



WWF

MAGAZINE

No. 1

2017

THE CIRCLE

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Sustainability

Connectivity

Conservation

Development

FINLAND TAKES THE CHAIR ARCTIC COUNCIL EDITION

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Collaboration in times of change

THE CIRCLE frequently addresses changes taking place in the Arctic – changes to climate, waters, human activities and wildlife – which are occurring in this region at unprecedented speed. One constant throughout these changes has been the government of Finland’s recognition of the need to work on them collaboratively through the Arctic Council.

Finland first chaired the Arctic Council in 2000. At that time, its Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja acknowledged that Finland was starting its term “preoccupied with our constant cause of anxiety, the vulnerability of the Arctic environment. The repercussions of climate change are far-reaching not only in the Arctic region but also globally.” He also noted that all their activities as Chair must be based on an appreciation of the link between the environment, and the knowledge of the Indigenous peoples and others living in the region.

At that time, Minister Tuomioja underscored the importance of focusing on the ecological, as well as the social, cultural and economic dimensions of sustainable development.

The rotating chair of the Arctic Council now returns to Finland. In introducing its priorities for the next two years, Finland is again highlighting climate change and sustainable development. As always, these priorities must merge with the views of other countries in defining the Ministerial direction for the upcoming term. As you’ll read in this edition of *The Circle*, the outgoing US Chair faced a mid-term change in presidents and no one is entirely sure what the new administration’s priorities are for the Arctic. Meanwhile, Iceland is on deck to chair the Council in 2019 and is already consulting its citizens on what issues should be highlighted in its upcoming term. This neatly ties in to Finland’s recogni-

tion of the importance of long term strategic goals that look beyond the two-year chairmanships.

Within the Arctic Council structure, the Permanent Participants – the circumpolar Indigenous peoples’ organizations – also have a voice in directing the Council. They also weigh in on what they feel needs to be prioritized in this term.

Outside of the Council, Arctic parliamentarians are requesting a forum of the Arctic state ministers responsible for climate to discuss initiatives for reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and short-lived climate forcers.

Observer states to the Arctic Council – non-Arctic countries – also need to be involved and aware of how they can contribute to a well-governed Arctic. The

government of the Netherlands speaks to how the Observer states can and should engage with the Council.

As an organizational observer and active participant in the Council’s work, WWF has strong views on what the Council should tackle. One of our repeated requests has been that Arctic states track progress on joint conservation commitments. To assist them, WWF has developed a scorecard showing progress to date against several critical indicators.

We also urge this Ministerial to include: developing Arctic-wide plans and incentives for renewable energy; advancing creation of a network of marine protected areas to further minimize the risks of increasing Arctic shipping, and improved understanding of the effects of an acidifying ocean on fisheries. Our full input to the Ministerial meeting can be found at panda.org/arctic. ○



LIISA ROHWEDER is
CEO of WWF Finland

FINLAND RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF LOOKING BEYOND THE TWO-YEAR CHAIRMANSHIPS



Left to right: Lisa Speer (NRDC), H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco, Fanny Douvère (UNESCO), Carl Lundin (IUCN).

World Heritage sites in Arctic Waters

SEVEN GLOBALLY significant marine sites in the Arctic Ocean have been identified by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as warranting protection and could qualify for World Heritage status. The report, in partnership with the US-based Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and UNESCO's World Heritage Centre, was supported by WWF.

Some areas identified by the report for potential heritage designation overlap with the Last Ice Area, prioritized by WWF for conservation.

"This report is another nudge to Arctic nations that they need to act now to conserve these areas of local, national and international

significance," says Clive Tesar, who leads WWF's Last Ice Area project. "Annual records set by shrinking Arctic sea ice indicate we are running out of time to protect these areas for species such as polar bears and narwhals. Their homes are melting away."

Declining ice sets new record

THE US NATIONAL SNOW and Ice Data Centre has confirmed that Arctic sea ice set its lowest spring extent in 38 years of satellite measurement. The ice maximum – when polar sea ice hits its greatest extent in spring – has been declining at a rate of about 3 per cent per decade.

"This is extremely worrisome for animals at the margins of the ice extent, such as the European Arctic,"

says Martin Sommerkorn, Head of Conservation for WWF's Arctic Programme. "Polar bears need the ice to reach denning areas, or to get out onto the ice to feed after a long fasting period in the den. Several species of seal also rely on the ice to give birth in the spring."

A recent study suggested that 50-70% of the Arctic ice disappearance is caused by people.

"This is not just about the effects on Arctic animals; it is also about the people who rely on those animals," says Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, head of WWF's Climate & Energy Practice. "We're trying to cool a larger, hotter part of the world with a smaller and smaller air conditioner. If the sea ice goes, it will impact the lives and livelihoods of billions of people and cause untold damage to sensitive ecosystems." He says this is a reminder that we must act quickly to slow the disap-

pearance of sea ice.

"We must leverage the Paris Agreement on climate change through increased scale and speed of implementation," he urges.

Great Siberian Polynya to be protected

AN AREA OF OPEN WATER in the high Arctic – the Great Siberian Polynya – important to polar bears, walrus, and many other species, is gaining greater protection with the creation of the New Siberian Islands reserve in the Yukutia territory. It will be among Russia's biggest marine protected areas.

The New Siberian Islands is home to one of the least-studied polar bear populations – the Laptev Sea population – along with walrus subspecies, spectacled eider, klookutun, pink seagull, and Bewick's swan. Every winter, the Great Siberian Polynya is a sanctuary for these and many other animals. Uniquely located between the East Siberian and the Laptev Seas, the polynya never freezes, allowing many Arctic species to winter there.

The nature reserve project, spearheaded by WWF Russia, was validated by the state ecological expert examination and approved by the Government of Yakutia. It has been submitted to the Government of the Russian Federation to sign.

© NOW – Michael Alsei

Polar bear subpopulations stable, but shrinking sea ice taking a toll

NEWLY-RELEASED results of a polar bear subpopulation survey show two of Canada's 13 polar bear subpopulations, previously thought to be declining, are likely stable while another may even be increasing. However, the survey has also uncovered some worrisome trends. Scientists observed the bears looked thinner, fewer cubs are surviving into adulthood, and female bears are being forced to swim longer distances for food. The evidence also shows declining Arctic sea ice may be a major threat to their long-term survival.

