FAIRBANKS DECLARATION 2017

On the Occasion of the Tenth Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council

We, the Ministers representing the eight Arctic States, joined by representatives of the six Permanent Participant organizations, have gathered in Fairbanks, Alaska, at the conclusion of the second United States Chairmanship, at the Tenth Ministerial meeting of the Arctic Council,

Reaffirming the commitment to maintain peace, stability, and constructive cooperation in the Arctic,

Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the Arctic Council and its emergence as the preeminent intergovernmental forum for the Arctic Region, and **affirming** the commitment to further strengthen the Arctic Council and its activities,

Reaffirming our commitment to the well-being of the inhabitants of the Arctic, to sustainable development and to the protection of the Arctic environment,

Recognizing the rights of Arctic indigenous peoples and the unique role of the Permanent Participants within the Arctic Council, as well as the commitment to consult and cooperate in good faith with Arctic indigenous peoples and to support their meaningful engagement in Arctic Council activities,

Acknowledging the contributions of local authorities, and the interests of all Arctic residents and communities in the work of the Arctic Council,

Further recognizing that activities taking place outside the Arctic region, including activities occurring in Arctic States, are the main contributors to climate change effects and pollution in the Arctic, and **underlining** the need for action at all levels,

Noting with concern that the Arctic is warming at more than twice the rate of the global average, resulting in widespread social, environmental, and economic impacts in the Arctic and worldwide, and the pressing and increasing need for mitigation and adaptation actions and to strengthen resilience,

Noting the entry into force of the Paris Agreement on climate change and its implementation, and **reiterating** the need for global action to reduce both long-lived greenhouse gases and short-lived climate pollutants, and

Reaffirming the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the need for their realization by 2030,

HEREBY:

ARCTIC OCEAN SAFETY, SECURITY AND STEWARDSHIP

1. Note with concern the widespread impacts of climate change on the Arctic marine environment and **decide** to continue efforts to assess these impacts as a basis for marine stewardship and adaptation,

2. Welcome the operational exercises that have advanced the implementation of the Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic, as well as cooperation through the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, and **request** continued actions within the framework of that Agreement to promote regional capability and readiness,

3. Welcome the entry into force of the Polar Code to ensure safe and environmentally sound shipping in the harsh Arctic marine environment, and **encourage** continued engagement by Arctic States, including at the International Maritime Organization, to facilitate harmonized implementation and enforcement of the Polar Code, and **note** with appreciation the establishment of the Arctic Shipping Best Practices Information Forum to promote the implementation of the Code,

4. Note the discussions within the International Maritime Organization on the use and carriage of heavy fuel oil by ships in Arctic waters and the assessment of associated risks, and **decide** to provide expertise and information developed through the ongoing work of the Arctic Council for consideration by those involved in Arctic shipping matters, including at the International Maritime Organization,

5. Note that the Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic has entered into force, **recognize** its important role in ensuring the protection of the Arctic marine environment from oil pollution incidents, **welcome** operational exercises and reports in support of its implementation including the database on Arctic response assets, and **encourage** their continuation,

6. Reiterate the importance of oil pollution prevention, preparedness, and response, and the role of research, technology and community participation, and **welcome** the status report on the oil pollution prevention framework plan and the Circumpolar Oil Spill Response Viability Analysis as concrete steps towards realizing this goal,

7. Recognize the value of sustained biodiversity monitoring, **welcome** the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program's State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report as the first of its kind, **welcome** the summary report, and **encourage** further efforts to address monitoring needs and to develop biodiversity status reports for other Arctic ecosystems,

8. Welcome the Arctic Protected Area Indicator Report, **adopt** the Marine Protected Area Network Toolbox, and **encourage** additional work to help implement the Framework for a Pan-Arctic Network of Marine Protected Areas in order to strengthen marine ecosystem resilience and to foster the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources,

9. Note with concern the vulnerability of Arctic marine ecosystems to the impacts of ocean acidification, **reiterate** the need to study and raise awareness of the impacts of increasing acidity in the marine areas of the Arctic, and **decide** to continue efforts to study the effects of ocean acidification in the Arctic and its environmental, social and economic consequences,

