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Arctic Council SAO Meeting Whitehorse, Canada 4-5 March 2015

Final Report

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1. Introduction

The Chair of Senior Arctic Officials (SAOC) welcomed delegates and expressed gratitude to the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council for welcoming delegates to their traditional lands.

1.1 Traditional Welcome

A traditional welcome and an opening prayer were offered by Elder Billie Giroux from the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Elder Gail Anderson from the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

1.2 Welcome by Yukon Premier Darrell Pasloski

The Honourable Darrell Pasloski, Premier of Yukon, thanked Elders Giroux and Anderson for their opening prayer, and recognized their First Nations' traditional lands. He noted the Yukon Government's support for the Canadian Chairmanship and involvement in the Arctic Council's work, particularly in the Adaptation Exchange Portal project. He noted the importance of circumpolar cooperation and cited Yukon as a good example of devolved governance. He also observed that Yukon has similar interests to those of the State of Alaska, and looks forward to the U.S. Chairmanship program in addressing shared Arctic opportunities and challenges. He then wished delegates success in this meeting and during the final weeks of Canada's Chairmanship.

1.3 Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

2. Update from the Chair of Senior Arctic Officials

The SAOC noted that, worldwide, the Arctic Council is perceived as the preeminent intergovernmental forum in the Arctic, a model for international governance, and a body that is moving towards policy-making and implementation. Noting that there is an increased interest in the Arctic Council, he urged delegates to rely on their spirit of cooperation and collegiality during the weeks leading up to the Iqaluit Ministerial.

3. Ministerial Meeting

Canada's SAO informed delegates that the showcase event originally planned for Ottawa has been cancelled, and noted plans to increase communications activities to better disseminate the Council's good work. She provided an overview of the revised schedule and logistics for the Ministerial meeting April 24-25.

- A charter airplane will take delegations from Montreal (Trudeau airport) to Iqaluit the evening of Thursday, April 23. It is expected that the U.S. and Russian delegations will arrive in Iqaluit on Friday morning on private aircraft.
- Ministers will meet privately on Friday morning, followed by lunch for Ministers and Permanent Participant leaders to then be followed by the formal Ministerial Meeting.

- The formal Ministerial Meeting will take place on Friday, April 24, in the early afternoon (13:45 – 16:00) followed by a ministerial press conference (16:45 – 17:15).
- Following the press conference, a meeting between Ministers, Permanent Participant leaders and representatives of the Arctic Economic Council is also being proposed. This will be followed by an evening reception for all delegates.
- There will be time for bilateral meetings on Saturday morning and there are plans for a community event. The charter airplane will depart Iqaluit late Saturday morning for Montreal to allow sufficient time for delegates to make outbound flight connections.
- It is expected that the U.S. and Russian delegations will depart on Friday evening.

DISCUSSION:

- Norway expressed its support for Canada in its work towards a successful Ministerial Meeting.

CONCLUSION / DECISION: None. For information only.

4. U.S. Arctic Council Chairmanship Program

The SAOC noted with appreciation the details set out in the proposed U.S. Chairmanship program and welcomed Ambassador David Balton as the incoming SAO Chair.

The U.S.'s SAO noted changes to the U.S. Chairmanship program, including the development of a concept paper on their proposed *regional seas program* initiative. She invited delegates to take part in a lunch side meeting to discuss the concept paper and the overall proposal. Regarding marine protected areas, she noted that PAME's work on this issue will continue as will discussions regarding the future development of this initiative, including specific areas such as the inclusion of the human dimension and reference to Aichi Biodiversity Target #11 (10% of global coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved). She noted a new project on climate resilience called the Circumarctic Environmental Observatories Network (CLEO), which would expand on an existing initiative in Alaska. She proposed that the CLEO be established in a phased approach, with phase 1 occurring during the U.S. Chairmanship and potential expansion under future chairmanships. Regarding climate adaptation and resilience, she noted that the Arctic Resilience Report (ARR), which began during the Swedish Chairmanship, would be concluded during the U.S. Chairmanship, and that this work could be housed within AMAP under the Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic (AACCA) project, or could remain a stand-alone project. She also noted comments received from many delegations regarding the importance of highlighting biodiversity, which has been addressed by adding a new project proposal on invasive species that would be tied to CAFF's ongoing work under the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment implementation plan.

She then presented the schedule of meetings planned for the U.S. Chairmanship:

- 16-17 June 2015 (executive, Washington, DC)
- 1-2 Oct 2015 (SDWG, Chena Hot Springs, Alaska)
- 20-22 Oct 2015 (executive + plenary SAO, Anchorage, Alaska)
- 11-12 March 2016 (SDWG, Barrow, Alaska)
- 15-17 March 2016 (executive + plenary SAO, Fairbanks, Alaska)
- 29-30 September 2016 (SDWG, Unalaska, Alaska)

- 4-6 October 2016 (executive + plenary SAO, Portland, Maine)
- 7-8 February 2017 (SDWG, Kotzebue, Alaska)
- 7-9 March in 2017 (executive + plenary SAO, Juneau, Alaska)

She noted that planning is already underway for the 20th anniversary event/celebration of the Arctic Council, and that there is an openness to schedule other meetings yet to be determined for Task Forces and expert groups. She then confirmed the announcement of Ambassador David Balton as the incoming SAO Chair.

