

Chair's Summary of the Arctic Environment Ministers' meeting

2018-11

Finland

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EXPLORING COMMON SOLUTIONS

ARCTIC ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS' MEETING

11–12 October 2018, Rovaniemi

FINLAND'S
CHAIRMANSHIP
2017–2019



12 October 2018

**Arctic Environment Ministers' Meeting
11-12 October 2018, Rovaniemi, Finland**

Chair's Summary

Finland organized the Arctic Environment Ministers' meeting (AEMM) between the eight Arctic States and the six Permanent Participants representing the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic in Rovaniemi, Finnish Lapland, on 11–12 October 2018.

The meeting was part of the Finnish Chairmanship of the Arctic Council in 2017-2019. Inclusive cooperation and exploring common solutions to common challenges is the point of departure for the Finnish Chairmanship. Climate change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development form the broad framework for the Chairmanship program.

Political attention was brought to the major environmental challenges of the Arctic region, and the case was made for knowledge-based decision-making and actions for the protection of the Arctic environment. The Ministers and Permanent Participants discussed the type of actions needed to tackle the challenges identified under the environmental focus areas of the Finnish Chairmanship: to continue working on climate change, to protect the unique Arctic ecosystems and biodiversity of the region, and pollution prevention measures for the benefit of both the Arctic peoples and nature.

In a joint session held at the Arctic Biodiversity Congress and organized by the Arctic Council's Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) Working Group, the Environment Ministers shared different perspectives and insights on biodiversity challenges facing their countries and regions, as well as practical ideas for addressing these challenges.

During the high-level dialogue of the AEMM, concrete solutions to a range of challenges in the Arctic were explored and potential elements for collaboration and action on Arctic environmental cooperation were highlighted.

The participants highlighted the information from the recent IPCC special report on 1.5 degrees global warming and its impacts on the Arctic.

The Agreement to prevent unregulated commercial fishing on the High Seas of the Central Arctic Ocean signed on 3 October in Greenland was welcomed.

The elements of these discussions by the Arctic Environment Ministers, high-level representatives and Permanent Participants, are reflected by the Chair as follows:

Climate change

- Continue national efforts to implement domestic actions that reduce black carbon emissions, and provide health benefits. Some ministers noted their plans to do so taking into account a collective aspirational goal¹. Invite non-Arctic States to strengthen their efforts in contributing to the reduction of black carbon emissions with their own national actions and to report them to the Arctic Council. Increase awareness about black carbon pollution and acknowledge the use of best practices with regard to black carbon emission reduction developed by the Arctic Council. The pledges made at the AEMM to support black carbon emission reductions in the Arctic were welcomed.
- Some ministers highlighted their respective efforts to advance early and ambitious actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, that also contribute to air quality, as well as increase new sustainable economic opportunities including, e.g. investing in and promoting low carbon economies, emission limitations, sustainable infrastructure, resource efficiency, and promoting access to energy-efficient technologies and services, including electricity and mobility services. Other ministers emphasized their efforts to promote economic growth and energy security and access while protecting the environment, noting their success in reducing emissions through innovation.
- Increase cooperation on strategies, information and tools for adaptation in order to strengthen resilience in a changing climate, e.g. by developing regional weather services for risk management, enhancing mitigation of and preparedness for natural disasters (such as wildfires, floods, and landslides), highlighting the importance of management and sustainable use of wetlands, and by recognizing the potential impacts of ongoing and rapid Arctic Ocean acidification in the management of marine resources.

Biodiversity

- Promote an ecosystem-based approach to management and mainstreaming biodiversity into decision-making, and enhance Arctic cooperation to these ends.
- Enhance cooperation to identify and apply area-based management tools that can support resilience of biodiversity and ecosystem services. In order to foster the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, continue cooperation on developing an ecologically connected, representative and effectively managed network of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) including in the Central Arctic Ocean, in collaboration with Indigenous peoples.
- Explore mechanisms for cooperation on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and protected areas management, recognizing the need to support and respect Indigenous management practices, knowledge and values in order to preserve the unique biodiversity of the Arctic and the traditional ways of life.