10. Welcome the progress made on implementing the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment recommendations, **note** the importance of increased understanding of Arctic shipping activities and of reducing the risks to the Arctic marine environment, **acknowledge** the creation of the Framework for Cooperative Action on Arctic Ship Traffic Data Sharing, and **welcome** the Arctic Regional Reception Facilities Outline and Planning Guide,

11. Note with concern the increasing accumulation of marine debris in the Arctic, its effects on the environment and its impacts on Arctic communities, and **decide** to assess the scope of the problem and contribute to its prevention and reduction, and also to continue efforts to address growing concerns relating to the increasing levels of microplastics in the Arctic and potential effects on ecosystems and human health,

12. Recognize the increasing need for regional cooperation to promote the conservation and sustainable use of the Arctic marine environment, **adopt** the report of the Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation as an assessment of future needs and existing mechanisms of cooperation, and its recommendations to strengthen coordinated marine stewardship, and **decide** to establish a new mandate for the Task Force to build upon this work by presenting terms of reference for a possible new subsidiary body, and recommendations for complementary enhancements to existing Arctic Council mechanisms, for consideration by Ministers in 2019,

IMPROVING ECONOMIC AND LIVING CONDITIONS

13. Reaffirm the role of the Arctic Council in promoting sustainable development through harmonizing its three core pillars in an integrated way: economic development, social development and environmental protection,

14. Recognize the vital importance of healthy Arctic communities, homes and peoples, and the essential role of the human and social dimension in the work of the Arctic Council, **welcome** reports and policy recommendations on food security and culture, on the One Health approach in the Arctic, on mental wellness and suicide prevention, and on access to safe water and sewer services, and **encourage** continued work on these issues,

15. Further **recognize** the vital importance for human health of a healthy natural environment in the Arctic, **welcome** the advancements made to reduce pollutants, such as dioxins, furans,

heavy metals, as well as black carbon, and **encourage** continued work on these issues at all levels,

16. Look forward to the entry into force of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, **encourage** prompt and effective implementation of the Convention by the parties, which is important in our efforts to reduce mercury contamination in the Arctic, **welcome** continued progress in the implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, and **welcome** the work on Chemicals of Emerging Arctic Concern, addressing new potential persistent organic pollutants and other pollutants,

17. Recognize the importance of collaborating with the private sector, **welcome** the operationalization of the Arctic Economic Council, and **look forward** to strengthened co-operation in order to enhance responsible economic development and to build partnerships for issues of common interest and capacity-building of Arctic populations,

18. Recognize the need for an improved understanding of the economy, socio-economic living conditions and environmental issues in the Arctic, and **welcome** the third Economy of the North Report as a resource for decision-makers,

19. Welcome the assessment on telecommunications infrastructure in the Arctic and its associated findings and recommendations, **note** the importance of furthering efforts to improve telecommunications in the Arctic as a means to support thriving Arctic communities, and **decide** to establish a Task Force on Improved Connectivity in the Arctic to compare the needs of those who live, operate, and work in the Arctic with available infrastructure, and to work with the telecommunications industry and the Arctic Economic Council to encourage the creation of required infrastructure with an eye toward pan-Arctic solutions, and to report to Ministers in 2019,

20. Note the critical role that energy plays in promoting sustainable development, **reiterate** the need to improve the access of Arctic communities to clean, affordable and reliable energy sources including renewable energy, **recognize** the potential to further reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and black carbon, to enhance energy efficiency and conservation, **welcome** the Arctic Remote Energy Networks Academy initiative, the Arctic Renewable Energy Atlas, and the Wind-Diesel Project at the Tundra Collective in the Murmansk Region as concrete steps towards this goal, and **encourage** national continuation of these initiatives and additional efforts to identify innovative energy infrastructure solutions in the Arctic,

21. Recognize the importance of education in fostering sustainable development and building resilience in Arctic communities, **encourage** the advancement of equal access to good education at all levels, from early childhood to post-secondary, to all Arctic residents, paying particular attention to empowerment and capacity-building of indigenous youth and involving the University of the Arctic where appropriate, and **encourage** international co-operation in developing culturally appropriate teacher competencies,

22. Welcome the initiative concerning preschool education practices aiming to raise the living standards of Arctic indigenous peoples while maintaining their cultures and languages and **encourage** the establishment of a program for training indigenous youth in the documentation of traditional knowledge related to food, food entrepreneurship and innovation,