DISCUSSION:

- Canada thanked the U.S. for a positive and collaborative approach to the development of this program, and indicated that the Council is still working to refine some of the U.S. proposals.
- SDWG noted with appreciation the opportunities provided by the U.S. to give input during the development of their program and thanked the U.S. for adjusting their meeting schedule to reduce travel requirements.
- Finland highlighted its approval of the themes of the Chairmanship program, and expressed eagerness to work closely with the U.S. during the next chairmanship transition (U.S. to Finland, 2017).
- The AIA noted enthusiasm for the CLEO program described by the U.S., highlighting its potential to “revitalize” ACAP and engage the PPs.
- The Kingdom of Denmark stressed the importance of climate and energy as an overarching theme, in particular because of ties to the COP 21 and the possibilities of engaging observers.
- The GCI introduced several new delegates from Alaska, and expressed interest in the meeting in Portland, Maine, noting GCI’s connections to those in Portland who have worked on sustainable communities.
- CAFF noted the inclusion of work on invasive species with gratitude, and noted CAFF’s readiness to cooperate with other Working Groups on other priority projects under the U.S. Chairmanship.
- The Saami Council expressed enthusiasm for upcoming meetings in Alaska, as well as for the resilience and adaptation projects.
- The AMAP Chair confirmed that there are strong links between the AACA and the ARR, and welcomed the opportunity to expand those linkages.
- The U.S. thanked those that had informally offered to lead or co-lead projects under the U.S. Chairmanship, and is looking forward to finalizing these arrangements.

CONCLUSION / DECISION: None. For information only.

5. Chairmanship-led Initiatives

5.1 Promoting Traditional Ways of Life

Canada’s SAO presented the compendium and advocacy plan for the “Traditional Ways of Life” project, which is a Chairmanship activity not directly linked to a particular Working Group or Task Force. She thanked all those who contributed to the project. She noted plans to develop a film in addition to the printed compendium. She also noted that the communications/advocacy plan is intended as a resource, not as a directive, for other delegations.

DISCUSSION:

- The U.S., Saami Council and AIA thanked Canada for assuming an organizing role, and expressed enthusiasm for the product.

CONCLUSION / DECISION: The compendium and advocacy plan were accepted for delivery to Ministers.

5.2 Strengthening the Arctic Council

5.2.1 Enhancing Permanent Participant Capacity

The AIA presented background information on the upcoming three-day funding workshop (17-19 March, Whitehorse) to address enhancing the capacity of the Permanent Participant organizations, focusing on financing. The goals of the workshop include:

- Discuss the nature of successful partnerships between PPs and foundations; and
- Work towards an agreement on the appropriate nature and management of a Permanent Participant Capacity Fund.

The planned outcome is a paper documenting the workshop's discussions, findings and decisions focusing on increasing PP financial capacities.

An update on the Small Committee on Institutional Issues (SCII) was then delivered by Canada's SAO. She noted that the SCII is seeking approval-in-principle of four recommendations for enhancing Permanent Participant capacity. She noted that agreement-in-principle had been received during the Executive meeting, but nonetheless reviewed the four areas for consideration, adjustment or improvement with which the Committee hopes to enhance Permanent Participant capacity:

- The 50% funding rule;
- Permanent Participant participation and engagement at the outset of projects;
- Business efficiencies of the Arctic Council; and
- Current resources and capacity of Arctic Council structures, referencing the ACS in particular.

DISCUSSION:

- The GCI urged quick action on this work.
- Norway noted its strong belief that funding to the PPs should come primarily from the States in which they reside, and that the building of ACS capacity to support PPs is important and tied to the relocation of the IPS.
- ICC welcomed this initiative, and urged continued work that supports positive engagement with the PPs.

CONCLUSION / DECISION: The SCII's recommendations were approved in principle, with note taken of caveats expressed in the discussion. The SCII was also asked to work with the approved recommendations and report back to SAOs at the October 2015 meeting.

5.2.2 Tracking Tool and Project Costing Tool

The Director of the ACS noted that the tracking tool has helped provide greater transparency and a better overview of the Council's ongoing work, and thanked the Working Groups for their contributions. Regarding the project costing tool, he noted interest from the SAOs in having estimates of the cost of project work conducted within the Working Groups, and observed that –

although the work has been challenging – the Executive Secretaries have helped move this initiative ahead. He noted the challenges associated with estimating project costs, and the plan to eventually merge the tracking and costing tools into a single database.

Canada's SAO noted the importance of the tracking tool as a deliverable for the Council, thanked the ACS and Working Groups for their help in building the tool, and noted that the tracking tool helps to convey the breadth of the Council's work. She informed delegates the tracking tool will be an annex to the SAO report to ministers.

DISCUSSION:

- SDWG and AIA asked whether it could be confirmed that the traditional and local knowledge column had been integrated into the tracking tool, which was confirmed by the ACS Director.
- The United States expressed support for the tracking tool, noting that it intends to refine and improve it (for example, adding an ecosystem approach category and by combining it with the project costing tool. She also expressed support for approving the project costing tool, but noted that it should not be publicly released at this point because there are still issues with it that need to be addressed in the long term.
- In response to Canada's expressed desire to find a better name for the tracking tool, some suggestions were made including Arctic Tracker and "Amarook" by ICC (the Inuit word for wolf, as the best tracker in the circumpolar Arctic).
- ICC urged the prompt release of the complete tracking tool to help States and PPs convey the breadth of the Arctic Council's work.
- Many other delegations noted the value of the tracking tool for transparency and public diplomacy.

CONCLUSION / DECISION: The tracking tool is approved for inclusion in the SAO Report to Ministers, and the ACS will look at methods to communicate the tool more broadly to the public.

6. Ecosystem-based Management

The ACS director presented the Report on Ecosystem Approach in the Arctic Council, which the ACS had prepared at the request of SAOs.

