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Warsaw, 30th October 2019

Ministry
of Foreign Affairs
Legal and Treaty Department

6th WARSAW FORMAT MEETING PARTICIPANTS: THE OBSERVER STATES AND THE EU

Address to the Chair of Senior Arctic Officials Group

The Warsaw Format Meeting formula was established in 2010. The original idea was to create a platform to exchange views between the Arctic Council Observer States and the EU as well as to allow open discussion with the Arctic Council Chairmanship. The gatherings also provided the opportunity to meet experts from relevant areas of expertise as regards Arctic. The last meeting took place in Warsaw on 20th September 2019.

The main points of the agenda were to exchange views between the Observer States and the EU with the Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials Group of the Arctic Council in relation to Chairmanship plans as well as with the Chair of the EPPR Working Group and the head of Indigenous Peoples Secretariat.

The discussion is considered to be thorough and effective. It also proved that this platform provides a unique opportunity for direct engagement between all aforementioned parties and as such Warsaw Format initiative shall be continued.

The address below was agreed between the Observer States and the EU.

To the Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials Group,

- We, the Observer States and the EU, are strongly committed to continue our active and interactive engagement with the Arctic Council, its Members and the Permanent Participants, as well as the Working Groups (WG), Expert Groups (EG) and Task Forces (TF).
- We fully acknowledge the fact that the Arctic Council operates on the model “bottom-up” approach and the Observers are welcomed to engage at the expert level.
- However, we would like to strengthen our engagement also at SAO level, in order to support the Arctic Council in implementing its goals and objectives. Therefore, we would welcome any opportunities and enhanced support to engage more actively.

- In particular, at the SAO plenary level we note the considerable substantive value of special sessions as part of the agenda of Senior Arctic Officials (SAO) Plenary meetings and the tradition of breakfast meetings with the Arctic Council Chair during SAO Plenary meetings (initiated by the US Chair). However, knowing the growing number of Observers, a vision on how to incorporate the Observer States' voice in a manner that is most reflective of their contributions would be appreciated.
- Therefore, together with the Arctic Council we would like to explore new forms of enhanced engagement by Observers. In particular, we consider that we all should make efforts to make all Observers' participation a meaningful one, whenever the circumstances allow to do so. We believe that the more active role is assigned the better for all parties involved. Such a form of engagement could be a more coordinated approach i.e. when the position of few parties may be presented by one, in order to make discussions easier and effective.
- We do declare that the Observer States and the EU will support the Chairmanship in the process and remain at its disposal in this respect.
- Separately, we reiterate our appreciation to all SAO Chairs of the Arctic Council who have supported and engaged with us at the Warsaw Format meetings. We do look forward to incoming Chairmanships and their positive answer to this initiative.
- We also noted that the Warsaw Format Meeting formula constitutes an effective platform to engage with the Arctic Council. Therefore, we consider organizing it on annual basis, under the principle of full visibility and transparency.

We do hope that the aforementioned ideas and proposals will be found interesting and valuable for the work of the Arctic Council.
