



CONFERENCE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

Report

Panel discussion in the UN/New York, 4 June 2008.

The Arctic – A Barometer for Global Climate Change

The Fourth Assessment Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Changes (IPCC) tells us that the Arctic is warming at almost twice the global average. The rising temperature is changing the Arctic in many ways. An area where the ice previously has hindered human activities is being replaced by open waters in the summer season. This will give way to new shipping, fishing, oil and gas, and tourism activities. These activities are either new to the area or are being considerably scaled up. How is this influencing the people living in the Arctic?

The consequences of reduced snow and ice cover at a global level give reasons for great concern. The UNEP report “Global outlook for ice & snow” gives us valuable insight to what is happening in the polar and mountain regions of the world.

Small coastal communities in the Arctic will be among those hit hardest by these changes. The culture and living conditions are threatened, and there is a great need to assist these communities in adapting to the changes.

The Small Island Developing States and the communities in the Arctic are experiencing much of the same effects of climate change. We need to cooperate and share our experiences and scientific results, especially on adaptation to the changing climate.

Over the last 15 years the Arctic cooperation has experienced a new spring. The scientists have gone from being a tool of the military presence in the Arctic to deliver important information about the Arctic environment. The indigenous peoples in the Arctic have in a successful way found their voice in sharing with the rest of the world what they think about the impacts of the global change.

The dynamic of the cooperation between the Arctic science community, the Arctic indigenous peoples and the Arctic political organisations, has been the motor in the circumpolar cooperation.

To be able to host a panel discussion in the UN on this important topic was a great honor for the Arctic parliamentary cooperation, and especially to present such a distinguished and highly qualified panel for the event. Dr Robert Corell from the Arctic science community, Ms Darcie Mattiessen representing the Arctic indigenous peoples, Ms Juliane Hennigsen from the Arctic parliamentary cooperation, and Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, the Executive Secretary of the UN Convention on Biodiversity, one of the most important conventions with regards to Arctic and climate change.

An important part of the panel was the intervention from Ms. Annebeth Rosenboom, Chief of the Treaty Section, Office of Legal Affairs in the UN. Included in the list of treaties for the



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Annual Treaty Event 2008 are treaties relevant to the International Polar Year. Signatories to the UN - treaties relevant to the Arctic and their implementation, are of paramount importance to the governance of the Arctic.

Finally I want to thank the Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations for their generous assistance with the practical preparations and good advises in advance of the seminar. A special thanks to Ambassador Løvald for chairing the meeting.

Yours,

Hill-Marta Solberg
Chair of the Standing Committee
of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region



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Intervention by Dr. Robert Corell

“Climate Change from an Arctic perspective”

(Summary by Mr. Bjørn Willy Robstad)

Looking at the history of climate change on earth, an Ice Age occurs about every 100,000 years. The current interglacial period is very long compared to all the interglacial periods. The last 20, 000 years seems to have been ideal for the development of human societies, it has been an historic “Sweet Spot”.

The IPCC WG 1 (2007) stated:

“The global increases in carbon dioxide concentration are due primarily to fossil fuel use and land-use change, while those of methane and nitrous oxide are primarily due to agriculture”.

So what will happen to the temperature on earth? If we continue at the current rates of emissions we are likely to arrive at 3 degrees Celsius higher average sometime mid-to late 21st century. The different IPCC scenarios vary from 1.5 to 4.5 degrees Celsius by about 2100. This rise in temperature will impact food security, water issues, ecosystems, extreme weather events and the risk of rapid climate change and irreversible impact. The regional and national impact will vary.

Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global average sea level.

There is now higher confidence in projected patterns of warming and other regional-scale features, including changes in wind patterns, precipitation and some aspects of extremes and of ice.

Anthropogenic warming and sea level rise will continue for centuries due to the time scales associated with climate processes and feedbacks, even if greenhouse gas concentrations were to be stabilized.

The Arctic is experiencing some of the most rapid and severe climate change on Earth. Over the next 100 years, climate change is expected to accelerate, contributing to major physical, ecological, social, and economic changes. Changes in the Arctic climate will also affect the rest of the world.

