



FIFTH CONFERENCE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

Tromsø, Norway, 11 - 13 August 2002

Conference Statement 13 August 2002

We, elected representatives of **Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, the USA and the European Union**,

Meeting in Tromsø, Norway on 11 - 13 August 2002, to discuss shared concerns and responsibilities related to the Arctic Region,

A.

1. **Recalling** the Conference Statements from the four previous Conferences of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region held 1993 - 2000,
2. **Convinced that** these Conferences, and the jointly agreed Conference Statements emerging from them, serve a very useful purpose in bringing a focus on shared or common Arctic issues among circumpolar nations and Parliaments, and that they help to identify practical areas where actions can be taken by national governments that will be not only to the benefit of individual countries but to international co-operation and to the Arctic Regions themselves;

B. Noting

3. The successful conclusion of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs);
4. The inclusion of Arctic issues in the preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and the acknowledgment of the role of parliamentarians in the preliminary statements for this United Nations meeting;
5. The international scientific momentum and policy support for the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment project and the progress of its ongoing research which confirm the world-wide importance of better knowledge of Arctic climate processes and changes, and their effects;

6. The successful launch of the University of the Arctic, with active involvement of several northern countries, and with an important focus on participation by northern indigenous peoples;
7. The continuing development and review of the structures and the activities of the Arctic Council, in particular the efforts to strengthen financial support and accountability, the increasing success of the Arctic Council in giving voice to Arctic issues in international affairs, the emphasis on improving capacity in various Arctic regions toward making policy decisions and implementing sustainable social and economic programmes, such as increased international cooperation related to children, and the networking programme linking organizations active in youth affairs in the circumpolar north;
8. The conference on Gender Equality and Women in the Arctic arranged in August 2002 in support of the efforts to strengthen the Arctic Council's work on issues concerning equality, especially bearing in mind the position of indigenous women;
9. The need for international cooperation in the development of sustainable transportation systems in Arctic regions, with associated infrastructure, including the Northern Sea Route, the issues related to use and management of the marine routes in Arctic North America, and the efforts to improve aviation in the Arctic regions and global connections;

C. Taking into Account

10. The Barrow Declaration of the Arctic Council, adopted in October 2000;
11. The ongoing work by the Arctic Council and its working groups and programs, Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP), Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME), Emergency Prevention Preparedness and Response (EPPR), Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG), and the Arctic Council Action Plan against Pollution (ACAP), to develop and implement actions to prevent pollution, conserve biodiversity and ensure sustainable use of living resources;
12. The Communique of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council released in March 2001;
13. The ten-year anniversary review of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy in June 2001 which highlighted actions taken to control or reduce contaminants in Arctic regions, and the need for immediate and resolute commitment to action on issues such as climate change and sustainable use of natural resources, and in particular the urgency for international cooperation in the preparation of an Arctic Message to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002;

14. The Action Plan for the Northern Dimension in the external and cross-border or regional development cooperation of the European Union including the ND Environmental Partnership and the Northern eDimension, the publication of a Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy and the implementation of the U.S. Northern Europe Initiative;
 15. The progressive co-ordination and effectiveness of national and international scientific activities in the circumpolar Arctic, with increasing emphasis on environmental protection, and social and economic development, as demonstrated by the establishment of the Northern Research Forum and by the success of the annual "Arctic Science Summit Weeks" organized through the International Arctic Science Committee, in which many international Arctic scientific activities participate and share research objectives and information;
 16. The multinational project "Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic" (SLICA); and the increasing attention given in many Arctic countries to social conditions and health issues, especially among indigenous societies and in small communities;
 17. The progress toward production of an Arctic Human Development Report, undertaken in cooperation with the Arctic Council, the UNDP and national and international agencies;
- D. Will work diligently**, individually and cooperatively and with our fellow parliamentarians, through our respective national government structures and international activities to;
18. Play an active part in development of activities that enhance circumpolar cooperation, and foster compatibility between national and international policies with regard to Arctic regions;
 19. Give careful consideration, with open parliamentary discussion and input from international indigenous organizations and elected bodies, to proposals to strengthen regional involvement in the Arctic Council by forging an effective coalition between the Council and the Northern Forum, while still maintaining the Council's role as a high-level intergovernmental circumpolar body;
 20. Recognize the invitation to the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region to attend as an observer, and ensure that there is adequate and important follow-up, in parliaments of Arctic countries, of the implications for the Arctic regions and peoples of the conclusions, recommendations, and agreements from the Johannesburg Summit;
 21. Request, through parliaments, progress reports on the Arctic Climate

