

Report: SAO plenary meeting

Hveragerði, Iceland | 20-21 November 2019

First SAO plenary meeting during the Icelandic Chairmanship

Link to meeting documents:

https://arcticcouncil.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/AC/SAO/Shared%20Documents/Meetings/SAOIS201_2019_HVERAGERDI?csf=1&e=nQ7225

Acronyms and abbreviations commonly found in Arctic Council reports

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| AAC | Arctic Athabaskan Council |
| ABC | Arctic Biodiversity Congress |
| AC | Arctic Council |
| ACAP | Arctic Contaminants Action Program (1 of 6 Working Groups) |
| ACGF | Arctic Coast Guard Forum |
| ACS | Arctic Council Secretariat |
| AEC | Arctic Economic Council |
| AIA | Aleut International Association |
| AIM | Arctic Investment Matrix |
| AMAP | Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (1 of 6 Working Groups) |
| AMBI | Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (CAFF) |
| AMSA | Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (PAME, 2009) |
| AIP | Arctic Investment Protocol |
| ARENA | Arctic Remote Energy Networks Academy (SDWG project) |
| ASTD | Arctic Ship Traffic Data (PAME) |
| ARR / ARA | Arctic Resilience Report / Arctic Resilience Assessment |
| ARAF | Arctic Resilience Action Framework |
| AYN | Arctic Youth Network |
| BCM | Black Carbon and Methane |
| CAFF | Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (1 of 6 Working Groups) |
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| CBM | Community-Based Monitoring (CAFF) |
| CBPM | Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CAFF) |
| CLEO | Circumpolar Local Environmental Observer Network (ACAP) |
| CliC | Climate and Cryosphere |
| CSR | Corporate Social Responsibility |
| EA | Ecosystem Approach |

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| EAAFP | East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership |
| EALLU | Arctic Indigenous Youth, Climate Change and Food Culture (SDWG) |
| EBM | Ecosystem-Based Management |
| EG | Expert Group |
| EGBCM | Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane |
| EPPR | Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (1 of 6 Working Groups) |
| EU | European Union |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization (UN) |
| FP-OPP | Framework Plan for Cooperation on Prevention of Oil Pollution from Petroleum and Maritime Activities in the Marine Areas of the Arctic (2015) |
| GCI | Gwich'in Council International |
| HoD | Head of Delegation |
| ICC | Inuit Circumpolar Council |
| ICES | International Council of the Exploration of the Seas |
| IMO | International Maritime Organization (UN) (Observer) |
| IPCC | Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change |
| IPS | Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat |
| JMS | Joint Ministerial Statement |
| MARPOL | International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships |
| MEMA | Meaningful Engagement of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in Marine Activities (PAME, SDWG) |
| MFA | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| MOSPA | Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic (2013) |
| MoU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| MPA | Marine Protected Area |
| NCM | Nordic Council of Ministers |
| OSPAR | The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic |
| PAME | Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (1 of 6 Working Groups) |
| PBA | Polar Bear Agreement |

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| PBRS | Polar Bear Range States |
| POP | Persistent Organic Pollutant |
| PP | Permanent Participant |
| PSI | Project Support Instrument |
| RADEG | Radiation Expert Group (EPPR, 2019) |
| RAIPON | Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North |
| SAO | Senior Arctic Official |
| SAOC | SAO Chair (Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials) |
| SAOX | SAO executive meeting |
| SAR | Search and rescue |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals (UN) |
| SDI | Spatial Data Infrastructure |
| SDWG | Sustainable Development Working Group (1 of 6 Working Groups) |
| SLCP/F | Short-Lived Climate Pollutants/Forcers |
| TF | Task Force |
| TFAMC II | Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation II |
| TFICA | Task Force on Improved Connectivity in the Arctic |
| TK | Traditional knowledge |
| TKLK | Traditional knowledge and local knowledge |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCLOS | UN Convention on the Law of the Sea |
| UN-ECE | United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (Observer) |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme (Observer) |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme (Observer) |
| UNFCCC | UN Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| WG | Working Group |
| WMO | World Meteorological Organization (Observer) |
| WP | Work plan |

Introduction

1.1 Opening remarks

The SAO Chair (SAOC) welcomed delegates to Hveragerði for the first SAO plenary meeting under Iceland's Chairmanship. He welcomed three new Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) to the Arctic Council attending their first plenary meeting: Thomas Winkler (Kingdom of Denmark); Petteri Vuorimäki (Finland); and David Sproule (Canada).

1.2 Welcoming remarks

The mayor of Hveragerði, Aldís Hafsteinsdóttir, welcomed delegates and provided a brief overview of the town's evolution from its former dependence on coal energy to geothermal renewable and sustainable sources. The SAOC thanked the mayor for an inspiring address on Hveragerði's path towards a sustainable community, and for her and her colleagues' personal introduction to their town the night before.

1.3 Approval of the agenda

The SAOC introduced suggestions to modify the order of some items on the agenda for logistical reasons. The agenda was approved as presented.

