

# Forum for 21<sup>st</sup> century

## on the Arctic issues

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### *Propositions to 3st Draft*

People's Republic of China would like to thank to the Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century for its intention to organize the conference on the Arctic issues. The Arctic has been attracting a lot of attention since the issue of harmful human activity damaging the environment was put up internationally a few decades ago. Huge reserves of fresh water stuck in the largest world's island can change the climate to such an extent that is hardly imaginable to any us. Considering potential consequences and impact of the ice-melting on the entire planet, China emphasizes the importance of international cooperation and expresses its conviction that only multilateral approach will help reach a possible solution to challenges standing in front of the world. Therefore, China is pleased by an opportunity to participate in such an important event as this conference really is.

China calls itself a near-Arctic state rightfully. Its northeast regions stretch to almost 50 degree latitude and the on-going climate change threatens its coastline areas as any island state. Because of high concentration of economic activity in these territories, mild influence of global warming on China's ecological environment, agriculture, social and economic development is pivotal. China's tireless efforts from 2006 when it applied for membership to the Arctic Council in order to get involved in the Arctic issues, were rewarded in May 2013 by recognizing its importance and granting it a permanent observer status in the Arctic Council. Hereby China reaffirms its view of the Arctic Council as the most important intergovernmental forum for discussing environmental issues and sustainable development in the region, promoting environmental protection and enhancing cooperation on trans-regional issues. China also sincerely supports nothing but peaceful and multilateral type of problem-solving leading to mutually satisfying outcomes. Furthermore, China expresses its respects to the UN Convention on the Law of Seas, Svalbard Treaty and the relevant regulations of international law which grant rights to non-Arctic states in the region.

There are three major incentives, which led China to actively participate in the issues of the Arctic. Predominant problem that deserves world's attention is the above-mentioned climate change. As all we know, melting of the polar ice cap does not affect exclusively the countries that are located in the north. However, it has great impact on all coastline areas. So it is also China's concern to take part in research of global warming in this region in order to explore causes of the melting. Starting its Arctic scientific research in the 1990s, China joined the Arctic International Scientific Committee in 1996, has conducted five expeditions on the

Arctic Ocean so far, established its own research station, the Yellow River Station, formed a high-quality team of experts and currently is expanding its research and scientific polar institute that will collaborate with Nordic research centres involved in the Arctic research. Therefore, China is sure that it will be great benefit for the states active in this field not only thanks to its experience, knowledge and number of its experts, but also because it is ready to provide a huge amount of funds for Arctic development. China upholds the Forum's propose to reinforce the current research capacities, by establishment of the long-term research group as a newly-founded organ of the Council and to create a Research Fund financed by all the Arctic and non-Arctic states with observer status. However, China thinks that determination of the fund contributions should be more complex, based not only on GDP, but also on other factors such as proximity to the North Pole, decision-making rights and support provided in form of experts and equipment. China considers this approach fairer and more acceptable for all parties.

China welcomes Forum's change in standpoint regarding a binding international agreement on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. We fully agree with postponing this issue to a different forum, whereas we concern about potential disagreement among the parties on this matter, which could slow down negotiations in other areas. Besides, China would not recommend using the Forum for agreeing on time-binding determination of a future forum for CO<sub>2</sub> reduction measures. Although we support emission cutbacks in general, we realize weight of commitment that emerges from the mentioned determination of a future forum. The negotiations should rather focus on our main goals within the Forum.

China respects the values, interests, culture and traditions of the Arctic aborigines and other inhabitants in the region. It also perceives the Arctic states as the cardinal subjects entitled to protect and foster the well-being of these people, their nationals. Nevertheless, China appreciates the Forum's proposal to remain open in Sustainable Development Working Group of the Arctic Council even for non-Arctic countries, which can take part in the meetings of this body and assist by solving problems and overcoming various obstacles. Further, being aware of the importance of education for sustainable development, China encourages its partners to support the knowledge of the indigenous population of the Arctic as well and to broaden their educational opportunities, by setting up educational institutions and sending qualified teachers and professors. China hopes that by providing educational services relative to its position as a near-Arctic state will contribute to the social development of the population concerned.

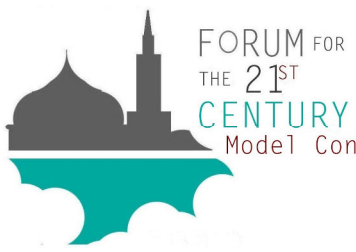
In the modern society, all states take note of growing importance of the long-term sustainable development, which guarantees desirable future state for human societies, in which living conditions and resource-use meet human needs without undermining the sustainability of natural systems and the environment. China agrees with the Forum's remark on the need of international environmentally-friendly and sustainable standards for mineral resources

exploitation, but regarding to the sovereign rights and jurisdiction of the Arctic countries over the region, China leaves the decision-making related to exploitation principles up to the Arctic states. Moreover, China is prepared to give hand by any exploitation, energy or infrastructure projects in the Arctic. It has proved itself to be a reliable partner in such activities with Russia, Iceland, Greenland or Canada before. With absolute respect to sovereign rights of the Arctic states over the region and with deep belief that these states will respect the natural rights of non-Arctic states deriving from international law such as freedom of research, freedom of shipping and freedom of navigation, China declares that in case of consent among the Arctic states to maintain the present division of the Arctic, China is ready to uphold this initiation in order to avoid disputes and so that the region could flourish.

Since the Arctic ice melting and the rising possibility of arctic navigation through three Arctic sea routes, the issues relating to freedom of navigation has a global significance. Majority of the Arctic states proclaim their efforts to make use of the Arctic passages, while ensuring the safety of navigation. Opening of the Arctic sea routes would be a great contribution to global development bringing benefits to all parties involved as a result of fuel-savings and cost-efficiency. Of course, all the countries must comply with related guidelines and regulations for Arctic navigation. China declares the Arctic Ocean as international waters and common heritage of humankind accordingly to international law. Therefore, China strongly supports the Forum's proposition on agreement of the freedom of navigation and over flight for all the countries solely for commercial and peace purposes. However, we oppose the idea that non-Arctic states cannot participate in the monitoring body at all. We propose that monitoring body should consist not only of a satellite network, but also of a guarding fleet deployed in various parts of the Arctic proportionally and that it would contain units at least from all member and observer states in order to avoid misunderstandings while "suppressing potential threat".

China agrees with the Forum on the matter of tourism strategy and its beneficial effects on the development in the region. In the respect of peaceful development of the Arctic region and on the basis of mutual respects, benefits and enhanced understanding, China promotes the Arctic tourism strategy in extent of its rights and expresses its hope to cooperate with both the Arctic and non-Arctic countries in the agenda of tourism.

In conclusion, China wants, with joined hands, to increase its capacity to address above-mentioned trans-regional issues and make its contribution to peaceful, stable and sustainable development in the Arctic in order to make the region part of the harmonious world. This conference gives a great opportunity to discuss these questions, which have worldwide significance and come to an agreement on them among the parties. Hereby, China expresses its belief that all the participants are willing to find mutually beneficial solutions to proposed problems and thereby to enhance not only the development in the region but also the cooperative partnership within the world village.



Model Conference - Modelová konferencia