Impact Assessment multi-national research, and facilitate discussion in parliaments of the implications for the Arctic and for national and international policies and actions of the growing knowledge about Arctic climate change;

E. Ask the governments in the Arctic Region and the institutions of the European Union to

22. Ensure that a strong Arctic message, which recognizes the particular situation of indigenous peoples, is included in the national presentations from Arctic nations to the World Summit on Sustainable Development;
23. Strengthen and clarify national policies and their implementation in Arctic regions, with full participation of Arctic indigenous peoples and all northern residents and with emphasis on environmental sustainability, enhanced energy efficiency and use of renewable energies, conservation of biodiversity, wise use of resources, and long-term social and economic development, supported by strong multidisciplinary science and basic research;
24. Adopt a new Action Plan for the period 2004-2006 for the Northern Dimension policy of the EU and to consider ways to strengthen the interaction between the Arctic Council and the EU Commission, taking into account the outcome of the Ministerial Conference on the Northern Dimension and the Arctic Window to be held in Greenland in August 2002;
25. Support and reinforce the efforts to enable the Arctic Council to become a strong international body with its own basic income and budget, with international as well as necessary national accountability, while still maintaining its essential characteristics including permanent participation by international indigenous organizations and elected bodies;
26. Instruct the Arctic Council to produce an Arctic Human Development Report, and to present a progress report to the next conference of Parliamentarians in 2004;
27. Instruct the Arctic Council to develop a plan or program for achievement of sustainable transportation systems in the circumpolar Arctic, with appropriate infrastructures, including necessary structures for information technology;
28. Facilitate continued cooperation between the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, in particular with regard to the shared or co-operative activities related to:

- support to the University of the Arctic, in particular its exchange and

mobility programmes;

- cooperation on fisheries and living resources management policies;
- implementation of cooperative programmes concerning children and youth;
- follow up on the outcome of the August 2002 gender equality conference held in Saariselkä, Inari, Finland;

29. Undertake periodic review of the mandates, performance, and effectiveness of both the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, with discussion in Parliaments concerning their support, and assessment of how they contribute to developing in Arctic regions an increased capacity for making and influencing political, social and economic decisions and implementation of the resulting programmes;

F. Identify and propose actions that the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region should take in the following priority area in the period 2002 - 2004:

30. Encourage and support the Arctic Council to produce an Arctic Human Development Report;

31. Develop, in cooperation with the Arctic Council, the European Union and other international bodies, a programme or plan for Information Technology suited to the Arctic regions, including serving the needs of indigenous societies, drawing on the report "IT and the Arctic" presented to the 5th Conference, and in particular its five goals:

- IT must be a tool available to everyone living in the Arctic,
- IT must boost the possibilities of setting up and investing in knowledge-intensive enterprises in the Arctic,
- IT must help the Arctic become a region with a high general level of education,
- IT must be used to revamp the social services in the Arctic,
- IT must help reinforce participation, transparency and access, and the Arctic identity;

32. Take into account the increasingly accurate information and likely prognosis of climate change in Arctic regions. These issues should include the environmental, economic and safety aspects of increasing maritime transportation in the Arctic, as a consequence of new exploration and plans for development of non-renewable resources and the possibility of transport of dangerous goods through Arctic regions;

33. Clarify the common and regional social, economic and policy issues related to management of fisheries and other renewable resources in the Arctic and sub-polar areas, and work toward practical common approaches, building on previous work by national and United Nations bodies;

34. Examine carefully the conclusions and recommendations from the United

Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development for its implications and opportunities for the Arctic regions, and prepare for the next Conference of Parliamentarians a proposed work plan for the Standing Committee and the Parliamentary Conference, so that the Arctic regions and peoples will benefit from the world-wide discussions and United Nations recommendations, the plan should also foster the contribution of Arctic knowledge and experience to international progress toward sustainable development;

G. The Conference further proposes that

35. In accordance with its role as observer to the Arctic Council as well as in recognition of the opportunity and responsibility it has to exchange information among elected representatives and to report to respective Parliaments, the Standing Committee shall keep watch on developments related to the various subjects identified in this Statement. In particular, it will seek opportunities to promote the priorities identified in sections E and F above, and report to the Sixth Conference on actions taken and their results. So as to assist the above process the Standing Committee will investigate the setting up of an electronic discussion forum to facilitate ongoing exchanges among Arctic parliamentarians.

H. In addition, the Conference

36. Acknowledges the interest and presence of parliamentary observers and representatives from governments and non-government agencies at this Conference, and recognizes their important role in carrying further the messages and supporting the actions herein discussed;

- I. Furthermore** the Conference welcomes and accepts the kind invitation of Denmark/Greenland to host the Sixth Conference in 2004.