

**Statement by the Federal Republic of Germany**  
at the  
**Meeting of Deputy Ministers of the Arctic Council**  
(27th May 2010)

Presidency,  
Ministers,  
Leader of the Indigenous People,  
Ladies and gentleman,

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you some ideas in relation to the agenda point "Responding to emerging challenges in the Arctic – Discussion on the leadership role of the Arctic Council".

Germany has been a state observer to the Arctic Council since its foundation and – recognizing its importance - aims at playing an even bigger role in the future. The Arctic Council acts effectively in the Arctic Region, which poses one of the major strategic challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with its development affecting each and everyone of us. Therefore we cannot ignore the region, we cannot be indifferent to it – neither to the responsibilities it entails nor the chances it offers.

We have heard this morning that challenges to the Arctic are manifold. As the Arctic Region inter alia houses a fragile ecosystem and is crucial for climate stability, Germany is committed to its preservation. The ice-pack continues melting at a breathtaking rate, an aspect which shows very clearly that the need to tackle the challenges is a matter of urgency. While some symptoms of the challenges become visible only in the Arctic, changes affect the entire Northern hemisphere and its sources are also found in influences from outside. A solution which solely stems from within the Arctic Region itself cannot be found, neither can it be considered adequate. Therefore, Germany is not only willing to, but feels obliged to do its part in tackling emerging challenges of the Arctic.

Germany has in fact a strong interest in seeing the Arctic Region develop in a peaceful and sustainable manner while maintaining the region's openness to non-Arctic countries. Being aware of the chances the Region offers next to the challenges, we are positioned excellently in Arctic Research with the largest Arctic research programme of any EU member state. As a great seafaring nation we own the world's third-largest shipping fleet, subject to only partial solutions in the Arctic Ocean. Possessing capital and leading technology to explore Arctic energy and other natural resources, Germany is likely to become an important consumer of future Arctic energy supplies. Furthermore, we regard it as important to follow a common peace-keeping policy towards the Arctic Region, seeing that security issues can be adequately addressed only in an institutional framework which can deal with these matters. But first and foremost Germany is concerned about the Arctic's unique environment and natural resources.

We think that the Arctic calls for an energetic, committed and joint approach, not only on the part of coastal states and Indigenous People of the Arctic, but also of all others who are honestly concerned to want to tackle the new Arctic challenge. As a consequence, Germany has a great interest in developments and challenges to the Arctic. We clearly demonstrated our interest on numerous occasions and various events, not least by hosting an international conference on the Arctic Region in 2009. And there is more to come. Germany is honestly concerned about the region and we position ourselves very clearly

towards the Arctic Council:

In future, the level of complexity in Arctic questions will rise even more. Regarding the different interlinked issues, solutions can only be found by working together on an international basis. But it is of paramount importance to focus on environmental and climatic challenges to preserve the Arctic for future generations. This is why Germany is highly interested in maintaining and strengthening relations with the Arctic Council and its working groups. Germany recognizes the Arctic Council as a leading platform to discuss the most relevant issues and confirms its leadership role. We offer to take an active part in supporting the Arctic Council and its aims.