



## **WWF Statement for the 2015 Iqaluit Ministerial meeting of the Arctic Council**

### **Positions & Technical recommendations**

#### **EMPOWERING ARCTIC PEOPLES**

##### **Arctic Sustainable Development and Renewable Energy**

WWF greatly appreciates the focus on community-level development and supports the proposals regarding renewable energy projects.

WWF urges:

- Arctic Ministers to expand existing renewable energy initiatives across the Arctic, allowing communities to benefit from more reliable, cheaper and cleaner energy options; and to reduce environmental risks associated with petroleum products, and requests that the Sustainable Development Working Group work with the Arctic Contaminants Action Program to undertake activities supporting a transition towards renewable energy supply for Arctic communities.
- The Arctic Council to provide for an analysis of financial incentives and disincentives to support substitution of diesel/heavy oil fuel with renewable energy solutions and develop mechanisms to facilitate funding flows from national governments towards additional renewable energy projects to finance the spread of renewable energy solutions around the Arctic.
- Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) and Permanent Participants (PPs) to develop a holistic and long-term (2030 or even 2050) Arctic sustainable development vision based on diversification and downscaling of the Arctic economy to guide future work, and an implementation plan for this vision to be revised every four years.

##### **Arctic Economic Council**

WWF has concerns about i) the direction of the Arctic Economic Council (AEC) work with little focus on sustainability in the Arctic versus sustainability of industrial growth, ii) low transparency of the AEC for civil society, iii) plans of the AEC to interfere into policy areas through work on changing regulations for industrial activities in the Arctic and iv) the special status AEC already has with regard to the Arctic Council (outside established procedures and accepted system of AC relations and bodies).

WWF encourages:

- The AEC to consider mechanisms for Arctic sustainable development with a net benefit to Arctic communities, assess challenges and opportunities for strengthening resilience of people in their changing environment, and assess the risk that their economic development will pose.
- The AEC to establish procedures to allow public participation and contribution to the AEC work programme.

WWF requests that:

- The Arctic Council (AC) clarify its relationship with the Arctic Economic Council to formalize its appropriate integration into the AC system structure following existing rules of procedure and approaches to Observers.

## ACTING ON CLIMATE CHANGE

### Reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

WWF urges the Arctic states to coordinate their actions in concluding a binding, effective and fair global climate agreement in Paris in 2015 that will take urgent action to meet the goal of limiting the increase in global average temperature to below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

WWF urges:

- The Arctic states to take a coordinated position targeting the UNFCCC negotiations to play a constructive role in reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions globally as a matter of urgency.
- The Arctic Council to promote the knowledge and experience of Arctic residents, especially Indigenous peoples, to amplify global understanding of climate change impacts, and highlight findings on ocean acidification to spur actions on climate change from the international community.

### Short-Lived Climate Forcers (SLCF)

WWF welcomes the *Enhanced Black Carbon and Methane Emissions Reductions Arctic Council Framework for Action*. WWF strongly supports the AC's current work on short-lived climate pollutants and in particular i) the opportunities it offers to expand on ACAP's work on substitution of oil powered generation in Arctic communities with renewables and ii) focus on eliminating gas flaring. WWF encourages the development of domestic black carbon inventories that identify contributing sectors and track progress in reducing emissions.

WWF urges:

- Arctic Council member states through national implementation plans to implement the actions agreed in *Enhanced Black Carbon and Methane Emissions Reductions Arctic Council Framework for Action* to reduce emissions of black carbon and methane.
- The Arctic Council to encourage and work with Arctic Council Observer States whose emissions affect the Arctic to implement the relevant actions of the *Enhanced Black Carbon and Methane Emissions Reductions Arctic Council Framework for Action*.
- The Arctic Council to work with the World Bank-led industry-government coalition, the Global Gas Flaring Reduction Partnership, to make use of new U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) satellite technology to provide higher quality images and better estimates of gas flaring in the Arctic.

## STEWARDSHIP OF THE ARCTIC ENVIRONMENT

### Arctic Council activities regarding oil and gas development

WWF believes the coordination of the oil and gas analyses, guidelines and projects of the Council must be strengthened to ensure Arctic Council environmental assessments findings and recommendations are fully integrated in Arctic Council oil and gas guidelines, projects, frameworks and activities.

WWF urges:

- Arctic Ministers to decide to develop further staff capacity at the Arctic Council Secretariat to ensure the coordination of all the Council's oil and gas related activities across working groups and subsidiary bodies to build on earlier analysis and integrate existing AC assessments, findings, guidelines, recommendations and expertise.

