

Arctic Council
Notes from the Second Ministerial Meeting*
Barrow, Alaska, U.S.A.
October 12-13, 2000

Thursday, October 12, 2000

Opening Ceremony and Welcoming Remarks

Meeting opened by the U.S. Chair, Under Secretary of State Frank Loy
Invocation given by Inupiat Elder Mary Lou Leavitt

Welcome from North Slope Borough Mayor George Ahmaogak, Sr:

Mayor Ahmaogak

Welcome all to the largest home-rule municipality in the United States, a region the size of Denmark. Our isolated location formerly allowed us to manage our affairs with freedom from outside interference, but the development of oil changed our lives dramatically. We had to fight for settlement of land claims, home rule government, modern housing, and the right to sit at the table at the international level. But we still suffer the effects of rapid social change and cultural abuse; our people were subjected to human experimentation, environmental contamination, and threats to our traditions such as whaling. There seems to be more interest in the endangered species in our homeland than in the health of our residents; outsiders fail to understand that our lives are entwined with the health of the land and animals. The rates of cancer are alarming and the system is failing to get studies done. Oil revenues have made it possible to improve our quality of life and the industry has learned from its mistakes; that I why we support the opening of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. There is also an opportunity to make use of the huge supply of natural gas under our lands, and we support construction of a gas pipeline. If we can deliver cleaner burning natural gas to replace our shrinking reserves of oil, then we are contributing to a healthier environment for all.

U.S. Chair

The Arctic Council depends on its Permanent Participants and regional governments to keep its attention focused on environmental protection and sustainable development. Alaskans have been full partners in our chairmanship of the Council and I thank them for their contributions.

Welcome from Alaska Lt. Governor Fran Ulmer:

Lt. Governor Ulmer

A great deal of work goes into organizing an effort like this meeting, and we thank everyone for their hospitality. Alaska is America's largest state but is sparsely populated, presenting us

*These notes are not a full transcript of the Ministerial Meeting, but rather selected remarks by participants which constitute an informal record of the discussions.

with some unique challenges in transportation, communications, health care, education, and public services, just as other nations represented here must face. We also have a very diverse and rich cultural heritage, and Alaska's native people embrace their culture with genuine enthusiasm. We are a young state and still evolving as a government. Our economy is based in natural resources and heavily dependent on exports, so we are very interested in what is going on in the world around us. Organizations like the Arctic Council provide us with the opportunity to better understand our neighbors. The work product of this young organization and the way it has welcomed the Permanent Participants and Observers are truly impressive. We now have a much clearer picture of where we need to go to empower the Arctic Council to assist all of the communities and countries of the Arctic to achieve the full potential.

U.S. Chair

Let me join Lt. Governor Ulmer in thanking Finland for convincing us all to take the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy and really make it into a cohesive council. It has grown to be a very effective body.

Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting Agenda and Approval of New Members

Agenda approved by Ministers without comment.

Statements of applicants for Permanent Participation:

Arctic Athabaskan Council

We recently formed a treaty organization that represents 45 First Nation communities in Canada and Alaska, representing nearly 40,000 indigenous people of the Athabaskan linguistic group. We have experienced the negative effects of contact with the Western world, such as our traditional economies being replaced and our people not being afforded the measure to participate fully. Mining, oil and gas, and forestry operations have left us with a mess when the resource is gone. We live with the tailings ponds, trash, and hazardous waste that remains. We are very concerned about illness among our people and very interested in research on persistent organic pollutants and the food chain. Our people can make valuable contributions to these discussions and studies based on our traditional use of our lands, and we would like to have an active role with the Council.

Gwich'in Council International

Our group comprises 15 communities and about 15,000 people. The Gwich'in have much to offer the Council in terms of traditional knowledge, negotiations of land claims and indigenous rights, etc. Much of the Council work has great bearing on our communities. We may have some different opinions about development, but that is the reason for this forum—to allow a rational approach to difficult issues such as health, development, quality of life, etc. We all must realize that everything we do is interrelated, either between the environment and people or between groups of people.

New Permanent Participant applicants approved by Ministers: Arctic Athabaskan Council and Gwich'in Council International.

Nine applications for Observer status approved by Ministers: French Republic, Advisory Committee on Protection of the Sea, Association of World Reindeer Herders, Circumpolar Conservation Union, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Arctic Social Science Association, International Union for the Conservation of Nature, North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission, and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Statement of new Observer:

French Republic

We have already circulated a note on the reasons we would like to be an Observer. But we would like to thank the Council for its approval and note France's many contributions to scientific research in the oceans.

