

# CONFERENCE REPORT 2002



## Forum for Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples:

"Strategies for Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples"



Centre for Sámi Studies  
[www.sami.uit.no/forum](http://www.sami.uit.no/forum)

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## **FORUM FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES 2002**

### **Strategies for Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples**

This report documents the Forum for Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples 2002. The conference was titled "Strategies for Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples" and took place at the University of Tromsø October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2002. The chapters in the report are minutes from all the lectures.

The third Forum conference in a row, the 2002 meeting consolidated the Forum as an arena for debates on Norwegian development policies and policies concerning indigenous peoples. Through yearly conferences, Forum home pages and e-mail communication, the Forum for Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples is a meeting place for researchers, development workers, administrators and activists working with indigenous peoples' issues since 2000. Aiming to facilitate the sharing of experiences between participants, the Forum seeks to gather representatives from Sámi, Norwegian and international institutions with experience from international indigenous work and others with an interest in Sámi or indigenous issues.

The FORUM conference programme 2002 reflected a wish to learn more about the European Union's Policy on indigenous peoples and development cooperation. The policy is additionally very interesting as a backdrop to the coming Norwegian strategies for development cooperation with indigenous peoples. Commenting the strategies, draft designers as well as indigenous representatives and researchers touched upon a wide range of topics relevant to indigenous peoples and development cooperation. Several of lecturers commented the potential, actual and ideological differences between indigenous to indigenous cooperation and non-indigenous to indigenous cooperation. Others focused on the challenges of defining indigenous peoples; in strategies as well as in different countries and regions. Rights-based approaches were recommended, and many of the contributors stressed the need to always consult and involve the indigenous peoples in all stages of a development

process. As part of the Forum Update the audience was informed on recent developments of indigenous peoples-state relations in Asia and on the establishment of the Competence Centre for Indigenous Rights in Kautokeino.

Another conference; "Indigenous Politics: Aspects of Power and Democracy" was arranged in Tromsø, October 3-5, 2002. With a focus on the formalisation of a Sámi public sphere and the development of a Sámi political system, it constituted a natural part II of the Forum conference. The conference was arranged by the Norwegian Power and Democracy Project.

For more information, please visit this homepage:

[http://www.uit.no/ssweb/sdg/prosjekt/makt/makt\\_eng.html](http://www.uit.no/ssweb/sdg/prosjekt/makt/makt_eng.html)

**CENTRE FOR SÁMI STUDIES**  
**University of Tromsø**  
**Norway**  
[www.sami.uit.no](http://www.sami.uit.no)

*Birgitte Feiring, Denmark*

## **EUROPEAN UNION: STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTANCE TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

### ***The history and importance of EU development assistance to indigenous peoples***

Birgitte Feiring was invited to share some of her experiences with strategies on development assistance to Indigenous peoples. Feiring is an anthropologist with 16 years of experience with indigenous issues in IWGIA and other NGOs, and she especially drew on her experiences from the review of the Danish strategy as well as from the work drafting the 1997-98 European Union's strategy for Indigenous peoples. Both strategies have been important backdrops for the coming Norwegian strategy.

According to Feiring, the European strategies for development assistance, including the ones concerning Indigenous Peoples, are first and foremost important because of the size and quantity of the EU assistance. Being the world's most important single donor, the EU provides approximately 55 % of all official development assistance, and accounts for 2/3 of all grant aid going to developing countries. Further, Feiring continued, the EU policy on Indigenous peoples binds both the European commission and the different member states. Thus, the EU, whether we like it or not, is very important when it comes to development assistance.

Summarizing the process leading to the adoption of the EU strategy for assistance to Indigenous peoples, Feiring emphasised that Denmark and Spain are two of the member states with strongest national strategies for indigenous peoples. In 1997 they jointly raised the issue of a similar strategy for the EU, and through the Council of Ministers, the European Commission was asked to come up with a policy paper.

Written in 1997-98, the paper and strategy was limited to development cooperation, and Feiring admitted that this fact limits the scope as well as the geographical coverage of the policy. An important improvement from earlier, however, was that the writers were successful in granting time and resources for consultations with indigenous peoples throughout the process. For instance, ICC (The Inuit Circumpolar Conference) and the Sámi Council played important roles co-organizing a conference in Brussels allowing indigenous peoples to comment on the draft. Feiring especially mentioned that the indigenous organisations brought a strong focus on capacity building to Brussels. The process was finalised by the publication of an EC Working Document in May 1998. In September 1998 the Council of Ministers issued a resolution, which together with the working paper

constitutes the policy framework for the EC/EU and all member states.

