

Introduction

by R. Wolfrum

The Arctic in the 21st century faces an increasing amount of challenges. Global warming will have far-reaching repercussions, not only for the Arctic Ocean and its resources, but also for other regions of the world. On the other hand, new opportunities open up. The melting of the ice enables the exploitation of previously inaccessible resources and the use of new shipping routes. However, these opportunities bring along new responsibilities, which have to be taken seriously. These developments in the Arctic are increasingly part of international discussion. Many questions have to be answered.

The Berlin Conference on *New Chances and New Responsibilities in the Arctic Region* held from 11-13 March 2009 provided a forum to discuss the possibilities of cooperation between Arctic and non-Arctic States, the involvement of international, multilateral organizations and the balancing of opposing interests of Arctic littoral and other States. It was organized by the German Federal Foreign Office in cooperation with the Foreign Ministries of Norway and Denmark, as well as the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law and Adelphi Research, and hosted around 150 participants from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business, science and civil society.

It focused on three main topics:

- Sustainable Development in the Arctic: Challenges for Environment, Societies and Research;
- Arctic in Change: New Prospects for Resource Exploitation and Maritime Traffic; and
- An International Governance Framework for the Arctic: Challenges for International Public Law.

This issue of the Heidelberg Journal of International Law contains a selection of contributions to the Conference. The comprehensive conference proceedings will be published later on in a separate publication.

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