



Conference of Parliamentarians
of the Arctic Region



Important steps in the Arctic Parliamentary Cooperation

25 Years - 1993-2018

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Introduction

The Arctic parliamentary cooperation celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2018. To mark this event we have produced a booklet which takes us back to the first Arctic parliamentary meeting in Reykjavik in 1993. The booklet continues by highlighting important steps in the parliamentary cooperation, but also tells the story of the path towards broader and deeper Arctic cooperation during these 25 years.

Prominent former and current members and chairs of the cooperation have shared their experiences and perspectives. I would like to thank all of them for their important contributions and for making it possible to tell the story of a cooperation that has developed significantly since its inception in 1993.

The 25th anniversary will be celebrated with a special session at the 13th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region. The session takes place in Inari, Finland on 16-19 September 2018, where also this booklet will be launched.

I very much hope you will enjoy reading the booklet and finding out more about the vital work that has been going on in the region over what has been a highly eventful 25 years.

Eirik Sivertsen, MP

Chair of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

25 years as the peoples' representatives

By Mr Eirik Sivertsen, Chair of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

Introduction

People have inhabited the Arctic region for thousands of years. We have travelled across the Circumpolar North for business and trade. We have learned to live in the harsh conditions, especially in wintertime. We live with the shifts of the year, from the polar nights and Northern lights during winter to the midnight sun in the summer. Our shared environment and experiences have naturally led to closer east-west cooperation than north-south.

Building on the rich history of close cooperation, parliamentarians representing the Arctic countries have worked together for 25 years. Our highest priority has been to improve the living conditions for those of us who live in the Arctic. We will continue to have the interests of the people at the top of our agenda. This includes opportunities for living good lives in prosperous societies, and a clean and safe environment.

Global warming is rapidly changing the Arctic. Scientists tell us that in less than 20 years we will have an ice-free Polar Ocean for parts of the year. There will be substantially higher temperatures, with huge regional differences. Climate change shapes the backdrop for Arctic cooperation and poses a huge challenge to the region. That said, we must also look at the opportunities that may result from climate change.

Throughout the North we share many of the same challenges, possibilities and experiences, regardless of national borders. Closer cooperation between Northerners can therefore only be beneficial. The knowledge and experience the people have gained by living in the Arctic must provide the basis for shaping the future of the North. It must be the foundation when we develop new policies, new technology and new ways of adapting to a changing Arctic.

Economic development

The basis for living in the North has always been the rich opportunities and the natural resources. Today this is more than simply about getting food on the table; it is also about creating jobs.

Economic development in the North must be done in a sustainable way in the broad sense of the term, including ecological, economic and social sustainability. In the Arctic this entails respecting, protecting and developing the traditional ways of using nature, be it harvesting marine mammals, reindeer herding, or other ways of utilizing the natural resources. Traditional use of resources and subsistence living are often important bearers of culture for indigenous peoples. Only those people dependent on the traditional ways can find out if and how they can adapt to a modern world. In conflicts between existing activities and the exploitation of new economic opportunities, economic considerations cannot be the only measurement for deciding what to preserve and what to allow.

We are few in the North as a percentage of the 7 billion people on the planet. There are only around 4 million of us. But we are just as valuable as everyone else. A changing Arctic, new technologies, and an ever growing population are creating new opportunities in the North. Oil, gas, fisheries, fish farming, minerals, timber and a lot of other resources are possible sources of new prosperity. But for whom?

I have a message to those who wish start businesses in the Arctic. You are very welcome to do so, together with us. Development of natural resources comes with a cost for the local environment and population, such as the use of land and the risk of pollution from shipping or mining. Social sustainability includes creating legitimacy, sharing the benefits, and investing in capacity building locally and regionally. The people must clearly see and feel that they share the advantages, see long-term benefits, and take part in the economic development happening in their homeland. In short, you need your social licence to operate by building support from the peoples of the Arctic.

I believe that the time has come for a concerted effort to connect economic development with human development for the future of the Arctic region. We need to strengthen the cooperation on creating innovative economies in the North and move up the food chain. The business community, universities and the public sector are important partners in creating innovative economies in the Arctic. The initiative by Nord University to create an Arctic Innovation Cluster with national and international partners is highly promising and could provide an example for how to address this issue.

Technology and infrastructure

For responsible, sustainable economic development to occur in the Arctic, it is necessary to invest in infrastructure. In today's society, a high-quality digital infrastructure is a prerequisite for good service to the population, education opportunities and entrepreneurship. Affordable and reliable internet access is a major challenge for many remote Arctic communities. The governments in the Arctic region must reinforce their collective efforts in finding a solution to this basic infrastructure challenge. The focus on digital infrastructure from the Finnish chairmanship of the Arctic Council has strong support from the Arctic parliamentarians.

With the increase in polar shipping, greater access to natural resources, the shifting of fish stocks further north, and enhanced tourism opportunities, there is also a considerable need for traditional infrastructure investments in the Arctic. Such an increase in marine activities demands a commensurate increase in Arctic marine infrastructure, for search and rescue, ports, navigational aids, adequate charts, and more. The Arctic countries must find new ways of cooperation to utilize existing infrastructure better and work more closely together when planning for the future. Close cooperation with the business sector, for example through the Arctic Economic Council, is necessary to map the needs and finance infrastructure investments.

International attention to the Arctic

The dramatic consequences of climate change in the Arctic and the rich natural resources in the region have drawn global attention. The Arctic countries have accepted the legitimate Arctic interests of the international community. It was an important and correct decision to include more observers in the Arctic cooperation. Although this creates certain challenges, the benefits are far greater. How best to work with observers in a constructive and balanced way will be an important question for the Arctic cooperation to address in the years ahead.

The Arctic Council has developed into a model for regional consensus-based international cooperation. The indigenous peoples sit at the table alongside the representatives of the governments. World-leading scientists from Arctic and non-Arctic countries prepare assessments on which political decisions are based.

This successful cooperation should not be taken for granted. A key to the success of the Arctic Council's first twenty years has been its ability to adapt to change. This is why it is imperative that we continue to develop the Arctic cooperation further, while continuing to protect its unique features.

We have to make sure that the indigenous peoples will still be able to contribute with their traditional knowledge of nature and living in the Arctic. Other voices from the people living in the Arctic should be included in a meaningful way, and with contributions from the broader international community.

The implementation of the 2017 Arctic Science Agreement should strengthen international scientific cooperation and improve our understanding and knowledge about the Arctic. Stronger circumpolar focus and better collaboration between scientists in different countries will help to avoid duplicating studies of the same topics or trends, and make better use of the combined resources allocated to Arctic research.

The Arctic parliamentary cooperation must be a place for open discussion and the exchange of best practices about development and living conditions in the Arctic. We will continue to challenge and support our governments in taking new steps in the Arctic cooperation, for the benefit of both the people and the environment.

Picture: Standing Committee meeting in Syktyvkar, November 2001.

Front from left: Mr Lennart Daleus, MP, Sweden, Mr Clifford Lincoln, MP, Canada, Chair of the Standing Committee, and Mr Valery P. Markov, MP, Russia.

Back from left: Ms Arina Zaitseva, Russia, Mr Guy Lindstrom, Finland, Mr Lavst Riemann Hansen, Denmark, Mr Ivar Kristiansen, MP, Norway, Mr Ernst Olsen, West Nordic Council, Mr Jogvan Durhuus, MP, West Nordic Council, Mr Kjell Myhre-Jensen, Norway, and Mr Kimmo Kiljunen, MP, Finland.



Greeting from the Arctic Council Chairmanship

From Mr Aleksi Härkönen, Senior Arctic Official, Chair, Finland

It is an honor for me to contribute to the celebration of the 25th anniversary of formal cooperation among Arctic parliamentarians. That cooperation began in Reykjavik in August 1993, at which time the Arctic Council was only the germ of an idea held by a few far-seeing government officials and indigenous peoples of the Arctic region. Even the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy was young, having just celebrated its second birthday.

Nevertheless, the parliamentarians of the Arctic region used their first conference statement in 1993 to encourage the Arctic States to "... achieve consensus on the establishment of an Arctic Council so as to impart direction, energy and profile to international Arctic cooperation". They followed this in the joint statement from their second conference (March 1996 in Yellowknife, Canada) with a more urgent request to their governments to "establish the intergovernmental Arctic Council as soon as possible". In addition, they asked that their governments include SCPAR as a part of the international cooperation that would go on within the Arctic Council, and expressed the belief that close dialogue between the Arctic Council and SCPAR would be desirable. Indeed, it has proven so.

The strong support of SCPAR for the establishment of an Arctic Council was not without effect, and the Arctic States reached consensus on the establishment of this body later that same year. Indeed, SCPAR was one of the few current Observers to the Arctic Council who can claim to have been "present at the creation" – the signing of the Ottawa Declaration on 19 September 1996. They were also among the first entities to be formally acknowledged as Observers to the Arctic Council at the Ministerial meeting held in Iqaluit, Canada in 1998.

Since that time, SCPAR has been a close partner for the Arctic Council through many years. On numerous occasions, SCPAR has used its political heft to urge the Arctic Council forward on different initiatives and activities – not least in the areas of sustainable development, connectivity, health, social equity, and the inclusion of Arctic indigenous peoples – that are crucial to the well-being of the Arctic region and its inhabitants. As just three examples, SCPAR specifically expressed support for the Council's work on the first Arctic Human Development Report, the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, and the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment.

As early as 2002, SCPAR was among those that encouraged the Arctic Council to build its own internal infrastructure, looking perhaps towards the Council as we know it today, with an established secretariat that provides administrative continuity, institutional memory, and logistical support for the Council's growing portfolio of work.

In more recent years, SCPAR has been vocal in its support for the Council's growing role as not only the primary forum for intergovernmental cooperation in the Arctic, but as a key element in the network of international entities whose decisions have meaningful impacts on the region that we call home. I share a vision of the Arctic Council as an increasingly important and increasingly well-networked actor in the governance of the Arctic region. As the Arctic Council undertakes the creation of its first long-term strategy, the support of SCPAR for our efforts – and for the content of the strategy that we will ultimately deliver – will be crucial to the Council's future, as it has been for the Council's first 21 years. I look forward to taking part in the SCPAR conference being held in Inari, Finland from 16-19 September, and – most of all – I look forward to our continued partnership in service of a future Arctic that is peaceful, stable, healthy, and prosperous.

Reflections on my involvement with the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

By Mr Clifford Lincoln, Chair of SCPAR 1998-2004

To those who live there, and to those who have travelled its immense spaces, and even to those who have never seen it, the Arctic is a magical place. Indeed, for a great many Canadians, even if they have not ventured anywhere near it, the Arctic defines Canada. It is that mysterious land of endless horizons, that sparkling white expanse of infinite grandeur, that majestic panorama which conjures adventure and exploration. It is also the romantic notion of another way of life, of those hardy peoples of the North so deeply attached to their vast homeland, and to the culture and traditions of their ancestors.

The formidable challenge for all Arctic nations is to succeed in preserving this very special heritage, to make the Arctic and Arctic life sustainable for future generations.

In 1994, the Parliament of Canada, in which I was a Member, was approached by the Nordic Council to send a delegate to the founding meeting of a new organization the Nordic Council was proposing, to promote environmental sustainable development in the Arctic Region. It would take the form of a Standing Committee of parliamentarians from each of the eight Arctic countries and the European Parliament, and of representatives of the indigenous peoples of the Arctic Region. The Standing Committee, to be known as SCPAR (Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region) would meet quarterly in the member countries, in rotation, and hold an international conference every two years.

The meeting took place in the Swedish Parliament in Stockholm, and was hosted by a distinguished Swedish politician and public figure, Birgitta Dahl, then Speaker of the Parliament. The USA did not send a representative, but all of the seven other Arctic countries – the five Scandinavian nations, Russia, and Canada – had assigned delegates, as had the indigenous peoples of the Arctic Region.

This initial meeting in Stockholm would be the start for me of a most challenging and interesting assignment, which would last ten years, until my retirement from politics in 2004. It became a labour of love, where genuine understanding and interaction among dedicated and committed colleagues brought about worthwhile results. SCPAR taught me much about the Arctic and its peoples, and also that sincere cooperation that sets aside egos and competitive urges, makes common goals all the more achievable.

A good year after the Stockholm meeting, Canada hosted the Conference of Arctic Parliamentarians in Yellowknife. In her opening address, the Speaker of the Swedish Parliament, Birgitta Dahl, urged us to strive towards clear and achievable goals, making sure not to scatter our efforts in too many directions.

Among these objectives, SCPAR decided to use its significant combined parliamentary influence to promote the creation of the Arctic Council, and of the University of the Arctic.

The end of the Cold War had brought about a new climate of geo-political rapprochement, where the two erstwhile super-power antagonists, the United States and the Soviet Union, had begun to cooperate on various fronts. The opportunity became ripe for this new-found goodwill to be applied to the Arctic Region, in which both the United States and the Russian Federation (which emerged from the dismantling of the Soviet Union)

were member states. Enter one of the Scandinavian countries, Finland, which led the way towards organized cooperation among the eight Arctic nations for the protection of the northern environment. It convened a ministerial conference of the Arctic countries in 1991 in Rovaniemi, Finland, the first such meeting to take place.

This new-found interaction among the Arctic states was to usher in an era of systematic cooperation, known as the "Rovaniemi Process", and led to the adoption of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy.

The strategy put into place guidelines to ensure sustainable development in the Arctic Region, commensurate with the rights of northern peoples.

At the same time as Finland had convened the first Arctic ministerial in 1991, Canada had proposed the establishment of an "Arctic Council", as a political organization ensuring cooperation among the eight Arctic countries in socio-cultural, environmental and economic areas affecting the peoples of the Arctic, and the circumpolar ecosystem on which their future depends.

The Rovaniemi Process and the Canadian proposal were to culminate in the Ottawa Declaration of 1996 establishing the Arctic Council. SCPAR having been an active and enthusiastic supporter of the Council's creation, I was invited as Chair of SCPAR, along with our Secretary General, Guy Lindström, to take part in the inaugural meeting at the House of Commons in Ottawa in September 1996. I was given the opportunity of addressing the meeting as representative of the Arctic parliamentary committee. For all of us committed to the protection of the Arctic and the way of life and culture of its peoples, it was a signal event, entrenching in a formal way systematic political cooperation among Arctic member states and Arctic peoples.

We had another reason to rejoice. In the same way that SCPAR had entrenched the participation of indigenous representatives as Permanent Members, so did the Arctic Council. Thus both bodies include as fully-fledged members the Aleut International Association (AIA), the Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC), the Gwich'in Council International (GCI), the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICI), the Saami Council and the Russian Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON).

Until 2013, the Arctic Council did not have a permanent secretariat in one of the Arctic countries, and in my view this was one of its inherent weaknesses. The Chairmanship of the Council rotates every two years, which makes sense, but so did its secretariat, which made far less sense. SCPAR had advocated consistently since 1996 for a permanent administrative home for the Arctic Council. Happily, at their biennial meeting in Nuuk, Greenland in May 2011, ministers from the member countries unanimously endorsed the establishment of a permanent Secretariat, to be based in Tromsø, Norway.

Arctic Council ministerial meetings take place every two years, at which point in time the chairmanship passes to the next host member state.

To ensure continuity in the intervening period between ministerials, each country appoints a Senior Arctic Official (SAO), and meetings of these officials are held twice yearly in the host country.

SCPAR has also recommended strongly over the years that the Arctic Council should be more than a coordinating body acting by consensus of its members, and should become a fully-fledged international organization through an autonomous treaty sanctioned by its member states. It has also advocated that the Arctic Council should endorse the creation of an adequate and stable budget to support the activities of the Council, thus eliminating the vagaries and unpredictability of the current system of piecemeal funding.

However, my observations during my decade of work with SCPAR have led me to believe that, unfortunately, it will be a difficult task to transform the Arctic Council into a fully-fledged international organization with all the decisive powers this would entail. For I have always sensed a profound difference of opinion between the

United States on the one hand, and the seven other Arctic nations on the other. The latter would be amenable to a strengthened international structure of the Arctic Council, whilst the United States seems adamant that the Council's present coordination role is adequate.

After my first three years on SCPAR, I was elected its Chair in 1998, a post to which I was re-elected for successive mandates, until my retirement from politics in 2004. SCPAR ranks as one of the most effective organizations of its kind in which I have been involved in active politics. The reason is that it is small, informal in its procedures, yet tightly focused, and pragmatic in its mission. It selects very few clear and achievable objectives, around which its members are able to coalesce most effectively. Certainly one of its key assets, its anchor, is its Secretariat.

During the first decade of SCPAR, and throughout my mandates as Chair, we had the extreme good fortune of having our Secretariat based at the Finnish Parliament, and to enjoy the involvement as our Secretary-General, of Guy Lindström, the Deputy-Director of the International Department of the Parliament. A distinguished and experienced parliamentary official, Guy Lindström belongs to that category of cultured European internationalists, with a vast knowledge and appreciation of the world beyond their own borders. Urbane, reflective, and fluent in several languages, Guy Lindström was the pivot around which our activities took shape and evolved.

Our very first objective was to mobilize support for the creation of the Arctic Council, an objective that became reality in 1996. We then turned our efforts towards the foundation of the University of the Arctic. The University of the Arctic is an outstanding example of visionary and effective cooperation among Arctic nations.

The challenge of bringing post-secondary education to the Arctic region is a formidable one. Yet it is a challenge that must be met and overcome, given the inescapable reality that higher education is an essential tool towards individual and community well-being in all its facets.

So the bold and imaginative concept of a virtual and cooperative university network was born to address this challenge. The University of the Arctic (UArctic) consists of a network of universities, colleges and other organizations which have created a common curriculum of studies to be taught across the eight countries of the Circumpolar North. Studies are carried out through the internet, in the classroom, as well as through student exchanges, with the indigenous peoples of the North being given a key role in the shaping of the curriculum and its monitoring.

As Chair of SCPAR, I took part in the official launch of UArctic in Rovaniemi, Finland, in 2001. For all the organizations which had toiled so diligently together towards that end since the project had been endorsed by the governments of the Arctic Council three years earlier, it was a special moment. Although the very idea of an Arctic university seemed far-fetched when it was first mooted by a few academics closely involved in Arctic studies and research, UArctic has become a highly successful reality. Nearly 4000 students are enrolled in its common courses, with several of them having completed the degree programs offered by member institutions.

SCPAR has remained a keen supporter of UArctic, whose President, Lars Kullerød, has attended our conferences regularly. The ongoing principal challenge is and will continue to be operational funding, which is provided mainly by grants from member governments. Government funding being inevitably subject to the ups and downs of political context and circumstance, it requires persistent and constant prodding on the part of UArctic leadership – a task Lars Kullerød achieves with both perseverance and effectiveness, and in which SCPAR has consistently provided its support.