Statements by Permanent Participants

U.S. Chair

The Arctic Council is probably the only international forum in which indigenous communities actually have a seat at the table and participate fully in the work of the organization. We will now hear from the four original Permanent Participants.

Aleut International Association (AIA)

We would like to thank the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for their hard work and funding to create the AIA, and also the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat for obtaining funds from the Canadian government to hold a board meeting last April in Anchorage. We depend on a subsistence lifestyle, and more research needs to be done on our food chain and that of the nearby Commander Islands. But there is no money to do research, and this may be our last meeting because we are running out of funds. We have requested financial support from EPA, and the Commander Islands has submitted a proposal to the Russian government for funds. Also, we would like to welcome the Arctic Athabaskans and Gwich'in and we support them in their efforts to find funding or anything they request from the Arctic Council. Finally, we have submitted a concept paper.

U.S. Chair

Financing for participation in international meetings is a big problem, even for the United States. This is part of a larger problem of making a commitment to finance participation, institutions, and obligations.

Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC)

We are proud to be at this meeting in the Eben Hopson Middle School as he was the founder of the ICC. We congratulate the Barrow community for the four bowhead whales caught earlier in the week. In light of the wording of the *Barrow Declaration*, I would like to remind the Council members that the Inuit are an indigenous people, not just inhabitants of the Arctic. The United States has done a good job as chair even though the ICC may not agree with all positions taken. We look forward to the Finnish chair as an injection of energy for the Council.

The Council can articulate the voice of the Arctic to the world. This is particularly important because so many decisions which affect our lives and over which we have little influence are made in the south; we need to educate these decision-makers. We recommend that

Finland sponsor discussions on communications programs, which we would assist. Recently ICC established a task force on economic development and trade and two international commissions on Inuit language and communications. We offer to share these resources which would help guide the Council's sustainable development program. We find the *Barrow Declaration* detailed and informative; we are particularly pleased with the fourth clause, on close coordination among Arctic states in international processes, and with the adoption of the survey of living conditions.

Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON)

We are concerned that the situation of native peoples has not changed much in the ten years that we have been raising issues. Why do we hear more about the flora and fauna of the Arctic than about the people? Much research is being done but there are no changes in living conditions. We would like to see the national governments pay more attention to the practical side of issues rather than just the theoretical.

Saami Council

In the last two years the Arctic Council has been dedicated to the sustainable development program, something which the Saami are sincerely committed to. The new Permanent Participants will benefit the entire Council. We are pleased that the *Declaration* considers the project on sustainable reindeer herding as the industry faces many threats. The European Union's Northern Dimension has evolved into an important concept for European policies and has been promoting work on sustainable development. We believe that Sweden, as upcoming president of the European Union, will be able to link the Arctic Council and the Northern Dimension.

Denmark/Greenland The interest shown by the EU in the activities of the Arctic Council is a very positive development. We in Greenland have found it important to have closer cooperation with the EU. We support the sustainable development ideas put forth by the Saami Council; they should be put forth in the *Declaration*.

Reports by Arctic Council Working Group Chairs

All Working Group reports to Ministers are available on the Arctic Council website, www.arctic-council.org.

Sustainable Development (SD) Chair

The goal of this program is to propose and adopt steps to advance sustainable development in the Arctic. A framework document, which contains a guiding strategy and descriptions of possible areas for work, is now before the Ministers for consideration. Progress has been made on initiatives on children and youth, telemedicine, cultural and eco-tourism, and fisheries management. For future activities, there are initiatives on capacity building, emerging infectious diseases, a survey of living conditions, and reindeer herding. Additional topics to be worked on include sustainable development in timberline forests, an Arctic voice in Rio+10, and a health disparities research network.

Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) Chair

AMAP's goal is to measure pollution and its effects on the Arctic ecosystem. We are nearly halfway through the second phase. The assessment should be finished in 2002. Most problems that we encounter are related to funding issues.

We can at this point announce some key findings and observations. Some Arctic countries have not yet ratified the UNEP LRTAP convention. There is also a need for global agreements on POPs and mercury, and a new generation of POPs is being discovered. The trend of decreasing levels of older POPs at lower latitudes has not occurred in the Arctic. AMAP recommends that countries support agreements on long-range transport and strengthen activities to reduce radioactivity. Phase One of the project on PCB phase-out in Russia has been completed. The project on persistent toxic substances and food security in Russia has been approved for funding by the GEF, but funds will not be released until co-financing is in place.

AMAP's Phase II, projects involving ACAP, and the Climate Impact Assessment all are dependent on adequate resources, as are the AMAP secretariat and thematic data centers.