The extent of sea ice reached a minimum in recorded history September 14 2007. Especially the last few years the extent of sea ice has decreased dramatically. One consequence could be increased shipping, as the Northern Sea Route is 45 % shorter than the Suez Canal. The Arctic is also expected to hold large parts of the worlds undiscovered petroleum resources. The melting ice may make these resources more accessible.



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Major geopolitical issues are unresolved across the Arctic Basin:

1. Access: Issues of Access and Rights of Passage through the Northern Sea Route (Russia) and the Northwest Passage (Canada)
2. Seaward Claims: Claims of seaward ownership within the Arctic oceanic basin. Median Line Method (i.e., Divide into areas proportional to the amount of coastline of a country), and the Sector Method (Divide into areas by essentially longitudinal line from the countries to the pole).
3. Boundary disputes: Many boundary disputes still exist.
4. Land claims: Many still unresolved across the Arctic region
5. Venue: Is the Law of the Sea the venue to resolve these geopolitical issues, or other international frameworks required?

The Greenland ice sheet dominates land ice in the Arctic. From May to September 2007 the melt area was the highest in the 29 – years of satellite records, and the melt area had increased by almost 30% since 1979.

A rise in sea level by 1 meter will have dramatic consequences for countries like Denmark and the Netherlands, and for Florida and Louisiana in the US.

The Concept of “Tipping Points”

Compared to past changes in a physical, bio-ecological and/or human system, a “tipping point” is when:

- The change is abrupt and
- The ability of the system to return to its original state is not very likely, that is: Hence, the system is now in a new state.

The changing climate influences the biodiversity and shifting in weather types and locations:

- Spruce bark beetle dramatically changes the forest, the landscape, and ecological systems.
- The polar bears are profoundly impacted by the loss of ice.
- Thunderstorms have migrated northward, along with lightning, which apparently caused the first known wildfire north of the Brooks Range in Alaska, which occurred last summer.

The Fourth International Polar Year (IPY) 2007-2009 is addressing uncertainties and gaps in knowledge. The IPY has more than 50, 000 participants from more than 60 nations, covering the Arctic and the Antarctic.

Focus scientific & public attention on Polar Regions by addressing these themes:

- Enhanced understanding of current status
- Past & future changes
- Linkages to global processes
- Investigate frontiers of science in polar regions
- Vantage point to earth history & to space
- Social & cultural dynamics & adaptability

Indigenous peoples knowledge and community issues are important parts of the research.



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The IPY is addressing priority issues at a critical time in human history, and is delivering insights and essential information by collaboration among many scientists and nations.

The 27-29 May 2008, governmental representatives from the five coastal states in the Arctic (Russia, the US, Canada, Norway and Denmark/Greenland) met in Ilulissat, Greenland to discuss the Arctic Ocean. “The Ilulissat Declaration” was adopted.

“The Arctic Ocean stands at the threshold of significant changes. Climate change and the melting of ice have a potential impact on vulnerable ecosystems, the livelihoods of local inhabitants and indigenous communities, and the potential exploitation of natural resources.”
(Quote from “The Ilulissat Declaration”).



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**Intervention by Ms. Juliane Henningsen,
MP, Denmark/Greenland**

“Climate Change in a Greenlandic perspective”

It's an honor to be able to address such a distinguished audience, in this important building on such an important topic – climate change.

My name is Juliane Henningsen and I am a member of the Danish parliament representing Greenland. I was elected to the parliament in November 2007. I am also a member of the Greenlandic Home Rule Parliament representing the party Inuit Ataqatigiit. At last but not least, I am a member of the Arctic parliamentary cooperation.

My home town is Ilulissat. That city has become famous as the city to go to when you want to see for yourself the impact of global warming. US- presidential hopeful John McCain has been there. German Chancellor Angela Merkel and U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi have dropped by to see the melting glaciers for themselves.

Ilulissat means in Greenlandic iceberg. And in Ilulissat icebergs are melting away. The glaciers are melting away. The sea ice is decreasing. The polar bear might soon be listed as an endangered species.

The arctic icecap has only half the size that is had 50 years ago. The nature is changing.

For us, people actually living in the Arctic, we have to deal with the consequences of climate changes and the effects on the arctic environment caused by global warming every day.

It has consequences for us!

We are living our whole life in the Arctic. And many of us have ancestors who have lived in the Arctic through many generations. We have through centuries adapted our way of living and our cultures to the arctic conditions.

