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I propose that the Standing Committee of the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Regions discusses the following issues in order to prepare a formal proposal to the Arctic Council from the upcoming Conference of the CPAR in September 2018. The formal proposal to the AC would call for an annual summer seminar/school where representatives of indigenous/first nations of the Arctic Region inform and educate people from various walks of life, from outside of within the Arctic countries.

These issues should be open for discussion:

1. Is it advisable to plan and conduct a 4-week-long seminar or summer school where representatives of various indigenous nations from the Arctic countries meet with individuals from the media, NGOs, schools, academies and universities, government institutions, parliaments etc.?

2. The curriculum would contain information and education tied to the indigenous ways of life, ethics of indigenous people and the understanding of nature - of how to utilize nature on one hand and protect the environment on the other. Is this a correct statement?

3. If advisable, how would an institution like such a seminar/summer school be financed and organized? Under what auspices would an institution like this best function?

4. How would the selection of "students" be done, and by whom? Is a form of application process more realistic?

5. Should a seminar/summer school of this kind be located in one of the educational centres in one of the major Arctic towns, or is it smarter to organize

such an event in a rotating fashion - being held in one Arctic country after another in a local indigenous community where communications and infrastructure are sufficiently strong.

6. In what way should cooperation with different organizations of indigenous peoples in the Arctic be conducted?

7. Do you see this kind of activities being enlarged to be a part of the UN Training Programs or the UN University (non-degree programs)?

Statement

The enclosed idea was introduced via a letter to the UN and the MFA in Iceland in 2014. I have also briefly introduced the basic idea to the Office of Arctic Issues at the MFA in Iceland (in 2016):

*" I propose that a somewhat similar training program is established in a relevant Arctic country concerning the rights, experience, knowledge and culture of the different Arctic indigenous people. The program is mainly aimed at the non-indigenous population of both Arctic countries and countries outside of the Arctic. The purpose is to educate academics and non-academic people (e.g. from the media) and disseminate knowledge about the various indigenous societies and their interaction with the environment, through courses and field experience."*

During the SCPAR meeting in Sisimiut (May 16th 2017), I promised to send the original letter to all the representatives of the SC, and after the SCPAR meeting in Iceland in October 2017, to expand the proposal and write an adjoining statement. Brief discussions during this October-meeting led to the preliminary conclusion that it would probably be too complicated to have this kind of a summer venue organized under the umbrella of the UN Training Programs (all four present ones are conducted in Iceland).

To my knowledge, different indigenous nations have a vast experience and solid knowledge, refined by generations, on nature and the many ways around in the Arctic environment. The ethics and rules are interesting, the philosophy and human skills are enlightening.

The purpose of a seminar of this kind is to educate academics and non-academic people (e.g. from the media) through courses and field experience and disseminate knowledge about the various indigenous societies and their interaction with the environment.

I am confident that this would highly benefit the ongoing political, scientific and economic development that changes rapidly in the Arctic regions. It will also strengthen the work done by the indigenous people themselves in their strive for a stronger position within the vast Arctic that is currently under heavy pressure from equally rapid environmental and social changes.

Out of about 4 million inhabitants, the 10% of the people in the Arctic, the many indigenous nations, have a lot to tell and show the other 90%. Interaction between different cultures benefits us all.

My concern for indigenous people in the neighboring countries, and worldwide, of whom we have none in Iceland, stems from my travels, documentaries and writings in different parts of the world as well as from engagement in the debate on global warming.

Respectfully yours,

Ari Trausti Guðmundsson