



## **NUUK DECLARATION**

**On the occasion of the Seventh Ministerial Meeting of**

**The Arctic Council**

**12 May 2011, Nuuk, Greenland**

Ministers representing the eight Arctic States, convening in Nuuk, Greenland, for the Seventh Ministerial meeting of the Arctic Council, joined by the representatives of the six Permanent Participant organizations of the Arctic Council,

**Recognizing** the importance of maintaining peace, stability and constructive cooperation in the Arctic,

**Reconfirming** the commitment of the Arctic Council to promote environmental protection and sustainable development of the Arctic,

**Welcoming** the increased cooperation among the Arctic States and peoples in order to address the new challenges and opportunities,

**Recognizing** that the Arctic is first and foremost an inhabited region with diverse economies and societies and the importance of continued sustainable development of Arctic communities, **recognizing** the rights of indigenous peoples and interests of all Arctic residents, and **emphasizing** the continued engagement of indigenous peoples and communities as a fundamental strength of the Council,

**Recognizing** that rapidly changing circumstances, in particular the changing climate, have increased the challenges and opportunities facing the Arctic in both volume and complexity, and **underscoring** the importance of strengthening the Arctic Council to address this change,

**Hereby:**

## **STRENGTHENING THE ARCTIC COUNCIL**

**Announce** the Agreement on Cooperation in Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic, as the first legally binding agreement negotiated under the auspices of the Arctic Council,

**Decide** that the Arctic Council should continue to work towards solutions to address emerging challenges in the Arctic utilizing a wide range of approaches,

**Decide** to strengthen the capacity of the Arctic Council to respond to the challenges and opportunities facing the Arctic by establishing a standing Arctic Council secretariat, hereinafter the Secretariat, in Tromsø, Norway to be operational no later than at the beginning of the Canadian Chairmanship of the Arctic Council in 2013,

**Decide** to establish a task force to implement the decisions to strengthen the Arctic Council, including any necessary arrangements to establish the Secretariat, and **approve** the composition and mandate of the task force as set out in the Senior Arctic Officials' Report to Ministers 2011 (SAO Report),

**Adopt** the recommendations of the Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) on the role and criteria for observers to the Arctic Council as set out in Annexes to the SAO Report , and **decide** to apply these criteria to evaluate pending applicants for observer status,

**Adopt** the Communication and Outreach Guidelines as set out in the SAO Report and **instruct** the SAOs to develop a Strategic Communications Plan for the Arctic Council,

## **MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FUTURE WORK**

### ***Human Dimension***

**Note with appreciation and welcome** the priority placed on human health issues during the Danish chairmanship, **take note** of the Arctic Health Ministers' Meeting held in Nuuk in February 2011, **recognize** the continued health challenges and **note** the need to improve physical and mental health and well-being and empowerment of indigenous peoples and residents of Arctic communities,

**Note** the need for a comprehensive overview of human development in the Arctic and **call** for an assessment of the current state of human development in the Arctic and its relationship with climate change and other factors affecting Arctic communities,

## ***Climate Change and Environmental Protection***

**Recognize** that substantial cuts in emissions of Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are the backbone of meaningful global climate change mitigation efforts,

**Welcome with appreciation** the full report on the assessment of the Arctic Cryosphere entitled "Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost in the Arctic" (SWIPA), **note with concern** the accelerated change in major components of the cryosphere and the profound local, regional and global effects of observed and expected changes, **emphasize** the need for forward looking Arctic cooperation with a view to increase Arctic resilience and to enhance Arctic Council leadership to minimize the human and environmental impacts of climate change, and **instruct** Senior Arctic Officials to consider how best to follow up on the SWIPA recommendations in the future work of the Arctic Council,

**Welcome** the Arctic Council reports on Short-Lived Climate Forcers (SLCF), that have significantly enhanced understanding of black carbon, **encourage** Arctic states to implement, as appropriate in their national circumstances, relevant recommendations for reducing emissions of black carbon, and **request** the Task Force and the AMAP expert group to continue their work by focusing on methane and tropospheric ozone, as well as further black carbon work where necessary and provide a report to the next Ministerial meeting in 2013,

**Decide** to establish a Short-Lived Climate Forcer Contaminants project steering group that will undertake circumpolar demonstration projects to reduce black carbon and other SLCF emissions,

**Note** with concern that mercury levels continue to rise and present risks to the health of the human population and the wildlife in parts of the Arctic as reported in the 2011 AMAP assessment on mercury in the Arctic, and **support** the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations under the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to conclude a global agreement on mercury that will significantly reduce global mercury use and emissions,

