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**Climate Change
and Arctic Sustainable Development :
scientific, social, cultural and educational challenges**

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ABSTRACT: BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

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Biodiversity and ecosystem services

The Saami culture is based on a close relationship to the living resources. The conditions for the living resources are constantly changing. Our realities have never been stable and stability has never been the objective. Thus, we can state that our culture traditionally has depended upon the biological diversity and the ecosystem services, as I understand the concept. Still today our culture depends on continues production in lively Saami communities, still living in a close relationship with nature.

Climate change brings our culture new challenges, but we traditionally, and rooted in our knowledge, have the capacity to face these new challenges; our knowledge should hold the skills and information necessary to adapt to new environmental conditions. "Our search for adaptation strategies is not connected to stability in any form, but in stead instead is focused on constant adaption to changing conditions" (Johan Mattis Turi).

Today's challenge lies mainly in the legal framework and regulations put in place by the authorities, without proper participation by the knowledge holders. The authorities depend on knowledge for their decision making. So far the authorities tend to rely solely on science, and traditional knowledge is not given equal value as a basis for research itself or as basis for developing the legal framework.

Cultural sites can serve as an example for investigating how people have been able to adapt to climate changes previously/historically. Also community-based monitoring has to be further developed/explored to serve the decision-making.

Our knowledge system has always, and continues, to explore adaptive strategies – based in traditional knowledge – that have served Arctic Peoples in the past, in the present, and may do so in the future.

Finally, the ability to adapt to constant changes is rooted in our knowledge that is developed in our regions in the north about living in the north and is embodied in our languages.

Recommendations:

- Seek support for the community based documentation of Traditional Knowledge as a critical source of information to make decisions

- Educate scientists and policy makers about differences and similarities in the knowledge systems and underlying world views
- Traditional Ecological Knowledge must form the basis for regulations, laws and policies and decision-making on the environment and natural resource management;
- Parallel processes must be recognised and encouraged between western scientific methods and the Traditional Knowledge of Arctic Indigenous Peoples in examining the causes and impacts of climate change
- Educate legislators about traditional practices critical to sustainable development (e.g., reindeer castration, whale hunting);