

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Lan Lijun at the Meeting  
between the Swedish Chairmanship of the Arctic Council  
and Observers**

(2:00 pm, 6 November, Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

**[Opening Remarks]** First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sweden for hosting the *Meeting between the Swedish Chairmanship of the Arctic Council and Observers*, as well as for inviting Mr. Cui Tiankai, vice foreign minister of China, to attend this meeting. Mr. Cui attaches great importance to this meeting. Although, due to conflicting schedules, he is unable to come in person, he has asked me to attend on his behalf.

China has noticed with appreciation that Sweden, as current Chair of the Arctic Council, values its communication with observers on Arctic issues. I believe this meeting will offer a great opportunity for direct and in-depth exchanges on Arctic issues, and help enhance mutual understanding and trust.

**[Arctic Council]** The Arctic Council is the most important regional inter-governmental forum to address issues of environmental protection and sustainable development in the

Arctic. It plays a very important role in coordinating Arctic scientific research, strengthening Arctic environmental protection, and promoting Arctic economic and social development cooperation. What the Council has done under current framework of international law has facilitated the joint efforts by relevant parties to effectively tackle pressing regional and trans-regional issues in the Arctic. The research and discussions conducted by the Council on trans-regional issues such as climate change and Arctic shipping have had significant influence on the decision-making by relevant international organizations. I believe that the Council's institutional reform will further strengthen its important role in Arctic affairs and promote the communication and cooperation among stakeholders in addressing Arctic issues.

**[Acceptance of Observers]** Accepting observers has been a long-standing issue of the Council. It is the hope of a number of non-Arctic states and organizations, including China, that the Council will resolve it appropriately at an early date. China is of the view that the participation of non-Arctic states in the Council as observers has positive significance to the work of the Council.

Most of the Arctic region is under the jurisdiction of Arctic states. While some of the Arctic issues are national in nature, some of them are regional that need to be addressed by Arctic

states themselves in a coordinated manner, such as those relating to environmental protection, resources exploration, indigenous peoples and other social and economic issues. Arctic states have substantial interests in those issues. The participation of observers does not prejudice the dominant role of Arctic states in the Council. The participation of observers in the work of the Council is based on the recognition of Arctic States' sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the Arctic as well as their decision-making power in the Council.

At the same time, some of the Arctic issues are trans-regional, such as climate change and international shipping, which involve the interests of non-Arctic states. Arctic states and non-Arctic states share common interests in addressing trans-regional issues and should further their communication and cooperation.

By accepting observers and therefore enhancing its openness and inclusiveness, the Council will help the international community to better appreciate its work, thus expanding its international influence. Its exchanges and cooperation with the observers will help it review trans-regional issues from a broader perspective, which will facilitate effective settlement of relevant issues through international cooperation. This model of cooperation has been effective in addressing issues such as climate change and international shipping, and deserves further

promotion. The Council should well respond to the desire expressed by relevant parties to participate in the work of the Council as observers.

**[China's Application for Observer Status]** China is a near Arctic state. The natural changes and economic development in the Arctic have significant impact on China's climate, ecological environment, agricultural production as well as social and economic development. Most Arctic-related activities of China are scientific researches. China has made some progress in its studies on high-altitude physics, climate change, ecology and ocean in the Arctic. We are ready to conduct cooperation on scientific research with other states. China has always attached great importance to communication and dialogue with Arctic states on Arctic issues to enhance mutual understanding and trust.

Since 2007, China has participated, as ad-hoc observer, in relevant activities of the Council and thereby gained a better understanding of the Council's work. China appreciates the positive role played by the Council on Arctic Affairs, accepts and supports the objectives of the Council. In the end of last year, China submitted its updated application materials to the Council in accordance with the criteria and procedure for accepting observers. China is both willing and able to contribute to the work of the Council and to strengthen cooperation with

states in the Council for the peace, stability and sustainable development in the Arctic region.

**[Concluding Remarks]** Today's meeting is very constructive. Relevant parties expressed their desires to participate in the work of the Council, and exchanged views and suggestions in a frank and sincere manner, with a view to promoting mutual understanding and trust between Arctic states, non-Arctic states and relevant organizations on the issue of observer. I hope Sweden, as current Chair of the Council, will continue to play an active role in promoting, as appropriate, the work of accepting observers, and in keeping the Council open as a policy exchange institution so that the Council could serve as a platform for cooperation between Arctic states and non-Arctic states for sound interaction and concerted efforts to address trans-regional issues together.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.