2. Marine cooperation

2.1 SAO-based mechanism to coordinate cooperation on marine issues in the Arctic Council

Background and discussion

At the Rovaniemi Ministerial meeting in May 2019, Senior Arctic Officials were tasked to implement a SAO-based mechanism to improve coordination of and strategic guidance on Arctic marine issues. The SAOC explained that implementation of the mechanism, based on recommendations from both TFAMC I and TFAMC II, was further discussed at SAOX meetings in Reykjanæsbær in June and in Hveragerði. He proposed that the mechanism would take the form of dedicated sessions within the framework of SAO plenary meetings. The first such meeting will take place during the Akureyri SAO plenary in March 2020. The SAOC emphasized that the format was still taking shape, and recurrence of these sessions would be determined based on the experience in Akureyri. The Chairmanship also plans to provide an opportunity for enhanced Observer participation within the meeting's framework.

Conclusion

The SAO-based mechanism will be implemented at the next SAO meeting. The Chairmanship will prepare a discussion paper in early 2020, based on the discussions in Hveragerði to help structure and guide the discussions in Akureyri and provide an outline of the meeting's format.

2.2 Arctic Ocean Ministers' meeting

Background and discussion

Magnús Jóhannesson, Special Adviser for Arctic Affairs at the Icelandic MFA and the Chairmanship's Special Coordinator on Plastics and Marine Litter, provided an update on Iceland's initiative to organize an Arctic Ocean Ministers' meeting in the spring of 2020. Due to other international engagements of relevant ministers, a date has not been formally set. Three options are under consideration: 23 April in conjunction with the International Symposium on the Threat of Plastics to the Arctic and Sub-Arctic Marine Environment; 15-16 April; or back to back with the Akureyri SAO meeting. One desirable outcome from the meeting could be a joint message from the Arctic Council to be brought forth to the upcoming 2020 UN Ocean Conference to be held 2-6 June in Lisbon.

Iceland's Ocean Ministerial initiative received overall support. As for themes of the meeting, one delegation recommended that the Council should remain attentive to the broader topic of marine litter, including plastics as one of many other sources of pollution.

Conclusion

Invitations to the Arctic Ocean Ministers' meeting should be sent out before the end of December 2019. Meeting updates will be provided intersessionally as preparations progress.

2.3 Marine litter and plastics coordination update

Background and discussion

Magnús Jóhannesson provided an update on his work as the Chairmanship's Special Coordinator on Plastics and Marine Litter. Since August, the Coordinator has met with all leaders of the relevant Arctic Council projects accounted for in the 2019 SAO Report to Ministers, and he has attended several WG meetings to familiarize himself with all the ongoing work. There are six plastic and marine litter related projects within five of the Arctic Council WGs:

- ACAP and SDWG are both addressing the issue of solid waste management in small communities and intend to collaborate on the matter through a joint proposal for PSI funding for a project to be undertaken during and after the Icelandic Chairmanship;
- ACAP is focusing on the management of solid waste on the Kola Peninsula, with leadership from the Saami Council, and is expected to deliver a report to the Ministerial in 2021;

- AMAP's Litter and Microplastics EG is developing a monitoring program initially looking at assessing plastics in the Arctic region, and is expected to deliver before the Ministerial;
- CAFF is working on a project studying plastics in seabirds, where one of the objectives is to provide input to AMAP's work on the monitoring program (some results may be available in early 2020); and,
- PAME has the overarching project to develop a Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter for the Arctic (ML-RAP), which is now in the format of a first draft plan and is being considered by the nine co-leads of the project. The ML-RAP will be further refined at the PAME I-2020 meeting in Oslo.

The coordinator also encouraged Observers to enhance their contributions to the Arctic Council's work on marine litter and plastics, and noted the importance of engaging with industry on this topic, possibly through the AEC. He further stressed the importance of distinguishing between local and global actions, while working on both ends.

Magnús Jóhannesson encouraged delegates to attend the [International Symposium on Plastics in the Arctic and the Sub-Arctic Region](#) on 21-23 April 2020 in Reykjavik. The symposium is organized in collaboration with the Nordic Council of Ministers and other international partners.

Many SAOs congratulated the Coordinator on his work on plastics coordination to date, and commended the Chairmanship's effort in organizing a timely symposium next April. Some PPs strongly encouraged the Chairmanship and the WGs to make an additional effort to include Arctic communities in their marine litter projects, in particular with regard to monitoring. One PP delegation suggested that the Chairmanship should consider including an item on the agenda of the April 2020 symposium that would focus specifically on indigenous peoples and plastic pollution in Arctic communities. One SAO reminded the plenary of the previous work done by the Group of 7 in 2018 and the Ocean Plastics Charter, while another noted the Nordic Council of Ministers' (NCM) ongoing activities in this field. The SAOC added that a startup initiative, Pure North Recycling, based in Hveragerði, used geothermal heat for recycling plastics.

