

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

I am delighted to be here with you today, surrounded by the impressive landscapes of your beautiful region.

The areas that I travelled through to get here, aroused deep emotions within me for many reasons. First of all, my family history, for my family has long had a special connection with the Great North, ever since my great-grandfather Prince Albert 1<sup>st</sup> led an expedition to the Arctic over one hundred years ago. This expedition had a profound effect on him.

"Far from the masses", he wrote, "in the purity of the Arctic, the issues that stir the passions of men were reduced to minute actions, while life's ideal was in the radiance of justice and truth."

Without doubt, it is this ideal of truth that grasps me in turn, since I have made several visits to the Great North right to the Pole and I continue to do so as often as possible, always with just as much interest, as it is the case today.

I have to say that, beyond discovery and emotion, the Arctic has become one of the focal points of my commitment.

In fact, through the future of your regions, a little of all our destinies is played out. What can be done to maintain the climate balance of the planet when its warming is largely observed here? How can we protect these reserves that are so vital to biodiversity? And above all, how can we limit the expansion of economic activities, when the melting ice opens up new development prospects for shipping routes, and the exploitation of fishing or mineral resources?

These are decisive questions for protecting our planet, and therefore humanity. Because environmental protection is only worthwhile if it involves men, if it incorporates their hopes and satisfies their needs. This is a truth that must never be forgotten when fighting for the environment, especially in the regions where populations are small and more vulnerable.

This is why I am delighted to be here today, in this institution which offers an extremely interesting path for the future of the region, and even more so for the people who live here. So that your people, and those that share this area can continue to develop their ancient culture, keep their traditions alive, and maintain the fine balance that results from centuries of cohabitation between man and nature.

This balance requires certain traditional practices to be maintained. However, it does not exclude being open to new ways of life, cultures and technologies. No population can live in ignorance of globalisation, especially when, as is the case here, it has direct effects on its own environment and consequently its future.

Then for you, as for the many peoples with unique traditions, the challenge is to maintain this dual requirement, which represents an incredible wealth.

By continuing to be your own heirs to your traditional knowledge and practices, you play a vital role in the destiny of your regions.

By opening yourselves up to others, you give yourself the resources for better control over your destiny.

We must therefore progress between these two paths. And this is why the approach of the Nunavut Arctic College is so important.

Like the one of the University of the Arctic of which it is a member as my Foundation alike, your College offers a model of conciliation between tradition and modernity, between human development and the commitment to protect nature.

And above all, by making you the people who in the future will be able to work with us to protect the Great North, it represents a great hope to all environmentalists.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear friends,

You are the truth of this region and you are its future.

Its truth, because the region's development can only be conceived by the continuation of a harmony for which you are the guardians and which must be preserved at all costs.

Its future, because it is up to you to continue to build it and not allow it to fall victim to the increasingly voracious appetites that we are seeing at work.

I will be at your side then, as I am today.

Thank you.