

Canada – Europe
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire
Canada – Europe

Report of the Canada–Europe Parliamentary Association

Arctic Parliamentarians Summit – Nordic and North American Collaboration Report

Nuuk, Greenland

September 11 to 13, 2022

Report

A Canadian delegation attended the Arctic Parliamentarians Summit – Nordic and North American Collaboration (the Summit) in Nuuk, Greenland, from 11 to 12 September 2022. The Summit was hosted by the Folketing, or the Parliament of Denmark and was the first in-person meeting of Arctic parliamentarians since 2018¹. The Canadian delegation included: the Honourable Yvonne Jones, P.C., M.P. (Head of Delegation, Member of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region); Mr. Mel Arnold, M.P.; Ms. Marilène Gill, M.P.; Ms. Lori Idlout, M.P.; and, the Honourable Mohamed Iqbal Ravalia, Senator.

The delegation also included Ms. Sara Fryer, Association Advisor from the Parliamentary Information, Education and Research Services, Library of Parliament, and Ms. Jessica Kulka, Association Secretary, Canada–Europe Parliamentary Association.

The Summit was attended by delegates from five Arctic states: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway, as well as delegates from the European Parliament. Members of Parliament for the Government of Greenland were also in attendance, along with representatives from Indigenous and human rights organizations, including the Inuit Circumpolar Council and the Sámi Council.

MEETING SUMMARY

The Summit was organized into two sessions. The first session was a series of debates on the following themes: Arctic Democracy, Arctic Women Leadership, Arctic Film and Media, and Arctic Law. The second session was the Arctic Parliamentarian Summit with plenary and breakout sessions.

ARCTIC DEBATES

On 11 September 2022, the Summit opened with welcoming remarks from the host of the conference, Mrs. Aaja Chemnitz, Chair of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region and Member of Parliament elected to the Danish Folketing for Greenland.

Mrs. Chemnitz stressed the need to continue the work of Arctic cooperation as it is an important way to highlight the priorities of Arctic states. She emphasized that the overall themes of the Summit are common to all Arctic states, including a focus on the recognition of Indigenous peoples' rights, an acknowledgement of the effects of climate change on the Arctic, and the need for sustainable development. Members of the Canadian delegation actively participated in the proceedings and made substantive contributions as moderators, presenters, and with questions and interventions.

1. Arctic Democracy

Ms. Lori Idlout, Member of Parliament for Nunavut, presented during the first debate of the Summit about the Pikialasorsuaq Commission, which recommended an Inuit strategy

¹ Arctic parliamentary cooperation is facilitated by the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region held every two years that follows issues relevant to the work of the Arctic Council. Parliamentarians representing Arctic states also serve on the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, which meets several times a year.

for safeguarding and monitoring the health of the North Water polynea as well as the importance of mobility for Inuit between Canada and Greenland.

2. Arctic Women's Leadership

The Honourable Yvonne Jones, Member of Parliament for Labrador, and Ms. Marilène Gill, Member of Parliament for Manicouagan, both presented during the Arctic Women's Leadership panels. Their discussion highlighted their experiences in leadership as parliamentarians serving constituents in rural and remote regions of Canada.

3. Arctic Film and Media

Mr. Mel Arnold, Member of Parliament for North Okanagan—Shuswap, attended the Arctic Film and Media session, which was moderated by Film Greenland. Over the past several years, the Greenlandic film industry has grown, with locals developing expertise in the production of feature films, documentaries and short films. Panelists discussed the importance of film production to tourism and noted that Greenland's film industry has grown significantly despite limited financial support from governments.

4. Arctic Law

The session on Arctic law featured an assessment of the international Arctic legal framework. Themes included how to adapt international conventions and decision-making bodies to the future realities of a potential ice-free Arctic Ocean. For example, shipping activities are projected to increase in the Arctic due to sea-ice thawing at a rapid rate. The International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (or the Polar Code) regulates shipping and navigation in polar waters that have ice and low temperatures. Presenters observed that the Polar Code may need to be adapted if Arctic seas become ice-free in the future.

The debate also highlighted the unique nature of land ownership in Greenland, as land is publicly owned. Speakers outlined the development of regulations and legislation related to mineral development in this context, land and water use in Greenland, and related processes for environmental assessment.

The Honourable Yvonne Jones discussed the duty of the Government of Canada to consult with Indigenous peoples in the environmental assessment of major project approvals in Canada. She noted that it is important to fund Indigenous participation in the regulatory process to understand how resource development may affect Indigenous knowledge and lands.

The Chair closed the first day of the meeting and it was agreed between states to issue a Chair's Conclusion reflecting the discussions between states during the Summit.

ARCTIC SUMMIT

On 12 September 2022, the Arctic Parliamentarian Summit began with the lighting of a lamp by a Greenlandic Elder. Ms. Avaaraq Olse, the Mayor of Nuuk, Greenland, and Mr. Jeppe Kofod, Minister of Foreign Affairs for Denmark, gave welcoming remarks to delegates by videoconference. In her remarks to Summit participants, Ms. Sara Olsvig, International Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, expressed concern about the pause in the work of the Arctic Council due to the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine and

urged that multilateral Arctic cooperation between Arctic states and Arctic Indigenous peoples must continue.