Conclusion

The SAOC thanked the delegates for supporting the initiatives on plastic pollution and especially the WGs for their ongoing collaboration with the Special Coordinator to fulfill his mandate.

3. Current and future cooperation between the Arctic Council and the Arctic Economic Council

Background and discussion

In October 2019, a first joint meeting between the Arctic Council and the AEC was held in Reykjavik to commence the implementation of a MoU both Councils signed on the margins of the Rovaniemi Ministerial meeting in May. The SAOC noted that the meeting had fulfilled its primary goal, to provide time and a space for discussion between the two Councils and their WGs to explore options for future cooperation. The joint meeting included a plenary session on the Arctic Investment Protocol (AIP) as well as thematic group breakout sessions on maritime transportation and blue economy; improving telecommunications connectivity; responsible resource development and mainstreaming biodiversity; and, responsible investments and corporate social responsibility in the Arctic.

Several SAOs expressed positive assessments of the first joint initiative. In that context, the importance of the Arctic Environmental Impact Assessment Report, completed during the Finnish Chairmanship, was also underlined. Many PPs welcomed the opportunity of meaningful engagement with the AEC allowing indigenous peoples and both Councils to learn more about their respective interests. Many PPs underlined the importance of implementing the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) approach as a core mechanism to protect indigenous rights and prioritize sustainable development practices.

One delegation noted during the discussion that the meeting had provided a useful venue to exchange ideas, better understand how the AEC perceived its role, and explore how both Councils can complement each other. With respect to the issue of telecommunications connectivity in the Arctic, the United States offered to provide a working level contact liaison on behalf of the Arctic Council to work closely with the AEC's Connectivity WG. This new effort will seek to ascertain whether and how both Council's priorities align when bringing improved connectivity to the Arctic. Other delegations were invited to join this US-led initiative.

Conclusion

The SAOC thanked the delegates for their support of strengthening cooperation between the Arctic Council and the AEC. He noted that Observers had expressed an interest to be involved in such joint meetings. In addition, the SAOC noted that at this time Iceland has not planned a second meeting but hopes that the Arctic Council will support the Russian Federation's efforts if it decides to move forward on similar cooperation after the Icelandic Chairmanship.

4. The work of the Arctic Council focusing on *People and Communities of the Arctic*

4.1 Youth engagement in the Arctic Council

Background and discussion

Since its inception, the Arctic Council has had a wide range of initiatives focusing on young people. The SAOC invited two Arctic Council WG Chairs to provide information about their ongoing efforts on youth engagement in their activities and address how the Arctic Council could ensure meaningful and coordinated youth involvement in its work in the future. The definition of youth varies from one WG to another, ranging from children to young adults and professionals in their early thirties.

CAFF

CAFF has both produced material on biodiversity suitable for children, and has involved youth in its activities since 2013. The objective has been to provide a space to share ideas, facilitate their participation in Arctic science and policy-related projects, and assist them in building capacity towards a self-sustaining youth network in the Arctic. These initiatives include, for example, the 2018 Arctic Youth Summit organized in conjunction with the Arctic Biodiversity Congress in Rovaniemi, as well as CAFF's science-policy fellowship program with the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC). Although the work has been rewarding for both CAFF and participating youth, sustaining these efforts remains intensive and complicated for a small WG secretariat. CAFF suggested that the effort should perhaps be better reflected across the Arctic Council.

SDWG

Known as the WG focused on peoples and communities of the Arctic, the SDWG has engaged with youth on many issues. The Chair of the SDWG discussed different types of youth engagement such as i) developing activities and projects focused on youth; ii) inviting youth to WG meetings, workshops and events; iii) involving youth in the delivery of specific activities and even project implementation; iv) including youth in the planning and design of activities; and, v) engaging youth in discussions around SDWG agenda-setting and priority-making processes. Two SDWG keystone projects with respect to youth engagement have been: *Indigenous Youth, Food Knowledge and Arctic Change* (EALLU) and *Mental Health and Suicide Prevention*. The Chair of the SDWG informed the meeting that a youth contribution will be integrated into the ongoing Phase III of the *Gender Equality in the Arctic* (GEA). A youth representative will be engaged in the steering committee of the GEA-report due in 2021.

Arctic Youth Network

Pétur Halldórsson of the *Arctic Youth Network* (AYN) provided information about the AYN's profile and goals, and called to the attention of the delegates its proposals for cooperation, which were distributed by email just prior to the meeting. The AYN is a youth-founded network of over two-hundred members from the eight Arctic States that seeks to educate, build capacity and provide resources on multiple Arctic issues. It has a board of directors and its structure is composed of national chapters across the Arctic. AYN members engage with both CAFF and SDWG. AYN seeks to expand its involvement in WG activities through greater collaboration with the Arctic Council. Potential avenues for future engagement between the AYN and the Arctic Council were discussed, and included: possible Observer status for the AYN to the Arctic Council; establishing a youth coordinator for the Arctic Council; incorporating the youth voice in governance and strategy; and, enhancing youth outreach programs.