Conservation of Arctic Flora & Fauna (CAFF) Chair

CAFF has put most of its energies into the five tasks assigned by the Ministers in 1998 and into the project on biodiversity conservation in northern Russia. Regarding climate change, we have established with AMAP nine expert networks on monitoring biodiversity. We have prepared a report on legal instruments for marine protection and a gap analysis of Russian areas. Work has continued on the protection of sacred sites, marine conservation strategies, and incidental by-catch of seabirds. We published an atlas on rare vascular plants and have almost finished the second part of the Arctic vegetation map, both with strong support of the United States. The project on biodiversity in Russia will focus on stakeholder involvement and emphasize capacity building. Sweden will now take over as CAFF chair and the United States as vice-chair.

Emergency Prevention, Preparedness & Response (EPPR) Chair

EPPR deals with environmental emergencies involving oils spills, hazardous chemicals, and now radiological emergencies. We have finalized the analysis of the adequacy and effectiveness of agreements; we concluded that agreements in force are currently adequate. On another major project, we have received information from all countries regarding the circumpolar map of resources at risk from oil spills. We expect to have a report ready for the working group meeting in February 2001.

Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) Chair

PAME's first objective deals with the prevention of marine pollution from land-based activities, which are the source of approximately 80% of marine pollution. Our highest priority is implementing the Regional Program of Action for the protection of the Arctic and the Russian National Program of Action; we will participate in the partnership conference to be held in 2001 to prioritize investments for these programs. Our second objective is to prevent marine pollution from offshore oil and gas activities; we are currently evaluating how the PAME guidelines are being used and will provide recommendations on possible amendments. The third objective is to prevent marine pollution from shipping activities; PAME greatly appreciates the snapshot analysis of maritime activities prepared by Norway, which will help determine if any other shipping measures are required. Fourth, PAME plans to update its review of international agreements and make recommendations for any further actions by 2002. I would also note that there have been increased ratifications of the Law of the Sea convention, the London Convention on marine pollution, and the UN ECE protocols on POPs and heavy metals. PAME's fifth

objective is to develop integrated and cost-effective action, which is necessary in any international activity.

U.S. Chair

I commend all five working groups; there are more useful steps being taken here than in many international organizations.

Canada

Canada would like to acknowledge the contributions of John Karau during his chairmanship of PAME. Also, Canada is very happy that the framework for sustainable development will be adopted.

Ministerial Roundtable Discussions

Roundtable I: Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA)

Introduction:

United States

Over several decades, temperatures have been rising in the Arctic, affecting the flora and fauna; AMAP and CAFF have over the years documented the consequences. The U.S. National Science Foundation and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are funding a secretariat in Fairbanks to support climate researchers. The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment is the result of collaboration of these groups and is before us for endorsement today.

Presentation:

ACIA Steering Group

The ACIA implementation plan is ready to be started as soon as ACIA has been adopted. There are regional differences in the Arctic, but it is clear that temperatures are changing. Air, ocean, and atmospheric temperatures are changing, although some are cooling. Ice distribution is changing, ice thickness is decreasing. Ozone is depleted; high pressure during winter is decreasing. The consequences include changes in geographic ranges of plants and animals. However, there is no consensus among scientists as to the causes, which could be natural variability or anthropogenic or both.

The goal of ACIA is to gather knowledge on climate change and ultraviolet (UV) radiation and to provide reliable information to governments and people. Environmental, human health, social, and economic impacts will be included in the assessment. The United States has funded \$2.4 million and will fund \$3.6 million; others also will contribute directly. ACIA deliverables will include:

- A scientific document comprising a series of assessment reviews (indicators of UV levels, changes in climate, etc.), and likely future changes;
- A synthesis document;
- A policy document.

*Discussion:****Inuit Circumpolar Conference***

We will be giving all delegations a video of Inuit observations of climate change on Banks Island in Canada. We thank the United States for funding the secretariat and moving ACIA forward. We are pleased that the *Barrow Declaration* requires ACIA to emphasize the impact of climate change on people as well as the environment, and also that it recognizes the need for ACIA to support policy making. The ICC would like the climate change delegations to Johannesburg to include representatives of northern peoples. We also believe that Inuit traditional knowledge can play a major part in this assessment.

U.S. Chair

The impact of climate change was predicted to be the most serious in the polar regions and that is proving to be true. It will be fixable only with global action, not just by the people in the region. The ACIA data must be presented in proper fora—the synthesis report will therefore be critical. We must avoid causality; others are working on this issue and the Council could probably not add much. The assessment should be a part of and fed into the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), but it also should be independent, such as the brochure compiling data on changes. The Arctic needs to make its story known to other regions in order to develop political support for the tough actions that are necessary.

