

Ministerial Meeting in the Arctic Council – 24 April 2015 – Iqaluit
Intervention by the Danish Foreign Minister

[Introduction]

Thank you Madame chair.

I would like to thank you and the people of Nunavut for welcoming us here today and for being such excellent hosts.

The cooperation in the Arctic Council truly is a success story. For almost 20 years we have managed to play by the same rules in this region and keep the Arctic as an area of cooperation and low tensions. This is no small result in the world of today. The Arctic Council is a strong framework for peaceful cooperation and I am convinced that the Arctic Council will grow in importance in the years to come.

[1. Climate change]

Now turning to climate change: Climate change affects the globe as a whole - but probably nowhere as dramatically as in the Arctic. Our scientific cooperation in the Arctic Council documenting the severe effects of climate change in the region is an important contribution to the climate negotiations, underlining the need for mitigation and an ambitious result at the COP21 in Paris.

[2. Energy]

New energy solutions are another political priority. Many remote communities in this region are highly dependent on traditional fossil fuels. We must explore how we can increase our energy efficiency, reinforce renewable energy sources and liberalize our energy markets. This will benefit the people, the environment and the climate - both inside and outside the region. We therefore very much welcome the US initiative to bring this new area of work into the Arctic Council.

[3. Inclusive approach and observers]

This brings me to my third point – the need for an inclusive approach in our cooperation in the Arctic. The involvement of the indigenous peoples in the work of the Arctic Council is to me one of the most important achievements of the Council.

It is one of the elements that make the Arctic Council unique. Also, the involvement of the Indigenous Peoples in the work of the Arctic Council is a constant reminder of our obligation to manage the balance between the fragile nature of the Arctic and the need to ensure responsible economic development to the benefit of the people living there.

At the same time, we have managed to accommodate the increased international interest in the Arctic. We very much welcome that stakeholders with legitimate and concrete interests want to take part in the development of our region. Their participation plays an important role in underpinning the Arctic Council as the primary forum for policy making in the region. It also contributes to maintaining the region as an area of low tension with a strong focus on friendly regional and international cooperation.

[concluding remarks]

With those words, I would like to pass on the floor on to the Greenlandic Minister for Industry, Labour, Trade and Foreign Affairs, Vittus Qujaukitsoq and then the Prime Minister of the Faroe Islands, Kaj Leo Johannesen.

Thank you!