

Agenda Item 3: “Indigenous Peoples, human health, planetary and territorial health and climate change: a rights-based approach”

Statement by the Nordic Saami Youth representatives

STATEMENT ON GREEN COLONIALISM AND ITS EFFECTS ON SAAMI YOUTH

Thank you Chair,

Distinguished experts, indigenous siblings, this is an intervention on behalf of the Saami Youth in Finland, Sweden and Norway.

We come with an urgent message to the global indigenous community about land grabs happening in Sápmi, in the name of the green transition.

We have come to learn the hard way, that sustainability does not end colonialism. In the name of saving the planet, the Nordic states are digging into our mountains, drilling holes into our rocks, and making it impossible for the Saami to practice our traditional livelihoods. What is being shown to the world as a shift to sustainability, is just Nordic colonialism hiding behind a new kind of mask.

In Norway, an illegal wind park stands on the lands of Fovsen njaarke Saami community producing renewable energy. It has now been 554 days since Norway’s supreme court ruled the wind park illegal, yet all of Europe gets to enjoy the green energy at the expense of us Saami.

And in Sweden, the government is hailing the massive mineral discovery in Giron as the saviour of the green transition in Europe, even though extracting those minerals would devastate the local Saami community. Ethical mining, the government calls it, yet we know: there is no such thing.

In Finland, the Saami have so far been successful in fighting off mining companies and other ventures, but over the years we have seen their rhetoric change. Green transition is now being used to promote land development projects that are pitch-black industrialism in our eyes.

When we’ve voiced our criticisms and concerns, the governments have responded with patronizing rhetoric. They tell us we shouldn’t oppose climate friendly ventures. We as youth know all too well the depth of the climate crisis, and for us to be called anti-climate is nothing short of insulting. They tell us, everyone has to sacrifice something. To that we say, when a colonizer has already taken everything you have, there’s nothing more you have left to sacrifice.

The Saami Youth of Finland, Sweden and Norway call upon the Permanent Forum to urgently turn their eyes to the frightening development taking place in the name of green transition. We demand the Nordic states to immediately halt the ongoing human rights violations against the Saami, and we plead the global indigenous community to notice this green colonialism in Sápmi.

We ask: If saving the world from climate devastation comes by sacrificing the indigenous world to fulfill the needs of the colonial states, then what are we even fighting for? What future do we have left?

Giitu - thank you