This research – funded in part by WWF Canada – helps



Polar Bears, Churchill, Canada

create a baseline for measuring polar bear health. “The decreases in reproduction and body condition of polar

bears in Baffin Bay are especially worrisome,” WWF-Canada Arctic species expert Brandon Laforest explains. “As sea ice continues to decline, frequent and timely monitoring of polar bear subpopulations across Canada will be necessary.”

Other findings of the survey include:

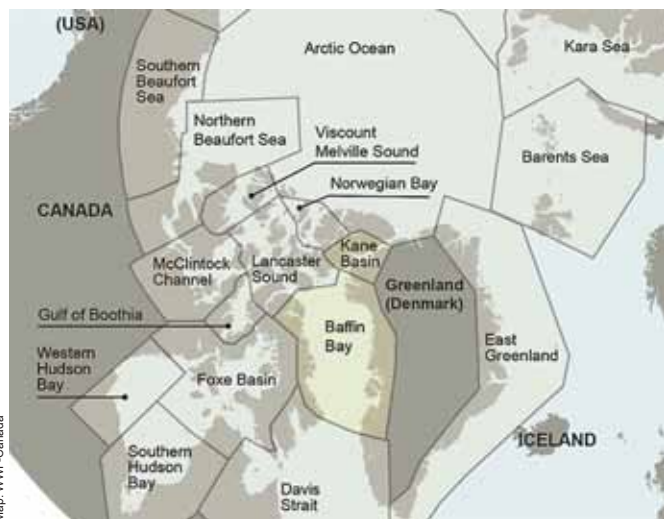
- Baffin Bay and Kane Basin subpopulations are now estimated to be 2,826 and 357 bears respectively, up from the previous survey in the 1990s.

- The Baffin Bay subpopulation has experienced dramatic losses in sea ice habitat. This has resulted in polar bears having to move farther

north in all seasons. Bears are also now spending 20 to 30 days more on land than in the 1990s.

- The Kane Basin subpopulation is experiencing a temporary benefit as climate change transforms their habitat into a more seasonal sea-ice zone. More cubs are being born and bears have increased access to food. This benefit is likely temporary if sea-ice loss continues.

Sea ice is a vital habitat for polar bears. It is where they feed, give birth, and is the platform they use to move across their range. Sea ice is the central feature for the entire Arctic marine food web.



Range map of polar bear subpopulations in Canada.

Finland takes the Chair

The following text is from a speech by the Prime Minister of Finland, **JUHA SIPILÄ** to the Arctic Frontiers international conference on sustainable development in Tromsø, Norway, January 2017.

WE ARE PREPARING to take over the chairmanship of the Arctic Council in May. We take this task very seriously as we Finns always tend to do. Over 20 years of its existence the Arctic Council has become a valuable international forum with distinctive qualities including the active involvement of Indigenous peoples' organizations and strong connections with the scientific community. As the Chair, we will continue this path. During our chairmanship, we also aim to increase the cooperation between the Arctic Council and the Arctic Economic Council. We need to do this to support sustainable growth and business opportunities in the north.

We must keep the bigger global picture also in mind, the Paris Climate Agreement and the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Develop-

ment are our guidelines for Arctic cooperation. The priorities for our upcoming chairmanship are now set. We will focus on environmental protection, connectivity, meteorology and education. We will build our 2-year chairmanship in the Arctic Council on strong Arctic tradition and expertise. Our motto is "if it works in Finland, it works anywhere". Finland is successful because of the Arctic climate, not in spite of it ... together with the present chair, the United States and other Arctic countries we are looking at how Arctic cooperation could respond even better to the changing situation in the far north. Our non-Arctic partners in Asia, Europe and America are invited to support this common goal as well.

There are opportunities that should be used; for example, improving connectivity in the northern regions is crucial. Finland is exploring the possibility of connecting Europe and Asia via telecommunications cable running through the Northeast Passage. We also want to enhance the role of the European Union in the development of Arctic Europe. But as in all EU cooperation the most important issue is implementation. We need to put our words into action. We hope to make progress on these issues in the EU's first Arctic stakeholder forum to be held in Oulu in June. ○

FINLAND IS SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE OF THE ARCTIC CLIMATE, NOT IN SPITE OF IT



The U.S. – in like a lion, out like a lamb?

The priorities put forth for the U.S. tenure as Chair of the Arctic Council included addressing climate change, improving economic and living conditions, and better stewardship of the Arctic Ocean, tied around a common theme of “One Arctic: Shared Opportunities, Challenges and Responsibilities”. Then, writes **HEATHER EXNER-PIROT**, the unexpected happened.

DONALD J. TRUMP was elected U.S. President, with an almost wholly undeveloped foreign policy beyond the slogan, “America First”. But as Alaskan Senator Lisa Murkowski, a Republican, conceded when hosting the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region in Anchorage on February 24, “there has not been a clear lay-down of a policy on all things Arctic” by the Trump Administration. And there may not be before the Ministerial in Fairbanks on May 11.

The U.S. approached its Arctic Council Chairmanship with energy and ideas, marking a period of growing American interest in the region following the indifference of the 1990s and early 2000s. But it faced some shortcomings even before Trump was elected.

The biggest challenge was, and remains, the disconnect between Washington D.C. and Alaskan perspectives on policy priorities for the Arctic region.

The State Department, under John Kerry, privileged climate change and environmental protection; whereas Alaskan politicians expected investment and progress on economic development and infrastructure. They got moratoriums instead. Disagreements have been aired publicly. The Arctic Council, which has been trying to find compromise between those two solitudes for twenty years, was able to stay above the fray.

For its part, the Obama administration embraced the Arctic, if not necessarily the Arctic Council. The Arctic became a much higher profiled piece of American foreign policy than ever before, with the well-attended GLACIER conference in Alaska in August 2015 that focused on climate change efforts; the White House Arctic Science Ministerial in September 2016; and two Joint Arctic Leaders’ statements with the Prime Minister of Canada, Justin

Trudeau, in March and December 2016. To the cynical observer, the attention given the Arctic was a proxy for Obama’s interest in climate change, with the region acting as an object, not a subject, in the discussion. It was unusual, if nothing else, for the Chair of the Arctic Council to spend so much time on Arctic issues outside of the parameters of the Council itself.

