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Welcome to Arctic Dialogue 2015.

I am very proud, as mayor of the Nordland County, to welcome you all to Nordland and to Bodø. This conference has become a significant arena for academic questions in the arctic.

University of Nordland, are one of the leading academic institutions that has a strong emphasis on arctic questions. The High North Center for Business and

Governance is in this respect a very important actor in the high north dialogue along with others, both here at the University and in other parts of the Arctic.

As a politician, I attend a lot of meetings and conferences - and I enjoy doing that.

Not only because of all the significant and interesting speeches and lectures, but conferences are also an arena for meeting people. I get a chance to build and

maintain networks, make new contacts, learn, and develop myself.

The University is educating specialist for the future High North, I am therefore especially pleased to see all the students that come from other countries (in the Arctic region).

I hope that as many as possible of you will maintain your contacts with the University, your fellow foreign and Norwegian students, colleagues and other actors in

the region. The students of today are our future. We all have a common goal, to participate in developing this region. None of us can do it alone, but if we cooperate, we are able to lift the Arctic to an even higher level.

This year's Arctic Dialogue 2015 will focus on the opportunities for Arctic Business & Security in a global perspective. When it comes to create wealth based on resources like oil, gas, fisheries, aquaculture, tourism

and minerals, I think the future resources and solutions lies in the North.

If somebody are in doubt, Nordland is an arctic county, and most of our inhabitants live north of the Arctic Circle.

There are both urban and more rural communities, but we all have something in common: The dependency on our nature. We both live of the nature, and in the nature. We should benefit by our natural resources, but

not exploit or ruin them. Some of our resources are renewable, other are not. However, we have to benefit from them it in a sustainably and safe way.

Nordland has one of the largest industrial clusters in Norway. Both international and locally own corporations dominate these clusters. All these companies were basically founded on cheap and environmental friendly hydroelectric power. Nordland is still one of the regions

in Norway with large overcapacity in hydropower; we are therefore an important supplier of electricity to other parts of Europe.

The cheap power is now history, but still, we have managed to maintain, developed and expanded these clusters. There are many reasons for that, but our main competitive advantage is now competence. In this picture, we have institutions like the University of Nordland and the University College in Narvik. I am

very pleased to see that the university now expands in the southern part of the county with for instance Campus Helgeland.

Other industries that are important for Nordland is of course see farming, fisheries and mining. For instance, about one of ten salmons that are produced in the world come from sea farms in Nordland. Nordland has also a large fishing fleet that supply fish processing factories all over the world.

Bodø, which is the largest city in Nordland, was manly founded based on herring fisheries. However, the city has now moved to be an important hub for knowledge creation, transport, business, military, safety and preparedness among other fields.

Nordland and Bodø several nationally and internationally oriented institutions that can contribute to increased focus on safety and preparedness in the Arctic.

Although some are military, we have a common goal to share a secure Arctic. The only way we can develop businesses and make people want to live in the Arctic, is to create a safe and secure society for all. Actors in Nordland already cooperate with actors all over the

Arctic in for example projects like MARPART and SARiNOR.

MARPART (Maritime preparedness and international partnership in the high north) works closely with several academic institutions in Norway Russia, Greenland, Iceland and North America. The goal is to find good solutions for marine emergency in the north.

SARiNOR is an other project that involves search and rescue solutions in the northern regions. SARiNOR should help to identify the potential for improvement within search and rescue, survival in cold climates, communication and shared situational awareness and joint operations.

The central Government of Norway stresses that the North is Norway's most important international issue. It is therefore important that we who live here also follow

up the high national and international focus on the High North. It is important that we create the policies and projects that will form our future. In this perspective, sustainable exploration of natural resources is essential.

The Arctic dimension has great perspectives, and Bodø is one of the hot spots. Therefore, I am very happy to see so you all in this yearly event, and I am very confident that the future is in the North.

Have a nice and safe conference