The arctic cultures, like the Inuit culture, have adapted to the extreme and constantly changing arctic environment. I think it is some of our cultural mechanisms that have made it possible for the Inuit to survive in this ever changing arctic environment.

We have many old sayings on what people can do to change the weather. I don't think that many of us today believe in all of the old sayings.

But they do tell us, that there is an old Inuit understanding of the relationship between human actions and changes in the environment. And we have through generations adapted to the



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changing arctic climate, when we have lived on different places for summer camps and winter places.

What we are experiencing these years in Greenland does not suit all of us well.

For sure the Inuit hunters in the Northern parts of Greenland, Canada, Alaska and Russia are not happy with the fact that the sea ice is getting unreliable. These hunters can no longer go hunting during the winter months the way they have been doing for generations. The Arctic has become an environment of risk and an environment at risk.

The hunters will have to change their way of living, and such changes are not always easy to live with.

In the way we look at climate change we have a saying that “nothing is so bad that it is not good for something else”.

While the reduction of the ice cover may have a negative impact on some hunting activities, it may open up new opportunities for other activities like fisheries. Increasing sea temperatures seem to open up for new fishing possibilities for our fishermen.

A new generation of hunters and fishermen, building on their ancestors’ skills, and knowledge will and must learn how to cope with the changes.

In the southern part of Greenland we actually have longer growing seasons, and we can now almost grow all the potatoes and other vegetables we need in Greenland.

In the southern part of Greenland climate changes do not mean the same kind of challenges as they do for the hunters in the northern part of Greenland. In this part of my country we also have a strong tradition of sheep farming.

We see more tourists coming to Greenland, especially on cruise ships. And I might add, also a great deal of climate tourists. For the first time, the Northwest Passage – a sea route to Asia may be opened for shipping in the near a future.

And it is a positive effect that many tourists want to see my beautiful country.

Greenland has, for some time, been the focus of many international climate research activities. By the end of this summer, more than 3,400 scientists from 60 countries have been working in Greenland.

Denmark and Greenland have decided to create a climate centre at the Greenlandic University in Nuuk. I am quite pleased that we have agreed to create this centre in Greenland where climate change is literally going on outside the front door.



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When I look at Greenland and the other Arctic regions I can see both challenges and advantages in relation to climate change.

The dominating political current in Greenland these years is aiming at more political independence from Denmark. Climate change has already opened new areas for the exploitation of mineral resources as the Icecap is retreating.

And in combination with the political and economic control of our mineral resources it will open new opportunities for Greenland to gain more economic and political independence from Denmark.

Therefore I am happy to tell you that in Greenland historic events have taken place in the last weeks.

The Danish – Greenlandic Self–Rule Commission was established in June 2004 to identify areas which could be taken over for self-rule.

The Commission has now ended its work and has handed its report to the Greenlandic Prime Minister Hans Enoksen and the Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

One of the big issues addressed in the Self-Rule Commissions work is the right to the Greenlandic underground.

The Commission has decided that the Home-Rule government will have the right to secure minerals from the Greenlandic underground, while at the same time future revenues will be deducted from the Danish block grant.

The Self-Rule Commission has also agreed that minerals in Greenland's underground belong to Greenland. This means that one of our achievements in the coming agreement will be full Greenlandic control of our resources – both the renewable and un-renewable resources.

This does not mean that Greenland is becoming independent from Denmark now. The relations between Denmark and Greenland are good, solid and warm. But it means that the Greenlandic people are now becoming even more self governing. I am personally very much in favour of that. As the prime ministers said after the ceremony:

“It was a great day in the common history of our two countries”.

The new law of Self-Rule will now be sent to a referendum on November the 25th 2008. The referendum will not entail a withdrawal from the Danish state.

If the Greenlandic People votes in favour of the law, it is planned that the new Self-ruled Greenland will be a reality from the Greenlandic National Day next year on June 21st 2009.



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In 2009, Denmark – together with Greenland and the Faroe Islands – will take over the chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

With Greenland being at the centre stage of climate change and very much in the focus of international climate research, we will continue to focus on climate change and related issues and to do our best to give it a human dimension and a human face.

