



**Ávarp forseta Íslands,
Ólafs Ragnars Grímssonar
á vígsluathöfn stækkunar álvers
í Straumsvík
17. október 1997**

Employees of ISAL,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

The oldest of the plant workers, the youngest member of the management and the shift foreman have assisted me in starting up the moulder to complete the process which converts aluminium from its molten state into ingots for export.

Their help was symbolic of the cooperation whose magnificent results we can see today. The combination of construction, machinery and software we see here is a remarkable confirmation of the capabilities, reliability, organizational skills and technological expertise of Icelandic contractors, specialists and workers.

Waterfalls are certainly the ultimate source of the power that Iceland harnesses to boost its industrial output and enhance our living standards. But the inauguration of the production facilities here today is above all a tribute to the resources of skill and knowhow that are to be found among the Icelandic people.

When aluminium production began in Iceland and hydropower stations were built to harness its waterfalls, Iceland had to look abroad for knowhow and organizational skills. Since then, Iceland has made such huge social, economic and technological advances that we are now assisting other nations in many parts of the world in developing their own energy resources and industry.

Within the space of a few decades, the narrow scope available to a nation with an undiversified economy has been transformed into a wealth of opportunities which we exploit on the strength of our expertise and firm confidence in our abilities. We now choose our partners in open

international markets, and evaluate what is best suited to our nation and all-round interests in each case.

The world which will greet the approaching century is very different from the one that the pioneers of the Straumsvík smelter knew. Today, progress is measured not only in terms of profit and income, but also by other criteria. The quality of nature, the environment, human health; such assets are also now taken into account when decisions about future industrial development are on the agenda.

Harmony between industry and natural resources, and the interplay between progress and the environment, are certainly among the most pressing issues of our day, and mankind is seeking solutions and standards on which all nations can agree. In this area, we need to set a good example and put forward credible arguments.

In recent years, Christian Roth has proved that the manager of an aluminium smelter can also be a powerful supporter of conservation, and I would like to thank him here today for the precedent he has set.

Rannveig Rist has followed impressively in his footsteps and we have proudly watched her management of this plant and admired her determination to take innovative approaches. It was certainly a praiseworthy initiative when Alusuisse-Lonza appointed her to manage the Straumsvík smelter.

I would like to congratulate the owners and employees of ISAL on the expansion which we are celebrating today, with my hopes that the boost which its extra production gives to the economy of Iceland will benefit the entire nation.