Among the achievements of SCPAR, certainly the Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) ranks as one of the most notable. The idea and inspiration for the AHDR came from one of our visionary and dedicated members, Tomas Ingi Olrich of Iceland, who more recently became Iceland's Ambassador to France. His premise was

based on the realization that there existed no means or process to measure the advancement, or regress, of human well-being and development in the Circumpolar Region. He held that in a world of extremely rapid socio-economic, technological, and environmental changes, there existed no benchmark to evaluate the impacts, positive or negative, on the well-being, cultures, and ways of life of Arctic peoples. On a global scale, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has compiled for many years the World Development Report, assessing the state of human development in its many facets in the member countries of the United Nations. Tomas Ingi Olrich was convinced that government initiatives and strategies in the Circumpolar North, worthy as they might be, could be planned and implemented far more effectively and judiciously if human development indices could be systematically measured and updated.

His proposal led to SCPAR's presentation of an Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) proposal to the Arctic Council, which adopted it at its Ministerial Conference in Inari, Finland, in 2002. The Arctic Council approved "as a priority project the Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) to be developed into a comprehensive knowledge base for the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Programme".

The Council appointed as Co-Chairs of the AHDR two leading Arctic scholars, Professor Oran Young, now at the University of California Santa Barbara, and Professor Niels Einarsson of the Stefansson Arctic Institute in Akureyri, Iceland. They had both been the experts with whom SCPAR had consulted extensively in preparing its AHDR proposal for submission to the Arctic Council. SCPAR and the Arctic Council were, and continue to be, most fortunate in being able to count on their comprehensive knowledge of Arctic issues, their wide credibility among indigenous peoples and other stakeholders of the Circumpolar North, and their remarkable dedication to the well-being of Arctic communities. Every important endeavour needs catalysts and leaders to transform ideas into action and achievement. In Oran Young and Niels Einarsson the AHDR found its ideal movers and champions.

In all ways a formidable undertaking, the first edition of the AHDR was completed in time, and issued in 2004. It contains thirteen chapters, covering a comprehensive array of relevant development issues, such as demography; core systems (socio-cultural, economic, political and legal); governance; health, education and gender issues; circumpolar international relations and geopolitics; and in conclusion, a human development agenda for the Arctic.

As an instrument for future coordinated strategic planning in the Arctic region, the importance of the AHDR cannot be overstressed. It is in all ways a progressive step forward, and a remarkable one.

SCPAR's next initiative resulted from a proposal by our then Swedish representative, Lennart Daléus. He convinced us of the key importance of Information Technology for the Arctic, arguing that IT was all the more essential in a region where communities were dispersed over vast distances, and most often isolated from one another.

Some significant IT steps had already been taken in the Arctic, in education and health. UArctic was becoming a reality, and telemedicine was being practised in several countries in the region. However, Lennart Daléus was convinced of the necessity of an over-arching IT project as a priority for the Circumpolar North. SCPAR does not implement projects – it has neither the funds nor the personnel to do so. However, it studies and develops worthy ideas and proposals, acting as a catalyst towards their implementation by relevant partners, especially the Arctic Council.

Among the focal projects which SCPAR followed with sustained interest, and which it supported actively, was that of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA).

ACIA was established by the Arctic Council and the International Arctic Sciences Committee (IASC), to assess the impacts and consequences of climate variability and changes across the Arctic region.

It was chaired and led by Dr Robert Corell, an eminent scientist and climatologist from Harvard University, assisted by a team of 300 scientists, as well as other experts and representatives of the indigenous peoples of the Arctic region.

SCPAR cooperated closely with Dr Corell, who shared the progress reports of ACIA with Arctic parliamentarians at SCPAR conferences and other venues.

The landmark ACIA report, 1 800 pages long, was peer-reviewed by a group of over 225 scientists and other experts from over a dozen countries. It was published in November, 2004, and its 17 chapters constitute a dire warning to world governments on the major implications and impacts on the whole world of climate change in the Arctic. The report projected that the Arctic was most likely to warm by more than twice the global average over the 21st century, causing major disruptions to ocean circulation patterns, to the biosphere, and to living species.

Through its Conference Reports, and the continuing input of the large body of parliamentarians it represents, SCPAR has actively supported and disseminated the findings and recommendations of ACIA.

The conclusions and warnings of ACIA continue to be borne out by the unprecedented ongoing climate changes in the Arctic.

SCPAR has always considered the European Union as an important ally in its efforts to promote and achieve sustainable development in the Arctic region. The European Parliament is a member of SCPAR, and plays an active part in the deliberations and work of SCPAR.

The Arctic has become a recognized issue within EU policies and strategies. The EU has become an important partner of the eight Arctic nations in furthering sustainable development in the Arctic, and thence the well-being of the indigenous peoples of the Arctic.

One issue which has occupied a large place in the discussions and work of SCPAR since its foundation has been the central question of Arctic governance.

SCPAR has consistently promoted the view that the Arctic Council should be more than a coordinating body acting by consensus of its members – and that it should seek to become a fully-fledged international organization, with an autonomous treaty mandate sanctioned by its members.

In 2011, SCPAR invited me, as well as former Canadian MP Karen Kraft Sloan and the Chair of the International Arctic Sciences Committee, David Hik, to its meeting in Ottawa, Canada, to present our ideas on the subject of "Arctic Governance in an Evolving Arctic Region".

In the intervening period, at the Arctic Council Ministerial in Nuuk, Greenland, on 12 May 2011, the Arctic Council had taken important steps towards a more autonomous status in certain areas of its governance.

It announced an Agreement on Cooperation in Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic, the first legally-binding agreement negotiated under the auspices of the Arctic Council.

It established a permanent Secretariat, to be based in Tromsø, Norway. It also set up a task force to implement the decision to strengthen the Arctic Council.

The issue of Arctic Governance was further brought forward as one of the main topics of deliberation at the 10th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, in Akureyri, Iceland, in September 2012.

SCPAR is conscious that a major issue such as that of Arctic Governance will not be concluded in the immediate future. Agreements binding several nations seldom happen without gradual, and often slow, deliberations evolving eventually towards a consensus. In continuing to raise and pursue the issue, SCPAR plays the role it was designed to further, that of catalyst towards eventual action.

Twenty years have now elapsed since the founding of SCPAR in 1994. What conclusions can we draw at this point in time from the initiative spearheaded by the Nordic Council to promote and enhance cooperative action among parliamentarians of the eight Arctic nations? Has it been a worthwhile initiative, and even a successful experiment?

The conclusion to date must be affirmative on both counts – the initiative has not only been worthwhile, but also successful. It has shown, as recommended by one of its founders, Birgitta Dahl, that a few judiciously chosen, clearly ear-marked, focused, and worthy objectives, if diligently pursued through sustained effort and action, can achieve significant results.

SCPAR has also shown that an organization, if clear and resolute in its role of catalyst and cooperative ally, does not have to be big or rich to achieve its goals. It can initiate, promote and support, the aim not being to achieve itself, but to make sure that achievement happens.

The Arctic Council, the University of the Arctic, and the Arctic Human Development Report, are and will remain clear examples of SCPAR's role as catalyst for action and results.

Picture: Standing Committee meeting in Ottawa, November 1997.

Front from left: Mr Yuri Neyolov; MP, Russia, Mr Clifford Lincoln, MP, Canada, Mr Geir Haarde, MP, Iceland, Chair of the Standing Committee, and Mr Erik Dalheim, MP, Norway. Back: civil servants from the Arctic countries.



Inclusiveness for a strong Arctic

By Ms Sara Olsvig, Former Chair and Vice Chair of SCPAR, Member of Parliament, Greenland

Inclusiveness for a strong Arctic

“Nothing about us without us”. This phrase is often stated by Arctic indigenous peoples’ representatives at Arctic meetings and represents one of the most important challenges of the Arctic cooperation; the challenge of ensuring inclusion of all Arctic peoples and voices in an international and often highly political environment. It is also often said that the Arctic is unique in the sense that the eight Arctic states have a well-founded tradition of including Arctic indigenous peoples in decision-making processes, in particular in the Arctic Council.

The Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR) has played a central role in continuously ensuring the inclusion of Arctic indigenous peoples, and must continue to ensure this unique structure.

From being a forum with its focus on mostly environmental issues, later health and social issues, the Arctic Council has over the years developed into being the most important forum for Arctic cooperation. The parliamentarians’ committee had in those very same years a tremendous impact on the work of the Arctic Council, giving the state cooperation a powerful parliamentary backing. The committee took part in the preparations for the establishment of the Arctic Council in 1996 and must continue its active part in ensuring an Arctic Council that is inclusive in its decision-making processes.

In 2012 the SCPAR adopted the report “Arctic Governance in an Evolving Arctic Region”, underlining the importance of the Arctic Council as the main forum for cooperation in an evolving Arctic. In the report, the SCPAR stated, that “The participation of the indigenous peoples is one of the main reasons behind the success of the Arctic Council”¹.

Further challenges emerging in the future

Looking back at the last ten to fifteen years of Arctic cooperation, the Arctic agenda has changed. As climate change and possible new shipping routes increasingly got the attention of the mass media and the rest of the World, more non-Arctic states and organizations have turned their attention to the Arctic. During the Cold War the Arctic and in particular some of the Arctic states attracted a lot of attention, but this new attention is fundamentally different. First and foremost, the media started telling the story of the impact of climate change on the environment and on the many Arctic peoples, and secondly, the story of the Arctic as a peaceful region based on cooperation and dialogue.

The increased attention has posed new challenges. New players want to take part in the game. More states want observer status in the Arctic Council and the Arctic states have continuously expressed a higher priority for Arctic issues.

This again has challenged the Arctic meetings. How many seats beside the eight Arctic states’ seats must there be? Who has an inherent right to sit at the table at an Arctic meeting, or to be given observer status?

¹ Report: ARCTIC GOVERNANCE IN AN EVOLVING ARCTIC REGION - A Proposal by the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR), 2012.

One of the consequences of this development has been that Arctic peoples, indigenous peoples and self-governing nations find themselves at the margins of the Arctic states' interactions. This, of course, has not gone unnoticed. As an example, Greenland boycotted the Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in Kiruna in 2013.

Although boycotts are not the best way to express one's desire to partake in processes and meetings, the question of seats was a genuine issue, and will continue to emerge on the agenda of the Arctic Council and possibly in other fora such as the SCPAR. Peoples of the Arctic are increasingly gaining self-governance, and more Arctic nations have their own parliaments and governments, but these parliaments and governments do not have the same right to sit at the tables as the state representatives. This is a challenge.

During one of the SCPAR meetings, held in Svalbard on 5 June 2013, the committee addressed the situation of the Greenland boycott. In its statement, the committee pointed to the importance of inclusion of all peoples living in the Arctic, and among other things stated:

*"The committee finds it very important, that the Arctic Council continues its inclusive character. It is important, that there is space in the council's work to effectively hear the voices of the peoples living in the Arctic (...)As the committee has highlighted in its report on Arctic Governance in an Evolving Arctic Region, the Arctic Council has a solid tradition of including the indigenous peoples of the Arctic in its work. The Council has a unique structure, with six permanent participants and the council must build on that unique structure"*². It is my hope, that the SCPAR will continue to strive for inclusiveness, and be the clear voice that speaks for an Arctic cooperation based on mutual respect. This will ensure a legitimacy in the cooperation of the Arctic, not only internally in the region, but also internationally.

Cross-border cooperation

The conference statements from the Arctic parliamentarians are strong messages to the Arctic states, governments and institutions across the Arctic. The statement of the 11th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, held in Whitehorse in 2014, included a long list of important recommendations. I would like to highlight a few of the recommendations.

A common challenge of our Arctic region is to interact freely and easily as citizens, as students and researchers, as workers and as businesses. Our borders divide us. This is a paradox as many of the Arctic peoples do live across many state borders. Inuit, for example, live in Russia, Alaska, Canada and Greenland. Our Arctic cooperation must pave the way for our peoples to be able to interact more freely.

Therefore, the conference recommendation *"Support cross-border and trans-border economic and human cooperation in the Arctic Region"*³ is of great importance and must be followed up by political action.

In particular, the ability to cooperate across borders about wildlife is of crucial importance for Inuit. As another important recent development, I would like to highlight the work of the Inuit Circumpolar Council⁴, Pikialasorsuaq Commission, which held consultations with the communities in Nunavut, Canada and Greenland about the future of the North Water polynya Pikialasorsuaq. One of the recommendations of the commission report is to *"establish a free travel zone for Inuit across the Pikialasorsuaq region"*⁵.

2 SCPAR statement on the situation of Greenland and the Arctic Council, 2013.

3 11th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region Conference Statement, Whitehorse 9-11 September, 2014.

4 Arctic Council permanent participant and indigenous peoples' organization.

5 Report of the Pikialasorsuaq Commission, "People of the ice bridge: The future of the Pikialasorsuaq", 2017.

Parliamentarians and governments in particular play a vital role in striving for more cross-border contact and cooperation among Arctic peoples. Cross-border cooperation is one of the key factors for a strong and inclusive Arctic.

A human rights approach to development

There is no doubt that the Arctic is unique, not only environmentally as a region, but also politically.

With the eight Arctic nation states cooperating in the Arctic Council and with the inclusion of indigenous peoples' organizations as permanent participants, this unique structure poses an example for other regions of the World. However, the structure should also continue to develop. Arctic states have all endorsed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which recognized indigenous peoples' fundamental human rights, collectively and individually. Besides including self-governing nations in the work of the Arctic Council, the Arctic states must also consider strengthening the position of the indigenous peoples' organizations. With more non-Arctic players in the field, ensuring the strongest voice for the Arctic peoples is the way forward in maintaining the Arctic Council's high legitimacy.

In the 11th Conference statement, the Arctic Parliamentarians Committee also recommended to *"Promote a human rights approach to development in the Arctic and enhance knowledge of basic human rights on all levels of governance"*⁶.

With a human rights approach to development, Arctic states and nations will set a high standard for human development, both on social, cultural, environmental and political affairs. Not only in regard to indigenous peoples' rights, but also for example in regard to the rights of the child, women's rights, and rights of persons with disabilities. Inclusiveness for a strong Arctic is also about equality within societies, and by implementing international human rights standards in Arctic societies, we will build strong communities, strong families and a healthy future for the Arctic.

Finally, the last recommendation from the 11th conference statement I would like to highlight links back to the issue of self-governing nations and their inclusion in the Arctic Council. The recommendation is to *"Exchange best practices on how to nationally involve local and regional governments in decision-making processes in the Arctic Council"*⁷. Our success in the Arctic will be determined by future generations of the Arctic. If we include and involve local governments, we will also build local capacity and knowledge for future Arctic citizens, politicians, diplomats and scientists. Local capacity and strength will benefit the whole Arctic and all Arctic states.

With these words, I congratulate the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region on its 25th anniversary. Let us continue to work together for a strong Arctic that belongs to us all, by including us all.

Picture: Ms Sara Oslvig in the middle (in black) welcoming the Standing Committee to Greenland in 2017 as Deputy-Premier of Greenland. Photo: Folketinget.

⁶ 11th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region Conference Statement, Whitehorse 9-11 September, 2014.
⁷ Ibid.



SCPAR at 25

By Senator Lisa Murkowski, the United States of America

I became a member of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region shortly after I was sworn in as a member of the United States Senate in 2003. Looking back over the past 15 years, it is encouraging to see the growing level of international Arctic parliamentary cooperation with both Arctic and non-Arctic nations, as well as a growing level of knowledge about the Arctic within the United States. Without question, at least part of that growth is due to the SCPAR.

Internationally, as the importance of the Arctic has grown, we have seen a corresponding rise in interest from non-Arctic nations, which has only helped strengthen parliamentary cooperation. Nations like Singapore, which has extensive expertise in port management and maritime shipping operations, have expressed an interest in sharing their knowledge with Alaska as we look to develop our own port infrastructure to address the increasing amount of Arctic shipping.

Officials from other non-Arctic nations like China and Japan are frequently at Arctic forums, including the Arctic Parliamentary conferences. Their participation is helpful on several fronts. It allows for a better understanding of positions and interests; it brings more resources to the table for potential investment in a region that, at least in the North American Arctic, still lacks much of the infrastructure needed to expand our economic opportunities and improve our quality of life; and it reinforces the primacy of multilateral forums like the SCPAR and the Arctic Council in setting Arctic policy.

Despite some significant political strain in recent years between Arctic nations, that contention has not negatively impacted the collaborative and cooperative spirit found in the Arctic. Sanctions imposed on Russia by a number of Arctic nations caused problems in issuing the formal invitation to the 2014 Arctic Parliamentary Conference in Canada. Fortunately, the SCPAR was still able to ensure that all members of the Arctic Parliamentary Conference were invited and able to attend. It is an example of the camaraderie found within the Arctic and the recognition that regional cooperation is both necessary and desired.

The Arctic is indeed a region of shared values, shared challenges, and shared opportunities. At one SCPAR meeting in Washington, DC, the United States' Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution pulled out some of their Arctic treasures and artifacts for the members to view. It was fascinating to see a member from Greenland show his Nordic colleagues how a traditional tool would be used, and to see the Russian delegation examining an old book about Russian activity in the Arctic. We also share real world challenges on a day-to-day basis. Whether it is the multiple flights needed to get to our meeting locations, or being delayed by volcanic eruptions as was the case for the 2008 Arctic Parliamentary Conference in Fairbanks, Alaska, or poor weather conditions, as members of the SCPAR experienced in Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard – we are all constantly reminded that Mother Nature remains in charge.

The 2008 Fairbanks Conference was the Arctic Parliamentarians' first meeting in Alaska – America's Arctic. It was a great opportunity to introduce the group to Alaska and Alaska to the Parliamentarians. The meeting also served as a precedent for the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in 2017 during the United States' Chairmanship. The Conference gave Alaska, the City of Fairbanks, and all who participated a chance to bond with our Arctic neighbors and colleagues. From an evening reception on a riverboat, toasting with glasses made from ice at the Chena Hot Springs Ice Museum, going back 20,000 years in a permafrost tunnel, and all events in between, I will always recall that as the moment the United States became a true participating member of the Arctic Parliamentary group.

Fifteen years ago, the Arctic wouldn't have made a Top 50 list of the United States' policy priorities. It was simply not at the forefront of the Washington, DC thought process. But as the Arctic has become more accessible, and more prevalent in policy discussions, our national policymakers are finally starting to grapple with many of the topics that the other Arctic nations have been working on for decades. The ideas that the SCPAR and the biennial conference incubate – like the Arctic Economic Forum, telecommunication needs, health care and suicide prevention – are taking hold in the United States. These are realities that the people of Alaska have known about for decades, but having them highlighted internationally in a part of the world that has a spotlight shining on it, has allowed topics that once were localized to become part of the national discussion.

