

Statements from Rovaniemi 2018 Observer Special Session: Observer States

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**China Observer’s Intervention on Biodiversity in the Arctic
Arctic Council SAO Plenary Meeting
(2nd November 2018, Rovaniemi, Finland)**

by Mr. Gao Feng

Honorable Mr. Chair,

Distinguished colleagues,

First of all, I would like to thank the SAO meeting for organizing this observer special session, which provides a valuable platform for observers to participate in the work of the Council and to exchange views with the members of the Council, Permanent Participants, the Working Groups, the Task Forces, observers and relevant international organizations.

Mr. Chair,

The theme of this special session is “Biodiversity in the Arctic”. As a major country with rich biological resources, China always attaches great importance to biodiversity protection. Ever since its becoming a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1993, China has strictly fulfilled the obligations under the Convention and actively taken part in activities relating to the Convention. In 2020, China will host the 15th session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. It is expected that this COP will significantly increase the influence of the CBD and

actions thereunder in China.

Currently the negotiation on an international legally binding instrument on BBNJ is another hot issue for international maritime legislation, with the first intergovernmental conference convened just in September. China attaches great importance to the conservation and sustainable use of BBNJ, constructively participates in relevant processes, and actively contributes China's wisdom and proposals.

Mr. Chair,

China is geographically a "Near-Arctic States" and an important stakeholder in the Arctic affairs. The issue of "Biodiversity in the Arctic" is closely related to China. As a transit country for the Arctic migratory birds along East Asian-Australasian flyway, China attaches great importance to the protection of migratory birds in the Arctic. For a long time, China has continued to appoint experts to participate in the work of CAFF, actively shared the related information about activities of the Arctic migratory birds in China and sent experts to attend the meetings relevant to biodiversity in the Arctic, such as the executive meeting of AMBI and its workshops. The experts of China also presented practical suggestions to "Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative Work Plan 2015-2019 (Revised)" of CAFF.

It is the national policy of China in participating in the Arctic affairs to protect the Arctic environment, Arctic migratory birds and the Arctic biodiversity. In January 2018, China released the first white paper entitled

“China’s Arctic Policy”, which clearly states that China will “strengthen protection of migratory birds and their habitats, organize research on the migration patterns of Arctic migratory birds.....[and] advance international cooperation in the protection of Arctic species of fauna and flora.” As one of the important measures to implement such a policy, China is expected to hold the AMBI China Workshop on the Protection of Spoon-billed Sandpiper in Hainan Province this December, and the agencies in charge of this matter are speeding up the preparations.

Mr. Chair,

The Arctic Council is the main inter-governmental forum on issues regarding the environment and sustainable development of the Arctic. China will adhere to its commitments made when applying to become an observer to the Council, fully support the work of the Council. China is willing to work with all parties to contribute to the environmental protection and sustainable development in the Arctic.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.