The second session of the Summit included substantive presentations on: Peoples of the Arctic, Climate Change in the Arctic, the Economy in the Arctic and the Future of the Arctic. The Summit closed with a panel discussion on Economic Sustainability in the Arctic.

1. Peoples of the Arctic

The first session of the Summit was about the Peoples of the Arctic and was moderated by Ms. Lori Idlout. Ms. Idlout asked for a moment of silence for those who were affected by violence in James Smith Cree Nation, Canada. Ms. Idlout introduced the panel's two speakers, Mr. Håkan Jonsson, President of the Sámi Parliamentary Council and Board Chairman of the Sámi Parliament in Sweden and Ms. Arnârak Patricia Bloch, public health researcher. Mr. Jonsson discussed Sámi cooperation between Finland, Norway and Sweden, where Sámi lands are located. Sámi living in all three countries have experienced similar consequences of assimilation such as loss of language. A shared priority is the revitalization of the Sámi language. Sámi in Finland, Norway and Sweden have shared experiences of historical injustices that have been documented through respective truth commissions held in each state. Mr. Jonsson sees that the Sámi are retaining more control of Sámi affairs within their respective states.

Ms. Arnârak Patricia Bloch discussed her research on mapping protective factors that contribute to well being of Arctic Indigenous peoples as an Inuk researcher working in public health. Inuit ways of living are taught by Elders – passing on knowledge to the next generation is important for survival. She found that family and relationships, language, spirituality, harvesting, Indigenous knowledge, humility and connection to the land are important protective factors for the physical and mental health of Indigenous peoples.

Ms. Lori Idlout made an intervention about the importance of Indigenous law and highlighted the recent appointment of the first Indigenous person in Canada to serve on the Supreme Court of Canada, Justice Michelle O'Bonsawin. She discussed how Indigenous laws can counter the effects of colonization.

Ms. Sara Olsvig, Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, discussed the importance of circumpolar cooperation more broadly among Indigenous people of the Arctic. She noted the processes of truth and reconciliation that have occurred in various states. She spoke about the Greenlandic Reconciliation Commission established in 2014 and the need to respond to the experiences shared by Indigenous peoples. She also noted that different state processes of colonization have affected the human rights of Indigenous women and girls.

Mr. Mel Arnold asked a question about the importance of land-based activities to the health of Arctic youth and how connections to the land can be strengthened. Evidence from Alaska was provided to speak to the importance of intergenerational learning through traditional activities that have improved the health outcomes of Elders and youth.

2. Climate Change in the Arctic

The second session of the Arctic Summit was moderated by the Honourable Yvonne Jones on Climate change in the Arctic. Ms. Jones provided opening remarks related to

how a warming climate is making sea ice unpredictable, and that travel for Inuit on sea ice means taking on significant risks to their safety. She noted that sea ice is critical to the practice of Inuit culture.

Mr. Lars Haltbrekken, member of Parliament for Norway, explained how international agreements were integral to solving past environmental problems such as acid rain. He noted that Arctic cooperation was a vital part of mapping where pollutants such as black carbon are occurring, and that black carbon build up can accelerate the thawing of snow and ice. Mr. Haltbrekken observed that reducing black carbon emissions will have more of an impact on warming than reducing the burning of fossil fuels and discussed examples of reducing emissions in Svalbard, including moving to renewable energy instead of using diesel for energy. He is hopeful that the climate crisis can be solved if the global community stands together and builds on solutions that respect the rights of Indigenous peoples.

Dr. Minik Rosing, a geoscientist at the University of Greenland, argued that innovation occurring in the Arctic regions can provide solutions to the problems of global warming. For example, sea ice is melting, which creates a substantial amount of meltwater. As such, Greenland has major hydro-electric potential. Meltwater also contains fine particles and minerals that provide plants with all the nutrients they need to survive. In regions of the world such as the tropics and subtropics, these minerals can be used as fertilizer to supplement soil so it is more productive for agriculture. He also discussed how Norway has transitioned its ferries from diesel to electricity and that the development of hydrogen and ammonia-based ships could mean emission-free shipping in the future.

Senator Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia highlighted the significant fisheries in Greenland's waters and how the productivity in the North Atlantic's waters is among the highest in the world. He asked if research had been conducted to see if the high mineral content in Greenland's meltwater is connected to the biodiversity and healthy fish stocks in the coastal waters of Greenland.

In a response to a question related to the Arctic states financial contributions to developing countries to combat climate change, the Honourable Yvonne Jones noted that Canada had established national targets to achieve net zero by 2050 and committed to doubling its financing to developing countries for international climate change during the 2021 United Nations Climate Change conference, the Conference of the Parties (COP 26).

