



Barents Euro-Arctic Council

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Report of the Swedish Chairmanship of BEAC 2009-2011

Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, Sweden

Ladies and gentlemen,

When we launched this Council in Kirkenes back in 1993, we declared that Barents co-operation was, at its essence, part of the integration of Europe. Much as we have achieved since then – on the environment, civil security, industry & commerce, public health and living conditions in the North – the Barents Region is developing so fast, not least economically, that the demand for co-operation is greater today than ever.

Back then, we were on the edge of Europe. Today, the Barents Region is anything but peripheral. We find ourselves, almost to our own surprise, a hub of European trade and transport, energy extraction, mining and processing, forestry and fishery. Back then the question was, How can we best support this vulnerable region? While still valid, an even more important question today is, How can the region best support and contribute to the development of Europe?

To maximise the potential of this fast-changing part of the world, and ensure that change is sustainable, our responsibility as politicians to foster co-operation and strengthen networks across borders is greater and more urgent than ever. To be successful, the Barents Council must work in equal measure to promote economic Prosperity, environmental and social Sustainability, and our common Security.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the last two years, we have made good progress in advancing these three goals. We have continued to jointly tackle the most polluted areas in the region, the so called Barents Hot Spots. For the first time ever, we will soon be able to completely clean up two hot spots – deposits of pesticides in Karelia and of mercury in Murmansk – eliminating them for ever from our list of environmental emergencies in the Barents Region. The Swedish chairmanship has launched a 1,3 million Euro facility, the so-called Barents Window, to carry out projects that improve the energy efficiency of our industries, transport systems and housing infrastructure. Climate change is faster in the Arctic than in other parts of the worlds. We are therefore developing an Action Plan on Climate Change for the Barents Region. It will focus among other things on the so called Short Lived Climate Forcers, particles that speed up ice melting and thus contribute to the acceleration of climate change in the North. We have also begun a discussion on how to further develop sustainable practices in the exploitation of raw materials, a field where our region is already on the forefront globally.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Barents Region is unique in Europe in its material riches: metals and minerals, forestry, energy and fish. In addition, no less than 80% of the world's technology for underground mining is estimated to come from here.¹ Along with its most important asset of all, namely its highly skilled work force, these resources are the driving force behind the region's shift from the periphery to the centre of the European economy. As our ministers of competitiveness agreed when meeting for the first time ever in Umeå in May 2010, it is our responsibility to ensure that these riches contribute to the development of the Barents Region itself, by strengthening its position as a global centre of excellence in technology and know-how for sustainable raw material extraction, harvesting and processing.

¹ Denna uppskattning har gjorts av GTK, finska motsvarigheten till Statens geologiska undersökningar SGU.

In addition to metals and minerals, we also have huge forestry resources, and our countries continue to be at the forefront of sustainable forest management, applying some of the most environmentally friendly practices in the world. These resources will be crucial as we move towards a green economy and more efficient energy use. The Barents Forest Sector Task Force, chaired by the Russian Federation, is about to adopt an Action Plan to stimulate action that will increase the contribution of the forest sector as the Barents Region moves towards a green economy.

To underline our region's importance to the European supply of raw materials, we met in Brussels in March 2011 with EU lawmakers, business and media: we discussed our potential economic contribution to Europe, as well as the support we need from the rest of Europe to realise that potential. In this context, the membership on our Council of the European Commission is a factor, the value of which we have yet to fully realise.

Less than a month ago, our researchers, geological authorities and businesses met in Luleå to suggest ways of strengthening Research, Innovation and Education networks in extraction and processing. Because important as our natural resources are, it is ultimately our world leading technology and know-how in sustainable extraction, processing and marketing that will allow those resources to contribute to development in the Barents Region itself, and not only on distant markets. Our greatest advantage is our human capital. Our universities, companies and research institutes, our highly educated work force, as well as our world-leading technologies are the true source of our future prosperity, more than the riches in our soil or under the seabed. Our co-operation in this area is only just beginning, and I believe the incoming Norwegian chairmanship of the Barents Council has ambitious plans to develop it further.

Our common cultural heritage, and the age-old cross-border networks between the people living in the Barents Region, is a crucial source of our future development and prosperity. In 2011, the Joint Working Group on Culture adopted its third programme for cultural co-operation. Focusing not least on the cultural and creative industries as a source of growth, its aim is to promote cultural diversity and multicultural dialogue as a tool for social and economic development, and to create new cultural meeting places.

Meeting here in Kiruna, in the heart of the Saami area of Sápmi, we are reminded that the Barents Euro-Arctic Co-operation consists to an important degree of the cross-border ties between the indigenous peoples who live in this vast area. In the past two years, we have seen the launch of the first Barents Indigenous Peoples' Congress in Kirkenes, with a follow-up congress planned for 2012. We have also seen a broadening of the participation of the Nenets, Saami and Veps peoples in the meetings of the Committee of Senior Officials and the Barents Regional Committee. These developments will strengthen the voice of indigenous peoples in our co-operation and enhance the work of the Barents Council itself.

Ladies and gentlemen, a condition for the prosperity and sustainable development of the Barents Region is our common security: from the transnational threat of infectious disease, from natural and man-made disasters, and from environmental degradation. Human security has therefore been at the very core of our co-operation ever since its launch in 1993.

Last month, we successfully carried out the latest in our series of Barents Rescue civil protection exercises, that we began a decade ago, during the Swedish Chairmanship in 2001. Our agencies

trained together in Jokkmokk, Luleå and Boden, based on a scenario of massive flooding caused by a dam failure due to climate change, requiring assistance from the Barents countries. For the first time ever, we tested our ability to efficiently receive emergency aid from third countries. This capability will substantially enhance our joint emergency preparedness in the future.

Ladies and Gentlemen, our efforts to contain multi-resistant TBC and hold back the spread of HIV have intensified during the effective Finnish-Russian chairmanship of the Joint Working Group on Health and Related Social Issues. We must do our utmost to realise the goal of controlling the spread of TB in the Barents Region by 2013, as agreed in our 2003 tenth anniversary declaration. We understand that this issue will be one of several important tasks outlined in the new work programme for the Joint Working Group for the period 2012 to 2015.

Health and social issues is one area where the Barents Council has co-operated effectively with other regional formats in the North, such as the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing, the Arctic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers. These experiences should inspire us to explore new synergies between our different formats for regional co-operation.

We must also strengthen the capacity of regional actors to access regional and multilateral funding sources, something that becomes increasingly important in times of tightening national budgets. Sweden has therefore added a position as financing advisor at the International Barents Secretariat in Kirkenes. We hope that this addition to the excellent IBS team will help regional actors across the Barents Region help themselves to the many, but often bureaucratically daunting funding sources out there.

Ladies and Gentlemen, The Barents Council has worked hard to contribute to our future prosperity, advance the goal of environmental sustainability, and increase our mutual security since we began our joint efforts in Kirkenes back in 1993. It is with high expectations that I now hand over the chairmanship to Norway, which will steer us toward the twentieth anniversary of our co-operation. Our achievements so far give us confidence; the challenges and opportunities ahead inspire us, as we move toward what seems to be a bright future indeed for the Barents Region.

Comments to the Report of the Swedish Chairmanship and other questions

Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja, Finland

Mr. Chair,
Distinguished Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Barents cooperation is just about to reach its full maturity. Eighteen years of rapidly expanding activities in the region have demonstrated the viability of the Council. The Barents Euro-Arctic Council not only embraces people-to-people, community-to-community, or cross-border relations. The Barents region is the part of the Arctic, which is closest to us and the region has an increasingly global reach.

A comprehensive approach to challenges facing the Barents region is of key importance. Climate change, together with sustainable use of natural resources, biodiversity conservation, pollution prevention as well as building up energy efficiency and renewable energy resources, economic growth, enhanced transportation and logistics in the region are inherently intertwined. Our Council, with its working groups of local and regional level participation, represents remarkable knowledge and expertise, and has a potential for increasing impact in the coming years.

The main impact from the work of the Council stems from the working groups. Finland is co-chairing the Joint Working Group on Health and Related Social Issues, and will take over the Working Group on Environment. Simultaneously, we are looking forward to participate actively in other Barents working groups.

Indigenous peoples are natural partners in the Barents cooperation. They enrich the economic activities, while at the same time assuring the environmental protection in the region. The full participation of indigenous peoples in the activities of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council is of utmost importance.

To illustrate the interlinked challenges, let me briefly discuss three issues: the minerals sector; transport and logistics; and tourism.

The Barents region is rich not only on hydrocarbons – such as oil and gas – but also minerals and other non-energy raw materials. The global prospects for the mining sector are encouraging. The growing demand seems inevitable. And the most important precondition, good mineral potential, is there.

The Fennoscandian shield looks as the most promising area in Europe in this regard. Improvement in business environment and development of mining sector are high on the agenda of the Finnish Government. (An ambitious national Minerals Strategy was published a year ago and a new Mining Act has just come into force.)

Improving business opportunities in the North requires a joint strategic view with neighbouring countries on the development of transport routes in the Barents region. This is especially true regarding the mining sector. Intensified cooperation both in infrastructure and common rules is necessary due to increasing traffic.

