

## **SUM UP of the Round Table on Future Perspectives by Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja, Finland**

- This discussion has well covered future potentials and challenges in circumpolar cooperation.
- I am pleased to note how well the priorities of Iceland will serve as a logical continuation of the progress accomplished during our chairmanship.
- The Arctic Human Development Report has received unanimous support. I understand that this also means we have committed ourselves to assist Iceland in this priority task.
- The Conference of Parliamentarians in the Arctic Region has presented a report “IT and the Arctic” and has called upon the Arctic Council to consider how we could cooperate in promoting the development of information technology suited to the Arctic regions. This is a demanding task, especially as we may face different challenges in different parts of the Arctic. Iceland is rising to the challenge and I warmly welcome the initiative to organize a thematic information technology conference during the Icelandic chairmanship.
- Scientifically based decision-making is a basic principle in the Arctic Council. Among our observers we have science and research organisations who provide indispensable contributions to our subsidiary bodies. The youth researchers’ network under build-up could contribute much to the Arctic Council youth cooperation. The Icelandic focus on science and research is well-founded. In Finland we hope to support Iceland in this respect, the cooperative link between for example the Arctic Centre in Rovaniemi and Akureyri is working smoothly.
- The Taking Wing Conference on gender issues needs follow-up during the incoming chairmanship, in particular the urgent need to eliminate all forms of violence against women, including trafficking in women.
- This discussion has given us a full picture of the main priorities of the Member States and the Permanent Participants. Without prioritization of our circumpolar agenda we could run a risk of facing a tall order, without chances to deliver results on all we pretend to do. On the other hand, the Arctic Council’s agenda can be built only upon consensus, which already leads to a prioritization.
- We have acknowledged the valuable contributions by our observer countries, international organisations and NGOs. We do encourage intensified cooperation with the EU on arctic issues and intend to continue the coordination of activities with other regional bodies.
- The Inari Declaration will be our common political platform for the next two years. Some ideas in this discussion are not included in the draft declaration – mainly because they may need further political consideration.
- This discussion has served as an excellent lead-in to the next item on our agenda, approval of the SAO-report and the Inari Declaration. These two documents should be seen as a whole – the declaration is intended to become our joint political platform, while the recommendations

included in the SAO-report serve is the main guiding instrument of the future work of the SAOs and the Arctic Council subsidiary bodies. The mandates of the Working Groups are included in the report of the SAOs.