

**Conférence internationale
«l'Arctique : un observatoire pour relever les défis des changements
environnementaux»,**

co-organisée par la présidence française de l'Union européenne
et la Principauté de Monaco,
Monaco, 9 et 10 novembre 2008

Intervention de Neil Hamilton, Directeur du WWF-Arctic

Your Highness, Ministers, Excellencies, distinguished guests,

It is an honour to be able to speak at this significant forum. On behalf of civil society in general I thank you for this opportunity.

Let me begin by reminding you, like David Shukman, of what the Arctic is.

- It is a tenth of the planet, an enormous area, 30 million km², half land, half ocean and seas – much larger than any country;
- A hugely productive ecosystem, producing half the fish eaten in the EU, and half eaten in north America;
- The home to many people, including large numbers of indigenous peoples, who are living the impacts of climate change today, and may indeed be able to help us to understand how to adapt to the changes that are happening;
- A geostrategic periphery – the place where countries test each others resolve and intent, and occasionally their strength.

Finally, there is one further point however in the context of this conference that we must not forget:

The Arctic is changing faster and further than any other region on Earth, as a direct result of human induced climate change.

The Arctic is warming faster than we thought even a year ago.

The rules and legal regime, be they adequate or otherwise, are not protecting the Arctic.

Temperature, glaciers and ice sheets, river flows, permafrost, ecology, and of course sea ice are all changing at dangerously fast levels, often beyond the predictions of the best science

available. We have already lost perhaps 80% of the volume of the sea ice, the single most important factor in arctic ecology and biogeochemical function.

What conclusions should we draw from Arctic Science?

Firstly, that Science is not precautionary. Doing science alone will not protect the Arctic. Only political decisions can do that.

Secondly, Science tells us that what happens in the Arctic does not stay in the Arctic. It has global significance.

Two simple examples:

- Increasing freshwater input in the Arctic change ocean circulation patterns
- Changed albedo causes accelerating atmospheric heating

Thirdly, Science also tells us that the Arctic is also one of the most important components of the global climate system.

- Twice as much carbon in the top 2m of frozen soils as in the entire atmosphere; These soils are melting;
- The single largest carbon store after the combined global ocean is the boreal forest, which is increasingly subject to fire, disturbance, fragmentation, and other stresses.

Science also tells us that if we fail to act now to limit Greenhouse gas emissions we will suffer global impacts of serious proportions, as a direct result of the impacts of climate change in the Arctic. As we go above 2 degrees global average, most of these impacts are negative and increasingly severe.

Most importantly, science also tells us that we can avoid the worst of the impacts, but only if we act now.

The best available science shows that we do have the capacity to change tracks onto a path that will permit the climate system to adapt and stabilize in a predictable and stable manner. As an added bonus, this would prevent the Arctic from becoming the largest, and uncontrollable, source of carbon on the planet.

What we need to do is to adopt concrete, verifiable measures to reduce global emissions, and do it now.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this conference is taking place during two very important political processes affecting the arctic and Europe.

Firstly, we are just one month away from the UN's Poznan Climate conference.

Secondly, the EU is in the final round of agreeing its own policies for the period until 2020, the climate and energy package.

The two processes are closely interlinked: only if the EU agrees to ambitious climate policies will other developed countries, and later developing countries, follow on the path of reducing emissions.

The EU needs to show the way. Politically, EU citizens have never more strongly wanted their governments to act decisively against global warming.

The French Presidency and the other EU Member States have therefore a truly historic opportunity to influence the world's pathway towards a safe climate and a safe Arctic.

The EU has been here before. Now is particularly the time to honor the result of last year's Spring Council decisions, the Bali Roadmap, and above all, what science tells us is necessary to avoid dangerous climate change. WE NEED TO:

- work towards a global agreement which ensures that the world stays well below a 2°C threshold;
- ensure the EU does its fair share towards that goal, agreeing to reduce EU emissions domestically by an unequivocal 30%, to stay within the 25-40% agreed in the Bali roadmap;
- ensure that the vast majority of this action takes place domestically, showing that sustainable economic growth and environmental protection go hand in hand as well as

furthering the technological development we'll need for the much steeper reductions post 2020;

- agree on adequate, sustained and additional funding for developing countries to be able to mitigate and adapt to climate change. This point is a sine qua non for getting a global deal in Copenhagen next year;
- Furthermore, the EU must ensure its reductions are credible – which means a strong monitoring, reporting, verification and compliance regime, and that the polluter pays principle is adhered to, which means that under the ETS, pollution permits must be auctioned.

And we need these now!

If these basic principals are respected, the EU can enter the international negotiation arena with its head held high – safe in the knowledge that it protects the atmosphere, the Arctic and is a credible political leader on climate change. Should it fail to do so, science tells us already what will happen.

In short, ladies and gentlemen, the Arctic is the greatest wake up call Europe has ever had for the need to lead the world in reducing emissions. If we do not do it now, we may never get another chance.

Beyond Sheila Watt-Cloutier's famous rallying cry "We have a right to be cold!",

I say "WE HAVE A *NEED* TO BE COLD!"

This is in your hands

Thank you