

2 November 2018

Statement at SAO Arctic Council meeting in Rovaniemi 2018

Thank you for organizing this session on this important topic and giving us the opportunity to participate and contribute to the discussion here today.

The Arctic is very important policy area for the Nordic Countries and consequently it is also important for the Nordic Council of Ministers. Through the Nordic Council of Ministers Arctic Cooperation Program we fund Arctic related projects to the tune of around 1.5 million USD or 1.3 million euros each year.

The NCM commitment to the Arctic is clear, since 1998 we have had seven consecutive three year programs and we are now in the first year of our eight program period. That program is anchored in the UN Sustainable development goals and the priorities outlined in Agenda 2030.

When it comes to Biodiversity we have contributed too many biodiversity projects within the CAFF working group, including supporting the two Arctic Biodiversity Congresses held in Trondheim 2014 and here in Rovaniemi last month. We have also supported the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment and the implementation of its recommendations via the Actions for Arctic Biodiversity 2013-2021.

These are only examples of support given to the CAFF working group. We have also funded studies and research carried out by national institutions and universities in the field of biodiversity. It is also worth mentioning that by focusing on environmental protection and supporting projects in that field that these projects also contribute to the conservation of Arctic biodiversity and helping to promote practices that ensure the sustainability of the Arctic's living resources.

The Council of Ministers aim with its Arctic program is to highlight the importance of the region, not only within the Nordic Arctic but also internationally. By focusing on supporting research projects and producing solid knowledge about the changes in the region we also contribute to the international discussion and demonstrate how important the Arctic is for all of us,

Thank you,