Iceland

Iceland will resume whaling when we can convince the world that we can do it sustainably, although other governments around the world do not support it; so we feel we have the same problem as the indigenous people. Iceland will participate in ACIA; we welcome the initiative. A report just came out in Iceland which predicts a 2°C rise in the next ten years and a 50cm rise in the sea level; glaciers may disappear in the next 100 years. There are conflicting reports on the effects on cod.

Canada

We strongly support ACIA. The signs of variability in the far north are already present. Inuit hunters say for the first time they have to use sunscreen. ACIA will show the connection between UV-B and climate change. Canada agrees that all Council members should be represented on the Assessment Steering Committee, but lead authors should be selected solely on merit. ACIA should continue its interaction with relevant bodies such as the IPCC. We also support the ICC's participation in ACIA's steering committee.

Finland

We support the ideas of ACIA; it is important to draw policy conclusions based on the ACIA report. Finland will work hard to see the Kyoto Protocol ratified at COPs-6. Finland endorses the participatory approach for ACIA, especially for indigenous populations who can provide valuable contributions and whose livelihoods may be jeopardized by climatic developments.

Denmark/Greenland

We hope the ACIA information will provide us with a clearer picture of the consequences of Arctic climate variability and increased UV-B radiation. We must use this information in our policymaking processes.

Norway

ACIA is very timely and we will be an active participant. This will be the first comprehensive assessment of climate changes in one single region. We look forward to the discussions on political action. There are already disturbing effects of the changing climate on northern societies, such as increased winter precipitation in Norway. ACIA will be built on existing data but should spawn new long-term research where there are weaknesses in existing data. We thank the United States for their willingness to finance the secretariat. Norway has allocated US\$350,000 to ACIA and Arctic climate change projects in our proposed budget for 2001. We emphasize the political implications of this work by advocating close ACIA-SAO links; there should be a progress report at future SAO and Council meetings as there was at this one.

Russian Federation

Climate change is very important to Russia due to our large Arctic territory. Oil and gas production could also be affected. Russian capabilities are in monitoring and research vessels; "Ecoarctica" is the name of the planned research expedition gathering information on the polar regions. Russia supports indigenous participation in these programs.

Sweden

No significant climate change has been observed in Scandinavia, but Sweden is not relaxing. In 1997 Sweden started regional climate modeling. 3.5°C rise in 100 years could be an average rise for Sweden, which would be higher than for the rest of the world. More precipitation, floods, snowstorms, etc., would occur. Water resources, food, health, and forests would be affected. Science needs to give us its best guess of the future; politicians need to look ahead. Sweden welcomes ACIA and has three wishes for the project: that all Arctic Council members participate; that full use of the Observers' offers to participate is used; and that there are equal opportunities for men and women in the studies.

United Kingdom

ACIA offers an ideal opportunity for the U.K. to contribute to the Arctic Council. The U.K. has been conducting a thematic research program for the last few years in the Arctic. Other programs are in pipeline and we hope the results can make a contribution to ACIA. Communication will be a crucial part of ACIA; the steering committee and the entire Council should make the world aware of the findings in order to add to the global debate on climate change.

Roundtable II: Focus on Sustainable Development and Arctic Communities***Introduction:******Denmark/Greenland***

Greenland and the Faroe Islands are heavily dependent on natural resources (marine mammals) and are striving to be economically self-sufficient. One of our biggest problems is a lack of infrastructure, which is needed to keep our communities together across great distances. The survey of living conditions will help for policy planning and implementation. We must allow for broader and more cost-effective participation.

*Presentation:****Canada***

Canada has had a commitment since the 1970s to capacity building in the north; we resolved aboriginal land claims and created a legal framework for aboriginals to develop the capacity to manage their own affairs. Now aboriginals are a partner with the federal government. Canada wants to instill capacity building as a crosscutting theme in all Council work so that regional capacity can be built. Canada is financially supporting ICC-Canada on the RAIPON project.

Canada-Nunavut

Nunavut is a highly-visible example of capacity building. We had to make sure the transition to territorial status would be smooth and the new government could handle the responsibilities. The government must reflect the population; we must recruit and train local residents. Our government is currently 78% staffed; 44% are Inuit. Formerly our people were self-reliant. We are trying to regain that self-reliance and capacity building is the key. Nunavut's government is decentralized: we are building facilities in ten of our 26 communities so that people will not need to relocate, salaries are spread out, and government employees are among the people. The development of human capacity must be the focus of other circumpolar situations as well.

*Discussion:****Saami Council***

People think our only food stocks are reindeer and trout, but we are also a coastal culture hunting seal, fish, and whale. We must look at fisheries if we are serious about sustainable development. On health and the environment, a WHO/UNEP joint agreement will support an Arctic project on health and indigenous people. This is a good example that the indigenous can work with organizations.

