



Speech for the closing plenary of Copenhagen Climate Ministerial 2025

The Ministry for Nature and Environment

Mr. Bentiarq Ottosen

Copenhagen, May 8th, 2025



Dear Excellencies and colleagues

I would like to express my gratitude for being given this opportunity to speak to all of you with a renewed sense of hope.

When we have hope, we find the will.
And when we have the will, we find new solutions.

I want to carry that hope forward—and let it inspire action in the Arctic, which is now at the center of the world.

Yet it is the people — the body and souls of our countries — who should remain at our center.

That's why I want to bring their narratives forward today, to illustrate why climate action must be about more than just targets and pathways. Climate action is about our homes, our families and our future generations.



Let me take you to the northernmost part of Greenland — to Qaanaaq.

In Qaanaaq, the air is so crisp it sings in your lungs.

Sledge dogs bark in the distance.

The wind sweeps across with a voice of its own.

You can experience both the harmony and harshness of nature.
The power of our nature is interconnected with humans.

In Qaanaaq, the sea ice no longer comes as it once did.
It arrives late, it arrives thin — and some winters, it doesn't arrive at all.

The environment is changing, and so are the conditions for the local hunters and fishermen.



Yet, the people adapt — as we Inuit have always done.

The hunter reads the “Sila,” the weather and climate, drawing on Indigenous Peoples knowledge passed down through generations. That knowledge guides not just his hunt, but the wellbeing of the whole community.

Over 2000 kilometers south of Siorapaluk, sheep farmers of Narsaq Kujalleq face a new reality:

Unpredictable weather, shifting seasons, and extreme conditions threaten livelihoods and ways of living.

From Siorapaluk in the North to Narsaq Kujalleq in the South. From Qaanaaq in the West to Ittoqqortoormiit in the East, we Inuit live and breathe on the frontline of climate change.

In Greenland, climate change is visible, accelerating and it is impacting livelihoods.



As the rainforest of the Amazon acts as the lungs of Earth, The Greenland Ice sheet is its heart, pumping cold water from north to south;

a vital organ that regulates the planet's climate and helps keep global temperatures in balance.

However, our Ice sheet – and the heart of the planet – is losing its strength, melting and causing sea level rise across the world.

Permafrost is thawing and destabilizing infrastructure.

We face extreme storms in the East, sea ice disappearing in the North, changing fisheries in the West, and unpredictable weather and ice conditions in the South.

Climate change is not uniform in Greenland. But everywhere, it touches the lives and livelihoods of people – especially Indigenous Peoples.



This is not just a Greenlandic story.

Across all seven sociocultural regions, Indigenous Peoples are experiencing different disruptions. Though, We as Indigenous Peoples may be different, we are united.

We live by, for, and with nature.

We have the right to our lands, territories, and natural resources.

We have the right to maintain, protect, and develop our cultures, languages, and ways of life.

We have the right to self-determination.

Yet our rights are under pressure. We must unite to hold on.

We are not passive bystanders, nor just stakeholders.

We are right-holders and agents of change.



Last year marked a turning point for Greenland.

We formally acceded to the Paris Agreement.

And we are now developing Greenland's first national climate strategy.

The strategy is founded on an inclusive participation model that engages the inhabitants across the country.

Indigenous Peoples Knowledge lay the foundation of the strategy.

This is a climate strategy *by Greenlanders, for Greenlanders, and to Greenland.*

It reflects who we are — and the development and future of our country.



At the same time, Greenland holds resources the world needs:

We have vast hydropower potentials, offering clean and renewable energy to the world.

Greenland is open for business — but not at any cost.

We will pursue development that is climate-conscious, socially responsible, and fully aligned with the rights of our people.

This is how we contribute not only as a vulnerable region — but also as a solution provider.



I strongly support the work of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform to ensure Indigenous-led climate action.

Indigenous Peoples protect much of the world's biodiversity - yet receive less than 1% of climate finance.

That ***must*** change.

We need direct and equitable access to funding for Indigenous Peoples-led solutions — rooted in culture, built on knowledge, and proven to work.

This is smart and effective climate action.



As we move toward COP30 in Belém, we must translate principles into action.

Indigenous Peoples must be involved from the beginning – through free, prior and informed consent – as equal partners, in both mitigation and adaptation measures. Our knowledge must be integrated and complement the best available science.

I commend the Brazilian Presidency for putting Indigenous Peoples at the center of the process.

Let us ensure action and implementation. Let us make it systemic.

From the Arctic to the Amazon. From the Amazon's lungs to the heart of our planet in the Arctic, we are ready to act — with our voices, our values, and our vision.

Qujanarujussuaq. *Thank you.*