

**Speech by  
Minister of Domestic Affairs, Nature & Environment  
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at the seminar on Sustainable Development, 10th of February 2010**

***Sustainable Development in a Environmental perspective***

Sustainable development forms one of the basic values in the Greenland government coalition agreement between Inuit Ataqatigiit, Demokraterne and Kattusseqatigiit Partiit. Furthermore it is the political goal of Naalakkersuisut (The Government of Greenland) that all future decisions taken by Inatsisartut (The Parliament of Greenland) are subject to an environmental assessment. Sustainability and environmental concerns consequently shall form the basic elements in the development process of all sectors within the Greenlandic society.

As a member of Naalakkersuisut responsible of the Interior, Nature and Environment I am of course bearing my part of the responsibility to make sure that Greenland at all times is working towards a sustainable administration and use of our living and non-living resources, and at the same time affirm a sustainable development with due consideration of our vulnerable Arctic environment.

The principle of sustainability is already at this point implemented in the Greenland legislation on the protection of nature and in the Greenland Parliament environmental order proclaiming the goal of protecting nature and environment aiming at securing that the development of the Greenland society is performed on the basis of sustainability, in respect of the life conditions of the citizens and for the preservation of the wildlife and the flora.

The principle of sustainability has - through the latest amendment of the Greenland environmental order - been highlighted as the basic principle in the order. Previously, during the phase of removal of waste the focus was put on the waste itself, but today importance shall be attached to the total circulation of material and subject to with the clear purpose of limiting a waste of resources. The principle of a life cycle is a principle requiring that a product is object of an environmental assessment including all parts of the chain starting at the time of the production process till the time of disposal as waste.

The principle of sustainability is also a part of the Greenland waste management plan, where it shall contribute to secure that no initiatives deteriorate the nature and our conditions of life – today and for the future generations. Specifically the plan also contains objectives of resource minimization and reutilization. Among the initiatives to reach the goals I can mention: introduction of certain responsibilities with the producer/importer concerning certain chosen goods, introduction of green excise duties in order to achieve limitations of the amount of waste, change of conduct among the consumers through initiation of information campaigns, limitations of the use of transport packaging, introduction of a general 'green' purchasing policy etc.

Naalakkersuisut also wants the principle of sustainability incorporated in other areas and plans for the coming years to focus on a stronger effort to create specific and realistic goals regarding the issue of sustainable development. During these efforts Naalakkersuisut finds it important to involve our citizens and not at least the municipalities. The municipalities together with the national municipal organization KANUKOKA are crucial partners in the process of implementing our plan; a dialogue between the partners has already been initiated at different specific levels.

Among the goals outlined by Naalakkersuisit at this point I want to mention that all new constructions must be environmentally sustainable, that Greenland is working to achieve a completely established energy sector based on environmentally friendly forms of energy that has continuously focus on the utilization of alternative energy sources, that the development of the transportation sector is focused on the reduction of CO<sup>2</sup>, that our purchase pattern must be environmentally sustainable through e.g. purchase of environmentally branded products, that the development of trades be performed with a focus on sustainability etc.

Furthermore we have a wish of reducing our usage of energy, water and other resources. As an example of a specific initiative regarding this goal I can mention that we are today exercising a pilot project on drawing up energy accounts at certain chosen companies. The accounts include statements of usage of electricity, water and heat. The experiences gained from this pilot project may be utilized in case of a future requirement to include and expand other environmental factors of the accounts of various companies concerning other environmental conditions; the so-called 'green' accounts.

Naalakkersuisit furthermore puts much importance to be active within the international cooperation regarding a sustainable development with those areas, our environment and our nature. Only in cooperation with other countries we can tackle the challenges facing us today and in the years to come. In relation to this point I would like to emphasize our cooperation within the Arctic Council and the Nordic Ministers Council as a crucial element of our efforts in the years to come.

Finally I would like to express my gratitude by the organization of this seminar, and I look forward to our discussions on sustainable development, including of course the issues of the environment and the nature.