From the Finnish point of view, the Barents link railway corridor from Northern Norway via Sweden and Finland to North-West Russia is essential for the economic development of the region. The Barents link will, undoubtedly, complement the Northern maritime routes. The Barents Euro-Arctic Transport Area (BEATA) and the Regional Working Group on Transport and Logistics are doing invaluable work in identifying and promoting projects that are crucial for an integrated and sustainable multimodal transport system as well as coordinating national and regional initiatives.

The environmentally sustainable and responsible use of natural resources in Finnish Lapland can hardly be overemphasized with a view to the promotion of tourism. With a concentration of high-class accommodation - and tens of thousands of beds – unprecedented elsewhere north of the Polar Circle, Finland sets the benchmark for onshore tourism in the Arctic. Consequently, we give our full support to the Public-Private Partnerships in the Barents tourism sector. The full potential in the

Barents tourism lies in the collaboration between onshore and offshore facilities. We have a keen interest to be a major partner in this field.

Talking about partnerships, the Northern Dimension policy of the EU, Russia, Norway and Iceland and the four established partnerships under this policy are featured in our Joint Communiqué, and with a good reason. One can hardly talk about the Barents region's transport and logistics issues without referring to the newest Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics. Other Northern Dimension partnerships relate to environment; public health and social well-being as well as to culture.

The growing interest in the Barents region is reflected also in the increasing number of operational institutions. We welcome a close interaction between the Regional Councils in the North, and other structures like the Northern Dimension and the parliamentary cooperation. Through a more effective division of labour between these institutions, the strength and the impact of each one of them can be better recognized. At the same time, the awareness of the Barents region in the wider European context can be heightened.

As a result of the climate change, the North-East Passage is opening as a global maritime transit corridor. While this is expected to benefit the Barents region, and contribute to region's socio-economic growth and well-being, increasing traffic brings about new challenges and risks. The Agreement on Cooperation within the Field of Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response is an indispensable instrument in this context. Finland will ratify the Agreement within the next few weeks.

The International Barents Secretariat was established under the previous Finnish Chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. Today, the Kirkenes IBS Secretariat is a small, but effective entity, providing indispensable services to the Council. Let me express our profound gratitude to the outgoing first Head of the Secretariat, Mr. Alexander Ignatiev, for his important contribution to the Council. Let me also give a warm welcome to the incoming new Head of the Secretariat, Mr. Ari Sirén.

In conclusion, let me thank the outgoing Chair, Sweden, for the work well done – particularly for drawing attention to many timely issues in the region, such as the eco-efficiency and the raw materials. And let me welcome the new Chair, Norway. It goes without saying that we pledge our full support and cooperation to Norway, keeping also in mind that we will follow Norway as the Chair in 2013 to take the Council to its third decade.

Warmest thanks also to the Region of Troms for chairing the Barents Regional Council. Finally, it is my pleasure here in Kiruna to welcome the Region of Norrbotten as the new Chair, and thank for the wonderful hospitality and programme provided to us.

Thank you.

Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre, Norway

Dear colleagues,

Thank you, Carl, and thank you for your excellent company on our interesting and impressive train ride from Narvik to Kiruna yesterday. If we carry on like this we will soon be able to write a book together: Travels in the Barents region.

Two years ago, our host today and I travelled by bus from the Norwegian Barents capital Kirkenes to Murmansk and the ministerial meeting hosted by our good colleague, Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov. It was a rewarding journey that gave us an opportunity to see both the beautiful nature and human activities in an area many Norwegians feel is the heart of the Barents region.

Once again this time we decided to travel overland to the BEAC Ministerial in Kiruna. The scenery is just as spectacular as between Kirkenes and Murmansk – and so are the human activities. The iron ore train is indeed impressive, and the town of Kiruna with the world's biggest underground mine is truly an attraction.

This is the Barents region in a nutshell: there are still vast areas of wilderness and unspoiled nature, but it is also a region that has extensive human activities and rich human resources. The people-to-people contact in the Barents region is unique, and the fact that people identify themselves as citizens of the Barents region is tangible proof of this.

The fact that the ministerial meeting is taking place here, deep down in the LKAB mine, is both symbolic and intentional.

As chairman, Sweden has been active in all the traditional areas of our cooperation. This is important, as these areas form the broad and solid foundation of our common efforts. Sweden has actively promoted work on energy efficiency - by establishing the Barents Window fund. We also appreciate the fact that a financial adviser has been seconded to the International Barents Secretariat. The IBS plays a key role in coordinating the Barents cooperation, and I commend the highly competent and dedicated staff on the work they do.

Let me also single out the importance of the Parliamentary dimension. The Fifth Parliamentary Barents Conference was successfully held in Luleå in May this year. The support of our legislators is invaluable. We also had very positive reports from the Barents Rescue Exercise in Norrbotten. And we look forward to close cooperation with Norrbotten over the next two years.

In my opinion, the most important result of the Swedish chairmanship is the mineral and mining initiative:

Sweden has managed to promote the Barents region and make the world aware that it is - and I quote - "a European region of strategic importance in the field of non-energy resources". The rich geological Fennoscandian Shield is more or less synonymous with the Barents region. The mineral sector will grow in importance, and may become one of the main driving forces for developing sustainable and prosperous societies in our region.

Mining in Kiruna started a century ago, but seldom has the future of the mining industry here looked brighter. Kiruna is a world centre of iron ore production, but it is also a city surrounded by

wilderness, by the free and open space of the High North. Above all Kiruna is a dynamic and vibrant centre in the Barents region. And the Barents region is attracting international attention due to its rich deposits of iron ore, minerals and metals. The High North is the leading region for supplying metals and minerals from primary sources to Europe and destinations further afield. But equally important to us is the fact that we have the opportunity to develop refining capacity in the region, as well as leading education and research institutions in the field of metals and minerals. We need to grasp this opportunity.

The mining sector is just starting up again in Norway, but it is developing rapidly. The Government is supporting a number of initiatives in this context. We look forward to cooperating in this sector with our more experienced Barents friends. I would like to briefly mention the plans to establish a competence centre for the sustainable exploration, extraction, processing and utilisation of mineral resources, with emphasis on the European High North Region. This is a long name, which has been shortened to SUSMIN – which stands for sustainable minerals. The research institute SINTEF in Norway is behind this initiative, and the idea is to develop a mineral competence centre by pooling the expertise of the Nordic Countries and Russia in this field. We hope this can become a mutually beneficial Barents project.

As a Norwegian, I like to ask this question: What would Kiruna have been without the port of Narvik? I do not have to give you the answer, it is obvious. Cross-border cooperation is necessary, and the extensive development of transport links and logistics is a prerequisite for industrial development. We need outlets, new links and transport routes, alternatives and substitutes. We need intermodality. We need to fight bottlenecks and coordinate national and regional initiatives.

For Norway the maritime aspect is always important. We now foresee that offshore activities, including increased maritime transport, will have great onshore repercussions in the Barents region. This is an opportunity for all Barents countries. In this respect it is vital that we develop the transport sector, including northern ports. Our traditional thinking in the region has been North–South, but we feel that the time has now come to look East–West.

During its chairmanship period, Norway will follow up the Swedish mineral initiative, and we will continue to work actively on developing transport solutions. These issues are inextricably linked.

The highest environmental standards must be applied in our activities. We must also always have issues such as corporate social responsibility and ethical standards on the agenda. This is important because of traditional land use and the rights of indigenous peoples to continue and further develop their way of life. It is important that we work together to find good and acceptable solutions to the region's challenges with the active participation of indigenous peoples. The Sami people lived in the Kiruna area for centuries before the mining even started. The name of the city is also Sami: Gironavara, which means the grouse mountain. It is a pleasure for me to give the floor to Mr Egil Olli, member of the Norwegian delegation and President of the Norwegian Sami Parliament. Thank you.

Egil Olli, President of the Norwegian Sami Parliament

Ministers, indigenous peoples and other participants here;

Thank you for according me a few minutes of the speaking time allotted to Norway's Minister of Foreign Affairs.

I greatly appreciate the Norway's Minister of Foreign Affairs invitation to the handover of the chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council that is taking place here today.

The Barents Region is rich in natural resources. It covers a vast geographical area and it is home to several indigenous peoples.

Joint Communiqué No. 25 mentions a variety of conditions that affect indigenous peoples. Special attention will be devoted to these conditions, as set out in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. I commend this approach.

On this occasion, I would also draw your attention to three specific UN efforts based on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and human rights:

- 1) UN Special Rapporteur James Anaya's report on the Sami in Finland, Sweden and Norway.
- 2) James Anaya's Annual Reports from 2010 and 2011 on corporate responsibility and the extraction of natural resources in indigenous areas.
- 3) UN Special Advisor John Ruggie has developed guiding principles on business and human rights.

It is crucial that the States implement the recommendations proposed by existing and future UN programmes.

I think that heeding such sage advice will contribute to good solutions for indigenous peoples, governments and businesses in processes relating to the production of natural resources in the Barents Region.

In conclusion, I want to underline yet again that indigenous representation in the Barents Cooperation must be developed further. The level of participation should be commensurate with indigenous peoples' shared ambitions regarding their own representation.

I wish Norway the very best of luck with the chairmanship and with the preparations for and implementation of the 20th anniversary of Barents Cooperation in 2013.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Russian Federation

At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Mr. Carl Bildt, and the authorities of Kiruna for the warm welcome and hospitality.