### ***Why a specific “Indigenous Peoples Policy”?***

Outlining the main points of the documents, Feiring first emphasised the reasons uttered for developing a special indigenous peoples policy:

- Indigenous peoples’ cultures are invaluable and necessary contributions to sustainable development
- Indigenous peoples play a key role regarding conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity
- Indigenous peoples possess a special vulnerability of being disadvantaged in the development process

Main objectives for the EU policy is to:

- Enhance indigenous peoples’ right and capacity to control their own social, economic and cultural development, and to
- Enhance indigenous peoples’ territorial rights and capacity for sustainable management of biological resources

Feiring stated that even though the Council resolution is a bit unclear on the matter, the objectives mentioned above are “as close to expressing ‘self determination’ as you can possibly get in this kind of organisation”. Clearly a rights-based approach, the objectives argue that indigenous peoples have the right to choose their own development paths, which includes the right to object to projects, in particular in their traditional areas. Always referring to indigenous peoples rights, the documents address more common development objectives, like poverty, marginalisation, exclusion, political participation, bilingual education, health systems and environmental protection.

### ***Political and conceptual contexts, and the focus on poverty***

Like most other donors, the overriding EU objective for development cooperation is poverty reduction. Strategies adopted to reach this objective are many:

- strengthening of democracy,
- consolidation of peace and the prevention of conflict,
- integration of developing countries into the world economy,
- greater awareness of social and environmental aspects (sustainable development),
- gender equality,
- public and private capacity building

With these strategies and objectives in mind, Feiring insisted on understanding poverty as a multi-faceted concept - including issues like health, education, natural resources and political participation. She still considered it a major obstacle to indigenous as well as general development that indigenous issues often are considered very marginal in NGOs as well as in the EU. Contrary to this, Feiring underlined that indigenous peoples and issues are *central* for achieving the general development objectives of poverty reduction, including democratisation, conservation of biodiversity and sustainable development. Feiring emphasised that the lack of recognition of rights is one of the root causes of poverty.

Adding to the complexity of the issue, Feiring mentioned the need to apply social and economic indicators relevant to the particular situation and perspectives of indigenous peoples. Many indigenous peoples have their own concepts of poverty, often putting a lot more stress on the loss of language and land than on monetary income. Because of its very narrow focus on income, Feiring especially also saw problems with the general trend of concentrating efforts on the Least Developed Countries. Pointing to Peru and Ecuador as good examples, she stated that a focus on average levels of income might hide the fact that in many countries large percentages of the population maintain living standards below the poverty level. In these and many other countries a majority of the poor are indigenous. To avoid viewing the indigenous as just another marginal sector of a homogenous society, one has to examine the underlying structures and the characteristics and level of poverty. Any strategy for poverty reduction in indigenous societies should thus take into consideration the perspectives of the indigenous peoples and be built on their own perceptions and concepts of poverty. Likewise, poverty should be measured by indicators defined by indigenous peoples themselves.

To implement the strategies, Feiring also saw the need to change the current tendency of dealing with indigenous issues through very small-scale projects. Encouraging the donor community to “think BIG”, she emphasised the need to consider institutional reforms and big scale sector programs (for bilingual education etc), especially in countries where the indigenous population constitute a large part of the population.

### ***Implementation, limitations and contradictions***

However promising the objectives, implementing the EU strategies has proved somewhat more difficult. There is a new emphasis on larger scale sector support within the EU, and indigenous peoples’ issues are to be mainstreamed into these sector approaches. In spite of the fact that she agreed on many of the intentions with sector approaches and mainstreaming, Birgitte Feiring saw an inherent risk of overlooking indigenous peoples once more.

Mainstreaming implies integrating...

“...the concern for indigenous peoples as a cross-cutting aspect at all levels of development cooperation, including policy dialogue with partner countries and enhancing the capacities of indigenous peoples’ organisations to take an effective part in the planning and implementation of development programmes”  
(from The Council Resolution).

However, a basic problem for indigenous issues is the lack of visibility. Most indigenous peoples have a marginalized position within the national society, with limited participation in national politics and debates and limited access to information. When and if donors build on the partner countries’ own analysis, it cannot be assumed that indigenous peoples’ needs, priorities and contributions are reflected in the national policy. Direct contact and consultation between donors (including EC) and indigenous communities is very rare. Because of indigenous peoples’ limited participation and access to information, Feiring strongly emphasised that the responsibility of approaching and focusing on indigenous issues lies with the donor agencies and not with the indigenous peoples. However, to achieve this capacity building and awareness rising is necessary within the donor community and the EU/EC. Also, concepts in relation to indigenous peoples and rights must be clarified.

As mentioned, the EU policy paper and strategy was limited to development cooperation, and Feiring admitted that this fact limits the scope as well as the geographical coverage of the policy. Sami as well as other commentators had also addressed the contradiction occurring because indigenous peoples living in Europe and other “developed” countries as well as general issues of indigenous rights are left out. The policy has a rights-based approach when addressing indigenous peoples in developing countries without acknowledging the same rights to indigenous peoples in other parts of the world. Drawing a parallel to the Danish strategy, Feiring mentioned that the latter strategy is not limited to developing countries, and therefore has enabled Denmark to play a crucial role in bi- and multi-lateral development cooperation as well as international processes of discussing and defining indigenous peoples rights and e.g. the establishment of Permanent Forum. Feiring especially argued the necessity of a more general rights-approach in an increasingly globalised world, where issues of trade, finance, biodiversity, intellectual property rights and many other issues cannot be confined to particular countries or particular contexts of development or non-development.

