

Speech given by Søren Rysgaard at the inauguration of the Greenland Climate Research Centre

Søren Rysgaard expressed his thanks for the establishment of the Centre and stated his vision for the Centre: *"The Greenland Climate Research Centre will be a leading international centre for studies on the impact of climate change on Arctic systems and societies"*.

He continued: "We hope and believe that the new centre can be instrumental in providing new research into climate and society and that it will contribute towards close integration of research within Danish and Greenlandic institutions. It is important that we stand together and maintain a long-term perspective. The ongoing climate changes can be expected to continue for more than 5 years, so now is the time to sow the seeds of future developments. We realize that we must demonstrate our capabilities first, and we will! We have a highly enthusiastic and skilled team here. Through the past 4-5 years, we have shown that it is possible to conduct high-quality internationally recognized research from Greenland. Furthermore, the interest shown by Danish and Greenlandic institutions is great, and during that period we have succeeded in launching and completing 35 projects based on external funding constituting an amount similar in size to the one that has now been granted to the new Climate Research Centre. The Centre's fields of activity will be climate, technology, and society. Future challenges and new opportunities. Not only relating to climate, but also basic scientific knowledge, which will be valuable in the future development in Greenland.

There are many things we do not know. In a time when it is possible to navigate with high precision in e.g. the cities of Europe, the waters surrounding Greenland remain relatively unexplored. For instance, only a small percentage of something as simple as sea depth has been measured. How deep are the fjords below the ice? Recent data suggest that fjords that are several kilometers deep may be hidden below the Ice Sheet in a short distance from the glacier fronts. We do not know how oceans and ice interact. This knowledge is important if we are to understand ice sheet melt and rising sea levels in future.

Likewise, we do not know how changes in ice sheet melt and sea-ice distribution and thickness affect the currents around Greenland. These are factors affecting nutrient conditions and food availability for fish, shrimps, birds, and mammals. The centre wishes to continue and expand our fruitful and important cooperation with hunters and fishermen who often stop by with new "strange" animals. We simply do not know enough about biodiversity and the genetic material below the sea surface, something which may prove to be an industrial gold mine.

Another important purpose of the Centre will be to make polar research known among the young. We plan to start up 10 PhD students as early as next year. Master and PhD courses have been held in Greenland, and it is now possible for Greenlandic students to take courses abroad.

We hope that the Climate Research Centre can play a central part in coordination and integration of research in future. It is important that Denmark and Greenland stand together in a globalized world. We are closely connected historically. We will now contribute towards expanding our cooperation to include research, and believe that Greenland and the Climate Research Centre will become an important asset for Danish and Greenlandic institutions and researchers as well as playing an important part internationally.

Until now, 9 research projects have been launched under the Climate Research Centre. Furthermore, we plan to expand our social scientific research by establishing a professorship at the University of Greenland. Please see www.natur.gl for further information about the new projects