BEAC as a format of regional cooperation in Northern Europe is a unique organization. In essence, it continuously generates a unifying agenda – at both the municipal and macro-regional level.

The changes occurring in the region and the world not only create new challenges, but also open up additional opportunities and induce us to take more vigorous action to address the tasks facing us. Signed in September last year, the Russian-Norwegian Treaty on Maritime Delimitation and Cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean makes it possible, on a firm basis of international law and good will, to tap the significant potential for expanding mutually beneficial economic cooperation. The Treaty is an example of regulation of relations in the northern latitudes through striking the balance of interest.

The Joint Communiqué that we will approve today contains important provisions that set the algorithm for our joint action to combat the serious challenges facing the region. Among the most pressing concerns is climate change, which not only bears a global character but also has a salient regional, northern aspect because it affects the traditional way of life and activity of the indigenous peoples of the North. We welcome the development in the BEAC of an Action Plan on Climate Change in the Barents Region, and the active participation in it of members of the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples. On the Russian side the Kola Science Center RAN intends to make a significant contribution to the preparation of appropriate recommendations.

A useful new venue for an in-depth and lively exchange of views on the full range of regional issues in the North is the Arctic: Territory of Dialogue international forum, the second meeting of which took place on September 22-23 this year in Arkhangelsk.

Not accidentally, the debate centered on transport problems. The accelerated melting of the ice for the first time can give our region not only a geopolitical, but also new, geoeconomic tinge, not only in terms of facilitating access to natural resources. Prospects are opening up for using the Northern Sea Route (NSR) as the shortest water route between Northern Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. Experts estimate that by 2020 the volume of freight traffic on the Northern Sea Route could increase to 60-65 million tons per year.

Creating a comprehensive transportation system in the Arctic in order to ensure maritime shipping in the NSR waters is part of the Russian state policy in the region. There has been prepared a draft Federal Law regulating all aspects of navigation in the Northern Sea Route waters, which is now submitted for consideration by the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation.

Representatives from all BEAC member states could clearly see the possibilities of practical use of the NSR at the international conference organized by the Russian Security Council during the passage on board the Yamal nuclear icebreaker on August 6-11, 2011.

The global potential of the Northern Sea Route should be fully considered in the elaboration by the Barents Regional Council of a common strategy for development of transport networks in the region with an integrated multimodal system.

The resources of our region, determining its serious competitive advantages and heightened international interest in it, are not only iron ore, nickel or oil, not only bioresources. Of course, its reserves of raw materials are significant. But do not wait for their depletion to proceed to the next level. As one thinker has said, the Stone Age came to an end not for a lack of stones.

In our opinion, it's necessary to actively encourage the development of human potential – to support the establishment of high-tech industries and formation of innovation centers. Together, we are quite capable of making the Barents Euro-Arctic Region an advanced, well-developed part of Europe.

Designed to facilitate this is the concept of “growth clusters,” which is reflected in the Joint Communiqué. We call for closer synergy of border regions for the development of advanced products and technologies capable of actively attracting investments, generating scientific, technological and organizational innovations and spurring the economic and social development of human settlements, taking into account the interests of the indigenous peoples.

One of the important tasks that could change the face of the region for the better is seen in promoting the expansion of contacts between people. Russia and Norway have taken the first step by signing the Agreement on Facilitation of Mutual Travel for Border Residents. Up next is advancement towards liberalization in a regional context, and ideally we should be talking about abolishing the visa regime between all our countries and between Russia and the EU. The Communiqué we adopt today emphasizes the importance of this area of joint work. We hope that this thesis will be put into practice.

Of particular importance is the coordination of activities of the Northern regional councils, while maintaining the independence and identity of each of them. Helpful was the meeting of the chairmanships of the four Northern councils at the level of deputy foreign ministers in September 2009 in St. Petersburg. We support the initiative of Norway to hold a second meeting before the end of this year.

Dear colleagues,

The efforts made by the Swedish Chairmanship of the BEAC to deepen cooperation in the fields of environmental protection, energy efficiency and energy conservation, transition to a clean economy, the development of rescue services cooperation and adaptation to climate change deserve a positive assessment. We hope that the Norwegian Chairmanship will retain continuity in the activities of the Council in these and other areas of regional cooperation.

An anniversary will fall on Norway's chairmanship stint: 20 years of the BEAC, which we will be celebrating in January 2013. During this period the region's face has changed dramatically. Interaction evolved from sporadic delegation exchanges into a full-scale and many-sided partnership. We became closer to each other and began to act, matching our priorities with the objectives of regional development and combining efforts to achieve synergy. Today, our region clearly demonstrates the ability to convert political will into concrete actions to improve the welfare and social security of people living in Northern Europe. We need to keep going in this direction.

Thank you for your attention.

State Secretary Michael Zilmer-Johns, Denmark

Allow me, first of all, to thank the outgoing chair – Swedish foreign minister Bildt - for the excellent work Sweden has performed over the past two years in the Barents cooperation; and to thank the city of Kiruna and the LKAB mine for hosting us here in this very unique and beautiful place.

Denmark continues to support increased regional cooperation in the Barents region. Cooperation that has proven successful in strengthening stability and development. As a matter of fact it has proven more important than ever, because of the rapid climate changes we are experiencing. Changes primarily caused by global warming. Changes that will continue to alter the conditions for economic activity and growth, and that will have a strong impact on the environment and on peoples' living conditions.

The impact is enormous. It will lead to opportunities – improved access, extraction of natural resources and increased tourism – but also challenges, affecting traditional ways of life among indigenous peoples. It has also led to increased international attention. People beyond our borders look to the North. New players realize the potential of more accessible areas, and seek influence and cooperation with us who live here.

We have excellent structures to face those challenges. We have a number of regional councils and other structures in the North. We have worked to ensure synergies and the effective division of labour between these structures.

During the past two years Denmark held the chairmanship of the Arctic Council, leading up to the Ministerial Meeting in Nuuk in Greenland in May this year. Together with Norway and Sweden we worked according to a joint platform for our consecutive chairmanships 2006-2013. This platform has enabled us to add consistency to the work of the Council and ability to look beyond the individual chairmanships.

During our chairmanship of the Arctic Council we took important steps towards strengthening the Arctic Council and solving the observer question, and we are happy to see that the Swedish chairmanship intends to implement and follow up on these efforts. Sweden has presented a very ambitious agenda for its chairmanship, and we will support it the best we can.

Another important achievement in Nuuk was the signing of a legally binding agreement among the Arctic States for Search and Rescue operations in the Arctic.

This agreement could prove to be the first in a number of agreements gradually changing the Arctic Council from a more normative forum to a more binding regional cooperation. But our efforts must not stop here. Safety at sea must be strengthened. Protection of the environment and of the peoples of Arctic must be strengthened.

We support closer cooperation on information sharing between the Arctic Council and the Barents Council. Important new scientific knowledge on Arctic changes could be used in all relevant fields to the benefit of all peoples of this region. Several good examples have been mentioned here.

We welcome the agreement on Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response ratified among your governments here in the Barents region as a step in the same direction, as well as concrete results like the joint rescue exercise held recently in September.

We support the human dimension staying in focus in the Barents cooperation. Valuable contribution from the different indigenous peoples requires equal participation in all activities to better react to such changes affecting the daily lives of peoples in the region.

Thank you.

State Secretary Einar Gunnarsson, Iceland

Mr. Chairman, ministers, ladies and gentlemen.

Allow me to congratulate Sweden on a successful chairmanship of the Barents Euro Arctic Council - and thank you for the warm welcome here in Kiruna. My minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Össur Skarphéðinsson, is a devoted advocate of international cooperation in the North and therefore regrets not being able to be here today, due to scheduling conflicts.

Iceland supports the current emphasis within the Barents cooperation on strengthening the region's role within Europe. The Barents Area is rich in natural resources and it is important to ensure that resource utilization contributes to the long-term social and economic development of the region.

We must also seek ways to minimize the negative impact of climate change, increased traffic and intensified exploitation of resources on the region's environment and inhabitants. The Barents Euro Arctic Council is an important forum to address these issues.

Iceland actively works on facilitating research activities in the High North. Only two weeks ago we signed an agreement with Norway on academic research and cooperation on the High North. Educated societies that offer varied career opportunities and good communications is what we need to offer our young people. It is our belief that sharing experiences and mutually promoting the potential and interests of the North within Europe should be actively pursued.

Mr. Chairman.

Environmental matters and combating climate change are issues central importance when we discuss the Arctic. Sustainable development is now high on our agenda as the international community prepares for Rio+20, where we should all seek a strong outcome.

In this context let me also emphasise that we must all strive for an international agreement on climate change in Desember in Durban – however challenging that may be. Effects of climate change is most visible in the Arctic and we see new alarms come into play, the most recent one being the acidification of the oceans due to human emission of carbon. This is affecting the health of the marine environment and is especially true for the Arctic and its vicinity.

Another aspect of climate change is increased marine traffic and economic activities that again call for the development of a strong infrastructure and coordinated actions, particularly when disasters occur in our waters. The recently signed Agreement on Search and Rescue in the Arctic completed under the auspices of the Arctic Council is a key instrument for that purpose. One can also tell from the successful Barents Rescue exercise in September that the Barents Region itself is preparing well for unexpected accidents or disasters.

