

## **KINA – Nansen-Zhu 15 year collaboration ceremony**

Your excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to be invited to speak here at the Nansen-Zhu Centre.

The Centre was established in 2003 - with our former foreign minister Børge Brende attending the opening ceremony. Today we can congratulate you on your fifteen year anniversary.

The Nansen-Zhu Centre is clearly one of the best examples of Chinese-Norwegian research collaboration.

It has contributed significantly to advance climate research as well as the training, education and exchange of young students in China and Norway.

Close connections and lasting friendship have been established between the many Chinese and Norwegian partner institutions and individual research scientists and students.

The centre has a strong legacy. It is named after two giants. Nansen's main contribution was in the marine environment and polar oceanography. Zhu's main interest was meteorology and atmospheric sciences.

Furthermore, the centre is a clear proof of the value of close interdisciplinary integration and international collaboration.

When Fridtjof Nansen worked on his doctoral studies, he suddenly came to a dead end. The microscopes that existed in Norway made it impossible for him to move on.

But Nansen wrote to the Italian scientist Camillo Golgi. He had the most advanced microscope in Europe. Nansen was allowed to use the microscope, finished his studies, and gave us a better understanding of the human nervous system.

Without an international orientation and willingness to go beyond the Norwegian borders, Nansen's academic work would have stranded.

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When it comes to the Arctic and climate change, international cooperation is crucial.

The impacts of global warming in The Arctic are dramatic:

- The sea ice is receding.
- The tundra is melting, amplifying global warming further.
- Fish stocks are migrating.

These are common challenges that demand collective responses.

We have a shared interest in making sure that our institutions are robust enough to address the rapid changes that are taking place; that our decisions are based on the best available knowledge; and that we manage our resources responsibly.

Natural resources, modern technology and increased human activity are opening up new opportunities.

The Arctic is mostly ocean – and the blue economy holds great promise for new investments, sustainable growth and employment.

By 2050, there may be 10 billion people on this planet. Increasingly, the world is looking to the oceans for food, medicines, energy and transport. We have only seen the beginning of the blue economy.

For Norway, the ocean is the very foundation of our economy and prosperity. Seventy percent of the value of Norway's exports comes from

ocean-related activities, and most of our sea areas are located north of the Arctic Circle.

We therefore have a strong interest in ensuring sustainable ocean management in this region.

In order to achieve this, we must continuously identify greener, smarter and more innovative ways to use Arctic resources.

I believe it is possible and necessary to do both: Take advantage of new opportunities, but doing it in a responsible way. However, that cannot be done without a strong and committed policy for research.

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China recently released its first Arctic Strategy. We acknowledge the ambition to give more priority to Arctic and high-latitude research, as well as promoting peace and stability in the region.

We too have strong ambitions in the North. To take advantages of the opportunities that arise from the rapid climate change and reduced sea ice conditions, but with increased attention to assure sustainable industrial development, tourist and transport activities, and environmental protection.

We intend to be the best steward of the environment and natural resources in the High North.

Scientific knowledge in and about the High North, must be the basis for all development, policy and decision making. Research and international collaborative efforts to develop scientific knowledge is an important contributor to advance science. But also to promote stability and peace in the Arctic.

Norway is the third largest polar research publishing country in the Arctic, after USA and Canada. Chinese polar research publications are sharply on the rise. This is a clear demonstration of the potential in a further strengthening of the collaboration between China and Norway.

China and Norway have a common interest in carrying out research in the Polar regions. Future climatic and environmental challenges need extensive international research cooperation.

For more than 50 years Norway has facilitated international polar research in Svalbard. The Norwegian research platform in Ny-Ålesund offers unique opportunities to conduct scientific research in the Arctic region.

The Norwegian Government appreciates the contribution of the Polar Research Institute of China (PRIC) to the research community in Ny-Ålesund. A new research building is under construction in order to further develop Ny-Ålesund as a platform for international research cooperation. The new building will be designed as a common facility for the polar research community in Ny-Ålesund.

The participation of relevant Chinese research institutions in the SIOS Knowledge Centre and contribution to the Svalbard Integrated Arctic Earth Observing System, is highly welcomed. By joining SIOS, Chinese scientists can access earth observation research infrastructure in Svalbard, acquire data from the international science community and use logistical services.

We also know that research into the "third pole" – the high mountain areas of the Tibetan plateau and the Himalayas – is of high interest to Chinese research. The polar regions influence climate variability in other regions of

the globe. The Arctic and the Antarctic interconnect with climate processes over long distances through teleconnections and feedback mechanisms.

Observation-based studies suggest that Arctic sea ice changes has impact on the atmospheric circulation. This again impacts the East Asian summer monsoon, with implications for extreme weather in Asia.

For instance, Norwegian and Chinese scientists are involved in research projects investigating the snow and sea ice impact on prediction and climate over Europa and Asia. This is important work.

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The Arctic is not only a regional issue, but a global one. In the past, there was an element of competition to the international contingency here. The polar explorers were scientists. But where they once would compete to discover new parts of the Arctic, nowadays we have to cooperate to preserve the Arctic.

And science and research has an essential part to play. That is why researchers from all over the world have to come together.

The Nansen- Zhu Centre represents a valuable contribution to climate and polar research. A contribution which cannot be performed without close interdisciplinary integration and international collaboration.

Congratulations once again with your first 15 years. And all the best for the next 15 years and more to come!

Thank you.