The SDWG and CAFF plan to remain engaged in discussions with youth about their involvement at various levels of WGs activities. They requested that SAOs provide them with guidance on how to facilitate sustainable, coordinated and meaningful engagement of youth in the Arctic Council now and for the years to come.

SAOs and PPs expressed unanimous support for moving forward on fostering sustainable and meaningful collaboration and engagement between youth and the Arctic Council. They also commended both CAFF and SDWG for their accomplishments and ongoing projects with the next generation of Arctic leaders.

Conclusion

The SAOC recognized the strong support from delegates for enhanced work on affairs related to youth and engagement with youth in the Arctic Council. He reminded delegates of the need to establish a common understanding of what age 'youth' relates to. The Chairmanship will consider AYN's proposals and discuss further actions intersessionally, keeping in mind the good advice provided from delegates.

4.2 Working Groups

Background and discussion

Each WG was invited to present and discuss their ongoing work with regard to the Chairmanship's priority on "People and the Communities of the Arctic."

SDWG

The Chair of the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG), Stefán Skjaldarson, reported that the Chairmanship's theme of "People and Communities of the Arctic" plays a central role in the WG's mandate.

To be adopted, SDWG projects must secure adequate funding for PP participation and demonstrate how they will improve the quality of life of Arctic residents or bring additional benefits to Arctic communities. They should also identify how the project leaders plan to communicate the findings with Arctic residents. Of the 14 projects underway, 10 have confirmed or potential PP co-leads, and PP participation has been secured for most of them.

The Chair of the SDWG reported that the Canadian government was moving forward with the establishment of the SDWG Secretariat in Canada. More information will be provided when it becomes available.

CAFF

The Chair of the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) WG, Mark Marissink, emphasized that biodiversity is of central importance to Arctic people and communities, so that all CAFF projects have direct relevance for this theme. Combining scientific, local and traditional knowledge is one of the most comprehensive ways to include people and communities in its work. He highlighted how the inclusion of traditional knowledge had proven very successful to the recent coastal work of the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP).

Three of CAFF's ongoing projects were highlighted. The *Salmon Peoples of Arctic Rivers* is a project that looks into cultural value, importance and meaning of salmon in the lives of many Arctic communities. The *Mainstreaming Arctic Biodiversity in Mining* project seeks to demonstrate how humans influence Arctic biodiversity and how industry can be included in a biodiversity approach. The *Arctic Invasive Alien Species Strategy and Action Plan (ARIAS)* focuses on economic and social aspects of biodiversity.

One delegate highlighted in the discussion the importance of information sharing as a two-way street where the Arctic Council plays a key role in sharing project findings with target audiences. The Russian Federation announced that it will be hosting the next *Arctic Biodiversity Congress* during its upcoming Chairmanship.

PAME

The Chair of the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) WG, Paula Kankaanpää, described how PAME's mandate covers management, mitigation measures and capacity building in relation to the Arctic marine environment – topics closely related to the livelihoods of people and communities of the Arctic. She reported on a selection of ongoing projects:

- the *Arctic Ship Traffic Data (ASTD)* project is the first comprehensive shipping activity database for the Arctic with useful data that benefits the work of the Arctic Council and its subsidiary bodies;
- the *Arctic Marine Tourism Project (AMTP)* seeks to collect historic data on cruise and passenger vessels operating in the Arctic and summarize existing site-specific guidelines for Arctic marine tourism;

- the *Arctic Shipping Best Practices Information Forum* seeks to raise awareness and exchange information amongst those involved in or affected by marine operations. The Forum has had its meetings annually since 2017. The next one will take place in London in May 2020;
- the *Handbook or reference tool(s) on Meaningful Engagement of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in Marine Activities* is aimed to assist Arctic local communities, governments and other proponents;
- PAME has several ongoing activities related to *Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)*. Work is currently underway on producing two factsheets on (i) MPAs and (ii) indigenous peoples under change. PAME continues to develop the MPA Toolbox and has held four workshops in this regard.;
- the *Ecosystem Approach to Management (EA)* project focuses on how to manage an entire ecosystem instead of a single species and the EA Expert Group has arranged a number of workshops in this regard. The next steps consist of convening a workshop on values and goods produced by Arctic marine ecosystems (autumn 2020) and to produce a report on defining and setting Ecological Objectives for ecosystem-based management; and,
- the *Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter in the Arctic (ML-RAP)* focuses on both sea and land-based sources with main topics including: the prevention and removal of litter; litter monitoring; and education and outreach. This work is done in close collaboration with other WGs. Engagement with indigenous peoples, local communities and relevant stakeholders is important in this work.

EPPR

The Chair of the Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) WG, Jens Peter Holst-Andersen, explained how involving indigenous and local Arctic communities in the WG's projects is of critical importance in the EPPR mandate. Indigenous and local communities across the Arctic are the most likely to be affected, should particular incidents occur. On the other hand, they may also be in a position to provide early interventions.

