

October 11, 2011 - Nuuk Greenland

Ilisimatusarfik/University of Greenland successfully hosts nation's first ever oil and gas key stakeholder dialogue.

Close to 100 attendees representing government, industry, community leaders, academia, and NGOs took part in the first ever Greenlandic oil and gas key stakeholder dialogue designed to discuss and address key issues regarding oil and gas development in Greenland. The two day dialogue, September 24-25 sponsored by Ilisimatusarfik, University of Greenland in Nuuk,; the University of Nordland - Bodø, Norway; and HBW Resources, highlighted the social, economic, environmental and technical challenges and opportunities regarding the emerging off-shore oil and gas sector. Participants strove to find common ground for solutions that will pave the way for a development program that will benefit all Greenlanders. The result was both a greater understanding of Greenland's developmental future and how it might impact the nation's societal needs as well as a deeper insight into the different stakeholder approaches.

Topics discussed included: capacity building; educational requirements; health, safety and the environment; social and cultural impacts; economic opportunities and impacts; cooperation among stakeholders and improved communication between governments, corporations, NGOs and other stakeholders. Recommendations were given as to how to maximize the capabilities of the public consultation process so it is inclusive and reflective of all segments of Greenlandic society. This effort was part of the broader Arctic Dialogue series which brings together Universities, academics and stakeholders around the circumpolar region. The dialogue series fosters new social sciences research to find development policy solutions in the area of Extractive Industries as well as help train the future Arctic leaders.

The dialogue concluded with a facilitated workshop on September 26 entitled: "priming the roadmap, sustainable development focusing on Greenland's oil and gas industry." Participants representing 15 stakeholders agreed upon several actions needed to ensure a safe, environmentally responsible, economically beneficial, and broadly publicly debated and widely supported oil and gas program for Greenland's future. A major focus was the need to match the skills held by current and future Greenlanders with the needs of a growing oil and gas industry.

Martha Abelsen, Chair of the Association of Greenlandic Municipalities, KANUKOKA: "We need to make an effort to establish education adapted to the needs of the new industry. And the public administration must be willing and able to fulfill the role as "midwife" for local initiatives - simply by encouraging the willingness to adapt to new circumstances, education, willingness to work hard and entrepreneurship."

Aqqaluk Lynge, President of Inuit Circumpolar Council, ICC: "This meeting between participants representing the Greenland Government, the industries and the various NGO's made it clear that a continuous dialogue is necessary to provide a proper balance in the development of the oil and mining industry. It was broadly accepted that resource development in Greenland needs to live up to the best international standards regarding environmental and social impacts through a higher degree of transparency and democracy in the processes. It was also reiterated that Inuit are the original stewards of the Arctic and must continue to be so in the future. Attention was called to ensure a development pace, which will balance benefits and risks with prevention as the main focus, so that Inuit can be the primary beneficiaries of resource development on their own lands. In that regard a

better democratic infrastructure needs to be developed in Greenland to ensure free, prior and informed consent."

Birger Poppel, Research Project Chief and conference convener, Ilisimatusarfik, University of Greenland: The University is proud that it could play this leading role in gathering together the important Greenlandic institutions and other stakeholders in collaboration with other Arctic Universities and researchers. This historic dialogue will be remembered as a first public forum including a large number of stakeholders discussing the role and concerns of the Greenlandic community regarding its future oil and gas industry and priming a roadmap for an oil and gas industry that will benefit all Greenlanders.

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