THE U.S. APPROACHED ITS ARCTIC COUNCIL CHAIRMANSHIP WITH ENERGY AND IDEAS... BUT IT FACED SOME SHORTCOMINGS



Photo: Pete Souza, Wikimedia Commons

New president in The Oval Office. What will the future U.S. Arctic policy look like?

On that matter, the appointment of Admiral Robert Papp as the State Department's Special Advisor for the Arctic in July 2014 always raised more questions than it answered. He launched the U.S. Arctic Council Chairmanship agenda, seemed to preside at some Arctic Council events, and became the public face of the Chairmanship, but his role was never clear. He left the post rather ignominiously, with a press release coming from Eastern Shipbuilding Group Inc. of Panama City, Florida, on January 6, 2017 – well before the inauguration, the time when political appointees usually offer their resignation – announcing he was the company's new President of its Washington operations, i.e. its lobbyist.

Politics aside, the history books will likely remember the U.S. Arctic Council Chairmanship as a successful one, judging by Arctic Council standards. An

Arctic Science Cooperation Agreement was already agreed to *ad referendum* in July 2016, and will be signed with the requisite fanfare in Fairbanks in May. Traditional Council fare – important scientific work that consistently fails to capture the public's imagination – will be proffered. Amongst other things, the U.S. Chairmanship's efforts on telecommunications, sanitation and renewable energy are some of the most practical endeavours the Council has taken to address sustainable development.

But the U.S. Chairmanship is still subject to the whims of the Trump Administration. U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who will preside over the meeting, has kept a very low profile, and the State Department has been on the defensive. The prospect of Tillerson meeting publicly with Sergei Lavrov, the Russian Foreign Minister, on American soil may bring unwanted attention to

the Council and the region. The focus on climate change may be diluted. Public debate around Obama's unpopular moratorium on oil drilling in the Alaskan Arctic may hijack the Ministerial's preferred messaging.

At this point, it would be a blessing if the U.S. Arctic Council Chairmanship ended with a whimper rather than a bang, and if the Fairbanks Ministerial was a bit of a bore. There are far less desirable alternatives. ○



HEATHER EXNER-PIROT is the Managing Editor of the Arctic Yearbook.

PERMANENT PARTICIPANTS WEIGH IN

SÁMI PARLIAMENT IN NORWAY

Including Sámi Parliaments

THE SÁMI PEOPLE have been engaged in the Arctic Council since it began in 1996. The Saami Council is one of the six Indigenous peoples' organizations that are Permanent Participants to the Arctic Council. The Sámi Parliament of Norway works actively with High North issues and has participated in the Arctic Council through the state delegation since Norway had the chairmanship in 2006-2009. When Finland takes over

the chairmanship, it will be critical that Finland and Sweden work to ensure the other Sámi parliaments are present at Arctic Council meetings.

The Sámi Parliament maintains that international climate action should continue to respect the rights of Indigenous peoples pursuant to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; recognize the value of Indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge, practices, and innova-

tions; and ensure access to climate funding for Indigenous peoples of all regions. The Sámi people are determining the path of our own economic, social and cultural development. It is important that future development and growth in the Arctic has the latitude to tailor new economic activities to the contexts and needs of the communities they affect.

The Sámi people must be able to express their values, priorities, and perspectives on our full participation in the economy, on the impacts of development, on what constitutes sustainable development and environmental protection, and on fundamental human rights. Many aspects of Indigenous cultures in the Arctic are dependent on snow and ice and are tied to renewable resources. The Sámi traditional livelihoods, especially in reindeer husbandry, fresh and seawater fishing, small-scale farming, and hunting and gathering, have been the cornerstone of Sámi culture for centuries. Today, these livelihoods face a serious threat from climate change, which the Arctic is experiencing twice as fast as anywhere else in the world. ○

JON PETTER

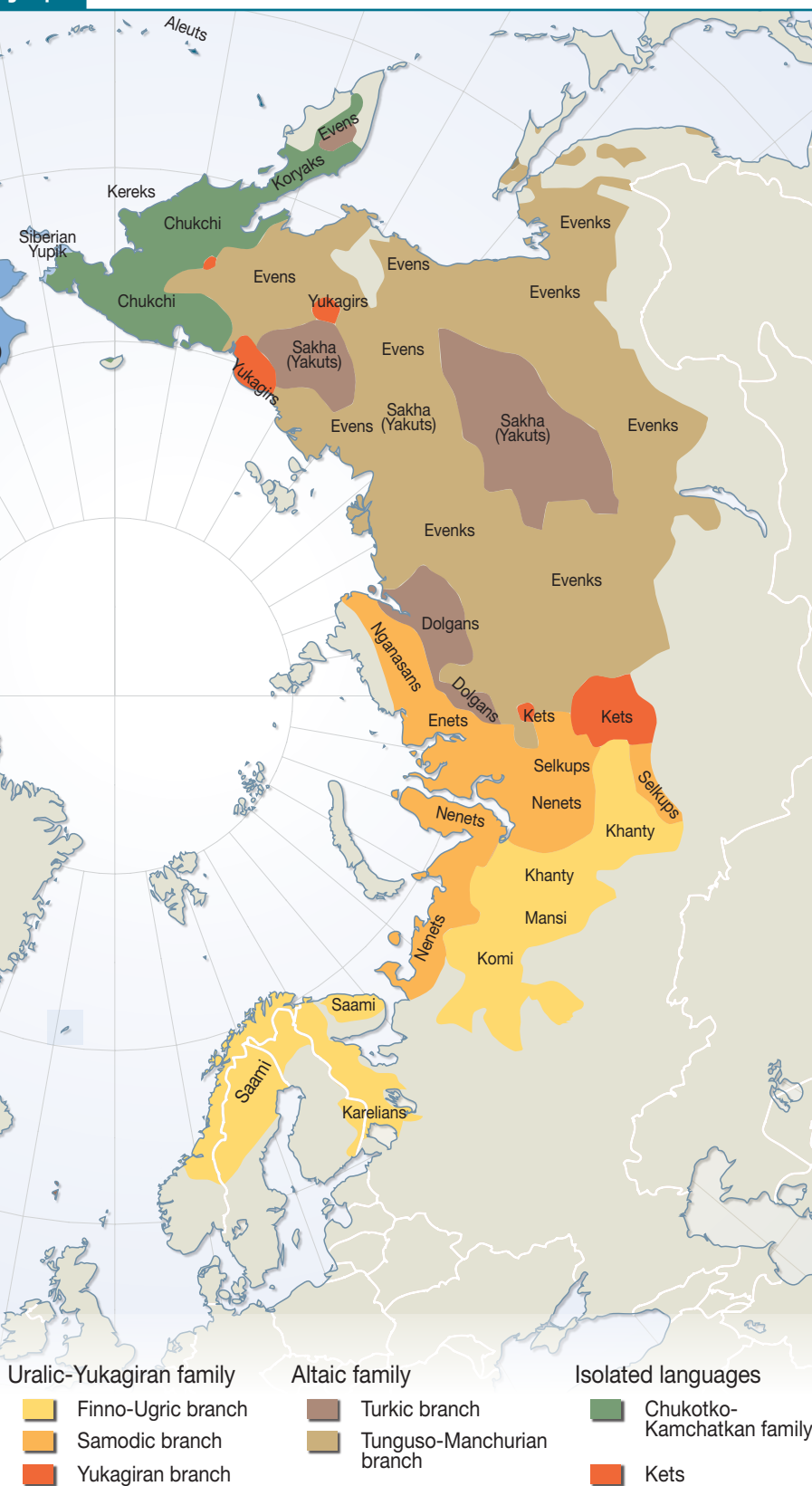
GINTAL is a Senior advisor to the Sámediggi, the Sámi Parliament in Norway.



