

Arctic Environment Ministers meeting in Jukkasjärvi 5-6 February 2013

## **Written statement from Italy**

Thank you Mr Chairman,

Italy expresses its appreciation to the Swedish Presidency for the organization of this meeting of the Arctic Environment Ministers.

The Italian interest to the Arctic has an historical background. More than 80 years ago held the first Italian Arctic expedition commanded by Umberto Nobile, with the great Norwegian explorer Amundsen. The expedition took off from the Svalbard Islands, where 70 years later Italy inaugurated the Italian Arctic Station "Dirigibile Italia".

The Italian research activities in Arctic concerns many areas, in particular climate, air pollution, ozonosphere instability, physics of clouds and precipitation.

For Italy mitigation and adaptation to climate change is the most urgent priority in the environmental Agenda, at national and international level, as also reaffirmed in Doha last November.

Climate Change is a global concern but in Arctic its effects are more evident than in other regions. Arctic is indeed a very sensitive and delicate region in which climate is warming more rapidly than expected, with consequences at local and global level.

For such evidences Italy is convinced that it is necessary to continue and improve the scientific research and international cooperation in these regions.

Moreover, recently Arctic has been also associated to the growth interest of different Arctic and non-Arctic States to the new opportunities arising from it, in terms of access to natural resources (in particular oil and gas), economic interests (such as new sea routes) and tourism.

Italy believes that urgent is the need to re-launch and reinforce cooperation and collaboration among States in order to assure a protection of the arctic environment, to contribute in the fight to the global warming, to improve scientific research and ensure sustainability of the use of such new opportunities, in respect to the indigenous and local communities.

Italy is convinced more than ever that works under the Arctic Council can take advantage of an active role of non-Arctic states, as the Observers states also.

In this regard, Italy recalls its hope for a positive conclusion of the negotiations on the roles and level of engagements of both States Observers and others, in order to give a concrete answer on addressing major challenges in the Arctic with a global approach.

The next Ministerial meeting of the Arctic Council in Kiruna could be the concrete opportunity for the conclusion of such process, allowing Italy to be official observer as other EU non-Arctic Countries such as France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and United Kingdom.

Let us conclude this statement with our congratulations for the appointment of the new Director of the Permanent Secretariat wishing him a very fruitful and successful work.

Thank you.