

*UArctic Congress opening panel “Arctic Agenda 2030: a challenge?” –
Introduction
Helsinki, September 2018*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

Raising the issue of the Arctic in 2030 means questioning the equilibrium of our Planet and its future.

Quite simply it means raising the question of our world in 2030 and therefore our capacity to take action between now and then.

2030 is tomorrow. Which means that the mechanisms that will be shaping the region in 2030 are already at work.

Global warming is an extremely slow process, whose effects take decades to appear and whose sources will take centuries to disappear, supposing that we are indeed able to alleviate them.

Pollution is already a reality that sadly nothing has curbed sufficiently so far.

Human activities in the Arctic are in such a phase of expansion that they will be impossible to stop by 2030. At most, we will be able to limit and regulate their development.

Consequently, we cannot reverse the trend before 2030. And we will not have saved the Arctic by that date.

On the other hand, perhaps we will have laid the foundations for efficient collective action by then.

Perhaps we will have raised greater awareness among the States and companies responsible for the degradation of these regions.

Perhaps we will have implemented new forms of collective action, in particular within the context of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Perhaps we will have developed extensive conservation areas, including in the High Seas, for which we are working at UN level with the negotiations that have just initiated in New York.

Perhaps we will have given resolute impetus to the low-carbon economy, without which global warming could not be contained.

Perhaps we will have implemented efficient strategies for adaptation to climate change.

And if we have done all this, we will have made good progress, for the Arctic and for the planet, because we will have set a decisive movement in motion.

This is personally the hope I would express for 2030, and this is my fervent desire: to ensure that our means of action by that time are commensurate with the challenges that lie for us ahead, and which lie ahead for the Arctic.

Today's meeting clearly demonstrates that such hope is already in motion.

An increasing number of our contemporaries are calling for this. It is up to us to respond to them, encourage them and remain one step ahead of them.

If we manage to achieve this goal in the Arctic, then we can do it for the rest of the world.

Because this Region is both the crux of many environmental issues and a universal symbol. The Arctic is both local and global.

Taking action for the Arctic, implementing here the means for collective action we need, is therefore not only taking action to directly maintain our world's balance, but also showing everyone that action is possible.

It is proving that resignation, disaster and inadequacy are not the only outlook for this endangered Planet.

It is these means of action that I would like us to discuss here today. Means that require determination and efficiency only.

Thank you.