



CONFERENCE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

19.9.2018 Inari, Finland

CONFERENCE STATEMENT

We, the elected representatives from Canada, Denmark/Greenland/Faroe Islands, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia and Sweden;

In close collaboration with the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic;

Recognize the need to discuss new opportunities for ensuring the sustainable development of the Arctic Region, including the promotion of economic activities inter alia the modernization of the digital infrastructure, as well as developing joint responses to environmental challenges, and current measures to mitigate negative effects of climate change and the ways to improve Corporate Social Responsibility and social and economic well-being of Arctic residents;

Note with grave concern that the Arctic is warming at more than twice the global average, resulting in rapid social, environmental, and economic impacts in the region and worldwide, and the pressing and increasing need for mitigation and adaptation actions and to strengthen resilience;

Underline the need to continue and strengthen Arctic cooperation in order to respond to challenges faced by all countries in the region; including on environmental issues, not only to mitigate the negative consequences of climate change, but also to create favorable conditions for sustainable economic development;

Emphasize the role of parliamentarians in the Arctic Region in advising and contributing to the work of the Arctic Council;

Ask the governments of the Arctic Region, the Arctic Council and the institutions of the European Union, where appropriate, to:

Regarding Digital Arctic and Arctic Economic Development:

1. Consider organizing an Arctic Council meeting between the ministers responsible for communications and digitalization to address improving the digital infrastructure of the Arctic;

2. Consider establishing a working group of national Arctic governments (and, where appropriate sub-national governments and industry) to explore cooperation opportunities in developing digital access in Arctic communities, such as through shared undersea cables or satellites;
3. Improve digital services in the Arctic, including satellite and fiber optic, to enable improved communications and continuous environmental monitoring, and develop new services through the introduction of innovative technologies;
4. Promote the role of a business-driven Arctic Economic Council in the development of a diverse, sustainable and prosperous economy for the Arctic Region;
5. Utilize the emerging new opportunities for economic and shipping activities to secure the sustainable development of the Arctic Region and the well-being of the inhabitants of the High North;
6. Encourage the Arctic Economic Council to look at promoting an improved investment climate and trade flow in the Arctic Region, including the promotion of joint economic projects;
7. Support Arctic cross-border economic and human cooperation, underlining the need to strengthen business development in the Arctic Region and discuss joint efforts for economic development, e.g. through promoting products from the region and increasing exports;
8. Promote prior consultation with Indigenous peoples and local communities in decision-making processes Arctic economic development;
9. Create job opportunities and by building on the skills of the residents of the Arctic, develop human capital that can serve to develop and diversify regional economies;
10. Strengthen cooperation on marine research and the blue economy to further our understanding of the Arctic Ocean and improve the basis for sustainable and innovative maritime business development;
11. Promote and support the digital development of all languages in the Arctic region by providing access to research, technology and education on computational linguistics;

Regarding Environmental Challenges:

12. Continue efforts to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and short-lived climate pollutants, such as methane and black carbon;
13. Disseminate knowledge about climate change and its consequences in the Arctic at both the global and local levels, and work with local stakeholders to enhance the adaptation and resilience of Arctic communities to climate change;

14. Develop energy efficiency solutions in Arctic architecture and construction technology, including the use of renewable energy in new building projects and energy refurbishment of existing buildings in the Arctic Region;
15. Facilitate the exchange of information on innovations, strategies, and adaptation tools to handle the effects of climate change, as well as results of the Arctic Council's Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic (AACA) project, throughout the Arctic Region at the local, regional and national levels;
16. Continue to support the working group Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) to co-ordinate and publish its collection of current data on the migration, extinction, and adaptations of species of flora and fauna, on land and in the seas of the Arctic Region;
17. Address the impacts of climate change on Arctic marine biodiversity and marine conservation solutions as part of the October 2018 Arctic Environment Ministers Meeting in Rovaniemi, Finland;
18. Facilitate the improvement of commercial navigation maps and systems in Arctic waters;
19. Address the need to prevent oil spills and other pollutants in the arctic region.
20. Implement the UN resolution to eliminate plastic pollution in the oceans, including by encouraging the Arctic nations and the Arctic Council's observer countries to adopt reduction targets;
21. Urge the full implementation of the International Maritime Organization's Polar Code;
22. Discuss and carry out, in partnership with the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic, a feasibility study of a school or an annual seminar where Indigenous peoples of the Arctic disseminate their traditional knowledge of natural resource management. The curriculum would contain information and education tied to Indigenous ways of life, ethics and the understanding of circular economy;
23. Hold an Arctic Summit, involving heads of state and governments of the Arctic Council member states, as well as the heads of the Permanent Participants to agree upon on arctic cooperation and the sustainable development of the Arctic Region;