Let me also address another important issue – that is oil pollution and the marine environment. A major oil accident in the North could have devastating effects on nations that build their very existence on an unpolluted nature and food production. We are pleased that the preparation of an agreement on Arctic marine oil pollution preparedness and response by the Arctic Council has been initiated and that the first meeting of member states will convene next week.

Iceland welcomes the drafting of an Action Plan on Climate Change in the Barents Region and supports strongly efforts towards switching into renewable energy sources. The green economy can only be achieved if we pursue vigorously the utilization of green energy. Hence, we welcome the idea of developing green energy projects and offer our expertise, both in the area of hydropower and geothermal energy exploitation.

Last but not least, mainstreaming gender considerations in the work of the Barents Euro Arctic Council cooperation in general is important. Gender equality is less about doing things for women and more about women doing things themselves. Let us bring women to the forefront, not least the indigenous women of the Barents area.

Mr. Chairman.

I would like to express our support for the efforts to streamline the work and interaction of the various regional organizations and initiatives. Increasing the cooperation and synergy between the regional bodies should be mutually reinforcing and enhance the efficiency of their work. Iceland will host the third Senior Officials meeting of the Northern Dimension in Reykjavík in November where will emphasize these elements.

Finally, I welcome Norway as the incoming Chair and look forward to our cooperation under the Norwegian leadership. Furthermore, I want to welcome Mr. Sirén as the new Head of the International Barents Secretariat and thank Mr. Ignatieff for his excellent work.

Thank you.

Ambassador Janos Herman, European Commission

Dear Ministers, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to transmit to you the personal greetings of High Representative/Vice-President Cathy Ashton, who regrets that she can not be here today, as she has to speak in the European Parliament, if I can add, very much on the ground. However, she takes keen interest in this meeting and a member of her private office is here with us as part of the European Commission's delegation. I'd like to add, if I may, that just in the very last days High Representative Ashton has been pleased to see good progress on several issues related to our cooperation in the North. To single out only one, she has noted the progress concerning the Pilot Project aimed at establishing an EU Arctic Information Centre in Rovaniemi.

Let me convey the High Representative's thanks to Sweden, to Kiruna and to Foreign Minister Carl Bildt for hosting this event. We applaud the Swedish BEAC Chairmanship for having worked so efficiently on promoting environmentally sustainable economic development in the Barents region.

As you know, the European Union, in its emerging Arctic policy, develops a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to Arctic-related regional cooperation. We are convinced that all four Councils in the North have their place in this cooperation, whereby the Northern Dimension plays a pivotal role in avoiding overlaps and providing synergy between them.

It is relevant to note that the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (focusing on a crucial area of the European Arctic) comprises all the European Members of the Arctic Council as well as the European

Commission. No wonder that the EU sees the Barents Euro-Arctic Council as a highly relevant framework for its present and future contribution to Arctic cooperation. Therefore we are interested in getting even more added value from BEAC, building on its most valuable distinctive features. I agree with Minister Bildt that the potential of EU contribution still remains to be realized fully in the future.

What could be the main areas for this? I'd like to mention five of them, although this list is far from being exhaustive.

First, the capacity to promote inter-regional cooperation involving sub-state and non-state actors is one of the most valuable features of the Barents cooperation. Smooth and successful cooperation between regions is the most important output of the BEAC. The EU will continue supporting this, primarily by facilitating cross-border cooperation, people-to-people contacts through EU programmes such as Kolarctic and Karelia-Russia.

Second, indigenous issues remain an integral part of the European Union's human rights policy, consistently mainstreamed in EU development cooperation strategies. Consequently, the European Commission provides direct support to civil society organisations working on indigenous issues. The European Union is developing a broad dialogue with Arctic indigenous peoples, in particular with the three peoples present in the Barents cooperation.

Thirdly, not only for being in the LKAB mine, let me highlight that one of the main goals of the EU's Raw Materials Initiative (under public discussion this year) is to foster the sustainable supply of raw materials from European sources. The Raw Materials seminar organized by Sweden in Brussels in March 2011 with the participation of Commissioner Tajani is a valuable contribution to this work. The Barents region has not only significant mineral resources but also a high potential for vertical integration, combining the use of energy and mineral resources.

For that we need better regional infrastructure, and this is my point number four. The EU will continue supporting the development of transport in the region, in particular the East-West connection, involving several transport corridors. The Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics provides an excellent framework for this. Let me say that it could be interesting to see whether BEAC could be more engaged in promoting cooperation in maritime issues too.

Last but not least, the protection of the environment is an overarching objective. Allow me only to recall the ongoing significant EU contribution to research and monitoring, or to increasing the safety of hydrocarbon exploitation and navigation in the region. We have to build on the ground-breaking progress achieved in the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership.

Finally, let me congratulate the outgoing Swedish BEAC Chairmanship for its valuable work, most notably its splendid effort to put the Barents Region higher up on the EU institutions' agenda. Allow me to wish a lot of success to the Norwegian incoming BEAC Chairmanship. The long-standing strong engagement of Norway in Barents cooperation is a guarantee for that.

In the same tone, I thank the county of Troms for its chairmanship of the Barents Regional Council and welcome the incoming chair of Norbotten County. We look forward to a fruitful cooperation with you. We are grateful to Mr Alexander Ignatiev for the good job done and greet Mr Ari Siren at the helm of the IBS. Thank you for your attention

Chair of the County Government Pia Svensgaard, Troms County Council

Dear Ministers, colleagues and Barents friends,

It is a great pleasure for me to be present here in Kiruna and once more get together with good friends and colleagues to promote cooperation and growth in our region.

Troms County Council has chaired the Barents Regional Council for a period of two years, and when looking back at our joint achievements, I am both content and pleased.

The work of the Barents Regional Council is extensive and mentioned in detail in the Joint Statement adopted by the Regional Council yesterday. I hope this statement can contribute to the Barents cooperation on national level as well. I would like to use this opportunity today to highlight some key areas of the Barents cooperation during this two-year-period.

A major priority during our programming period has been to strengthen the structures of political cooperation in the Barents region, our objective being to create agreement and joint efforts as a solid base for promoting the regional level as an important stakeholder in achieving an overall and sustainable development in the Barents region.

One important element in this regard is the personal commitment of each of us, and the regular contact between the stakeholders in the Barents Region. I have prioritized to be present at as many events and in as many Barents counties as possible. During these two years I have attended meetings in all counties of the Barents Region.

The increasing national and international focus on our region is, as we all know, due to the Barents Region's natural resources and future opportunities. From a regional perspective, it is important that the exploitation of our resources brings added value to the region and contributes to sustainable growth and activity in our counties. Furthermore, the regional level should take an active role and be actively involved in the political processes, shaping the future development of the Barents Region.

The Barents Region should not only be a net supplier of raw materials. Instead, incentives should be provided to promote regional industrial development and the local refining of raw materials. By connecting such efforts to the regions' high competence and research institutions and innovation environments, the region will present itself as an attractive region with interesting and solid employment opportunities – which is important in order to prevent a negative demographic development.

During my time as chair of the Barents Regional Council I have had a strong focus on local processing of raw materials. For that reason I warmly welcome the initiative taken by Jonas Gahr Støre, Norway's Minister of Foreign Affairs, to promote local processing and product development, linking natural gas and minerals as a possible solution to generate an industrial development in the North.

Adequate infrastructure and efficient networks for transport and logistics are of utmost importance for sustainable regional development. The development of the High North demands new internal and external transport solutions. At the same time, the agreement between Norway and Russia on the maritime delimitation line in the Barents Sea and increased shipping-traffic through the Northern Sea Route opens up new opportunities for growth. It is important to implement the necessary measures

to develop a well-functioning transport infrastructure which can contribute positively to the whole Barents Region, functioning as a transport and logistical bridge between Europe and the Arctic.

Transport infrastructure has from the beginning of our chairmanship been high on the agenda of the Barents Regional Council. In a statement of June 2010 we spoke up for a common Barents transport strategy.

This was based on the wish to contribute to the coordination of the different national transport strategies to ensure that the Region's transport challenges are taken into account.

The Barents Regional Council has, during this period promoted the Region's interests and has managed to increase the understanding of the Barents Region within the EU. Dialogue and cooperation are established with several stakeholders, among them the EU Commission and other networks and institutions like the EU-Arctic Forum, the network of the Northern Sparsely Populated Areas, the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions and the Northern Dimension Partnerships. The North-Norway European Office has taken an active part in this work in order to strengthen the cooperation between the Barents region and the EU.

I am very pleased with the statement which was given by the Barents Regional Council to the European Parliament on their High North Report. The statement aroused interest among EU parliamentarians and resulted in an invitation to hold a seminar in the European Parliament. The seminar focused on regional interests as regard to indigenous people, transport and logistics, fisheries and challenges concerning raw materials.

We note with interest the resolution submitted by the European Parliament in September to the EU strategy on raw materials, presented by the EU Commission. In this resolution the European Parliament asks the Commission to include a comprehensive approach to improving transport infrastructure linking resource-rich areas to the industrial areas. This resolution is in accordance with the message we have promoted during this programming period, and I allow myself to encourage the different national and regional structures of the Barents cooperation to follow up this initiative.

