



Seventh Conference of Parliamentarians of the
Arctic Region, Kiruna, Sweden, 2-4 August 2006

CONFERENCE STATEMENT

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

Meeting in Kiruna, Sweden, on 2-4 August 2006, to discuss shared responsibilities and opportunities related to the Arctic region,

Recalling the Conference Statements from the six previous Conferences of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region held in the period 1993 – 2004

A. NOTING

1. The consequences of climate change which are becoming more visible and greatly influencing the living conditions of human beings, especially the indigenous peoples, as well as the region's flora and fauna;
2. That climate change makes the Arctic more accessible to human activities such as exploitation of resources and increased shipping activities;
3. The international environmental cooperation which has taken place concerning sustainable development, climate change and biodiversity;
4. The cultural diversity in the Arctic represented by more than 40 distinct peoples, cultures and languages;
5. The steps being taken within the European Parliament to host a Northern Dimension Parliamentary Conference to increase coordination between the existing regional organisations in Arctic region;
6. That the eco-system in the Arctic is vulnerable to pollution, over-exploitation and developmental strains and is under pressure;

B. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT

7. The Declaration and Policy document from the Arctic Council meeting in Reykjavik 24 November 2004;
8. That the United Nations has designated the period from 2005-2014 as the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development;
9. The Joint Communiqué from the 10th Session of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in November 2005;
10. The Statement from the first meeting of Ministers of Culture of the Arctic Council member states in January 2006;

11. The fundamental rights of the Arctic Indigenous Peoples expressed in International Law;
12. The planning of the International Polar Year, 2007/2008, and the significance and potential it holds for the development of Arctic science, and the provision of information that may be useful in policymaking;
13. The work towards developing a framework document and a policy declaration for the Northern Dimension Policy;
14. The Draft Nordic Sami Convention submitted in November 2005 by the Expert Group appointed by the Governments and the Sami Parliaments of Finland, Norway and Sweden which is now being reviewed on a national level;
15. The draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples adopted by the UN Human Rights Council;

C. ASK GOVERNMENTS IN THE ARCTIC REGION AND THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO

16. Use the attention and debate following the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) to raise a strong Arctic message on climate change on the international agenda, underlining the role of the Arctic as an early warning sign for global climate change;
17. Make sure that concrete policy proposals are made on how to follow up the ACIA Policy Document from the Arctic Council meeting in Reykjavik, November 2004, and initiate a continuous follow up with reports at regular intervals (5 – 10 years);
18. Ensure financial resources to generate monitoring and research stations/platforms that can secure observations of climate change and the effect of pollution;
19. Strengthen the adaptive capacities of the Arctic residents as mentioned in a political statement by the Arctic states at the COP 11 meeting in Montreal, and to promote research, exchange of experiences and good practices, to develop strategies needed to support Arctic residents in their efforts to sustain their health, culture, economic life and general well being;
20. Retain and intensify efforts to reduce CO₂ emissions and other greenhouse gases and strengthen the multilateral environmental agreements relevant to the Arctic;
21. Ensure openness to data and accessibility to geographical areas and research related data;
22. Carry out the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment as outlined in the Arctic Marine Strategic Plan adopted by the Arctic Council of Ministers at the 4th Arctic Council meeting in November 2004;
23. Make sure that the ongoing Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment within the Arctic Council fully covers the Indigenous Peoples' past, present and projected future activities in the Arctic Seas;

24. Ensure that natural resources of the Arctic are exploited in a sustainable manner and to the benefit of the peoples living in the Arctic;
25. Call on the partners to the Northern Dimension, EU, Russia, Norway and Iceland, to agree on a clear cut, visible and dynamic Arctic policy, with a strong political commitment by all partners that should include the USA and Canada as observers, and establish Arctic partnerships within the Northern Dimension on energy and the marine environment;
26. Make concerted efforts to develop environmentally friendly technology for transport and economic activity in the Arctic to protect its vulnerable nature and the way of life for the Arctic peoples;
27. Promote and invest in research, development and deployment of alternative and low impact energy sources suitable to the Arctic region;
28. In light of the impact of climate change, and the increasing economic and human activity, initiate, as a matter of urgency, an audit of existing legal regimes that impact the Arctic and to continue the discussion about strengthening or adding to them where necessary;
29. Propose to the United Nations that the scope of the Annual Treaty Event in 2007, or at the earliest possible time, should be UN Treaties relevant to the Arctic;
30. Strengthen the dialogue, analyzes and take concrete measures regarding gender aspects in Arctic societies, especially men's changing role in society and female out-migration from rural areas;
31. Make sure the potential of the International Polar Year 2007/2008 is maximised through sufficient governmental financial support and use the findings of the Arctic Human Development Report as a tool to give the International Polar Year 2007/2008 a strong human dimension;
32. Use the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development to implement specific programs for Arctic education;
33. Take initiatives to ensure a coordinated and joint effort to analyse and make use of the results of the International Polar Year in policymaking;
34. Conduct under the auspices of the UN, by the end of IPY in 2008, an international conference "The Arctic – a region of global cooperation";
35. Promote the Arctic region and Arctic science, with a special focus on the young generation, to create a renewed curiosity and interest in Arctic science, and use the University of the Arctic as an important player in this process, and to hold in 2007 with the assistance of UNESCO an international conference on the role of the Universities situated in the Arctic with regard to the sustainable development of the Arctic Region;
36. Ensure the participation of the Arctic indigenous peoples and the use of their knowledge in the Arctic science;
37. Provide increased funding to the University of the Arctic to ensure its continuous success;

38. Implement the funding of the approved Project Support Instrument;
39. Carry out an assessment of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as proposed by the Arctic ICT network;
40. Strengthen their cooperation regarding marine security, especially search and rescue matters;

D. ASK THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION TO

41. Continue the work, also at a national level, of promoting a strong social dimension in Arctic cooperation, as indicated in the Arctic Human Development Report, with a special focus on children and youth;
42. Actively follow the work of the planning and implementation of the International Polar Year 2007/2008;
43. Actively promote the Arctic region with regard to the new Northern Dimension policy;
44. Continue to promote the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in concrete projects as a tool for delivering services to Arctic citizens, such as telemedicine and education in local communities;
45. Ensure that there is adequate and continuous follow-up, in parliaments of Arctic countries as well as in international organisations and negotiations, of conclusions and recommendations that have implications for the Arctic regions and peoples;
46. Consider to review the Rules of Procedure for the Standing Committee before the next conference in 2008 in order to improve the working methods;
47. Work in their home parliaments to prepare a common concept for the development and control of environmental programs, programs of natural resources development, transport and energy networks which affect (or does not affect) to climate change and of preservation of Arctic nature for next generations of the Arctic peoples;

E. THE CONFERENCE

48. Acknowledges the interest and presence of parliamentary observers and representatives from governments and non-government agencies at this Conference, and recognises their important role in relaying the messages and supporting the actions herein discussed;
49. Welcomes the forthcoming Norwegian Chairmanship of the Arctic Council and looks forward to continued cooperation with the Arctic Council in 2006-2008;
50. Welcomes and accepts the kind invitation of the USA to host the Eighth Conference in 2008.