Demography of Indigenous peoples of the Arctic based on linguistic



Map: Hugo Ahlenius



UNEP/GRID-Arendal. Sources: Arctic Human Development Report, 2004 and Norwegian Polar Institute (W.K. Dallmann).

THE ALEUT INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Improving connections and information

THIS IS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY to look at what new initiatives and priorities will take place during the Finnish Chairmanship. The Arctic consists mainly of small populations separated by large distances. Many Arctic communities are not located on a road or rail system and rely on air transportation. Poor connectivity makes distance learning problematic. But education is a key factor in community sustainability and resilience. Working with the University of the Arctic to strengthen educational opportunities for polar communities and continuing the work of the Task Force on Telecommunications Infrastructure in the Arctic could have long-term and far-reaching positive influence.



The Aleut International Association represents the Aleut people

in the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands of Alaska and the Commander Islands in the Russian Federation. **JIM GAMBLE** is the Executive director of the AIA.

A new area for potential cooperation is in Arctic meteorology and should include collaboration between the Arctic states and the World Meteorological Organization. Continued work to implement the existing Search and Rescue Agreement and the Agreement on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response will benefit from improved weather data. Improved cooperation between the Arctic states in marine activities both within their respective Exclusive Economic Zones and in areas beyond national jurisdiction will also benefit the region through increased safety and consistent management practices. Monitoring amendments to the International Marine Organization will also be important, especially when it first comes into force. Measures are also needed to

- strengthen internal Arctic Council cooperation by working to ensure smooth transitions and cooperation between chairmanships and working groups, improving the inclusion of observers in the Council's work, and continued support of the Arctic Council Secretariat while improving the visibility of the Arctic Council globally.

tic Council globally.

Work to strengthen social progress for Arctic Peoples will be vital in the coming years. The profound effects of accelerating climate change need to be recognized while looking at ways to stop global warming and mitigate those effects that cannot be stopped. This can happen

through a commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement which the Arctic states should lead since the Arctic is experiencing those effects more drastically than any other place on the planet. Work that focuses on human health, education, and combating social problems such as suicide and substance abuse will benefit

GWICH'IN COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL

Clean power for Arctic communities

THE FINNISH Prime Minister says all of Finland will be powered by renewable energy by 2050. This is a goal the Gwich'in Council International (GCI) can get behind. For the past two Arctic Council chairmanships GCI has prioritized projects related to a clean energy future.

The environmental and economic impact of the high price of energy in our communities is too high. We need to share the goal of the Finnish chair to move our communities towards renewable energy technologies. We look forward to learning from Finland how they will do this and see what their experience

can teach us while sharing with them what we've already learned as per the mandate of the Arctic Council: inhabitants across the Circumpolar North working together.

GCI is contributing to this goal by acting as the lead or co-lead on several Arctic Council projects related to renewable energy:

- Arctic Renewable Energy Futures Framework (AREFF) aims to create a toolkit of resources for communities to develop energy plans that move towards renewable energy;

- Arctic Renewable Energy Network

Academy (ARENA) provides mentorship and educational opportunities for community leaders and

- Arctic Renewable Energy Atlas (AREA) creates an inventory of existing renewable energy infrastructure available in the Arctic.

We're also proud to be a partner in the Finland-hosted Arctic Energy Summit, which will take place later this year in Helsinki. The Summit will highlight innovations in renewable energy technologies, create opportunities for sharing best practices, and build a circumpolar network of companies, governments, and

THE INUIT CIRCUMPOLAR COUNCIL

From policy shaping to policy making

WE HAVE MUCH to be grateful for in the Arctic, this peaceful region governed by eight nation states. Four million people call this home and more than 40 different Indigenous peoples or ethnic groups form a significant part of the population – all of whom have varying degrees of rights, including settled land claims, self-government and treaty rights. Importantly, all have the right to self-determination advanced through the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is also a complicated region. Communicating with each other is difficult as is travel. It is extremely expensive to live, work and function here.

To those who live and work in the Arctic, it is a privilege and an international

arena where good things are happening and where even more can be achieved.

The Arctic Council remains the most important forum to ensure the Indigenous knowledge of the Inuit and other Permanent Participants is heard and that the Permanent Participants directly contribute to Arctic science, research and policy development through the Council and bilateral relationships with Arctic states. The 160,000 Inuit who live in 150 communities and villages in Canada, Greenland, Russia and the United States share the responsibility of engagement and influence within the Council with the other Permanent Participants.

As the US chairmanship concludes and Finland assumes the Chair, we should

celebrate the US Chairmanship successes and have the courage to reflect on where we can improve. As the US Senior Arctic Official suggested in an interview, we need to re-visit the 2013 Arctic Council Ministers' "Vision for the Arctic" and assess if we are indeed pursuing the appropriate opportunities to expand the role of the Arctic Council and the Permanent Participants from policy shaping to policy making. This is an ongoing evolution – each chairmanship moves the target forward, bringing new vision and energy to the Council.

