

## Session 3: New opportunities in the Arctic Region

Dear colleagues, esteemed participants of the Arctic parliamentary conference,

1. I am glad for this chance to continue our discussion about the Arctic opportunities. As previous speakers and chairs have noted, Arctic holds vast promise for development. Before giving my rapporteur I would like to thank the Russian Duma and the Republic of Buryatia for hosting this conference. Your hospitality has been every bit as enjoyable as promised.
2. I look forward to our programme and especially the visit to Lake Baikal, world's deepest lake, which holds fifth of all the fresh water resources of the world. Nature's resources are also a major part of our discussions today. Many of our Arctic countries hold remarkable potential for economic development.
3. We are all aware how the oil and gas resources, opportunities presented from the mining sector, forestry and fishing can help our economies to grow and help our people living in the north to secure a living for themselves.
4. And this development of resources has already begun. In the Prirazlomoye platform and in the Yamal Peninsula production of oil and gas has already started. In Finland we have seen an increase in mining in our Arctic regions and other Nordic countries have been gaining more and more from their Arctic regions. And we have only scratched the surface.

5. Today, we also understand how important it is to take nature into account. We have all seen the weather changing in the north, heard from the locals and from indigenous people that the traditional calendar, which has shown them when to fish and when to hunt, when the cranberries will grow, does not hold anymore.
6. This is of course due to the climate change. In the Arctic, we have witnessed how fast it has evolved and how over-reaching its impact can be. In a way, it seems also contradictory; we, the remote people living in the northern pure nature, are the first to feel the effects of the industrialization of densely inhabited regions. And at the same time, when the snow and ice withdraws, a new frontier of economic development is being revealed right in our back doors.
7. The hard decision we have to make is whether we continue as before, or do we have the courage to take nature's interest into account. Can we manage to turn our thinking in a way, that all of our efforts are not concentrated to exploiting the nature in a way that it carries negative effects?
8. I believe we can. This is why we are today here discussing about the New opportunities, not the old ones. For me, the new opportunities are as vast as the old ones, but the difference is that they would include actions that would avoid harming the nature and adding to the effects of the climate change.
9. These new possibilities, at least for me, are what we need. Tourism is one example of these new Arctic opportunities. In Finland we have managed

to attract vast number of people to our Lappland, so that they can marvel the Aurora Borealis, or the midnight sun.

10. Another possibility lies in cold temperatures; data centers need cooling, which we have in abundance. Different producers need to see if their products work also in the minus temperature conditions. All these are just a sample of the possibilities that the cold itself holds.
11. Third example could be services we could pride for the “old possibilities”, for the mining and oil and gas production. We know that at least a part of these arctic resources are going to be exploited, but we can make sure that this is done in a sustainable way, that causes the least amount of harm to the nature. In this, we the decision makers have a big responsibility. We have to make sure that the codes and the norms can channel the production in a sustainable way.
12. We can even put a value for the silence and the remoteness of the Arctic if we have imagination. Crowded city dwellers, people from the unwearyingly hot areas could find the tranquillity and silence something to marvel upon.
13. Climate change is a fact we can't deny. It affects all of us, whether we like it or not. We see the dryness increasing in other areas as others are coming wetter and wetter. The living space of the whole humanity is diminishing, at the same time our population is growing. All of us can feel the climate warming.
14. And this is the reason we have to look for new opportunities. This is our incentive to act. And this is why I would like to challenge you all to

come up with new ideas, tell how you see the new opportunities. Because one thing I have found that unites us, the people from the north especially, is creativity. Let us put it to use also here.

Thank you