Before rounding off, I would like to highlight the good cooperation between the Barents Regional Council and the Swedish national chairmanship. I would also like to mention the work of the International Barents Secretariat and the way they have contributed to the work and the coordination of program activities in a highly professional manner

Norrbotten has now assumed the leadership of the regional Barents co-operation, and I feel certain that they will continue the work already in progress and promote the regional interests in an overall perspective. I look forward to a good and fruitful cooperation with both the new regional chairmanship and the Norwegian national chairmanship.

I would like to thank all enthusiastic Barents friends, who have actively contributed to our work. Warm thanks to the International Barents Secretariat which is headed by Alexander Ignatiev. His secretariat has contributed with expertise in a highly professional and satisfactory manner.

Thank you for your attention!

County Governor Per-Ola Eriksson, County Administrative Board of Norrbotten

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Distinguished guests and dear colleagues,

It is first and foremost an honour for me to greet you all here in Kiruna, Sweden's principal mining town but also the space town above the Arctic Circle. Yesterday you visited the Esrange space centre, the largest civil ground station for satellites in the world and Europe's largest overland test range for aerospace vehicles. And today we are meeting 540 meters under the ground, just a few hundred meters above the present iron ore production level.

Our program so far has been all about contrasts. This is also true for the very Barents cooperation. Our region is full of contrasts. Midnight sun and polar night. Mountain chains and archipelagos. Sparsely populated areas and large industrial centres. Unique yet fragile environment. We do represent different countries, regions and cultures, we speak different languages. Yet we all identify ourselves with the Barents region, with our Barents.

Almost twenty years ago, we agreed that our strength lies in bringing together our resources, energy and knowledge in order to jointly address common challenges and to ensure stable and prosperous development of our region in the future. This firm belief is as valid today as it has been back in 1993.

It is based on this belief and on our shared values that we are taking over the lead in the Barents regional cooperation for the coming two years. We are very pleased indeed to see a lot of similarities in analyses and approaches expressed by our Norwegian partners who are taking over the chairmanship in Barents Euro-Arctic Council. Needless to say, we are looking forward to a close cooperation with the Norwegian national chairmanship.

As the incoming chair of the Barents regional council, we do have the privilege to suggest the framework for our cooperation for the nearest future. Let me now lead you very briefly through the main issues that we suggest to focus on during our chairmanship.

We do see one of our main tasks in promoting the strategic role that the Barents region, with its unique reserves of minerals and natural resources, could play in response to growing international needs in terms of raw materials. In this regard, it is quite symbolic indeed that we have gathered today in the very heart of the Swedish mining industry.

At the same time, we will advocate that investments are directed into our mining and refinement sectors, in the development of the railway and transport corridors as well as aviation connections, in education and research. In short, through further development of the mining and refinement industries and with the help of the advanced research and new technologies, we would contribute to a sustainable and durable economic and social development in Barents.

We should thus strive to strengthen the image of the Barents region on the European arena, making it all more visible and valuable for our strategic partners in Europe.

The Barents region is not only extremely rich in terms of natural resources. Our strength also lies with the people of the region, their knowledge, experience and rich historical and cultural heritage.

Our goal and our duty is to make sure that the younger generation fully realises the unique possibilities that the region may offer in terms of education, career and secure future. We would like our young specialists to remain in the region, but also to make the latter more attractive to the youth in general. It should become prestigious to come to live and work in the High North. This is undoubtedly a long-term process and an ongoing challenge. But what we can start implementing already today, is to invite the youth to play a more active role in all Barents activities.

The ongoing climate change is a major concern for the whole Barents region. We should continue to coordinate our action to prevent and minimize its negative effects on the economy, biodiversity, human health as well as traditional living cycles of indigenous peoples. Access to clean drinking water all over Barents is yet another challenge, and joint projects in this field are going to get our full support.

Continued cross-border economic cooperation remains important too, and we should focus on solving the practical problems faced by individual entrepreneurs and companies that want to extend their businesses across the borders within the Barents region.

We should continue to support joint initiatives within the sphere of culture and creative industries as to increase the impact of culture in the Barents region. It is also important to contribute to the development of the cultural tourism, especially aimed at the young people. All these efforts will, in the long run, also contribute to increasing the image of the Barents region on the international arena.

Finally, we are looking forward to a broader cooperation with the representatives of the region's indigenous peoples in all areas of common concern.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear Barents friends,

The County of Norrbotten is taking over the chairmanship in a well established and well functioning mechanism of interregional cooperation with almost twenty years of experience. Our main task for the two coming years is to ensure that the good level of cooperation is maintained and that the constructive dialogue between the national and the regional levels of cooperation continues.

In terms of conclusion, let me wholeheartedly thank the Troms regional chairmanship and the national chairmanship of Sweden for their dedication and valuable input in strengthening the Barents cooperation, in the further development of our region and in ensuring the well-being for us all.

Thank you very much for your attention.

**Karin Åström, Chair of the Swedish Delegation to the Nordic Council,
Member of Swedish Parliament**

Dear participants and guests of this Session of the Barents Council,

It is an honour and indeed a pleasure for me to have this opportunity to share a few reflections with you, based on a slightly different perspective than that of the previous speakers.

By now, it is almost a tradition that a Parliamentary Conference is organized by the national Parliament of the state holding the Presidency of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. These conferences bring together members of national and regional parliaments, but also relevant governmental and regional agencies, as well as NGO:s, from all parts of the Barents area. I am convinced that this close relationship between all actors and stakeholders is an essential aspect of the model we use for the Barents co-operation.

The fifth Parliamentary Barents Conference, which the Swedish parliament had the pleasure of hosting in May this year, focused on environmentally sustainable growth, on commerce and on development of the infrastructure. There is an awareness, both in our countries and the rest of the world, that there are vast natural resources in the Barents area, and that there is a growing potential for exploiting them. This region may soon become one of the most economically important world-wide. Obviously, this brings opportunities, but it will also sharpen the challenges we meet, and even bring new ones.

Sustainability means that we need to use the best technologies available, and probably develop new ones, adapted to the special conditions of the Barents region. For sure, this is another opportunity: The demand for efficient, low-energy and environmentally sound technologies will increase all over the world.

Clearly, the increased economic activity will put additional strain on a transport system that is underdeveloped even in relation to today's demands. In particular, the east-west connections need to be improved – not only the Northern sea route, which is already opening up, but also connections by air, railway and roads. We must also ensure efficient and reliable IT communications. This calls for close co-ordination between the states and regions concerned.

These conclusions of this year's Parliamentary Conference relate to the main priority of the Swedish Presidency of the Barents Council: To meet the challenges of economic growth, climate change and sustainable use of natural resources. But in my view, this can not be the full picture. The previous, fourth, Parliamentary Conference, which was held two years ago in Syktyvkar, Russia, had extensive discussions on matters such as health care, social welfare, culture and education. Economic development has to go hand in hand with environmental concerns, social progress and respect for cultural values. We need to assure sustainability in the broadest sense.

You will find much food for thought in our Conference resolutions, so I will not go into details here. However, there is a general point I wish to make: It is true that there are natural resources in this region. But do not forget that there is also a dynamic industry and trade, highly qualified universities and a rich cultural life. Above all, there are creative persons who are familiar with the special conditions prevailing in the region. Of course, the indigenous peoples are part of all this. It is crucial that the population living in this region does not only benefit from the Barents co-operation. They must also have a say in determining the region's needs and in deciding the actions taken to meet them.

At the same time we need to make people in our capitals – parliaments and governments – aware that the Barents co-operation between neighbouring states is a fundamental national interest.

I am convinced that scrutiny and debate in parliaments is essential for popular support of the Barents co-operation, not only in the region itself, but as an important element in our national politics and our international relations. I would like to encourage all governments represented here to submit reports to Parliaments, providing a basis for debate and constructive conclusions. In the absence of such a report I myself will bring attention to Barents issues and the co-operation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in the debate we shall have on Nordic co-operation in the Swedish Parliament in about two weeks. At the same time I will draw attention to the co-operation in other, partly over-lapping, structures, and to the need for co-ordination among them.

The Parliamentary conferences I have mentioned have demonstrated that there is wide support for using the structures provided by the Barents Cooperation on national and regional levels, in order to develop common assets and resources, and to address common challenges in the region. To a very large extent we all share the aims and ambitions of the Barents Cooperation. We parliamentarians therefore look forward to co-ordinated initiatives from our governments to promote these aims. We stand ready to support such measures, including by allocating the necessary resources. Generally, while Barents co-operation is not yet perfect, the results achieved in a remarkably short time – 18 years – makes it a model for international relations which we can proudly present to other regions of the world.

Lars-Anders Baer, Chairman of Working Group on Indigenous Peoples

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen

Allow me first of all to thank the member states of the Barents Council for providing the indigenous peoples' representatives through the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples (WGIP) the opportunity to address the Barents Euro-Arctic Council 13th session 2011 of the role, views and the aspirations of the indigenous peoples in the Barents region. It is also a great pleasure to wish you all very welcome to Sámiland and to the underground of the Sámi traditional territory. This mine is the oldest extractive industry project in the Barents region that is still in full swing. The project as such can and should be used as an example of both best and worst practice in relation with indigenous peoples.

