****

CONFERENCE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

*Draft 3.5.*

*Additions from (12.3.2018):*

*-Iceland*

*-Canada*

*And amendments from (3.5.)*

*-Norway (comments by Chair)*

*-DK*

*-Canada*

CONFERENCE STATEMENT

We, the elected representatives from Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States of America;

In close collaboration with the Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic;

Recognize the need to discuss the modernization of the digital infrastructure of the Arctic, the environmental challenges, mitigation of negative effects of climate change and the ways to improve Corporate Social Responsibility and social well-being of Arctic residents;

Note with grave concern that the Arctic is warming at more than twice the rate of the global average, resulting in rapid social, environmental, and economic impacts in the Arctic and worldwide, and the pressing and increasing need for mitigation and adaptation actions and to strengthen resilience;

Underline the need to continue and strengthen the Arctic cooperation in order to respond to challenges faced by all countries in the region;

Including on environmental issues, not only to mitigate the negative consequences of climate change, but also to create favorable conditions for sustainable economic development;

Emphasize the role of parliamentarians in the Arctic Region to advise and contribute to the work of the Arctic Council;

Ask the governments of the Arctic Region, the Arctic Council, the institutions of the European Union and, where appropriate to:

Regarding Digital Arctic and Arctic Economic Development

1. Organize an Arctic Council meeting between the ministers responsible for communications and digitalization to improve the digital infrastructure of the Arctic, as the economic future of the Arctic – like the global economic future – will be driven by digitalization;
2. Improve satellite safety services in the Arctic to enable the continuous monitoring of various Arctic regions, and develop new services and improve scientific knowledge through the introduction of innovative technologies, such as highly elliptical orbit satellite imaging and mini- and microsatellites;
3. Strengthen the enhancement of business development in the Arctic region and discuss joint efforts for economic development in the region, e.g. by promoting products from the region and increasing export.(Denmark)
4. Set up a working group of national Arctic governments (and where appropriate sub-national governments and industry) to explore cooperation opportunities in developing digital broadband access in Arctic communities, such as shared undersea cables or satellites; (Canada)
5. Develop cooperation mechanisms between the Arctic Council’s Task Force on Improved Connectivity in the Arctic (TFICA) and the Arctic Economic Council to create pan-Arctic telecommunications infrastructure solutions adapted to the needs of inhabitants of the Arctic Region; (Canada)
6. Engage Indigenous peoples and local communities in the decision-making process on the Arctic development, to create job opportunities and by using the skills of the residents of the Arctic, develop human capital, that can serve to develop and diversify regional economies;
7. Support cross-border economic and human cooperation in the Arctic Region;

Regarding Environmental Challenges:

1. Continue efforts to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and short-lived climate pollutants, such as methane and black carbon;
2. Welcome the initiative by the Innovation Center Iceland to co-found and organize an annual Arctic Innovation Prize in cooperation with the Arctic Council;(Iceland)
3. Discuss and carry out a feasibility study of a school or an annual seminar where the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic disseminate their knowledge of natural resource management. The curriculum would contain information and education tied to the indigenous ways of life, ethics and the understanding of nature (Iceland)
4. Establish a technical committee to share the most recent innovations, information, technologies, and methods of adapting infrastructure to climate change, including but not limited to thawing permafrost; (Canada)
5. Continue to support the work of the working group Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) to co-ordinate and publish the collection of current data on the migration, extinction, and adaptions of species of flora and fauna, on land and in the seas of the Arctic Region.
6. Develop energy efficiency solutions in Arctic architecture and construction technology, including the use of renewable energy in new building projects and energy refurbishment of existing buildings in the Arctic Region. n addition to emission reductions during the full life cycle of the Arctic built environment, these concrete measures will improve local air quality, living conditions and energy security in the Arctic; (Canada)
7. Facilitate the exchange of information on adaptation tools and strategies to climate change, as well as results of the Arctic Council’s Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic (AACA) project, throughout the Arctic Region at the national, regional, and local levels; (Canada)
8. Explore impacts of climate change on Arctic marine biodiversity and marine conservation solutions as part of the October 2018 Meeting of Arctic Environment Ministers in Rovaniemi, Finland; (Canada)
9. )
10. Implememt the UN resolution to eliminate plastic pollution in the oceans, including by encouraging the Arctic nations and the Arctic Council’s observer countries to adopt reduction targets;
11. Urge the full implementation of the International Maritime Organization’s Polar Code;
12. Disseminate the knowledge on climate change and its consequences in the Arctic both at the global and local levels, and work with local stakeholders to enhance the adaptation and resilience of Arctic communities to climate change;
13. Hold an Arctic Summit, involving heads of state and governments of the Arctic Council member states, as well as the heads of the Permanent Participants to agree upon the sustainable development of the Arctic Region;