### Arctic marine oil pollution preparedness and response

WWF welcomes the first functional exercise of the *Operational Guidelines for the Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response* (MOA) and the proposed planning concept for the second functional exercise of the Operational Guidelines for the MOA under the US Chairmanship.

WWF recommends that:

- EPPR review existing and new practices for oil spill environmental sensitivity mapping.

- EPPR develop common high minimum pan-Arctic environmental standards of operation.
- Arctic states report to EPPR with regards to national response plans including minimum level of pre-positioned equipment that is commensurate with the worst case scenario risk involved that takes into account anticipated risks to areas of special ecological significance.
- Arctic States enhance Arctic oil spill response capability by conducting a full scale live exercise including an after-action report with recommendations improving oil spill response coordination in the Arctic; joint exercises should test not only notification and requests for assistance, but also the practical challenges of transporting and deploying response equipment and responders to spill locations.
- EPPR conduct an analysis and report on the success and progress of implementation of the 2013 *Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response*.

### **Arctic Guide to Oil Spill Response in Snow and Ice Conditions**

WWF believes that the IMO/EPPR *Guide to Oil Spill Response in Snow and Ice Conditions* provides an overly optimistic picture of response capabilities in the Arctic by emphasizing the advantages and understating the disadvantages of oil spill response methods in snow and ice. Further research must be conducted to elucidate the impacts on Arctic ecosystems of the response methods promoted by the guide as it stands now. Based on the analysis, the guide should clearly states that there are no proven effective oil spill response methods in extreme Arctic weather and ice conditions, and there is a lack of capacity to even employ the limited existing unproven response methods. The guide's scope focuses narrowly on removal methods only. It should also be examining the risks from a planning perspective, addressing other important mitigation measures and a broader range of response questions.

WWF urges:

- Arctic Ministers to request that EPPR build on its previous initiatives to undertake further research on environmental impacts of oil spill response methods in Arctic conditions, assess their effectiveness, and develop actions to enhance the current preparedness and response capabilities in the Arctic.

### **Arctic Oil Spill Prevention**

WWF strongly supports the intent of the Participants of the *Arctic Council Framework Plan for Cooperation on Prevention of Oil Pollution from Petroleum and Maritime Activities in the Marine Areas of the Arctic* to “explore and pursue ways to reduce the environmental risk posed by transportation, storage or use of heavy fuel oil by ships in the Arctic.” However, the Task Force on Oil Pollution Prevention did not complete its work with a “concrete plan of action” including “recommended measures and actions to further oil pollution prevention in the Arctic; and a step-by-step plan for implementing these recommendations,” as recommended by the SAOs in Kiruna in 2013. Therefore, WWF believes further work on Arctic marine oil pollution prevention is needed at the pan-Arctic scale and urges Arctic states to continue and strengthen cooperation on marine oil spill prevention.

WWF urges:

- Arctic Ministers to request the relevant Arctic Council subsidiary bodies to follow-up on the *Framework Plan* and develop concrete deliverables within identified timeframes, and further strengthen cooperation on oil pollution prevention, and decide to report on progress in implementing the *Framework Plan* and designing further cooperative actions, provisions and measures at the next Ministerial meeting.
- Arctic Ministers to request follow up on the work of the Task Force on Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Prevention to address prevention in a broad and holistic manner, including competence, training, management systems and safety culture; ensuring that oil and gas decision-making and shipping occur in the context of ecosystem based management and spatial planning; liability for oil spills, and transparency and public participation in decision making.
- Arctic Ministers to instruct EPPR to monitor the implementation of the recommendations flowing from the 2013 report *Recommended Practices in the Prevention of Arctic Marine Oil Pollution* (EPPR; RP3; Kiruna 2013), compile and analyze national implementation progress and report back to the Ministers every two years.
- Each Arctic state to identify no-go zones for oil and gas activities based on comprehensive biodiversity & ecosystem functions information.

## **Safe and environmentally sound Arctic Shipping**

WWF welcomes the *IMO International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters* (Polar Code). However, despite clear original intentions to develop a comprehensive Code addressing all aspects of shipping safety and environmental protection in polar waters, the environmental protection provisions of the Polar Code have slipped. The Arctic Council member states and Observers must trigger a new phase of IMO negotiations to address the current environmental omissions of the Polar Code. WWF urges the Arctic Council, its member states and Observers to work together to influence and shape action in further negotiating an environmentally sound Polar Code by providing collective leadership.

