

Nordic Sami Council helps Native people

The Nordic Sami Council is an organ for cooperation which deals with problems concerning the Samis in Norway, Sweden, and Finland. The Samis are the indigenous Native people of Scandinavia.

The purpose of the council is to serve and protect the economic, social, and cultural interests of the Samis in the countries concerned. The council endeavors to support and strengthen mutual contacts and

solidarity among the Sami population in addition to making the situation and goals of the Samis generally known. The council has also been assigned with the task of ensuring that the Samis are recognized as such and that they can continue to live in their native territory which they have inhabited for centuries. The council wants to be a unifying factor serving the common goals of the Nordic Samis, an organization in which the Samis can cooperate when dealing with issues of concern to them all.

The Nordic Sami Council is in close contact with the national Sami organizations, but it is not a cover organization for them. Cooperation is also emphasized by the fact that there are many Samis among the council membership who also hold positions in the governing bodies of the national Sami organizations. Plans have been made to strengthen this connection to

the organizations in conjunction with the new regulations which are now under preparation.

According to the regulations now in force the Nordic Sami Council consists of five members from Norway, four from Sweden, and three from Finland, plus alternates. These members are named by the Nordic Sami Conference which is held every second year. Participating in this conference are 30 Sami delegates from Norway, 24 from Sweden, and 20 from Finland, all of whom have the right to vote. It can thus be seen that in practice the Sami Conference serves as the parliament for the Nordic Samis. The Sami Conference must take a stand on different issues which concern the Samis as well as draw up resolutions and guidelines for the work of the Sami Council between conferences. In accordance with present regulations the Sami Council arranges these conferences in order to

further solidarity between the different Sami groups and to make Sami issues objects of more general discussion and interest.

During the Ninth Sami Conference which took place in the summer of 1976 it was decided that the council would become a member of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP). This opens wider perspectives for the Samis, the Sami Council and Sami cooperation.

The Sami conferences and the Sami Council appoint committees and work groups for the following fields: the economy and environment, handicraft, instruction and education, information and language questions. The Sami Council also functions as an advisory organ for the Nordic Sami Institute. The Sami members of the board of the Sami Institute are elected by the Sami Conference.
