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Greenland's New Foreign Minister Addresses UK Parliamentary Group

Last Wednesday (9 June 2021), Greenland's new Minister for Industry, Trade, Foreign Affairs and Climate, Pele Broberg, addressed the UK parliament's All-Party Parliamentary Group for Greenland, and took the opportunity to outline the domestic and international priorities for the new government in Nuuk.

More than 25 MPs and Lords were represented at the most recent meeting, at which the Foreign Minister highlighted the importance Greenland placed on its relationship with the UK, stressed the need for a bilateral trade agreement, clarified the new government's position on mining, discussed Greenland's close relationship with the British Overseas Territories, and outlined Greenland's role in relation to COP26 which will be held in Glasgow later this year.

Aiming to foster links and cooperation between the UK and Greenland, the creation of the cross-party group late last year made the UK Parliament the world's first outside the Kingdom of Denmark to have a Parliamentary group dedicated to Greenland.

Commenting following the meeting, APPG Greenland chair **Brendan O'Hara MP** outlined the importance of building 'closer' links between UK and Greenlandic Parliamentarians, stating, "It was a very useful and informative meeting in which we covered so much ground, including COP26, Arctic defence and security, relations with the new Biden administration and the future role of China in Greenland. There was of course, further discussion on the need for a Greenlandic / UK Trade Deal."

Minister Broberg, who will represent Greenland at COP26 in Glasgow, told MPs and Peers that he will use the conference to highlight the impact climate change is having on Greenland and the urgent need for international action. The Minister stated: "(We) support the UK Government in the hosting of the COP26, and with our knowledge of the Arctic and the ice, we would like to contribute in making the COP26 in Glasgow a success."

Dr Dwayne Ryan Menezes, Director of the Secretariat of the Greenland APPG and Founder and Managing Director of the Polar Research and Policy Initiative, emphasised the need for a trade deal, "which replicates as much as possible the principles underlying UK-Greenland trade prior to 31 December 2020." He went on to say, "The UK has the largest commercial footprint for any single country in Greenland, with at least 16 firms holding mining licenses in Greenland headquartered in, listed in, or substantially connected to, the UK."

The APPG for Greenland meets on a regular basis and is there to strengthen ties between politicians in both parliaments. Covid restrictions permitting, Brendan O'Hara MP hopes to meet Minister Broberg ahead of COP26 in Glasgow and will host the Minister in Westminster the next time he is in London.

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Note to editors: Full quotes included for use if required.

Brendan O'Hara MP: "The APPG was delighted and honoured that Pele Broberg, Greenland's new minister for Industry, Trade, Foreign Affairs and Climate Change, took time out of his busy schedule to speak to us last week to talk about the priorities of the new government.

It was a very useful and informative meeting in which we covered so much ground, including COP26, Artic defence and security, relations with the new Biden administration and the future role of China in Greenland.

There was of course further discussion on the need for a Greenlandic / UK Trade Deal. I have agreed with Pele that we should meet in person at the earliest opportunity as we build closer links between MPs at Westminster and the parliament in Nuuk."

Pele Broberg, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Industry, Trade and Climate: "Let us have that trade agreement between our countries. This could be the steppingstone that develops the bilateral relationship between us. A relationship that is in the interest of both our countries.

Greenland sent a draft proposal for a trade agreement to the UK Government last year. It was written based on known principles in the trade between the UK and Greenland. Let us use that as a starting point for developing our trade relationship - it would be to the benefit of us both. Let us start the talks about this.

We also support the UK Government in the hosting of the COP26, and with our knowledge of the Arctic and the ice, we would like to contribute in making the COP26 in Glasgow a success. If the UK Government succeeds, the climate succeeds and the World Wins!

So, let our two governments start talking together on different areas. it will be to the benefit of both our countries."

Dr Dwayne Ryan Menezes, Director of the Secretariat of the Greenland APPG and Founder and Managing Director of the Polar Research and Policy Initiative: "I am delighted that the Greenland All-Party Parliamentary Group is proving to be an effective and necessary instrument to raise awareness about Greenland in the UK Parliament and to facilitate a closer relationship between Greenland and the United Kingdom.

The APPG has held three formal meetings this year, and already it has had Greenland's then Foreign Minister Steen Lynge address it in January, the leaders of Greenland's three most prolific seafood businesses (Royal Greenland, Polar Seafood and Arctic Prime Fisheries) address it in April, and Greenland's new Foreign Minister Pele Broberg address it in June.

By convening such meetings and briefings on an ongoing basis, the Greenland APPG aims to serve as the central focal point in Westminster for MPs and Peers with an interest in Greenland and the UK-Greenland relationship.

Securing a robust bilateral trade agreement, which replicates as much as possible the principles underlying UK-Greenland trade prior to 31 December 2020, has been flagged by every speaker thus far as the greatest priority in the bilateral relationship.

The UK, after all, is one of the largest export markets for Greenland, accounting for 10-15% of Greenland's overall trade. In 2020, Greenland exported an estimated 11,251 tonnes of fish products to the UK, valued at around £80.5 million. The products included mainly cold-water prawns, cod, haddock, Greenland halibut and snow crab.

The UK, moreover, has the largest commercial footprint for any single country in Greenland, with at least 16 firms holding mining licenses in Greenland headquartered in, listed in, or substantially connected to, the UK. The UK is also one of the leading sources of incoming tourists in Greenland and has a substantial research community engaged with research projects in Greenland."