

Governance, resources and co-management

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This session considered “new” governance forms, which means a move towards co-management and extended cooperation. This is a consequence of the world that is perceived of as getting smaller and making issues of governance linked, as the Norwegian parliamentarian Ivar Kristiansen pointed out in his presentation. It also implicates, as young researcher Tom Rostoks concluded, that the nation-states are no longer sufficient to deal with all aspects of governance. The people of the Circumpolar North need to participate to a higher degree.

To this aim, it was emphasised by several panellists, for instance young researcher Nina Häyrynen, that self-reliance and trust must be built up. Carl Christian Olsen from the Inuit Circumpolar Conference discussed that research today is disconnected from indigenous communities though knowledge really is meant to be shared. This disconnection could be changed by establishing more relations between scientists and indigenous communities that would create trust.

A personal reflection about this session and forum is that much of the attention is at Native peoples, which is very important. They are, however, not the only people who live in the Circumpolar North and it is important not to forget the others who also mostly live in rural areas and feel disempowered and not listened to. Let us work to create resilient institutions for *all* people in the Circumpolar North!

In this work we should keep in mind the words of Kristiansen that we should not see the challenges we face as a threat. Arnold Brower from the North Slope Borough Mayor’s Office also raised hopes by highlighting that the sometimes slower development of the North can be seen as though we have “saved the best for last”!

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John B. Zoe, representative of the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council, gave a presentation about how the Tliche Agreement on indigenous peoples’ land claims in Canadian North West Territories was drawn up. The history of Dogrib land claims dates back to 1920’s and only now the objective of indigenous populations’ right to control their

land and gain economic benefits from use of natural resources in their home land is becoming a reality.

The example presented by Mr. Zoe was discussed later in several occasions during the forum and the experiences gained during this process was seen as a good example for other indigenous groups in the Circumpolar North, especially for those living in Russia. The Tliche Agreement is a relatively successful example of wise governance and empowerment of the native people.

During the same session Kirill Istomin from the Komi science centre, Russia gave a presentation

about the differences in understanding and perceiving the environmental effects of oil development among Komi reindeer herders and scientists. This case study clearly showed that the understanding of concepts differs substantially even between countrymen. We should, thus, be aware of societal and cultural heterogeneity in the Circumpolar North, inside nation states and between them, when we are trying to use the good governance experiences gained in some areas of the North to be implemented in others. This leads to the conclusion that definition of common concepts is a crucial precondition for fruitful co-operation in the pluralistic and culturally diverse Circumpolar North.