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Letter of Support

Arctic Council project in the area of Information and Communication
Technology

This letter serves to confirm that the project "Ubiquitous and Pervasive Networking through the Use of Delay Tolerant Networking", led by Techn Dr Maria Udén at Luleå University of Technology, is a project that has the support of the Arctic Council.

The Arctic Council is a high level intergovernmental forum that can address common concerns and challenges faced by the Governments of the Arctic States and the people that live in the circumpolar Arctic. The Arctic Council was established in 1996. It brings together Canada, Denmark, Greenland and the Färö Islands, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the USA with representatives of six organizations of indigenous peoples from the Arctic region. The Council has eight Observer States (Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Poland, France, Spain, China and Italy). The European Commission attends Arctic Council meetings.

The Arctic Council meets at Foreign Minister's level every two years. The Chairmanship of the Council rotates. Norway took over from Russia at the Meeting of Foreign Ministers that was held in Salekhard in western Siberia in November 2006.

The Arctic Council has paid attention to the benefits that can be gained from expanded use of information and communication technology in order to promote sustainable development in the Arctic for several years. The

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Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region is very supportive of that work and has highlighted the importance of access to ICT and ICT-based services as a means of improving living conditions and the potential for economic and social development for Arctic residents, in particular indigenous peoples, at several of its Conferences of Parliamentarians in the Arctic Region.

In the initial Arctic Council discussions on the importance of ICT in the Arctic, Sweden proposed that the Council should focus on promoting development work in order to mobilize and combine efforts underway in different Arctic States to search for solutions to already identified needs. To illustrate the kind of work we believe that the Arctic Council could usefully engage in, we chose the project "Sami Network Connectivity", which is now evolving into the project "Ubiquitous and Pervasive Networking through the Use of Delay Tolerant Networking". That project was presented to the AC Working Group on Sustainable Development in the spring of 2005. It was accepted and has since been supported under the name "Arctic Action". Dr Udén was invited to make a presentation and report on progress made at the Working Group's most recent meeting in April 2007 in Tromsø, Norway. Her presentation was highly appreciated.

Many communities in the Arctic are located in very remote areas, some reindeer herding families continue to lead a nomadic or semi-nomadic life. Their particular needs and circumstances are being addressed by the highly interesting and innovative project led by Dr Udén. It is envisaged that she will be invited to make further presentations at future meetings of the Working Group as the project advances in order to illustrate the great potential for cooperative work and the many benefits that ICT solutions can bring to people in the circumpolar Arctic when projects are intentionally designed to address needs that have been identified by people who live and work in the Arctic.

Other Arctic Council work on ICT aims to prepare a descriptive study of the present ICT situation in the Arctic. Dr Udén's project will be featured as a case study in that report.

Helena Ödmark
Senior Arctic Official for Sweden