

## Statement of Canada to the 1st DRAFT

We, Canada highly appreciate the initiative of the Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and we would like to emphasize our gratitude for the opportunity to participate on the discussion about the Arctic issue which is crucial for Canadian society.

Our north, our heritage, our future – these words sum up our relationship with the Arctic zone. We are a northern country and the Arctic is a fundamental piece of our national identity. The Arctic which is embedded in Canadian history, culture and in the Canadian soul is home to many Canadians, including indigenous people. We honestly declare that our vision for the Arctic is a stable, rules-based region, with clearly defined boundaries, dynamic economic growth, vibrant Northern communities, and healthy environment.

Concerning the Arctic, we are acting domestically while cooperating internationally. The good governance and responsible stewardship of the Arctic region is exercising in full compliance with the decisions of the Arctic Council. We are proud to proclaim to be the first chair of mentioned multilateral forum and currently we are meeting the challenge of the chairmanship repeatedly. Beyond the Arctic Council, Canada works through other multilateral institutions including the International Maritime Organization and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We would like to emphasize the conclusion of an Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic signed at the beginning of our biennial presidency period.

Pursuant to the ambitious Canadian Northern Strategy, we are making the efforts to respond the opportunities and challenges arising from the changing geopolitical, social as well as ecological environment. Our Northern Strategy lays out four areas with the intention to help unlock the North's true potential:

- exercising sovereignty;
- promoting economic and social development;
- protecting our environmental heritage;
- improving and devolving Northern governance.

Canada appreciates the proposal of the Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century to look for the solution concerning the development for the people of the North as the main theme of our chairmanship with a focus on responsible Arctic resource development, safe Arctic shipping and sustainable circumpolar communities.

Taking into consideration the proposals of the Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we would like to present our standpoints.

## **(1) Research, Climate and Environmental Change**

Canada concurs with the statement of the Forum in the requirement to deal with the subsequent consequences of the climate changes on the fragile Arctic environment and therefore we are taking a comprehensive international approach to the protection of environmentally sensitive lands and waters in our North. This effort is based on the cooperation with our Arctic partners.

Pursuant to the facts above mentioned we propose:

- i. To conclude a new international agreement on the reducing greenhouse gas emissions with clearly defined obligations enforceable by law with compulsory membership for worldwide polluters;
- ii. To promote and build low - carbon economy and to begin work on oil-pollution prevention;
- iii. To expand the national park system in view of the necessity to preserve the diversity of fauna and flora in that area. In that context, it is necessary to take into consideration the existence of the endangered animal species and provide them with suitable living conditions.

## **(2) Population and indigenous people**

More than four million inhabitants, living in the eight Arctic states, call the Arctic region home. We highly appreciate the proposal of the Forum concerning the position of indigenous population due to the main theme of our chairmanship – development for the people of the North. We deeply focus on responsible Arctic resource development, safe Arctic shipping and sustainable circumpolar communities.

New social and economic challenges are coming to the fore in accordance with changing environmental patterns of the Arctic region affecting the life of many people. Our clear vision for the Arctic population is to ensure the creation of vital communities managing their own affairs and shaping their own destinies.

Pursuant to the facts above mentioned we propose:

- i. To ensure financially and technically active participation of Indigenous representatives in the process of the stewardship of the Arctic region;
- ii. To secure that the central role of the Permanent Participants within the Arctic Council will be not diminished as a consequence of the growing interest in the Arctic region by non-Arctic players. It is necessary to emphasize the unique status of the Arctic states.
- iii. To avoid the launching a new way of neo-colonialism in that part of the world performed by the increase in shipping, tourism and research activities.

## **(3) Geopolitical division and resource management**

Concerning the geopolitical division and resource management, we would like to remind the words of the Prime Minister Stephen Harper: *“In exercising our sovereignty...we*

*are not only fulfilling our duty to the people who called this northern frontier home, and to the generations that will follow; we are also being faithful to all who came before us.”*

This statement reflects our main priorities pursuing in the Arctic region – to resolve boundary issues and to secure international recognition for the full extent of our extended continental shelf.

Pursuant to the facts above mentioned we propose:

- i. To begin the negotiations with the aim to conclude the international agreement concerning the boundary issues in accordance with international law. Canada is anxious to avoid the model of the legal regulations of the Antarctic accordingly to the strong and long standing historical, cultural and social connections with the Arctic region and therefore we are calling for international ensuring our territorial claims;
- ii. To build responsible Arctic resource development.

#### **(4) Law of the Sea and Arctic waterways**

The rights of Canada over the Arctic natural resources are internationally recognized by The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Pursuant the Article 76 of the Convention, Canada is working to define the outer limits of our continental shelf in both the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans and we are collaborating with neighboring states in the scientific, technical and legal work needed to do so. By the end of 2013, we are going to present our proposal to the partner countries. Arctic shipping is another key area of focus.

Pursuant to the facts above mentioned we propose:

- i. To draw up the guidelines for sustainable tourism and cruise-ship operations. On the basis of these guidelines, the Arctic Council will encourage the benefits that tourism will bring to communities while reducing the risk associated with increased activity;
- ii. To develop a mandatory polar code for the Arctic Ocean.

Canada welcomes the discussion proposed by the Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with enthusiasm. Cooperation, diplomacy and respect for international law have always been Canada’s preferred approach in the Arctic. At the same time, we will never waver in our commitment to protect our North.