



ARCTIC PARLIAMENTARIANS

20th – 23rd March 2024, Kiruna, Sweden

CONFERENCE STATEMENT

As the dynamics in the Arctic are shifting in light of climate change and the current security situation, Arctic Parliamentarians convene to address the multifaceted challenges in the Arctic region. Our considerations center on topics of both current and future relevance to the Arctic and its people: climate, research, and employment, with continued commitment to inclusivity, sustainability, security, and the well-being of Arctic residents, including Indigenous Peoples.

The Arctic Parliamentarians strongly support the work of the Norwegian chairship of the Arctic Council to secure Arctic Council as the main arena for Arctic cooperation.

As elected representatives from Canada, Denmark/Greenland/Faroe Islands, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and in collaboration with the Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic, we highlight the following:

Climate and Waste Management

Acknowledging the existential threat posed by climate change, we advocate for joint efforts to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, preserve biodiversity, and combat pollution in the Arctic region.

We call on the Arctic governments to prioritize reduction of black carbon and methane emissions as it will have strong short-term effects on climate change in the Arctic, such as melting sea ice and permafrost.

We urge Arctic governments to embrace renewable energy solutions, develop zero emission off grid communities in the Arctic and implement stringent waste management policies such as transportation of waste from Arctic communities and tourism facilities, and to promote circular economies and sustainable practices that minimize ecological footprint.

We further urge the Arctic governments to strengthen joint efforts to minimize marine plastic pollution and call upon non-Arctic states to intensify their effort to minimize marine littering which by wind and ocean currents ends up having severe negative impacts on the ecosystems and wildlife of the Arctic region.

Indigenous voices must be included in decision-making processes, empowering local communities to lead initiatives for environmental conservation.



Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

We acknowledge that within the Arctic there are differences in how the rights of Indigenous Peoples are upheld.

We see the effects of wrongdoings against Arctic Indigenous Peoples in the past, such as boarding schools, forced displacement, involuntary contraception and other historical injustices in various countries. These practices have contributed to intergenerational trauma and ongoing mental health and addiction crises in many Arctic communities. We emphasize the need for opportunities for today's population to collaborate and plan together for the future.

In those parts of the Arctic where Indigenous Peoples have unequal access to society's institutions, and lack forms of self-determination, we call on all levels of government to work together to create equal opportunities for all inhabitants of the Arctic. Joint solutions should be found between the state and the indigenous population.

Business and employment

Recognizing the economic imperatives of Arctic development, we emphasize the importance of fostering a competent business environment that balances economic growth with social responsibility and environmental consideration.

We appreciate the close cooperation with Arctic Economic Council to promote sustainable business development in the Arctic.

We call on Arctic governments to increase the promotion of inclusive economic policies and workforce development strategies that prioritize business development, local employment, housing, empower Indigenous and local enterprises, and ensure equitable distribution of benefits derived from Arctic resources and industries.

Research and Education

Emphasizing the role of research and education in fostering resilience and innovation, we underscore the imperative of investing in science, technological advancement, and knowledge exchange within the Arctic. We treasure the close cooperation with the University of the Arctic and highlight the importance of continued collaboration with Arctic research institutions.

We urge Arctic governments to work for the establishment of interdisciplinary research platforms and academic partnerships across the nations of the Arctic to equip Arctic residents, including Indigenous youth, with the skills and expertise necessary to address emerging challenges. We recognize the importance of traditional Indigenous knowledge and the contributions made by hunters, trappers, and fishers. Traditional knowledge should be on-par with scientific research in guiding decision-making.



Civil security and preparedness

Recognizing the imperative of safeguarding Arctic territories in this time of increasing geopolitical attention, we underscore the necessity for cohesive security frameworks that prioritize collaboration and information exchange among the Arctic nations to maintain the region as an area of low tension. Ensuring food security is an important factor for health among the Arctic residents, including Indigenous Peoples.

We call on Arctic governments to strengthen the reinforcement of search and rescue capabilities, infrastructure development, and disaster response mechanisms tailored to the Arctic's unique environment. Emphasis should be placed on fostering partnerships with local communities like the Indigenous communities to integrate traditional knowledge into emergency preparedness plans.

In conclusion, we, the Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, urge Arctic governments to take our recommendations into account and translate collective aspirations into concrete actions that safeguard the Arctic's environment, uphold the rights and interests of Arctic residents, including reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, and foster sustainable development for generations to come.

Arctic Parliamentarians welcomes the friendly offer of the United States to host the Arctic Parliamentary Conference in 2026.