Letter from Kim Traavik to Members of the Arctic Council and Permanent Participants.

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Oslo, 21 February 2003

Dear colleagues,

It is a pleasure for me to invite you to Svalbard, Norway, on 5-7 August 2003 for a special meeting on the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment.

Looking ahead, we are all aware that climate change may well be the next topic to dominate Arctic agendas. The ACIA team is due to deliver its final reports in 2004. At the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Inari, Finland, in October last year Norway proposed having a special meeting in 2003 where we as politicians can meet scientists on an informal basis before the next Ministerial Meeting. The purpose of the informal meeting would be to prepare for the upcoming debate on climate change, and share our thoughts with the scientists. Thus we could facilitate the preparation of the ACIA Policy Document. The meeting will be closed to the press and there will be no final statement (Chatham House rules).

I have received positive responses to the proposal for such an informal meeting during bilateral talks. I have also been in close contact with the chair of ACIA, Dr. Robert Corell, during the preparatory process. He has confirmed his support for the meeting and regards it as a good means of advancing the ACIA process. The idea of organising the meeting has been discussed with the Icelandic Chair of the Arctic Council who has no objection to it in principle.

We have chosen Svalbard, which lies at about 79 °N, as our venue in order to have the best possible setting for the meeting. Longyearbyen is easily accessible by regular flights from Oslo and Tromsø. Internal transport on Svalbard will be provided by Norway as host country. Due to practical considerations the total number of participants will have to be limited to a maximum of 50. I would therefore propose two-

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three representatives from each member country, one from each of the permanent participants and about 15 from the ACIA. The level of political participation should be left to each member country to decide, but one possibility would be to meet at state-secretary (deputy minister) level.

Please find enclosed a tentative programme for the meeting. A final programme will be drawn up in close co-operation with the Icelandic Chair and the ACIA.

I hope to see you on Svalbard in August and look forward to your reactions to the proposal in this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Kim Traavik

Kim Traavik
INFORMAL ACIA MEETING AT SVALBARD, 5-7 AUGUST 2003
(tentative programme)

Tuesday 5 August

09.20 Departure by regular flight from Oslo, Gardermoen Airport
13.55 Arrival in Longyearbyen, Svalbard

Afternoon Presentation by Dr. Robert Corell, Chair of the ACIA
Status of the work of the ACIA, special focus on the Scientific
Report

Evening Reception hosted by the Governor of Svalbard
Information about Svalbard and Longyearbyen
Welcoming dinner
Night spent in Longyearbyen

Wednesday 6 August

Early morning Departure to Ny-Ålesund (international research community),
which lies at 79 ° N

Morning Presentations of the work on the ACIA Policy Document and draft
recommendations

Afternoon Discussion

Evening Excursion (possibly in the direction of the Kongsbreen glacier)
Arctic barbecue
Night spent in Ny-Ålesund

Thursday 7 August

Morning Discussion and summing up

Early afternoon Departure for Longyearbyen
14.55 Departure from Longyearbyen
19.05 Arrival in Oslo, Gardermoen Airport