



## Ilisimatitsissut Notat

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**Næstformanden for Naalakkersuisuts tale ved Nordisk Ministerråds seminar om  
'Bæredygtig udvikling i boliger, energi og transport'**

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[tidsramme: 10 minutter]

**Distinguished ministers, participants in the debate on sustainable development,  
environmental researchers, ladies and gentlemen,**

It is a privilege for me to be here today and to represent the Government of Greenland at a seminar focusing on sustainable development in housing, energy and transport. These themes will be seen in the light of social and environmental challenges in the Arctic and the Nordic area in general - with inspiration from our special Bhutanese guest speaker, who will talk of happiness as a gross domestic product.

The Greenlandic philosophy of life is based on the appreciation of the 'inter-connectedness of all things' - a connectedness that reaches far beyond the individual.

Sustainable development has three interdependent dimensions: the economic, the social, and the ecological. A sound economy, good public health and a safe and robust environment are factors that are mutually dependent and are preconditions for sustainable development. None of these dimensions must be allowed to undermine the others. However the economic dimension has the capacity to sustain growth in the social and ecological dimensions.

The Arctic is a challenge when it comes to all areas within construction and sustaining a reliable infrastructure. It is an expensive business, which sometimes forces us to minimise environmental standards for the well-being of the people. With the introduction of Self-Government and the ambition for a self-reliant economy, enhancing the economy will be essential for the coming years.

And as stated in an old Inuit proverb, change is needed "he who hesitates is frost". In order to meet the challenges on the following areas: housing, energy and transport, we have to state education and research, public participation and local sustainability strategies as necessary tools for sustainable development.

Many of the above mentioned challenges are not unique for sparsely populated areas – they are global too. The topic of making energy efficiency profitable is a strong and governing unit. As an individual person and without legislation it is possible to make big progress through reducing ones own consumption, for example through eco-driving and eco-sailing.

The infrastructure is 'island based', that is, no towns are connected except from by flight or by ship. This gives some issues in regard of supply and cargo delivery as well as passenger transport and not the least a challenge in regard of energy supply. Island operation is expensive for consumers and society.

We all have common but differentiated responsibilities regarding solidifying a sustainable development for a healthy planet for future generations. We face challenges here and now and in the future.

Independence from fossil fuels requires long-time investments in technology, knowledge transfer and belief in new opportunities through sustainable production of renewable energy i.e. hydropower, wind, solar power and geothermal energy. Hydropower is a strategic resource in Greenland, because it displaces fossil fuels with the use of sustainable energy and provides high security of supply at low costs.

There is an African proverb that says "*It takes a community to raise a child*". We need to aim for a sustainable development within our society in order to pass on a sustainable living and future for ourselves and the next generation.

In many places there is a great need for more public housing projects as well as a huge need for renovating existing housing, i.e. through better insulation. Thus the incentives have to balance the economy and investments. With regard to new housing projects, attention should be given to sound environmentally friendly building methods, complemented with the use of energy-saving technologies. Furthermore, there are the challenges of climate change i.e. in regard of permafrost and construction.

Besides the fact, that most problems can be solved by technical solutions, it is also of great importance to change behaviour. Intelligent tools are needed for changing behaviour. Distant meter reading to measure individual energy consumption has already proven to be a great success in our country. It is being introduced countrywide as one of the first countries worldwide. This is an example of a technology, where the consumers

by following their own energy consumption at the internet, quickly realise the potential in energy saving.

Transport is one of the big challenges in achieving a sustainable development due to the industries' high emissions. That includes transportation of people and goods for retail as for large-scale co-operations. Planes, ships and automobiles are the target of their own industries to be more environmentally friendly through new and innovative technology, design and fuel methods.

We are reliant on all three modes of transportation. To provide an efficient and economic sustainable strategy for a more efficient infrastructure and transportation system, the Government has organised a Commission of Transportation. Included in the Commission's mandate are considerations of mitigation of green house gases.

Cooperation is essential among the Arctic and Nordic countries as well as with the wider world. Greenland acknowledges a special interest in the technological and infrastructural development in order to support capacity building and knowledge-exchange.

We are looking forward to being co-host during the Danish Chairmanship for the Nordic Council of Ministers with several meetings planned on Greenlandic ground.

Finally, I wish you all a profitable day with sustainable and sound discussions.

Qujanaq!

Thank you!

Inussiarnersumik inuulluaqqusilluta

Med venlig hilsen

Metta Wiese

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