DISCUSSION:

- The U.S. welcomed the compilation, noting that it shows that the recommendations from the Ecosystem-based Management (EBM) expert group are being considered in the Working Groups, and that this work will be continued during the U.S. Chairmanship. She noted the success of the PAME EBM expert group with separate Terms of Reference, welcomed the suggestions contained in the compilation for future work, and underlined the importance of establishing a "champion" to lead the collective efforts of the AC. She suggested that the champion for EBM during the U.S. Chairmanship will be the Chairmanship itself, with assistance from the ACS.
- PAME noted that they have an expert group in which work on marine ecosystem approach has been ongoing for years, and that the work of that expert group will continue with an expanded mandate/scope.
- Norway observed that science-based EBM is important for all Working Groups.

- Canada and CAFF noted their support for the idea of a “champion”, as other cross-cutting work has already illustrated the importance of clear leadership.
- Canada also suggested that the Council might wish to identify this “champion” in the Senior Arctic Officials’ Report to Ministers.

CONCLUSION/DECISION: The Ecosystem Approach in the Arctic Council Report was accepted for delivery to Ministers.

7. Task Forces

7.1 The Task Force on Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Prevention

The co-chair from Norway presented on the development of the Framework Plan (submitted as part of the executive meeting documents), which covers petroleum activities and maritime activities in marine areas of the Arctic. She noted that the primary objective of the Plan is to strengthen cooperation between Arctic States, and provided greater detail about the content of the Framework Plan. The co-chair from Russia emphasized the value of the Framework Plan as a continuation of the legally-binding agreement on oil spill preparedness and response signed in 2013, and highlighted cooperation between national regulators as a key component of the Framework Plan.

DISCUSSION:

- The U.S. noted that it is considering hosting a workshop(s) to bring more specificity to some elements of the Framework Plan.
- The AIA noted the unique importance of prevention of oil pollution, as opposed to preparedness and response, and a desire for stronger language in some elements, but expressed support overall for the inclusion of language regarding engagement with PPs and local communities.
- AIA and ICC asked for clarification on the proposed regulators’ forum and its relationship to the Arctic Council.
- The Kingdom of Denmark supported the U.S. proposal for a workshop, and noted the value of the Framework Plan for public diplomacy.
- Canada underlined that this initiative is an important deliverable of the Canadian Chairmanship, including for Canada’s territorial governments.
- The Norwegian co-chair welcomed the U.S. Chairmanship’s offer to host expert meetings with the purpose of deepening the substance of the Plan. Regarding the proposed regulators’ forum, the Norwegian co-chair noted that the Task Force facilitated the establishment of such a forum, but did not create this body within or under the Arctic Council.
- The U.S. proposed to help clarify the relationship between the AC and this proposed regulators’ forum as well as other forums operating outside the Arctic Council (for example, the Arctic Economic Council, Arctic Coast Guard Forum and Arctic Regional Hydrographic Commission).

CONCLUSION / DECISION: The Framework Plan was accepted for delivery to Ministers.

7.2 Task Force for Enhancing Scientific Cooperation in the Arctic

The co-chair from Russia provided background on the work of the SCTF, and elaborated on the deliberations of the Task Force. He highlighted sharing data, easing movement of people and equipment, and reducing barriers to access research areas as elements of particular interest. He noted that in tackling these issues, the force of a legally-binding agreement may be warranted, and that the Task Force recommends an extension of its work into the U.S. Chairmanship for completion.

DISCUSSION:

- The U.S. expressed gratitude to all those who had taken part in the work of the Task Force, and expressed a willingness to extend the mandate of the Task Force into the U.S. Chairmanship, with the goal of achieving a legally-binding agreement. The U.S. urged States to prepare to negotiate a legally-binding agreement, beginning in August 2015.

CONCLUSION / DECISION: Consensus to submit text as described in the discussions for the Declaration and to extend the mandate of the Task Force with the goal of moving towards a legally binding agreement under the U.S. Chairmanship.

7.3 The Task Force for Action on Black Carbon and Methane

The co-chair from Canada presented the work of the Task Force. She indicated that the Task Force had concluded negotiations; highlighted the recommendation to establish an expert group; and noted that subsequent to not receiving any comments from Task Force members following a final review, the final negotiated text was forwarded to SAOs for consideration. She also indicated that following a concern raised during the SAO Executive Meeting, some structural changes were made to the Framework document to differentiate between what are considered national actions, and what is considered as Arctic Council work, as well as better reflecting the non-legally binding nature of the Framework, the respect for national priorities, and the collective focus of the work of the Expert Group.

DISCUSSION:

- Sweden noted support for the progress of the Task Force and hoped that the work might be completed so as to deliver the relevant document to ministers.
- Canada added its support, and noted the importance of this work as a demonstration of the Council's willingness to act in response to its scientific work and assessments; expressed support for an expert group under the U.S. Chairmanship; and highlighted the unique character of this as an element of the Council's work in which observers have played – and will play – an active role (AIA, the US and Norway reiterated this point, with Norway noting that this was a model, and that they hope this could be relevant for other areas of work).
- The Kingdom of Denmark noted its support, and expressed its need for flexibility in terms of implementation and national commitments.
- Russia thanked Sweden and Canada for their contributions; expressed Russia's commitment to these efforts; and noted that they would be reviewing the modifications to the Framework document and would provide a timely response.
- Finland noted the expert group's emphasis on information sharing and identification of best practices; highlighted in particular the criteria for submission of national inventories and the engagement of observers as positive elements; and indicated that the work of the Task Force will be a step towards setting more complete targets for emission reductions.

- AIA noted that there is little information on black carbon in small communities – an issue which AIA is now working on.
- The US was supportive of the Task Force’s work, highlighting areas for implementation during their chairmanship, including improving the quality and transparency of the information; and sharing of emissions information.

