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CONFERENCE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

**Meeting of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region**

**Ottawa, Canada**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

Tuesday, November 15, 2016

9:00 Welcome by Mr. Erik Sivertsen, Chair of SCPAR

1. Adoption of the agenda and the proposed order of agenda

*The Agenda was adopted. Order of agenda item 6 and 7 were changed.*

 2.  Approval of the draft minutes of the 12th SCPAR, Ulan-Ude, Russia,

 June 14-16, 2016

  *Draft minutes were approved.*

 3. Presentation of the Canadian Arctic Policy

 Guest Speakers:

 Ms. Pamela Goldsmith-Jones, M.P.,

 Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and

 The Honourable Hunter Tootoo, P.C., M.P.

*Ms Goldsmith-Jones introduced the priorities of the Canadian Arctic policy. PM Trudeau has highlighted the sustainable development of the Arctic and Canada is committed to develop its remote areas so that it benefits the local people. Mitigating negative impacts of the climate change is also a priority.*

*Honorable Hunter Tootoo: Major part of Canadian identity comes from the north. Rights of the people living in the area should be respected and their views should have an influence. Mr Tootoo highlighted the need for the Inuites to have a say in their own future. Indigenous people perspectives and the needs have to be taken into account. Infrastructure development is needed. Living conditions are poor in the remote areas. Improved connectivity needed.*

*Aaja Chemnitz/ Denrmark, Greenland highlighted the human dimension.*

*Katri Kulmuni/ Finland, asked about the policies related to suicide reductions. There is community based solutions planned.*

*Nr. Dohrman/ EP, inquired about the ways to utilize the economic potential in the north.*

*The committee took note of the information*

 4. Digital Arctic

 Guest Speakers:

 Ms. Madeleine Redfern, Mayor of Iqaluit and

 Mr. Adam Fiser, Senior Research Associate, Conference Board of Canada, Centre for the North (Author of the report Telecommunications and Broadband Connectivity: Mapping the Long-Term Options for Canada’s

 North)

 *Ms. Redfern informed about the situation regarding the telecommunications in the norther areas. 10 % of population live in remote areas where connectivity is dependent from the satellites. Reliable and stable telecommunications is needed for good governance and to reduce the costs of education/ welfare.*

 *Mr. Fiser introduced the committee about the restrictions of limited internet access and the costs of services. Competitive networks do not ease the situation. Shared services could be a solution.*

 *Sen. Murkowski/ US, investments in connectivity increases quality of life in remote areas as access to health care and government services are provided.*

 *Aaja Chemnitz/ Denmark, Greenland, inquired if there are any possibilities for business development in this field.*

 *The committee took note of the information*

 5. Presentation of Canadian Arctic Research

Guest Speaker:

Mr. David Mate, Director of Science and Technology, Operations, Polar Knowledge Canada

*Dr. Mate, provided an overview of the Canadian Arctic research. Research is the key part in the Canadian Arctic policy. Variety of institutes involved in Arctic affairs. As a research topic, really expensive target for research because of its remoteness. Notable logistical challenges.*

*Dr. Mate introduces the Polar Knowledge Canada, which is an innovative government agency, aimed at advancing knowledge of the Canadian Arctic. Science can support the next generation of conservation decisions.*

*Chair Sivertsen highlighted the need to balance the natural science and social science aspects.*

*The committee took note of the information*

 6. Update on the work on Arctic Council

 Guest Speaker:

 Ms. Alison LeClaire, Senior Arctic Official, Global Affairs Canada

 *Ms. LeClaire/ Canada, informed about the current issues of the AC. Last months of the US chairmanship ongoing, work to reduce black carbon and methane emissions continue. All goals are not to be met before the last US ministerial meeting, but important developments have been made. Important to engage observers in the work of the council.*

 *The strategic plan initiative has been made during the US chairmanship. This work is to be continued during the Finnish chairmanship. Building the capacity of the Permanent Participants has been important. The framework agreement regarding capacity building has been met.*

 *Siversten/ Norway, highlighted again the importance of human dimension. This has to be taken into account when thinking about corporate responsibility. Companies from outside the area cannot only reap the benefits of the Arctic, they must contribute and show social responsibility.*

 *Kulmuni/ Finland, highlighted educational aspects in the work of the council.*

 *The committee took note of the information*

 7. Status of the work of SCPAR

Report

General exchange of views

*Sen Murkowski/ US presented her views regarding the US current political situation. The consequences of the Presidential elections can’t yet bet evaluated. Many uncertainties, for example regarding the Paris climate agreement. Special situation in US politics when GOP has majority in the congress and senate.*

*Karlov/ Russia, Russia remains an arctic partner. Peace, education and indigenous people’s economic rights are highlighted. Mr. Karlov informed about new funding for the Arctic projects. In Yamal, Russia is developing projects together with China and India. Plans to create two national parks in the Arctic region. Mr. Karlov informed about arctic forums taking place during the next few months. Arctic should remain an area of cooperation.*

*Mr. Dohrman/ EP, highlighted the importance of dialogue. EP is discussing its position regarding the EU’s Arctic Communication. EU’s Arctic communication center is under consideration.*

*Ms. Chemnitz/ Denmark, Greenland, Greenland has new government, independence is sought. Paris agreement and uranium and social issues under discussion. Ulan Ude declaration has been presented to the Danish government.*

*Mr. McGuire/ Canada, highlighted cooperation. Communication is something that Canada is planning to develop in the Arcic. Environmental issues important, like also infrastructure development.*

*Sievretsen, Norway, mentioned joint conference with Russia. White paper on Svalbard coming up in the parliament. Svalbard only off grid community in Norway. The government will present a white paper of Oceans during next year. And white paper on arctic during spring 2017. In January 10th Arctic Frontiers conference.*

 8. Preparation for the Finnish Chairmanship of The Arctic Council

Guest Speaker:

His Excellency Vesa Lehtonen, Ambassador of the Republic of Finland to Canada

*Ambassador informed the committee about the upcoming AC chairmanship priorities.*

 9. Next meeting of SCPAR

 *Greenland, Iceland and Finland will hold SCPAR meetings in 2017*

 10. Any other business