**FORUM:** GA4

**QUESTION OF:** The geopolitical situation in the Arctic Circle

**SUBMITTED BY:** Denmark

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

*Defining* the Arctic Circle as any region north of the Arctic Circle, at a latitude of 66° 32’N,

*Acknowledging* that the majority of the 13.1 million people inhabiting the Arctic Region are indigenous people whose rights and way of life must be protected,

*Bearing in mind* that most disputes in the Arctic Region are due to control of maritime routes and natural resources such as oil and gas, as well as points of national pride,

*Alarmed by* the heightened effects of global warming on the Arctic Region, including ice melt and break up, increased pollution and loss of habitat for the non-human inhabitants of the region,

*Emphasising* the necessity of peaceful and sustainable development of the Arctic Region for future generations,

*Noting* that the Danish-Canadian dispute over Hans Island (native name Tartupaluk) has been unresolved since 1973 and has been used as a political device by politicians from both nations,

1. Congratulates the nations with claims in the Arctic Region on their past ability to solve disputes diplomatically and without the use of force, while hoping this continues indefinitely;
2. Approves the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea 1984 (UNCLOS) by all member states and its full application within the Arctic Ocean and surrounding seas;
3. Authorises the UNCLOS to extend the period of official submissions for the limits of each Arctic nation’s continental shelf and subsequent Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) for a further six years and two months, or until 1st January, 2025, when the 21-member arbitration panel from the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) will evaluate the competing claims and make suggestions to the relevant parties with special focus on:
   1. the Kingdom of Denmark’s credible 2014 claim on the Lomonosov Ridge as opposed to those made by Canada and Russia,
   2. the disputed maritime boundaries between Canada and the United States of America in the Beaufort Sea;
4. Supports the extension of the Arctic Council’s jurisdiction, making it able to operate under the following description:
   1. coordinating research within the Arctic region with the authority to order new research reports, fund research and deny proposed development of the region, such as oil drilling, if they are judged to have a negative effect on the ecosystem of the Arctic or its people
   2. providing support and information to UN organisations making decisions about the geopolitical situation within the Arctic
   3. coordinating the different committees and conventions regarding the Arctic Region, including the Arctic Council and the informal 'Five Arctic Ocean Coastal States'
   4. ensuring the rights of the indigenous people of the Arctic are respected and their voices heard
   5. providing a means for the establishment of an international liability and compensation convention and a possible international compensation fund for pollution damage caused by offshore oil exploration and exploitation;
5. Calls upon the implementation of a subsidiary commission of the Arctic Council, named the Commission for the Development of Claims on the Extension of Exclusive Economic Zones within the Arctic Circle (CEZAC), whose purpose is to, for instance;
   1. endorsing the aforementioned perambulatory clauses
   2. providing a mediatory platform for member states to discuss conflicting claims to land and sea within the Arctic Circle that have been approved by the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) and thereby help prevent member states seek bi- or multilateral agreements counselled by the Permanent Court of Arbitration
   3. extending the agenda of the Arctic Council to the security of indigenous lands and communities within the Arctic Circle;
6. Encourages the decision to take advantage of the unique opportunities to study processes of global importance by completing thorough and relevant research into the effects of human development on the Arctic Region, including but not limited to:
   1. the effects of climate change, as seen by the melting of polar ice, possibly through the North Greenland Eemian Ice Drilling (NEEM Ice Core Drilling) research project
   2. the effect of human pollution of air and sea resulting in phenomena such as the Arctic Haze
   3. the movement and habitat of the native species of the Arctic region, with emphasis on the best methods to protect the biodiversity of the region
   4. our shared planet’s geological history and the magnetic effects of the poles
   5. oceanic movements, such as direction and strength of current flow and oceanic heat transfer
   6. the seabed of the Arctic region, which can produce information pertinent to continental shelves and territorial claims;
7. Requests that relevant states take action on the issue of the exploitation of living resources, namely fish stocks, in a multilateral effort to prevent overfishing through actions such as but not limited to:
   1. drawing up new legislation pertaining to the regulations on fishing companies, especially with regards to:
      1. quotas
      2. specific fishing areas within the EEZ
   2. implementing punitive measures to be taken by each state’s judicial system in case of breach of this legislation
   3. relating the quota to an annual “Total Allowable Catch” (TAC) of the principal species, based on biological advice and respecting socio-economic concerns, commercial interests and international obligations
   4. Subjecting fishing proposed to take place in international waters to UNCLOS regulations;
8. Further requests that relevant states take additional action on the issue of the exploitation of living resources, in this case hunting of mammals, in ways such as but not limited to:
   1. using licences granted by the government of Arctic states to designate hunting rights
   2. continuing adherence to the International Whaling Commission’s regulation of the catch of large whales, especially in relation to the exemption granted for indigenous people