### ***Concluding remarks***

Feiring gave the following recommendations regarding the process of developing the Norwegian policy: Get a policy or join the European Union! According to Feiring a policy is first and foremost a much-needed platform for systematized learning. It is further:

- a platform for generation of experience



- an instrument to guide development practitioners
- an instrument to measure if we are doing right
- an instrument for indigenous peoples to measure if we are doing right.

The policy should therefore also be translated and communicated in indigenous languages, making the indigenous peoples able to monitor the projects and hold the donors accountable. The policy is also an important tool in the dialogue between partner countries.

Feiring concluded by mentioning that in Johannesburg Denmark/Greenland initiated the formation of a *partnership* with indigenous peoples. Aiming to promote knowledge on indigenous peoples' rights and priorities, the partnership intends to facilitate the exchange of experiences of good practice between all parties involved in development assistance, including development agencies and national governments.

Suggested activities within the project range from the establishment of a network of partners, to dissemination of lessons learned and awareness rising on indigenous issues among development agency staff members, NGOs and private sector representatives. Feiring mentioned the wish to support indigenous organizations' research on specific themes related to indigenous issues (e.g. issues of poverty, gender, sector wide approaches, resource management/biodiversity). Additionally, plans included support to indigenous organizations in their efforts of influencing key policy processes globally (e.g. WTO and WIPO). A very important purpose is further to enhance the capacity of indigenous peoples to influence policy processes and decision-making regarding sustainable development. Hoping to cooperate with agencies and organizations in Norway, including the Sámi Council, Feiring saw the partnership as an important step forward, possibly supporting the work of the Permanent Forum as well as the different national strategies.

*Lars-Anders Baer, Sami Parliament, Sweden*

## **COMMENTS ON ASSISTANCE STRATEGIES AND OTHER CURRENT DEBATES ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES**

Outlining some principles concerning development assistance and cooperation with indigenous peoples, Lars-Anders Baer started by commenting the World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002 in Johannesburg, where an unstable international atmosphere influenced many of the debates. Additionally, some of the debates on indigenous issues were poorly organised and confusing. However, Baer emphasised that despite all the problems they had managed to agree on the Johannesburg declaration. According to Baer, the declaration and the plan of action are very important documents, clearly stating the importance of indigenous peoples in relation to sustainable development and the reduction of poverty.

Bearing in mind that the relation between (sustainable) development and indigenous peoples has often been dangerous, and in some cases even leading to genocide, the new agreements become even more important. Indigenous representatives in Johannesburg had expressed that they welcomed development, and even more so sustainable development, but only as far as indigenous peoples are included in all parts and phases of a development process. According to Baer, the strategies and declarations on debate in Johannesburg and on this conference show that the richer countries have agreed to share their wealth. According to Baer, development deals with and depends on these issues. Looking forward to monitoring the difficult processes of implementation of the Johannesburg plan of action, he pointed especially to the responsibility of the Nordic governments in these processes. Baer looked forward to the establishment of the UN Permanent forum, and highlighting the crucial role and responsibility of the indigenous organisations in the rich countries in international processes, he especially emphasised the importance of indigenous to indigenous cooperation.

Concerning strategies for development cooperation with indigenous peoples in developing countries, Baer saw a need of evaluation and coordination between the Nordic countries. He further wanted to promote a better coordination between the different Sámi organisations and development projects. Baer emphasised the important work of the Sámi Council influencing politics on different levels. In addition to working with their own projects, the Sámi Council supports and monitors development efforts, and try to make more organisations include indigenous issues and perspectives in their projects.

Like Birgitte Feirung, Baer then mentioned the paradoxes and discrepancies related to the

Scandinavian governments' politics regarding indigenous peoples at home and abroad. The governments and state aid agencies often had a progressive policy towards indigenous peoples in their partner countries, but rather tried to limit and de-emphasise the relevance of similar issues in Scandinavia. He considered that the difference between discourses at home and internationally constituted a problem of credibility. Additionally, Baer noted the paradoxes related to the fact that the Sámi people are both members and non-members of the EU (as a people in four countries). He did, however, again relating to Feiring's points on the EU policies, also consider the paradoxes an interesting and potential point of departure for development and changes in the relationship between the nation-states and indigenous population in the Northern region.

Baer supported the introduction and elaboration of guidelines and methods that ensure indigenous participation and consultation, and emphasised the need to focus on the implementation of such principles. To succeed in this it is essential that development agents can seek support and competence whenever needed. Baer thought competence building was needed at all levels, and at the government level as well as in grassroots organisations. Regarding the EU-system, he also missed and welcomed competence building on EU-bureaucracy, and emphasised the need to make indigenous people able to influence the EU-system and apply for funds.