The United States has worked hard to address issues concerning the peoples of the Arctic and we have enjoyed working with our American counterparts.

all Arctic communities. Finally, all the Arctic Council's work will benefit from a robust inclusion of Indigenous knowledge. When considered from the very beginning of every initiative, project outcomes will always be improved making them more vital to Indigenous peoples and local communities. ○

non-governmental organizations working towards a renewable energy future.

Finland takes over the chairmanship at a crucial time for environmental stewardship globally. We welcome their continued leadership in environmental sustainability, exemplified by their renewable energy goal. ○



GRANT SULLIVAN is the Executive Director of the Gwich'in Council International, which represents Gwich'in in the Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Alaska.

Projects which advanced human rights, Indigenous knowledge and science, Arctic Ocean cooperation, renewable energy projects and mental health and suicide prevention have been implemented.

As Chair of the ICC, I want to encourage the incoming Finnish Chair to keep moving forward projects that have real societal value for the Arctic and its peoples. Successive Chairmanships can count on ICC to support their mandate for the benefit of all partners and our respective peoples. Raising the bar, building equity and demonstrating partnerships through collaboration must always be our goal. ○



OKALIK EGEESIAK is the International Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council

Increasing Indigenous capacity

THE ARCTIC COUNCIL

provides a platform for Indigenous peoples to add their voices to international issues. These Permanent Participants – the Aleut International Association, the Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich'in Council International, the Saami Council, the Inuit Circumpolar Council and the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North – sit at the Arctic Council table and contribute substantially through their unique perspective and input on international issues. This ensures the actions of the Council are shaped by those who are affected by those actions and that Indigenous culture, traditions and knowledge are reflected in Council business, research and proceedings.

These Permanent Participants contribute substantially to the Council's authoritative status in the region. Yet since the Council was created two decades ago they have consistently been challenged to maintain robust involvement due to a lack of adequate, sustained and stable funding.

In the Council's 20-year history, each Ministerial declaration has recognized the need for an appropriate funding mechanism to ensure the Permanent Participants can fully engage in the business of the Arctic Council. The vehicle to finally act on this long-standing deficit is the newly-created Álgú Fund. In early 2017, this capacity-building charitable foundation was established by the Permanent Participants to pro-

Structure of the Arctic Council



Graphic: Arctic Council Secretariat

vide reliable funding on an equitable basis to each of the Indigenous organizations represented at the Arctic Council.

Álgú in the Saami language means "beginning". In this case, it marks a new beginning for the participation of Indigenous peoples' organizations in the business and proceedings of the Arctic Council. The Álgú Fund will operate independently of but alongside the Arctic Council to provide stable, predictable funding. This will be distributed on an equal basis to the five Permanent Participant organizations to increase access to research, while improving capacity for community engagement and ability to collaborate on projects.

The Álgú fund is chaired by James Gamble, (AIA), while Vladimir Klimov (RAIPON) is the vice Chair. The other board members are: Grant Sullivan (GCI), Chief Gary Harrison (AAC), Outi Paader (SCI). The Álgú Fund is now actively soliciting support. Contact: Elle Merete Omma elle.merete@arctic-council.org ○

SCORING the Arctic Council

The Arctic Council provides direction in the form of Ministerial decisions, policy recommendations, guidelines, framework plans, and binding agreements. It is then imperative that the Arctic states put this direction into practice to deliver good governance. This first **WWF ARCTIC COUNCIL CONSERVATION SCORECARD looks at the extent to which Arctic States have implemented Arctic Council direction nationally, and whether the Arctic Council has delivered agreed-upon commitments through its own work. Since WWF focuses its work on conservation, that is the direction analyzed here.**

WHILE SOME COUNTRIES are moving to address specific environmental issues in the Arctic, our findings indicate national implementation of Arctic Council direction has, overall, been poor. The Arctic Council itself is excellent in delivering on its commitments, demonstrating that the Arctic states' involvement at the Arctic Council is extremely valuable. However, greater efforts in implementation are required by member states to secure a healthy Arctic, and for Arctic

countries to reap the rewards of their involvement at the Council.

NATIONAL RESULTS SUMMARY

The Scorecard is based on an analysis of Council direction in six assessment areas. These areas were chosen to evaluate implementation performance because they have been the focus of Arctic Council direction over the past decade and because they relate to the protection of the Arctic environment.

1 Arctic states are advancing towards identification of conservation areas. However, the implementation of specific area-based protection measures such as marine protected areas is fragmentary and few mechanisms are in place to safeguard Arctic marine biodiversity under changing environmental conditions. 20.2% of the Arctic's terrestrial area is protected but only 4.7% of the Arctic's marine areas are protected. Further action is required to establish a comprehensive network of specially-managed marine areas.

2 Arctic states are slow to mainstream and incorporate strategies for resilience and adaptation of Arctic biodiversity in their plans for development, legislation and practices. This could be because the recent, ambitious, long-term policy recommendations of the 2013 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment will take time to implement. There is also slow progress on reducing human disturbance outside protected areas, except for fishing regulation. Arctic states have introduced practices that



FURTHER ACTION IS REQUIRED TO ESTABLISH SPECIALLY MANAGED, PROTECTED MARINE AREAS

THE WAY FORWARD

Establishing the Arctic Council as the preeminent policymaking forum in the region will require member states to develop reporting capacity for ensuring a transparent, effective and accountable institution. Arctic states should report back to the Arctic Council secretariat on national action and progress in implementing Arctic Council direction to achieve this.

Based on the Scorecard results, governments also need to upgrade their respective national processes to strengthen implementation of Arctic Council direction domestically and across borders. WWF recommends Arctic States establish national action mechanisms to lead implementation of Arctic Council direction.

The direction is expected to become more specific to provide effective guidance to implementing authorities including results that should be achieved. Future Council direction should identify responsible parties, clarify terms of action requested, and provide timelines.