**Appreciate** actions in support of the implementation of the Stockholm Convention and the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and Heavy metals protocol of the UNECE Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP), and **encourage** countries to continue work to reduce emissions and sign, ratify and enhance the implementation of these Conventions and Protocols,

**Reiterate** the importance of the use of Arctic Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge and capacity-building initiatives in the planning and implementation of measures to adapt to climate change, **recognize** that climate change and

other negative factors have impacted the traditional livelihoods and food safety and security of Arctic Indigenous Peoples and other Arctic residents and communities,

**Confirm** the commitment of all Arctic states to work together and with other countries to implement the agreements reached in Cancun by the time of the climate talks this year in Durban, South Africa, and in this context **urge** all Parties to the UNFCCC to take urgent action to meet the long-term goal of holding the increase in global average temperature below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels,

**Decide** to establish an expert group on Arctic ecosystem-based management (EBM) for the Arctic environment to recommend further activities in this field for possible consideration by the SAOs before the end of the Swedish chairmanship,

**Direct** SAOs to review the need for an integrated assessment of multiple drivers of Arctic change as a tool for Indigenous Peoples, Arctic residents, governments and industry to prepare for the future, and, based on that review, to make recommendations for consideration by Arctic Council Deputy Ministers at their next meeting of a possible Arctic Change Assessment, including an Arctic Resilience report,

### ***Arctic marine environment***

**Decide** to establish a Task Force, reporting to the SAOs, to develop an international instrument on Arctic marine oil pollution preparedness and response, and **call for** the Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) and other relevant working groups to develop recommendations and/or best practices in the prevention of marine oil pollution; the preliminary or final results of both to be presented jointly at the next Ministerial meeting in 2013,

**Welcome** EPPR's report "Behavior of Oil and Other Hazardous Substances in Arctic Waters" (BoHaSa) and its contribution to knowledge of the behaviour of oil and other hazardous substances in the Arctic and **encourage** the Senior Arctic Officials to consider the conclusions and recommendations for future Arctic Council activities,

**Recognize** the important role of the Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic for safe transport and enhancing cooperation in assisting people in distress in the Arctic,

**Urge** the completion as soon as possible of work at the International Maritime Organization to develop a mandatory polar code for ships,

**Welcome** the progress achieved with the Arctic Ocean Review (AOR) project which considers existing global and regional measures that are relevant for the Arctic marine environment, and **look forward** to the delivery of the final report of the AOR project in 2013, in particular the options and opportunities for strengthening global and regional efforts for the conservation and sustainable use of the Arctic marine environment,

### ***Science and Monitoring***

**Recognize** the importance of the Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks (SAON) process as a major legacy of the International Polar Year for enhancing scientific observations and data-sharing and **accept** the recommendations of the Senior Arctic Officials as contained in the SAO report for the ongoing management of SAON,

**Recognize** that the International Polar Year (IPY) was the largest circumpolar program on scientific research to date, and **welcome** in 2012 the "Knowledge to Action Conference" in Montreal as the concluding event of IPY and the opportunity it presents to transform knowledge and scientific results into policies that will guide our future actions related to the environment and well-being of Arctic communities,

**Decide** to task the Senior Arctic Officials to consider maximizing the legacy of the IPY by supporting a proposal to arrange an International Polar Decade in light of the rapid climate change of the Arctic and the need for further coordinated research of the Arctic environment and its human dimension,

**Welcome** the contributions of the Arctic Biodiversity Trends 2010 Report toward understanding the adaptability of nature and living resources in the Arctic to global and regional stressors, and **await** the scientific assessment and policy recommendations from the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA) scheduled to be completed in 2013,

**Congratulate** the University of the Arctic (UArctic) on its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, **recognize** its contribution in developing specialized education aimed at building capacity and fostering traditional and scientific knowledge relevant to Indigenous Peoples, Arctic communities and policy-makers, and **encourage** continuous support for the UArctic,

### **OTHER ISSUES**

**Adopt** the recommendations in the SAO Report to Ministers and **instruct** SAOs to review and adjust, if needed, the mandates of the Arctic Council working groups and task forces and their work plans for 2011-2013,

**Reiterate** the need to finance circumpolar cooperation, as well as the importance of providing adequate funding to Permanent Participants to support their preparations for, and participation in, the Arctic Council, the working groups, task forces and Arctic Council projects,

**Note** the Arctic Environment Ministers Meeting in June 2010, and the Arctic Health Ministers meeting in February 2011, and **welcome** further high-level meetings,

**Welcome** continued cooperation with other relevant bodies,

**Thank** the Kingdom of Denmark for its Chairmanship of the Arctic Council during the period 2009-2011, and **welcome** the offer of the Kingdom of Sweden to chair the Arctic Council during the period 2011-2013 and to host the Eighth Ministerial meeting in 2013.