In the contemporary international political discourse concerning the rights of indigenous peoples a paradigm shift has taken place in the beginning of the 21 century. The establishment of the Barents co-operation almost 20 years ago is one dimension of this paradigm shift. A more recent example of this paradigm shift is the newly revised Swedish constitution where the Sámi people are recognized as a distinct "people".

When the UN General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples in September 13th 2007, the Nordic states fully supported the adoption. Only four states voted against, among them Arctic states as USA and Canada. Russia abstained. In recent years these four states have changes their position and now fully support the principles in the declaration. Although Russia abstained the Russian government has been working in the spirit of the declaration, especially highly sensitive questions concerning the rights of indigenous peoples in relation to extractive industry. We of course welcome an elaboration of the Russian positions vis-à-vis the UN Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples

The establishment of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council where the indigenous peoples were invited to participate in an innovative way is an important milestone in the acceptance and restoration of the rights of the indigenous peoples.

Since the Barents Euro-Arctic Council 12th session we can see a new trend where indigenous peoples both are given space and economical possibilities to co-operate cross-border in the framework of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) and the Barents Regional Council (BRC).

The First Barents Indigenous Peoples' Congress was held in Kirkenes on February 4th 2010. Altogether 60 delegates, representing the Nenets, the Veps and the Sámi peoples, participated. The Congress agreed on a resolution regarding the role of the indigenous peoples within the formal structure of the Barents cooperation.

The resolution states among others that

By virtue of the rights to self-determination, the Nenets, the Sámi and Vepsian peoples have the rights to represent themselves in international affairs, which include participatory rights in international bodies that address issues of relevance to them.

At the very least, this participatory right amounts to the level of participation indigenous peoples enjoy as Permanent Participants to the Arctic Council.

the Nenets, Sámi and Vepsian peoples' participation in the BEAC and the BRC must first and foremost be achieved by being granted status as Permanent Participants in BEAC and BRC in the same way as in the Arctic Council.

If BEAC and BRC will embrace this initiative and extend the indigenous participation as Permanent Participants this will be a major step to enhance full indigenous participation in these international bodies.

This initiative has so far received positive response from the concerned stakeholders and WGIP is now invited to participate in the BEAC senior officials meetings.

The 2nd Barents Indigenous Peoples' congress will be held in Kirkenes on 10th of February 2012. I will take the opportunity to invite you to attend the Congress, and also to the International Conference on industrial activities and environmental Challenges in the Barents Region, which will be held back to back, February the 9th, 2012 also in Kirkenes.

Allow me also to express our gratitude for the financial contributions from Sweden and Norway the last two years. Due to this, indigenous peoples in the region have been able to participate in various working groups, and in the Barents Regional Council meetings. The view and the contributions of indigenous peoples' representatives has, as we understand, been an added value to the co-operation. The WGIP looks forward to take an even more active part in future co-operation.

In this context I will especially mention the Indigee –the Indigenous Entrepreneurship project. This project is an excellent example of co-operation between indigenous entrepreneurs and their businesses and their communities in the Barents region. More than 70 indigenous entrepreneurs from four countries have gathered and shared experiences and learned from each other. Already now we can see good results from the Indigee initiative and we foresee a continuation of this project.

Allow me to make a critical remark in the context of recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples. Unfortunately, as we all know, there is often a gap between such universal norms and the reality which indigenous peoples are faced with on the ground. This is often referred to as “the implementation gap” – between ideals and the reality. The implementation gap is often a consequence of the fact that some governments and national parliaments do not possess the necessary political will to effectively implement their international obligations towards indigenous peoples. The Barents co-operation has an important role to bridge this gap.

In closing I want to express that the indigenous peoples in the Barents region have of course the same high expectations on the incoming Norwegian chairmanship as on the outgoing Swedish chairmanship. We welcome the initiative from the Norwegian chairmanship to arrange a meeting in Moscow about the indigenous people’s issues in partnership with the Russian government and the indigenous peoples, December 16th this year. This will be, so to speak, an excellent kick off in matters related to indigenous peoples by the incoming the Norwegian Chairmanship of the Barents Council.

Thank you

Alexander Ignatiev, Head of International Barents Secretariat

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Colleagues and Friends,

The task of the International Barents Secretariat is to facilitate further development of cooperation in the Region. Our work has been light and pleasant. Around us we saw aspiration to make the Barents cooperation more dynamic, more close to the needs of the states, regions, and people. Our work has been a part of these common efforts.

First of all I mean favorable political background. One of its most visible manifestation is the Norwegian-Russian Treaty on maritime delimitation and cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean.

But not only politics, even nature helped us. It’s not a joke. Due to the climate change our Region has become more accessible and open for the international community, for new big projects. The Barents Region has become an integral part of the all continental cooperation.

The Barents Council is also developing. Being a political Forum as it was established about 20 years ago, it has been getting features of an international organization, which has already initiated conclusion of the two legally binding intergovernmental agreements – on rescue cooperation and on the establishment of our Secretariat.

Today the Barents Council, and first of all its 16 working groups, cover all the fields of practical cooperation in the Region. The International Barents Secretariat is the only one permanent body of the Council, and it organizes this work, accumulates information, and works out recommendations.

The task number one of the Secretariat is to support priorities and practical activities of both national and regional chairmanships. Sweden, that will hand over the chairman’s gavel to Norway today, has announced an eco-efficient economy as its primary target. It means economic growth combined with sustainable use of natural resources, energy efficiency and due note of the climate change. In fact

the Barents Council has been working on this target from the moment of its establishment and will be working in the future.

Striking changes we can see in the field of transport. The Barents region has become a connecting link between East and West, between America, Europe and Asia. First of all I mean the Northern Sea Route. According to some estimations cargo transport via the NSR would increase 60 times by 2020. Under work are big projects aimed at the development of new transcontinental rail way routes, new aeronautical lines. One of our working groups commenced development of a Barents transport strategy.

From many sided activities in the field of environment I would like to mention work done by our Secretariat in order to develop an Action Plan on the climate change in the Barents Region. An accent will be done on concrete recommendations with linkage to similar work in the Arctic Council.

Another direction – exclusion of so called environmental hot spots or in other words - contaminants. We have already established new organizational structures, that would be dealing with this problem. The IBS has been creating an electronic Information System that would make possible to follow the process of exclusion of hot spots in dynamic.

Today the North, Arctic has become more accessible not only for business but also for people. They bring here their own traditions, mentality, culture. This is a new challenge for the traditional way of living of the indigenous peoples. In the Barents Council we have taken some measures to have the voice of these people to be heard. Now not only representatives of the Working Group of indigenous peoples, but also the peoples themselves – Sami, Veps, Nenets can participate into all Barents structures. Still the question of participation of other Barents indigenous peoples – namely Karelians and Komi – is open.

Our cooperation is not isolated. The Barents Council keeping its unique character joins its efforts with the Partnerships of the Northern Dimension. As a result we can get more solid material basis for our programs and projects. And of course we are strengthening traditional ties with other regional councils in the North. For example recently together with the NCM we have launched the third phase of the project to study climate change impact on the Region.

We have a lot of new plans, ideas. But very often the obstacle for their implementation is lack of financial resources. That's why we welcomed initiative of Sweden to second to the Secretariat a new employee, whose task is to look for resources from national and international institutions to finance cooperation in the Region.

It seems to us that the International Barents Secretariat is on the eve of a new stage in its development. Its primary tasks and forms of activity are more or less clear. The time has come to make more accents on analytical side of the work, to analyze bottle necks of cooperation and prepare suggestions for their elimination. With these words Russia will hand over the post of the Head of the Secretariat to Finland in the near future and wish success in these endeavors.

Statement of the incoming Norwegian Chairmanship of BEAC

Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre, Norway

Dear colleagues, Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

We look forward to chairing the work of BEAC for the next two years. I would go as far as to say that BEAC is one of the most successful and dynamic regional cooperation organisations in the world.

When the Kirkenes declaration was signed on 11 January 1993, the pledge we made was to “provide impetus to existing cooperation and consider new initiatives and proposals”. Mission accomplished? Well, both yes and no. The Barents region today and the areas that were envisaged to make up the future Barents region back in 1993 are worlds apart. A quiet revolution has led to a change of atmosphere in our region. Today the general picture is one of trust and confidence, friendship and close contacts; in short, normal and normalised relations. This has been achieved in less than 20 years.

We must build on this. Our chairmanship will be characterised by continuity and adaptation. The cooperation must continue to be a major instrument for building an area of stability, confidence and sustainable development in Northern Europe.

I would like to say a few words about the Troms County Council chairmanship of the Barents Regional Council, which has been particularly active. Cooperation with all regional entities has been strengthened, important processes and issues such as business development, infrastructure and transport, environment and culture have been addressed. Cooperation agreements between counties have contributed greatly to the overall aims of BEAC. Growing cooperation with EU bodies is also an asset, as is the growing cooperation between regional legislators. We would like to thank Pia Svendsgaard and her staff at Troms County Council for their assiduous work. We now look forward to fruitful cooperation with the new chair of the BRC, Norrbotten. It is impossible to imagine the Barents cooperation without its regional pillar.