We still have plenty of challenges ahead. Within the United States, more resources are needed to invest in infrastructure. Our indigenous peoples in the Far North need to have a greater role in setting national Arctic policy that impacts their daily lives. We still need to educate the rest of the United States that we are indeed an Arctic nation. But I am incredibly grateful to all of the SCPAR members who have traveled to the United States for various Arctic-themed events and forums. It wasn't that long ago that we had the same panelists at every Arctic-related conference and roundtable in the United States – essentially our own speaking circuit. Thanks to the participation of our SCPAR colleagues, we have been able to add more variety and international expertise to our panels, and raised the level of discussion and awareness to even greater levels.

I have been fortunate to witness tremendous growth in the level of interaction among Arctic Parliamentarians over the past 15 years, and the need for regional collaboration in a sparsely populated area of the world. It has helped keep the Arctic a "zone of peace" and I am hopeful that we can continue to do so long into the future. The United States is still well behind the other Arctic nations in recognizing the importance of the Arctic, but with the cooperative spirit of the Arctic Parliamentary membership, I know that we are on the right road.

Picture: Senator Lisa Murkowski, the USA, and Ms Hill-Marta Solberg, MP, Norway, Chair of the Standing Committee, at the Arctic parliamentary conference in Fairbanks in 2008. Photo: Paul H. McCarthy



A View from the European Parliament – SCPAR 25 Years

By Mrs Diana Wallis, former Vice-President of the European Parliament and member of SCPAR

Twenty-five years, or a quarter of a century of Arctic Parliamentary Cooperation; that is surely something worth celebrating? Although looking back I was sad to see that the European Parliament was not involved from the outset, indeed I found that an initial request to the European Parliament in 1995 was greeted with a rather frosty response that the Parliament did not co-operate with ad hoc groups and furthermore had no Arctic policy! Fortunately things were to change.

For my own part I was a member of SCPAR from 2000 through to 2007 and had the privilege to attend some dozen committee meetings at venues all over the Arctic region during that period. Thereafter as a Vice President of our Parliament I was able to continue to foster Arctic collaboration both with the Committee and Conference, using my institutional role. In total I attended some five Conferences of Arctic Parliamentarians, starting with Rovaniemi in 2000 and culminating with what for me was a huge achievement, the hosting of the Conference in the European Parliament in 2010.

The reason I set all this out is because although such activity was for me an important part of my parliamentary life, it was by no means obvious that it should have occupied such a segment of my time or interest. My first duty was to my electors back home in the UK region of Yorkshire and the Humber, and then as a legislator on our Legal Affairs, and Internal Market Committees. Thereafter I was Vice President and then President of the Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Switzerland, Iceland and Norway and the EEA. Arctic issues were rather tagged onto this latter remit, along with equal responsibility for Baltic and Barents parliamentary co-operation. Someone had identified some synergy with the Delegation, which already had its hands full dealing with three countries. So this was not expected to be a major part of parliamentary activity, perhaps in line with that initial rather cool response. However, as many have noted, once bitten by the Arctic bug it is hard to resist.

In some ways there was always a feeling of having to justify my own or more importantly the European Parliament or EU interest in the Arctic. What I never had was the secure basis or direct justification of living in the Arctic, or within an Arctic nation; I could merely claim the historical links of my hometown, the port of Hull with the Arctic whaling industry and its twinning with Reykjavik. However I always tried to articulate that the Arctic should be the interest of us all and in turn of the citizens we represent. What is happening in the Arctic in terms of climate change is affecting and will affect us all. However, for Arctic peoples and nations, managing outside interest in the Arctic is a delicate issue and something I was intensely aware of during my involvement.

It is therefore good to see that European Parliament engagement was actually sought out and indeed it was always my experience that our participation was welcome. During the main part of my involvement, one of the running themes was to achieve more EU engagement in the Arctic and in the Arctic Council. In some senses the European Union, or certainly my fellow parliamentarians, was distracted with the implications of the successful enlargement of the Union in 2004, particularly in northern Europe bringing in the Baltic States. This meant that European attention was deflected to issues around the Baltic Sea and relations with Russia. I had to continually fight for attention for what became known as 'the Arctic window', such that I remember on one occasion an exasperated Alexander Stubb saying 'oh here comes Diana with her polar bears!' So at least I achieved something in terms of recognition. Indeed further than that through our Delegation we were able to achieve plenary debates and indeed resolutions on Arctic issues, resulting in both the Parliament and the EU having an Arctic policy.

It was also wonderful to witness and be some part of the soft power and influence which SCPAR exercised in many areas, particularly the report on human development in the Arctic, activities in the lead-up to International Polar Year and arguing for a permanent Secretariat for the Arctic Council. It was very special to be part of a parliamentary organisation that brought together such diverse membership, from the European Arctic nations, from the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic, and from Russia and Canada and finally from the US. This was a unique experience.

There are many places and experiences I could recall, but of particular resonance were two trips to Svalbard, one with the Committee and also a number of trips to Ilulissat. Perhaps these places represent what the real Arctic means to the outside world, but then they are both special. For me the Arctic Window Conference organised by the Danish presidency of the EU in September 2008 represented a high point in the expectations for EU Arctic policy. It showcased the European Commission working at its best across a whole number of sectoral areas to produce a coherent European Arctic policy. For me personally, it was a real honour to be able to deliver a heart-felt speech on behalf of our then President Hans-Gert Pöttering, particularly emphasising as he had asked me to, European solidarity with the Arctic and its peoples.

Sadly, in the following years EU Arctic policy was rather overtaken or dominated by the whole issue of the trade in seal products. For me this was a sadness; some of us fought to obtain a better outcome than the ban, but without success. However it only illustrated the greater need for wider public awareness about real Arctic issues and life in the Arctic. This is where parliamentary co-operation is so important and the need to involve as many colleagues as possible in this activity in a meaningful way. This in order to ensure that when difficult issues arise there will hopefully be more knowledge and understanding to inform decision-making. I should like to thank the Arctic parliamentarians for opening my eyes to the Arctic and for having given me many wonderful and challenging experiences, but also to have met and worked with a group of truly inspiring colleagues, officials and academics, all of whom were so passionate about this fragile part of our globe.

Picture: Standing Committee meeting in Longyearbyen, Svalbard in 2001. Left: Mr Stuart Arnold, European Parliament Mr Nikolay Yashkin, Russia, Mr Yuri Neyolov; MP, Russia. Right: Mr Henrik Olsen, European Parliament, Ms Diana Wallis, MEP, Mr Kjell Myhre Jensen, Norway, Ms Belinda Theriault, Iceland, Mr Kimmo Kiljunen, MP, Finland.



On the establishment and development of cooperation between Arctic states in the Arctic, including the parliamentary dimension

Contribution from the Russian delegation

1. Establishment of cooperation. Bilateral relations between Arctic region countries

One of the first international treaties concerning cooperation in the Arctic was the Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Protection between the USSR and the United States, which has been in effect since 1972. The document provided for the development and implementation of measures to prevent and study pollution and regulate the impact of human activities on the natural environment. This agreement was subsequently used as a basis for the drafting of similar treaties. In 1989, the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Concerning Cooperation in Combating Pollution in the Bering and Chukchi Seas in Emergency Situations was signed in Moscow.

In 1984, the National Council for Scientific Research of Canada and the USSR State Committee for Science and Technology signed a protocol on the development of a scientific and technical cooperation programme on the problems of the Arctic and the North. The document focused on interaction in such areas as geological science and Arctic oil, the environment, construction and transport in the North, ethnography, and education. In 1989, the countries decided to strengthen cooperation in the macroregion by signing the Agreement on Cooperation in the Arctic and the North, the Agreement Concerning Environmental Cooperation, the Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation Relating to the Prevention and Control of Arctic Marine Pollution.

In 1988, the USSR also signed a bilateral agreement with Norway concerning environmental protection.

After the collapse of the USSR, the Russian Federation confirmed the validity of the documents, some of which were signed in an updated version.

In particular, Russia and Canada renewed the Agreement on Cooperation in the Arctic and the North in 1992 and the Agreement Concerning Environmental Cooperation in 1993.

In 1994, a new version of the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Russian Federation on Cooperation in the Field of Protection of the Environment and Natural Resources was signed. The sides agreed to jointly develop policies in these areas at the bilateral, regional, and global levels. In addition, an intergovernmental agreement was signed in Washington, DC in 2000 on the conservation and use of the Chukchi-Alaskan polar bear population.

The Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Protection with Norway was updated in 1992. In addition, new documents were added to expand cooperation: the Agreement Between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Kingdom of Norway concerning Cooperation on the Combatment of Oil Pollution in the Barents Sea (1994) and the Agreement between the Russian Government and

the Norwegian Government on Cooperation in Search and Rescue of People Suffering Distress in the Barents Sea (1995).

The Agreement on Environmental Protection between Russia and Denmark entered into force starting in 1993.

At present, in addition to the aforementioned documents, there is also a wide range of agreements in effect on the conservation of marine living resources in the seas of the Arctic Ocean¹.

2. International structures for cooperation in the Arctic

At present, international organizations are intensively developing their relations. A forum for regional cooperation was established based on the initiative of Russia and Norway in 1993 – the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC). Permanent members include Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Finland, and Sweden as well as the Commission of the European Communities. The United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Canada, the Netherlands, Poland, France, the United States, and Japan hold observer status. The BEAC meets annually at the level of foreign ministers. In order to carry out routine practical work on the main areas of cooperation, working groups and task forces were set up within the BEAC and report on their activities on a regular basis. Russia held the BEAC chairmanship in 2015–2017 during which special attention was devoted to the protection of the rights and interests of indigenous peoples. In April 2017, Moscow hosted the first Indigenous Peoples' Summit in the Barents Region. It resulted in the establishment of an equal dialogue between indigenous peoples and the authorities. An agreement was reached to hold such events on a regular basis.

The Arctic Council was established in 1996. It is an international regional structure whose mission is to promote cooperation in matters concerning environmental protection and ensure the sustainable development of circumpolar territories. The Arctic Council has become the main discussion platform for international cooperation in the Arctic. The organization's members are Denmark, Iceland, Canada, Norway, Russia, the United States, Finland, and Sweden. Observer status has been granted to France, Germany, England, Spain, the Netherlands, Poland as well as a number of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Organizations of Arctic indigenous peoples also take part in the activities of the Arctic Council: the Aleut International Association, the Arctic Athabaskan Council, the Inuit Circumpolar Council, the Saami Council, the Gwich'in Council International, and the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North.

The Arctic Council carries out its activities within the framework of six permanent working groups: on eliminating pollution in the Arctic, monitoring the Arctic environment, preserving the Arctic flora and fauna, preventing and eliminating emergencies, protecting the Arctic marine environment, and sustainable development. In 2014, the Arctic Council created the Arctic Economic Council whose activities aim to develop economic relations in the region and increase its investment appeal. The Arctic Coast Guard Forum whose tasks are to ensure security, in particular in matters concerning ecology, was established in 2015.

The Russian Federation is the organization's largest donor².

All Arctic states³ sign legally binding documents as part of the Arctic Council's work. In particular, the Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic, which was drafted with Russia's

¹ For example, the Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Mutual Fisheries Relations of 1984 and the Agreement between the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Government of the Kingdom of Norway on Mutual Relations in the Field of Fisheries of 1976.

² The Arctic Council Project Support Instrument (hereinafter referred to as the PSI), in effect since 2014, finances developments to reduce environmental pollution approved by the Arctic Council. As of early 2017, the PSI had USD 15.9 million, of which USD 10 million had been provided by the Russian Federation.

³ Denmark, Iceland, Canada, Norway, Russia, USA, Finland, and Sweden.

participation, was concluded in 2011. The Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution, Preparedness and Response in the Arctic was signed in 2013.

In addition, the Framework Plan for Cooperation on Prevention of Oil Pollution from Petroleum and Maritime Activities in the Marine Areas of the Arctic and the Framework for Action on Black Carbon and Methane were adopted in April 2015.

In October 2016, the Arctic Council approved a new strategy, which provides for expanding information and educational activities. The goal of the strategy is to promote knowledge in matters concerning climate change.

In 2017, a new legally binding document was signed: the Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation. It envisages Arctic states providing assistance in the exchange of scientific information, access to research areas and scientific infrastructure, and the protection of intellectual property.

The Russian Federation has initiated about 70 projects in the economic, environmental, and social spheres as part of the Arctic Council's activities, including the health of the local population and the development of telemedicine. Cultural interaction among Arctic countries was initiated within the framework of the organization at Russia's suggestion. Russia acted as a co-author of the first and second legally binding documents of the Arctic Council. In 2017, approval was granted for a project prepared with Russia's participation, which aims to improve the system of free pre-school and school education for children representing indigenous peoples of the North.

During a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Arctic Council on 11 May 2017, the Russian side proposed resuming annual meetings of the chiefs of the general staffs of the armed forces of the Arctic states, which had been conducted until 2013. In addition, the Russian side stressed the need to support the projects of the Arctic Council that enable the use of new technological solutions and the introduction of environmental initiatives, including to reduce emissions of black carbon.

International cooperation is also developing at the regional level of Arctic countries.

The Barents Regional Council operates under the aegis of the BEAC, helping to establish cooperation directly between the regions of its member nations. It includes the heads of administrative entities. From the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, the organization includes the Murmansk and Arkhangelsk Regions, the Nenets Autonomous District, the Republic of Karelia, and the Komi Republic. The main issues that are addressed within the international organization include: the development of infrastructure and industry, education, environmental protection, healthcare, culture, and support for indigenous peoples.

The Northern Forum, which includes regions from Iceland, the Republic of Korea, the United States, Finland, and Russia, was established in 1993. Nine constituent entities of the Russian Federation have joined the forum⁴. Regions in the organization are represented by senior officials. The objective of the Northern Forum is to improve the quality of life of the peoples of the North by providing sites for the exchange of knowledge and experience in solving common problems as well as supporting joint regional socioeconomic initiatives.

Interparliamentary ties play an important role in the development of international relations in the Arctic region.

The main platform for representatives of legislative bodies is the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (CPAR), which was first organized in 1993. Its mission is to exchange information between parliaments, governments, organizations of indigenous peoples as well as international governmental and non-governmental organizations. The conference promotes initiatives in matters concerning Arctic cooperation at the regional and

4 The Kamchatka, Krasnoyarsk, and Primorsky Territories, Magadan Region, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), and Nenets, Khanty-Mansi, Chukotsky, and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Districts.

international levels. Permanent participants include the parliaments of Denmark, Iceland, Canada, Norway, Russia, the United States, Finland, and Sweden as well as the European Parliament. A working body was formed in 1994 – the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR), which is responsible for preparing initiatives for the development of cooperation in the Arctic and monitors the implementation of the Conference’s decisions.

In 2012, representatives of Russia put forward an invitation to form an Arctic consortium of banks of countries interested in the development of the macroregion at the 10th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region⁵.

At a regular meeting of the SCPAR in Greenland on 15–18 May 2017, the Russian side supported an initiative to set up task forces on priority issues concerning Arctic cooperation in ecology, telecommunications infrastructure, business, and the economy. A proposal was made to involve scientists, experts, and businessmen in the work of SCPAR when discussing Arctic issues.

The Barents Parliamentary Conferences are held under the auspices of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. At the 8th Conference, which took place in Naryan-Mar (Nenets Autonomous District) in June 2017, legislative representatives discussed issues concerning the development of interparliamentary cooperation as well as the socioeconomic and cultural development of the Barents Region⁶. A Russian initiative to establish a regional high-level forum dubbed “Barents Davos” on a permanent basis received support at the conference. This forum should become a discussion platform for the discussion of the entire Barents agenda with an emphasis on the sustainable socioeconomic development of the regions. In addition, the resolution drawn up at the conference noted the importance of developing the Northern Sea Route, cooperation in environmentally sustainable production and consumption as well as the protection of water resources.

Picture: Mr Vladimir Barbin, Senior Arctic Official, Russia, and Mr Gregoriy Ledkov, MP and Chair of RAIPON, at the Arctic parliamentary conference in Ulan Ude, Russia in June 2016. Photo: Mr Mark Agnor



5 From the presentation of Mikhail Slipenchuk, Deputy Chairman of the State Duma Committee on Natural Resources, Nature Management and Ecology. The presentation is posted on the official website of the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region.

6 The area around the Barents Sea, which contains 13 regions or corresponding administrative entities of Norway, Russia, Finland, and Sweden.

25 years of Arctic Parliamentary Cooperation - The early years

By Mr Guy Lindström, SCPAR Secretary General 1994 – 2002

This text will focus on how the Arctic parliamentary cooperation started, and how it was built up during its early years. The focus will be on events and meetings that moved the work forward. The big picture, how the Canadian initiative to establish the Arctic Council developed, how Finland moved forward with the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, and how these initiatives eventually merged into the Arctic Council has been presented in many other papers.

Members of parliament in the Arctic states became a driving force for Arctic cooperation in the early 1990's. Scandinavian parliamentarians played an active role in this process by initiating an international Arctic conference for parliamentarians organized by the Nordic Council. The Nordic Council is the official forum for inter-governmental and interparliamentary cooperation between the five Scandinavian countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

This first conference was held in Reykjavik, Iceland, in August 1993. Some of the major themes were environmental protection, sustainable development of natural resources and the situation of the indigenous peoples of the Arctic. All these areas later became key issues in Arctic cooperation, and have remained so until this day. At the first conference there was, however, one exceptional issue in the program: maintaining peace and security in the Arctic. After the cold war it was natural to discuss the issue in this context and as part of a broad security concept. It took, however, over twenty years before this issue again emerged on the agenda of the Arctic parliamentarians. This happened at a seminar on the subject in connection with a SCPAR meeting in Helsinki in November 2014.

This first conference decided to establish a permanent parliamentary committee for Arctic cooperation, the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR). The Nordic Council was given the responsibility to make the committee operational, and it then worked under the auspices of the Nordic Council for the first few years. The first formal proposal within the Nordic Council to set Arctic cooperation on the agenda was made by Mr Halldór Ásgrímsson, MP, Iceland, who at the time was one of the top political leaders of the Nordic Council, and later Foreign as well as Prime Minister of his country.

SCPAR held its first meeting in 1994 with Halldór Ásgrímsson as chair, and with the other Scandinavian members present, Birgitta Dahl, at the time Speaker of the Swedish Parliament, and Jan P. Syse, distinguished Norwegian MP and former Prime Minister.

To create a certain balance between large and small member states and in order to have a committee with a fairly limited number of members, it had been agreed that the Scandinavian members would have three seats nominated by the Nordic Council, and that the European Parliament, Canada, Russia and the USA would have one seat each. Representatives of indigenous people were also given seats in the committee from the start. Here parliamentarians followed the example that had already been set within the Arctic environmental cooperation.

