



Minister Knud Kristiansen's speech at the Arctic Circle Greenland Forum about economic development for the inhabitants in the Arctic - The future of the Arctic industry - shipping and air transport.

First of all, I would like to thank you very much for inviting me to speak at this meeting and at today's exciting event. There are many important themes on the agenda, and I'm looking forward to a good debate about Arctic links in the transport sector - an area in which Greenland will witness an explosive development in future years.

Transportation by sea and air is - and will always be - of fundamental significance in our large country with its dispersed settlements and huge geographic distances. As you all know, transportation by land is not a real possibility outside of the towns.

Within air transport, the realization of our forward-looking plans within infrastructure means that Greenland will have far better air connections - internally in the country as well as to the surrounding world.

On 2 December 2015, the Parliament of Greenland made a number of highly ambitious and future-proof decisions which are to open up for Greenland's air services to be far more coherent, up-to-date and reliable for all travelers, the entire country and our guests. The construction of international airports in Nuuk as well as in Ilulissat opens up the possibility of realizing a large potential for tourism, and the North Atlantic airports in Qaqortoq as well as Tasiilaq will improve travel opportunities for the population and the accessibility for tourists from Iceland for example. Finally, a new, regional airport in Ittoqqortoormiit will connect the eastern region in a much better way.

These new and improved landing strips at several locations in the country will ensure improved transport connections to our neighboring countries in the Arctic region, to North America and to Europe.

More direct flight connections are expected, and the Government expects improved accessibility and connection to the surrounding world, reduced travel time and great travel prices with more offers on air tickets.

The flight connections will benefit foreign trade - import and export - through faster freight connections, including for example export of fresh fish from Greenland and import of goods fresh from the airplane. Business travelers will also be able to make briefer and more efficient business travels around Greenland and abroad with durations of no more than 1-2 days.

New opportunities open up for international airplanes to stop in Greenland at night. This might potentially bring new jobs to town in the form of permanent crew members, cleaning staff and technical staff for maintenance etc. If an airplane is parked in Greenland at night, there also is the possibility of an early, overseas morning flight, e.g. to Denmark or Iceland, and maybe a late evening flight back to Greenland.

Besides these measures to improve the infrastructure of Greenland, the Government has started discussions with the Government of Iceland about extending the cooperation in the field of aviation. I expect much from this cooperation and I anticipate great benefits. I foresee that this initiative will contribute to realizing the potential within aviation in general. The intention is firstly to explore the opportunities for expanding the existing good cooperation between the two countries with the aim of improving efficiency of air traffic services and collaborate on security measures.

In this context we wish to explore possible potentials of improving tourism and also improving the availability and access of the general public of the two countries to goods and services, through increased cooperation.

Great, new things are also happening within the shipping industry. In about six months, the new container terminal will be ready in Nuuk - Sikuki Nuuk harbor - a hub for all goods in and out of Greenland. The entire harbor area in Nuuk has been constructed to meet future needs, and infrastructure in Greenland will have a large and future-proof boost thanks to this hub.

Among other things, the new harbor will improve and render the provision of goods to and from Greenland more effective. To mention an example, it will be far easier to import food with a critical shelf life from the neighboring countries through faster transportation times because of reduced transit times.

With the new harbor, all of Greenland will be even better equipped to exploit our large potential within the fishing industry, tourism and the raw material sector. There are also many indications that climate changes may involve changes in international shipping which might mean that more ships will navigate the Arctic waters in the future. With the right infrastructure, this might contribute to create growth and jobs for Greenland and new business areas in the Arctic region.

Being Minister for Housing, Construction and Infrastructure, I am looking forward to good and constructive cooperation with you all. Together, we will work to ensure that we will have the best possible conditions for future transportation which will contribute to growth and jobs in the country and in the entire region.

Thank you!

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Kind regards,

Knud Kristiansen