Baer stated that indigenous participation is crucial at all levels and phases in development processes. Emphasising that all development effort must be based on the indigenous peoples own priorities and agendas, Baer mentioned that consultation often happens too late. Additionally, the requirement of participation may constitute a political problem. However, even if it may seem difficult, Baer insisted on consulting the indigenous peoples in question. He consequently also insisted on persuading the partner countries that this is the right path to development.

*Indra Øverland, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)*

## **DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: EXPERT-TO-CLIENT OR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE-TO-INDIGENOUS PEOPLE**

Taking the first Forum for Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples in 2000 as a point of departure, Indra Øverland focused on indigenous to indigenous development assistance. In many of the debates in 2000, Sámi representatives had maintained that a bigger part of the state-financed assistance to Indigenous peoples should be channelled through Sámi organisations. NORAD was open to this proposition, and since the first forum the cooperation between NORAD and the Sámi Council has increased considerably.

Øverland focused on the relations between indigenous organisations and other organisations engaging in development assistance to indigenous peoples on an international level. Along with Sweden, Finland, Denmark, New Zealand, Australia, USA, Canada, France and Japan, Norway is a significant player in the global development assistance arena. At the same time they have indigenous populations with potential roles to play within development cooperation.

### ***Power dimensions***

Øverland claimed that all development assistance involves a power relation between donor and recipient. And even though most organisations, indigenous or not, emphasise grassroots approaches, this power relation may not be eliminated. According to Øverland there are two levels of power:

- **Collective power (of the donor country)**
  - Power to define problems and solutions
  - Conceptual power
  - The power of development models
  
- **Personal or organisational power (of the operative players/development workers)**
  - Economic power/standards of living (these are extreme privileges in a poverty context)
  - Power to decide who is going to receive assistance

According to Øverland it is possible to understand some of the Tromsø debates as a tug of war between different operative actors on who is going to have this personal or organisational power in our partner countries.

### ***Dominant discourses***

Øverland showed that three main discourses support the positions of the operative actors:

- Idealistic discourses
- Ideological (or Identity) discourses
- Technocratic discourses

Because of the strong dependence of state funding of Norway-based NGO's, Øverland did not think that the idealistic discourses were particularly relevant at this moment in time. However, in the relations between indigenous organisations and mainly professional non-indigenous organisations Øverland had found that ideological and technocratic discourses played important roles.

Indigenous to indigenous development assistance is based on ideas of ideological community between all indigenous peoples, bridging all differences in climate, race, language, distance and so on. The discourse stresses indigenous peoples' experiences from their own work and life in one part of the world - as a basis for helping others. Critically speaking, Øverland called this discourse *populist*, because it equals indigenous peoples in rich and poor countries, and donors and recipients. Øverland noted that in "indigenous peoples to indigenous peoples", the term "peoples" is even mentioned twice, resulting in what he called a "double populism".

Aid from non-indigenous organisations to indigenous peoples, or expert-to-client-assistance as Øverland provocatively put it, is based on a technocratic discourse. Even though the organisations themselves may have problems with the term "technocratic", Øverland claimed that it forms the basis of much of the current development assistance. Current aid programmes require technological skill and expert knowledge. The specifications may vary, but compared to the indigenous to indigenous peoples' aid discourse, this discourse is clearly more technocratic, and the assistance is often called expert aid or professional aid.

Sticking to the concepts of "populist" and "technocratic", Øverland claimed that the discourses could be both competing and mutually complementary. When they compete we immediately see problems with the technocratic aid; especially linked to capacity building and rights. Nearly all aid to indigenous peoples focuses on these issues, and precisely regarding capacity building and rights the indigenous organisations have and claim

comparative advantages. Formal competence and education seldom outweighs personal experience.

The field of indigenous issues is full of contradictions and paradoxes, and the technocratic discourse also comes up against the populist discourse in the relation between home country and home indigenous people. According to Øverland, the Norwegian state and NORAD is balancing between the need to keep up the international image as a friend of indigenous peoples, and at the same time trying to avoid losing power over natural resources and people at home. Like the previous speakers, Øverland mentioned how Norway and other countries have often worked progressively for indigenous peoples' rights internationally, while working against implementing the same rights at home.

However, the populist discourse is also full of paradoxes. First, Øverland claimed that it is not obvious that the educated and politicised elite of the indigenous peoples in rich countries would have very much in common with indigenous recipients in partner countries. He even claimed that they might be very different from other indigenous people at home.

Indigenous- to-indigenous aid is closely related to a modern global indigenous ideology, emphasising the similarities between different groups that are marginalized in very different contexts. According to Øverland, one cannot automatically assume that the experience of marginalisation in one context makes it easier to communicate or work with people living in another marginalized context. An indigenous person from a rich country, with high wages, skills in English and Spanish, nice clothes and Visa-card travelling to Latin America is in a very different position than his or her local counterpart. The Sámi and other indigenous peoples with "western" features may also be categorized very different from other indigenous peoples in many Latin American settings.