The parliaments of Canada and Russia took an active part from the start and swiftly nominated their members. Clifford Lincoln became the Canadian representative and Ludmila Pobedinskaya the representative of Russia. Getting members on board from the European Parliament (EP) and the USA required a bit more work.

Because of the good relations that the Nordic Council had developed with many international and regional organizations, the European Parliament was invited to the first conference in Iceland. After that it was a very natu-

ral step to also include this parliament in the group that would move forward with the work after the conference. There was also on a political level a clear interest in the EP to join SCPAR, but there were some challenges on the formal side. It was very important within the EP to define the mandate of its representative and to agree on which body within the EP should be responsible for this work. In this process the committee had strong support from one of the top officials of the EP at the time, David Harley. He took an interest in this issue, and with his help the problems were eventually solved, and MEP Brian Simpson was appointed SCPAR member from the EP.

Including the EP as a full member was perhaps more a result of good luck than tactical skill, but it has served the Arctic cooperation very well to have this important European institution as a member since it gave Arctic cooperation a platform in Brussels. At the time Denmark was the only Arctic member of the EU; Finland and Sweden didn't join until 1995.

Within the Arctic Council it has, unfortunately, taken a long time to convince all member states that the EU Commission could contribute to the work as a permanent observer.

In the USA the problems were not so much procedural as practical. Congress works differently and is not as widely involved in the work of international parliamentary bodies as most European parliaments. There are also more constraints on members to travel than in Canada or Europe. The Alaskan members of Congress were, however, very supportive of our efforts. By the end of summer 1995 they had agreed that US Senator Frank Murkowski should be the US delegate to the committee. Now the committee was complete.

For the credibility of the work it was very important to also have the USA as a member. It was clear that a US Senator would not be able to participate in committee meetings on a regular basis, but membership meant that SCPAR now had a contact point in Washington, D.C. In the daily work we were very fortunate to have the support of David Garman, aide and later Chief of Staff of Senator Frank Murkowski, and of Isaac Edwards, one of the key advisers on Arctic policy, first to Senator Frank Murkowski, and later to Senator Lisa Murkowski, the present U.S member of SCPAR. Because of their efforts, and many committee meetings in Washington D.C, as well as visits by the SCPAR chair, the USA has been fully involved in the work of the committee.

In the summer of 1995 another distinguished Icelandic parliamentarian took over as chair of the Standing Committee, Geir Haarde. He too later became Foreign as well as Prime Minister of Iceland, and has served as the Icelandic ambassador to the USA since the beginning of 2015. Geir Haarde was in charge of the work of the committee until 1998, when it was reorganized on the model of the Arctic Council, and became an independent entity with direct representation from all member parliaments.

The Arctic Council

A priority in the work of the committee during the first few years was to support the establishment of the Arctic Council. The Second Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region was prepared in cooperation with the Canadian Parliament and held in Yellowknife in March 1996. The negotiations on the Arctic Council were at that time in the final stage. The clear statement from the conference in support of the establishment of the Council created additional pressure on the negotiations to succeed. A week after the parliamentary conference an Arctic environmental meeting was also held in Canada, and already at that time the work to establish the Council took a step forward. There was an agreement between the Arctic states to indicate the summer of 1996 as a likely time to finalize the negotiations and make the formal decisions on the establishment of the Council. In September 1996 the Arctic states, together with representatives of the indigenous organizations, were finally ready to sign the Ottawa declaration, and the Arctic Council was ready to start its work. The efforts of the parliamentarians in support of this process received great and positive attention at the inaugural meeting

that was held on the level of Foreign Ministers. The Standing Committee became a permanent observer and good cooperation was established between the Council and the Committee. The Committee was represented at meetings of Senior Arctic Officials, and at Committee meetings a standing point on the agenda has been discussions with the Foreign Minister and senior officials of the country hosting the meeting. The Arctic Council has needed all the political support available for moving its activities forward, and this has given the Arctic parliamentarians a good position. The Council has taken note of recommendations made by the parliamentarians, and the cooperation between parliaments and governments has been closer and more productive than in many established international organizations.

Arctic cooperation up to speed

When parliamentarians met for their third conference, in Salekhard, Russia, in the spring of 1998, the political interest in the potential of the region had already grown significantly, and Arctic cooperation was already picking up speed. The Arctic Council had started its work, and was getting close to solving issues related to procedures and its mandate for sustainable development. The conference dealt with major issues such as the Northern Sea Route, and came out in strong support of a collaboration between universities in the form of a network connecting institutions within, as well as outside, the Arctic region. This cooperation developed into the University of the Arctic. UArctic became a big success, and today consists of over 130 members in the region and also from further south. The parliamentarians have consistently supported the University of the Arctic, and they have also actively contributed to the efforts to secure funding for its activities.

Considering the future work of SCPAR, the most important decision in Salekhard was to reorganize the Standing Committee and give it a structure directly comparable to the Arctic Council. Rules of Procedure were set up, and future work was based on these rules that were adopted at the beginning of 1999. The rules are in all respects compatible with the rules of procedure of the Arctic Council.

The work of SCPAR has always relied on active engagement by its members and a strong focus on issues. For the first few years there was no need for any formal rules. A good sign of there being a positive atmosphere has been the fact that no member has ever taken up procedural issues or made demands relating to the rules of procedure. Quite exceptional for an international parliamentary organization.

In order not to create any formal obstacles for any parliament to participate, member parliaments were given the right to decide on their participation and their representatives according to their own rules and procedures. In order to have some balance between larger and smaller members, it was decided that member parliaments with two houses (Canada, Russia, and the USA) can have two members in the Standing Committee, and the other parliaments one each.

Finland first took on the economic responsibility for providing staff resources for the Committee, and later on this was also provided for by Iceland and Norway. There is no joint budget. Each parliament has covered the costs of its participation, and the host country of the conference has financed the conference as well as the additional costs related to it, such as the publication of reports and other documents. The lack of joint financial resources has mainly been a problem when SCPAR has been interested in initiating new projects. However, these problems have been solved in a pragmatic way, and the committee has fortunately always been able to rely on the assistance of many key people in the Arctic research community.

At the conference in Salekhard, Clifford Lincoln from Canada was elected as chair. He had taken part in the work from the start, and now it was his turn to take over. Clifford Lincoln continued as chair until 2004. He used the good framework already established to strengthen the work and role of SCPAR. With his strong interest

in the environment, he was a former environment minister of Quebec, he focused on the central issues with a profound impact on the Arctic. Clifford Lincoln became a legendary chair, and in many ways took the work of SCPAR to the level it is at today. He gave the work prominence and being the experienced politician he was, he also knew how to create respect with ministers and senior officials for the work of the parliamentarians. He was an outstanding speaker and he could present a message with force, but at the same time with diplomatic finesse and disarming humour.

After the conference in Salekhard the order was clearly established that the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, CPAR, would be the primary forum for the cooperation between the parliaments while the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, SCPAR, would serve as a steering group and implementing body. The member parliaments also gradually started to set up permanent delegations to CPAR. Today almost all parliaments have some sort of established order for their representation. In order to guarantee direct influence by all member parliaments, as a rule all parliaments continue to directly nominate their representatives in SCPAR, they are not elected by CPAR. That also means that the chair of SCPAR serves as the chair of the whole organization.

Global engagement

After the Arctic Council had consolidated its work during first the Canadian and then the US chairmanship, discussions on how to develop the work and strengthen the role of the Council started during the transition to the Finnish chairmanship in the year 2000. The parliamentarians had already expressed the view early on that the Arctic Council should have annual ministerial meetings, a budget of its own and a permanent secretariat. To contribute to this discussion SCPAR had asked Professor Oran Young to write a report on Arctic governance. This report received great attention at the CPAR in Rovaniemi, Finland in 2000, leading up to the Finnish chairmanship. The governance issues did not move forward very quickly, but they became part of the ongoing discussion on how to make the Council more efficient. Another issue did, however, get stronger priority at this stage: the capacity of the Arctic states to act jointly in international fora, and to speak with one voice on the Arctic, especially at international environmental meetings.

The CPAR in Rovaniemi confirmed the trend already visible in Salekhard two years earlier, that Arctic cooperation had received political momentum. A record number of members of parliament were present, and the conference was opened by the Prime Minister, also a first. An important new initiative was put forward: a survey of living conditions of the people living in the north and the opportunities they would have for development. This first Arctic Human Development Report was then prepared by the Arctic Council after a decision made at the ministerial meeting in 2002, and it became one of the major results of the Icelandic chairmanship 2002 - 2004. Since then the parliamentarians have given special priority to issues related to creating the social and economic conditions necessary for people in the region to continue living there. It was the first female chair of SCPAR, Mrs Hill-Marta Solberg of Norway, who put these issues on the agenda.

During the first years of the new millennium the Arctic Council gradually strengthened its role as a voice for the Arctic at international meetings. The first real breakthrough was the Stockholm meeting in 2001 on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). The Council also prepared very well for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. An Arctic side event was organized, in which SCPAR took part, and in the negotiations on the declaration from the Summit the Arctic states worked hard to also include an Arctic perspective. This was one of the main issues of the CPAR in Tromsø, Norway in 2002, held only days before the Summit. In Tromsø the parliamentarians also continued their work to strengthen Arctic governance, again on the basis of a report by Oran Young. Governance issues have remained on the agenda of the Arctic parliamentarians until this day.

During this time the first major study of climate change in the Arctic was also started, the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) led by the USA. The decision to start this project was taken at the ministerial meeting in Barrow, Alaska, in 2000, and it was presented during the Icelandic chairmanship of the Council in 2004. It became ground breaking for the work on environmental issues. The results of the assessment gave the Arctic region a clear profile in international environmental cooperation, and generated additional political support for Arctic cooperation within the region as well as stronger global interest for developments in the Arctic. After this, in the world of international politics, the Arctic was no longer a godforsaken place somewhere far away, of little interest to anybody outside the region. It became in many ways a key arena for shaping the future.

Picture below: Family photo from the Arctic parliamentary conference in Whitehorse in September 2014
Photo: Canadian parliament

Picture to the right: Meeting of the Standing Committee in Helsinki in November 2009.
Front row: Mr Vladimir Usoltsev, MP, Russia, Mr Hannes Manninen, MP, Finland, Chair of the Standing Committee, Senator Mikhail Nikolajev, Russia





The Nordic Council's International Conference for Parliamentarians on Development and Protection of the Arctic region

We, elected representatives of the Canadian, Danish, Faroese, Finnish, Greenlandic, Icelandic, Norwegian, Russian, Sami and Swedish Parliaments, and representatives of the Nordic Council and the West Nordic Parliamentary Council

noting

- the vital importance of the Arctic region, and of sustainable development activities there, for the life systems of the entire planet, and the pressures exerted by the world's activities on its fragile environment,
- the responsibilities therefore incumbent on the international community to protect and defend the Arctic region against environmental and other threats,
- the opportunities for further utilisation of the natural resources of the Arctic region, while respecting the principles of sustainable development,
- the need to make use of the knowledge of Arctic conditions and problems possessed by Arctic residents, especially Arctic indigenous peoples, in all relevant decision-making forums,
- the abiding interest of Arctic states in the maintenance of international peace and security, and of the need to deal with Arctic military and other problems in non-Arctic negotiating forums,
- the need for an effective regional institutional framework to promote co operation for environmental protection and sustainable development of the Arctic region,

determined to

- protect and defend the Arctic environment through concerted efforts against threats arising from outside the region and from unsustainable economic activity occurring within the Arctic region and ensure that the future development of the Arctic region takes place in accordance with high environmental standards, and responsible resource management,
- improve living conditions of Arctic indigenous people, and their possibilities of preserving, protecting and defending their original culture, way of life and legal rights in the future,
- encourage increased communication between people and cultures, and the exchange of products and ideas across the circumpolar north, while ensuring that these activities are conducted in such a way that the Arctic environment is not jeopardised,
- persuade the international community to acknowledge its responsibility to relieve the Arctic region of environmental threats, including radioactive and other hazardous wastes which have been dumped or discharged on land or in sea, and to implement disarmament measures in a manner which reduces the pressures from military activity and further environmental contamination,
- and to promote further scientific research in areas related to the well-being of the Arctic region and its people,

therefore recommend

- strengthened co-operation among the Arctic states and other parties engaged in the Rovaniemi process and its elaboration of an Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, in accordance with the Agenda 21 of the UNCED,
- continued support for international scientific co-operation, e.g. cooperation which is co-ordinated by the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) and its
- knowledge-gathering activities including the traditional knowledge of the Arctic region and its peoples,
- further efforts by the Arctic states to achieve consensus on the establishment of an Arctic Council so as to impart direction, energy and profile to international Arctic co-operation,
- further international co-operation between the states concerned to promote future economic and industrial ecologically sustainable development of the Arctic region, including the utilisation of renewable natural resources, and the use of renewable energy sources,

- to strengthen co-operation in multi-species research and management of marine living resources, and in the monitoring and conservation of the biological diversity, habitats, flora and fauna of the Arctic region,
- to promote co-ordination in monitoring and investigation of climatic change,
- to reduce and ultimately eliminate airborne and seaborne pollution such as that from heavy metals, greenhouse gases, PCB, DDT, and chlorinated hydrocarbons,
- intensified intergovernmental collaboration for the development of communications and transportation systems consistent with the economic, social and natural
- interconnectedness of the region,
- a widening of the practice of including Arctic residents in international negotiations which have a direct effect on Arctic communities and lands, the environment and natural resources,
- that the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples should lead to the proclamation of an International Decade for the World's Indigenous Peoples.

and ask the governments to

- initiate a systematic review of international agreements and other commitments to ensure that satisfactory consideration is
- given to the environment of the Arctic region and that existing provisions are tightened, or that new ones are drafted where applicable,
- ensure that plans to make use of Arctic living and non-living resources also include Environment Impact Assessment (EIA), at a sufficiently early stage of the process,
- support all efforts to create a total ban on nuclear weapons tests, and to put all other civilian and military use of nuclear technology and nuclear material, including waste management, under strict international surveillance and control,
- support, within the framework of the Euro Arctic Barents Council, a multinational pilot project to gain practical experience in the monitoring and eventual removal of nuclear waste from one or more Arctic locations,
- speed up and report on any new opportunities for Arctic-related measures of confidence building, arms control and disarmament in existing negotiating forums, and to achieve their realisation, if appropriate, directly by the Arctic states themselves,
- in collaboration with Arctic indigenous people, develop a co-ordinated programme of activities to enhance the cultures, recognise the rights and improve the circumstances of indigenous people throughout the region and with regard to their own values,
- support current efforts to study the implications of the opening of the Northeast Passage as a regular shipping route between Europe/North America and East/Southeast Asia,
- ensure the presence of adequate prevention and emergency preparedness measures against potential oil spills resulting from the use of tankers in the Arctic,

Furthermore,

- to further the implementation of this resolution, we have decided to establish a Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, and
- we ask the governments concerned collectively to report to the Committee on the progress of implementation of recommendations in this resolution and on
- all significant issues related to the future of the Arctic region.

Reykjavik, Iceland, 17August 1993

Second Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

We, elected representatives of the Canadian, Danish and Greenlandic, Finnish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Russian and Swedish Parliaments, of the Sami Parliaments, the Nordic Council, the West Nordic Parliamentary Council and of the International Arctic Indigenous Peoples' Organizations, meeting in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada, on 13-14 March 1996

Recalling

- the statement of conclusion (Final Document) from the International Parliamentary Conference of the Arctic, held in Reykjavik in August 1993; and

Noting

- that the Arctic region is important not only to residents of the Arctic areas and to the social, economic and spiritual well-being and political development of all northern countries, but also to international relations throughout the world, and to the regional and global environment;
- the need to achieve sustainable or long-term economic and cultural vigour in all Arctic areas, based to the optimum extent on local or regional resources, conditions, skills, and values; and taking into account the special and diverse interests and contributions of Arctic indigenous peoples;
- the need to ensure that resources of the Arctic regions are used and conserved in such a way that they provide optimum benefit both to the residents of the Arctic and northern regions in which they are found and to the countries in which they occur;
- the sensitivities and vulnerabilities of Arctic and northern terrestrial and marine ecosystems to chemical contaminants from both near and distant sources; the threats presented by such contaminants to the health of present and future generations, and the extreme difficulty, imposed by Arctic environmental conditions and biological processes, of removing such contamination or counteracting its effects once it has become dispersed in Arctic regions;
- that these sensitivities and vulnerabilities, and the challenges and opportunities presented by Arctic resources of many kinds, emphasize the continued need for protection of the environment and preservation of biological diversity in the Arctic region, and for respect for the principles of sustainable and responsible development in the utilization of its natural resources;

Noting also

- the need for enhancing through legislative activities parliamentary influence on the overall development and protection of the Arctic region, and the need for active dialogues between governments and parliaments on Arctic issues;

Recognizing

- that notwithstanding the wide diversity and variety of geographical, demographic, cultural, historical, and political characteristics of different Arctic and northern areas, there are common or shared problems, and opportunities for regional and circumpolar action that can be of mutual benefit to all Arctic states and peoples;
- the responsibilities incumbent upon the elected representatives of Arctic regions to protect the Arctic region and its peoples against environmental threats, unwise or wasteful use of its resources, and destruction of its cultures;
- the essential contribution that the accumulated knowledge of indigenous peoples can make in addressing the present and future problems of the Arctic regions and in implementing solutions;
- the need for improved scientific knowledge and development of appropriate technologies to address satisfactorily the increasingly serious environmental, resource-use, economic, and potential health problems of the Arctic regions;
- the report and recommendations on a programme of co-operation in the Arctic Region, adopted by the Nordic Council of Ministers, February 1996, which emphasizes the need for closer co-operation and co-ordination in Arctic activities and policies to avoid duplication of effort or inconsistencies and to achieve

an optimum balance between regional, national, and circumpolar efforts and policies concerned with the Arctic;

- that the process of establishing an Arctic Council as an intergovernmental institutional framework to promote co-operation for environmental protection and sustainable development of the Arctic region appears to be coming to a conclusion;

Recognizing also

- that the expression of co-ordinated concerns and discussions from parliamentarians in many northern countries will facilitate the work of addressing the complex and shared issues of the Arctic region;

Determined to

- seize this moment in the political and environmental history of the world, when all Arctic nations in concert and the circumpolar peoples in particular, have an opportunity to turn the course of regional and international events from patterns of exclusiveness and confrontation toward a vision of circumpolar co-operation, collective environmental and social security, and shared responsibility for our common high-latitude home;
- protect and defend the Arctic against environmental threats arising from outside the region and from unsustainable activities within the Arctic;
- work toward establishment of collective or shared international responsibilities and mechanisms involving all the Arctic nations, to ensure environmental and political security for the whole of the Arctic region, acknowledging the responsibility of each northern country and the international community to relieve the Arctic region of environmental threats, including radioactive and other hazardous wastes which have been dumped or discharged on land or at sea, or which may be carried to Arctic regions by atmospheric and ocean currents;

