

Denmark

- Greenland
- Faroe Islands

Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting 9-10.10.2002.

Round Table Discussion 1: Actions against Pollution and Environmental Degradation.

Ministers and Delegates. Ladies and Gentlemen,

We welcome the work done in the Arctic Council and its environmental working groups. It is essential to continue the research and studies in these fields as the peoples of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Denmark are dependent on natural resources – in particular the resources of the sea, for our economic and social well-being and for sustainable development in the future.

We – and that count specifically for Greenland and the Faroe Islands – are taking active measures to deal with the health risks from contaminants in our environment. In other words – we are bearing the costs of pollution for which we are not responsible.

AMAP's second assessment report on the state of the Arctic environment is an important and, in part, alarming report. It highlights the fact that several groups of people living in the Arctic are exposed to health threatening levels of contaminants.

That is why contaminants in the Arctic are of such great concern to us. For this reason we have contributed actively in the work of monitoring the pollutants including the effects. To AMAP's second phase we have given app. 9 mill. US\$.

The results from AMAP's first assessment report have been taken very seriously. Greenland has established a Council for nutrition. The purpose of the council is to advise the population on the consumption of animals high in the food chain. Special focus is given to potential mothers and mothers breast-feeding their children.

In the Faroe Islands, revised dietary recommendations for safe limits of consumption of pilot whale meat and blubber were issued already in 1998.

We must not forget the work done in other working groups.

Regarding CAFF we would like to commend Iceland for the valuable initiative to establish a number of circumpolar expert groups. Greenland Institute of Natural Resources participates in several of these monitoring activities.

On climate change we lack knowledge as to the effect of climatic change and the changes of the ozone layer in the Arctic. Therefore, we welcome the Arctic Council's initiative on the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) and await the results with great interest.

The valuable environmental work must be translated into pro-active policies in the member states of the Arctic Council. We must remind ourselves of our own commitments – not least to the Rio principle of “polluter pays”. The Arctic Council needs to help remind the rest of the global community that we have all subscribed to these principles. We are pleased to have seen progress and new commitments on pollution reduction in recent years, such as on POPs – but in other areas, such as global commitments on reduction of mercury – we are still waiting to see that the fine words will be put into action.

On behalf of Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland we note the great advances made during Finland's presidency and we are confident that this work will be continued by our Icelandic friends.

We thank the Arctic Countries for their support of the participation of the Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic in the Council and other international fora. We for our part have always supported the Indigenous Peoples with a clear “s” and we will continue to do so.

Thank You