CONCLUSION / DECISION: The SAOC stated that the Council is very close to accepting this document; noted the need for some delegations to consult with headquarters; and deferred the final acceptance to the Executive SAO meeting in Ottawa, April 8-9.

8. Working Groups

8.1 Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP)

8.1.1 Reduction of Black Carbon from Diesel Sources in the Russian Arctic;

8.1.2 Update on Short-lived Climate Forcers (SLCF) Projects

The vice-chair of ACAP presented this pilot project involving an on-road source of diesel emissions. The summary brochure for this case study (bus fleet upgrade, MurmanskAvtotrans) highlights the different benefits of this work, which was undertaken in Murmansk and involved a large fleet of buses. The co-chair highlighted the upgrades made to the bus fleet and the benefits that accrued for the community and others.

The ACAP co-chair also provided an update on its work on short-lived climate forcers, in particular the Report on Reduction of Black Carbon Emissions from Residential Wood Combustion (approved at the October 2014 SAO meeting).

DISCUSSION:

- The US thanked the many experts and partners involved in this project, drew attention to other deliverables expected for the future, and urged further work on a broad collection of ACAP initiatives.

CONCLUSION / DECISION: The brochure was accepted for delivery to Ministers, and the SAOC noted a desire to strengthen the associated language in the declaration.

8.1.3 ACAP Work Plan

In presenting ACAP’s work plan, the executive secretary of ACAP drew delegates’ attention to the breadth of ACAP’s existing work, and several projects for which approval is still required, and/or for which funding has not yet been secured. He made special note of the proposed CLEO network, observing that it has many overlaps with other Working Groups, and stating that nothing new would be developed unless a gap is identified. He then informed delegates about an Indigenous Peoples Contaminant Action Program (IPCAP) initiative to host a conference on best practices on contaminant reduction in indigenous communities in 2016, and then moved on to highlight mercury-related projects. In the area of POPs (dioxins and furans), he briefed delegates on two projects that are underway which will assist Russia to comply with Stockholm Convention criteria. Next he looked at two approved projects on obsolete pesticides and two new projects on this theme awaiting ACAP approval. He finished with reference to two new projects on hazardous waste that await ACAP approval.

DISCUSSION:

- AIA took special note of the IPCAP project that appears in the ACAP work plan, and invited the PPs to increase their involvement in IPCAP.
- ICC welcomed the CLEO initiative and expressed interest in developing this project further in cooperation with ACAP. Regarding energy efficiency projects, ICC asked for consideration of undertaking an assessment of how communities are supplied with energy and how those supplies might be improved upon.
- Regarding the CLEO project, AMAP noted the danger of duplicating our efforts in data collection. ICC addressed AMAP's intervention, noting that CLEO was started due to a lack of community-based monitoring, and that this should be viewed as an opportunity for AMAP.
- CAFF noted its eagerness to contribute with its experience from the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP), and expressed certainty that there would be no duplication due to ongoing cooperation and coordination.
- Russia thanked ACAP for its projects in Russia, and cited this as a good example of concrete cooperation which could serve as a model for other regions.

CONCLUSION / DECISION: The ACAP Work Plan was accepted for delivery to Ministers.

8.2 Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme

8.2.1 AMAP Assessments on Black Carbon and Methane / Tropospheric Ozone

The AMAP Chair provided a broad overview of AMAP's mandate and discussed how it develops summaries for policy-makers, based on larger scientific reports. He emphasized that the text within each policymakers' summary has been negotiated among national delegations within AMAP, and has also been vetted by scientists after these negotiations. For this summary (Arctic Climate Issues – Summary of Policy-Makers), he made it clear that the larger scientific report is based on two reports – one on black carbon and methane and a second on tropospheric ozone. He made special note that the actions provided in policymakers' summary do not address their economic and political implications, but only their technical feasibility.

8.2.2 Arctic Pollution Issues: Presentation of Conclusions and Recommendations and Plans for Follow-Up

The AMAP Chair reviewed the Pollution Issues - Summary for Policy Makers that was formed out of a new assessment of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and radioactivity, and informed delegates of the key messages to emerge from the report. He also noted the contributions of scientists from observer State Japan. Speaking next on the human health assessment, he pointed out that levels of POPs are declining, and that new information continually confirms the health benefits of reduced POPs. He noted that the report also addresses the important challenge of communicating risks of POPs. Overall, he noted that much remains to be done to continue mitigating pollutants and learning about new and emerging pollutants.

8.2.3 Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic (AACA)

The chair of AMAP then introduced updated information on the AACA project, presenting the timeline for the reports on the three pilot regions. In terms of challenges for the AACA, he noted

funding, resources, time, visas and other logistical concerns. The AACA is expected to be delivered to Ministers in 2017.