In 2009 Denmark will also be hosting the United Nations Conference on Climate change in Copenhagen. This will give a very good opportunity to demonstrate the urgent need for action to slow down climate change, and to speed up new strategies in dealing with global warming.

Greenland will of course be active in preparing the big summit in Copenhagen, and the Greenland Home Rule Government will support and promote every positive step and action that will help us deal with climate change.

Qujanaq – thank you for your attention.



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Intervention by Ms. Darcie Matthiessen Climate Change Coordinator, Arctic Athabaskan Council

Good afternoon. My name is Darcie Matthiessen. I work for the Arctic Athabaskan Council or “AAC”, which brings together Athabaskan peoples in northern Canada and Alaska. I live in Whitehorse, Yukon in northern Canada and I’m speaking on behalf of Cindy Dickson, AAC’s Executive Director, who sends her regrets for not being able to attend this important discussion. AAC was formed in 2000. Our purpose is to bring the voice of Athabaskans to international affairs. Like five other Arctic Indigenous Peoples organizations, AAC is a “permanent participant” in the eight-nation Arctic Council.

I want to begin by thanking Norway and the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic for bringing us together today. Norway has been a champion of environmental protection and international co-operation in the circumpolar world and the Arctic Parliamentarians never shy away from difficult issues.

The Arctic as the world’s barometer of environmental change seems to be a recent idea. UNEP’s Governing Council passed a resolution to this effect in February 2003, and the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA), released late in 2004, has greatly popularized the concept.

We need to embed the Arctic barometer into international legal instruments—the framework within which we make decisions. Then, and perhaps only then, will we be placed to listen to what the barometer is telling us. Let me elaborate.

When the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change was negotiated in the late 1980s and early 1990s, very few people used the words “Arctic” and “climate change” in the same breath. That is no longer the case. The plight of polar bears and barren-ground caribou have become symbols of the impacts of climate change worldwide.

The Arctic is disproportionately impacted by climate change—Dr. Bob Corell has told us how and why. What’s more, people live in the Arctic—they are on the front lines of climate change. To Athabaskans, Gwich’in, Aleut, Inuit, Sami and many other Indigenous peoples, the Arctic is “home” with all that this implies. In the Arctic, climate change is a human, cultural, and human rights issue. It is not just a matter of environmental protection.

The framework convention on climate change singles out certain portions of the globe - mountains, deserts, low-lying areas - that are thought to be particularly vulnerable but it does not even identify the Arctic. Like most international conventions, the UNFCCC is essentially a deal between North and South—between the developed and developing worlds. But the Arctic does not fit in this framework. Perhaps this is why it was ignored.



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The Arctic states—Canada, USA, Iceland, Finland, the Scandinavian countries and, increasingly, Russia are highly developed, yet many residents in the region suffer from levels of unemployment, poor health, and social pathologies—suicide, spousal assault, and drug and alcohol abuse—and levels of income closer to the third world than the first.

Not only does the UNFCCC fail to mention the Arctic, it fails to mention Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples in the Arctic are among the most vulnerable and highly impacted human populations worldwide. But to the UNFCCC, we are invisible. This is inequitable and it is unfair. Arctic Indigenous peoples know a lot about the environment—we have to—we rely upon it for our very food—and protecting food production is a core objective of the convention.

Drawing upon traditional knowledge as hunters, trappers and herders, Arctic Indigenous peoples have for more than 25 years reported changes to the natural environment as a result of global warming. Until recently few people listened. The ACIA is notable for its genuine effort to integrate traditional knowledge and science. This is why Arctic Indigenous peoples continue to speak about the ACIA and call upon other countries to emulate it and to heed its conclusions. The ACIA is the barometer in action. Unlike the Convention on Biological Diversity, the climate change convention does not have provisions endorsing and encouraging the use of traditional knowledge in decision-making. We think this is a major weakness of the convention.

I suspect that almost all of us in this room have attended Conferences of the Parties to the UNFCCC. So let me ask you a question: should not those who are most impacted by climate change and most vulnerable to its effects have their voices heard in the implementation of the convention? I think the answer is “yes.” Indigenous peoples around the world are becoming more insistent that they have a formal seat at COPs. Providing for this may require amendment to the convention, and I am interested in the views of the panel on this issue.

