

Dear Guests,

First of all I would like to welcome to Iceland and to the University of Iceland's campus. I'm honored to address you, albeit briefly, here at the beginning of this third MARPART conference and workshop on maritime emergency management and transnational cooperation in the high north.

Maritime preparedness and international partnership in the high north has never been a more pressing issue due to the fact that commercial activity in the High North is ever increasing. This brings along vulnerability related to amongst other human safety, environment and vessels.

Increased activity in the High North includes intra- and inter-regional transportation, search for and exploitation of petroleum and mineral resources, the fisheries, and cruise tourism. Maritime operations in this region are challenged by limited infrastructure, low temperatures with ice and icing, polar lows, and a vulnerable nature and extreme weather conditions.

Governments must hold the responsibility for preparedness as to safety, security and environmental protection in the High North but one of the aims of the MARPART-project is to contribute to increased understanding of the complexity of joint operations, the resources needed, and alternative organizational design and management tools for operational coordination and control.

It has been maintained that to increase both effectiveness and efficiency within the maritime preparedness system, a management tools are need for coordination and control making optimal use of the joint resources of several institutions both within and between

countries. Therefore, the main objective of MARPART is to provide analytical concepts for the coordination of resources in joint Arctic operations and provide ideas for the inter-organizational structuring and cooperative processes of the government institutions, private companies and voluntary organizations that have operational responsibility in the High North.

MARPART is an important project that brings together researchers and policymakers from Norway, Denmark, Greenland, Iceland and Russia and is led by Nord University in Norway. I wish you a successful conference and fruitful discussions.