

Gávnnadeapmi 3 Youth Declaration – Oktasaš Sápmi

Adopted on 18 June 2026 in Ohcejohka

We, the Sámi youth, gathered in Ohcejohka from June 15–18, 2026, to discuss the future of Sápmi, with a particular focus on oktasaš Sápmi – an undivided Sápmi.

Oktasaš Sápmi – Sápmi without colonial borders. We share the same culture, traditions, and values across Sápmi. We are shaped by those who came before us, and we are now shaping the future for generations to come.

We recognize the importance of Gávnnadeapmi and strongly urge the Saami Council to continue supporting and enabling cross-border youth gatherings and to ensure that youth engagement remains a core priority.

We, the Sámi, and our ways of life, are inseparable from the lands, waters, and forests. Healthy ecosystems are the foundation of healthy lives. States must ensure clean, drinkable water and healthy forests for present and future Sámi generations. This requires Sámi community-led monitoring, strong protection of forests, and the full implementation of the Rights of Nature.

The climate crisis poses an imminent and severe threat to present and future Sámi generations, as well as to our traditional livelihoods. We firmly condemn the exploitation of our territories for renewable energy projects – this is not a solution, it is green colonialism. Young Sámi should not have to carry the double burden of climate change and the theft of our lands.

We need stronger protection for Sámi traditional livelihoods. Sámi reindeer herding should be legally recognized as a distinct Indigenous practice in Finland. Financial aid must be guaranteed to Sámi reindeer herders during crises caused by climate change. Specifically, an emergency fund, governed by the Sámi, must be established to compensate for damages and loss of livelihoods caused by extreme weather conditions.

Land encroachment, such as increasing military presence and mass tourism, presents ongoing challenges to Sápmi. Any activities on Sámi lands must be in full compliance with our rights to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent.

The rivers and seas have always provided for us, and in return, we carry the responsibility to protect and care for them. Current salmon fishing regulations imposed by states directly violate our right to self-determination. River and sea stewardship must be deeply rooted in the Sámi way of life and guided by our traditional systems of governance.

National legislation must be brought into full alignment with international human rights instruments, including UNDRIP, ILO 169, ICCPR, and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).

Diversity is our strength – Sápmi should be a safe and inclusive place for everyone, regardless of gender or sexuality. Sámi youth need permanently funded, low-threshold mental health services that are culturally sensitive based on Sámi values.

One Curriculum for all – We call for a cross-border Sámi educational system that unites our youth beyond state boundaries. Every Sámi child has the right to learn Sámi. We demand proper resources for education in all Sámi languages and public visibility of them. The states must ensure the right of Sámi youth to reclaim our languages, actively support native Sámi speakers, and support the development of our living languages.

Duodji, luohiti, and storytelling connect us. We cannot learn this knowledge solely from books; it is passed down through oral tradition and learned by doing – from generation to generation. We are forced to spend our time fighting for our fundamental rights. Rapid changes to our way of life demands us to protect our very existence. We want – and need – to focus on learning and passing down our culture to future generations.

We reclaim our Siida system on our terms. Our vision is an undivided Sápmi, oktasaš Sápmi.