Some of you may think it is fanciful for Indigenous peoples to sit at the same table as governments in international meetings. Well, this already happens in the circumpolar world. The Arctic Council brings together Ministers of Foreign Affairs from eight countries. Six Arctic Indigenous Peoples organizations sit at the same table intervening under the same rules. We even have our own flags. It works pretty well. This is the sort of participatory model that should be emulated in COPs under UN conventions.

At the 2005 climate change COP in Montreal, Klaus Topfer, the Executive Director of UNEP, announced a programme to enable Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Arctic interests to work together on climate change. Klaus was a visionary. He understood the importance of the Arctic barometer and he appreciated the need for vulnerable regions to support each other internationally on adaptation, resilience and mitigation. I was in Belize last year working with representatives of SIDS to add flesh to the programme he announced. Norway has been highly instrumental in funding this programme called Many Strong Voices. The Arctic barometer is equipping AAC to work with people in other regions—we know we are all in the same boat.



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I want to finish with some words about Canada. Earlier I mentioned that to Athabaskans and other Arctic Indigenous peoples in Canada, climate change is an issue of rights. Let me explain. In the last 40 years, Canada has negotiated far-reaching, detailed, and comprehensive modern treaties with northern Indigenous peoples. The rights defined in these treaties are protected by our national constitution. To get these rights we had to cede to Canada our pre-existing but ill-defined aboriginal title to land and natural resources—not something we did lightly.

Modern treaties deal with land ownership, environmental management, wildlife harvesting and management, self-government and other issues. The impacts of climate change are eroding and undercutting the value and meaning of the rights, particularly rights to harvest wildlife, in our treaties. Defending our rights is the touchstone of Athabaskan organizations. This is why, to us, climate change is a matter of rights and we constantly urge the Government of Canada to press forward on mitigation and adaptation in order to protect our rights. As the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom said some years ago—climate change is a foreign policy issue.

In the early 1990s Canada had an enviable international reputation on environmental issues. Prime Minister Mulroney was the first, or one of the first, heads of government to sign the climate change and biodiversity conventions. Lamentably Canada is no longer an environmental leader and, in response to climate change, lags behind many others. Let me give you one recent example.

Following more than five years of effort by scores of government and university scientists with the involvement of Indigenous peoples, Canada completed this year its national climate change assessment—our equivalent of the ACIA. Rather than informing Canadians of the conclusions of the national assessment, it was posted, I might say slipped, onto the web site of a government department late on a Friday afternoon with not even an explanatory press release. Ministers did not speak to it or explain its conclusions.

From an Arctic and Indigenous peoples' perspective, this is an abrogation of responsibility and a dereliction of duty. This tawdry episode may prompt you to ask about the Government of Canada's commitment to address climate change. To some, climate change is one issue among many. In northern Canada and the circumpolar world, climate change is emerging as the key driver of social, economic, cultural and environmental change. In the North climate change is **the** issue.

Thank you very much.



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Statement by Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif
Executive Secretary, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are here today because we know that the world is on a path to self-destruction and we want to change its course. As we all know, clean water and air, pollination of crops, food, buffers from floods and storm surges, non-proliferation of infectious diseases, cultural values, raw materials to meet consumer demands—all of these things that so many of us take for granted—are the direct result of an incredible diversity of plant and animal species and their intricate interactions. Together, they provide the ecosystem services that ensure the well-being of humanity.

Yet in the same breath, we are destroying the very resources that sustain our lives and livelihoods. According to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the pressures on the planet's natural functions caused by human activity, have reached such a high level that the ability of ecosystems to satisfy the needs of future generations has been seriously, and perhaps irreversibly, compromised.

As climate change progresses, another human-induced change, more and more species and fragile habitats become threatened with extinction. The fourth assessment report issued in 2007 by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), demonstrates that up to 30 per cent of all known species are likely to be at increased risk of extinction before the end of this century.

At the United Nations General Assembly, following her appointment as Special Envoy of the Secretary General on Climate Change, the visionary and consensus builder, Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, stated, "It is irresponsible, reckless and deeply immoral to question the seriousness of the situation. The time for diagnosis is over and the time for action is now".

Arctic regions are now experiencing some of the most rapid and severe climate change on Earth, which will contribute to global environmental and socio-economic changes - many of which have already begun.

