

**Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Denmark**

**Mr. Anders Samuelsen**

**At the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting**

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**Lappi Arena**

**Rovaniemi, Finland**

Colleagues, permanent participant leaders, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of The Kingdom of Denmark, I would like to thank our generous Finnish hosts for excellent guidance and cooperation during your Chairmanship.

Our cooperation in the Arctic Council is not only a choice. It is a necessity! And we can be truly proud of our efforts so far. Despite many challenges, we must nurture this unique governance structure. Only then can we show the outside world that we are responsible and visionary Arctic actors.

I would therefore like to express our clear support for the joint Ministerial Statement as well as the for the Chairs' Statement.

I would like to highlight an area, which is very important to the Kingdom of Denmark: our cooperation on economic development to the benefit of the Arctic population.

Climate change and pressure on the natural environment present challenges in the Arctic. But at the same time new business opportunities are emerging. We should pursue those opportunities in a sustainable way.

This Council has done important work on economic development. For example on how to exploit new opportunities for connectivity overcoming obstacles of long distances and remoteness and thereby reducing the digital divide between the Arctic and most other places.

The Kingdom of Denmark will work towards even more sustainable economic development. As a key element, I would like to point to the report on Business Finance in the Arctic, commissioned by the Danish MFA and carried out in cooperation with the Arctic Economic Council. The report identifies and recommends possible ways of creating better framework conditions that can lead to further economic development. I hope these recommendations will inspire and benefit us all.

Together with Greenland, the Faroe Islands and the incoming Icelandic Chairmanship, we look forward to taking a first step. We will engage young people in a competition on innovation in the Arctic during 2019 and 2020. The aim is to promote entrepreneurship among young people across the entire Arctic region.

I would now like to pass the floor to Minister of Education, Culture, Church and Foreign Affairs from Greenland, Mrs. Ane Lone Bagger, followed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Faroe Islands, Mr. Poul Michelsen.

Thank you!