

Tilson to chair Arctic Conference

The Parliament of Canada, under the auspices of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association, will host the 11th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (CPAR) from Sept. 9 to 11 in Whitehorse, Yukon.

Dufferin-Caledon MP David Tilson, president of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association and Sara Olsvig, MP from Denmark and chair of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR), will preside over the meetings. As co-chairs of the conference, Tilson and Olsvig will welcome 150 delegates representing parliaments of the Arctic states (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and U.S.A) and the European Parliament; indigenous peoples' organizations that have permanent participant status at the Arctic Council; and parliaments of nations and organizations that have observer status at the Arctic Council.

"I am looking forward to what is sure to be a positive and productive conference," Tilson said. "We will be discussing a variety of topics from the environment to northern economics; all of which are of great importance to the Arctic states that will be in attendance."

The Canadian Parliament actively supports Arctic parliamentary cooperation and Arctic Council initiatives under Canada's chairmanship of the Council. Nunavut MP Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Minister for the Arctic Council and Chair of the Arctic Council, will deliver a keynote address at the opening session of the conference this coming Tuesday (Sept. 9). Delegates will also be welcomed at the opening session by the Yukon Premier Darrell Pasloski. Meetings will continue through Sept. 11 with sessions on sustainable infrastructure development, governance models, enhancing northern economies and environmental challenges.

CPAR and SCPAR pursue initiatives to further Arctic cooperation and act as a parliamentary forum to discuss and advance action on issues relevant to the work of the Arctic Council. The main outcome of the 11th Conference will be a Conference Statement, with recommendations to the Arctic Council and to the governments of the eight Arctic states and the institutions of the European Union, as well as to other international organizations. Between conferences, SCPAR, which has observer status at the Arctic Council, monitors progress in implementing the recommendations of the Conference Statement.

The Canadian delegation consists of Senators Percy Downe, Daniel Lang, Ghislain Maltais, Michel Rivard and Members of Parliament Dean Allison, Joyce Bateman, Dennis Bevington, Corneliu Chisu, Yvonne Jones, Ryan Leef, Beverley Shipley and Tilson.