During the 20th century, Arctic air temperatures increased by approximately 5 degrees C. This increase is ten times faster than the observed global-mean surface temperature. An additional warming of about 4-7 degrees C in the Arctic is predicted for the next 100 years.

As you know, the Arctic is particularly threatened by climate change. Arctic species and societies have developed very specialized adaptations to the harsh conditions found at the poles, thus making them extremely vulnerable to dramatic changes in these conditions.

Walrus, polar bears, seals and other marine mammals that rely on sea ice for resting, feeding, hunting and breeding are particularly threatened by climate change.

The consequences of climate change are becoming more visible in the Arctic, and are greatly influencing the environment, animals and the living conditions of humans, especially the indigenous peoples who strongly depend on ecosystems and natural resources.



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The livelihood of indigenous peoples in the Arctic is already being affected by climate change. Losses in biodiversity affect the traditional practices of indigenous people, particularly fishing and hunting. For example, the Saami people have observed changes in reindeer grazing pastures, and the Inuit people of Canada have observed reductions in the ringed seal population, their single most important source of food.

Indigenous and local communities' traditional knowledge, innovations and practices are an inseparable part of their culture, social structures, economy, livelihoods, beliefs, health and their relationship to the local environment. It is the totality of all such elements that makes their knowledge, innovations and practices vital in relation to biological diversity and sustainable development.

Biodiversity and climate change are closely linked, and each impacts upon the other. The Prime Minister of Norway, HEM Jens Stoltenberg, in his article for the third publication of *Gincana*, stressed the connection between biodiversity and climate change when he noted that, "Climate change and biodiversity are strongly interlinked. Climate change affects biodiversity and biodiversity can affect the world's climate, most importantly when forests are lost. Active management and preservation measures aimed at protecting biodiversity cover a wide range of measures which also have the effect of mitigating climate change." Thus both issues require our attention.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) establishes the international framework for biodiversity conservation and very early on looked into the relationship between biodiversity and climate change. The CBD, through its cross-cutting issue on climate change, integrated climate change components in almost all of the programmes of work of the Convention. The Secretariat of the Convention has also initiated an exhibition of indigenous and local communities highly vulnerable to climate change, as well as an International expert meeting on responses to climate change for indigenous and local communities and the impact on their traditional knowledge related to biological diversity in the Arctic region, which was held in Helsinki, Finland, 25-28 March 2008.

The eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity noted with concern that indigenous and local communities, particularly those in the Arctic, small islands and high altitudes, are highly vulnerable to climate change, and also that indigenous and local communities, in maintaining healthy ecosystems and other practices, can mitigate against climate change.

At the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, Parties considered recommendations on a range of issues relating to biodiversity and climate change. In particular, Parties discussed how to better integrate of climate change within all programmes of work of the Convention in order to ensure that the objectives of the Convention can be achieved, even under changing climatic conditions.

Parties also considered ways to link climate change discussions within the CBD with the work being conducted within the other Rio Conventions: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.



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All this being said, while international mobilization is key to creating the political will necessary to achieve the objectives of the CBD, all international agreements are only as strong as their Parties' plans for on-the-ground implementation in their own countries. To achieve this, the Convention requires, under Article 6(a), that each Contracting Party develop a national biodiversity strategy and action plan (NBSAP) for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Without a clear map to direct conservation initiatives, individual projects, while locally successful, may not contribute to the enhancement of nation-wide endeavours, and ultimately are less effective than might be otherwise. More than this, however, a national strategy gives decision makers the mandate to push for laws, educational programmes, and budgets, among other things, that support the protection of biological diversity.

We must also recognize, that if parliamentarians do not put in place governance tools to ensure implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and continued participation in the international arena, biodiversity will continue to be lost. Thus, political engagement is key to achieving the goals of the CBD.

What is lost in one country is lost to the world. Individual efforts by communities, regions, nations, and organizations must be brought together so as to ensure that activities around the world are supporting each other rather than counteracting each other. Neither flora nor fauna adhere to human-drawn borders and thus initiatives at each level must be mutually reinforcing and require dialogue and cooperation. This is the important role played by the Convention on Biological Diversity. Our mandate is to encourage, support, and demand actions to conserve biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. Only through synergistic action and social solidarity will we reverse biodiversity loss.