Therefore recommend

- the establishment of an Arctic Council that will enhance international co-ordination and co-operation on issues of Arctic policy, environmental protection, sustainable economic development, and cultural diversity;
- support for the development and implementation in the Arctic regions, where appropriate, of international and national activities arising out of Agenda 21 of the UNCED, in particular Chapter 26 regarding indigenous peoples, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and Principle 21 of the Rio Declaration;
- the careful development of national economic and health policies of all northern countries that will recognize the special needs and conditions of Arctic regions;
- the promotion of co-operation between intergovernmental bodies and non-Arctic states that have an interest in, or whose policies may have an effect upon, Arctic regions, such as the European Union and the Nordic Council of Ministers;
- the adoption of national policies and international arrangements that broaden Arctic security issues from a predominantly military focus to the development of collective environmental security that includes the values, life styles, and cultural identity of indigenous northern societies;
- the continuation and widening of the practice of including representatives of Arctic peoples in national delegations in international negotiations and decisions which affect Arctic communities, resources, and ecosystems;
- the sustainable and rational utilization of the living resources of the sea, including marine mammals;
- intensified intergovernmental co-operation in the development of communications, transportation systems, and commerce throughout the Arctic region, consistent with environmental protection and cultural identities;

And ask our respective governments to

- establish the intergovernmental Arctic Council as soon as possible, and ensure that national authorities work toward the implementation of the recommendations and activities of the Council;
- include the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region as a component of the structure for international co-operation within the Arctic Council, and to express the desirability of a close dialogue between the Arctic Council and the Standing Committee;

- under the aegis of the proposed Arctic Council, continue vigorously to implement, with adequate resources and policy support, the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy and its sub-programmes;
- work assiduously toward the achievement of international agreements and operational protocols for the reduction of greenhouse gases and the control of the release of toxic materials, stressing their particular effect on the long-term environment of the Arctic regions and the well-being of its peoples;
- set in place practices whereby all policies at all levels, including all international agreements to which the state is a party, are examined for their potential effect on Arctic regions and Arctic peoples, with provisions made if necessary to ensure that their implementation is appropriate to Arctic conditions;
- support increased national and international scientific research and environmental monitoring of sub-Arctic and Arctic areas, including where relevant the research priorities identified by the International Conference for Arctic Research Planning organized by the International Arctic Science Committee, the activities of the UNESCO Northern Sciences Network, and other internationally co-ordinated national scientific activities related to polar regions;
- ensure that at an early stage, formal environmental assessment, with adequate input from resident indigenous peoples, is included in all plans and decisions that could have impact on Arctic landscapes or waters;
- in collaboration with indigenous people from different parts of the Arctic, develop co-ordinated and co-operative programmes and activities to give expression to the cultures and histories, recognize the rights, spiritual and human values and teachings, and improve the social and economic circumstances of indigenous peoples throughout the region, recognizing the particular role and contribution of women;
- set in place and strengthen policies and programmes to encourage and facilitate the active participation or leadership by indigenous Arctic peoples in scientific activities in Arctic regions, especially on those subjects that are identified by northern residents themselves to be important to their social and economic prosperity and their culture;
- join with other countries in establishing and supporting a scientifically valid, operationally practical means of preventing and controlling deleterious effects on the Arctic marine and coastal environment from waste radioactive substances presently deposited in Arctic areas or watersheds
- maintain and improve the circumpolar network of environmental observation and monitoring systems, including especially meteorological and upper atmosphere observations, monitoring of chemicals of concern, and radioactivity;
- support efforts to create a ban on nuclear weapons tests and to put all other civilian and military use of nuclear technology and nuclear material, including management of radioactive wastes, under international surveillance and control;
- develop and implement opportunities for Arctic-related measures of international confidence-building , arms control, and disarmament;
- prepare an inventory of Arctic-related work undertaken in the subjects identified in this Statement, including studies of indigenous cultures, languages and histories, and present results to the next Parliamentary Conference;

Furthermore

- the Conference gratefully accepts the kind invitation of Russia to host in Salekhard, no later than 1998, the next Conference of Parliamentarians;
- the Conference asks the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region to continue its work, in which the major tasks will be: (1) to follow up the implementation of the recommendations and requests from this conference to governments and international bodies; (2) to follow closely the establishment of the Arctic Council, and ensure the future role and recognition of parliamentarians in facilitating the work of the Council; (3) to study alternatives for future arrangements for inter-parliamentary co-operation between the Arctic countries and to report to the next Conference of Parliamentarians; and (4) to prepare, in co-operation with the host country, the next Conference of Arctic Parliamentarians;
- the Conference asks the Nordic Council to take continued responsibility for the Committee's secretariat, in co-operation with the host country for the next conference.

Yellowknife, Canada, 14 March 1996

Third Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

Salekhard, YamaloNenetsky Autonomous District, Russia on 22-24 April 1998;

We, elected representatives of Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia and Sweden, meeting in Salekhard, YamaloNenetsky Autonomous District, Russia on 22-24 April 1998;

Recalling the Final Document from the International Parliamentary Conference for Parliamentarians on Development and Protection of the Arctic Region, held in Reykjavik, Iceland in August 1993, and the Conference Statement from the Second Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, held in Yellowknife, Canada in March 1996; and

Noting

- the importance of the Arctic region, not only to the social, economic and political development of all northern countries, but also to the cultural and spiritual value of residents of Arctic areas, to international relations throughout the world, and to the regional and global environment;
- the need to ensure that resources of the Arctic region are used and conserved in such a way that they provide optimum present and longterm benefit both to the residents of the Arctic and northern regions in which they are found and to the countries in which they occur, and also maintain the quality of the Arctic environment and the richness and vigour of Arctic ecosystems;
- the importance of protecting and defending the Arctic regions, inhabitants, and terrestrial and marine ecosystems against environmental threats arising from outside the region and from unsustainable activities within the Arctic;
- that the Arctic region, in its varied parts, is changing rapidly as a result of demographic, economic, cultural, environmental and other factors and influences both internal to the region and global in nature, and that these changes and influences make especially pressing the need for sustainability policies designed or adapted to Arctic conditions and situations;
- the importance of recognizing the distinctive contribution that indigenous peoples of the Arctic region, their cultures and perspectives have made and can continue to make to the emerging issues of governance, environmental protection and resources management, and the relevance to the Arctic of the International Decade of Indigenous Peoples;
- that the rapid development of hydrocarbon and mineral resources in some particularly resource-rich areas of the Arctic present special and urgent problems of environmental and economic sustainability, social and cultural equity, human rights and education;
- the importance of broadening interest in Arctic policy issues on a national and international level;
- that all northern countries have committed to implementing the guidelines of the United Nations Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 regarding the necessity for environmentally safe and socially and economically balanced development and that these guidelines provide a basis for all activities in the Arctic region;
- the fundamental importance of scientific knowledge as a basis for development and implementation of policies for sustainable development in the Arctic, underlining the need for research and scientific monitoring, and the dissemination and exchange of scientific information within governments, communities and industry;

Taking into account

- the decision made by the eight Arctic states to establish the Arctic Council as a high level intergovernmental forum to provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic states, with the participation of the Arctic indigenous organizations and other Arctic inhabitants, on common Arctic issues, in particular issues of sustainable development and environmental protection;
- the commitment in the statements connected with the formation of the Arctic Council and in the planning of its activities that the Council will give particular attention to fostering sustainable social and economic development in the Arctic region, to improved health conditions, and to maintenance of cultural diversity and wellbeing, with special attention to women's issues and the needs of children and youth;
- the substantive and comprehensive work of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) and its respective programmes the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), the programme

for Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), for Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME), and for Emergency Preparedness, Prevention, and Response (EPPR); recognizing the many valuable documents, statements and recommendations resulting from this work, including substantial progress in defining the concept and implementing the particular requirements of environmental impact assessment in Arctic regions; and noting with satisfaction the decision that the AEPS programme will continue under the umbrella of the Arctic Council, under principles and guidelines set forth in the Alta Declaration;

- the agreement from the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy that all Arctic countries should endeavour to apply the AEPS guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment in the Arctic;

Noting also

- the decision by the European Council in December 1997 to prepare in 1998 a report concerning a policy for the northern dimension of the European Union.
- the recommendations and commitments by the Government of Canada to recognize shared economic, societal and cultural, environmental and scientific responsibilities in the Arctic circumpolar region.
- the progress toward devolution of jurisdictional authority from national to northern autonomous regions, territories or societies in several Arctic states;

Welcoming

- the decision by Senior Arctic Officials of the Arctic Council to recommend to ministers that the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region be given Permanent Observer status in the Arctic Council;
- the international evolution of a concept and positive discussions of the practicability of a dispersed international “university of the Arctic” as an institution of higher education focused on environmental, cultural and economic integrity of the Arctic regions, with full involvement and participation of indigenous people;
- the establishment and progress of a number of international multidisciplinary scientific programmes addressing important scientific issues in the Arctic, coordinated or developed by Arctic international scientific organizations including the International Arctic Science Committee, the UNESCO MAB Northern Sciences Network, the Arctic Ocean Sciences Board, the European Commission, the Advisory Committee for Protection of the Sea, and others;

Aware

- that active participation and full consultation of indigenous people, respect for and use of the knowledge and value systems of northern societies, while provided for in principle through permanent representation in the Arctic Council and other international arctic fora, needs to be nurtured and encouraged so that Arctic policies and practices reflect the priorities, needs and contributions of all northern residents and cultures;
- of the need for careful development, in all northern countries, of health policies that recognize the special needs and conditions of different Arctic regions, taking into account cultural, demographic, economic and environmental factors;
- of the need to encourage economic cooperation, development and public support as a principal factor in increasing social, cultural, and economic stability and wellbeing in the Arctic region, and the necessity to foster the harmonious fitting of the economies of the Arctic regions into the national policies and activities of each northern country;
- of the need to develop and implement, throughout the Arctic region, increased communication and exchange of information, ideas, experiences and concerns on a social, economic and political level, by both traditional and modern methods, through electronic communication, exchange of newsletters, radio and television, and cooperative school programs, using local languages wherever possible, as a means of increasing the richness and variety of Arctic cultures, facilitating shared social progress and making more effective the economic and political development of Arctic regions;
- of the need to develop and implement opportunities for Arctic-related measures of international confidence- building, arms control, and disarmament;

Noting

- that the Arctic Council is a mutual declaration by governments rather than an international treaty, that it can provide opportunities for cooperation and collaboration with other bodies to their mutual benefit, and that it thus can help Arctic governments address common needs;

Recognizing

- the responsibilities incumbent upon the elected representatives of Arctic regions to bring about, develop and implement the legislative means to protect the Arctic region and its peoples against environmental threats, unwise or wasteful use of resources, and restriction or destruction of its cultures;
- that the expression of shared and coordinated concerns, discussions, and statements from parliamentarians from governments in many northern countries can facilitate international cooperation, and help in addressing the complex and common issues of the Arctic regions;
- the importance of developing and maintaining strong links between the national parliaments of Arctic countries, as a means for improving the democratic anchoring and responsiveness of compatible Arctic policies and cooperation;
- the advantages of maintaining an active cooperation and exchange between governments and the parliamentarians involved in a variety of Arctic countries, with and through the Arctic Council, to which the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region expects to become a Permanent Observer, as a means of strengthening parliamentary influence on and accountability for the overall development and protection of the Arctic region;

Acknowledging with appreciation

- the valuable information in the Inventory of Sustainable Development Initiatives in the Circumpolar Arctic that has been compiled by Canada as a background document to the discussions of the Third Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region;

Urge

- the Arctic Council to accelerate, strengthen and consolidate the work of its member governments on environmental and sustainable development issues, by providing stronger political leadership including annual ministerial meetings, technical coordination, criteria for quality control and accountability, and to build the organizational structure necessary to achieve these goals;
- the Arctic Council, and other international policy-related bodies with responsibilities in the Arctic region, to make deliberate and open efforts to involve significant participation by indigenous peoples and their institutions in a wide range of their respective activities, during this important formative period of circumpolar cooperation;
- the Arctic Council, in co-operation with local and regional organizations and other national and international bodies involving indigenous organizations, to develop forward looking programmes that address the special issues of social equity, women, youth, children and education in Arctic regions.
- that consistent with evolving and shared concepts of indivisible security, national policies of all northern countries and international arrangements be reviewed or designed to recognize and reflect a broadening of Arctic security issues from a former predominantly military focus to that of collective environmental and social security that includes the values, life styles and cultural identity of indigenous northern societies and all northern residents;
- that national policies, structures and practices, together with collaborative international arrangements be put in place for the sustainable and rational utilization of the living resources of the Arctic seas, including marine mammals;
- that the management of all living resources in the Arctic region take into account their cultural and spiritual importance to Arctic indigenous peoples, as well as their economic value to the countries in which they occur;
- investment in and promotion of trade within the Arctic regions, and between Arctic and nonarctic regions, by removing obstacles that presently exist in commercial infrastructure and legal and administrative barriers such as complex procedures, discriminatory customs charges and taxes, with a view particularly to facilitating the businesses of smallscale Arctic producers or entrepreneurs;

Recommend

- active and transparent promotion of dialogue and cooperation between the Arctic Council and other relevant fora which are pursuing complementary objectives, such as the OSCE, the European Union, the Nordic Council, the Barents Council, the West Nordic Council, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the Sami Council, the Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation, and the Northern Forum;
- intensified intergovernmental cooperation in the development of communications and transportation systems throughout the Arctic region and between Arctic and non-arctic regions, consistent with environmental protection and respect for cultural identities;
- continued support for the safe, economical, and environmentally sound development and utilization of the Northern Sea Route for international and regional maritime transport taking into account the concerns, sensitivities, and effect on life styles of people who live in areas likely to be affected by increased shipping and port development, by supporting the work of national research programmes, and of the International Northern Sea Route Programme (INSROP), the programmes AMAP and PAME of AEPS and the international joint research project, the Arctic Demonstration and Exploration Voyage (ARCDEV) and by organizing regular ministerial and parliamentary conferences to this end;
- strengthening of regional cooperation between groups of Arctic states as well as multilateral activities to deal with the threat of radioactive pollution in the Arctic region, the enhancement of nuclear reactor safety, and the facilitation of safe management, storage and disposal of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive wastes in the Arctic region;
- that the parliaments represented in the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region contribute politically to sustainable development and protection of the Arctic by addressing Arctic policy issues in national parliaments, and by monitoring the work of their respective governments in the Arctic Council and other relevant international bodies;

And therefore ask our governments to

- support the development of full and active partnership between parliaments of northern countries and the Arctic Council, with active practical cooperation and consultation with the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region;
- ensure that national authorities support and work actively toward the implementation of the recommendations and activities of the Arctic Council, including the programmes of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, and the principles and guidelines of the Alta Declaration;
- support the revision, updating, and making as comprehensive as possible the Inventory of Sustainable Development Initiatives in the Circumpolar Arctic - A Work in Progress that was started in 1998 in accordance with a recommendation of the Second Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, with a view to producing, every second year, a public list of such activities, which will also be available electronically, for reference, analysis, and international co-operation;
- increase efforts to limit and reduce emissions of contaminants into the environment, and to promote international cooperation in order to address the serious pollution problems reported in the State of the Arctic Environment report issued by AMAP, and in particular, to strengthen and maintain the work of the UNEP and the UNECE processes to manage Persistent Organic Pollutants, and to address problems of organic pollutants and heavy metals in Arctic and sub-Arctic seas;
- support increased national, international, and coordinated scientific research and environmental monitoring in Arctic and subArctic areas, including the Arctic and subarctic oceans and bipolar research, as coordinated and facilitated by the International Arctic Science Committee, the UNESCO MAB Northern Sciences Network, the Arctic Ocean Sciences Board, the European Commission, the Global Change programmes and other international scientific activities related to polar regions;
- promote and support institutions of learning and research in the Arctic regions, with increased cooperation and exchange between national institutions and the development of a circumpolar “university of the Arctic”, with encouragement of indigenous teaching and scholarship;
- set in place and strengthen policies and programmes to assist the indigenous people of the Arctic to pursue northern based economic development and achieve financial sustainability, and encourage and facilitate active participation and, as appropriate, leadership by indigenous Arctic people in scientific activities in Arctic regions, especially on those subjects that are identified by northern residents themselves to be important to their social and economic prosperity and their culture;

- implement within the respective national structures the guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment in the Arctic, as developed by the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, by including them in all proposals, plans and decisions for activities that could have impact on the Arctic environment;
- increase the public and government awareness of the importance of the Arctic regions and its issues not only to the Arctic but to non-Arctic areas and to global issues, by including Arctic questions and subjects in dialogue and exchanges with non-Arctic countries through the OSCE, and by working closely with the European Union by promoting participation of the European Union in Arctic activities, including the Arctic Council, in order to strengthen the national implementation of programmes of cooperation in the Arctic; and by building on the Canadian parliamentary interest in circumpolar affairs.

In light of its fruitful discussions and deliberations as summarized above, the Third Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, in particular,

Asks the Arctic Council

- in co-operation with national governments and international bodies, to take forcefully and quickly a leadership and co-ordinating role in Arctic environmental and sustainable development policies and programmes in the circumpolar region;
- to ensure the continuation and strengthening of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, and facilitating its contribution to and interaction of its constituent programmes with United Nations environmental activities and other environmental protection programmes in non-Arctic areas;
- to increase and ensure the effective contribution of indigenous people and their societies in all policies and development decisions in the Arctic regions including assessment of environmental and social impacts, ensuring that the rights of Arctic residents are adequately protected, and that the benefits from development and utilization of Arctic resources are equitably shared;
- to work with governments of Arctic countries at national and local levels to develop compatible policies, and to put into effect programs that address issues of social equity, women, youth, children and education in Arctic regions;

Asks the governments of our respective countries to

- increase and sustain the incorporation of Arctic issues in national policies and international arrangements, by developing an awareness in the public and parliaments of the importance of developments in the Arctic to national economic and environmental questions;
- develop and implement policies that give full participation to indigenous Arctic peoples in development decisions in each northern country, including assessment of environmental impacts, which ensure that northern residents receive a fair and equitable share of the benefits of economic development in the Arctic, and which foster Arctic-based economic enterprises;
- increase and maintain the support of national and international scientific research and environmental monitoring in Arctic regions, with encouragement of the involvement of indigenous peoples, and compilation of a running inventory of sustainable development initiatives, as a basis for implementing programs of social and economic development;
- consider carefully the recommendations and requests made by Parliamentarians at this Conference, and to report on actions taken, to the Fourth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region.

