

## **Statement Greenland**

### **Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting**

**Iqaluit, Nunavut, 24 April 2014**

Colleagues, Permanent Participant Leaders, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I will start by thanking Canada for their great leadership during their Chairmanship these last two years and I look forward to working with the U.S. the next two years during their Chairmanship.

We attach great importance to working closely with our Arctic neighbors and being an active partner in the Arctic region, because we share many challenges and opportunities and we have many cultural and social relations that are important to maintain.

Greenland has since the very beginning of the Arctic Council been very active in the work of the Council. For us it is a necessity that we are present and are helping to shape the decisions about our region.

As we all know climate change is having a more significant and faster impact in the Arctic region than it is in other regions of the world.

The consequence of this is that traditional lifestyles, hunting and fishing are being fundamentally affected.

While climate change is having major adverse impacts on traditional lifestyles, it is also my clear political priority to ensure that the people living in Greenland will benefit from the new economic opportunities which climate change also makes possible; in tourism, in agriculture, in mineral and oil extraction and in industrial development based on hydropower.

Greenland will not be a passive victim of climate change.

Building of resilience to cope with the impacts of climate change requires an integrated approach. Adaptation actions build resilience and must draw on different sources of knowledge and experiences; scientific assessments as well as traditional knowledge and experiences.

Developments have to be sensitive to local circumstances, and have to take a holistic approach that incorporates socio-economic, cultural as well as ecological perspectives.

The Arctic is rich in natural resources. This wealth has to be managed in a way that benefits our people and in a way in which we are actively empowered to make decisions for the benefit of our people.

At the heart of our culture, is the preservation and long-term conservation of the living resources, on which inhabitants in the Arctic have always depended. These living resources are the key to our identity and culture, and our livelihoods will always depend on their long-term sustainable utilization.

Our traditions in Greenland have been developed from the materials available in an Arctic environment. The seal, the whale, the reindeer, the musk ox and the polar bear are all bearers of cultural meaning and tradition. These living resources are key to my identity and to that of my people.

Therefore the development of the Arctic must be driven by the needs and aspirations of the peoples of the Arctic. Anything other than this would be wrong.

So let us cooperate in order to create the best possible conditions for sustainable development in the Arctic.

Thank you. Qujanaq.