

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a genuine pleasure for me to be here today with you.

This trip to Lapland, which is all too quick, provides me with an opportunity both to return to such a beautiful part of the world and see personalities I appreciate, like Anders Oskal, Helena Omma and Klemet Erland Heatta, that I am so glad are with us here.

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Your invitation is proof of the close ties between us, beyond geographic distances. And these ties resonate with my most heartfelt convictions.

They are the result of a long family tradition, since my great-great-grandfather Prince Albert I already explored the Arctic region over a century ago. His long expeditions, in what were obviously difficult conditions, had a strong impact on him. They taught him the importance of these zones and their treasures, indispensable both to Science and the balance necessary to all humankind.

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From this ‘Scholar Prince’, as he was known at the time, I inherited my awareness of the fragile wonders on which our very existence depends. This is why I, too, am so deeply attached to your part of the world.

Observing the landscapes around us, and especially by setting out to meet their inhabitants, I can only take the measure of the threats looming over us and the urgency of taking appropriate action.

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Just a few days ago, the journal *Nature Climate Change* informed us that these threats are even more pressing than we had feared so far. The current rate of warming could trigger a rise in temperatures of 3° to 4°C in the century, possibly leading in the long run to melting of the entire ice cap.

It must be remembered that your regions are important for the entire world. They suffer the consequences of irresponsible practices observed all over the Planet. And their deterioration would affect all human beings.

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This strong solidarity that binds us all to you is exacting. But it is not sufficiently well understood since many of our contemporaries have the legitimate reflex of deeming that they are concerned only by their own immediate environments.

This is obviously untrue. Today, we well know that the main phenomena threatening us, global warming in particular, disregard national borders and continents, even if their impact is greater and more visible in certain regions.

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This awareness is something I try to share. I do so in particular through my Foundation, which is most active in fighting climate change, protecting biodiversity and conserving water.

I am invited to participate on many occasions when the problems of the Arctic are addressed. Whenever I am given the opportunity, I reiterate everything we owe to the Arctic, and what we risk soon if we persevere in our recklessness and passivity. In this respect I am very proud of the agreement signed yesterday with the International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry, the concrete result of a partnership engaged in since last year.

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I also want to recall that the issue of the Arctic exceeds the mere notions of climate and geophysics to which it is too often reduced. The future of the Arctic cannot be limited to polar bears, glaciers and hydrocarbon reserves.

If the Arctic is important, it is also and above all for local peoples, also under threat today along with their environment.

I am thinking of the direct impact on the environment of indigenous peoples, who see their natural environment changing year after year. I am also thinking of the profound changes in social practices and mentalities, those countless silent revolutions that alter the equilibria and traditions inherited over their long history.

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This daunting challenge often leaves these men and women helpless, and this includes you. Yet with their traditions, it is part of the cultural heritage of all humankind that is in jeopardy.

This makes it imperative to assist by standing by their side to preserve their environments and help them regain full control over their destinies.

In fact, these peoples only too often are unable to benefit from the potentialities for economic development existing in the region, in particular due to technological progress.

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These peoples are the victims of a damaged environment and precarious living conditions as well as exposure to sanitary hazards. Their environment and social organisation suffer from this upheaval and must not be forgotten.

Here as elsewhere, the environmental cause needs the contribution of local peoples. They alone are truly familiar with the reality of the pace of Nature. They alone are able to detect the slightest warnings of their regions' millennia-old equilibria. And they alone can help us take action in the Planet's poorly known extreme reaches.

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This is why local protection projects must never overlook them – This includes *you*. This guarantees both efficacy and justice.

We should do more to involve local peoples in decision making and recognise their rights and aspirations. We must help them adapt to changes in Nature and perpetuate ancestral practices that are a peerless cultural treasure and represent their identity, as well as being essential elements for the region's stability. I am thinking, of course for example, of reindeer herding, which we must preserve, taking full advantage of the potentialities offered by new technologies.

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We must also help indigenous peoples become better integrated in a globalised world, where decisions made at the antipodes may have serious consequences. I believe, in particular, in the formation of new elites that will now have to take constraints and opportunities into consideration on a planetary scale.

In this respect, I would like to rejoice here in the partnership between my Foundation and the University of the Arctic and extend my warm greetings to its representatives. For me, the University of the Arctic is exactly the kind of project that must be encouraged.

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I sincerely hope that, like so many other projects begun here, it will continue developing. And to that end I hope it will receive support from the major countries that emit greenhouse gases, however geographically distant, which are directly responsible for the problems raised here.

Indeed, we must do our utmost to support indigenous peoples collectively in adapting to these new conditions. The youngest must be able to shape their destinies, oversee their future without falling victim to upheaval over which they have no control.

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Despite appearances, the fight to save the environment remains a struggle in the service of humankind. It is for them and with them that we must fight. For their children and ours, we must both devise a new form of growth compatible with shared progress, and make the world more accountable, respectful and compassionate - in short more sustainable.

Today, we must progress for the sake of these young people, so they can control their future and make themselves heard in this new world in the making. Despite the hazards, this will be their world. It will become even more so if we help them adapt to climate change and conduct their own struggle to counter its effects!

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In this, I see today's initiative as very positive, arising from the common awareness of indigenous peoples, who must unite the better to make themselves heard.

Ladies and gentlemen, Dear friends,

President Obama said: "We come from many places, but we share a common future." I believe this common destiny must be highlighted today. It is our most cherished hope in the face of the challenge awaiting us and that is, above all, a challenge to solidarity: solidarity between peoples, as well as future generations.

This common destiny has brought together here today.

Thank you.