Øverland pointed to the fact that in debates regarding development assistance to women and anthropological research, similar questions have been asked. Do female development workers or local anthropologist have advantages? And both female development workers and native anthropologists have been critiqued for oversimplifying their own representation and legitimacy. Still, Øverland claims that there is difference between anthropological analysis on one hand and the strengthening of women's and indigenous rights on the other. While anthropology at least in principle is or wants to be "neutral", capacity building among indigenous groups or women is normative and action oriented.

The discourses related to indigenous to indigenous development assistance include another important paradox. In addition to claiming competence in communicating and working with other indigenous peoples, most indigenous organisations additionally claim suitable formal and technical skills and qualifications. They use the same technocratic discourse as non-

indigenous organisations.

According to Øverland, the paradoxes make the two discourses mutually dependent. Not surprisingly, it has made many indigenous and non-indigenous organisations cooperate. Øverland ended his speech by giving examples from indigenous to non-indigenous cooperation in Russia, where different kinds of foreign organisations and authorities work with different local indigenous organisations and authorities. According to Øverland, what could be concluded from this cooperation was that authorities worked best with authorities, ngo's worked best with ngo's, and indigenous organisations worked best with indigenous organisations. The different development players worked with what they knew best, and thus reduced some of the paradoxes.

**NUPI - Norwegian Institute of International Affairs**

<http://www.nupi.no/>

*Ingunn Klepsvik, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation*

## **THE NORWEGIAN STRATEGY FOR ASSISTANCE TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

Presenting the draft of the coming NORAD guidelines for support to indigenous peoples, Ingunn Klepsvik focussed on some of the main backgrounds and perspectives in the report, which now had been forwarded to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She maintained that the guidelines were still not approved by the ministry, and that some of the proposed strategies may be slightly modified before approval. The main message from the Ministry was that the government wished to follow up the Johannesburg declaration, and that this would mean an increased focus on indigenous issues. Budget implications were, however, still not available. Klepsvik emphasised the rights-based approaches in the drafted guidelines, and maintained that these approaches had influenced all the action plans included in the guidelines as well as existing programmes. Emphasising that NORAD does have personnel with broad knowledge and experience on indigenous issues, she admitted that the work with indigenous peoples has not been coordinated internally. Also there has been little contact with external environments with competence on indigenous peoples' issues, including the Sámi Parliament and Sámi Council.

### ***Sector approaches and budget aid and competence building***

Klepsvik went on to comment the current modernization of development assistance from project assistance to sector assistance, eventually leading to an aid system where bilateral aid goes directly into the partner country's budget. Mentioning Tanzania as an example, she clearly saw advantages in changing a development aid system with 8 000 separate projects to sector assistance. According to Klepsvik, sector assistance will give local politicians a greater influence on development goals and decision-making.

Klepsvik maintained that NORAD would continue to include indigenous issues in the dialogues with partner countries, and with other donor countries. Wishing to cooperate with external environments with competence on indigenous issues, Klepsvik noted that the Forum for development cooperation with indigenous peoples has opened up for debates and much needed sharing of experiences. She also wanted to improve NORAD's communication with the Sámi Parliament and other indigenous actors in Norway.



### ***Changes in The Norwegian Indigenous Peoples Programme***

Turning to concrete assistance programmes to indigenous peoples, Klepsvik emphasised the need to focus on legal assistance and educational programmes including bilingual education. Referring to the previous and current focus on indigenous projects in Latin America, Klepsvik mentioned that assistance to indigenous peoples is to be extended to include countries in Asia and Africa. She also emphasised the need to increase research cooperation on indigenous issues. Opening up for a more flexible system of assistance to indigenous peoples, NORAD is further considering the possibility of assisting indigenous peoples in “middle income countries” and poorer countries which are currently not included as NORAD partner countries.

Previously focussing on 5 countries in Latin America, The Norwegian Indigenous Peoples Programme has already undergone quite radical changes. Klepsvik especially noted that in Guatemala there had been a severe lack of coordination of different types of assistance and lack of communication between different Norwegian institutions. From now on, all direct support to indigenous organisations and other projects (including the Indigenous Peoples Programme in NORAD) will be administered through the Norwegian embassy. Similar changes will be implemented in other countries. Through the embassies, NORAD hopes to arrive at a closer communication with the local authorities and partners. The embassies will have better knowledge on Norwegian aid policy and practice, and thus be able to promote Norwegian views on these issues. In Brazil, rights issues have been particularly important. By transferring the previous Indigenous Peoples Programme projects to the embassy in Brasilia, NORAD hopes that the embassy will be able to promote Norwegian views in dialogues with Brazilian authorities. The embassies are also closer to the projects and potential and actual local partners, and will thus be more available for indigenous peoples and organisations.

Mentioning that NORAD’s aid to indigenous peoples totals approximately 100 million, Klepsvik claimed that most of it will continue to be state-to-state aid through international and Norwegian NGO’s as well as local organisations in the different partner countries. Emphasising the general efforts made in NORAD and other donor agencies to improve the reporting mechanisms, Klepsvik wished to introduce a way of reporting which also reflects the UN Millennium Development Goals.