RAIPON

Our first international project, with Canada and ICC-Canada, dealt with capacity building. One success is our improved correspondence: AIA messages to RAIPON used to take weeks; now we are using email. Email is also helping one of our groups in their conflict with Lukoil as we have been able to contact supporters in Russia and abroad more easily. After the economic reforms in Russia, governments have been ignoring the indigenous people, so the work of the Arctic Council is very important.

Roundtable III: Effects of Contaminants in the Arctic*Introduction:****Norway***

The 1998 AMAP findings were not pleasant: contaminant levels in human blood, food, and marine mammals were high; radioactive releases are also a threat. The ACAP objectives to meet these challenges are very ambitious. ACAP will provide a basis for cooperation and a more active role for the Arctic Council. Most priority projects lack sufficient funding. There also

needs to be cooperation with international institutions and the business community. Norway will contribute US\$200,000 to the RAIPON project on toxic substances in food. Other countries need to contribute in order to release matching funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF). AMAP information will continue to play a role in strengthening international pollution control.

Arctic Council states must work together on the global POPs negotiations using the precautionary principle. We cannot forget that POPs also originate in our own countries. All Council countries must ratify the LRTAP protocols. We also need to deal with threats from Russia on radioactivity and reprocessing plants from the south as well.

Discussion:

Russian Federation

We thank Norway for its active participation in fighting pollution in the Arctic and for organizing the AMAP project. There is a lack of objective information on contaminants in the Arctic. There is still a high level of radioactivity in the region, and therefore risk—the Kursk submarine is an example. We are thankful for the technical and financial help on pollution in the Arctic.

Russia is often named as the main source of pollution; the ACAP dioxin-furan project says Russian industry led to this pollution, but AMAP does not give any grounds for thinking that these pollutants come specifically from Russia. These documents do not allow a cooperative and constructive atmosphere for our work. Some countries are supposedly involved in these projects but are not doing comparative studies in their own territory. PAME's Regional Plan of Action (RPA) is almost an RPA for Russia alone. The format is not a good model for interaction of the working groups within the Council. Russia must re-examine the 2001 Partnership Conference to make sure the results will be in our interest.

Sweden

The POPs agreement should contain a precautionary approach and commitments to assist developing countries. Could the Council ask Finland to forward the ideas of the *Barrow Declaration* to the UNEP negotiations?

Sweden is surprised by the comments of the Russian delegation concerning contaminants. The preparatory discussions were not of the same tone. We thought we had support from both Russia and the United States, but of course we are not going to force a country to work with us. Maybe we should hold bilateral discussions later. We are nevertheless ready to be the lead country for this project.

United States-Alaska Lt. Governor

The wild food diet is still healthiest for native people and is also important for its cultural and spiritual content. We must reassure the people of the Arctic that it is the best, but not stop there. The contaminant levels we are beginning to notice are creating a renewed concern. Today I am sharing with you a collaborative interagency paper which presents an action plan. Its recommendations are to educate people about contaminants, commit resources for research and monitoring, strengthen federal-state, university, etc. ties, and reduce and eliminate exposure to contaminants. I also encourage you to look at the paper on the Traditional Knowledge in Contaminants project. Also, Alaska Governor Knowles yesterday released a press statement on his action plan, including a cabinet-level review team to work on this issue.

Friday, October 13

Roundtable III continued: Effects of Contaminants in the Arctic

United States-Environmental Protection Agency

There is still a lot to be learned about Arctic contaminants; the more we work on it, the more complicated it becomes. In particular, we recently discovered that mercury can be broken down and enter the Arctic food chain, which underscores the importance of the Council's focus on contaminants. Thanks to all working on the AMAP Phase I PCB project in Russia. We are pleased that Phase II was approved and have made an offer of US\$100,000 but we need \$400,000 to move ahead. We encourage Sweden on the dioxin project in Russia; we plan to set aside some money to facilitate that work as well. Radioactive wastes in the Arctic are largely in the military realm. There are some barriers but we are working to achieve agreement on liability protection for the handling of radioactive materials in Russia.

Iceland

Any threat to the marine environment, like nuclear contamination, is a great concern to Iceland. We therefore welcome any efforts to minimize nuclear risks and we also strongly support the international agreement on POPs. Developing countries need financial support and we will look into possibilities for funding. The projects Iceland is most interested in are PCBs in Russia, mercury, and the regional assessment of POPs. A downward trend of POPs in fish was recently detected in Iceland, reflecting the ban on these substances. So there is some good news, but we still strongly support international agreements on POPs.