Regarding Arctic Economic development (addition by Iceland) and the Corporate Social Responsibility;

1. Promote, in collaboration with the AEC, the creation of an ambitious Arctic Corporate Social Responsibility program, where the residents of the Arctic share their ideas regarding the best possible solutions;
2. Arrange a meeting with the Arctic Economic Council to discuss how Corporate Social Responsibility could be promoted in the Arctic, where harsh climate conditions, long distances and the lack of infrastructure create particular challenges, with the understanding that businesses would benefit from developing connections with local stakeholders and residents, who possess a unique understanding of the Arctic through local and traditional knowledge;
3. Carry out Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) with emphasis on the specific features of the Arctic environment and society in the planning of major projects in the region. Acknowledge public participation and the utilization of Indigenous and local knowledge as integral to EIAs;
4. Promote trust and social responsibility by disclosing in an accessible manner the basic information on all corporations, their board members, yearly reports and major shareholders; (Iceland)
5. Initiate a study of the feasibility of cleaning up oil spills in ice-filled waters in the Arctic Ocean from offshore oil wells; (Canada)
6. Promote the role of a business-driven Arctic Economic Council in the development of a diverse, sustainable and prosperous economy for the Arctic Region;
7. Establish an Arctic innovation system which links the scientific community, the business sector, political society and local populations, for instance through an Arctic mentorship and mobility program;
8. Support the development of a circumpolar Arctic Business Index (Norway)
9. Support relevant capacity building, particularly through education and training, to ensure that local communities will continue to benefit from economic development;

Regarding the Social well-being of the people living in the Arctic;

1. Support the strong participation of Indigenous Peoples in the work of the Arctic Council and the integration of Indigenous Knowledge into the programs and projects of the Council;
2. Support initiatives of preventing adolescent substance use in the Arctic countries in accordance with the needs of different societies; (Iceland)
3. 2. Promote the UN sustainable development goals in the Arctic Council; (Iceland)
4. Organize a conference of experts from Arctic nations, to share data and best practices in the field of Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs), focusing on prevalence, prevention, and justice, and undertake a study on ways to provide differential sentencing and services to inmates with an FASD, who represent a significant proportion of the population in Arctic prisons;
5. Initiate a study on the causes and prevalence of suicide in the Arctic Region, especially amongst youth, and best practices in prevention, and support the continuation of the circumpolar cooperation on suicide prevention; (Canada)
6. Increase cooperation between statistical agencies of Arctic nations and continue the development of statistical indicators of social conditions, well-being, and inequalities in the Arctic Region; (Canada)
7. Develop statistical indicators for the subsistence economy of Arctic Indigenous Peoples facilitating the assessment of climate change impacts on traditional harvesting activities; (Canada)
8. Raise awareness of the importance of gender equality, and the understanding of the contribution of women and men to sustainable development;
9. Promote the development of basic education and curriculum development, especially by addressing teacher education in order to provide opportunities for local communities;

Furthermore the Conference:

1. Acknowledges the interest and presence of parliamentary observers and representatives from governments and non-governmental agencies at this Conference, and recognizes their important role in relaying the messages and supporting the actions herein discussed;
2. Acknowledges the importance of, and supports, the active participation of Indigenous Peoples throughout all ongoing and future activities and processes in the Arctic Region;
3. Welcomes the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the focus on climate change issues during the Finnish Chairmanship of the Arctic Council 2017 – 2019;
4. Welcomes the forthcoming Icelandic Chairmanship of the Arctic Council and looks forward to enhanced cooperation with the Arctic Council;
5. Welcomes and accepts the invitation of the Parliament of Norway to host the 14th Conference in 2020.