

Copenhagen, May 27th, 2010

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me start by expressing my personal satisfaction for being able to represent the Republic of Poland - the observer state of the Arctic Council at the biennial meeting of the Council at the Deputy Ministers level. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to our Danish hosts, for their initiative to organize this meeting which we consider both important and timely.

Let me remind you that Poland also participated at the first meeting of this kind held on the initiative of the Norwegian presidency in Tromso on October 2008. We highly appreciate the decision of the last Ministerial Meeting held in Tromso in April 2009 to continue this sort of contacts which give us, the observers states, an insight as to such important Arctic issues as Search and Rescue, Short Lived Climate Forces and Sustaining Arctic Observation Networks.

Poland is fully aware of the leadership role of the Arctic Council on the Arctic challenges and opportunities, and the increasing international interest in the work of this important body. As you may know, on the 3rd of March, this year, Warsaw hosted the international Conference entitled: „On Top of the World – Addressing Challenges of the Arctic Region”. During that Conference, for the first time publicly, we declared the Polish priorities concerning the Arctic. We also recognized the special role of the Arctic Council for shaping the Arctic regional cooperation.

As other countries, Poland is deeply concerned about the escalating rate of warming of the Arctic climate that will likely also affect the rest of the world. For example the possible opening of the northern maritime routes.

Sustainable development in the Arctic requires the conservation of Arctic ecosystems and sustainable use of the Arctic resources. That deserves wise and coordinated international efforts focused not only on the environmental, economic and strategic issues but also on the human dimension of the Arctic, the needs of indigenous people. In our opinion a special role in this area could be played by the involvement of the resources and abilities of the European Union.

As we all know the Danish presidency is right now working on the new concept concerning the role of the observers in the Arctic Council. We would be glad to participate in this discussion. Poland will provide the Chair of the Arctic Council with our study on this particular issue. It is obvious that each observer state has its own priorities in respect to the Arctic Council.

This year, on March 26th, we organized in Warsaw an informal, working meeting of representatives of observer states and ac hoc observers. For the first time, the representative of the Arctic Council presidency took part in this sort of meeting which is highly appreciated by Poland and all other observers. Let me publicly thank Ambassador Lars Moller for accepting our invitation and his active participation in the Warsaw meeting.

In our view the cooperation between the members states and the observer states on the Council forum should be based on a partnership, transparency and a concrete input coming from the observers to the activities of the Council. To achieve this goal the active presence of scientists from the observer states in the Working Groups of the Arctic Council is absolutely essential. Already in the summer of 2008 we provided the Chair of the Arctic Council with a formal application in this matter. At the moment two eminent

Polish scientist are participating in the Arctic Council Working Groups. We hope that there will be more of them in the future.

Two years ago in Tromso we provided the Arctic Council with the list of the Polish priorities vis a vis the Council. Mr. Chairman, allow me now to share with you our main priorities to the Arctic Region.

They are as follows:

- we support all activities focused on the protection of the natural environment in the region and all common efforts to mitigate the negative results of the climate change in the Arctic;
- we stress the importance of the strict observance in the Arctic region of the rules of international law of the sea and maritime conventions (especially UNCLOS) ;
- we are in favor of further development of the principles on the government of the Arctic region, especially concerning international sailing and management of the resources, taking into consideration the role of the Arctic Council in that respect,
- we support the freedom of scientific research in the region.

I thank you very much for your attention.