The WWF Arctic Council Conservation Scorecard will be updated every two years to assist the Council and its member states in monitoring progress. We hope this will encourage a more systematic delivery of actions critical to the Arctic Council's mission to protect the Arctic environment. ○

■ www.panda.org/acscorecard

reduce by-catch of marine mammals, seabirds and non-target fish and avoid significant adverse impact to the seabed. The states also have solid biodiversity monitoring systems in place.

3 Arctic states are taking steps to protect areas of heightened ecological and cultural significance from the impacts of Arctic shipping, but implementation is incomplete. Countries appear slow to reduce air emissions from shipping, although they are acting to prevent the introduction of invasive species and to establish marine monitoring traffic systems.

4 The Arctic Council direction for oil spills focuses on administrative preparedness and response. Arctic states perform very well against those commitments. The provisions of the 2013 *Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic*, however, are not ambitious. This Scorecard did not assess whether response capacity is sufficient for real-world oil spill response.

5 Canada, Norway, Russia, and the United States are exploiting massive oil resources, thus increasing emissions of greenhouse gases responsible for climate change. WWF urges Arctic states to transition swiftly towards a low-carbon economy to reduce these emissions. In 2015, Arctic states collectively represented 21.40% of global carbon dioxide emissions. The effects of black carbon in the Arctic are unique and noticeable in that it darkens snow and ice, reducing their ability to reflect sunlight. WWF commends many of the Arctic states for implementing early actions to reduce black carbon emissions.

6 The outlook for national efforts to implement ecosystem-based management in the Arctic is bleak. Arctic states need to invest in applying the ecosystem approach as requested by Arctic ministers. This poor performance can be attributed to a lack of specific research on combined effects of multiple stressors as well as a lack of political leadership.

Christopher Mehel, CC, Flickr.com

*Polar bears, Spitsbergen,
Svalbard, Norway.*



Looming challenges

For much of the Arctic Council's existence, climate change has been a driver behind the Council's priorities. Now its latest update on climate science has been released, and LARS-OTTO REIERSEN says the climate-driven regime shift calls for urgent attention.

AFTER A LONG, STABLE PERIOD of thick multi-year ice, thinner one-year ice now characterizes Arctic sea ice cover; permafrost is thawing and snow cover extent is declining. The effects of changes in the Arctic sea ice extent have

even been documented in southern latitudes, including South East Asia according to the new scientific assessment Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost in the Arctic (SWIPA 2017). These findings presented by the Arctic Monitoring & Assessment Programme (AMAP) are a stark reminder of the global impact of climate change. ➤



and Assessment Programme (AMAP) to the Arctic Council Ministerial conference in May, 2017 update the earlier SWIPA assessment conducted by AMAP in 2011. These physical changes have already resulted in effects on Arctic ecosystems and societies, and together with regional and global socio-economic drivers documented in the three regional AMAP reports on Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic underscore an urgent need to improve adaptation strategies and actions to face this new reality.

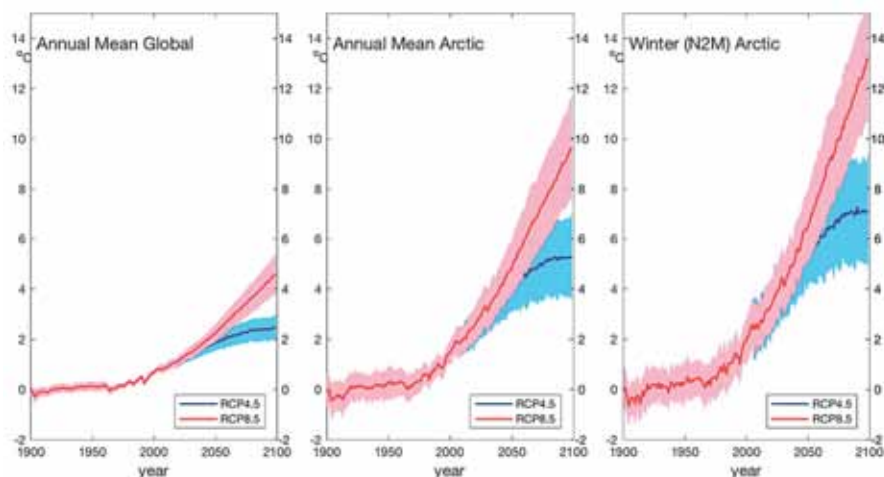
These changes are expected to continue for at least the next several decades. According to the SWIPA 2017 assessment, Arctic temperatures will continue to increase and by 2040-50 the annual mean air temperature for areas north of 60°N will be 4-5°C higher than the reference period independent of any mitigation actions. This is due to the inherent input and transfer of energy (Fig.1). This figure also illustrates what may happen if no reduction is initiated – with the yearly average temperature potentially increasing by 10°C by

2100, and in winter months (November – March) by 13°C. If actions according to the Paris agreement (http://unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9485.

phpt) are implemented, the increase might be reduced to 5-6°C on average and 7°C in the winter months (blue curve reflecting the rcp 4.5). Therefore, the sooner mitigation action is initiated, and the more comprehensive this action, the greater its effect will be in reducing the long-term impact of the projected temperature rise in 2100.

Science, however, must still clarify numerous questions to help prepare for the near- and long-term future in the Arctic and the influence of climate change on southern latitudes. The priority will be to convey the new results to people living in the North and to deci-

Fig. 1: Potential temperature change scenarios 1900-2100



sion makers so that the policy perspective of the new documentation can be understood. Priorities include:

- Better capability in predicting how changes in the Arctic cryosphere may affect the weather, climate and the hydrological system within the Arctic region and globally but especially for the Northern hemisphere. We specifically need to improve the prediction of extreme weather and how it may affect infrastructure such as houses, roads, harbors, airports, etc., and the environment thereby allowing governments and businesses to take preparatory measures and adaptation actions. Better understanding at local and regional levels of the environmental processes and conditions that will be affected by changes in climate and hydrology which will effect daily life in Arctic communities including traditional fishing, hunting and herding.

- It is especially important to clarify changes and effects on the marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems,

e.g. new species moving into warming Arctic waters and die-offs of existing species. Some of the world largest fisheries are in sub-Arctic areas. We currently do not have a clear understanding of the combined effects of changes in temperature, ocean acidification and pollutants on species composition and future fisheries.

- The change in climate and hydrology will be accompanied by new vector-borne diseases in the North that will affect the people living there. Science will have to clarify how best to cope with this new situation. There is increasing evidence for human health effects from contaminants, climate change and dietary changes. New research must identify precautionary actions.

