

6th CONFERENCE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

Nuuk, Kalaallit Nunaat, Greenland, 3 – 6 September 2004

Conference Statement

5 September 2004

We, elected representatives of **Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia and Sweden**,

Meeting in Nuuk, Kalaallit Nunaat, Greenland, on 3 - 6 September 2004, to discuss shared concerns and responsibilities related to the Arctic region,

- 1) **Recalling** the Conference Statements from the five previous Conferences of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region held 1993 – 2002;
- 2) **Convinced** that these Conferences, and the jointly agreed Conference Statements emerging from them, serve a valuable purpose in bringing a focus on shared or common Arctic issues among circumpolar nations and Parliaments, and that they help to identify practical areas where actions can be taken by national governments that will be not only to the benefit of individual countries and to the Arctic regions in general; but will also enhance international co-operation and the contribution that Arctic countries make toward addressing major world-wide environmental, economic, and social problems;

A. Noting

- 3) The increasing evidence that the dominant economic and resource use practices and policies in most parts of the world, including the Arctic, are not sustainable and are leading to environmental degradation, hardship in many Arctic communities and cultural stress, especially within indigenous societies, raising the responsibility and urgency for policies, activities and support for practical sustainable development, as outlined at the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg 2002;
- 4) The world-wide consequences of rapid climate change and ultraviolet radiation in the Arctic, an important cause of which are human influences, particularly increased emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases, and the global scale of these changes;
- 5) The profound environmental impacts on ecosystems, wildlife and habitat, including genetic changes and loss of biodiversity, which rapid climate change and increasing economic activity are having in the Arctic, and the multi-faceted threats and challenges that this involves for the well-being of Arctic residents;
- 6) The likelihood of increased utilization of Arctic shipping routes, including the Northern Sea Route and the Northwest Passage, as well as the interest in development of resources on the Arctic continental shelf;
- 7) The environmental risks of large-scale shipping in Arctic waters, particularly shipment of oil and other dangerous materials, and the ensuing threats this may pose to coastal communities and the living resources on which they depend. These risks increase the responsibilities of northern and Arctic peoples and local governments with respect to Arctic shipping, coastal

protection, and management of maritime living resources, and the increasing use of multi-mode (marine, land, air) transportation in the Arctic;

- 8) The urgency with which rapid climate, environmental, social and economic forces of change occurring within the Arctic need to be responded to and addressed by governments and policy makers, so as to ensure the diversity and conservation of the Arctic environment as well as the sustainable cultural, social and economic well-being of Arctic residents, including indigenous peoples;
- 9) The cultural diversity, resilience and dynamism of Arctic communities, and the potential for new technologies and conditions to be enjoined with ancient cultural practices and traditions to attain new forms of community viability in the Arctic in the face of global change.

B. Taking into Account

- 10) The increasing success of the Arctic Council (AC) in achieving co-operation and coherence among the activities of Arctic countries and in giving voice to the role of the Arctic in international affairs as outlined in the Inari Declaration in 2002; noting especially the success under the Icelandic Chairmanship to make ICT a priority of the Arctic Council; the steps forward taken to increase cooperation between the Arctic Council and the European Union (EU); the successful efforts made to strengthen scientific and technological cooperation in the Arctic and the conclusions of the Arctic Science Summit Week; the work towards strengthening financial support, accountability and maximum cost efficiency of Arctic Council projects through an AC Project Support Fund; and the steps taken to make the Arctic an international example of alternative use of renewable energy sources;
- 11) The comprehensive findings of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA), and the conclusions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which confirm rapid and significant changes of climate in Arctic regions with major environmental, economic, social and political consequences;
- 12) The decision to produce an Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) at the AC Inari Ministerial Meeting in 2002 for presentation at the AC Reykjavik Ministerial Meeting in November 2004;
- 13) The ongoing development of the Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (AMSP) to be presented at the AC Reykjavik Ministerial Meeting in November 2004;
- 14) The resolution of the United Nations Environmental Programme, February 2004, for increased environmental monitoring in the Arctic region;
- 15) The remarkable progress in the development of the University of the Arctic, and the importance of its academic and mobility programs for capacity building in the Arctic;
- 16) The declaration of the First Meeting of Ministers of Education and Science of the Arctic Council member states, adopted in June 2004;
- 17) The Second Action Plan for the Northern Dimension in the external and cross-border or regional development cooperation of the European Union including the ND Environmental Partnership, the Social Partnership and the Northern eDimension, and, in addition, the

Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy and the implementation of the U.S. plan for an Enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe (e-PINE);

- 18) Initiations to prepare regional or global protocols on motorized transport in order to promote the use of clean technology vehicles;
- 19) The World Summit on the Information Society, 2003;
- 20) The Communique of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, 2003;
- 21) The decisions and recommendations of the World Ecotourism Summit, organized by the World Tourist Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme, 2002;
- 22) The progress toward a major international interdisciplinary scientific research program, the International Polar Year 2007-2008, with creation of national IPY committees in Arctic countries;

C. Ask governments in the Arctic region and the institutions of the European Union to

- 23)
 - i. Develop without delay necessary policies and recommendations for implementation through international organizations to address rapid climate change in the Arctic;
 - ii. In light of new scientific knowledge, and changing responsibilities and administrative structures in the Arctic, develop management procedures to support Arctic communities in adapting to climate change;
 - iii. Acknowledge that adaption is a necessary but insufficient strategy in response to climate change, and therefore take mitigative action to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, promote the development and adoption of alternative energy sources, and implement policies to increase the energy efficiency of Arctic economies and the conservation of carbon sinks;
 - iv. Continue research on Arctic climate and follow-up on the remaining gaps in knowledge, as well as linking circumpolar research networks;
 - v. Put special resources into investigating further the effects of climate change and increased UV radiation on human health and devise public programs to address these risks, with particular attention to indigenous peoples;
 - vi. Re-evaluate nature conservation policies in light of changes in climate and its ecological consequences;
 - vii. Actively communicate the findings of ACIA within the Arctic region as well as internationally, drawing attention to the possible far-reaching effects of climate change on Arctic and global ecosystems and on the cultural, social and economic well-being of Arctic residents;
 - viii. Incorporate materials from the ACIA process into relevant education, research and training programs;
 - ix. Encourage the University of the Arctic to develop curricula based on the findings of ACIA, especially in relation to societies and communities that are particularly vulnerable to climate change.
- 24) Ensure that there is a strong Arctic message in national and international work on the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, as well as the results of the World Summit on

Sustainable Development which include pertinent issues such as water supply, food security and chemicals.

- 25) Give careful consideration to maritime shipping policies and their associated support and regulatory mechanisms, to ensure that they meet present and likely future national needs and international activities, and to this effect take the following actions:
 - i. Pursue, in a sustainable way, the opportunities afforded by the foreseeable opening of new Arctic Sea Routes;
 - ii. Design policies which reduce and prevent pollution in the Arctic marine environment, conserve Arctic marine biodiversity and ensure the sustainability of Arctic marine resource use;
 - iii. Cooperate with the International Maritime Organization to ensure that adequate environmental standards are incorporated into the Arctic Shipping Code now under development;
 - iv. Encourage the development of improved ship technology for use in ice-infested waters and ensure more transparent and accurate information on the quality of ships in Arctic waters;
 - v. Ensure sufficient resources and capacity for effective and timely response to oil spills and accidents in the marine environment.

- 26) Follow-up on the findings of the Arctic Human Development Report by:
 - i. Taking concrete action and research initiatives aimed at filling the gaps in knowledge identified in the report, thereby focusing circumpolar research on human development issues for the future;
 - ii. Using the findings of the AHDR to provide input into the shaping and sharpening of the human dimension agenda for the International Polar Year;
 - iii. Communicating the results of the AHDR as educational material for research dissemination projects on the Internet, similar to the Human Dimensions of Arctic Environments (www.thearctic.is), thereby spreading awareness of the cultural diversity of Arctic residents;
 - iv. Periodically assessing the progress made on the issues addressed in the AHDR, with special attention to gender and the needs and opportunities of children and youth;
 - v. Working systematically towards filling the gaps of knowledge identified in the report as to the social, cultural and economic well-being of Arctic residents and their political participation.
 - vi. Encouraging the University of the Arctic to develop curricula based on the findings of the AHDR;
 - vii. Strengthening attention to indigenous interests in relation to economic activities, and in particular in extractive industry, with a view to protecting the rights to self-determination, land rights and cultural rights of indigenous peoples of the Arctic.