   3. respecting the indigenous population’s hunting rights by allowing them to have some jurisdiction over the allocation of hunting licenses
   4. pursuing effective management and control regimes to counter illegal, unreported and unregulated hunting, with responsibility for the Arctic Response Force;
9. Suggests that states in the Arctic region take advantage of the potential for renewable energy sources, such as but not limited to:
   1. hydropower initiatives, such as tidal turbines placed on the coasts of surrounding nations
   2. solar power to be used as universally as possible as a means of powering settlements throughout the Arctic region, especially during the Arctic summer;
10. Reminds member states of their responsibilities to develop the Arctic region’s mineral potential sustainably, based on methods such as but not limited to:
    1. licensing policy and strategy of competitive tenders in the oil and gas sector
    2. setting rules for exploitation, which will be continually adapted to optimise safety, health, environment and transparency standards through the use and improvement of best available techniques and practices, and which will include inspiration from other countries’ regulations, such as the Norwegian NORSOK standards
    3. ordering that terms and conditions for licenses to exploit must be reasonable for both larger and smaller companies, resilient to fluctuating market conditions as well as simple and easy to administrate for companies and authorities
    4. implementing operation with the knowledge of the potential safety, environmental and health risks
    5. respecting the limited nature of mineral resources, especially those of critical raw materials
    6. creating an appropriate supervisory body and ensuring compliance with the stipulations of this clause;
11. Draws attention to the necessity of following the International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) Polar Code which came into force on 1st January 2017, with emphasis on its safety and environmental requirements for ships operating in Arctic waters;
12. Endorses the creation of additional maritime safety measures by each member state to come into effect on 1st January 2020, including but not limited to:
    1. updating nautical charts and satellite-based systems, such as GPS
    2. ensuring the availability of reliable information on weather, sea conditions and ice
    3. enhancing surveillance of maritime traffic in the Arctic Region in order to prevent accidents and coordinate rescue operations;
13. Confirms opening the shipping routes through the Northwest Passage and the Northern Sea Route under the control of each nation, with the following requirements:
    1. passage through the routes will be free, under a new convention based on the Convention of Constantinople with regard to the Suez Canal
    2. ships will pay a toll equivalent to 1% of their cargo’s worth to a multilateral organisation composed of the nations whose waters the vessel passes through, in addition to their own nation’s tax or fee
    3. The aforementioned revenue will be used solely for the sustainable development of the region and its people and the use of this revenue is to be enforced by the Arctic Council;
14. Recommends the exercising of each Arctic state’s sovereignty and its surveillance to be conducted to that nation’s prerogative within the boundaries set by the Arctic Council, given that it does not break any international treaties or national laws and that each nation attaches great importance to confidence building and cooperation with Arctic partner countries;
15. Further supports the creation of a unified circumpolar group, consisting of the previously separate indigenous councils, designed to protect the indigenous people of the Arctic and their way of life, with this group being led largely by the indigenous people of the Arctic, but having representatives from each of the Arctic states in order to maintain international relevance, with the group being able to recommend topics and actions to the Arctic Council and with the jurisdiction of this group being on topics such as but not limited to:
    1. indigenous hunting and fishing rights respecting the cultural significance of these activities
    2. permission for resource extraction within the living area of the indigenous people;
16. Further encourages the agenda and development of the Arctic Marine Tourism Project (AMTP);
17. Further recommends the creation of education programmes to be tailored according to different demographics, emphasising the global importance of the Arctic Region to be run in a multilateral approach with each Arctic state taking a role, through methods such as but not limited to:
    1. summer schools held for secondary school students, such as the summer school in Kangerlussuaq, Greenland which gives opportunities to participants to learn about the region, develop an interest in science and international politics, as well as the opportunity to make contacts in other nations and develop language skills
    2. simple education programmes to be implemented in the schools of all member states
    3. more detailed programmes to be taught in secondary school science and geography classes;
18. Further suggests that Hans Island should be separated between Canada and Denmark according to the following requisites:
    1. the border should be drawn down the middle, connecting the maritime borders that exist on either end
    2. the island’s status may be changed if either nation can prove, by means of geological surveys carried out by either nation as well as a third-party organisation, that the island is a base point on the coast of Greenland or Ellesmere Island
    3. the rights to any resources such as oil or natural gas discovered on the island should be allocated to the nation within whose territory the deposit is found, given that the deposit does not transpose the international border, in which case the resource’s rights should be shared equally between Canada and Denmark.