

Denmark – Minister Anders Samuelsen

Colleagues, permanent participant leaders, ladies and gentlemen and our generous Alaskan hosts. On behalf of The Kingdom of Denmark I would like to start by thanking the USA for the good cooperation during your chairmanship the last two years – and congratulate the upcoming Finnish chairmanship.

Before passing the floor to Greenland and the Faroe Islands, I would like to remind us all that our cooperation in the Arctic Council truly is a success story.

During more than 20 years of existence the Council has manifested itself as a strong framework for peaceful cooperation. It has also proven its ability to adapt to changing circumstances and has, successfully, transformed into an important decision-making forum. Today's signing of the third legally-binding agreement is a clear evidence of this transformation.

The Arctic is a vast region coping with the challenges of long distances and for some parts a serious lack of connectivity. Therefore, infrastructure investments are crucial for a successful and economic development. Defeating Distance Digitally is by all means the most promising, cost efficient and environmentally friendly way of doing so. Therefore, it is very positive indeed, that the Finnish chairmanship has decided to keep the Arctic connectivity in focus during the coming two years.

With these words, I would like to pass on the floor to Minister of Independence, Foreign Affairs and Agriculture from Greenland, Mrs. Suka Frederiksen, and then the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Faroe Islands, Mr. Poul Michelsen.

Greenland – Minister Suka Frederiksen

Colleagues, permanent participant leaders, ladies and gentlemen, with the increasing interest for the Arctic, our cooperation becomes even more important. We hear many different visions about how the Arctic should develop, be protected, and used. Yet, what I often think is lacking are the Arctic peoples' voice and influence.

The outside world often forgets that people living in the Arctic have their own visions on which opportunities to seize and which challenges to solve. It is important to find a way that offers the prospects for economic development that embraces and respects our way of living.

Therefore it is our most prominent task – us, who call the Arctic our home - to lead the dialogue on, and development of, our region. The Arctic Council is the leading forum where representatives of indigenous peoples take part. We should be proud of this and take good care of it.

In Greenland we are aware of our responsibility to secure a sustainable development to the benefit of our country. We need to adapt to a changing climate and changes in our way of living. This cooperation shall secure a sustainable future and be based on common values and respect.

The Fairbanks declaration and the Agreement on Scientific Cooperation take important steps in this direction. To secure a safe Arctic – and an Arctic prepared to develop! The scientific community in Greenland looks forward to actively implement the agreement, and welcome colleagues to join us. Qujanaq, thank you!

The Faroe Islands – Minister Poul Michelsen

As an island nation in the West Nordic region of the Arctic, the Faroe Islands have many political, economic and social challenges and opportunities in common with other circumpolar countries and communities.

These shared interests provide an excellent basis for focused and effective international research cooperation in our region. And such cooperation is not only necessary, but absolutely vital.

I am therefore pleased to sign the agreement on enhancing international arctic scientific cooperation on behalf of the Faroe Islands.

The location of the Faroe Islands in the Northeast Atlantic has long since been recognized as globally important for observing and modelling the effects of climate change. Around the Faroes is where the cold waters from the high Arctic converge with the warm currents of the Gulf Stream.

We are pleased to be providing our own scientific expertise in the international research and monitoring efforts related to oceans and climate change.

I am confident that many other aspects of the environment, the culture and the society of the Faroe Islands – some uniquely Faroese, others common to all peoples and nations of the Arctic – will also become the subject of future studies and research both in the Arctic and beyond.

Thank you!