Regarding Corporate Social Responsibility:

24. Promote, in collaboration with the Arctic Economic Council, the creation of an Arctic Corporate Social Responsibility initiative as a platform for sharing ideas in finding best solutions and taking into consideration environmental standards and the well-being of the residents of the Arctic, and disclosing, in an accessible manner, basic information about corporations operating in the Arctic;

25. Carry out Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) with emphasis on specific features of the Arctic environment and society in the planning of major projects in the region respecting Indigenous and local peoples. Promote prior consultation, public participation and the utilization of Indigenous and local knowledge as valuable parts of EIAs;
26. Initiate a compilation of the research on the feasibility of cleaning up oil spills in ice-filled waters;
27. Establish an Arctic innovation system that links the scientific community, the business sector, political society and local populations, for instance through an Arctic mentorship and mobility program;
28. Support the development of a circumpolar Arctic Business Index;
29. Support relevant capacity building, particularly through education and training, to ensure that local communities will continue to benefit from economic development;

Regarding the social well-being of the people living in the Arctic:

30. Support the strong participation of Indigenous peoples in the work of the Arctic Council and encourage the integration of Traditional Knowledge into all relevant programs and projects of the Council;
31. Promote the United Nations sustainable development goals in the Arctic Council, highlighting the importance of gender equality and the understanding of the contribution of women and men to sustainable development;
32. Promote the development of basic and higher education, especially by addressing teacher education and curriculum development, in order to provide opportunities for residents of the Arctic;
33. Support and share best practices on preventing adolescent substance use in the Arctic countries in accordance with the needs of different societies;
34. Secure a swift implementation of the Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation, which entered into force 23 May 2018 and improve the possibilities of sharing scientific data between countries and institutions engaged in Arctic research;
35. Initiate a study on the causes and prevalence of suicide in the Arctic Region, especially amongst youth, and support the continuation of circumpolar cooperation on suicide prevention;
36. Increase cooperation between statistical agencies of Arctic nations and continue the development of statistical indicators of social conditions, well-being, and inequalities in the Arctic Region, including the development of statistical indicators for the

subsistence economy of Arctic residents, facilitating the assessment of climate change impacts on traditional harvesting activities;

37. Organize a conference of experts from Arctic nations, to share data and best practices in the field of mental health, including Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs), focusing on prevalence, prevention, and justice, and undertake a study on ways to provide differential sentencing and services to inmates with FASDs;

Furthermore, the Conference:

38. Acknowledges the interest and presence of parliamentary observers and representatives from governments and non-governmental agencies at this Conference, and recognizes their important role in relaying the messages and supporting the actions herein discussed;
39. Acknowledges the importance of, and supports, the active participation of Indigenous peoples in the spirit of the United Nations Declaration on Rights of the Indigenous Peoples throughout all ongoing and future activities and processes in the Arctic Region;
40. Welcomes the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the focus on climate change issues during the Finnish Chairmanship of the Arctic Council 2017 – 2019;
41. Welcomes the forthcoming Icelandic Chairmanship of the Arctic Council and looks forward to enhanced cooperation with the Arctic Council;
42. Welcomes and accepts the invitation of the Parliament of Norway to host the 14th Conference in 2020.