During our chairmanship we will highlight and promote the Barents region as a resource-rich region in Europe.

The Barents region is immensely rich in natural resources: oil and gas, fish and seafood, forests, minerals, metals. But not least, the region is rich in human resources.

The Barents region has a highly skilled labour force, a range of universities and other centres of learning, research and scientific centres and industrial clusters - boasting world-leading technology for the safe environmental management of natural resources in Arctic conditions. And it is by far the most populated area in the whole Arctic region.

The region provides raw materials to European and distant markets, but the rich resources are also processed in the region. We want to foster environmentally-friendly industrial development in the region.

The indigenous peoples - with their invaluable traditional knowledge - must play an active role in the modern development of the Barents region. We want to further support the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples and strengthen its cooperation with other actors.

Much has been achieved since the Barents cooperation was established in 1993. The greatest achievement is an overall normalisation of human relations, people-to-people contact. Local and regional cross-border activities have provided a form of “soft security” and laid the foundation for mutual trust and confidence between good neighbours. But there are still challenges. We must be able to respond adequately and adapt to these new challenges and new realities.

We will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the BEAC in Kirkenes in 2013. This will be an occasion to look back and take stock, but first and foremost to look ahead at the challenges and opportunities presenting themselves in the next 20 years. A new Kirkenes Declaration will be called for, a Kirkenes II, where we define future strategic priorities for the Barents cooperation.

The Norwegian chairmanship will work for continuity and adaptability, with three main priorities:

1. Sustainable economic and industrial development

International development, climate change and the global demand for resources have all contributed to the ever-growing attention directed towards the High North and the Barents Region. The extraction of metals and minerals may become an even more important activity in the region, including the regional processing of raw materials. However, for this to occur there must be a major concerted effort to develop transport links and logistics. International cooperation in this field is crucial. The Barents cooperation can play a key role in this work.

2. Environmentally safe and climate friendly development based on knowledge

Our aim is to implement the highest environmental standards using the scientific potential of the region as well as international research and cooperation in this field. Corporate social responsibility and ethical standards must be high on the agenda. Continued support will be given to efforts in the areas of renewable energy and energy efficiency, as well as to the activities aimed at eliminating the environmental “Hot Spots”. Cross-sector activities are important. Norway will arrange a “Vadsø II”-conference on climate change. The work on an action plan for climate change in the Barents region is a high priority.

3. The human dimension

Activities and contacts between ordinary citizens is the true foundation of the Barents cooperation. The broad cultural cooperation is at its core. We will also continue to encourage and support other important cooperation areas such as health and social issues, sports, youth, education, science and research, tourism, and emergency and rescue cooperation. Good networks and close contacts across borders and between regions are necessary for building a regional identity.

Interaction between the national and regional levels is a particular feature of the Barents cooperation. As chair of the Council, Norway intends to cooperate closely with the chair of the Barents Regional Council (BRC), Norrbotten. The working groups are the practical instruments of our cooperation. We will make every effort to support and stimulate their work. The International Barents Secretariat (IBS) in Kirkenes is a valuable centre for coordinating activities in the Barents region. For the Norwegian Chairmanship, the Norwegian Barents Secretariat in Kirkenes is also an important partner and implementing party for practical project cooperation. Enhanced cross-border cooperation is an integral part of the general Barents cooperation. Finally, it is our aim to coordinate

the work in the BEAC with other regional organisations and bodies, the Arctic Council, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Northern Dimension.

We intend to play an active role as chair of BEAC. We will organise several seminars, conferences and political meetings on important issues. And we aim to mark the 20th anniversary of the Kirkenes Declaration with a high level meeting in Kirkenes in 2013. We encourage the active participation of all Barents actors on all levels. Together we can and will move forward, and make the Barents cooperation ever more visible and relevant.

Speeches at the Session in original languages

Egil Olli, President of the Norwegian Sami Parliament

Ministarat, álgoálbmot ja earát dás;

Mun giittán go mun lean ožžon moadde minuhta Norgga olgoriikaministara sáhkavuorroáiggis.

Mun anán dan go Norgga olgoriikaministtar lea bovden mu Barents-ráđi ovdagotti badjelii váldimii odne hui alla árvvus.

Barentsguovllus leat ollu rikkis luondduresurssat. Geográfalaš guovlu lea oalle viiddis.

Barentsguovllus ássat álgoálbmogat

Oktasaš julggaštusas nummir 25:as namuhuvvojit mánggalágan bealit mat gusket álgoálbmogiidda. Dáid beliide galgá addojuvvot erenoamáš fuomášupmi dávistettiin ON álgoálbmotjulggaštussii. Mun rámiidan dán.

Dasto áiggun mun čujuhit ON bargui ON álgoálbmotjulggaštusa ja olmmošvuoigatvuođaid vuođul:

- ON erenoamášdieđiheadji James Anaya raporta mii guoská sámiide Suomas, Ruotas ja Norggas.

- Dasto James Anaya jahkásaš raporttat 2010 ja 2011 mat gusket fitnodagaid ovddasvástádussii luondduriggodagaid roggama oktavuodas álgoálbmotguovlluin.

- ON erenoamášráđđeaddi John Ruggie lea ovddidan bagadeaddji prinsihpaid dasa movt fitnodagat galget čuovvut olmmošvuoigatvuođaid.

Deačalaš lea ahte stáhtat guldalit ON barggu dálá ja boahteáiggi rávvagiid.

Mun jáhkán ahte dat go guldalit dán lágan rávvagiid buvttiha buriid čovdosiid sihke álgoálbmogiidda, stáhtaide ja fitnodagaide proseassaid oktavuodas mat gusket luondduresurssaid roggamii Barentsguovllus.

Loahpas deattuhan mun ahte álgoálbmotovddastus Barents-ovttasbarggus ferte ovddiduvvot. Dat ferte dávistit álgoálbmogiid iežaset oktasaš oainnuide dán lágan ovddastusa ektui.

Mun háliidan sávvat Norgii lihku ovdagoddin ja Barents-ovttasbarggu 20-jagi ávvudemiid ráhkkanemiiguin ja čađahemiin 2013:s

Giitu sáni ovddas.

Jeg takker for at jeg får noen minutter av utenriksministerens taletid.

At utenriksministeren har invitert meg med på overtakelsen av formannskapet til Barentsrådet her i dag setter jeg svært stor pris på.

Barentsregionen er rik på naturressurser. Det geografiske området er enormt. I Barentsregionen bor det urfolk.

I joint communiqué nr 25 så nevnes forskjellige forhold som berører urfolk. Disse forhold skal gis spesiell oppmerksomhet i tråd med FNs urfolkserklæring. Jeg berømmer en slik tilnærming.

Samtidig vil jeg vise til FN- arbeid med utspring fra FNs urfolkserklæring og menneskerettighetene:

- FNs spesialrapportør James Anayas rapport som omhandler samene i Finland, Sverige og Norge.
- Videre James Anayas årlige rapporter fra 2010 og 2011 som handler om bedrifters ansvar og utvinning av naturressurser på urfolksområder.
- FNs spesialrådgiver John Ruggie har utviklet veiledende prinsipper for bedrifters etterfølgelse av menneskerettighetene.

Anbefalingene fra eksisterende og fremtidig FN arbeid er det viktig at statene gjennomfører.

Jeg tror at å lytte til denne type råd vil bidra til gode løsninger både for urfolk, stat og bedrifter i prosesser tilknyttet utvinning av naturressursene i Barentsregionen.

Avslutningsvis understreker jeg at urfolksrepresentasjonen i Barentssamarbeidet må utvikles videre. Den må samsvare urfolkernes egne omforente synspunkter om egen representasjon.

Jeg vil ønske Norge lykke til som formannskap og med forberedelsene og gjennomføringen av 20 års jubileum for Barentssamarbeidet i 2013.

Takk for ordet.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Russian Federation

Прежде всего, хотел бы выразить признательность Министру иностранных дел Швеции господину Карлу Бильдту и властям г.Кируна за радушный прием и гостеприимство.

СБЕР как формат регионального сотрудничества на Севере Европы является уникальной организацией. По сути дела он в постоянном режиме генерирует объединительную повестку дня – как на муниципальном, так и на макрорегиональном уровнях.

Происходящие в регионе и мире изменения не только порождают новые вызовы, но и открывают дополнительные возможности, побуждают к более активным действиям по решению стоящих задач. Подписанный в сентябре прошлого года российско-норвежский Договор о разграничении морских пространств и сотрудничестве в Баренцевом море и Северном Ледовитом океане позволяет на прочной основе международного права и доброй воли задействовать существенный потенциал расширения взаимовыгодного экономического сотрудничества. Договор служит примером регулирования отношений в северных широтах через согласование баланса интересов.

В Совместном коммюнике, которое мы одобрим сегодня, содержатся важные положения, задающие алгоритм наших совместных действий по борьбе с серьезными вызовами, с которыми сталкивается регион. В ряду наиболее актуальных – изменение климата, которое носит не только глобальный характер, но и имеет ярко выраженное региональное, северное преломление, поскольку затрагивает традиционный образ жизни и деятельность коренных народов Севера. Приветствуем разработку в СБЕР «Плана действий по вопросам изменения климата в Баренцевом регионе», активное участие в ней представителей Рабочей группы по вопросам коренных народов. С российской стороны весомый вклад в подготовку соответствующих рекомендаций намерен внести Кольский научный центр РАН.