WWF recommends that:

- Arctic Council member states work with Observers to launch and lead further IMO Polar Code negotiations to address many of the current environmental omissions, including a ban for the use and carriage of heavy fuel oil, restrictions for the emission of black carbon, prevention of the introduction of non-native/invasive species through ballast water discharges and hull fouling, and the impacts of underwater noise.
- PAME conduct an analysis to measure if and how much the provisions of the IMO Polar Code are consistent with the *Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment* Report findings and recommendations (PAME; AMSA: 2009).
- PAME undertake a comprehensive analysis which includes the current Polar Code and omissions (previously mentioned) of Arctic shipping best environmental practices to inform a new phase of negotiations of the Polar Code as well as voluntary measures that may be taken by the shipping sector and national governments.

## **Arctic Marine Conservation**

WWF applauds PAME *Framework for a Pan-Arctic Network of Marine Protected Areas* (MPAs). WWF strongly supports the activities proposed to advance a marine protected areas network and a Regional Seas Program (RSP) for the Arctic Ocean. WWF supports the strategic goals, principles and approaches of the *Arctic Marine Strategic Plan 2015-2025* (AMSP) and underlines the need for AC working groups to develop strategies and activities sufficient to implement the vision and strategic goals outlined in the plan.

WWF requests that:

- Arctic Ministers commit to establish an equitably and effectively managed, ecologically representative and well-connected system of marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures for the Arctic marine environment in accordance with respective national legislation, international law and globally agreed conservation goals such as the [Aichi Biodiversity Target 11](#), and instruct Senior Arctic Officials to report on progress in implementing the Framework including Arctic states' progress at the next Ministerial meeting.
- Arctic Ministers decide to establish a task force to design a Regional Seas Programme as a platform for: implementing ecosystem-based management principles in Arctic marine areas; managing and reducing the impacts and risks of industrial development; and protecting biodiversity to enhance ecosystem health and coastal communities' wellbeing.
- PAME in cooperation with CAFF develop guidance for area-based conservation measures for achieving long-term conservation of Arctic biodiversity by considering sensitivity of important categories of Arctic biodiversity to known pressures and risks.
- Arctic States agree on potential conservation measures beyond national jurisdictions and make joint submissions to IMO and other appropriate UN bodies, and where appropriate jointly grant conservation status for significant areas for biodiversity resilience across national jurisdictions.
- PAME leads a regular cross working groups' process to review progress of the implementation of the *Arctic Council Marine Strategic Plan 2015-2025*, to identify further strategic actions on emerging issues requiring attention, and to coordinate the integration of AC working group work plans in support of the implementation of the AMSP.

## **Actions for Arctic Biodiversity**

WWF strongly supports the *Actions for Arctic Biodiversity: Implementing the recommendations of the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment 2013-2021*. However, WWF believes the targets and vision that we share with the Arctic Council will not be achieved unless each Arctic state creates a national implementation plan.

WWF urges:

- Arctic Ministers to request Arctic States to develop national implementation plans consistent with the *Actions for Arctic Biodiversity, 2013-2021*, and instruct CAFF to track and report on the implementation of *Actions for Arctic Biodiversity* every two years, including progress by Arctic states.
- CAFF and PAME to review information on biodiversity, including sensitivity to current and projected pressures and threats, to provide for the identification of candidate terrestrial and marine areas as part of networks of place-based conservation measures.
- Arctic Council working groups to compile and review information on the role of biodiversity and ecosystem services as a fundamental source of wellbeing and resilience for Arctic peoples to inform the *Arctic Resilience Report*, the *Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic* projects and the implementation of relevant Arctic Biodiversity Assessment recommendations.

### **Community and Ecosystem Resilience**

WWF supports the *Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic (AACA)* process to prepare appropriate management responses to current and future Arctic change. WWF welcomes renewed efforts to complete the *Arctic Resilience Report (ARR)*, ensuring that any recommendations are policy-relevant, clear and specific as to implementation by the appropriate levels of government.

WWF recommends that:

- Arctic Ministers request that Arctic Council Working Groups undertake or complete activities to advance monitoring efforts and enhance understanding of the resilience of communities and ecosystems, promote and where necessary develop tools for assessing climate vulnerability, adaptive capacity and the resilience of ecosystem services, and urge Member States, Permanent Participants and other members of the global community to implement actions and policies that reduces vulnerabilities to climate change in the Arctic.
- Arctic Council Working Groups investigate the role of biodiversity for continued resilience to climate change of Arctic communities and societies.
- Arctic Council Working Groups develop tools for detecting the status of resilience in Arctic social-ecological systems to inform adaptation actions and human development.

