

**Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen's speech to the Greenland  
Parliament  
at the ceremony in honour of self-government beginning in Greenland  
on 21 June 2009**

Check against delivery.

Your Majesty, Your Royal Highnesses, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

today we are making history. Greenlandic history. And Danish history too.

Today is a day of freedom. A day where we continue to build on the sound principle that decisions are best made by the people they directly affect.

Today is a day of responsibility. A day where we continue to build on the sound principle that a people should take responsibility for their own fate and future.

Today is a day of solidarity, when we loosen the ties that might be too tight, but keep hold of those that strengthen.

Greenland and Denmark have shown great solidarity and mutual respect to complete the extensive preparatory work required for the Self-Government Act. And self-government itself was voted for with the widespread support of the Greenlandic population in last year's referendum.

Freedom, responsibility and solidarity. These are the values on which Greenlandic self-government rest.

In 30 years of home rule, Greenland has developed into a modern society which still remains true to its roots. Greenland has managed to walk a tight-rope, something which hasn't always been easy to do.

Home rule has created a solid structure which self-government can now expand upon and strengthen.

The Self-Government Act acknowledges that the Greenlandic people are a people with the right to self-determination in accordance with international law.

The Self-Government Act states that Greenlandic is the official language of Greenland. Of course. Just as it should be.

And thanks to the Self-Government Act, Greenland is now able to take on many new areas of responsibility whenever the decision is taken in Greenland to do so. It is up to Greenland itself to build onwards and upwards.

Greenland is a large and beautiful country with a strong population. A society in which the individual has many opportunities to put their stamp on the country's development.

Greenland also has global vision. You are part of the world, so it is natural that the Danish Government will inform the UN that Greenland now has self-government.

In 1967, when Greenland's first elected chairman of the Provincial Council was voted in, Jørgen C. F. Olsen, one of the founders of the home rule movement, made a speech.

He said:

“We must overcome all the obstacles that are holding us back. Our efforts are bound to be crowned with success due to our love for our homeland; through love that binds hopes for the future to memories of the past.”

That was in 1967. Since then democracy in Greenland has continued to develop, as has the relationship between our two countries.

I trust that self-government for Greenland and the Greenlandic people will overcome the obstacles you may face. And in doing so make Jørgen Olsen's words a reality also in the future.

Her Majesty will now present the Self-Government Act to the Chairman of the Parliament.

(PAUSE)

I would like to conclude my congratulations by presenting a gift on behalf of the Danish Parliament and the Government.

We have had a silver box made in which a piece of copper has been inlaid. As we know, copper possesses the excellent property of changing and maturing with time. Just like the relationship between Denmark and Greenland.

The copper in this box is part of a roof tile that has lain on the roof of Christiansborg Palace for 70 years. It has seen sunny days – and rainy days. It has seen stormy days. And I mean both inside and outside the palace. Wind and weather have coated the copper with verdigris.

But today is a beautiful day – no matter what the weather is doing outside.

I would like to finish this speech by wishing Greenland well from the bottom of my heart.

To all of Greenland and all Greenlanders from Siorapaluk to Cape Farewell:

Congratulations!