Furthermore

- the Conference gratefully accepts the kind invitation of Finland to host the Fourth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region in the year 2000;
- the Conference agrees that the membership in the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region should be increased in order to assure that national parliaments of all Arctic States and the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the Sami Council, and the Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation are represented on the Committee, and asks the secretariat to take the necessary initiatives to implement this decision, ensuring as appropriate, that the qualifications for participation in the Standing Committee remain compatible with those for representation on the Arctic Council;
- the Conference asks the Standing Committee to continue its work, in which the major tasks will be; 1) to follow up the implementation of the recommendations and requests from this conference to govern-

ments and international bodies, including requesting the governments of member countries to produce, six months before the next Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, information for public discussion about actions taken or not taken in response to those recommendations and requests, and the results of such actions; 2) to establish close liaison with the Arctic Council, and ensure the recognition also in practice of parliamentarians in facilitating the work of the Council; 3) to prepare, in cooperation with the host country, the next Conference of Arctic Parliamentarians, and 4) to prepare for consideration at the next conference a document concerning the future work of the Standing Committee, its composition and procedural issues;

- the Conference asks the host country for the next conference, in cooperation with the Standing Committee, to take responsibility for the Committee's secretariat.

Salekhard, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Region, Russia, 24 April 1998

Fourth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

Rovaniemi, Finland, August 27 - 29, 2000

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

Meeting at Rovaniemi, Finland, on 27-29 August, 2000,

To discuss shared concerns and responsibilities related to the Arctic Region,

Recalling the Final Document from the International Parliamentary Conference for Parliamentarians on Development and Protection of the Arctic Region, held in Reykjavik, Iceland in August 1993, the Conference Statements from the Second Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, held in Yellowknife, Canada, in March 1996, and from Third conference, held in Salekhard, Russia, in April 1998; and

Noting

The rapid and dynamic developments in the Arctic Region that are of importance to the Arctic countries and their people, in particular:

- the continued strength and effectiveness of the environmental protection activities of the Arctic Council, the establishment of a framework for sustainable development activities, and the beginnings of a programme related to children and youth in the Arctic Region;
- the evolution of political structures in arctic North America, and the northern regions of Europe and Russia, that give specific responsibilities to northern residents, especially to indigenous people, with respect to natural resources, environment, and education; and the changed financial and accountability situations that result;
- the increasing significance to the Arctic region of the evolution of the concept of "security" from a primarily military and geopolitical priority into a more comprehensive concern with international environmental, socio-economic and cultural dimensions;
- the increasing international and inter-country character of activities in the Arctic related to science, environmental monitoring, environmental impact assessment, and health and cultural issues;
- the development of new technologies in communication, information processing, resources discovery and exploitation that promise increased economic and social development in Arctic Regions and increased participation in the wealth and prosperity of the nations of which they are a part; but which, unless managed with care and sensitivity, may bring problems of increased disparity of economic prospects and opportunity between different parts of the Arctic Region, difficulties of social adjustment and of maintenance of indigenous cultures;

- the launching of the circumpolar University of the Arctic, with the active cooperation of established universities in several arctic countries;
- the completion of an international research programme concerning the Northern Sea Route, and the continued activities in developing more effective marine and air transport and communication in the Arctic Region;
- the interest of indigenous peoples of northern Russia in establishing a parliament similar to existing Saami parliaments in Finland, Norway and Sweden;
- the increasing evidence that human activities in the Arctic, as well as Arctic ecosystems, are likely to be affected by rapid climatic and environmental change to a greater extent than activities and ecosystems in lower latitudes;

Taking into account

- declarations from the Arctic Council in September 1998, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in March 1999 and March 2000, and the Arctic Leaders Summit in September 1999;
- the recognition by the European Union of the Arctic Region as an area requiring special attention, and the development of a “Northern Dimension” action plan, which provides an “Arctic Window” for international economic and social policies;
- the publication by the Nordic Council of Ministers of the Nordic Action Plan to Protect the Natural Environment and Cultural Heritage of the Arctic.
- the activities of the Northern Research Forum which provides a means for bringing together locally-based and international co-operative research on Arctic and Northern issues;
- the development and wide discussion of a Northern Foreign Policy for Canada;
- the development of a Northern Europe Initiative by the USA;
- the inclusion, in the Declaration and the Science Agenda documents of the World Conference on Science, signed in July 1999 by representatives of all countries of the Arctic Region, of the “polar regions” as an area where national, regional and international research programmes should be strengthened, with particular attention to the bringing together of the natural and social sciences, the inclusion of traditional knowledge systems and the participation of all sectors of society and all resident cultures;
- the support given by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) toward programmes aimed at reduction of pollution and maintenance of biological diversity in Arctic Regions;
-

Urge parliamentarians in all arctic countries to

Encourage their fellow parliamentarians, their parties, and their governments to:

- recognize the importance of the Arctic Regions, to each arctic nation and internationally, and to give higher priority for broad national discussion of northern or arctic issues taking into account that the distinctive characteristics of the Arctic environment, Arctic geography, societies and histories lead to distinctive arctic issues and government responsibilities that require arctic-sensitive national priorities and policies and international co-operation to achieve and ensure sustained economic and social development;
- provide, in ways appropriate to each country, greater emphasis on education, training, and research facilities related to arctic regions and arctic issues, including adaptation of advances in technology and science, in order to increase the expertise and capacity of each Arctic Nation and its northern societies to recognize, deal, with, and take advantage of distinctive northern circumstances and impending issues;
- develop on a national basis and with open international discussion, activities that will ensure the basis for continued economic strength and social and cultural well-being of Arctic Regions, avoiding duplication of work and taking into account the successes, experiences and opportunities revealed in the inventories of Sustainable Development Initiatives compiled for the Conference in 1998 and 2000; and to support such inventories as an aid to effective sustainable development in the Arctic regions while ensuring that investment and policies for enhancement of trade and commercial development bring benefits to northern residents;

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

Support and implement international inter- governmental agreements, commitments and institutions related to Arctic Regions, linking them to appropriate national policies and activities, taking care to avoid duplication but accommodating regional and national differences, and in particular to:

- commit to continued support of the Arctic Council, with adequate financing of its activities including efficient secretarial support, involvement of the Permanent Participants, and integration or liaison of its respective monitoring, research, and socio-economic activities with related national activities, including implementation of compatible environmental impact assessment guidelines and procedures; and strengthening in appropriate areas its regional components, including involvement of regional authorities and organizations, and consideration of means to enhance Arctic regional and circumpolar transportation and communication systems;
- continue support of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, and facilitate its work in providing a focus for strengthening peaceful international relations, enhancing co-operation in policies for economic development, protection of the environment, and information exchange throughout the region, including strengthening of the voices of indigenous communities;
- facilitate closer co-operation between the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, to enhance regional and circumpolar exchange among indigenous peoples, including communication in native languages;
- encourage and support, taking care to ensure effectiveness and avoid duplication and overlap, international organizations that facilitate the achievement of objectives of member countries in northern and Arctic regions, including but not limited to the international indigenous organizations, scientific organizations and their research, monitoring and information exchange, programmes of cultural exchange and development, and the northern specialized activities of organizations of the United Nations;
- take positive and vigorous action to develop and implement a co-ordinated programme on health and sustainable community development for indigenous people, and sustainable use of living resources for the Arctic Region, in concert with the Arctic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the World Health Organization, the European Union, UNEP and UNDP, including, as soon as feasible, preparation of a United Nations Human Development Report for the circumpolar Arctic Region;
- ensure that there is appropriate attention, as part of national and international programmes in these fields, to the needs for research, data collection, and examination of the environmental, ecological and social consequences of the distinctive arctic and polar aspects of current and possibly impending global climatic and environmental change, including improved understanding of the effects that changes in the Arctic are having and may in the future continue to have on the regional and global climate;
- recognize the distinct importance to and in the Arctic Regions of the enhanced sophistication, accuracy, and completeness of environmental, biological, resources and operational information available through the Global Climate, Ocean, and Terrestrial Observing Systems co-ordinated by the International Council for Science (ICSU), and to include the potential importance to the Arctic in the justification for national participation in such systems;
- recognize, and provide appropriate support to the international activities and management of the University of the Arctic, as an entity housed in separate countries but of interest and potential benefit to all circumpolar countries and peoples;
- support in co-operation with the Arctic Council, development of an Action Plan for advanced Information Technology systems tailored to the needs of the Arctic Regions and peoples, and to incorporate such systems into their educational, communications, and planning programmes;
- include an arctic dimension in the national actions and programmes being developed to implement the Declaration on Science and the Science Agenda that each arctic country signed at the World Conference on Science in July 1999;
- encourage the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and all relevant foundations, including the United Nations Foundation, to work with indigenous peoples of the Arctic to define, facilitate, and fund appropriate sustainable development projects;

Declare that

- within the context of the developments, needs and opportunities for parliamentary co-operation noted above, the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region will during the next two years (2000-2002), through the Standing Committee as appropriate, give priority to actions in the following areas:
 1. With the assistance and participation of contact persons identified by participating countries and organizations, the up- dating of the Inventories of Sustainable Development Initiatives in the Arctic Region on a continuing basis; and the undertaking of periodic assessment of the highlights and lessons learned;
 2. Preparation, in co-operation with or under the guidance of the U.N. Development Programme, of a Human Development Report for the circumpolar Arctic Region;
 3. Development of a co-ordinated or compatible Action Plan for utilization of modern Information Technologies in Arctic Regions;
 4. Implementation of the findings and recommendations of the International Northern Sea Route Project (INSROP).

The Conference further proposes that

- the Standing Committee strengthen its communications and means by which it will be seen, nationally and internationally, as a spokesperson for cooperative international concern and actions related to Arctic Regions;
- in accordance with its role as observer to the Arctic Council as well as the opportunity and responsibility it has to exchange information among elected representatives and to report to its respective parliaments, the Standing Committee keep watch on developments on the various subjects identified in this Statement, and in particular seek opportunities to promote the priorities identified in Section 32 above, and report to the Fifth Conference on actions taken, and their results.
- In addition, the Conference
- Acknowledges the interest and presence of parliamentary observers and representatives from governments and non-governmental organizations to the conference, welcomes their participation, and recognizes their important role in carrying further the messages, and supporting the actions herein discussed.

Furthermore

The Conference accepts the kind invitation of Norway to host the Fifth Conference in 2002.

Fifth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

Tromsø, Norway, 11 - 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.

- Recalling the Conference Statements from the four previous Conferences of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region held 1993 - 2000,
- 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 na-

tional 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

- The successful conclusion of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs);
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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

- The Barrow Declaration of the Arctic Council, adopted in October 2000;
- 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;
- The Communiqué of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council released in March 2001;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;

- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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

- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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:

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

- 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

- 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.

Sixth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

Nuuk, Kalaallit Nunaat, Greenland, 3 – 6 September 2004

We, elected representatives of Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia and Sweden, Meeting in Nuuk, Kalaallit Nunaat, Greenland, on 3 - 6 September 2004, to discuss shared concerns and responsibilities related to the Arctic region,

- Recalling the Conference Statements from the five previous Conferences of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region held 1993 – 2002;
- Convinced that these Conferences, and the jointly agreed Conference Statements emerging from them, serve a valuable 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 and to the Arctic regions in general; but will also enhance international co-operation and the contribution that Arctic countries make toward addressing major world- wide environmental, economic, and social problems;

A. Noting

- The increasing evidence that the dominant economic and resource use practices and policies in most parts of the world, including the Arctic, are not sustainable and are leading to environmental degradation, hardship in many Arctic communities and cultural stress, especially within indigenous societies, raising the responsibility and urgency for policies, activities and support for practical sustainable development, as outlined at the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg 2002;
- The world-wide consequences of rapid climate change and ultraviolet radiation in the Arctic, an important cause of which are human influences, particularly increased emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases, and the global scale of these changes;
- The profound environmental impacts on ecosystems, wildlife and habitat, including genetic changes and loss of biodiversity, which rapid climate change and increasing economic activity are having in the Arctic, and the multi-faceted threats and challenges that this involves for the well-being of Arctic residents;
- The likelihood of increased utilization of Arctic shipping routes, including the Northern Sea Route and the Northwest Passage, as well as the interest in development of resources on the Arctic continental shelf;
- The environmental risks of large-scale shipping in Arctic waters, particularly shipment of oil and other dangerous materials, and the ensuing threats this may pose to coastal communities and the living resources on which they depend. These risks increase the responsibilities of northern and Arctic peoples and local governments with respect to Arctic shipping, coastal protection, and management of maritime living resources, and the increasing use of multi- mode (marine, land, air) transportation in the Arctic;
- The urgency with which rapid climate, environmental, social and economic forces of change occurring within the Arctic need to be responded to and addressed by governments and policy makers, so as to ensure the diversity and conservation of the Arctic environment as well as the sustainable cultural, social and economic well-being of Arctic residents, including indigenous peoples;
- The cultural diversity, resilience and dynamism of Arctic communities, and the potential for new technologies and conditions to be enjoined with ancient cultural practices and traditions to attain new forms of community viability in the Arctic in the face of global change.

B. Taking into Account

- The increasing success of the Arctic Council (AC) in achieving co-operation and coherence among the activities of Arctic countries and in giving voice to the role of the Arctic in international affairs as outlined in the Inari Declaration in 2002; noting especially the success under the Icelandic Chairmanship to make ICT a priority of the Arctic Council; the steps forward taken to increase cooperation between the Arctic Council and the European Union (EU); the successful efforts made to strengthen scientific and technological cooperation in the Arctic and the conclusions of the Arctic Science Summit Week; the work towards strengthening financial support, accountability and maximum cost efficiency of Arctic Council projects through an AC Project Support Fund; and the steps taken to make the Arctic an international example of alternative use of renewable energy sources;

- The comprehensive findings of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA), and the conclusions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which confirm rapid and significant changes of climate in Arctic regions with major environmental, economic, social and political consequences;
- The decision to produce an Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) at the AC Inari Ministerial Meeting in 2002 for presentation at the AC Reykjavik Ministerial Meeting in November 2004;
- The ongoing development of the Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (AMSP) to be presented at the AC Reykjavik Ministerial Meeting in November 2004;
- The resolution of the United Nations Environmental Programme, February 2004, for increased environmental monitoring in the Arctic region;
- The remarkable progress in the development of the University of the Arctic, and the importance of its academic and mobility programs for capacity building in the Arctic;
- The declaration of the First Meeting of Ministers of Education and Science of the Arctic Council member states, adopted in June 2004;
- The Second 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, the Social Partnership and the Northern eDimension, and, in addition, the Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy and the implementation of the U.S. plan for an Enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe (e-PINE);
- Initiations to prepare regional or global protocols on motorized transport in order to promote the use of clean technology vehicles;
- The World Summit on the Information Society, 2003;
- The Communiqué of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, 2003;
- The decisions and recommendations of the World Ecotourism Summit, organized by the World Tourist Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme, 2002;
- The progress toward a major international interdisciplinary scientific research program, the International Polar Year 2007-2008, with creation of national IPY committees in Arctic countries;

C. Ask governments in the Arctic region and the institutions of the European Union to

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- i. Develop without delay necessary policies and recommendations for implementation through international organizations to address rapid climate change in the Arctic;
- ii. In light of new scientific knowledge, and changing responsibilities and administrative structures in the Arctic, develop management procedures to support Arctic communities in adapting to climate change;
- iii. Acknowledge that adaption is a necessary but insufficient strategy in response to climate change, and therefore take mitigative action to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, promote the development and adoption of alternative energy sources, and implement policies to increase the energy efficiency of Arctic economies and the conservation of carbon sinks;
- iv. Continue research on Arctic climate and follow-up on the remaining gaps in knowledge, as well as linking circumpolar research networks;
- v. Put special resources into investigating further the effects of climate change and increased UV radiation on human health and devise public programs to address these risks, with particular attention to indigenous peoples;
- vi. Re-evaluate nature conservation policies in light of changes in climate and its ecological consequences;
- vii. Actively communicate the findings of ACIA within the Arctic region as well as internationally, drawing attention to the possible far-reaching effects of climate change on Arctic and global ecosystems and on the cultural, social and economic well-being of Arctic residents;
- viii. Incorporate materials from the ACIA process into relevant education, research and training programs;
- ix. Encourage the University of the Arctic to develop curricula based on the findings of ACIA, especially in relation to societies and communities that are particularly vulnerable to **climate change**.

- Ensure that there is a strong Arctic message in national and international work on the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, as well as the results of the World Summit on Sustainable Development which include pertinent issues such as water supply, food security and chemicals.
- Give careful consideration to maritime shipping policies and their associated support and regulatory mechanisms, to ensure that they meet present and likely future national needs and international activities, and to this effect take the following actions:
 - i. Pursue, in a sustainable way, the opportunities afforded by the foreseeable opening of new Arctic Sea Routes;
 - i. Design policies which reduce and prevent pollution in the Arctic marine environment, conserve Arctic marine biodiversity and ensure the sustainability of Arctic marine resource use;
 - i. Cooperate with the International Maritime Organization to ensure that adequate environmental standards are incorporated into the Arctic Shipping Code now under development;
 - i. Encourage the development of improved ship technology for use in ice-infested waters and ensure more transparent and accurate information on the quality of ships in Arctic waters;
 - i. Ensure sufficient resources and capacity for effective and timely response to oil spills and accidents in the marine environment.
- Follow-up on the findings of the Arctic Human Development Report by:
 - i. Taking concrete action and research initiatives aimed at filling the gaps in knowledge identified in the report, thereby focusing circumpolar research on human development issues for the future;
 - i. Using the findings of the AHDR to provide input into the shaping and sharpening of the human dimension agenda for the International Polar Year;
 - i. Communicating the results of the AHDR as educational material for research dissemination projects on the Internet, similar to the Human Dimensions of Arctic Environments (www.thearctic.is), thereby spreading awareness of the cultural diversity of Arctic residents;
 - i. Periodically assessing the progress made on the issues addressed in the AHDR, with special attention to gender and the needs and opportunities of children and youth;
 - i. Working systematically towards filling the gaps of knowledge identified in the report as to the social, cultural and economic well-being of Arctic residents and their political participation.
 - i. Encouraging the University of the Arctic to develop curricula based on the findings of the AHDR;
 - i. Strengthening attention to indigenous interests in relation to economic activities, and in particular in extractive industry, with a view to protecting the rights to self-determination, land rights and cultural rights of indigenous peoples of the Arctic.
- Encourage the Arctic Council to be a leader in the development of agendas for national and international activities related to sustainable development, climate change, health, health risks, gender, children's rights, demographic and educational issues in the Arctic, which are inter-related and at the heart of the challenges facing Arctic regions;
- Ensure the participation of indigenous peoples in all levels of scientific research and decision-making processes within the Arctic Council;
- Strengthen further the cooperation and interaction between the Arctic Council and the EU, based on the Action Plan for the period 2004-2006 for the Northern Dimension policy of the EU, in which the Arctic has a more visible role than before;
- Support the steps needed to enable the set-up of an Arctic Council Project Support Fund or similar mechanism which will ensure that financial resources are mobilized for project preparation and implementation within the Arctic Council in a more timely and effective way;
- Ensure that core funding of the University of the Arctic is raised to an adequate and stable level;
- Take an active part in the planning of the International Polar Year 2007-2008, supporting the creation and funding of National Committees and the coordination by the International Council for Science, and encouraging the full inclusion of the social, cultural and economic dimension of the Arctic, including the traditional knowledge of northern indigenous societies;
- Encourage Arctic Council member states to strengthen and make more sustainable Arctic tourism, by adopting policies and regulations that support local eco-tourism initiatives and tourist-related industries, ensuring that the activities are environmentally sound, acceptable to and protective of local cultures and values, and that they lead to protection and long-term management of Arctic wildlife and historical

resources. This would be assisted by encouraging and helping in the preparation of information and educational materials suitable for tourism in each particular region, and by assisting in the international communication and accounting that is essential to modern tourism. The development of an internationally approved standard for environmentally sustainable Arctic tourist operators may be considered.

