

Welcome speech //

Welcome:

- • Goodmorning and welcome to the first ever Model Arctic Council in Greenland.
- Thank you all for attending and showing an interest. I have really been looking forward to meeting you all.
- I always get excited when we try new things and when we work with students. It always provides me hope for the future of Greenland and the rest of the World.
- • Therefore I also have great expectations for today, but I'm sure that you all will meet these expectations.
- Diversity of the Model Council Greenland
- All of you come from different background and fields of study and interest.
- • This conference is indeed diverse in scope. We have students from Ilisimatusarfik, GUX and NI in Nuuk. We are very happy that two Greenlandic students representing AVALAK managed to come all the way from Denmark. Two students from ARTEK in Sisimiut will contribute with their unique knowledge of science and technology.
- • We also have international guests participating today. A student from the US, who studies at Yale and participated in the first ever Model Arctic Council in Fairbanks. We also have exchange students studying here at Ilisimatusarfik, from Sweden and the US.
- Welcome to all of you.

Why Model Arctic Council Greenland:

- I represent the Danish Parliament at the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region - also in short called the Arctic Committee. More than 20 years ago the Arctic Committee initiated the Arctic Council. The Arctic Council has grown in size since then and no one questions its importance to the Arctic and the rest of the World today.
- • In 2015 we hosted a vision seminar for Greenlandic students, in the Danish Parliament in Copenhagen. Through a Case Competition forty students competed and came up with solutions on how to boost the economic development in Greenland. Today we are here in Nuuk - my hometown - and will have a similar exercise. This time we have chosen the concept Model Arctic Council because I

think it is important that students gain insight into foreign policy and the work of the Arctic Council and get a rare chance to practice your debate skills on a high level.

- • Through the Arctic Council Greenland has a unique role, collaborating with major global powers like the US and Russia.
- Development and a self-sustaining economy doesn't only happen in Greenland. It also happens in interaction, trade and collaboration with international partners, including our Arctic neighbours.

The future leaders of the Arctic

- • All of you in this room are the future of the Arctic. The next generation of leaders in the region.
- You are the future leaders of the Arctic. The people of the Arctic should be defining the future of the Arctic. This should not just take place in Brussels, Copenhagen or New York. The future of the Arctic should also be defined right here in the Arctic by you, the people of the Arctic.
- Therefore I want to hear your voices to be heard, why we will exchange roles. You will speak and I will listen. You will act ministers, permanent participants and observers of the Arctic Council, while I will gain inspiration from all of you.
- As a spokesperson for children and youth my motto was that the youth shall be heard and taken seriously. This could be captured in the phrase: Nothing about us, without us. You can say the same with the Arctic. When Arctic is discussed, we shall be included. Nothing about us, without us.

Diplomatic work in the Arctic

- The realm with Greenland, Denmark and the Faroe Islands are in many ways a complicated matter. Three interests, but just one voice in the Arctic Council. This requires diplomatic skills, dialogue and a willingness to find common grounds.
- In many ways the work of the Arctic Council is a role model for diplomatic work in the rest of the World. The council seeks consensus and common solutions to common challenges.
- Why a focus on Sustainable Economic Development in the Arctic?

- • Finally, we have chosen Sustainable Economic Development as the main theme for the conference.
- • As the Arctic is opening up to more tourists, fishing, mining and foreign investments I find it important to talk about sustainability.
- How do we, the people living in the Arctic, want the economic development to look like in our region? How do we attract the right investments? How do we adapt to the changes caused by climate change?
- In my opinion the human dimension of the Arctic is the most important issue, but also the most challenging issue. How do we sustain and develop prosperity, work places and a decent living standards for the 4 million people living in the Arctic. How do we ensure human rights, including rights for indigenous peoples of the Arctic region? Do we proceed as we have always done or is time for a change?
- In many ways you can say, the Arctic is ever changing. The transition is happening as we speak. A more traditional way of living is now replaced with a more globalized, more modern way of living. Instead of learning to fish and hunt, you study books and we, as a society, becomes more dependent upon the knowledge you gain through your studies.
- You will have the chance to discuss all of these questions today and I am excited to hear your answers.
- • A special thank you to Ilisimatusarfik for the collaboration and for letting us use the university today.
- • We are very grateful that Polar Seafood have contributed and sponsored the food we will be having today.
- When I was recently at the White House with the rest of the Foreign Affairs Delegation from Denmark, I told them about today. I am very excited that the vice chair of Naalakkersuisut is here with us today and that the Foreign Affairs Minister of Denmark will be given a speech to you on video later on.
- • Thank you all for coming today and especially welcome to you Sara Olsvig.