Полезной площадкой для углубленного и заинтересованного обмена мнениями по всему спектру региональных проблем на Севере стал международный форум «Арктика – территория диалога», второе заседание которого состоялось 22-23 сентября нынешнего года в Архангельске.

В центре дискуссии не случайно были проблемы транспорта. Ускоренное таяние льдов может впервые придать нашему региону не только геополитическое, но и новое, геоэкономическое звучание, причем не только с точки зрения облегчения доступа к природным ресурсам. Открываются перспективы использования Северного морского пути (СМП) как кратчайшего водного маршрута между Севером Европы и Азиатско-Тихоокеанским регионом. По оценкам специалистов, к 2020 году объем грузоперевозок по Севморпути может возрасти до 60-65 млн. тонн в год.

Создание комплексной транспортной системы в Арктике в целях обеспечения морских перевозок в акватории СМП является составной частью государственной политики России в регионе. Подготовлен проект Федерального закона, регулирующего все аспекты судоходства в акватории Северного морского пути, который внесен на рассмотрение Государственной Думы Федерального Собрания Российской Федерации.

В возможностях практического использования СМП представители всех государств-членов СБЕР могли наглядно убедиться на международной конференции, организованной Советом Безопасности России во время перехода 6-11 августа нынешнего года на борту атомного ледокола «Ямал».

Глобальный потенциал Севморпути следует в полной мере учитывать при разработке Баренцевым региональным советом единой стратегии развития транспортных сетей в регионе с выходом на интегрированную мультимодальную систему.

Ресурсы нашего региона, обуславливающие его серьезные конкурентные преимущества и повышенный международный интерес к нему, – это не только железная руда, никель или нефть, не только биоресурсы. Безусловно, запасы сырья в регионе значительны. Но не стоит ждать их истощения, чтобы перейти на новый уровень развития. Как сказал один мыслитель, каменный век завершился не потому, что кончились камни.

На наш взгляд, следует активно поощрять развитие человеческого потенциала – содействовать налаживанию высокотехнологических производств и формированию инновационных центров.

Сообща нам вполне по силам сделать Баренцев/Евроарктический регион передовой, хорошо развитой частью Европы.

Способствовать этому призвана концепция «кластеров роста», которая отражена в Совместном коммюнике. Призываем к более тесному объединению усилий приграничных регионов для создания перспективных продуктов и технологий, способных активно привлекать инвестиции, генерировать научно-технические и организационные инновации, стимулировать социально-экономическое развитие населенных пунктов, учитывая интересы коренных народов.

Одной из важных задач, способных изменить облик региона к лучшему, видится содействие расширению контактов между людьми. Россия и Норвегия сделали первый шаг, подписав Соглашение об упрощении взаимных поездок жителей приграничных территорий. На повестке дня – продвижение к либерализации в региональном контексте, а в идеале надо вести речь об отмене визового режима между всеми нашими странами и между Россией и ЕС. В принимаемом нами сегодня коммюнике акцентируется важность данного направления совместной работы. Надеемся, что этот тезис получит практическое воплощение.

Особое значение имеет координация деятельности северных региональных советов при сохранении самостоятельности и идентичности каждого из них. Полезной была встреча председателств четырех северных советов на уровне заместителей министров иностранных дел в сентябре 2009 г. в Санкт-Петербурге. Поддерживаем инициативу Норвегии о проведении второй встречи до конца нынешнего года.

Уважаемые коллеги,

Заслуживают позитивной оценки предпринятые шведским председательством в СБЕР усилия по углублению взаимодействия в области защиты окружающей среды, энергоэффективности и энергосбережения, перехода к «чистой экономике», развития сотрудничества спасательных служб, адаптации к изменению климата. Надеемся, что норвежское председательство сохранит преемственность в деятельности Совета на этих и других направлениях регионального сотрудничества.

На «вахту» Норвегии придется юбилей – 20-летие СБЕР, который мы будем отмечать в январе 2013 г. За этот период облик региона кардинально изменился. Взаимодействие из эпизодических обменов делегациями переросло в полномасштабное и многоплановое партнерство. Мы стали ближе друг к другу, начали действовать, сопрягая свои приоритеты с задачами регионального развития и объединяя усилия в целях достижения синергии. Сегодня наш регион наглядно подтверждает возможность конвертировать политическую волю в конкретные дела по повышению благосостояния и социальной защищенности людей, живущих на Севере Европы. Нам надо продолжать идти именно в этом направлении.

Благодарю за внимание.

Alexander Ignatiev, Head of International Barents Secretariat

Дамы и господа,
Друзья,

Задача Международного Баренцева Секретариата - содействовать дальнейшему подъему сотрудничества в нашем регионе. Работать нам легко и приятно. Наши усилия - часть общих устремлений сделать Баренцево сотрудничество более динамичным, более близким к потребностям государств, регионов, людей.

Прежде всего – это благоприятный политический фон. Одно из его ярких проявлений – российско-норвежский Договор о разграничении морских пространств и сотрудничестве в Баренцевом море и Северном Ледовитом океане.

Но не только политика, даже природа помогала нам. Это не шутка. Происходящие изменения климата сделали наш регион более доступным и открытым для международного сообщества, для новых как по масштабу, так и по качеству проектов. Баренцев регион все больше становится неотъемлемой частью общеконтинентального сотрудничества.

Трансформируется и сам Совет Баренцева региона. Оставаясь политическим форумом, как это было задумано почти 20 лет назад его создателями, он приобретает черты международной организации, в рамках которой уже родились два юридически обязывающих межправительственных соглашения – о сотрудничестве спасательных служб и о создании нашего Секретариата.

Сегодня органы Баренцева Совета, прежде всего его 16 рабочих групп, покрывают все сферы практического взаимодействия в регионе. Международный Баренцев Секретариат, как единственный постоянный орган Совета, организует эту работу, аккумулирует информацию, дает рекомендации.

Первейшая задача Секретариата – поддержка приоритетов и практических усилий действующих председательств как на национальном, так и региональном уровне. Швеция, сегодня передающая председательский молоток Норвегии, поставила задачу строительства в регионе «экоэффективной экономики», что означает экономический рост в сочетании с устойчивым использованием природных ресурсов, энергоэффективностью и учетом изменений климата. По-существу – это сквозная цель, над которой с момента своего основания работает и будет работать Совет.

Кардинальные подвижки происходят в области транспорта. Баренцев регион становится связующим звеном между Востоком и Западом, между Америкой, Европой и Азией. Это прежде всего Северный морской путь. По некоторым оценкам, объем перевозимых грузов по нему к 2020 году возрастет более чем в 60 раз. В работе крупные проекты по развитию трансконтинентальных железнодорожных магистралей, новых авиационных трасс. Готовится стратегия развития транспорта в Баренцевом регионе.

Из всего многообразия деятельности в области охраны окружающей среды упомяну работу нашего Секретариата по выработке т.н. Плана действий в Баренцевом регионе в связи с изменениями климата. Будет сделан акцент на конкретные рекомендации, учтена аналогичная работа в Арктическом Совете.

Другое направление – ликвидация т.н. экологических горячих точек, а попросту говоря, загрязнителей в регионе. Сформированы новые организационные структуры для занятий этой деятельностью. Наш Секретариат создает электронную информационную систему, по которой как эксперты, так и представители общественности смогут следить за динамикой и результатами ведущейся работы.

Сегодня Север, Арктика становятся все более доступными не только для бизнеса, но и для людей. Они приходят сюда со своими традициями, менталитетом, культурой. Это – новый вызов для сохранения самобытности проживающего здесь коренного населения. В Баренцевом Совете мы приняли ряд мер, чтобы слышался голос этих людей. Теперь не только представители Рабочей группы коренного населения, но и сами коренные народности - саами, ненцы, вепсы могут участвовать во всех Баренцевых структурах. Тем не менее остается вопрос об участии в делах Совета других народностей Баренцева региона, а именно карелов и коми.

Наше сотрудничество развивается не изолированно. Баренцев Совет, сохраняя свое своеобразие и свою уникальность, объединяет усилия с Партнерствами СИ. Это создает более прочную материальную базу для наших программ и проектов. Укрепляется традиционное сотрудничество с другими региональными советами. Так, например, с Советом министров северных стран на днях мы запустили третью фазу проекта по изучению влияния изменения климата на биоразнообразие в регионе.

У нас имеется много новых планов и идей. Но препятствие для их осуществления чаще все одно – недостаток средств. Поэтому мы приветствовали решение Швеции направить в Секретариат нового сотрудника, в задачу которого входит изыскание средств из национальных и международных источников для финансирования сотрудничества в регионе.

Представляется, что в деятельности Международного Баренцева Секретариата должен наступить новый этап. Первичные задачи более или менее освоены, формы деятельности отлажены. Пришло время сконцентрировать внимание на аналитической стороне, анализировать трудности или узкие места сотрудничества, инициативно готовить предложения по их расшивке. С этим пожеланием Россия в ближайшие месяцы передаст пост Главы Секретариата Финляндии и желает ей успеха в этой деятельности.