### ***Indigenous Issues and a new Project Group in NORAD***

As part of the integration approach, Klepsvik mentioned that NORAD is currently including indigenous issues in different action plans and reports, also trying to make the actual assistance to indigenous peoples more visible. Klepsvik further noted that NORAD intends to

establish a project group within NORAD focusing on indigenous issues and projects. With representatives from different departments in NORAD, the project group will be responsible for the internal competence building on indigenous issues in NORAD. The project group is to conduct an internal evaluation by the end of 2004.

Commenting the drafted policy document, Klepsvik mentioned that NORAD makes a strict definition of indigenous peoples aid. In the draft it is called “specific aid to indigenous peoples”, which means clearly identifiable aims related to improving the situation for indigenous peoples in well defined areas. Also, the drafted guidelines state that indigenous peoples should always take part in the discussions of aims, priorities and methods. However, NORAD has decided not to include projects that more indirectly include indigenous issues within this framework.

#### **NORAD**

<http://www.norad.no/>

#### **Norwegian Indigenous Peoples Programme**

[http://www.norad.no/default.asp?V\\_DOC\\_ID=1087](http://www.norad.no/default.asp?V_DOC_ID=1087)

#### **The Evaluation of the Norwegian Program for Indigenous Peoples:**

An executive summary of the Evaluation report is available at UD Evaluation Report 8.98:

<http://odin.dep.no/ud/engelsk/publ/rapporter/032091-990133/index-dok000-b-n-a.html#1998>

(find 1998 nr 8)

## **COMMENTS ON THE NORAD REPORT/ DRAFTED GUIDELINES**

### ***The drafted guidelines***

Commenting the NORAD-report and drafted guidelines on Norway's efforts to strengthen development support to indigenous peoples, Axel Borchgrevink started by emphasising the overall positive elements, specifically

- The emphasis on rights based approaches, and
- An overall turn to more specific and targeted assistance to indigenous peoples.

Emphasising his support for the main intentions in the proposed guidelines, Borchgrevink especially recommended the rights based approaches as important instruments for changing the marginalized situations of many indigenous peoples. Stressing the need to clarify goals and strategies, he supported a narrow and more specific definition, and welcomed the introduction of a basic distinction between “specific development assistance” and “integrated development assistance” to indigenous peoples. NORAD presently supports many projects in areas densely populated by indigenous peoples, and many of them are defined as support to indigenous peoples even though they do not explicitly target indigenous issues. Borchgrevink favoured to only count targeted programmes as part of NORAD's assistance to indigenous peoples. He claimed that such changes would provide the basis for a more realistic overview of NORAD's support to indigenous peoples, and make it possible to talk about Norway's support to these groups in a more concrete and correct way.

Other positive elements according to Borchgrevink:

- A focus on the need to strengthen civil society rather than providing services.
- Increased cooperation between Sami organisations and Norwegian organisations working with and supporting (other) indigenous peoples
- The possibility of supporting indigenous peoples in more countries, and not only in the least developed ones.
- Expansion of NORAD's aid to indigenous peoples in Asia and Africa.

However, Borchgrevink also mentioned some elements which he meant were lacking in the new draft-strategy, which should have been developed further. His main complaint was that after all the time spent planning the organisation of support to indigenous peoples, he had hoped for guidelines more useful and suitable as a practical tool, strengthening assistance to indigenous peoples. Borchgrevink highlighted three areas in need of further definition and elaboration.

- Who are indigenous peoples?

The NORAD report uses the definitions in ILO convention without considering how they may be practiced. Further, there are a lot of other definitions in use, often emphasising cultural differences. Borchgrevink claimed that definitions differ by accentuating either a) first arrival in a certain area, or b) structural marginalisation in relation to state and society. Recommending the latter definition, Borchgrevink emphasised the difficulties of using the first arrival argument in many countries in Africa and elsewhere.

- Do no harm

Repeating his support of the specific support to indigenous peoples, Borchgrevink felt that it was very important to make sure that *other kinds* of assistance programme did no harm. However, the drafted NORAD guidelines did not include any paragraphs on how NORAD intends to secure indigenous peoples' interest in other kinds of aid programmes. Borchgrevink strongly advised that mechanisms to avoid doing harm to indigenous peoples should be part of all planning processes in areas inhabited by indigenous peoples

- Do good

Borchgrevink supported the general rights based approaches in the report, as well as the intentions of including indigenous peoples and priorities in the processes of project formulation. He further liked the links to the international indigenous agenda, and the emphasis on a holistic perspective on indigenous issues at country level. However, Borchgrevink felt that the report lacked an elaboration of four points central to NORAD as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

- Democracy
- Good governance and responsible authorities
- Rights and natural resources
- Distribution politics and basic social services

According to Borchgrevink, there is a need to concretise the support of indigenous rights within these fields, and also to suggest how support may be implemented on a country level. Additionally, he saw a need to confront the dilemmas in relation to recipient orientation and autonomy vs imposed indigenous policies. Borchgrevink ended the first part of his intervention by stating that he supported many of the main arguments in the report. However, other points made in the drafted guidelines need to be concretised in order to limit the difficulties of implementation.