### **Arctic Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services**

WWF welcomes the CAFF Technical Report with regards to *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) for the Arctic Scoping Study*.

WWF recommends that:

- Arctic Ministers instruct CAFF and SDWG to carry out a TEEB Arctic study, based on two to five key policy areas as identified in the scoping study.
- Arctic Ministers instruct CAFF to lead and coordinate Arctic Council Working Group follow-up improving capacity to understand Arctic ecosystem services and their values and to apply this knowledge to policy and to complementing the TEEB Arctic study.

### **Arctic Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM)**

WWF urges clear Ministerial guidance to implement the 2013 recommendations of the Arctic Council expert group on ecosystem based management, and encourages proceeding with integration of these approaches into governance regimes for the coastal, marine and terrestrial environments.

WWF recommends that:

- Arctic Ministers instruct AC Working Groups to ensure their work plans address implementation of the Arctic Council Ecosystem-based Management recommendations as appropriate.
- Arctic Ministers instruct Senior Arctic Officials to promote the implementation of ecosystem-based management approaches across the work of the Arctic Council.

- Arctic Ministers request Arctic states to pilot practical implementation of ecosystem based management in national and transboundary Arctic Large Marine Ecosystems, considering the elements of EBM as they are summarized in the work of PAME's Ecosystem Approach expert group, including through establishing ecological objectives, regular and strategic integrated ecosystem assessments and the recognition of ecosystem goods and services.
- The Arctic Council ensure that a regional seas program (RSP) will represent a platform for implementing EBM principles in the Arctic marine areas and for coordinating a common approach by developing an overarching Arctic ecosystem based management goal for the RSP, and providing guidance on how to develop and operationalize objectives supporting this goal.
- Working Groups identify terrestrial management units for supporting the EBM implementation.

## **STRENGTHENING THE ARCTIC COUNCIL**

WWF supports the proposal to conduct a Senior Arctic Officials review of the internal Council structure to examine if it continues to meet the Council's objectives. This review should aim to bolster capacity for implementation of Arctic Council decisions and to strengthen the Council as an institution which takes accountability for implementation of policies and agreements developed under its auspices, including at a national level. WWF urges the US to continue and complete the work of strengthening the capacity of Permanent Participants as an essential element in strengthening and maintaining the Council's credibility.

WWF recommends that:

- Arctic Ministers request Senior Arctic Officials and Permanent Participants examine the framework of the Arctic Council and recommend organizational options to ensure the Council's structure meets the needs of the Arctic States and Permanent Participants in a global context, and commit to develop enhanced capacity for implementation of the Council's decisions and recommendations at the national level.
- Arctic states develop detailed national plans or revise their existing national strategies to implement the recommendations and decisions of the Council within their own national structures, and on a specified periodic basis report back to the Council on progress in national implementation.
- The Arctic Council issue on a periodic basis a report on the state of the Arctic based on the reports on national implementation as recommended above which it receives including specific reference to the progress countries are making in implementation.
- Arctic states, where international agreement is required, develop a shared strategy to achieve such agreement including participation and commitments from non-Arctic Observer states where such participation would be relevant, and allow for one or more Arctic countries to be designated to assure action in relevant international fora.

### **Arctic Environment Ministers**

WWF recommends the United States host a meeting of Arctic Environment Ministers during its chairmanship focusing on the implementation of Arctic Biodiversity Assessment policy recommendations.

### **20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Arctic Council**

It is the hope of WWF that the Council will seize the historic opportunity to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Arctic Council and host a meeting for the Arctic Heads of State. This may be an opportunity to commit to the concept of a regional seas agreement.

### **Chairmanship**

WWF thanks the Government of Canada for its active chairmanship of the Arctic Council during the period 2013-2015, including the development of the *Arctic Council Marine Strategic Plan 2015-2025*, the *Framework for a Pan-Arctic Network of Marine Protected Areas*, and *Actions for Arctic Biodiversity: Implementing the recommendations of the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment 2013-2021* which will set important long-term strategic frameworks in place. WWF welcomes the Arctic Council chairmanship of the Government of the United States of America during the period 2015-2017 and looks forward to a chair that will emphasise core principles of transparency, inclusion, and accountability in the Council's work.