The Chair of the EPPR presented two projects. First, the *Preparedness, Prevention and Response in Small Communities* project, which is in its third phase since being approved in 2015. The project seeks to better understand risk exposure and preparedness in remote Arctic communities, while ensuring the access to best practices and building awareness by finding meaningful ways to engage with them. The project deliverable from its second phase was a series of outreach videos published on the EPPR *Vimeo* account and are easy to share on social media. For its third phase, the project focuses on a new informative video to further enhance EPPR's engagement with Arctic communities. The Chair of EPPR urged all delegates to share the outreach videos through social media on a regular basis to ensure they reach the relevant audience.

The *Circumpolar Wildland Fire Cooperation* initiative seeks to better understand Arctic wildfires, enhance cooperation and share best practices that include traditional knowledge

and local knowledge (TKLK). The project's proposal has been made by the Gwich'in Council International (GCI) and is in its final approval phase. Observers are encouraged to participate in EPPR projects, and especially in the wildfire response initiative where expanded expertise sharing is seen as mutually beneficial for everyone involved.

ACAP

The Vice Chair of the Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP) WG, Patrick Huber, reported on four relevant projects, which are all situated under the Indigenous Peoples Contaminant Action EG (IPCAP). First, the *Circumpolar Local Environmental Observer Network* (CLEO) is a database of observations on changing environments in the Arctic. In addition, the practice of logging observations has also been simplified and the platform is now open for everyone to use in the mobile app. A new concept, [LEO kiosk](#), is being developed as a field reporter mobile app aimed at making it simpler for LEO members to contribute observations.

Second, the *Solid Waste Management in Remote Arctic Communities* project is conducted jointly with SDWG. It will pilot solid waste management practices in three to five Arctic communities. The project is a good example of how ACAP engages with communities.

Third, the *Kola Waste Project* is a community-based effort that identified and cleaned two illegal dumping sites on the Kola Peninsula. A third site has been identified for cleanup. This project will also be featured in the waste management practices project.

Finally, the *Community-Based Black Carbon Public Health Assessment* project seeks to educate and strengthen local capacity to identify, mitigate, and prevent black carbon pollution and exposure. The project is led by AIA and is seeking PSI funding.

AMAP

The Chair of the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) WG, Anders Turesson, opened his remarks by explaining how Arctic inhabitants and their livelihoods are being profoundly impacted by environmental transformations caused by climate change and atmospheric pollution. AMAP therefore seeks to strengthen resilience and facilitate adaptive measures for the benefit of the people living in the Arctic.

Climate change affects Arctic communities, public health and economies in many ways: shorter snow seasons; loss of coastal sea ice; thawing permafrost; wildfires; and, impacts on terrestrial and marine ecosystems. To that end, AMAP has recently re-established its Climate Expert Group, and a new *AMAP Climate Report* is projected for 2021, as well as a joint AMAP/CAFF assessment of impacts of climate change on Arctic ecosystems for 2023.

Addressing contaminants and pollutants affecting public health are additional priority areas for AMAP's work in relation to community engagement. Working collaboratively with local communities and establishing inclusive and meaningful partnerships are integral to AMAP's Strategic Framework. The Chair of AMAP explained how the WG's EGs are now using a

checklist to include local engagement requirements when establishing a new project. With the support of GCI, ICC suggested that an Arctic food chain assessment be undertaken. AMAP's Framework to Enhance PP Participation is currently underway.

Conclusion

The SAOC thanked all six WGs for their presentations and project updates.

4.3 Working Group – Observer engagement on *People and Communities of the Arctic*

Background and discussion

A WG-Observer session on the Chairmanship's thematic priority took place in parallel to the SAOX on 19 November. The Chair of SDWG, Stefán Skjaldarson lead the discussion and reported to the plenary.

The session was attended by the six WGs and 35 Observer participants from 24 delegations attending the SAO meeting. A summary of approximately 50 WG initiatives related to *People and Communities of the Arctic* had been shared with Observers in preparation to the meeting. During the session, Observers were requested to share with the WGs those projects in which they had most interest and would like to learn more about for future collaborations. In total, 19 projects were discussed. SDWG, in collaboration with the Chairmanship and the ACS, plans to follow-up with the Observers as a way to maintain discussions on potential collaborative partnerships with WGs.

After his reporting, the Chair of the SDWG invited three representatives from each Observer subgroup to briefly provide constructive perspectives from their participation in the session.

States

Input from Observer states was summarized by Liz ter Kuile of The Netherlands who thanked the Chairmanship, SDWG and WGs for organizing the session to enhance engagement with Observers within the existing framework of the Arctic Council. She noted that such working sessions were taken seriously as they provided valuable information that HoDs could convey to relevant stakeholders and scientists in their respective states. Looking forward, it was strongly suggested that the Council continue moving in this direction for engagement.