At the same time, it is important to bear in mind, however, that politicians also receive mandates from the people. If citizens do not perceive themselves as stakeholders in the ongoing loss of biodiversity, they will not support endeavours that work to reduce it.

As the world begins to respond to the current crisis of biodiversity loss, hand in hand with climate change, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has a special role to play as a centre of excellence in international networking, information exchange and as an active and objective facilitator on inter-governmental decision-making processes and will be essential in assisting in the design and implementation of effective conservation strategies in partnership with Parties, Governments and indigenous and local communities – for the benefit of both peoples and nature.

It is also for this reason that the international community celebrated the International Day on Biological Diversity on 22 May 2007 under the theme “Biodiversity and Climate Change”. In his message delivered for this occasion, the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, reminded the international community that the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is an essential element of any strategy to adapt to climate change. He also stated: “Through the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the international community is committed to conserving biodiversity and combating climate change. The global response to



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these challenges needs to move much more rapidly, and with more determination at all levels—global, national and local. For the sake of current and future generations, we must achieve the goals of these landmark instruments.”

The international community is called upon to redouble its effort for achieving the Johannesburg Biodiversity Target aimed at reducing substantially the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. The celebration in 2010 of the International Year for Biodiversity will offer a unique opportunity to keep the momentum generated by the International Polar Year.

To this end, I want to appeal to you today, to join the Convention of Biological Diversity in its efforts to raise public awareness about these issues, as part of our mutual efforts to save life on Earth. I would like to leave you with the words of Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, who once said, “A community is like a ship; everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm.”

Thank you for your kind attention.



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Ms Annebeth Rosenboom
Chief of the Treaty Section, Office of Legal Affairs, UN.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for your support for this year's treaty event by hosting this panel discussion on the Arctic, and giving me the opportunity to brief you today on the plans for the 2008 Treaty Event.

[This year's event]

This year's event is entitled "2008 Treaty Event: Towards Universal Participation and Implementation – Dignity and Justice for All of Us", and it highlights 53 multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

- It will take place from 23 to 25 September and 29 to 30 September in the Treaty Signing area in the General Assembly building, and it will coincide with the General Debate of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.
- In 2000, the Secretary-General initiated the annual Treaty Event as an awareness raising measure to promote participation in the multilateral treaty framework. During the past nine events, an impressive total of 1359 treaty actions have been undertaken.
- Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has invited Heads of State and Government visiting New York for the opening of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly to reaffirm their commitment to the rule of law in international affairs by undertaking treaty actions with regard to the more than 530 treaties deposited with him.
- To enable States to prepare themselves for the event, the Treaty Section publishes a booklet each year in English and French. The booklet contains the objectives and the key provisions of each of the highlighted treaties, as well as the relevant dates of adoption and entry into force. It also lists the Signatories and Parties for each treaty. It will be sent to the Permanent Missions later this month and we would request to the delegates here to forward them to your capitals.
- Treaties are the main source of international law and international relations are largely based on treaties. Much of what we take for granted in our day-to-day life rests on an underlying framework of treaties.
- Well in advance of each treaty event, a list of highlighted treaties is put together. For this year's event, we were approached among others by the Conference of Parliamentarians of the



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Arctic Region and as a result treaties relevant to the International Polar Year are included in this list.

- This year is also the International Year of Sanitation as well as the Year of Planet Earth, and last but not least, it is the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Both the Chair of the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation and the High Commissioner for Human Rights have provided introductory remarks for the publication covering this year's event.
- Last but not least, among the highlighted treaties one can find treaties related to transit, customs and trade agreements to draw attention to the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries.
- This event will additionally highlight treaties that address disarmament, non-proliferation and penal matters as well as privileges and immunities and the safety of United Nations and associated personnel. Of course, during the yearly event, States can sign or accede to any of the more than 530 treaties for which the Secretary-General acts as the depositary.

In Summary:

- As the Secretary-General has noted last year:

"Furthering the causes of security, development and human rights is a shared responsibility, as well as a shared interest, and participation in the Treaty Event and the further consolidation of the multilateral treaty framework will contribute to this noble goal."
- We encourage States to participate in the multilateral treaty framework, and I would like to thank you once again for this opportunity to draw attention to the annual Treaty Event.



