



CONFERENCE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

14th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

Digital Conference 13 - 14 April 2021

CONFERENCE STATEMENT

The Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region envision **the Arctic as a region of peace, stability and low tension** where nations act responsibly, and where economic and energy resources are developed in a sustainable, transparent manner respecting the environment and the interests and cultures of all inhabitants of the Arctic, especially Indigenous peoples.

We congratulate the **Arctic Council with its 25th anniversary** as the primary forum for Arctic cooperation and its proven ability to maintain a constructive and positive spirit. We encourage the stronger inclusion of youth representatives, strengthened cooperation with the Arctic Indigenous peoples, and constructive cooperation with existing and new observers.

We congratulate the **University of the Arctic, UArctic, with its 20th anniversary** and take pride in having supported the creation and its successful development since the inception.

We firmly underline **the importance of international law** in the Arctic, especially the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which provides the essential multilateral legal framework for all ocean activities, including in the Arctic.

As **elected representatives** from Canada, Denmark/Greenland, European Union, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States of America, and in close collaboration with the **Indigenous peoples** of the Arctic, we highlight the following:

Climate change in the Arctic

We see with grave concern that the Arctic is **warming at a rate more than twice that of the global average**, resulting in rapid social, environmental, and economic impacts, not only in the region but worldwide. The peoples of the Arctic are dramatically experiencing the effects of this change, and need support and resources to adapt to these profound changes.

We call on the governments of the Arctic region to:

Renew and increase their 2015 Paris Agreement commitments at the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) in Glasgow, with the understanding that climate change is a critical threat to our planet.

Take a **leading role** in the work to forge an **ambitious climate action plan** for the Arctic, addressing emissions cuts of greenhouse gases globally and in Arctic States, especially CO₂ and black carbon, and adaptation to climate change while supporting **innovative solutions** relevant to the Arctic, which will protect the people in the region.

Strengthen the knowledge base and improve scientific cooperation with a **new International Polar Year Initiative**. In close cooperation with the World Meteorological Organization and other main polar science organizations such as the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research and the Arctic Science Partnership, the International Arctic Science Committee, International Arctic Social Sciences Association and University of the Arctic, with focus on extensive interdisciplinary and multilateral scientific programs that include Northerners and Indigenous peoples in the planning and conducting of scientific activities.

Continually consider **new technologies** to reduce carbon emissions in pursuit of ambitious climate action.

Sustainable Economic Development

Sustainable economic development is fundamental for the future of the Arctic region and requires close cooperation **between government, academia and business** representatives.

We stress the importance of **financial institutions** for the development of the Arctic as a key instrument for sustainable development of the region, including enhancement of socio-economic conditions, modernization of industries, and development of infrastructure across borders, while respecting Arctic ecosystem boundaries.

Underscore the importance of promoting the use of **renewable energy** in remote Arctic communities and encourage further work on innovative energy solutions and related capacity construction in the Arctic aimed at climate change prevention taking into account the needs of the increasingly electrifying society.

Acknowledge the need to support **small and medium size business** in the Arctic as well as develop large-scale projects in a sustainable responsible manner in order to ensure overall progress, increase employment rate and enhance living standards of the Arctic inhabitants.

We call on the governments of the Arctic region to:

Increase the accessibility of **digital infrastructure** in the Arctic, thereby promoting entrepreneurship, innovation and diversify economic development in the Arctic.

Strengthen the cooperation with the **Arctic Economic Council** and ensure the implementation of the **Arctic Investment Protocol**.

The Peoples of the Arctic

Urbanization is making the Arctic a more interesting place for young people to live as it offers better services, education and leisure opportunities. However, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is difficult, with the loss of employment and health concerns. COVID-19 has shown that medical resources and infrastructure available in parts of the Arctic is poorer than in the southern regions.

We call on the governments of the Arctic region to:

Strongly strengthen the cooperation on **public health** in order to increase the exchange of knowledge and foster greater awareness and better response to the health issues of circumpolar peoples.

Incorporate **voices of the youth** in venues and engagements organised for Arctic cooperation.

Support the youth cooperation across the borders and ensure a meaningful engagement of the Arctic youth in the activity of the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic region.

Strengthen the funding of **“north2north” and other mobility programs** especially directed at young people living in the Arctic.

Base all activities in the Arctic Region on the **respect of the rights** of Indigenous peoples.

Facilitate contacts between people in the region by **simplifying the visa regime** and ensuring freedom of movement of the citizens of the Arctic states.

Strengthen **the cooperation and dialogue on security issues** in order to address the global and regional challenges and key risks and threats of today, including COVID-19 pandemic.

Underscore the importance to maintain **peace, stability and low tension** in the Arctic region; acknowledge the need to strengthen the cooperation and dialogue between the Arctic states on security issues, in order to address the global and regional challenges, key risks and threats of today.