8.2.4 AMAP Work Plan 2015-2017

The chair of AMAP highlighted several projects, including:

- Report to be published on the use of unmanned aircraft systems for scientific purposes in the Arctic;
- Scientific assessment reports to be published in Summer 2015 on several topics;
- Follow-up on the AACA project;
- Follow-up on SWIPA assessment;
- Scientific evaluation of Short-lived climate pollutants;
- Updated assessment on ocean acidification;
- AMAP trends and monitoring programme and related activities;
- Updated assessment of POPs, including biological effects;
- Sustaining Arctic Observing Systems (SAON); and
- Ongoing support for international activities, e.g. the Stockholm Convention

DISCUSSION (covers 8.2.1, 8.2.2, 8.2.3 and 8.2.4):

- Many delegations expressed support for the policymakers' summaries as ministerial deliverables.
- The U.S. was pleased that the AACA will be delivered under the U.S. Chairmanship.
- Russia acknowledged the importance of the assessments done by AMAP, and many delegates suggested that the Council consider how AMAP results could be made more accessible to the broader public and politicians.
- Sweden noted the connection to the work of the Task Force on Black Carbon and Methane and the proposed expert group on SLCPs.
- The Saami Council noted with gratitude the translation of the Arctic Ocean Acidification report into Saami language, and encouraged other Working Groups to consider translation. Regarding the AACA, the Saami Council expressed very strong support, but noted that there may be conceptual reasons to separate the ARR from the AACA.
- Norway informed delegates that a conference would be held in Paris in March 2015 bringing observers together to address these issues prior to COP 21.
- ICC noted its own efforts to contribute to AMAP, including the AACA, and expressed gratitude for the efforts made by AMAP to ensure that findings of the human health assessments are communicated to local communities.
- The AMAP Chair expressed gratitude for the feedback, and noted that the group supports broader communication of materials but that resources are limited. He encouraged States to increase financial support for further communications work, and expressed an eagerness to share knowledge, noting that public awareness also influences policy.

CONCLUSION / DECISION: "Arctic Climate Issues", "Arctic Pollution Issues", the AACA-C progress report and the AMAP work plan are accepted for delivery for ministerial consideration.

8.3 Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG)

The SDWG Chair noted that two deliverables were presented for approval, and four for acceptance, with three more to come for acceptance at the SAO Executive meeting on April 8-9. She explained to

delegates the difference within SDWG between acceptance (finalized SDWG deliverables which respond to the commitments in the SDWG work plan without implying endorsement of content in reports/documents) and approval/endorsement (finalized SDWG deliverables which have procedural implications or reflect consensus on SDWG commitments). The SDWG Chair noted that the SDWG agreed to take this approach as an interim measure that will be revisited by the Working Group under the U.S. Chairmanship as part of a more formal procedural review.

8.3.1 Promoting Traditional and Local Knowledge

The SDWG Chair presented the rationale, objectives and process of this project, and highlighted SDWG's close cooperation with the other Working Groups and Task Forces. She noted that while the traditional and local knowledge recommendations were being presented to SAOs for approval, the separate traditional knowledge principles that were developed by the PPs will not be submitted for SAO acceptance/approval but will remain a stand-alone PP document independent of the Arctic Council. That being said, SDWG would like the PP-led work done on the TK principles to be recognized in the Ministerial Declaration.

8.3.2 Arctic Adaptation Exchange Portal

The Director of the Yukon Climate Change Secretariat presented this item for acceptance by SAOs. She highlighted several elements on the Portal, and made note of the extent to which it draws on the ongoing AACA project. She noted that over 500 resources are currently available on the Portal, and that user contributions are a critical component of the Portal's evolution. She reviewed the target user groups of the Portal, which are community intermediaries, decision-makers and researchers.

8.3.3 Circumpolar-Wide Inuit Response to the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA)

The SDWG Chair reviewed the purpose of the project, which built on the 2009 AMSA and a 2008 ICC report entitled "The Sea Ice is our Highway." She presented the final report for acceptance by SAOs and summarized its findings.

8.3.4 EALLIN: Reindeer Herding and Youth

The presenter from the Association of World Reindeer Herders thanked the Arctic Council, SDWG, and the project's funders and contributors. He highlighted the twelve community-based workshops and seminars to date that have helped with capacity-building. He also noted the project's focus on youth, including participation from Chinese and Mongolian reindeer herders, and the lead role the youth took in informing the project's executive summary, report and recommendations, which were presented to SAOs for acceptance.

8.3.5 Review of Cancer among Circumpolar Indigenous Peoples

The SDWG Chair noted the important role played by ICC in this project, and introduced the project's rationale and objectives, and how the report was prepared. After a brief summary of the key findings, she submitted the final report for acceptance by SAOs for delivery to Ministers.

8.3.6 SDWG Work Plan 2015-2017

The SDWG Chair noted SDWG's focus on the human dimension, which will continue during the U.S. Chairmanship under the theme of *Improving Economic and Living Conditions*. She highlighted that the SDWG will continue to advance work in the areas of mental wellness, traditional and local

knowledge, adaptation to climate change, reindeer herding and Arctic Indigenous languages, and that the Working Group will undertake 7 new projects in areas that are consistent with the U.S. Chairmanship priorities such as energy security, water resources and food security.

DISCUSSION (Covers 8.3.1, 8.3.2, 8.3.3, 8.3.4, 8.3.5 and 8.3.6):

- Many delegates expressed their support for the SDWG deliverables, the SDWG Work Plan, and its focus on the human dimension.
- The U.S. voiced its support for approving the SDWG work plan and traditional and local knowledge recommendations.
- ICC expressed support for SDWG's work on traditional knowledge, mental wellness, and languages.
- AIA highlighted the traditional knowledge work, the Adaptation Exchange Portal, and SDWG's Work Plan, which will allow for continuity with past projects.
- Canada noted the importance of the traditional knowledge work and its inclusion in the tracking tool, and the Adaptation Exchange Portal as an excellent example of collaboration with sub-national governments.
- The Saami Council outlined its involvement in the SDWG deliverables, and made special note of the reindeer herding projects (i.e. EALLIN and EALLU).
- Norway voiced its support for the EALLIN report and its recommendations, noting that this project was an excellent example of people-to-people cooperation across borders.

CONCLUSION / DECISION: The traditional and local knowledge recommendations and the SDWG Work Plan were approved, and the Adaptation Portal, Inuit Response to AMSA, Review of Cancer, and EALLIN were accepted for delivery to Ministers.