¹ By 25 to 33 percent below 2013 levels by 2025, Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane; Summary of Progress and Recommendations 2017:

Pollution Prevention

- Enhance Arctic Council cooperation to reduce marine litter, among other things by considering an Arctic regional action plan and other joint projects on marine litter, as well as the promotion of sustainable materials management. Some ministers proposed to consider a pledge in support of international efforts to reduce marine litter and plastics pollution at the May 2019 Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting.
- Continue participation of the Arctic States, in their national capacities, in global efforts (such as the Stockholm, Basel and Minamata Conventions) on contaminants. Seek new ways to better understand and address new emerging contaminants (including through the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, SAICM and the Beyond 2020 process on the sound management of chemicals and waste).
- Explore management tools and best practices to address adverse impacts of cumulative pressures, including local pollution, habitat degradation and the impact on food security in the Arctic. Support healthy food choice decisions among Arctic populations by ensuring availability of reliable and comprehensive information, including on the relationship between diets and pollution, and promote Indigenous traditional diets, and access to adequate healthy food supplies in local communities

Cross-cutting issues

- Promote cooperation and implementation related to recommendations from the Arctic Council and its key work products², e.g. through national and local level actions, best practices and policy measures to further sustainable development and to protect the Arctic.
- Support the work on assessments and knowledge production undertaken by Arctic Council Working Groups. Consider the extension of the pilot phase of the Arctic Council Project Support Instrument (PSI). Raise awareness of the cooperation and products of the Arctic Council among Arctic inhabitants and governments, relevant Arctic institutions, youth, and other stakeholders. Communicate scientific results at the local level and for Indigenous peoples' communities. Share Arctic environmental information, key findings, recommendations and data with relevant international fora and agreements.
- Develop new opportunities and sustain existing systematic long-term monitoring of the Arctic environment, ecosystems and biodiversity, incorporating new meteorological and other technological tools, and using best available scientific and Indigenous, traditional, and/or local knowledge.

² Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (2013) and the Actions for Biodiversity 2013–2021 (2015)
Ecosystem Based Management in the Arctic (2013)
Framework for Action on Enhanced Black Carbon and Methane Emissions Reductions (2015)
Arctic Marine Strategic Plan 2015–2025 (2015)
Framework for a Pan-Arctic Network of Marine Protected Areas (2015)
Framework plan for Cooperation on Prevention of Oil Pollution from Petroleum and Maritime Activities in the Marine Areas of the Arctic, TFOPP (2015)
Arctic Resilience Action Framework (2016)
Chemicals of Emerging Arctic Concern (2017)
Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost in the Arctic, SWIPA, AMAP (2017)
Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic Reports, AMAP (2017)
Arctic Invasive Alien Species (ARIAS) Strategy and Action Plan, CAFF and PAME, (2017)
Arctic Ocean Acidification, AMAP (2018)

- Undertake activities for the full, effective and meaningful engagement and participation of Indigenous peoples at all levels and to further empower Indigenous communities to contribute to knowledge production.
- Enhance cooperation with the Arctic Council Observers to reduce and prevent long-range transport of pollutants to the Arctic, enhance efforts to limit climate change globally and in the Arctic, and to protect shared migratory species.

These conclusions were issued by Minister Kimmo Tiilikainen, Chair of the Arctic Environment Ministers' meeting in Rovaniemi, Finland, 11-12 October 2018. The meeting was convened under the auspices of the Arctic Council. It was attended by ministers and high-level representatives from the eight Arctic states: Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States together with representatives from the six Arctic Council Permanent Participants organizations: Aleut International Association, Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich'in Council International, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North and Saami Council. The Arctic Council Observer States and Organizations were invited to observe the meeting.

The Chair's Summary will be shared with the Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in May 2019, and contribute to the future of environmental cooperation of the Arctic Council.