- 27) Encourage the Arctic Council to be a leader in the development of agendas for national and international activities related to sustainable development, climate change, health, health risks, gender, children's rights, demographic and educational issues in the Arctic, which are inter-related and at the heart of the challenges facing Arctic regions;

- 28) Ensure the participation of indigenous peoples in all levels of scientific research and decision-making processes within the Arctic Council;

- 29) Strengthen further the cooperation and interaction between the Arctic Council and the EU, based on the Action Plan for the period 2004-2006 for the Northern Dimension policy of the EU, in which the Arctic has a more visible role than before;
- 30) Support the steps needed to enable the set-up of an Arctic Council Project Support Fund or similar mechanism which will ensure that financial resources are mobilized for project preparation and implementation within the Arctic Council in a more timely and effective way;
- 31) Ensure that core funding of the University of the Arctic is raised to an adequate and stable level;
- 32) Take an active part in the planning of the International Polar Year 2007-2008, supporting the creation and funding of National Committees and the coordination by the International Council for Science, and encouraging the full inclusion of the social, cultural and economic dimension of the Arctic, including the traditional knowledge of northern indigenous societies;
- 33) Encourage Arctic Council member states to strengthen and make more sustainable Arctic tourism, by adopting policies and regulations that support local eco-tourism initiatives and tourist-related industries, ensuring that the activities are environmentally sound, acceptable to and protective of local cultures and values, and that they lead to protection and long-term management of Arctic wildlife and historical resources. This would be assisted by encouraging and helping in the preparation of information and educational materials suitable for tourism in each particular region, and by assisting in the international communication and accounting that is essential to modern tourism. The development of an internationally approved standard for environmentally sustainable Arctic tourist operators may be considered.

D. Ask the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region to

- 34) Carry to the governments of the Arctic states a strong message on the importance and seriousness of Arctic climate change and the urgency with which it needs to be addressed;
- 35) Actively participate in the evaluation and periodical follow-up of the Arctic Human Development Report;
- 36) Take active part in the Arctic Council Information and Communications Network, promoting the inclusion in the Arctic Council activities of an Arctic ICT pilot project, TRAICE (Target Region Arctic Information Communications Enquiry), already introduced to the Arctic Council;
- 37) Request information on the implementation by the relevant authorities in each country of recommendations of the Arctic Council and of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, facilitate discussion in parliaments of the implications for the Arctic and for national and international policies and actions of the growing knowledge about Arctic climate change, and in particular encourage the coordination of the activities in response to climate change with the activities directed toward social and economic sustainability;
- 38) Ensure that there is adequate and continuous follow-up, in parliaments of Arctic countries, of the implications for the Arctic regions and peoples of the conclusions, recommendations, and agreements from the Johannesburg Summit, and in this regard cooperate closely with the UN Commission on Sustainable Development;

- 39) Consider possibilities to initiate a process which over time could lead to a binding legal regime for conservation and sustainable use of the Arctic and its marine environment;
- 40) Consider putting discussion of the global relevance of the International Polar Year on the agenda of the 8th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region.

E. The Conference

- 41) Acknowledges the interest and presence of parliamentary observers and representatives from governments and non-government agencies at this Conference, and recognizes their important role in carrying further the messages and supporting the actions herein discussed;
- 42) Welcomes the forthcoming Russian Chairmanship of the Arctic Council and looks forward to continued cooperation with the Arctic Council in 2004-2006;
- 43) Welcomes and accepts the kind invitation of Sweden to host the Seventh Conference in 2006.