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

1. The Economy in the Arctic

During the Economy in the Arctic session, Mr. Christian Keldsen, CEO, Greenland Business Association, and Mr. Mads Qvist Frederiksen of the Arctic Economic Council provided an overview of the economy of Greenland and its connections to the circumpolar Arctic. Greenland has made significant investments in infrastructure, which has benefited people around the territory. For example, 92% of the population has cellular coverage and internet, and transportation is highly subsidized between communities. Their presentation outlined the key drivers of Greenland's economy, including its fisheries, mainly driven by Royal Greenland Fisheries, which is a public company. There is also the

potential to develop mineral resources in the territory. However, Greenland has challenges with the capacity of its energy grid. There is also an initiative to consolidate international climate research occurring in Greenland, so locals can benefit from the wide array of research occurring in the territory.

2. The Future of the Arctic

The Future of the Arctic session discussed the education system in Greenland, and featured presentations from local youth leaders. The panelists featured the founder of the first social enterprise in Greenland, Siu Tsiu, which provides opportunities for youth to progress into permanent employment or to further their education by building community networks. The work includes construction and producing local food both outdoors and in greenhouses. Another presentation featured the Kofoeds School, which offers education programs for youth who are homeless or face other challenges to provide training and education through employment. Youth are also offered other services, such as meal programs and counselling.

Ms. Gill highlighted the issue of low voter turnout for youth in Canada and the steps politicians can take to engage youth.

3. Mental Health in the Arctic

During the Mental Health in the Arctic session, Ms. Arnârak Patricia Bloch of the National Institute for Public health in Greenland talked about national initiatives for suicide prevention, including training of front-line workers. Another panelist discussed approaches to the promotion of youth mental health initiatives in Iceland.

4. Economic Sustainability

The Summit closed with an overview of economic development in Greenland and green energy transition examples from across Arctic states, moderated by Mr. Mikko Kärnä, MP, Finland. Ms. Aaja Chemintz spoke about widescale development occurring in Greenland, including the development of two new airports and the work of the territory to create stable economic conditions to encourage business development. Mr. Mads Qvist Frederiksen of the Arctic Economic Council described some examples of sustainable economic development. Innovative models for green energy transition were highlighted, including solar installations in Old Crow, Yukon, and how wind farms in Berlevåg, Norway, are being used to produce hydrogen and green ammonia to fuel ships operating in northern waters.

The conference delegates agreed to the Chair's Conclusion appended to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Francesco Sorbara, MP
President, Canada–Europe Parliamentary Association

Travel Costs

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| ASSOCIATION | Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association |
| ACTIVITY | Arctic Parliamentarians Summit - Nordic and North American Collaboration |
| DESTINATION | Nuuk (Greenland) |
| DATES | September 11 to 13, 2022 |
| DELEGATION | |
| SENATE | Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia |
| | Mr. Mel Arnold |
| HOUSE OF COMMONS | Ms. Marilène Gill |
| | Ms. Lori Idlout |
| | Ms. Yvonne Jones |
| STAFF | Ms. Jessica Kulka |
| | Ms. Sara Fryer |
| TRANSPORTATION | \$ 42,156.24 |
| ACCOMMODATION | \$ 13,333.20 |
| HOSPITALITY | \$ 0,00 |
| PER DIEMS | \$ 9,979.63 |
| OFFICIAL GIFTS | \$ 51.54 |
| MISCELLANEOUS | \$ 273.34 |
| TOTAL | \$ 65,793.95 |

Appendix



ARCTIC PARLIAMENTARIAN SUMMIT

NUUK 2022

THE ARCTIC STATES OF CANADA, FINLAND, NORWAY, ICELAND AND THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK (INCLUDING GREENLAND AND THE FAROE ISLANDS) MET IN NUUK, GREENLAND ON THE 11th and 12th OF SEPTEMBER 2022.

Chair's conclusions from the summit:

People of the Arctic

- We acknowledge and promote Indigenous people's rights, including recommendations from the ICC and Sami parliaments.
- We want to enhance the representation of Indigenous peoples in film and media. In acknowledgement of fact that there is not only one truth, we also have to see it from the Indigenous people's point of view.
- Support the preservation and development of the culture and language of Indigenous peoples.
- Follow and support the truth and reconciliation processes in the Arctic and promote the implementation of the recommendations.
- Promote initiatives on mental health, with a special focus on prevention of suicides, sexual abuse of children and alcohol abuse. By speaking up, we ensure political action and awareness concerning mental health.

Climate Change in the Arctic

- We will work for a reduction of emissions in the Arctic.
- We will promote green and renewable energy in the Arctic. The Arctic should be the place to look for solutions for the world.
- We will increase funding in climate research.
- We will promote a special focal point on Indigenous representation in international negotiations on preventing climate change.

The Economy in the Arctic

- We will work to promote a stable and predictable political framework for sustainable economic development in the Arctic.
- We will work for guidelines for good economic development in the Arctic.
- We will promote a business mindset in young people, education and good working conditions for a competent workforce around in the Arctic.
- We will look to increase the competences of remote communities by digitalisation and in that way promote e-health and e-learning possibilities.

Aaja Chemnitz

Chair, Arctic Parliamentarians