D. Ask the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region to

- Carry to the governments of the Arctic states a strong message on the importance and seriousness of Arctic climate change and the urgency with which it needs to be addressed;
- Actively participate in the evaluation and periodical follow-up of the Arctic Human Development Report;
- Take active part in the Arctic Council Information and Communications Network, promoting the inclusion in the Arctic Council activities of an Arctic ICT pilot project, TRAICE (Target Region Arctic Information Communications Enquiry), already introduced to the Arctic Council;
- Request information on the implementation by the relevant authorities in each country of recommendations of the Arctic Council and of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, 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, and in particular encourage the coordination of the activities in response to climate change with the activities directed toward social and economic sustainability;
- Ensure that there is adequate and continuous 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, and in this regard cooperate closely with the UN Commission on Sustainable Development;
- Consider possibilities to initiate a process which over time could lead to a binding legal regime for conservation and sustainable use of the Arctic and its marine environment;
- Consider putting discussion of the global relevance of the International Polar Year on the agenda of the 8th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region.

E. The Conference

- 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;
- Welcomes the forthcoming Russian Chairmanship of the Arctic Council and looks forward to continued cooperation with the Arctic Council in 2004-2006;
- Welcomes and accepts the kind invitation of Sweden to host the Seventh Conference in 2006.

Seventh Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

Kiruna, Sweden, 2-4 August 2006

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

- 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;
- That climate change makes the Arctic more accessible to human activities such as exploitation of resources and increased shipping activities;
- The international environmental cooperation which has taken place concerning sustainable development, climate change and biodiversity;
- The cultural diversity in the Arctic represented by more than 40 distinct peoples, cultures and languages;
- 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;
- That the eco-system in the Arctic is vulnerable to pollution, over-exploitation and developmental strains and is under pressure;

B. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT

- The Declaration and Policy document from the Arctic Council meeting in Reykjavik 24 November 2004;
- That the United Nations has designated the period from 2005-2014 as the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development;
- The Joint Communiqué from the 10th Session of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in November 2005;
- The Statement from the first meeting of Ministers of Culture of the Arctic Council member states in January 2006;
- The fundamental rights of the Arctic Indigenous Peoples expressed in International Law;
- 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;
- The work towards developing a framework document and a policy declaration for the Northern Dimension Policy;
- 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;
- 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

- 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;
- 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);
- Ensure financial resources to generate monitoring and research stations/platforms that can secure observations of climate change and the effect of pollution;
- 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;
- Retain and intensify efforts to reduce CO₂ emissions and other greenhouse gases and strengthen the multilateral environmental agreements relevant to the Arctic;
- Ensure openness to data and accessibility to geographical areas and research related data;
- 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;
- 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;
- Ensure that natural resources of the Arctic are exploited in a sustainable manner and to the benefit of the peoples living in the Arctic;
- 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;

- 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;
- Promote and invest in research, development and deployment of alternative and low impact energy sources suitable to the Arctic region;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- Use the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development to implement specific programs for Arctic education;
- Take initiatives to ensure a coordinated and joint effort to analyse and make use of the results of the International Polar Year in policymaking;
- Conduct under the auspices of the UN, by the end of IPY in 2008, an international conference "The Arctic – a region of global cooperation";
- 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;
- Ensure the participation of the Arctic indigenous peoples and the use of their knowledge in the Arctic science;
- Provide increased funding to the University of the Arctic to ensure its continuous success;
- Implement the funding of the approved Project Support Instrument;
- Carry out an assessment of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as proposed by the Arctic ICT network;
- Strengthen their cooperation regarding marine security, especially search and rescue matters;

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

- 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;
- Actively follow the work of the planning and implementation of the International Polar Year 2007/2008;
- Actively promote the Arctic region with regard to the new Northern Dimension policy;
- 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;
- 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;
- Consider to review the Rules of Procedure for the Standing Committee before the next conference in 2008 in order to improve the working methods;
- 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

- 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;
- Welcomes the forthcoming Norwegian Chairmanship of the Arctic Council and looks forward to continued cooperation with the Arctic Council in 2006-2008;
- Welcomes and accepts the kind invitation of the USA to host the Eighth Conference in 2008.

Eighth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

Fairbanks, the United States of America, 12-14 August 2008

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

In collaboration with indigenous peoples of the Arctic;

Meeting to discuss maritime policy, human health, renewable energy, and adaptation to climate change in the Arctic region;

Ask governments in the Arctic Region, the Arctic Council and the institutions of the European Union:

Regarding human health in the Arctic, to

- Form a strategic plan on human health policy in the Arctic Council where the synergies from existing work on this issue are utilized to provide for better human health in the Arctic in harmony with cultural values.
- Provide an assessment of the positive and negative effects of a changing climate on human health in the Arctic.
- Continue to support exchange programmes for young people in the Arctic Region.
- Urge the Arctic Council to give priority to the prevention of alcohol and drug abuse and suicide, and to exchange best practices on how to deal with these problems, with the participation of states, regions and indigenous peoples.
- Commission the University of the Arctic to provide specialized training for health care personnel, with special focus on Arctic conditions.
- Place the issue of alcohol and drug abuse, and best practices from efforts to reduce this problem, on the agenda of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the World Health Organisation.
- Further engage relevant NGOs in the Arctic Region in the work of human development, risk reduction, access to health care, preventive health care and disaster preparedness in the sparsely populated areas in the Arctic.

Regarding development of an Arctic maritime policy for safety at sea, to

- Work to develop harmonized, effective regulations to reduce all forms of pollution from ships sailing in the Arctic Ocean.
- Strengthen cooperation, consultation and coordination among nations regarding search and rescue matters in the region to ensure an appropriate response from states to any accident.
- Take an active role in updating the “Guidelines for Ships Operating in Ice-covered Waters” within the International Maritime Organisation, and making these guidelines mandatory.
- Strengthen existing measures and develop new measures to improve the safety of maritime navigation.
- Support the completion of the Arctic Council’s Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment and develop an action plan on the basis of its findings.
- Support action and investment by Arctic nations, and the maritime industry, to put appropriate resources in place to provide for emergency response capability, search and rescue capability, and spill response

capability, as the Arctic opens to marine shipping, and to take preventive measures to avoid shipping accidents.

- 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.
- Support the solid foundation for responsible management of the Arctic Ocean by all Arctic States and other users of the Arctic Ocean through the existing, comprehensive international legal regime that governs the Arctic Ocean.

Regarding adaptation to climate change, to

- Raise a strong Arctic message to combat climate change at the COP 15 negotiations in Copenhagen in December 2009.
- Support the “Indigenous Peoples Global Summit on Climate Change” and promote the inclusion of the summit report at the COP 15 and other related venues.
- Speed up the promotion and conduct, by the end of IPY 2008, of the International Conferences “The Arctic – a region of global cooperation” and “Global climate changes and human challenges” under the auspices of the UN.
- Provide an assessment on how Arctic nations can prepare for new opportunities as a result of a changing Arctic.
- Further build capacity in Arctic communities to adapt to climate change, including the development of new education programmes and skills training initiatives, to allow individuals in these communities to be prepared for new job opportunities and to implement projects at a local level.
- Increase research on adaptation to climate change with a focus on the social and economic needs of the people living in the Arctic.
- Ensure availability of data, including research data and accessibility to geographical areas for research purposes.
- Implement the recommendations from the International workshop in Helsinki in October 2008 on “Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks”, (SAON), as a legacy of the International Polar Year 2007 – 2009.
- Ensure the inclusion of an appropriate contribution from elected representatives of the Arctic region to the COP 15 in Copenhagen in 2009.

Regarding development of renewable energy resources, to

- Promote and invest in research, development and deployment of alternative and renewable energy sources suitable for the Arctic region. Special emphasis should be placed on the replacement of fossil fuels by solar, wind, biomass and other alternative energy sources.
- Address the challenges of access to energy by communities in the Arctic given the vast distances between communities, limited infrastructure, and smaller economies of scale for investment opportunities.

Ask the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, to

- Work to promote the 2010 targets to reduce the loss of biodiversity in the Arctic.
- Promote the Fairbanks Statement in the development of an Arctic policy in the European Union and the Arctic states, and involve the national parliaments and the European Parliament in this process.
- Take note of the intention of the European Commission to release a Communication on Arctic policy in the autumn of 2009.
- Actively support the development of a Northern Dimension Partnership in Transport and Logistics, and the further strengthening of the existing partnerships in Environment and in Public Health and Social Well-being.
- Encourage the Arctic States and the European Union to work together on an agenda for issues of Arctic and northern interest, and to promote it on a global level in cooperation with international organizations and forums, which are taking a growing interest in Arctic issues of global importance.
- To continue the discussion on legal regimes that impact the Arctic, and in particular to promote ideas to strengthen the legal and economic base of the Arctic Council.
- Take initiatives on a domestic level, where necessary, to draw up national strategies for northern regions.
- Encourage the University of the Arctic to build practical capacity in the north to address the challenges of adaptation to climate change, and to solve the Arctic’s needs for energy, from technical, cultural, economic as well as environmental perspectives, and to provide further education of health care personnel with special focus on Arctic conditions.

Furthermore the Conference

- 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.
- Underlines the growing geopolitical and strategic importance of the Arctic.
- Is convinced that the political role of the Arctic Council should be enhanced given the many challenges facing the region, particularly by ensuring more regular ministerial meetings with all participants, no less than once a year, and to ensure its full engagement with other international bodies working on the same issues, particularly the United Nations.
- Welcomes the forthcoming Danish Chairmanship of the Arctic Council and looks forward to continued cooperation with the Arctic Council.
- Notes the information from the Danish delegation concerning the Ilulissat Declaration, and the concerns of the Icelandic delegation regarding full participation of all states of the Arctic Council.
- Welcomes and accepts the kind invitation of the European Parliament to host the Ninth Conference in 2010.

Ninth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

European Parliament, Brussels, 13-15 September 2010

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

In collaboration with the indigenous peoples of the Arctic;

Meeting to discuss the sustainable use of living resources in the Arctic, cooperation in education and research – the legacy of IPY, and the consequences of the melting ice;

Considering the transformative change now occurring in the Arctic driven by the forces of climate change and globalization resulting in tighter economic and geopolitical links;

Ask the governments in the Arctic Region, the Arctic Council and the institutions of the European Union:

Regarding the sustainable management of living resources in the Arctic, to

- Create mechanisms that emphasize ecosystem-based management and extended environmental impact assessment procedures, as well as social impacts, on an Arctic-wide basis.
- Establish Arctic cooperation on the management of living resources in the Arctic, and formulate a common set of goals and interests.
- Examine what sort of practical hunting and fisheries education exists in the Arctic, and facilitate a closer cooperation between research institutions and hunting organizations in the Arctic region.
- Commission the University of the Arctic to strengthen education, including traditional knowledge, related to the sustainable hunting of marine mammals and establish a network between educational institutions in this field, as well as increase the number of grants to PhD fellowships and research into marine mammals.
- Collect and share data on new and emerging fisheries within their exclusive economic zones toward ensuring sustainable development of those fisheries and to work towards consistency of approaches and standards for managing transborder stocks.
- Strengthen the cooperation of the circumpolar reindeer herders' network, including the IPY legacy, the University of the Arctic Institute for Circumpolar Reindeer Husbandry, as reindeer as a species and their grazing lands have a special significance for human life and the economy in the Arctic.

Regarding cooperation in education and research, and the follow-up of the International Polar Year, to

- Enhance Arctic research and education programs for circumpolar projects with the possibility for non-Arctic countries to participate.
- Implement agreements and share information between the Arctic countries and other interested nations that secure access to research data and information about the Arctic.
- Secure long-term monitoring of development in the Arctic and support the Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks (SAON) process.
- Arrange a meeting between the ministers responsible for research in Arctic countries and the ministers from countries participating in the International Polar Year, if possible in conjunction with the IPY Conference in Montreal 22-27 April 2012, in order to promote mutually beneficial interaction between the science and policy communities.
- Assess the IPY results and, together with scientific organizations, develop a document for decision-makers of emerging key research findings, and promote consultations on the proposal for an International Polar Decade.
- Provide easy access to the results of IPY for researchers, decision-makers and the general public.
- Move forward on the plans by the European Commission to set up an EU Arctic Information Centre, taking note of the idea to set up such a centre as a network with a hub at the Arctic Centre of the University of Lapland, Finland, and cooperating with relevant research institutions.
- Strengthen existing mobility and exchange programs to increase circumpolar mobility as well as “Go North” mobility for students from southern locations as a focused means to secure international cooperation, integration, and the development of future polar scientists.
- Connect the science community and the business sector in order to use the results from polar research to create new jobs in the Arctic region, particularly for those already living there.
- Further develop and continue partnerships and general dialogue with local and indigenous communities in business development, knowledge development, IPY legacies and democracy building in the Arctic.
- Continue to provide programs to encourage interdisciplinary research cooperation in the Arctic.

Regarding consequences of the melting ice in the Arctic, to

- Conclude the agreement on search and rescue and increase capacity in the Arctic Region in order to ensure the appropriate response to possible accidents as the Arctic opens up to marine shipping.
- Strengthen existing measures and develop new measures to improve the safety of maritime navigation, in particular through the International Maritime Organization and its ongoing work, notably in the development of a compulsory Polar Code.
- Implement the recommendations of the Arctic Council’s Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment.
- Raise a strong Arctic message to combat climate change at the COP 16 negotiations in Mexico 2010.
- Enhance efforts to prevent and mitigate climate change and its consequences for Arctic populations and wildlife habitats.
- Continue to improve the assessment of the environmental, societal and economic consequences of natural resources’ exploration and extraction.
- Support the Icelandic initiative toward a second Arctic Human Development Report in 2014, bringing together state-of-the-art knowledge from the IPY that covers Arctic societies and their welfare in a global context.

Ask the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, to

- Engage in the preparation of the next Conference of the International Polar Year in Canada in April 2012 and actively participate in the Conference.
- In cooperation with University of the Arctic strengthen the open dialogue between the science community and political leadership in the circumpolar north.
- Ask the University of the Arctic in cooperation with organisations like IASSA and IASC increasingly to publish Arctic relevant knowledge in reviewed academic journals, with a focus on marine mammals.
- Promote the Statement from the Ninth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region in the development of an Arctic policy in the European Union and the Arctic states, and involve all the member parliaments in this process.

- Encourage member parliaments to organize conferences and public consultation exercises on the sustainable management of living resources in the Arctic that involve the participation and contributions of fishermen, hunters, reindeer herders, scientists, politicians and other interested parties.

Furthermore the Conference

- Asks the Arctic Council and Arctic governments to establish a panel to provide an assessment on how the Arctic nations can prepare for new opportunities and challenges as a result of a changing Arctic, and on the basis of such a study, create a vision for the Arctic in 2030. The panel should include representatives of the science community, parliamentarians, business community and indigenous peoples' organizations.
- Asks the Arctic states to arrange an Arctic Summit at the level of heads of state and government to show leadership and promote the Arctic region as an area of peaceful development and cooperation.
- Supports the Arctic Council as the primary forum for Arctic cooperation, and encourages the Arctic Council to arrange annual ministerial meetings and to strengthen its legal and economic base, and to establish a permanent secretariat for the Council.
- Calls on the partners of the Northern Dimension Policy and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, as well as the other structures of cooperation in the Northern Dimension region, to actively implement the policy in the Arctic, and especially to include the Arctic in the new efforts to develop logistics and transportation, environmental policies, as well as to promote cultural exchange.
- Takes note of the EU's efforts to develop an Arctic Policy and encourages the Arctic Council to consider granting the EU Commission permanent observer status in the Council in order to strengthen cooperation between the Council and the European Union.
- Supports an active dialogue between Arctic and non-Arctic states in order to increase awareness among the general public as well as governments of the Arctic and its importance, not only regionally but globally.
- Encourage the European Commission and Arctic governments to have effective dialogue with Arctic indigenous peoples on matters concerning them.
- 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 relaying the messages and supporting the actions herein discussed.
- Welcomes the forthcoming Swedish Chairmanship of the Arctic Council and looks forward to continued cooperation with the Arctic Council.
- Welcomes and accepts the kind invitation of the Parliament of Iceland to host the tenth Conference in 2012.

Tenth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

Akureyri 5-7 September 2012

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

In collaboration with the indigenous peoples of the Arctic;

Meeting to discuss Arctic governance, responsible economic development in the Arctic and human development in the Arctic;

Considering the rapid change now occurring in the Arctic driven by the forces of climate change and globalization resulting in closer economic and geopolitical links;

Ask the governments in the Arctic Region, the Arctic Council and the institutions of the European Union, where appropriate;

Regarding Arctic Governance and the Arctic Council to

- Initiate discussions toward developing the Arctic Council into a formal international organization by adopting an exclusive treaty among the eight Arctic states to give themselves more binding powers.
- Hold annual Arctic Council ministerial meetings, as well as regular meetings between ministers responsible for special sectors important to Arctic cooperation, such as research and education and environmental issues.
- Establish the permanent secretariat of the Arctic Council with personnel reflecting the member states, including indigenous communities.
- Establish an adequate and stable budget to support the work of the Arctic Council.
- Create a vision for the Arctic on how the Arctic nations can prepare for new opportunities and challenges as a result of a changing Arctic and, as part of this process, hold an Arctic Summit involving heads of state and government of the Arctic Council member states, as well as the heads of the Permanent Participants.
- Encourage Canada and the US to identify joint priorities for their consecutive chairmanships of the Arctic Council.
- Secure the role and participation of the Permanent Participants and provide mechanisms to increase their financial and human resources to participate fully in all the activities of the Arctic Council.
- Explore new ways to include the views of the Permanent Participants in future legal agreements between the Arctic nations.
- Ensure an open and consultative process by including the Arctic communities, permanent participants, scientists, the business community and others, in the development of a visionary Kiruna statement to be adopted at the Ministerial Meeting in May 2013.
- Explore new areas for legally binding agreements between the Arctic countries in possible areas such as research, education, tourism and aspects of environmental protection. When appropriate, the agreements may open to interested parties.
- Produce good practice examples of environmental action and governance that other parts of the world can replicate and learn from.
- Identify and agree on environmental indicators that can be used to tackle accelerated change in the Arctic and can also feed into the process of developing global sustainable development goals (SDGs).
- Encourage a close collaboration between the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro- Arctic Council (BEAC) in all areas of common interest and concern.
- Agree on observer status of interested parties to secure the Arctic Council as the primary forum for Arctic cooperation.

