

NEW ARCTIC COUNCIL AGREEMENT WILL IMPROVE RESCUE EFFORTS IN THE ARCTIC

At the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting today the eight Arctic States signed an Agreement on cooperation in Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic. It will strengthen cooperation between the states in response to future accidents.

12 May 2011. Today in Nuuk, Greenland, Foreign Ministers and leaders of the indigenous peoples of the Arctic Council met to set out future policy for the Arctic Council.

Lene Espersen, Foreign Minister of Denmark and outgoing chair of the Arctic Council states

- Denmark is very satisfied with the result of the ministerial meeting in Nuuk. The Search and Rescue Agreement is ground-breaking, as it is the first legally binding agreement negotiated under the auspices of the Arctic Council and an important step towards safe shipping in the Arctic.

The Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, incoming chair of the Arctic Council states

- Arctic Countries need enhanced cooperation on many future challenges in the Arctic, not least prevention, preparedness and response to oil spills. As incoming chair we will press forward with this agenda.

The Arctic Council today released a major study on environment that shows that climate change is having a more profound impact on the Arctic environment than previously understood. Substantial cuts in CO2 emissions and other greenhouse gases are the backbone of global climate change efforts. Another Arctic Council study shows that “soot” (black carbon), ground level ozone and methane may account for up to 40% of observed warming in the Arctic.

The Foreign ministers decided to strengthen the Arctic Council establishing a secretariat to increase the ability of the Arctic Council to address future challenges in the region.