

The Greenland Ministerial Dialogue on Climate Change Ilulissat, Greenland 16 –19 August 2005

Chair's summary

Ministers and heads of delegation from 22 countries met in Ilulissat, Greenland where they experienced the serious consequences of climate change in the Arctic region and were informed about the devastating local and global effects of this development.

Main points summarised by the Chair:

- 1. The benefit of an informal interactive political dialogue.** Ministers discussed informally in an open and confidential atmosphere without being bound by the normal constraints of fixed national positions. This meeting form was able to improve the common understanding of key issues and raise innovative ideas on how to move forward.
- 2. "The blaming game" has to stop.** Instead of blaming other countries for the lack of action all governments should present credible visions on how they could make their own fair contribution to combating global climate change. In this regard capacity building in developing countries is important.
- 3. Increased momentum and room for optimism.** Efforts to combat climate change seem to be on the rise and the momentum has increased since the last UNFCCC Conference of the Parties in Buenos Aires in 2004. The implementation of the Kyoto Protocol represents a crucial breakthrough. In addition the recent G8 summit emphasised the broad political will and the need for immediate action.
- 4. Action is needed now.** The scientific case has been made and there is a growing consensus on the need for action now. Several Ministers underlined how their countries are already experiencing severe economic, social and environmental consequences of climate change. Even if further targeted and ambitious action is taken immediately, global warming will continue for hundreds of years. The high costs of inaction imply that the choices we face are not between action and inaction but between various alternative courses of action. We cannot afford inaction.
- 5. Improving our knowledge on economic costs and benefits of climate change policies.** The need for more information on the costs associated with an "insufficient" effort to combat climate change was a crucial theme. We need to improve national and regional information on costs and benefits as a basis for making the assessments at the global level more reliable. Better macroeconomic analyses led by authoritative multilateral economic institutions could guide our adaptation and mitigation efforts.
- 6. Awareness raising.** There is a need to raise the awareness of the general public and in the private sector regarding the consequences of climate change. The possibility of launching a global public awareness campaign was mentioned. The upcoming International Polar Year represents an interesting opportunity in this regard.

- 7. Development, application and transfer of technologies.** Speeding up the development and transfer of technologies through appropriate financing and other incentives was mentioned as a crucial means of combating climate change. The massive expected global investment in the energy sector (16 trillion US dollars until 2030) represents a historic opportunity to develop the world's energy infrastructure in a more sustainable direction. The application of cleaner technologies is vital for achieving long term sustainable emission paths.
- 8. Integrating climate change into sustainable development.** Integrating climate change into sustainable development is urgently needed to further facilitate the engagement of developing countries into a future international regime. Combating climate change is a precondition for sustainable development and some countries mentioned that climate change related damage already amounts to several percent of their GDP. Co-ownership of joint efforts by all countries and living up to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities was mentioned as an essential condition for further action.
- 9. Looking ahead to the upcoming COP/MOP 1.** It is crucial to accelerate and expand the implementation of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) without impairing its environmental integrity. The conditions for the continuation and further development of the CDM beyond 2012 should be created as soon as possible. It is also essential to further elaborate on the Buenos Aires 5 year Work Programme on Adaptation. There is a need to establish a process for the future at the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties in Montreal.
- 10. Develop an inclusive strategy beyond 2012.** Ideas for strengthening long-term international cooperation on climate change were discussed. There was a general interest in exploring new options building on the UNFCCC framework such as for example sectoral targets, voluntary commitments and further differentiation of Parties within existing frameworks and type of commitments. The need to be able to compare different efforts is also crucial.

It was the general impression that the informal and confidential setting in Ilulissat proved to stimulate a constructive and more open interactive dialogue among Ministers and heads of delegation. Because of the fact that the informal dialogue proved to be constructive and stimulating Ministers from South Africa, Canada, Sweden and Denmark agreed to explore the possibilities of continuing the Dialogue initiated in Greenland. An informal Ministerial meeting in South Africa 2006 could be an option.