
*GENDER EQUALITY AND 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT*

Session 5.15 at UArctic Congress 2018
Date: 5 September 2018, Time: 10.30-12.00
Place: Saalasti Hall, University of Oulu, Finland

SUMMARY OF THE ROUND TABLE CROSS-SECTOR DISCUSSION

The session Gender Equality and 2030 Agenda discussed the main challenges of integrating gender equality perspectives in the activities of the Arctic Council focusing on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and discussed also some of the SDGs, for example good health and wellbeing (3), quality education (4), and decent work and economic growth (8).

MODERATOR

Ann-Marie Nyroos, Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland

PANELISTS/SPEAKERS

Pekka Shemeikka, Chair of SDWG of Arctic Council, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland

Bryndis Kjartansdóttir, Senior Arctic Official, Directorate for International and Security Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Iceland

Gunn-Britt Retter, Head of the Arctic and Environmental Unit, Saami Council

Natalia Kukarenko, Assistant Professor in Philosophy, Northern Arctic Federal University (NArFU), Arkhangelsk, Russia

Rasmus Ole Rasmusen, Senior Research Fellow, MAP-SCAN, Roskilde, Denmark

Read about the session

<https://congress.uarctic.org/program/science-section/sessions/5-other/session-36141/>

INTRODUCTION

Ambassador **Ann-Marie Nyroos** from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland gave an introduction to the panel, and said that the aim was to discuss how the Arctic Council in practise can integrate gender perspectives into its work, especially in the context of sustainable development. Nyroos pointed out that the work done on gender equality from 2002 to 2014 has given Arctic Council a platform from where to move forward. Nyroos also described the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, which is based on three pillars - the economic, social, and environmental, and that these are equally important and support each other. She pointed out that gender equality is the key to reach the goals and all human resources - not only half of them - need to be put in use to achieve economic, environmental and social sustainability. Economists have realized that gender equality also promotes economy, actually in a remarkable way, and women's experiences are crucial in finding sustainable solutions for climate change, and women should participate in the decision-making at all levels.

Gender Equality is Goal number five of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and sets up special targets, which all are to be implemented in every country. In the UN Agenda 2030 it was also agreed that the gender perspective should be integrated into all the other goals. Nyroos pointed out, that the gender mainstreaming work is often challenging, as it also is in the Arctic Council, but as she said, it is the same for all regions in the world.

The Arctic Region is characterized by cultural diversity, with often harsh living conditions due to the climate and remoteness of the communities. The climate is rapidly changing its nature and the whole society. All the people, women and men, including the indigenous peoples living in Arctic communities, need to cope with this change. The UN Agenda 2030, also when it comes to gender equality, is a framework for the Arctic Region, and it has specific challenges. Nyroos stated that one of the strengths of the Arctic Council is the inclusive way of working. Governments, indigenous people, the scientific community and the young generation are cooperating for sustainability. This is a great asset in the input for sustainability. Nyroos concluded by saying that the panel will share views on what are good practises and challenges of integrating the gender equality perspective in the activities of the Arctic Council.

PRESENTATION

Rasmus Ole Rasmussen gave a presentation on *Gender Perspectives on Path Dependencies - Regional Socio-Economic Dependencies and Its Gendered Impacts*. Rasmussen described the population and settlement changes in the Arctic settlements from 1990-2010. He presented an overview of where women and men live in the Arctic region, and said that women are in majority in big cities, such as in Reykjavik, Iceland, Rovaniemi, Finland and Krasnoyarsk, Russia, and men are in majority in Greenland, Sakha, Russia, and Alaska, USA, and most men in majority are found in Chukotka region in Russia. Rasmussen asked the question: What have been the drivers in this development?

The characteristics of the mobility of women and men in the Arctic Region are: men move because of career opportunities as getting a better job, or just getting a job, better salaries and options of getting better working conditions and women move for better own education options, family matters, better education options for children and improved leisure time options. Characteristics that were equal for both men and women were: improved public transports, improved health conditions, better housing and public service options. Rasmussen said that perceptions of change have become multidimensional and the gender aspects are based on the person's role of the relations to the community, the role to the relations to the world outside the community and the role of qualifying to the world outside the community. The surveys from 2005, 2008 and 2014 in Greenland show that of the boys, 11% will stay in the village in the community, and 19 % will stay in the town of the community, while of the girls 37 % will move to Nuuk, and 28 % will look for global opportunities. He also described the perspectives of path dependencies based on a project collecting tweets in Iceland and Greenland and there is a gender difference between the tweets of young men and young women. The young men asked: What can *I* do? What have *I* accomplished? How do *I* compare to the others? The young women asked: What can *we* do? What can *we* accomplish together? How, where and when can *we* interact again?

Rasmussen also presented the consequences of increased mobility in the Arctic. Earlier choice of residence used to be a-once-in-a-life-time option. Men today seem to be socialized into path dependency and have difficulty accepting other paths and changes, while women are more open for changes, which makes them prepared to move between

job categories and job options, and thus women are much more mobile, both socially and geographically. Men, on the contrary, maintain traditional work, that not enables them to ensure the investments needed to modernize and expand their activities. And without a wife with a second income, the investments are absent. At the same time men lack the education that might provide them with alternatives. So men are stuck, without options for mobility, both geographically and socially.

Today geographic mobility, on the other hand, makes it possible to move from one place to another through all our lives. Examples of this are fishermen from Greenland moving to Denmark, and Greenlandic grandmothers also move to Denmark, to be close to their families, children and grandchildren.

