

Ladies and gentlemen, dear guests,

On behalf of the Municipality of Nuuk, it is a pleasure for me as mayor to bid you welcome to Nuuk and to Greenland. You have travelled here from afar, and I thank you for choosing to visit our town and country in order to contribute to the sixth International Congress for Arctic Social Sciences.

We are happy and proud that so many scientists with an interest in our country and region have come here to exchange knowledge about and help develop the Arctic countries. You have travelled here from many different countries and you represent a wide array of sciences but you have a focus on the polar world in common.

Your visit here means a lot to us for without knowledge of the many changes which our societies undergo these years, we cannot anticipate the future. We have a fine university in our city. It is of great value, however, to get inspiration from abroad and get others to see the affairs and phenomena we take for granted. This congress is therefore of major importance to Ilisimatusarfik as a university and to Nuuk and Greenland. Your stay helps put our society on the international agenda and connect the problems we have to a global level.

An English poet once said: Nobody is an island. Although we live on the greatest island in the world and although we are a mere 56.000 people, the quote is true, since we are not alone with the challenges we face. We can learn from each other on a conference like this one:

The climatic changes studied by some of you are a good example for human activity in one place has consequences for the living conditions somewhere else on the globe. We experience that here in Greenland, too.

The Arctic cultures also experience influences from the outside. Our Greenlandic culture has developed receiving impressions from particularly the Danish culture which is influenced by yet other cultures. The development in areas such as literature, politics, and the media is connected with similar developments in other countries. International research in the cultural affairs of the Arctic countries can help cast light on this.

Finally, I would like to mention an area such as the development of trade in which it is essential to use and build on current research and existing knowledge. In Greenland, projects in the fields of raw material extraction and tourism development become more and more important. Your knowledge and expertise which you will present on this congress are greatly appreciated.

We can learn from each other in the Arctic. I hope that the many lectures which you will present over the next couple of days as well as sessions and meetings with politicians, officials, businesspeople, and representatives of organizations will yield a rich output of knowledge for the benefit of all.

I also hope that you will enjoy your stay in our town and municipality.

Our municipality is geographically large. Next year it will merge with four other municipalities to form the second largest municipality in the world. It will be the only municipality in Greenland to span the ice cap and thus connect the east with the west of Greenland. The fiord and the mountains surrounding the town of Nuuk are teeming with life. The animal life here includes whales and reindeer, for instance.

Our municipality also has a rich cultural life. We are at present in the arts centre of the town and all of Greenland. Here you can enjoy dance performances, live music, film, pictorial art, and many other expressions of art on a regular basis. The town also has a wide array of educational establishments. Also, the political life of Greenland has its centre here in Nuuk.

Finally, I should like to mention that we would like our municipality to be a dynamic centre for industry and commerce in Greenland. The town has a well-functioning business life. Here in Nuuk people find employment within fields such as fishing, tourism, production, building, administration, and media.

Therefore, there is plenty of opportunity to study people and conditions of life in the Arctic here in Nuuk. I hope that your days here will prove rewarding and that you will use this occasion to establish new contacts. We look forward to being informed and to making the most of your knowledge in our continued effort to make the Arctic an even better place to live than it already is.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for coming. Once again a really cordial welcome to Nuuk. Enjoy the congress.

Thank you.