

The World Congress of the Finno-Ugric Peoples

June 15-17, 2016

Lahti, Finland

Section 4: Economy and Environment

Moderator: Sakari Linden

Uvazhaemyj kollegi, Ladies and gentlemen, Arvoisat suomalais-ugrilaiset ystävät,

I warmly welcome you to the 7th World Congress of the Finno-Ugric peoples. As a Finn, I am proud that the World Congress is held for the second time in Finland.

My name is Sakari Linden and I act as a moderator of this Section number 4, which concerns economy and environment.

The significance of the World Congress is huge for the future of the Finno-Ugric peoples. Together, our responsibility is to find new means to secure and strengthen the vitality of the Finno-Ugric peoples. This means to increase the number of persons that identify as Finno-Ugrians, increase the number of people that speak languages of the Finno-Ugric peoples, as well as raise the social status of minority Finno-Ugric languages in the regions inhabited by Finno-Ugric peoples.

Economy and environment are especially important subjects because they determine vitality of the Finno-Ugric peoples in the future. We all agree that it is an absolute value to protect and revitalize minority languages. However, we need more incentives to ensure that speakers of Finno-Ugric languages feel that the knowledge of their language benefits them and they decide to transmit the knowledge of their language to their children. Economy is one of those incentives that can encourage them. On the other hand, we need balance between economy and environment, which makes the development sustainable. That is the key word of our section, the sustainable development.

Our approach to the Finno-Ugric peoples' affairs has to be two-fold. Firstly, we have to keep in mind the geographical characteristics of the regions inhabited by Finno-Ugric peoples. Secondly, we have to have a connection to the global movement of indigenous peoples and thus adopt best practices from indigenous peoples elsewhere.

Speakers in our section will raise questions and best practices related to the use of indigenous peoples' land from the perspective of international law and development of ethno tourism.

The working method of our section consists of presentations given by our expert speakers and general discussion, where you will be able to raise your own points of view to the subject. We will draw conclusions from these two parts and propose them as part of the official recommendations of the World Congress to the governments of the Finno-Ugric regions.

I wish you a good world congress and fruitful and productive work.