

**Outline of the statement by Sergey Lavrov  
at the presentation of the programme  
of the Russian Chairmanship  
in the Arctic Council in 2021-2023**

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**(20 May 2021)**

Mr Chairman,

Colleagues,

*Responsible Governance for Sustainable Arctic* is an overarching priority theme of the Russian Chairmanship in the Arctic Council. We intend to promote collective approaches to ensuring a balanced development of the Arctic region in its social, economic and environmental dimensions based on respect for international law. We will work on the implementation of the Arctic Council Strategic Plan, enhancing synergies and constructive cooperation and coordination with other regional platforms concerned.

The Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Mikhail Mishustin has adopted the comprehensive Russian Chairmanship program that includes more than 100 events, aimed at promotion of interaction in all main areas of the activities of the Arctic Council. The following priority areas are planned:

**1. Arctic population, including indigenous peoples**

Sustainable development of the Arctic region largely depends on the quality of human capital. We will prioritize the issues of improving the well-being of people living in the Arctic, increasing accessibility of services in such fields as healthcare, education, and social welfare as a whole.

To these ends, we believe it necessary to use the vast potential of the Arctic to develop interregional, scientific, cultural, youth and tourist exchanges and people-to-people contacts. We attach great importance to preserving the identity and heritage of the indigenous peoples of the North in line with the

goals and objectives of the UN International Decade of Indigenous Languages (*in the period from 2022 to 2032*)

During its Chairmanship, Russia will organize a series of international events dedicated, among other things, to protecting the health of citizens, preserving and promoting languages, ensuring comfortable urban environment and accessibility of education and telemedicine. Indigenous peoples' forums, including youth forums, will also be held.

## **2. Environmental protection**

Given the rapid climate change in the Arctic, including permafrost degradation, we consider it a priority task to improve the region's adaptation to these realities. Specifically, this involves minimizing the anthropogenic impact on nature, preserving and restoring the environment, natural resources management, as well as maintaining the health of Arctic ecosystems, including the marine environment, and preserving biodiversity, in particular migratory bird species.

At the same time, we believe it important not only to be mindful of the Arctic's vulnerability in the face of climate change. It is essential also to use its natural, energy and transport potential to facilitate the transition to low-emission economy. This, in turn, will contribute to fulfilling the goals of the 2015 Paris agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We intend to encourage the widespread introduction of advanced innovation technologies in industry, transport and energy, including the development of renewable energy sources.

We are planning to organize forums on issues such as climate change and permafrost thaw in the Arctic, prevention of marine and land pollution, including oil spill prevention and response. We will conduct comprehensive emergency response and management exercises. There are also plans to hold the third Arctic Biodiversity Congress, meetings of ministers responsible for environmental protection and heads of meteorological services.

### **3. Social and economic development**

We are convinced that sustainable economic development remains an essential prerequisite for the well-being and prosperity of the Arctic. Our Chairmanship will consistently focus on issues of promoting economic cooperation in the region – developing new sustainable transport routes, including Arctic marine shipping, energy infrastructure and telecommunications systems. We intend to pursue efforts to support and encourage entrepreneurship and provide favorable conditions for investment and financing of business.

We are planning to organize conferences and workshops on energy issues, including green energy, and the role of the Arctic region in preserving the global energy balance, as well as sustainable Arctic navigation, telecommunications and digitalization, trade and investment.

### **4. Strengthening the Arctic Council**

We will contribute to strengthening the Arctic Council's position as a key format for international cooperation in the region. The Russian Chairmanship intends to fully implement its duties related to conducting the review of the Arctic Council's activities aimed at increasing its efficiency, including the subsidiary bodies and formats for interaction with observers. We will welcome the assistance from our partners in the Council: your contribution will make such review truly comprehensive and multilateral.

We are going to work to improve funding mechanisms for the Council's activities, including its projects and program, ensure proper implementation of decisions and recommendations made. Developing dialogue and contacts with the observers aimed at ensuring their meaningful and balanced involvement in the Council's activities is among our priorities.

The Russian Chairmanship stands ready to facilitate the Arctic Council's constructive collaboration with the Arctic Economic Council, the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, the University of the Arctic and other relevant entities. The agenda also includes the expansion of international scientific cooperation, in

particular looking into the issue of organizing an international marine scientific expedition with the participation of the Arctic Council Member States.

Colleagues,

The program of the Russian Chairmanship aims to effectively address the tasks set out in the Declaration we have adopted today, as well as achieve the goals of the Arctic Council Strategic Plan.

With an aim to ensure the effective implementation of the Chairmanship program, including organizing the all the planned events at the high level, the Organizing committee chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Presidential Plenipotentiary Envoy in the Far Eastern District Yury Trutnev, who is also chairing the State Commission for Arctic Development.

During the Russian Chairmanship significant attention aimed at successful implementation of the projects and initiatives agreed at the Arctic Council will be devoted by the Inter-agency Commission of the Security Council of the Russian Federation on ensuring the national interests of Russia in the Arctic chaired by the Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of Russia Dmitry Medvedev.

We are committed to active and fruitful joint work with a view to ensuring further peaceful, sustainable and progressive development of the Arctic, which we regard as one of the world's most promising regions for cooperation.

Thank you.