ICC-Canada

Contaminants in country food are a great concern. Our health and cultural heritage are at stake. In a short time, we have come from a holistic education system that prepared us for life to a system that often separates learning from life. Once more we recognize the importance of our traditional culture and have come full circle. We eat what we hunt and that is not going to change. Traditional knowledge is a critical part of true ownership of sustainable development in our communities. As we are turning back to our land, our culture, and our country food, the last thing we need is to think that our food is poisoning us. We commend the State of Alaska for encouraging the federal government to work with Alaskan interests on POPs; in Canada, the indigenous peoples work very closely with federal agencies and are jointly implementing the northern contaminants program. We recommend similar partnerships to all of you.

All parties must sign the LRTAP POPs protocol. The *Barrow Declaration* should be used to call for funding of the POPs convention. Only Canada of the Council members has contributed funding. We recommend that Finland, as the new chair, work with the EU to ensure that the EU announces a significant contribution. In light of Alaska Governor Knowles' announcement yesterday, we hope the United States will also contribute.

Denmark/Greenland

The Arctic Council must send a strong message on pollution reduction. Why is it so difficult for some countries to make a commitment? Contaminants can only be reduced through international cooperation.

Canada

We agree with the statements the ICC and Norway made yesterday. In addition to our support for ACAP, Canada would like to see all ratify the 1998 Aarhus protocols on heavy metals and POPs under LRTAP before June 2001. We support the capacity of developing countries to take the actions necessary to ratify the POPs agreement. Canada has taken steps to establish a POPs trust fund with the World Bank in order to assist developing countries.

Finland

The AMAP report and others show the need for international protocols on POPs. Finland aims to ratify the UN ECE protocol as soon as possible. We are willing to bring the message in the *Barrow Declaration* to Johannesburg. Finland is considering financial support for the AMAP project on food security and hopes to announce by the end of the year. The Arctic has been confirmed as a sink for heavy metals. We are pleased to announce that Finland ratified the UN ECE protocol on heavy metals and confirmed 1990 as the reference year for emissions reductions. Finland participates actively in radioactive monitoring and our work is available for AMAP assessments; our support for nuclear safety programs aims to prevent serious nuclear accidents at facilities located near Finnish territory.

Arctic Athabaskan Council

Pressure must be put on the chemical companies producing wastes and dumping. There are stories of illegal dumping, even in international waters, and I wanted to broach this subject.

U.S. Chair

Illegal dumping of chemicals is a huge problem in various parts of the world. It is in part a problem of domestic law and enforcement. Many of us are parties to the London Convention on dumping in international waters. But for local communities, the waste is certainly a critical issue and nations have to be diligent in enforcing their laws.

Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

A special trust fund to activate the POPs negotiations is needed. We also back insertion of the precautionary principle in the POPs treaty. The notion is that it is tacitly there, but it should be an approach, not an explicit principle. Yet I recall that all nations here endorsed it very strongly in Rio as an explicit principle. When people speak about pollution in the Arctic, it has tremendous resonance, more so than when only scientists or experts speak. All parties must make a resolution to speak about the Arctic at the POPs talks.

There is a tremendous proliferation of working groups and committees on the same issues. Four years ago Sweden suggested making an inventory of Arctic programs. With financial backing of Canada, it has been put on the internet thanks to GRID-Arendal. We hope Finland can use this tool in the future.

Circumpolar Conservation Union

We in Savoonga, Alaska, are very dependent on marine mammals. Many of our cultural values and subsistence activities have been passed from generation to generation, but they are in danger of being lost. The language in the POPs treaty should ultimately eliminate, not just manage, POPs, and the precautionary principle must be included. Financial support is needed. There must be a strong U.S. presence, not just by the Department of Defense and the chemical companies, but by the Department of Interior which has obligations to natives. There should be a senior, knowledgeable delegation. The State of Alaska must press its Members of Congress for support as well.

Roundtable IV: The Future of Arctic Cooperation

Introduction:

U.S. Chair

One of the positive developments of the last decade has been the formation of several regional organizations dealing with the Arctic, of which the Arctic Council is one. A web of connections has been woven to deepen cooperation for the future—the matrix and the Venn diagram in the binders show the connections between many of these organizations. The European Union and the Global Environment Fund are important players; cooperation with them is desirable and we have invited them to join as observers. With so many players involved in these issues, I now invite discussion on whether we are operating in the most effective manner possible.

Discussion:

Norway

What can the Arctic Council do to be more inclusive of and cooperate better with other organizations? We must continue working closely with local populations and concentrating on concrete projects. We need to communicate better the results of our cooperation; we suggest perhaps developing a program for journalists, as well as promoting better the political platform on which we can agree.