[END OF DAY 1]

Presentation by Representatives of the Arctic Economic Council (AEC) Executive Committee

The SAOC introduced the AEC representatives (Tom Paddon, AEC Chair, and Tara Sweeney, AEC Vice Chair). In their presentation, the AEC representatives referenced a recent Globe and Mail article that included misrepresentations of the AEC. The AEC representatives highlighted that the AEC is an independent business-to-business forum that will inform the work of the Council. Regarding the relationship between the Arctic Economic Council and the Arctic Council, the AEC representatives explained that the AEC will serve to synthesize input from businesses on questions of circumpolar interest and offer that input to the Arctic Council for its consideration. They then reviewed the progress made to date on the AEC, including the decision to establish the AEC's secretariat in Tromsø, Norway.

The AEC representatives then noted that the AEC is currently in the process of establishing sectoral Working Groups, three of which are already up and running: Arctic stewardship; maritime transportation; and responsible resource development. They explained that these Working Groups will invite expertise from wherever appropriate (not just from businesses residing in the eight Arctic States); however, AEC membership will remain limited to the business representatives named by the PPs and Arctic Council States (up to three each). They noted the synergies between the thematic areas of the U.S. Arctic Council Chairmanship agenda and the work of the AEC. They indicated that

the second meeting of the AEC will likely take place in Ottawa in April around the time of the Ministerial meeting, and pointed out that the selection of the next AEC Chair is under discussion.

DISCUSSION:

- Many delegates noted their support for the establishment of the AEC and its progress to date.
- Norway expressed support for the broad approach to participation in the AEC's Working Groups, and the wish to build a close relationship between the AEC and the Arctic Council, while maintaining their independence.
- The CAFF and AMAP chairs noted an interest in building a connection between the data available from monitoring activities conducted by businesses represented on the AEC and from Arctic Council Working Groups.
- ICC reminded delegates that the words "sustainable" and "responsible" have real meaning in their communities, and that the AEC is a body at arm's length from the Arctic Council (i.e. businesses should not be involved in developing the Arctic Council's policies).
- The Saami Council welcomed in particular the AEC's work on Arctic Stewardship, and noted the progress regarding the AEC's decision to establish its secretariat in Tromsø considering the challenges IPS was having in moving to Tromsø.
- The AEC representatives noted the opportunity for the AEC secretariat to share information with the Arctic Council Secretariat, given that they will both be located in Tromsø. They also expressed support for sharing data with the Arctic Council.
- The U.S. noted that the Council has benefited from collaboration with industry for a long time, and expressed hope that the AEC will support this by identifying industry experts to support the Council's work. She also noted that the relationship between the Arctic Economic Council and the AC may have parallels with the Council's relationship with other external bodies, including the Arctic Coast Guard Forum. She expressed interest in clarifying the relationship between the Arctic Council and these external bodies.

CONCLUSION / DECISION: None. For information only.

8.4 Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME)

8.4.1 The Arctic Marine Tourism Project; 8.4.2; The Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (AMSP); 8.4.3 The Framework for a Pan-Arctic Network of Marine Protected Areas Report; 8.4.4 Presentation of the PAME Work Plan (2015-2017)

The PAME Chair introduced this presentation, noting seven key deliverables for the ministerial, four of which were submitted for approval at this SAO meeting.

He began by reviewing the Arctic Marine Tourism Project (AMTP)'s best practice guidelines on sustainable tourism, which is a follow-up to the 2009 Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment recommendations. He noted in particular that the best practice guidelines are voluntary, and focused on areas where the Arctic Council can add value. He then presented the document's recommendations, which are addressed to several target audiences including operators, Arctic States, and the Arctic Council.

The head of the US delegation to PAME then spoke on the development and history of the AMSP. She provided an overview of the process by which the new iteration of the AMSP was developed,

and reviewed its four strategic goals. She noted that outstanding issues remain and reviewed those issues one by one, but stated that those issues are close to resolution.

She also spoke on the Framework for a network of Marine Protected Areas. She provided a high-level overview of the contents of the report and of the near-term actions contained therein for follow-up. Regarding some possible confusion about the document, she noted in particular that the framework document is not prescriptive and does not address the high seas.

The PAME Chair then presented the PAME Work Plan, beginning by reminding delegates of the PAME mandate and highlighting the ways in which PAME's work plan connects to the U.S. Chairmanship priorities. He then highlighted a project to identify basic principles for the engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities in marine activities, as well as follow-up to the AMSP and the Ecosystem-Approach expert group.

DISCUSSION (Covers 8.4.1, 8.4.2, 8.4.3 and 8.4.4):

- Many delegates expressed support for the deliverables and work plan. AIA noted the forward-thinking nature of the AMTP and the identification of local communities as a target audience, and highlighted the willingness of observers to engage on these issues.
- The Kingdom of Denmark and Norway highlighted their support for PAME's work on an MPA Framework.
- Norway also noted its appreciation for PAME's broad consultation on the AMSP and the need for consensus to implement its recommendations.
- Canada highlighted the importance of engaging with local communities and the need for greater clarity on the U.S. proposal for a regional seas program.

CONCLUSION / DECISION: With acknowledgement of bracketed text in the AMSP, all items were accepted for delivery to ministers. The bracketed text in the AMSP will be discussed at the SAO Executive Meeting in Ottawa in April.