ADDRESSING THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

23. Note again that the Arctic is warming at more than twice the rate of the global average, **note** with concern that the pace and scale of continuing Arctic warming will depend on future emissions of greenhouse gases and short-lived climate pollutants, **reiterate** the importance of global action to reduce both greenhouse gases and short-lived climate pollutants to mitigate climate change, and **call** for the Arctic Council to undertake additional analyses to contribute to the assessment reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and continued collaboration with all levels of governments,

24. Adopt the first Pan-Arctic report on collective progress to reduce black carbon and methane emissions by the Arctic States and numerous Observer States and its recommendations, including an aspirational collective goal, **acknowledge** the importance of implementing those recommendations as nationally appropriate, recognizing that Arctic communities are entitled to develop in accordance with their needs and interests, **note** the importance of the continued work of the Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane, **recognize** the gains that some industries have already made in reducing the emissions and intensity of greenhouse gases, including methane, and **underscore** the important role of industry in fostering innovative technologies to contribute to further reductions in greenhouse gases and short-lived climate pollutants,

25. Recognize that resilience and adaptation to climate change are important for Arctic communities and ecosystems, **welcome** the three regional Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic Overview Reports that further our understanding of integrated climate, social and ecological change, as well as the Arctic Resilience Report and Synthesis for Arctic Leaders, **adopt** the Arctic Resilience Action Framework to track suggested circumpolar resilience priorities and to coordinate such efforts, and **welcome** actions as appropriate to address those priorities,

26. Welcome the creation of the Framework for the Circumpolar Expansion of the Local Environmental Observer Network and **encourage** expansion of such networks,

27. Recognize that climate change is the most serious threat to Arctic biodiversity, **reiterate** our commitment to safeguarding biodiversity under changing conditions, and **look forward** to the second Arctic Biodiversity Congress in 2018,

28. Recognize that rapid change in the Arctic is increasing the region's vulnerability to invasive alien species, **adopt** the Arctic Invasive Alien Species Strategy and Action Plan, and **encourage** their implementation with the aim to prevent, control, and eradicate invasive alien species,

29. Reiterate the importance of climate science to our understanding of the changing Arctic region and our activities in the Arctic environment, **welcome** the work towards a regional digital elevation model, and **encourage** continued efforts to coordinate the management and sharing of data that serve as indicators and predictors of climate change, based, *inter alia*, on the World Climate Research Program of the World Meteorological Organization,

30. Recognize the need to increase cooperation in meteorological, oceanographic and terrestrial observations, research and services, and the need for well-maintained and sustained observation networks and continuous monitoring in the Arctic, such as the World Meteorological Organization's Global Cryosphere Watch Program,

31. Recognize the importance of scientific assessments and projections to informed decision-making in the Arctic, incorporating as well traditional and local knowledge, and the reliance of Arctic biodiversity and inhabitants on the availability of freshwater, **welcome** the updated assessment of Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost in the Arctic, **note** with concern its findings, and **adopt** its recommendations,

32. Reaffirm the need for an ecosystem approach to management in the Arctic, **welcome** the Status of Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach to Management in the Arctic Report, and **encourage** future efforts to develop practical guidelines for implementing an ecosystem approach,

33. Announce the Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation, the third legally binding agreement negotiated under the auspices of the Arctic Council, which will help increase effectiveness and efficiency in the development of scientific knowledge about the region as well as strengthen scientific cooperation in the Arctic region, and **encourage** its implementation by all parties following its entry into force,

STRENGTHENING THE ARCTIC COUNCIL

34. Recognize that the Arctic Council continues to evolve, responding to new opportunities and challenges in the Arctic, and **instruct** the Senior Arctic Officials to develop a strategic plan based on the Arctic Council's foundational documents and subsidiary body strategies and guiding documents, for approval by Ministers in 2019,

35. Recognize the important work carried out by the Arctic Council Secretariat and the Secretariats of the Arctic Council Working Groups, and **encourage** further efforts to strengthen their capacity,

36. Recognize the need to inform Arctic residents and the general public of the work of the Arctic Council, **welcome** the Arctic Council's successful communications efforts and **note** the updated 2016 Communications Strategy and the Communications and Outreach Guidelines to be used by the Arctic Council and its subsidiary bodies,