Observers are very important to the Council. France wants to increase coordination among observers, which would be very useful. The Saami Council yesterday pointed to the EU's Northern Dimension; Norway is not a member but still participates and this endeavor will benefit the Council. We will distribute the report "Regional Organizations in the North," which underlines the complexities of the systems. The papers should help avoid overlap and increase effectiveness.

We welcome the review of the structure of the Council and argue again the need for a permanent secretariat. Also, there must be a more balanced sharing of financial responsibility for the working group secretariats. In international negotiations, Council states must work jointly and with more coordination. Rio+10 will be a good opportunity to develop an Arctic regional approach and presentation.

Iceland

We all agree that the most important issue facing the Council is sustainable development and environmental protection. The framework document lays the foundation for a holistic approach to this issue. We welcome the effort to integrate environmental considerations into all economic activities. The Arctic Council should strengthen ties to other regional organizations—the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the Council of Baltic Sea States, and the Nordic Council of Ministers. We are very pleased with the work Finland did with its initiative on the Northern Dimension, which is now an EU program. We need to adapt the structure of our working groups to the new realities of the environmental field. The structure of financing also must be more systematic; while we agree that contributions are voluntary, there is a need for some level of predictability for working group budgets.

Sweden

We agree that we need to establish closer contact with the EU on the implementation of the Northern Dimension. Its action plan will open many possibilities for cooperation with the Council. During Sweden's EU presidency in 2001, we will continue to develop these issues with the United States and Canada within the transatlantic dialogue. Let us use this opportunity to ask the working groups to consider proposals for cooperative projects that can fit into the action plan of the Northern Dimension.

Finland

Today we will adopt two programs which give a new orientation to our work and set new challenges: the Arctic Council Action Plan to Eliminate Pollution in the Arctic and the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment. To meet these challenges, the Council has to improve its internal cooperative structure and make it more efficient and flexible. It is time to present our valuable work at other international fora and develop fruitful relations with them to promote globally significant issues. While Canada and the United States have not been directly involved with the Northern Dimension, it is part of the regular transatlantic dialogue between the EU and those two countries. The Arctic Council provides a link between Northern Europe and North America, including all of northern Russia. The permanent participation of the EU in the Council would be mutually beneficial.

Finland-Governor of Lapland

It is time to move on to practical projects on the regional Arctic level. To achieve concrete results, it is important to have the commitment of northern inhabitants, which in turn requires the inhabitants to be involved as central actors. Cooperation between national and subnational entities has been successful in other organizations and could be applied to the Arctic Council. The Northern Forum covers the regions of the Council well but there are some gaps. I hope that during Finland's chairmanship of the Council, the bottom-up principle will become centrally involved in the organization.

Russian Federation

Russia plays a special role in Arctic cooperation because it represents about one-half of the region and also because it did not formerly undertake its obligations. Now it seems that Russia is being burdened especially heavily with new obligations. We hope that this is taken into account when new working groups are set up. Much work has been done to coordinate programs but there are duplications in the working groups; we hope that new chair Finland can minimize or eliminate such overlap. We welcome the sustainable development activities but wish they would be more systemized. It might also be useful to adopt an Arctic agenda for the 21st century. Finally, we appreciate the work of the United States over the last two years as the Council made the transition from organizational to practical matters.

Denmark/Greenland

Arctic cooperation should cover not only environmental concerns, but also trade, minerals, education, health, cultural, etc. We have an obligation to the people living in the Arctic to move forward on sustainable development. There should be no taboo issues. We want to ensure sensible coordination between the Council and all regional organizations in the Arctic. The views of the northern communities must be fully heard and respected; for too long we have suffered from influences and ideas imposed from afar.

Canada

Canada's new foreign policy initiative positions us to take on the challenge of Arctic cooperation with our Arctic neighbors. The Northern Dimension of Canada's foreign policy has four objectives: to enhance the security and prosperity of Canadians, especially northerners and aboriginal peoples; to assert and ensure Canada's sovereignty in the north; to establish the circumpolar region as a vibrant geopolitical entity in the international system; and to promote the human security of northerners and sustainable development of the Arctic. A priority will be to promote a central place in circumpolar relations for the Arctic Council; we will strengthen our support for the Canadian Permanent Participants. We will continue to support the children and youth of the Arctic and other important projects of the working groups, and also the University of the Arctic. Our Northern Dimension will assist Russia through strengthened bilateral and circumpolar activities. We also want to cooperate with the EU to implement concrete northern cooperation projects. Canada will be contributing C\$400,000 to support the RAIPON project on toxic substances, which is modeled on our own northern contaminants program.

