

## ARCTIC COUNCIL 3RD MINISTERIAL MEETING

Saariselkä, Inari  
October 9-10, 2002

### **Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland**

#### *Round Table Discussion 1: Actions against Pollution and Environmental Degradation*

- Thank you for your contributions to this theme discussion and especially to the work of the working groups. The main elements of this discussion will be included in the Inari Declaration.
- AMAP's Arctic Pollution 2002 Report will and must have a strong impact on our future work and international environmental cooperation. Report shows that we have made progress but also that we are facing new problems. I think the Arctic Council has so far done good work in monitoring and reporting to all of us, particularly the governments, what the situation is and now it is up to us to respond and take the necessary steps to counter the problems and threats which we have in front of us. It is also encouraging to know that our work has already had good effects and we must continue that.
- The adoption by the Russian Federation of a National Plan of Action against pollution in the Arctic Ocean is encouraging. I do hope that this plan could form the basis for investments in selected hot spots.
- Biodiversity conservation is an increasingly important challenge for all of us, not least in view of expanding hydrocarbon exploitation in the Arctic. Obviously this will have vast social-economic impact but we must manage it in sustainable manner and not create any new environmental problems