Intergovernmental and Inter-parliamentary organizations

Input from Observer intergovernmental and inter-parliamentary organizations was summarized by Jan Dusik of the UN Environment Program (UNEP) who shared the overall enthusiasm of other Observers for the Chairmanship's goal of enhancing engagement. He noted that the theme of the joint session was a bit broad and time was limited in the session. However, the format based on mix-matching was complementary, while the informal setting provided a good working environment for informative and constructive

discussions. In order to permit better preparation by Observers for such sessions in the future, he recommended narrowing the thematic priority in advance and involving Observers in the scoping of the session.

NGOs

Input from non-governmental organizations was summarized by Peter Winsor of the WWF Arctic Programme, who stressed that NGOs welcomed more meaningful engagement with the WGs.

The three delegation representatives also provided constructive insights for joint meeting improvements in the future. These remarks were duly noted by the SAOC.

During the discussion, many SAOs expressed their gratitude towards Observers involved in the work of the Arctic Council. It was agreed that they provided valuable contributions to the issues at the core of the Arctic's future. Other delegates suggested that ongoing discussion on how to enhance overall cooperation with Observers should remain an Arctic Council priority.

Conclusion

The SAOC thanked the Chair of the SDWG for having chaired and reported from the session, and thanked the three Observer representatives for their constructive summaries. The Chairmanship plans to continue in this direction and is committed to build on the outcome of the joint session in Hveragerði.

4.4 The Arctic Council work on black carbon

Background and discussion

The Chair of EGBCM, Kirstín Linda Árnadóttir, ACAP Vice Chair, Patrick Huber, and AMAP Chair, Anders Turesson informed delegates of their ongoing projects on black carbon with respect to the Chairmanship's thematic priority.

The EGBCM is tasked to periodically assess progress of the [Framework for Action on Black Carbon and Methane](#), and to share this information with participating Arctic Council Observer States.

The Chair of EGBCM reported on the group's [first meeting during the Icelandic Chairmanship](#), held in Reykjavik in October 2019. She presented the next steps forward and potential interest for the EG in EPPR's project on Wildfires. The Chair of the EGBCM further noted that all eight Arctic States were active in the group's work and invited PPs to nominate representatives and encouraged all Observer States to join the group as well.

The Chair of AMAP provided background on the updated assessment on short-lived climate forcers (SLCFs), which is scheduled for delivery in 2021. The work scope is extended to address impacts of SLCFs on ecosystems and human health, and is coordinated with ACAP and EGBCM, as well as other international fora, such as the OECD.

The Vice Chair of ACAP highlighted the work undertaken under its Short-Lived Climate Pollutants Expert Group, including the progress of the project on reducing SLCP from APG-flaring and the upcoming workshop in Moscow on 28-29 April 2020, as well as the project on Ozone Depleting Substances and Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases. He invited submissions to the [Black Carbon Case Studies Platform](#), which showcases mitigation projects or policies relevant to the Arctic.

Finland, the previous Chair of EGBCM, thanked Iceland for the energetic start with the EGBCM's work and reaffirmed its support moving forward. Several delegations underlined the growing importance of work addressing SLCPs and the need for coordinated global action. To that end, many highlighted the value of Observer contributions, and urged all Observer States to join the Arctic States in submitting their emission data in national reports to the EGBCM.

Conclusion

The SAOC thanked all speakers for their important updates and their ongoing work on black carbon, and encouraged all state delegations to have their national data submitted to the EGBCM.

5. Past and upcoming side events with Chairmanship/Arctic Council participation

Background and discussion

The SAOC provided information on the involvement of the Chairmanship and the Arctic Council in various side events over the past few months. On some occasions, attendance can be in a national capacity, while in others in a Chairmanship capacity. Side events are only organized in the name of the Arctic Council after seeking approval of the SAOs.

- At the Arctic Circle Assembly on 11 October 2019, a plenary session was organized on “The Icelandic Chairmanship of the Arctic Council” with Iceland’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson and chaired by Magnús Jóhannesson, Special Advisor for Arctic Affairs at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iceland;
- The Chairmanship also organized two breakout sessions at the Arctic Circle Assembly. One was on Gender Equality in the Arctic, and the other on Safety at Sea.
- At the Our Ocean 2019 conference held in Oslo, a breakfast panel was organized by the Arctic Council on 23 October titled “A Cleaner Arctic Marine Environment – Battling Marine Debris in the Arctic.” Speakers included the Chair of the SDWG, the Co-chair for AMAP’s Litter and Microplastics Expert Group, and the Chairmanship’s Special Coordinator on Plastics and Marine Litter; and,
- In collaboration with the Harvard Kennedy School and the Woodrow Wilson Center, the Chairmanship co-led a workshop on “Policy and Action on Plastics in the Arctic

Ocean” on 30-31 October, at Harvard University.