United States-Alaska Lt. Governor

I agree with the Governor of Lapland on the importance of subregional organization participation; there is a profound opportunity for regional governments to assist the Arctic Council on issues like sustainable development. I urge the Council to be creative about funding for the Permanent Participants so they may participate effectively. Finally, I commend Norway for the recommendation about journalist participation—it is essential that good works be made more visible.

RAIPON

Cooperation is a very important component of our work in the Arctic and we are getting results. As examples, during the fuel crisis of 1998, RAIPON, with the Russian ministries and the ICC, was able to help the people of Chukotsk. Second, the Norwegian project to increase the role of Russian indigenous peoples in Arctic policy has accomplished a lot with little expenditure: we are publishing a magazine for over 500 communities in Russia as well as for government agencies and the legislative assembly. As a result, laws were passed giving the indigenous certain powers and a legal foundation for their existence. Third, we have created a committee of indigenous peoples of the deputies in the State Duma. These are small examples but they show how important it is to move from theoretical discussions and scientific research to practical action.

United Nations Environment Programme

All of the Observers met and although we are a diverse group, we believe that we are an important resource to the Council and we will try to continue to meet on the margins of your meetings. We would like the secretariat to continue joining us for those meetings which we hope will make the Council meetings more efficient.

Netherlands

Picking up on Iceland's point about predictability of funds, I would like to note that the Dutch government intends to set up an Arctic program analogous to our Antarctic program. The program will provide a more stable financial basis for the various projects undertaken by the different government departments and institutes in the Netherlands, some of which contribute to programs like ACAP and CAFF. Through this program we intend to focus and intensify our participation in Arctic cooperation.

Inuit Circumpolar Conference

The public hearing on Wednesday, meeting people directly and talking with them instead of to them, was a much better way of communicating our work than has been done in the past. We thank Greenland for bringing the question of sustainable use of marine living resources to the agenda. We hope that Finland will make an effort to represent the Council at other international fora so as to communicate our important work.

Approval of Reports and Ministerial Declaration

SAO Report to Ministers approved by Ministers without comment. Text of SAO report available on website.

Final draft of Ministerial Declaration approved by Ministers without further comment. Text available on website.

Summation by U.S. Chair

There are some very important and knowledgeable participants among the Observers; I hope that eventually the Council can find a better way to integrate the Observers into our work. The issue of funding for Permanent Participants exists in many organizations, and I suggest to the incoming Chair that some funding could be provided by governments. I echo the point made by others about the need to involve journalists in the work of the Council. You can affect the way the world views you by informing journalists; they, like others, tend to be influenced by whether we make it easy or hard for them to cover the issue. The task is to get a world that is very far from the north, but which has an influence on the north, to focus on the north.

Closing Session

Finland approved as next Chair by Ministers without comment.

Gavel and Arctic Council records passed by United States to Finland.

Statement by Finland (Full text available on website)

Finnish Justice Minister Koskinen

Thanks to the North Slope Borough and the State of Alaska for all their hospitality. The efforts within the Arctic Council have brought agreement after an initial phase of diverging views on some fundamental issues. The sustainable development framework agreement will facilitate a more comprehensive approach to the issue in the Arctic. We welcome the new Permanent Participants and hope that all Member States will facilitate the active participation of all the indigenous representatives to the Council.

The Arctic Council should acquire a complimenting role as the voice of the circumpolar region in global and other regional fora; the Rio+10 conference will be a pilot case for this approach. Cooperation with the EU will help strengthen the Council; because of climate change, the Arctic is relevant to the entire EU, not just to its northern members. Permanent Observer status for the EU would establish a long-term partnership and would facilitate presentation of the indigenous groups' concerns to the EU.

Assessment reports prepared by our working groups are in active use in environmental protection communities, for which we should congratulate each other. Resources will continue to be an issue. We must promote sustainable development and focus on youth and women's issues. We welcome closer cooperation between capitals and their northern regions; we have witnessed how the mental distance between Washington and Alaska has shortened during the U.S. chairmanship, and it is our intention to bring European capitals closer to the Arctic Circle during our chairmanship.

U.S. Chair

We are anxious to shorten the distance between North America and Europe as well as between Washington and Alaska. The paradox in the Arctic is striking: the pristine environment and yet the risk citizens face from environmental contaminants; how the region is so affected by distant parts of the world. Also striking is the interaction between traditional ways and the use of modern technology as described so well by our Permanent Participants. As a final word, I will repeat something said by one of the Permanent Participants: please remember that the way in which indigenous people develop and thrive depends very much on the way in which the rest of the world arranges its affairs and particularly its environmental affairs.

Barrow Declaration signed by Ministers. Text available on website.
Press Statement released. Text available on the website.

[Arctic Council website address: www.arctic-council.org]