- Securing and improving existing observation networks to provide necessary data from remote areas. This is especially important in monitoring Arctic marine and terrestrial areas and the run-off from Arctic glaciers and the Greenland ice sheet. The network of in-situ observation stations needs to be improved to document both linear and non-linear (extreme) changes. Some Arctic countries and the European Union have over recent years allocated some funding to these priority areas, but it is insufficient to provide all the data needed. However, Arctic and non-Arctic countries must also make substantial contributions. ○

LARS-OTTO
REIERSEN is
the Execu-
tive Secretary
of the Arctic
Monitoring and Assess-
ment Programme (AMAP)
Secretariat



BY 2040-50 THE ANNUAL MEAN AIR TEMPERATURE FOR AREAS NORTH OF 60°N WILL BE 4-5°C HIGHER

Early adopters

The Netherlands is one of the longest-standing observers at the Arctic Council – since 1996 – and at its predecessor, the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS). KEES RADE and JORDEN SPLINTER look at how this small non-Arctic country contributes to the sustainable development of the North, The Netherlands' niches and strengths in this region, and how it views the incoming Finnish Chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

HISTORICALLY, THE DUTCH were among the earliest Arctic explorers in the 16th century, naming and mapping numerous locations. But what is the current Dutch interest and involvement in the Arctic? The Netherlands 2016-2020 polar strategy makes that very clear: while it doesn't rule out economic opportunity, environmental protection and sustainable development – based on the ecosystem-based approach and the precautionary principle – come first. This implies that the government does not actively encourage further Arctic exploration and exploitation by the Dutch private sector. However, Dutch companies are very much aware of environmental and safety aspects, and where they are active in the Arctic we ask them to go beyond local or national regulations and keep raising the bar for sustainable operations.

This is where a multi-stakeholder approach is key with government, private sector, scientists and NGOs participating equally in decision-making. This approach is a long-standing Dutch tradition and an export product in itself, reflecting the strong legal position NGOs have in The Netherlands. In the Arctic, the Dutch government has a good working relationship with NGOs such as WWF, which is generally

1639 painting by Cornelis de Man picturing the whaling station of the Amsterdam chamber of the Northern Company in Smeerenburg, Svalbard, Norway.



A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACH IS A LONG-STANDING DUTCH TRADITION

considered a constructive and engaged actor in this vulnerable part of the world.

For sustainable Arctic operations, solid science and research data are indispensable. Arctic countries agree on this as per a binding agreement on Arctic research cooperation signed in May 2017. This is a critical area in which non-Arctic countries can also contribute to the Arctic Council and to the sustainable development of the North. The Netherlands conducts research on numerous themes, and even though its polar program is modest in terms of quantity, we are proud to rank first in the world in terms of citations *per*

research publication. The quality of our research makes The Netherlands a reliable partner in three of six working groups of the Arctic Council – Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG), Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) and other Arctic fora. The Netherlands has also had its own research facility on Svalbard for over two decades.

One of the obvious reasons The Netherlands is involved in Arctic research is ➤



KEES RADE became the first Arctic Ambassador for The Netherlands

in 2016. He is also Ambassador for Sustainable Development.



JORDEN SPLINTER is Senior Arctic Official for The Netherlands.

Netherlands research themes:

- ice, climate and sea level rise
- polar ecosystems
- sustainable development
- social, legal and economic landscape

climate change and subsequent sea level rise. Roughly one third of the country is below sea level, and two thirds of the national GDP is generated there. Arctic changes are already affecting the biodiversity in the Netherlands, notably in the Wadden Sea area, so we have a strong sense of responsibility for the Arctic. The Netherlands is a country with a large ecological footprint per capita, including CO₂ emissions. This, combined with a belief that parts of the Arctic belong to us all (as a *global common*), illustrates the need for an Arctic policy. Part of this policy is the position of Indigenous peoples, as The Netherlands is one of the few countries globally to ratify the International Labour Organization 169 Convention on Indigenous Peoples Rights. Finally, a changing Arctic means changing relations between states. It is very much a Foreign Affairs task to analyze Arctic changes and understand what global and Arctic climate developments mean for national and European security. Our Minister of Foreign Affairs had this in mind when he joined the former US Secretary of State John Kerry's GLACIER conference on Svalbard in the summer of 2015.

The US Chair of the Arctic Council has done a great job in terms of working with observer countries and giving them a voice. We are confident the Finnish Chair will continue this practice. We have recently met with the Finnish Arctic team, and have concluded that the Dutch and Finns share similar Arctic priorities: sustainable development, environmental protection – particularly the reduction of black carbon emissions – and education. Nothing stands in the way of future cooperation. If there is one thing needed to safeguard the Arctic, it is international cooperation. ○

Support for Finland

Finland is preparing to take over the Chairmanship in an increasingly uncertain political situation. EIRIK SIVERTSEN says it is Finland's job to ensure cooperation continues on climate-related challenges, and on economic and political development of the region.

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT tasks facing Finland is to prevent any negative trends from spiralling out of control and thus undermining decades of East-West cooperation that have established the High North as a region of low conflict.

While a detailed chairmanship program is presented at the Ministerial Meeting on 11th May, we already know that the Finnish Chairmanship will focus on the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of Arctic cooperation. As the Arctic Council's primary mandate relates to sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic, the Finnish priorities are readily justifiable.

Arctic parliamentarians have a long tradition of defining new goals for the Arctic Council. In its efforts to improve effectiveness, the Council's plan of strategic development has the support of the parliamentarians. But this requires the establishment of an adequate and stable budget for the Arctic Council.

In the latest Parliamentary Statement, the Arctic parliamentarians outline three areas where we expect results. Climate change has been viewed as the most pressing challenge. We annually witness how the extent of sea ice has

been diminishing in the Arctic to the point that startling monthly lows rarely even make headlines any longer. At the beginning of 2017 the World Meteorological Organization reported that sea ice extent in the Arctic and Antarctic was the lowest for the month of January since satellite records began 38 years ago. Even though this was something that gained wide publicity, many failed to understand its true meaning and consequences.