Rasmussen ended by saying that in the Arctic Council the following issues should be discussed in a gender perspective:

- The differences in gender related perception of change
- The path dependency
- The role of diaspora
- The life cycle related mobility

PANEL DISCUSSION

How all the human resources could be used in the Arctic Council and the Arctic Region.

Pekka Shemeikka pointed out that gender equality is the key-question for using all resources in the Arctic region. Round Table discussions as this about *Gender Equality and UN 2030 Agenda* are important arenas to raise awareness of how to utilize all available human resources. Arctic Council has hosted two conferences on gender equality *Taking Wing* in 2002 in Finland and *Women in the Arctic* in 2014 in Iceland. A follow-up result of the Taking Wing conference was the Arctic Council project *Women in the Fisheries 2002-2004*. One of the priorities of the Finnish Chairmanship is education and connectivity and both of these have of course a high gender perspective.

Pekka Shemeikka said the survey Rasmus Ole Rasmussen presented, and available Arctic research about attitudes and changes, should be used as base for a sustainable competition on the resources in the Arctic region. A new approach to gender equality should be built up through education in all regions in the Arctic.

Bryndis Kjartansdóttir, took up the discussion of the importance of engaging men in the discussion on gender equality, and referred to the concept of *barbershops* that the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs has developed. A barbershop with the theme *Equality at Home and at Work Mobilizing Men and Boys for Gender Equality* was arranged in autumn 2017 in Copenhagen, Denmark. The aim of the concept is to include more men into the gender equality discussions and development of gender equality policies without excluding men. The idea is that men are empowering men on gender issues, by creating safe environments ("the barbershops") for men to discuss gender equality. Today women are dominating the gender discussions, while men have the leader positions. Kjartansdóttir said that in the Arctic Council the gender equality perspective is not integrated into the discussions from the beginning, it is more like a pop-up issue. She ended by saying that Arctic Council is an organisation, where the decision-making is based on consensus decisions and the most focus is on issues as sustainable development, climate and environment.

Barbershop conference can be followed via the link

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9J3oLM4L79s&list=PL34_oCe07XYyI0_Izr4C9BsDtnnBa0Jt3

Gunn-Britt Retter said that a new trend in the Saami population is that young educated women return and establish families in their home region. Ten years ago the statistics showed that educated Saami women stayed in municipalities and cities, where they could get a job corresponding to their education.

Retter pointed out that it is a question of women and power, and the conferences should perhaps be called something else than women in the Arctic. A conference called food, focus on those who cook, those who eat, and the old people, who has knowledge on traditional cooking. This food conference should focus on who cook, is to women or men, what are women eating, what food men prefer, and is it women or men, who pass over traditional cooking to the next generation. Today the issues of Arctic Council focus on are called oil and money. More focus should be on how the Arctic Agenda is defined and how Arctic Council addresses all women living in the Arctic Region.

Natalia Kukarenko stressed the need of specific Arctic gender equality data and in order to grasp this human development complexity. There is a need to develop more sophisticated tools via multi/transdisciplinary research, e.g. on human health, how health risks, health rights and health security are perceived by women and men and, in turn, to find out how their awareness affects their own situation. The power relations between the women and the men should be analysed through the different resources women and men have depending on their age, education, if they are indigenous people, or belong to other groups in the society, living in cities or rural areas, etc. Another question is: the focus on diversity. There is a need for more intersectionality between the different issues, and a key-question is how to integrate the natural sciences into the discussions on diversity and gender. Kukarenko said: "We need bigger complexity research projects on human health in the Arctic Region."

What are the challenges of integrating a gender perspective in the Arctic Council?

Today in UN the discussion on *Agenda 2030* also have a *global focus on the Arctic region*. The major aspect in the discussion on the Arctic is the competition on resources, and because of this there is a need for new innovations, also for social innovations, and therefore a gender perspective should be included into the discussions of the development of the competition of the resources and the development of all kind of innovations. In addition to the indigenous perspective the Arctic Council should also add the gender equality perspective, and Arctic Council should also take it into the global UN discussion focusing on the Arctic region.

The *Arctic Council core mandate* is on sustainable development and environment, and healthy food is important for both women and men, so the focus should be on food security from a gender perspective, and a sustainable management of the food could be a project integrating both women and men living in the Arctic Region. A new strategy to guarantee gender inclusion in the Arctic Council should be developed.

During the panel it was stated that *gender equality is disappearing from the political agenda* and therefore there is a need for a real dialogue between researchers and decision-makers/politicians, because these two groups are thinking very differently.

The panel also discussed, which of the UN SDG:s could be included in the Arctic Council work with a gender perspective, and proposed the following:

- Gender equality, both as a goal itself, and as a gender goal included in all the SDG:s - must be a perspective for both the governments, but also for the private sector - otherwise the SDG:s cannot be reached
- Sustainability relates to gender - women need to empower women, because today men are all the time empowering men
- Sustainable consumption has also a gender perspective - women and men consume differently
- Climate action - a gender perspective is needed in the Arctic region
- Education - must include a gender path
- Educate the silver generation in digital skills - a step forward to change the roles of women and men
- Family models should be discussed - the city model/nuclear family or the village model
- Childcare - included into the balance of working life and family/private life

MESSAGE FROM THE ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

The Round Table concluded that to ensure that gender equality is on the Arctic Council agenda each chairmanship is encouraged to prioritize gender equality within the framework of at least one of the prioritized chairmanship activities. This would guarantee a long-term discussion on gender equality within the Arctic Council.