8.5 Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR)

8.5.1 The Arctic Guide on Oil Spill Response in Ice and Snow;

8.5.2 Radiation Projects: Report and Handbook from the Exercise "Arctic 2014";

8.5.3 Report from the First Exercise under the auspices of the *Arctic Marine Oil Spill Preparedness and Response Agreement*;

8.5.4 The Arctic Environmental Response Management Application (ERMA);

8.5.5 Request for Adjustment of EPPR Mandate; 8.5.6 Presentation of the EPPR Work Plan (2015-2017)

The Chair of EPPR provided an overview of the Working Group's six proposed deliverables to the ministerial, five of which were for SAO consideration at this meeting. He first discussed the Arctic Guide on Oil Spill Response in Ice and Snow, developed in response to a request from the IMO. He noted that two versions (an Arctic and a global version) have been prepared. He then presented on the report and handbook from the radiation exercise "Arctic-2014", the report from the first exercise under the auspices of the oil spill preparedness and response agreement, and the Working Group's request to adjust its mandate to formally include search and rescue. He then outlined Arctic ERMA, which provides a common operating picture during environmental incidents, and noted that this

supports the oil spill agreement. Finally, he provided a brief overview of the EPPR work plan, noting that it incorporates both ongoing work and adjustments based on U.S. Chairmanship priorities. He noted some projects provide excellent opportunities for cooperation with PPs and with observer States, and opportunities to follow up on other work including the legally-binding agreements and the products of Task Forces. Finally, he introduced the incoming EPPR chair and thanked those who have supported EPPR's work.

DISCUSSION (Covers 8.5, 8.5.1, 8.5.2, 8.5.3, 8.5.4, 8.5.5 and 8.5.6):

- Many delegates expressed support for EPPR's deliverables and expanding EPPR's mandate to include search and rescue.
- Russia noted that the Arctic Guide on Oil Spill Response in Ice and Snow is both technical and political, and that the cooperation on the legally-binding agreements provides concrete opportunities to strengthen cooperation among the Arctic States.
- The Kingdom of Denmark noted that it would like the change to EPPR's mandate to be included in the ministerial declaration and SAO Report to Ministers.
- The U.S. introduced the incoming EPPR Chair and pointed out the possibility of connecting with the Arctic Coast Guard Forum.
- AIA thanked EPPR for engaging with Permanent Participants, and expressed support for projects that address the needs of small communities.
- Many delegates mentioned the importance of including observers in these projects.

CONCLUSION / DECISION: The five EPPR deliverables (including the adjustment to the EPPR mandate) that were for SAO consideration at this meeting, and the EPPR Work Plan, were accepted for delivery to Ministers.

8.6 Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)

8.6.1 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment; 8.6.2 Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative; 8.6.3 CAFF Ministerial Deliverables; 8.6.4 Presentation of the CAFF Work Plan (2015-2017)

The CAFF Chair presented the "Actions for Arctic Biodiversity 2013-2021: implementation plan for the ABA recommendations" as a deliverable to the ministerial. She highlighted the co-chairs' report from the Arctic Biodiversity Congress, an event that brought together Indigenous peoples, industry, scientists, students, and others. She then moved on to the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP), drawing attention to the four-year strategic plan as a ministerial deliverable and its importance to CAFF's work. The CAFF Chair presented a four-year work plan for the Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI) and highlighted the importance of including other partners such as observer States. She then provided an overview of other CAFF projects that are ongoing or previously accepted by SAOs. Finally, she presented CAFF's 2015-2017 work plan, highlighting important elements of CAFF's communications-and-outreach work, including translations, printed materials, and films.

DISCUSSION (Covers 8.6.1, 8.6.2, 8.6.3 and 8.6.4):

- Many delegates expressed support for CAFF's work and its ministerial deliverables.
- ICC and AIA noted with approval the emphasis on traditional knowledge. ICC suggested that CAFF should consult SDWG on the inclusion of traditional knowledge, given SDWG's work on the traditional and local knowledge recommendations.
- Canada thanked CAFF for its work and noted in particular the Arctic Biodiversity Congress, the AMBI, and CAFF's focus on the implementation of recommendations.

- The Saami Council noted that there are some financial concerns related to a nomadic reindeer herding project, and expressed enthusiasm for the “Salmon Peoples” project and a willingness to co-lead.
- AAC thanked the PPs and CAFF for their involvement in the Salmon Peoples project, and encouraged other Working Groups to become engaged in this project.
- The SDWG Chair highlighted CAFF’s communications and outreach efforts and the inclusion of traditional knowledge in its work, and proposed the co-location of a CAFF and SDWG meeting during the U.S. Chairmanship.
- The U.S. asked for a review of the language in the ABA implementation plan to ensure that it reflects coordination with other Working Groups’ plans, and expressed concern with the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity Scoping Study for the Arctic (TEEB) and asked for close review before the next steps are undertaken in the project. The U.S. also expressed support for the Salmon Peoples project, with the caveat that it not address questions of management but remain focused on the co-production of knowledge.
- ICC intervened on the TEEB by noting that Inuit are unwilling to put monetary values on certain items under discussion and requested close engagement.
- The CAFF Chair noted a strong desire to cooperate with SDWG and engage on multiple projects. She said that she will raise the possibility of a joint meeting in an upcoming CAFF conference call. Regarding the ABA implementation plan, she responded affirmatively to U.S. concerns and noted that the language will be harmonized with other Working Groups’ work plans. Regarding TEEB, she noted that it is a scoping study, not a report, and emphasized that this is not all about monetary valuation. She also noted that ICC has provided input to the scoping study.

CONCLUSION / DECISION: All items were accepted for delivery to Ministers.

