

Tale til Greenland Expo den 20. juni 2009



Dear Guests, Dear Exhibitors,

Tomorrow is a historical day for our country, and with the introduction of Self-Government we will address ourselves to the challenges that other countries before us have fought.

Greenland is part of the globalised world, and it does affect us when the world is hit by a financial crisis like the one roaming the world at present. We are a growing country, and the world economy and international trade therefore place heavy demands on our competitive power and our capacity for change. Our companies need to develop themselves constantly through the invention of new products and new markets in order to survive.

We therefore have to ask ourselves the question: How are we going to support ourselves in the future?

This Business and Investment EXPO shows us that we have a lot of opportunities: raw materials, fisheries, water power, tourism, ice and water, and all our creative lines of business. Today, I am proud to be able to present our future business and investment potential.

Today, the business structure is largely characterised by small and medium-sized businesses within tourism and other shore-based industries. These companies must contribute to laying the foundation of large-scale business projects within, for example, water power and raw materials, and help them succeed. We must develop a varied business sector so as to provide Greenland with a solid base from which new projects can emerge and grow. This is a central theme if we want to be able to finance and create the welfare that we want for our children, the young, the sick and the old.

We have to dare to be innovative. Our companies must focus on more than just the local market. We have to identify new export opportunities and new products that can compete with the vast amounts of products that we have to import every day.

And we have to dare to be our own employer, in keeping with the old and strong traditions in our country, and we have to be entrepreneurs and start up new businesses.

Confronting traditions does not happen by itself. Politicians need to make good and brave decisions together with the people of Greenland to provide the companies with a framework for development. This is exactly what the new Government intends to embark on.

The clash with tradition does not just apply to the business structure. We will create a solid framework for a flexible labour market and ensure that the labour force develop their competencies. If we fail to develop the labour market, there will be no industrial development, and accordingly, in order to move forward, we must have a broad perspective. In former times, our labour market was very flexible. People moved from settlement to settlement and from town to town to fish and hunt. This is the tradition that we need to get back to. There must be room for everybody and jobs for those who can work.

To reach our target of a self-supporting economy we need to make certain forward-looking changes in the existing structure. We must arm ourselves with common sense, courage and perseverance – and we must make long-range planning. When we have answered the question of how we are going to support ourselves in the future, we must act and organise ourselves accordingly.

In my capacity as Minister for Industry, Minerals and Petroleum, I intend to meet these challenges, and I realise that prioritisations will need to be made within our existing industry and labour market structure. Our industry and labour market structure must be adjusted to the challenges we are facing. Accordingly, new strategies need to be implemented.

As politicians, it is our responsibility that a varied business sector can flourish, and it is therefore also our responsibility to create the structure that supports the companies' capabilities of creating growth. We must use the resources at hand in the best way possible in order to secure this crucial development.

It is my hope and my vision that our country, through a continuous development of our business sector, will be better equipped to face the global challenges and to meet the population's demand for an increasingly self-supporting economy, locally as well as internationally, as we embark on Self-Government for Greenland.