

High North Dialogue
Summing up by Director Anne Kari H. Ovind
19 March 2015

Dear participants,

This conference is a dialogue about the future of the Arctic.

The Arctic covers about 8% of the Earth's surface, but has only 4 million inhabitants.

By including new observers 60 % of the world's population are now represented in the Arctic Council.

Global trends influence the opportunities and challenges of the future Arctic.

We see a more globalized Arctic and we need to understand what this means for Arctic development.

While the various parts of the Arctic has a lot in common, climatic conditions and the degree of human activity vary greatly across the region.

Because of the North Atlantic Current, temperature and ice conditions in the Norwegian part of the Arctic are vastly different from those of Canada for example as demonstrated so clearly by ambassador Wilczynski yesterday.

As explained by more speakers today the retreat of the sea ice and the effects of climate changes is not uniform in the Arctic. Equally we were reminded this morning that security is not a uniform concept in the High North.

We are not talking about a homogeneous region. There is not one Arctic.

There are many "Arctics". I think today's discussion has underscored the need for taking into account these differences to have a meaningful and nuanced conversation on Arctic developments.

The Arctic holds considerable potential for future generations of Arctic citizens, but we must treat it with care.

It is not enough just to use the Arctic: **we must use it wisely!**. I think this has been a key message from discussions of today.

This is also why Norway aims to promote sustainable business development in the north. We have no wish to see an Arctic bust following an Arctic boom.

We want to see sustainable growth! In fact our goal is for North Norway to become the most innovative and knowledge-driven regions of growth in the world.

It is only by bringing together bright heads and the leaders of tomorrow that we can produce the bright ideas we need in order to make this vision come true.

And these bright heads are you – the students at UiN.

Dear participants,

This conference has **highlighted** what the prerequisites are for Arctic business and security **in a time of geopolitical change.**

Firstly, we must ensure that the High North remains a region of low tension characterized by peaceful cooperation, stability and respect for international law.

We have the legal framework in place and a political framework well equipped to address Arctic issues.

Cooperation is key.

The Arctic is an area where no country or no company can go it alone.

Secondly, research and science are essential in developing sustainable solutions for the Arctic in the future.

Without knowledge we will not be able to understand the complexity of the Arctic.

Knowledge and responsible management are the basis for industrial growth, value creation and innovation.

As underlined by state secretary Haugstad this morning this is why institutions like the University of Nordland and the High North Center play an important role in producing knowledge in and about the High North and in promoting understanding and international cooperation.

Dear participants,

“The greatest thing in human life is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving”. This statement by Fridtjof Nansen takes us to the core of today’s discussion. As we meet the challenges and seek the opportunities in the North, our direction must be guided by responsibility.

Responsibility in respect of

- Adhering to international law and universal principles
- Meeting complex security challenges
- Building world class research and education institutions
- Protecting fragile ecosystems and biodiversity
- Adapting to dramatic climate change and putting a price on carbon to reduce emissions
- Managing natural resources sustainably
- Striking a balance between new and old industries
- Implementing highest environmental and safety standards

This to mention a few of the areas identified by the speakers and the participants at this conference.

In short, we want to show the world that we are taking responsibility as Arctic nations, with focus on low tension, sustainable development, value creation and welfare for our people in the north.

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This has been an inspiring conference day. I will not try to recall all the valid points that have been made. But let me end my summing up by thanking the UiN and the High North Center for organizing the High North Dialogue for the 10th time.

So let me also thank the speakers for sharing your thoughts and insights and to the moderators for energizing our discussions here today.

Thank you all for participating at the conference and wish you all a safe journey home.