural heritage and traditional knowledge. The final goal a broad and common management for protection of Sami cultural heritage and traditional knowledge. Section leader Magne Svineng will talk about this later on.

Many questions arise from the Sami parliament, Sami institutions and private Sami about what is acceptable and legal utilization of Sami cultural heritage and traditional knowledge in commercial and other context.

We think that it is very positive that our culture is interesting and appealing. Instead of just trying to impede exploitation of Sami cultural resources, we are, in our cooperation, trying to find ways where not only the structures and the sensitive and ethical aspects are attended, but also how this could benefit our culture and our people.

We can see that the work that we are doing, and where Finland and other Scandinavian countries are supporting, is very important for our cultural identity and equality. And also for the Sami livelihood, development and economic prosperity.

We do appreciate this discussion and it will be very interesting to follow it and see in what way the ministries and governments will support Sami property rights and implement them in entire Sápmi.

Giitu! Thank you!