37. Note the ongoing initiatives undertaken to enhance the accountability and transparency of the work of the Arctic Council, and **welcome** the work to complete the archives of the Arctic Council,

38. Welcome the contribution of the Arctic Council Project Support Instrument to the protection of the Arctic environment by providing and leveraging financing for pollution mitigation projects, including the recent completion of its first projects,

39. Note with appreciation the work done by the Permanent Participants to establish the Álgu Fund to strengthen their capacity, and **acknowledge** existing mechanisms to support their active participation,

40. Welcome the Working Group Common Operating Guidelines that will strengthen the coherence of the work and procedures of the Arctic Council and its subsidiary bodies,

41. Instruct Senior Arctic Officials to explore the possibility of establishing formal cooperation mechanisms, such as memoranda of understanding, with those intergovernmental organizations that could contribute to the work of the Arctic Council, and submit relevant proposals on the potential structure and content of any such mechanisms to Ministers in 2019,

42. Recognize the positive contributions of Observers to the work of the Arctic Council, **note** the efforts made by the Senior Arctic Officials and the subsidiary bodies to enhance engagement with Observers, and **encourage** further efforts to strengthen this working relationship,

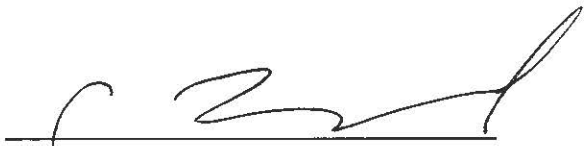
43. Note the review of those Observers in the Arctic Council admitted during the years 1998-2000, **reaffirm** the Observer status of those reviewed, and **instruct** the Senior Arctic Officials to conduct a review of the remaining accredited Observers and report the outcome to Ministers in 2019,

44. Welcome the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, Oceana, the National Geographic Society, the Oslo-Paris Commission, Switzerland, the West Nordic Council and the World Meteorological Organization as new Observers, and also **commit** to invite, in cooperation with the Arctic Economic Council, representatives of industry and business associations to participate as experts in relevant activities of the Arctic Council,

45. Adopt the Senior Arctic Officials Report to Ministers, including its working group deliverables and work plans, **approve** the Arctic Council Secretariat budget for 2018 and 2019, and **instruct** Senior Arctic Officials to review and adjust the mandates and work plans of the Arctic Council working groups and other subsidiary bodies as necessary, and

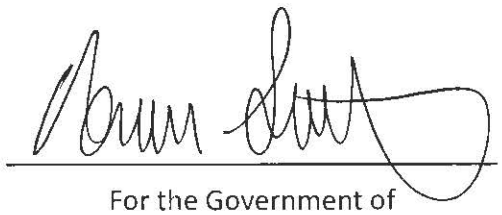
46. Acknowledge with appreciation the United States' role in chairing the Arctic Council during the period 2015 – 2017, and **accept with appreciation** Finland's offer to chair the Council for the period 2017 – 2019 and to host the eleventh Ministerial meeting in 2019.

Signed by Representatives of the Arctic Council
11th Day of May, 2017
Fairbanks, Alaska



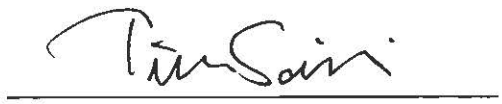
For the Government of Canada
Christina Alexandra Freeland
Minister of Foreign Affairs

For the Government of Norway
Børge Brende
Minister of Foreign Affairs



For the Government of
the Kingdom of Denmark
Anders Samuelsen
Minister of Foreign Affairs

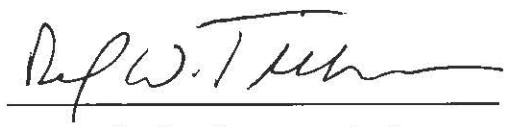
For the Government of
the Russian Federation
Sergey Lavrov
Minister of Foreign Affairs



For the Government of Finland
Timo Soini
Minister for Foreign Affairs

For the Government of Sweden
Margot Wallström
Minister for Foreign Affairs

For the Government of Iceland
Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson
Minister for Foreign Affairs



For the Government of
the United States of America
Rex Tillerson
Secretary of State