



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
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International Experts Meeting

**Climate Change
and Arctic Sustainable Development :
scientific, social, cultural and educational challenges**

3-6 March 2009, Monaco

**ABSTRACT:
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS**

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**Sustainable Development of the Arctic in the face of Global Climate Change:
Challenges and Opportunities in the case of Greenland.**

Climate change and its potential impact on the society is considered important, but has not yet reached the very top of the political agenda in Greenland. This is despite the fact that Greenland tends to be at the centre of the international climate change debate.

Over the past 30 years, the overall political goal of the Greenland Home Rule Government has been to establish an economic sustainable society. This effort continues today and has been one of the most important drivers towards greater political self-determination.

As a result, the Greenland Home Rule Government will, this year on June 21 - with the clear consent and approval of the Greenland people - transform into Greenland Self-Government, whereby its powers will be extended even further.

This major and historic achievement, combined with the attention and many activities generated by the process to renew the Kyoto protocol, gives new momentum to climate change issues as they clearly impact on political and economic developments in Greenland.

In this context, it is important to note that there are many challenges ahead but also some potentially rewarding opportunities. This presentation attempts to highlight some of these challenges and opportunities as they relate to both sustainable development and climate change and to the responsibilities following Greenland's assumption of additional political decision-making power.

A couple of observations include the fact that increasing sea temperatures may have dramatic consequences for traditional occupations such as small scale hunting and fishing in which stable sea ice is essential for the hunters and fishermen to be able to get

to the hunting and fishing grounds.

It is date impossible to predict exactly how changes in sea currents will impact on the biodiversity and thereby on both small scale hunting and fishing and industrial fisheries. Fisheries currently constitute 86 % of Greenland's export revenues.

To potential benefits may be counted the increased access to previously ice covered areas with oil and gas deposits, which may be extracted more easily.

Warmer temperatures in South Greenland may indeed aid the farmers in their attempt to increase agricultural production and the breeding of livestock. The overall dominating sheep farming has, over the past few years, been supplemented by cattle, and the variety and distribution of local agricultural products have been on the increase.

These and other factors put pressure on Greenland to continuously adjusting its economic development strategies in order to maximize benefits and minimize disadvantages.

Recent developments, which will culminate with the introduction of the new Self-Government seems to boost the political and industrial self-esteem. Greenland may, after all, be able to make significant contributions sustainability of the Arctic – in the face of climate change.

Recommendations:

- Promote the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in particular the right to self-determination including ownership and control of lands, territories and natural resources.
- Promote and support the participation by indigenous peoples and Arctic communities in all processes and negotiations concerning climate change mitigation goals and measures, as these will have a major impact on the opportunities for sustainable economic, social and cultural development in the Arctic.
- Ensure local ownership to climate change adaptation strategies by basing capacity building efforts on local knowledge and practices as well as cultural values.
- Ensure that communication, outreach and education strategies on climate change mitigation and adaptation are involving and targeting relevant stakeholders.