The SAOC Chair has also participated in several high-level meetings including the Russian Federation’s VIIIth International meeting of Member States and Observer States of the Arctic Council and the Scientific Community; the Arctic Circle Assembly; the Arctic Spirit in Rovaniemi; the 6th Arctic Indigenous Leaders’ Summit; and the EU Arctic Forum.

Furthermore, the SAOC informed delegates that he will participate in the Arctic Futures Symposium’s 10th Edition in Brussels on 25 November; the Arctic Partnership Week 2019, in Busan, Korea on 9-10 December; and attend a working session with a sub-group of Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 16 December. In addition, parliamentary groups of the European Parliament have expressed an interest in organizing an introductory event on the Arctic Council with the Chairmanship.

Upcoming Arctic Council side events for engagement and outreach include:

- A COP25 panel titled “All Aboard! Tackling Polar Ocean Acidification” taking place in Madrid on 9 December 2019;
- Two panels at the 2020 edition of the Arctic Frontiers conference taking place in Tromsø next January:
 - a) titled “A Source for Arctic Optimism: The Blue Bioeconomy;”
 - b) a panel with the Chairmanship and WGs in a session titled “The Use of Arctic Science – The Case of the Arctic Council.”

Conclusion

In addition to the planned Arctic Council side events, WGs are organizing sessions at different events. The SAOC reported that he had also been invited to several high-level meetings in the coming months, and will provide updates on his outreach efforts at the next SAO plenary meeting in March 2020.

6. Arctic Council Secretariat update

Background and discussion

Nina Vaaja, director of the ACS, gave a status update on the current situation at the Secretariat. She reported that all tasks listed in the ACS work plan for 2018-2019 had been completed, and that the financial situation is good as the Secretariat is operating well within its 2019 budget, which was 1.8 million USD. This year has brought staff changes requiring recruitment of four new ACS officers. This recruitment was a significant undertaking for the ACS. One of the main priorities for the ACS in 2019 has been to strengthen the communications team, and two new colleagues were introduced: Ms. Susan Novotny, web and digital media officer (US/CA) and Jessica Cook (US), public relations officer (who will begin in January 2020).

Many delegates expressed their support and appreciation for the work of the ACS and its quality, despite the Secretariat's small team and limited resources. Several delegates praised the work accomplished on enhancing the Arctic Council's overall communications.

Conclusion

The SAOC thanked the director of the ACS for her comprehensive update. He underlined the good cooperation between the Chairmanship and the ACS grounded in an effective and efficient working relationship.

7. Report from the 2019 Arctic indigenous leaders' summit

Background and discussion

The 6th Arctic Leaders' Summit (ALS) is a high-level political gathering of indigenous leaders in the Arctic that was held in November 2019 in Rovaniemi and hosted by the Saami Council. The Vice President of the Saami Council, Christina Henriksen, expressed great appreciation to the PPs, Observers, SAOs and other national representatives who traveled to attend the meeting held in conjunction with the 2019 edition of the Rovaniemi Arctic Spirit conference. Other participants included delegates from various UN bodies, several youth representatives from PP organizations and other leaders.

The 6th ALS concluded with an official [declaration](#), as did the [Arctic Leaders' Youth Summit](#), that announced their decision to establish an Indigenous Youth of the Arctic Council. Christina Henriksen thanked the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat (IPS) and the ALS steering committee for their hard work and leadership in organizing the 6th edition.

The delegates offered unanimous praise to the 6th ALS and congratulated the Saami Council and participating organizers on their important accomplishment. Many recognized the powerful nature of the ALS Declaration and were inspired by youth involvement at the meeting and the role of culture and languages during the discussions.

Conclusion

The SAOC noted feeling honored to have taken part in the meeting, where he had the opportunity to speak on the central place of PPs in the work of the Arctic Council, and the shared priority between Iceland and the PPs on sustainability. He recognized the powerful youth engagement at the ALS, which sends an inspiring message to the rest of the world.

8. Arctic Science Ministerial

Background and discussion

Lindsay Elizabeth Arthur, Project Manager at the Icelandic Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, provided an update of the ongoing preparations for the [3rd Arctic Science Ministerial](#) – “Co-operation in Arctic Science – Challenges and Joint Actions” – to be held in Tokyo, Japan, on 21-22 November 2020. Co-hosted by Iceland and Japan, the meeting is themed “Transparent and Inclusive Science-to-Policy.” The ASM is independent from the Arctic Council but aligned with its objectives. Organizers plan to follow-up on the progress made by the two previous meetings held in Berlin (2018) and Washington D.C. (2016).

Japan’s Ambassador in Charge of Arctic Affairs, H.E. Ms Mari Miyoshi, encouraged delegates to join the ASM, which will be the first Ministerial meeting regarding Arctic issues to be held in Asia. As an Observer of the Arctic Council since May 2013, Japan seeks to engage in international efforts to address issues that impact the Arctic region and communities, but also represent significant concerns for Japan and other Asian countries on issues such as climate change. The Ambassador reported that Japan plans to continue to expand the scope of its Arctic research and collaborations with all Arctic Council WGs.