Regarding Economic Opportunities in the Arctic to

- Recognize ecosystems and science as fundamental, principal considerations in Arctic resource management.
- Ensure that gender based analyses are used in the development, implementation and assessment of all Arctic policies.
- Ask the Arctic Council member states to intensify their cooperation in the International Maritime Organization in order to speed up the work on a mandatory Polar Code for shipping, and intensify their cooperation on hydrographic data collection.
- Efficiently implement the agreement on search and rescue cooperation in the Arctic and, in this respect, also conduct joint search and rescue exercises in cooperation with those countries whose vessels cross Arctic routes.
- Increase sub-regional cooperation and coordination in the development of new transport strategies, and give the Arctic a prominent role in the implementation of the Northern Dimension Partnership on Logistics and Transportation.
- Establish an Arctic Chamber of Commerce or Economic Forum that includes, amongst others, local communities and indigenous peoples of the Arctic.
- Support capacity building, particularly through education, in order that local communities will benefit more from economic development.
- Support cross-border and trans-border economic and human cooperation in the Arctic Region, and consider how to strengthen the possibilities for travelling east-west and how to develop infrastructure for data-communications and satellite surveillance of cruise ships and other vessels in the Arctic.

- Stimulate environmental innovation in leading sectors and focus on producing examples of good practices.
- Develop overall strategies for assessing environmental, social and cultural consequences when exploiting natural resources in the Arctic, to ensure that any such exploitation is based on principles of sustainability.
- Include strategies for mitigative action and adaptation to climate change as well as environmental effects in all analyses of economic development in the North.
- Support continued close cooperation between the research community and other Arctic stakeholders.
- Identify particularly vulnerable Arctic areas that require special management to secure biodiversity.
- Prevent oil spills and finalize the oil spill preparedness and response agreement between the Arctic states.
- Develop renewable energy suitable for the Arctic region and develop leading technologies in terms of society and environment.
- Initiate joint research on challenges related to oil drilling and transportation of oil and other hazardous goods in Arctic waters in order to improve capacity in the event of oil spills and other environmental accidents.

Regarding Enhancing Human Development in the Arctic to

- **Develop the Arctic region with the human dimension in focus and with a human rights approach.**
- Analyze the knowledge gaps in Arctic social sciences and research, and enhance cross-border knowledge sharing and building.
- Consider the impacts of bans of products of some living resources on indigenous Arctic communities.
- Encourage the European Union to speed up its work on the creation of a European Arctic Information Centre as a network with a hub at the Arctic Centre of the University of Lapland, Finland, cooperating with relevant research institutions.
- Strengthen and expand mobility and exchange programs involving students in the Arctic.
- Establish an Arctic Council framework mentorship and mobility program, in cooperation with universities and scientific and business communities.
- Continue the inclusion and recognition of traditional and local knowledge, and improve the interplay and complementary relationship between traditional knowledge and conventional science.
- Strengthen the indigenous peoples' educational institutions by building competence locally in the Arctic including their own holistic knowledge.
- Disseminate the rich knowledge accumulated during the International Polar Year and follow up on the IPY 2012 theme "From Knowledge to Action."
- Anchor knowledge accumulated from Arctic research in the Arctic and secure local capacity building in education, research, policy making and local governance.
- Support and increase the use of indigenous and community-based monitoring of living resources.
- Continue the focus on human health and well-being, with an emphasis on mental health, prevention and food safety among Arctic peoples.
- Continue to strengthen cooperation between the University of the Arctic and the indigenous peoples' organizations.
- Develop a more structured partnership with the University of the Arctic, the International Arctic Science Committee, International Arctic Social Sciences Association and other relevant organizations
- Support the second Arctic Human Development Report and the plans for an International Polar Decade initiative.

Ask the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region to

- Strengthen the dialogue with the Arctic Council in the process of drafting a statement at the next Ministerial Meeting in Kiruna 2013.
- Start to explore the possibility of annual Conferences of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region.
- Promote the Statement from the Tenth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region in the further development of Arctic policy in the Arctic states and the European Union and involve all the member parliaments in this process.

Furthermore the Conference

- 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 relaying the messages and supporting the actions herein discussed.
- Welcomes the forthcoming Canadian chairmanship of the Arctic Council and looks forward to continued cooperation with the Arctic Council.
- Welcomes and accepts the kind invitation of the Parliament of Canada to host the Eleventh Conference in 2014.

Eleventh Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

Whitehorse 9-11 September 2014

We, the elected representatives from Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States of America;

In collaboration with the indigenous peoples of the Arctic;

Meeting to discuss Sustainable Infrastructure Development, Governance Models and Decision-Making Processes, Enhancing Northern Economies: Responsible Resource Development and Capacity Building, and Environmental Challenges;

Considering the transformative change now occurring in the Arctic driven by the forces of climate change and globalization resulting in tighter economic and geopolitical links;

Underlining the positive development of Arctic cooperation and with a view to promote even closer and deeper cooperation;

Emphasizing the role of the parliamentarians in the Arctic Region to advise and contribute to the work of the Arctic Council;

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

Regarding Sustainable Infrastructure Development to:

- Promote closer cooperation among coastguards in the Arctic countries and work towards getting a common operational picture for ships operating in the Arctic;
- Support cross-border and trans-border economic and human cooperation in the Arctic Region;
- Improve cooperation and coordination when developing sustainable infrastructure and domain awareness in the Arctic Region, such as satellite surveillance, Unmanned Aircraft Systems, communications, maps and marine infrastructure and look for financial solutions that encourage a regional and international approach;
- Support the development of renewable energy suitable for the Arctic Region to drastically reduce black carbon emissions;
- Promote new technological innovation and research that supports sustainable energy generation pilot projects in the Arctic for affordable electricity production and heating, and to create efficient waste disposal and reduce emissions in order to establish self-supporting energy production for Arctic communities;
- Promote the creation of infrastructure to support food security, such as local processing and incentives supporting Arctic traditional livelihoods, fisheries and agriculture;
- Support the creation of infrastructure, such as roads, ports and airports, that support and assist in the development of tourism, local economies and other environmentally sustainable economic activities;

- Continue and strengthen cooperation in the International Maritime Organization to ensure the finalization of the Polar Code and its effective implementation.

Regarding Governance Models and Decision-Making Processes to:

- Support the development of training and research programs through the University of the Arctic which encourage sustainable development, cultural activities and circumpolar mobility;
- Promote a human rights approach to development in the Arctic and enhance knowledge of basic human rights on all levels of governance;
- Exchange best practices on how to nationally involve local and regional governments in decision-making processes in the Arctic Council;
- Explore new ways to involve regional and local stakeholders in Arctic decision-making processes, such as the outreach events established under the Canadian Chairmanship;
- Secure the role and participation of the Permanent Participants in the Arctic Council and provide mechanisms to increase their financial and human resources to participate fully in all the activities of the Arctic Council;
- Address the issue of the growing number of Observers in the Arctic Council, and the possibility for these observers to speak and interact directly with states and Permanent Participants at relevant Arctic Council meetings;
- Exchange best practices on national governance models to include the views of the indigenous peoples in the national decision-making processes;
- Explore new areas for legally binding agreements between the Arctic countries;
- Support initiatives such as the forthcoming EU Arctic Information Centre and the Canadian High Arctic Research Centre as vital tools to supplement existing structures for Arctic research, education and information collaboration;
- Hold an Arctic Summit, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Arctic Council in 2016, involving heads of state and governments of the Arctic Council member states, as well as the heads of the Permanent Participants.

Regarding Enhancing Northern Economies, Resource Development and Capacity Building to:

- Establish an Arctic innovation system which links the scientific community, the business sector, political society and local populations, for instance through an Arctic mentorship and mobility program;
- Support relevant capacity building, particularly through education and training, to ensure that local communities will continue to benefit from economic development;
- Share and utilize existing technologies and affordable energy generation and deployment practices, particularly in remote communities, as a way to reduce the cost of energy, reduce carbon emissions, support infrastructure development, and contribute to the well-being of residents of the Arctic, and the viability of communities across the Arctic;
- Exchange experiences and best practices about how industrial projects and traditional industries can coexist and benefit from one another;
- Promote a Circumpolar Mobility Program to encourage the mobility of students as well as scientists among the Arctic countries with a focus on mutual understanding, collaboration, innovation and sustainable economic development;
- Support the ongoing work with the International Polar Partnership Initiative to facilitate improved cooperation on future polar research;
- Promote sustainable resource development in the Arctic by assessing the impacts of development on the environment, societies and cultures, including resilience assessments;
- Promote cooperation in order to develop new technological solutions that improve the capabilities of the mining industry in challenging Arctic conditions;
- Recognize the importance of tourism and examine the possibilities of eco-tourism and geo-tourism in the Arctic while developing joint guidelines for sustainable land- and sea-based tourism;
- Continue to explore the possibilities of ensuring Corporate Social Responsibility – CSR - in the Arctic Region and assess if the principles of the UN Global Compact initiative can be applied when developing activities in the Arctic;
- Promote the role of a business-driven Arctic Economic Council as one of many partners in the development of a diverse, sustainable and prosperous economy for the Arctic Region;

- Encourage mutual understanding of the rights of the peoples of the Arctic to utilize their resources in a sustainable way, and the importance of securing their livelihoods by expanding the markets for traditional products, such as seal products, where applicable;
- Support the value added and innovation in Arctic indigenous societies to strengthen their adaptive capacity to change, including initiatives such as the Arctic Indigenous Peoples' Culinary Institute, the Arctic Council Indigenous Youth Engagement Leadership Program for Local Adaptation, and the EALLIN Reindeer Herding Youth Project.

Regarding Environmental Challenges to:

- Develop overall strategies for assessing environmental, social and cultural benefits and impacts when developing natural resources in the Arctic, to ensure that any such development is based on principles of sustainability;
- Initiate joint research on challenges related to oil drilling and transportation of oil and other hazardous goods in Arctic waters in order to prevent accidents and improve capacity in the event of oil spills and other environmental accidents;
- Establish closer cooperation on challenges related to oil drilling and transportation of oil and other hazardous goods in Arctic waters;
- Examine how closer Arctic cooperation can promote the use of renewable resources in the region;
- Develop comprehensive adaptation strategies to prepare Arctic societies for the consequences of climate change;
- Enhance the health and growth of forests through the sustainable management and use of forest resources while facilitating adaptation to climate change;
- Continue the work of identifying particularly vulnerable Arctic areas that require special management to secure biodiversity;
- Raise a strong Arctic message to communicate the consequences of climate change in the Arctic at the UNFCCC COP 20 in Lima in 2014 as well as at the COP 21 negotiations in Paris in December 2015.

Ask the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region to:

- Explore the possibility of arranging annual Conferences of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region;
- Continue to promote an active dialogue between the Arctic Council and the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region to secure mutually beneficial cooperation;
- Further explore and strengthen the possibilities for increased cooperation in the field of culture in the different parts of the Arctic region, and thereby build capacity in communities to deal with environmental, economic, cultural and social challenges for the benefit of sustainable development in the Arctic region.

Furthermore the Conference:

- 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;
- Acknowledges the importance of, and supports, the active participation of indigenous peoples throughout all ongoing and future activities and processes in the Arctic Region;
- Welcomes the forthcoming US Chairmanship of the Arctic Council and looks forward to continued cooperation with the Arctic Council;
- Welcomes and accepts the invitation of the Parliament of Russia to host the twelfth Conference in 2016.

Twelvth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

Ulan-Ude, 15-17 June 2016

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

In collaboration with the indigenous peoples of the Arctic;

Meeting to discuss Arctic Cooperation in Light of COP 21 in Paris, Inhabitants in a Developing Arctic, and New Possibilities in the Arctic;

Considering the transformative change now occurring in the Arctic driven by the forces of climate change and globalization resulting in tighter economic and geopolitical links;

Stressing the role of the indigenous peoples of the Arctic and the respect for their parliament/council and government structures, from which the developments in the Arctic should stem;

Considering the Arctic as a region of peace, global cooperation, and great economic potential;

Noting the importance of joint response of the Arctic states to the current challenges, and collective action to take advantage of new opportunities;

Acknowledging the constructive and important role of the Arctic Council celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2016;

Emphasizing the role of the parliamentarians in the Arctic Region to advise and contribute to the work of the Arctic Council;

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

Regarding Arctic Cooperation in Light of COP 21 in Paris to:

- Organize an Arctic Council meeting between the ministers responsible for climate to take new initiatives to reduce emissions of CO₂ and short-lived climate forcers;
- Explore new ways to involve the observers to the Arctic Council in the work to combat climate change by reducing emissions of CO₂ and black carbon;
- Continue the work in the International Maritime Organization with guidelines regarding the use of heavy fuel oil in the Arctic, and continue to support the development of renewable energy suitable for the Arctic to drastically reduce black carbon emissions;
- Intensify collaborative work towards sustainability and adaptation to climate change in the Arctic;
- Emphasize the importance of scientific work between Arctic countries and other relevant stakeholders to ensure the continuation of the research cooperation, including appropriate funding;
- Intensify multidisciplinary research concerning the role of the Arctic in the global climate system and ensure that research outcome and results are openly shared internationally;
- Raise a strong Arctic message to communicate the consequences of climate change in the Arctic at all relevant international meetings;
- Promote the development of national, regional and local climate change adaptation plans in the Arctic, including the work on building resilience.

Regarding Inhabitants in a Developing Arctic to:

- Maintain strong international cooperation to further peace and stability in the Arctic region where more than 4 million people live;
- Create an Arctic Circumpolar Mobility Program to encourage the mobility of students as well as scientists among the Arctic Council member states and observers with a focus on mutual understanding, collaboration, innovation and sustainable economic development;
- Support relevant capacity building, particularly through education and training, to ensure that local communities will continue to benefit from economic development;
- Strengthen the work to improve and monitor Arctic living-conditions and work actively towards finding real solutions to issues concerning human health and well-being in the Arctic, especially mental health;

- Continue the work on adaptation and resilience in a changing Arctic, including climate change mitigation, focusing on new possibilities for the people and the region;
- Acknowledge the importance of creating future socio-economic possibilities to entice youth, particularly young women to stay or return and fully participate in their local communities;
- Promote, protect and further develop the languages of indigenous peoples in the Arctic;
- Investigate solutions to the issues of food security in the Arctic;
- Take note of the negative consequences which (seal) bans of products of living resources from indigenous communities have;
- Acknowledge that sustainable harvest of living marine resources in the Arctic is fundamental to the current and future welfare of the inhabitants in the Arctic.

Regarding New Possibilities in the Arctic to:

- Strengthen environmental safety and sustainable economic cooperation between the Arctic states, regions and local communities to increase employment, prosperity and quality of life while applying the highest environmental standards;
- Continue the work to assess the large fresh water resources in the Arctic, including management and local, regional and global implications;
- Establish an Arctic innovation system which links the scientific community, the business sector, political society, local populations and Arctic research data, for instance through an Arctic mentorship and mobility program;
- Promote the work of the Arctic Economic Council as an independent organization that facilitates Arctic business-to-business activities and responsible economic development;
- Exchange experiences and best practices about how industrial projects and traditional practices and industries can coexist and benefit from one another;
- Promote cooperation in order to develop new technological solutions and the highest technical standards for a more sustainable mining industry in challenging Arctic conditions and respecting the Arctic environment;
- Find mechanisms to incorporate Corporate Social Responsibility – CSR – for companies doing business in the Arctic Region through cooperation with representatives of the business sector, such as the Arctic Economic Council;
- Explore the potential of voluntary mechanisms to encourage high industry standards in social and environmental performance, such as highlighting ‘best performances’ in an Arctic Corporate Responsibility Index based on for instance the Arctic Business Investment Protocol and UN Global Compact Initiative;
- While developing new industries in the Arctic region, remembering a continuous focus on a sustainable use of our living resources, especially a close international collaboration regarding the Arctic fish stocks;
- Further develop close collaborations across the Arctic concerning experiences and best practices within the sector of sustainable tourism in the Arctic region;
- Together stimulate new innovative solutions, research and local competence building which address the needs of future Arctic communities;
- Develop further access and improve safety for the people working, visiting or living in the Arctic using the highest standards with a continuous focus on the development of new infrastructure and communication solutions with technology and satellites.

Regarding the 20th anniversary of the Arctic Council to:

- Secure the role and participation of the Permanent Participants in the Arctic Council and provide mechanisms to increase their financial and human resources to participate fully in all the activities of the Arctic Council;
- Address the issue of the Observers in the Arctic Council, and the possibility for these observers to speak and interact directly with states and Permanent Participants at Arctic Council meetings and its Working Groups, without diminishing the leading role of Arctic States and Permanent Participants;
- Ensure that observers that represent Arctic peoples and organizations maintain the possibility to speak and be directly involved in the Arctic Council work;
- Establish an adequate and stable budget to support the work and future goals of the Arctic Council;
- Include more voices from the peoples living in the Arctic, such as regional organizations, into the work of the Arctic Council to make sure that they can influence the direction of the Arctic cooperation;

- Reinforce links and cooperation with other international bodies and policy frameworks which focus their activities on cross-border cooperation in the Arctic region, like the Barents Euro-Arctic Council / Barents Regional Council and the Northern Dimension;
- Exchange best practices and explore new ways on how to nationally involve regional and local governments in decision-making processes in the Arctic Council;
- 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;
- Follow-up on the conclusions from the international audit about the work in the Arctic Council.

Furthermore the Conference:

- Acknowledges the importance of, and supports, the active participation of indigenous peoples throughout all ongoing and future activities and processes in the Arctic Region;
- 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;
- Welcomes the forthcoming Finnish Chairmanship of the Arctic Council and looks forward to continued cooperation with the Arctic Council;
- Welcomes and accepts the invitation of the Parliament of Finland to host the thirteenth Conference in 2018.

