

**Speech by Premier Kuupik Kleist on inauguration of Greenland Selfgovernment
21st of June 2009 in the morning**

Dear fellow citizens.

This morning we woke up with a whole new feeling.

We awoke with renewed hope in our hearts.

Today sees the start of a new era in the history of our country. On this important and auspicious day we cannot help but be moved as we look back at developments in Greenland as a society.

It is as if we have woken up to newly fallen snow in which we are to set the first footprints for those who come after us to follow.

I wish you all heartfelt congratulations on this day, marking the introduction of Self Governance on our National Day.

We cherish a hope and a wish that our future will see light and bear fruit. The introduction of Self Governance opens up for new opportunities; the gateway through which we must pass is now wide open.

We are a small society and the successes we have achieved so far mean a lot to us. From this day forward we are recognised a people – we have been accepted on an equal footing with other nations. It has cost great suffering for many societies to achieve recognition, but our Self Governance has been earned through negotiation, mutual understanding and mutual respect.

Today's achievement is the fruit of our work and our common endeavours. We have achieved Self Governance because we understand each other; because we help each other and because we can work together. As a society we have achieved Self Governance jointly and we have every good reason to joyfully pat each other on the back.

Let's just try and feel this special sense of joy and wellbeing.....

can you feel the energy of the emotion welling up inside?

We need this energy for our future development.

A great deal of work lies ahead of us, and I have no doubt that through unity and our sense of equality - indeed, the people we ultimately are – we will succeed in reaching our goals. Because we all are needed. Whatever our role in society, we all work for the common good of the people. Each and every one of us contributes to the development of society. And we want everyone to have the freedom to support themselves and to grow – both physically and spiritually.

Every generation is needed; children, young adults and the older generation. This span of generations brings strength to our lives. Children bring the strength of new life, young people bring energy and hope, while the older generation bring wisdom and experience that we cannot do without.

The coming of Self Governance brings with it new demands to us as a people. We are ready to take on greater responsibility, and this is why we said yes to Self Governance. And by saying

yes we have shown that we want to govern our own country and that we want to be responsible for our own lives.

If we are to fully encompass Self Governance, then we must do this on our own. It all comes down to our commitment. By working harder we can become better at providing for ourselves and thereby increase our freedom as a people. We do need to work, but at the same time we must remember to work as one - to strengthen 'us' as a people.

When we are strong as a people, our ability to support ourselves will also strengthen. Our standpoint will be more solid, and we will have more opportunities; because we know how far we can reach when we stand on steady ground.

Today is a very special and important day, because as of today, our language, Greenlandic, has become our official language. Language cannot be separated from identity, and this is why we must work hard to ensure the use of our language in everyday life. We must ensure that it is not just ceremonies like this one that remind us that Greenlandic is our official language. On the other hand, we must not use language as a means to oppress or exclude others. We must all work together and show respect for one another in the pursuit of the best future for our nation, with equal opportunities for all.

Greenland should be a country where foreigners should feel welcome. We are members of a global community, and the need to participate in the global debate has never been stronger.

We cannot grow if we are complacent and introvert – we are also part of the international community.

We are introducing Self Governance at a time where Greenland is at the centre of international attention in a way that we have never experienced before. Our nation is being watched closely by the whole world, and you may ask how we can exploit this interest. Well, we can use it to seek new opportunities by participating in the global debate.

Our nation has many opportunities, and if we are open and have faith in our fellow human beings, many more new opportunities will present themselves.

The way we think is crucial. So let us approach Self Governance with positive thoughts.

I believe that through Self Governance we will create a strong, well-educated and energetic people. We already have the foundation for this. Just think of our unique forefathers who survived with no help and support from the outside world.

Our forefathers lived with great endurance. They got by with only the fragile kayak and they managed to create so many things with just the small ulu tool to help. They travelled the great seas in their fragile kayaks, and they survived life in the tough yet spectacular nature of our country through sheer willpower. They are the reason we can be here today.

We stand here today because we the Greenland people believe that all things are interconnected. We believe in the powers of the universe and that these are inseparable from the individual's soul. We believe in the power of nature and that we must live in harmony with nature. This belief is crucial to our way of life.

We have inherited this philosophy from our forefathers and we must protect it for future generations.

We have inherited one more thing that we carry in our hearts but that we don't speak of openly very often. The search for happiness – laughter and good heartedness. A heritage that gives us strength and that we should protect. And we will need all our strength when we have Self Governance.

Today we are celebrating with many guests from abroad. I am happy that so many people could join in the festivities. Let us give them a warm welcome and let us all work together to give our guests an experience they will never forget.

I am also very pleased that Her Majesty Queen Margrethe, His Royal Highness Prince Henrik, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Frederik and Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Mary are a part of our ceremony.

Let us hope that today, the longest day of the year, and the day on which we celebrate the dawn of Self Governance, will bring us strength with its light. We are entering Self Governance with an inner candescence, and I hope that the path we move down will always be bathed in light.

I wish you all a joyous celebration.