### ***The Norwegian Indigenous Peoples Programme***

In the second part of the speech, Borchrevink was concerned with the future of the Norwegian Indigenous Peoples Programme. The NORAD report suggests that the Norwegian Indigenous Peoples Programme be reorganised and integrated into different departments in NORAD and that the projects are to be administered through embassies in the partner countries. Borchrevink strongly opposed this.

According to Borchrevink, the history of the programme shows many of the ambiguities and ambivalent aspects of the Norwegian attitudes to indigenous development cooperation. The programme was started 20 years ago, in the wake of the Alta case and an increased awareness of indigenous issues. On the other hand, there is a paradox that Norwegian authorities favoured indigenous issues abroad while trying to retard similar processes at home. During the 80's the Indigenous Peoples Programme lived a quite "invisible" life within NORAD, supporting 40 small projects in Latin America. In 1991 it was outsourced to FAFO. However, also in FAFO it became a strange element, and never integrated into the research environment. It still grew to a quite successful programme with considerable attention abroad.

However, in 1998 the programme was evaluated. The critique made NORAD take the programme back. Borchrevink did not think this was an obvious conclusion. He was further worried about the future of the programme within NORAD. Claiming that the drafted NORAD guidelines first and foremost takes into consideration the internal organisation of NORAD, he argued against administrating the programme projects through Norwegian embassies. Borchrevink agreed that within the NORAD system, the Indigenous Peoples Programme just didn't fit. However, he considered that instead of attending to the bureaucratic needs, NORAD ought to be responsible for the continuation of the programme. He emphasised that the programme has proved to have so many qualities, precisely because it is different from many other kinds of assistance programmes; it has:

- Sufficient administrative capacity securing tight follow up of all partners, and
- Flexible working methods fitting the partner organisations
- Emphasis on continuity

Borchrevink feared that most of these features would disappear with the proposed reorganisation, and he strongly advised NORAD not to go ahead with the plans. He further feared that integrating indigenous aspects in the overall NORAD strategy would lead to a less focused aid to indigenous peoples, and subsequently to less monetary input.

**NUPI - Norwegian Institute of International Affairs**

<http://www.nupi.no/>

*Douglas Sanders, University of British Columbia, Canada*

## **NEW DEVELOPMENTS ON THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE-STATE RELATIONS IN ASIA**

Welcoming the expansion of Norwegian and Sámi development cooperation with indigenous peoples in regions outside Latin America, Douglas Sanders contributed to the conference by sharing some glimpses of the new developments concerning indigenous peoples and issues in Asia.

Referring to previous debates at the conference concerning the difficulties of defining indigenous peoples outside Latin America, Sanders focused on the processes of definition that are currently taking place in very many Asian countries. He emphasised that the processes of defining indigenous peoples and issues are dynamic and ongoing processes, in Asia as well as other countries. Sanders drew a line from previous debates in the UN and Europe to the present situation in Asia. He pointed to the fact that in the first meetings in the Working Group in the UN, the Sámi People's status as an indigenous people was also questioned. Since then things have changed considerably, internationally as well as in the Scandinavian countries. According to Sanders the processes might be understood as "evolutions of understanding" where countries and national authorities as well as legal systems and international organisations are defining their way into a new understanding of indigenous peoples.

Referring to the Working group and other UN meetings, Sanders particularly focused how Asian countries like India, Bangladesh and Indonesia during the 80's challenged the ongoing processes. In Asia there have been many parallel discourses on definition. India and Bangladesh claimed that assimilation had made indigenous issues irrelevant. They preferred the term "tribal" when needing a distinction between different groups. In China they claimed that the majority population "han" were also indigenous. But when the term was applied to such a large group - it had no meaning. However, there are countries in Asia who emphasise and recognise indigenous peoples in their legal systems and in terms of statements internationally (Taiwan and Malaysia ao.). Also countries like the Philippines and Singapore have included indigenous rights in the constitution. However, problems with implementation are many. Sanders further reported that Japan has made some concessions, and that in Vietnam internal problems has made indigenous issues more visible.

Sanders told stories and gave short glimpses of important debates going on in many of the Asian countries. He emphasised the difficulty of presenting an overall analysis, and stated

that it would be wrong or premature to say that the “tide has changed”. He felt that things were still very “particular” in Asia, and there are no overarching regional forums handling indigenous issues. However, Sanders emphasised the potentials of indigenous discourse and was especially interested in the processes in India and China. These are countries with extensive provisions for their “tribal peoples”(India) and “national minorities” (China). But still they have not seen, or have refused to see, these policies in relation to the debates on indigenous peoples internationally. However, Sanders thought that this might change. Even though it has not changed in official statements, he assured the conference audience that changes were going on.