9. Administrative Matters

9.1 Arctic Council Secretariat

9.1.1 Arctic Council Secretariat Report from the Director

The Director of the ACS presented the ACS’s 2014 annual report and the work plan for 2016-2017. He highlighted the ACS’s continued role in providing support to the Chairmanship, Arctic States, Permanent Participants, and additional assistance to Working Groups, Task Forces and observers. He noted the ACS’s efforts on the tracking tool, project costing tool, and the archiving project, and the ACS’s support provided specifically to ACAP, EPPR, and three Task Forces. Regarding communications, he noted growth in traffic to the Arctic Council website and its social media accounts and the ACS’s work on the communications and outreach group.

9.1.2 Arctic Council Secretariat Work Plan for 2016-2017

Looking ahead to 2016-2017, the Director noted the ACS’s plan to continue the efforts noted above, while adding further coordinating efforts to assist with the scheduling of Working Group meetings, and building on communications by expanding the ACS’s library of media. He also noted the expiration/renewal of five employee contracts in 2017. Should three or more staff members choose not to renew their contracts, this will create a burden in terms of recruitment, and have budgetary implications (such as moving allowances). He noted the success of secondments to the ACS to date, and encouraged States to consider seconding staff to the Secretariat. Finally, he highlighted the 20th

anniversary of the Arctic Council as an occasion for celebration, and cited coordination with the US Chairmanship and Norway.

9.2 Review of Working Group Operating Guidelines

The Director noted first that the Working Groups' guidelines do not contradict the Arctic Council Rules of Procedure, but that there are notable differences between the operating guidelines used among the Working Groups. He described the method by which the guidelines were reviewed by the ACS, and noted that the overview is summarized in a table.

DISCUSSION (Covers 9.1.1, 9.1.2 and 9.2):

- Many delegates expressed support for the ACS's work over the past two years, and plans for the future.
- The U.S. thanked the ACS for its support and transparent reporting, and asked for more details on the 20th anniversary celebrations to ensure that celebrations are well coordinated.
- Finland noted that it would like to begin discussing future work of the ACS under the Finnish chairmanship as early as possible.
- AIA expressed enthusiasm for future close cooperation between IPS and ACS, and praised the ACS for its Permanent Participant support and outreach. AIA also asked whether there is any relationship between the ACS and the Arctic Economic Council secretariat in Tromsø, to which Norway responded that the Arctic Economic Council Secretariat has not yet been established.
- Norway also noted a desire to have a 20th anniversary celebration in Tromsø in coordination with the other Arctic States.
- ICC noted that the relocation of IPS does appear in the ACS's work plan.
- The ACS Director informed delegates that the ACS was building a library of photos on occasion of the 20th anniversary.
- The ACS Director also suggested that they may wish to create handbook or illustration to provide a clearer image of the Council and the Working Groups. AMAP then commented that they would be happy to begin work on this.
- The U.S. noted that it would like to see better coordination and consistency of the Working Groups' operational guidelines while recognizing the uniqueness of each group. The U.S. requested that SAOs only provisionally approve the guidelines to allow for a review that goes beyond only looking at their consistency with the AC's Rules of Procedure to other elements such as operations, including observer participation.
- The Kingdom of Denmark agreed with the U.S. that a more thorough review and harmonization of the guidelines is desirable.
- The AMAP Chair expressed gratitude for provisional approval of their operating guidelines, and recommended Working Group involvement in this proposed further review. He also suggested expanding this review to include expert groups.
- ICC supported the idea of further reviewing Working Group operating guidelines, and expressed hope for consistency in the Working Groups' use of traditional knowledge.

CONCLUSION / DECISION: The Director's report and work plan were accepted for delivery to Ministers. The Working Group operational guidelines were provisionally approved, subject to further work during the U.S. chairmanship.

10. Procedural Matters

10.1 Project Support Instrument (PSI)

A written report was submitted for consideration.

DISCUSSION:

- AIA reminded delegates that it submitted a proposal to the PSI for a project on community-based black carbon monitoring and assessment and that there had not yet been a response on its proposal.
- The PSI representative noted that proposals had been requested by January 24, 2015, with decisions to be delivered following the next PSI meeting on March 24, 2015. He noted that, although AIA's proposal was late, it has been sent to the PSI committee for consideration at the March 24 meeting.
- AIA then asked when a decision could be expected on its proposal, to which the PSI representative responded that a decision will likely occur in October.
- The U.S. reminded delegates that the PSI is intended only to support projects approved by the Arctic Council (i.e. approved in-session or intersessionally by Working Group heads of delegation and approved by SAOs), and that external financing of Arctic Council projects through any mechanism should take place after approval by Arctic Council Working Groups and SAOs, in accordance with Arctic Council Rules of Procedure. In addition, Working Group heads of delegation should approve funding requests or expressions of interests submitted to external financing mechanisms.
- Russia expressed support for the U.S.'s comments.

CONCLUSION / DECISION: External financing for Arctic Council projects and funding requests/expressions of interests require preapproval by Working Group heads of delegation and SAOs, in accordance with Arctic Council Rules of Procedure.

11. Any Other Business

(No items were raised.)

Close of Meeting

The SAOC began by thanking delegates for their cooperative spirit over the course of the meeting. He then expressed his appreciation to the Working Groups and Task Forces for their impressive array of deliverables for Ministers, which highlight both the sustainable development and the environmental protection pillars of the Council's work. He noted that a new draft of the Ministerial Declaration had been circulated electronically to SAOs and PPs, which will be on the agenda for the April 8-9 Executive SAO Meeting in Ottawa. He reminded delegates of the changes that were announced regarding the Ministerial Meeting, and he committed to delivering more information as soon as possible. The U.S. SAO then thanked the SAOC for his excellent work since assuming his position.