

# Denmark moves forward on North Pole claim

August 22 2011

---



View of an Arctic fjord. Denmark presented its "Arctic Strategy" for the next decade, confirming that it intends to lay claim to the North Pole sea bed by 2014 at the latest.

Denmark on Monday presented its "Arctic Strategy" for the next decade, confirming that it intends to lay claim to the North Pole sea bed by 2014 at the latest.

The 58-page report said Denmark and its autonomous [Arctic](#) territories of Greenland and the Faroe Islands had agreed on a common strategy for the region, including producing "documentation for claims to three areas around Greenland, including an area north of Greenland which among other areas covers the [North Pole](#)."

That claim, which the report said would be made in 2014 at the latest, could put the Scandinavian country on a collision course with Russia, the

United States, Canada and Norway.

The five countries all have claims in the region, where melting [polar ice](#) and new technologies have made the "high north" easier to access and fueled competition for untapped oil and [gas reserves](#).

Foreign Minister Lene Espersen had hinted in May that Denmark would detail its own claim to the [sea bed](#) there in its upcoming strategy report, insisting though that "the North Pole is not a goal in itself."

On Monday however, she focused on the importance of sustainable development in the region, stressing the plan was "necessary at a time when there are major changes in the Arctic, not least as a result of [climate change](#) and [melting ice](#)."

Denmark's "Arctic Strategy 2011-2020" was "designed to ensure the sustainable development of the Arctic with full respect for nature and the environment," Espersen said in a statement, insisting that Denmark was intent on working "in close cooperation with our international partners."

Under the 2008 Ilulisaat Declaration, the five Arctic coastal states agreed to negotiated settlements to claims in the [Arctic region](#), which along with the Antarctic is one of the last areas on earth where sovereignty has not been fully apportioned.

"The increased strategic interest and activity in the Arctic regions requires... a well-functioning framework of international law to ensure peaceful coexistence," the report said.

The Arctic seabed is thought to hold about 90 billion barrels of oil and 30 percent of the world's undiscovered gas resources, according to the US Geological Survey.

The North Pole seabed itself is however not believed to hold large reserves, but appears to hold symbolic value for the countries in the region.

In 2007 for instance, a Russian mini-submarine reached the bottom of the Arctic Ocean under the North Pole and planted a Russian flag, and Canada is also expected to make a claim in the area.

Countries bordering the Arctic are currently entitled to a 200 nautical mile economic zone from their coastlines, but claims for extending their territories will be decided under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

UNCLOS requires countries laying new claims to present them within 10 years of ratifying the convention, something Denmark did in 2004.

(c) 2011 AFP

Citation: Denmark moves forward on North Pole claim (2011, August 22) retrieved 21 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-08-denmark-north-pole.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.