*Marit Myrvoll*

## **UPDATES ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMPETENCE CENTRE FOR INDIGENOUS RIGHTS IN KAUTOKEINO**

Drawing a line from the UN conference on Indigenous rights in Vienna to The Norwegian White paper NOU 1993 concerning legislation on human rights, Marit Myrvoll described the background and establishment of the Kautokeino Competence Centre for Indigenous Rights.

The Norwegian Parliament adopted the White Paper NOU 1993 in 1999. Further, a Human Values Action Plan for Human Rights was developed, discussing the field of problems related to the implementation of indigenous rights in Norway. The action plan stressed the need to locate the centre close to one of the Sámi competence environments in Finnmark or Tromsø so that the centre could be a specialized supplement to the existing environments focussing on human and indigenous rights. In 2001 the Norwegian government finally decided to locate the centre in Kautokeino. Located on the premises of the Nordic Sami Institute, the centre was established autumn 2002. Myrvoll reported that at the time of the conference their main concern was to establish infrastructure and economy.

Myrvoll stated that a main purpose for the centre is to create knowledge of and understanding for Indigenous rights and Sámi rights. Discussing the terms of reference, Myrvoll referred the somewhat confusing list of tasks mentioned in the White papers and Acton plan. Being an important part of the efforts to counteract the long-term negative effects of the previous policies of discrimination and assimilation conducted by the Norwegian authorities, the competence centre is established to increase knowledge about Human rights and Indigenous rights more specifically, in Northern Norway as well as other parts of the country. The competence centre is to have documentation and dissemination of knowledge and information on Sámi and other Indigenous Peoples' Rights as a central responsibility. With a mandate to cover international as well as national indigenous issues, the main task is to provide information for schools and other educational institutions.

Main centre activities is thus to gather, adopt and disseminate information and documentation on indigenous rights nationally and internationally. The centre shall not, however, conduct research itself, but it may indicate need for research in certain fields. Myrvoll further emphasised that the centre is to be an independent knowledge institution, not a Sámi political body.

Reflecting the intention of producing and disseminating science-based information, the board



will be constituted of representatives from Nordic Same Institute, Sámi University College, Institute of Human Rights/University of Oslo, University of Tromsø, and Sámi Council. All of these are competent institutions in the field of human rights.

According to Myrvoll, the centre in Kautokeino intends to develop activities similar to that of IWGIA, doCip Geneva, and other specialized documentation centres within the UN. Target groups are all individuals, organizations and institutions seeking knowledge about indigenous rights in Norway or internationally.

Finally, Myrvoll mentioned a few of the possible tasks in the near future. Referring to the work that has been done in order to disseminate the ILO conventions and its content to a wider public, she especially saw a need to facilitate the popularisation of the results of the Sámi Rights Commission. Similarly, other kinds of information drawn from books and white papers may be adapted to reach a wider audience. Showing some of the books and papers describing and discussing Sámi Rights and the situation of the Sámi people, Myrvoll left no doubt about the importance of the future work of the competence centre.

**Competence Centre for Indigenous Rights in Kautokeino c/o NSI:**

<http://www.nsi.no/>

**DoCip:**

<http://www.docip.org/>



## ***Forum for Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples***

### ***Forum conference 2002: Strategies for Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples***

For more information: <http://www.uit.no/ssweb/forum>

#### **Tuesday 01.10.2002**

20.00: Reception, Arctic Gallery, Grønnegata 23. (Grønnegata is Parallel with the Main street, The gallery is close to the Mack Brewery)

#### **Wednesday 02.10.2002:**

##### ***Opening of conference***

08.30-09.15: Registration

09.15-09.45: Opening by the University of Tromsø, the advisory board of the Forum and the Centre for Sami Studies

##### ***Strategies for Assistance to Indigenous Peoples***

09.45-10.30: "European Union: Strategies for Assistance to Indigenous Peoples" by Birgitte Feiring (Denmark)

10.30-10.45: Coffe

10.45-11.15: Comments from Lars-Anders Baer, The Saami Parliament (Sweden)

11.15-11.45: "Aid to Indigenous Peoples: expert to client or people to people?" by Indra Øverland. NUPI/Norwegian institute of International Affairs (Norway)

11.45-12.45: Discussion

12.45-13.45: Lunch

##### ***Focus at the Norwegian Strategies for Assistance to Indigenous Peoples***

13.45-14.30: "The Norwegian Strategy for Assistance to Indigenous Peoples" by Ingunn Klepssvik, NORAD/The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norway)

14.30-15.00: "Strategy for strengthened development cooperation with indigenous peoples, or bureaucratic streamlining?" by Axel Borchgrevink, NUPI/Norwegian institute of International Affairs (Norway)

15.00-16.00: Discussion

16.00-16.30: Coffee

##### ***Forum update***

16.30-17.00: "New developments in indigenous-state relations in Asia" by Douglas Sanders, University of British Columbia (Canada)

17.00-17.15: "Center for Indigenous Rights" by Marit Myrvoll, Center for Indigenous Rights, (Norway)

##### ***Closure of conference***

17.15-17.30: Closure of the conference

##### ***Banquet***

20.00: Banquet at Raddisson SAS hotell