Conclusion

The SAOC thanked Ambassador Miyoshi and Lindsay Elizabeth Arthur for their presentations and updates about the 3rd ASM in November 2020, co-hosted by Iceland.

9. Arctic Science Summit Week

Background and discussion

Allen Pope, Executive Secretary of the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) and Federica Scarpa, Communications Manager at the Icelandic Arctic Cooperation Network and IASC, provided an update on the next edition of the [Arctic Science Summit Week](#) (ASSW) to be held on 27 March – 2 April 2020 in Akureyri, back-to-back with the SAO meeting. The ASSW was initiated by IASC in 1999 to provide opportunities for coordination, cooperation and collaboration between the various scientific organizations involved in Arctic research. The summit has evolved into the most important annual gathering of IASC. The 2020 edition will have three main blocks: *Science for a Sustainable Arctic*; *IASC Business and Community Meetings*; and, the *5th Arctic Observing Summit*.

One delegation noted in the discussion that it was excellent that the Arctic Council could work with an Observer such as IASC with the aim of encouraging and facilitating cooperation on all aspects of Arctic research. She encouraged delegations attending the SAO meeting next March to stay an additional day in Akureyri to join the Science Day of the ASSW, to be held 27 March. The organizers welcome strong Arctic Council involvement in their program.

Conclusion:

The SAOC noted his deep appreciation for the ASSW and its strong complementarity with the work of the Arctic Council.

10. Third round of Observer review

Background and discussion

The SAOC provided information on the process for the 20 Observers being reviewed in 2020-2021. According to the *Arctic Council Rules of Procedure* (annex 2), Observers are to be reviewed every four years. Observers subject to review are to submit their written reports by 1 June 2020. Observers who are not being reviewed in this round are to submit a written report detailing their ongoing Arctic Council-related activities, as required by the rules of procedure, by 1 December 2020.

Conclusion

The SAOC informed Observers that they will be provided with written instructions on the review and reporting processes and modalities in December 2019.

11. Report from the 6th Warsaw Format Meeting of Observer states

Background and discussion

Poland's Head of Delegation Piotr Rakowski provided a brief summary of the conclusions from the 6th annual Warsaw Format Meeting of Arctic Council Observer States of September 2019. The Warsaw initiative was launched in 2010 between the Observer States and the EU providing a working dialogue between the SAOC, Observer States, the EU and invited guests such as WGs, PPs and the ACS. The Warsaw format meetings have been held every other year but the incentive to increase its recurrence on an annual basis is growing.

Many delegates expressed support for this format that represents a key channel between the Arctic Council and its Observer States.

Conclusion

The SAOC concluded that the Warsaw meeting was an excellent format to allow direct engagement in a smaller group. He noted for the record that Iceland as the current Chair was willing to attend yearly Warsaw Format meetings and would support and attend similar initiatives if organized by Arctic Council Observer organizations.

12. Any other business

New Arctic Council Observer

Based on established Arctic Council practice, the SAOC invited the International Maritime Organization (IMO) HoD to say a few words as the new Observer at the Arctic Council. The IMO is the international regulator for all global shipping, including polar waters. IMO's HoD, Heike Deggim, conveyed the organization's appreciation of having been accredited as a new Observer in May 2019. She noted that this new status represents an opportunity for the IMO and the Arctic Council to intensify their collaboration that has been ongoing for a few decades now. She invited all delegations to join the *Arctic Shipping Best Practices* forum taking place in London from 11 – 12 May 2020.

The SAOC thanked Heike Deggim for her words and reiterated the Arctic Council's enthusiasm in working more closely with the IMO in the future, in particular on issues related to the Polar Code.

UArctic Congress in conjunction with the Arctic Circle Assembly 2020

SAOC briefed the meeting on the UArctic Congress, to be held in Reykjavik on 6-8 October 2020, where the last day will be held in conjunction with the Arctic Circle Assembly. The themes of the UArctic Congress will mirror that of Iceland's Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, with a strong emphasis on the participation of youth and early career scientists. The SAOC informed that a call for session proposals was open until the end of January, and that further information could be found on the UArctic [website](#).

Change in the delegation of the United States of America

The acting SAO for the United States announced the departure of Reid Creedon from the U.S. delegation to the Arctic Council. She noted that Mr Creedon had played an instrumental role for U.S. Arctic policy. He will be greatly missed.

Change in the delegation of Iceland

SAOC informed delegates that the current SAO for Iceland, Bryndís Kjartansdóttir, was taking on a new role and is leaving the Arctic Council. He warmly thanked her for the important work and collaboration she provided to the Chairmanship over the past year and a half, and her prior work in the early 2000s as part of the first Icelandic Arctic Council Chairmanship. The SAOC wished her best of luck in her new professional capacity. Bryndís Kjartansdóttir's successor is Friðrik Jónsson who also attended the meeting.