These dramatic changes profoundly influence the life of the people and animals living in the Arctic. Therefore, Arctic parliamentarians will ask the Arctic Council to organize a meeting between the ministers responsible for climate to take new initiatives to reduce emissions of CO₂ (carbon dioxide) and short-lived climate forcers. The Council should also explore how the 12 observer countries can be more closely involved in the fight against climate change.

Global warming is not created by

**GLOBAL WARMING
IS NOT CREATED BY
THE ARCTIC'S 4 MIL-
LION INHABITANTS**



Reindeer herding. Jokkmokk, Sweden.

the Arctic's 4 million inhabitants. The climate challenges can therefore not be solved by turning the Arctic into a sanctuary. Yet the Arctic is hit first and hardest by the impact of climate change. Every opportunity should therefore be taken to raise a strong voice to communicate the consequences of climate change in the Arctic at all relevant international meetings.

In order to meet the consequences of climate change, we must understand and support the regions and communities affected by it. We propose that the Arctic Council support development of national, regional and local climate change adaptation plans in the Arctic, including ongoing work on building resilience. Arctic Parliamentarians strongly advocate the need for economic development in the Arctic. The Arctic is

not a wildlife sanctuary, but a home for more than four million people. We are obliged to ensure the opportunity for sustainable economic development for all people living in the Arctic. Requisite standards for Corporate Social Responsibility – CSR – should be established for companies doing business in the Arctic Region.

In the two decades it has existed, the Arctic Council has been a success. Due to innovative ways of governance and the ability to meet new opportunities, it has become the most important international body for governing the Arctic. Now that we have celebrated the Council's 20th anniversary, we need to look ahead. To secure continued development and success in the years to come, we propose holding an Arctic Summit involving the heads of state


and governments of the Arctic Council member states, as well as the heads of the Permanent Participants who represent the Indigenous peoples of the circumpolar Arctic.

As Arctic parliamentarians, we will continue to work for the interests of the inhabitants of the Arctic, and welcome all initiatives of the Finnish chairmanship that support the well-being of the people living in the Arctic. ○



EIRIK SIVERTSEN is a Norwegian Member of Parliament for the Labor Party. He

Chairs Norway's delegation to the Arctic Parliamentary Cooperation and the Standing Committee of Arctic Parliamentarians.



*Ghost ship in a snow storm. Reydarfjordur,
Sudur-Mulasysla, Iceland*

Iceland on deck

Iceland will follow Finland as Chair of the Arctic Council in 2019 and has already begun consultations on its programme. For Iceland, the Arctic is a key foreign policy priority but it is also important in the domestic realm. **ARNI THOR SIGURDSSON** notes that development there will have great impact on the health and well-being of its communities and inhabitants.

ICELAND'S ARCTIC POLICY was unanimously adopted by its Parliament in 2011 and encompasses twelve wide-ranging principles. These include promoting and strengthening the Arctic Council as the premier forum for Arctic cooperation and the importance of and respect for international law – most notably the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. In addition, science and knowledge are considered fundamental to policy and decision making in the Arctic. The policy states that Iceland will adhere to principles of sustainability and protection of the

environment, regarded as seminal when discussing the future of economic development. Further, the policy emphasises cooperation between the Arctic states, but also with non-Arctic states, intergovernmental organisations, academia, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), etc. Here, the active participation and contribution of the Arctic Indigenous Peoples in the work of the Arctic Council is of utmost significance. Moreover, the policy underscores domestic consultation and cooperation on Arctic issues as a means to ensure increased knowledge,

democratic debate, and consensus on the implementation of the policy in the society at large.

As an Arctic coastal State and a founding member of the Arctic Council, Iceland has great interests at stake in the Arctic, shaped strongly by its geographical position and the importance of access to natural resources and their sustainability. Therefore it is a welcome opportunity for Iceland to assume the rotating chairmanship in the Arctic Council in 2019, following Finland. The United States will pass the torch to Finland at the upcoming Ministerial

AS AN ARCTIC COASTAL STATE AND A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE ARCTIC COUNCIL, ICELAND HAS GREAT INTERESTS AT STAKE

was a very important first step to involve relevant stakeholders in Iceland in the Ministry's work, ensuring broad ownership and commitment to the approaching task. During Iceland's first chairmanship in 2002-2004, a particular emphasis was placed on the social, economic, and cultural aspects of sustainable development, resulting in the first comprehensive attempt to document and compare systematically the welfare of Arctic residents on a circumpolar basis (the Arctic Human Development Report I). Regarding the 2019-2021 chairmanship it would be premature to make any statements at this stage about potential priorities. However, in defining our chairmanship, we will presumably look to issues that Iceland normally emphasizes: international cooperation



ARNI THOR SIGURDSSON
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Photo: Tristram Ferne, CC, Flickr.com

regarding the environment, particularly the marine environment; sustainable resource management; renewable energy and socioeconomic conditions in the Arctic. In this important work, Iceland will be guided by the commitments in the Paris Climate Change Agreement as well as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Exciting times lie ahead of us with both opportunities and challenges. Only through extensive and all-embracing cooperation will we be successful in our goals. The Arctic Council is the most befitting forum for Arctic cooperation and Iceland looks forward to duly shouldering its responsibility as Chair. ○

in Fairbanks, Alaska in May, thereby concluding a successful leadership of the Arctic Council, which has included an emphasis on Arctic Ocean safety and stewardship, improving economic and living conditions in the Arctic, as well as addressing the impacts of climate change. Finland will inevitably build on the accomplishments of the Arctic Council so far. However, it is important that each chair country shape its own priorities, develop the already broad collaboration within the Council, and even extend it into new areas. Iceland looks forward to working with Finland

on its defined priorities, such as climate change, meteorology and education, while preparing our own chairmanship programme.

In line with our policy of inclusiveness and participation, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs launched its preparations for the Icelandic chairmanship by inviting stakeholders to a brainstorming meeting in Reykjavik in mid-January. More than one hundred people from ministries, government agencies, academia, business, politics, NGOs etc. gathered to discuss Arctic issues and Iceland's chairmanship in 2019. This

THE PICTURE

Arctic Council 1996-2016



Photo: Arctic Council Secretariat/Linnéa Nordström

Arctic Council delegates pose on the campus of the University of Alaska Fairbanks during a meeting of Senior Arctic Officials. The Arctic Council celebrated its 20th anniversary in September 2016.



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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