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PERMANENT MISSION OF NORWAY
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

The Arctic – A Barometer for Global Climate Change

4 June 2008 at 1:15 – 3:00 PM
Trusteeship Council

Ice and snow are important components of the Earth's climate system. They are particularly sensitive to global warming. Since the 1980s glaciers worldwide have shrunk dramatically. Temperatures in the Arctic are increasing at almost double the global rate. The Arctic is a barometer for global Climate Change. The International Polar Year is expected to provide new and groundbreaking scientific knowledge. What are the challenges facing the Arctic? How can effective responses be developed? How does the region's population address current challenges?

Dr Robert Corell will address Climate Change from an Arctic perspective in a globalised world, and introduce the International Polar Year. He is the Director of the Global Change Program at the H. John Heinz III Center for Science, Economics and the Environment.

Ms Juliane Henningsen will introduce the role of the indigenous peoples in the Arctic cooperation, and reflect on climate change and its consequences for the Inuit People living in Greenland. She is a Danish Member of Parliament, representing Greenland.

Ms Darcie Matthiessen will introduce the role of the indigenous peoples in the Arctic cooperation. She is climate change coordinator at Arctic Athabaskan Council.

Dr Ahmed Djoghlaif will present how Arctic biodiversity is influenced by climate change. He is the Executive Secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

Ms Annebeth Rosenboom will present the scope of the UN Annual Treaty Event 2008. She is the Chief of the Treaty Section, Office of Legal Affairs, UN.



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June 2008

Mission Statement

CONFERENCE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

The first Parliamentary Conference concerning Arctic cooperation was held in Reykjavik, Iceland in 1993. The following Arctic parliamentary conferences have been held in Yellowknife, Canada; Salekhard, Russia, Rovaniemi, Finland, Tromsø, Norway, Nuuk, Greenland and Kiruna, Sweden. The next conference will be held in Fairbanks, the USA, 12-14 August 2008.

The Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, which is responsible for the work between conferences, started its activities in September 1994.

One of the main priorities of the Standing Committee was originally to support the establishment of the Arctic Council. The new organization, representing the eight Arctic states (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the USA) was founded on 19 September 1996. Since then the Committee has worked actively to promote the work of the Council. The Committee participates in the meetings of the Arctic Council as an observer.

The Eight Conference in Fairbanks 12-14 August 2008, will focus on the following major themes:

- Maritime policy
- Human health in the Arctic,
- Adaptation to climate change,
- Development of rural energy resources.

The conference is attended by representatives from the national parliaments of the Arctic states and the European Parliament. Observers also participate from governments and inter-parliamentary organizations as well as from observer states and relevant international organizations.

The Conference adopts a statement with recommendations to the Arctic Council and to the governments of the eight Arctic states and the European Commission. The Standing Committee closely monitors how the governments implement the Conference Statement, and take new initiatives to further Arctic cooperation.

Qualifications for participation in the Standing Committee are compatible with those for representation on the Arctic Council.

The Chair of the Standing Committee is Ms. **Hill-Marta Solberg**, MP, Norway. Members of the Committee are: Mr. **Robert W. Mills**, MP, Canada, Ms. **Juliane Henningsen**, MP,



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Denmark/Greenland; Ms. **Bilyana Ilieva Raeva**, MP, European Parliament; Mr. **Hannes Manninen**, MP, Finland; Mr. **Sigurður Kári Kristjánsson**, MP, Iceland; Ms. **Sinikka Bohlin**, MP, Sweden; Mr. **Ildar Gimaletdinov**, MP, State Duma, Russia; Mr. **Mikhail Y. Nikolayev**, MP, Council of Federation, Russia and Ms. **Lisa Murkowski**, Senator, the USA.

The Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council are represented by Mr. **Egil Olli**, Saami Parliamentary Council; Ms. **Patricia A. Cochran**, ICC (Inuit Circumpolar Council) and Mr. **Sergey N. Haruchi**, President, RAIPON (Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North).

Mr. **Bjørn Willy Robstad**, the Norwegian parliament, is the Secretary General of the Committee.

For further information: www.arcticparl.org or please contact the secretariat at the address below.

Bjørn Willy Robstad

Secretary General

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