

ARCTIC COUNCIL
MEETING OF SENIOR ARCTIC OFFICIALS
Inari, Finland
October 7-8, 2002

MINUTES

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Chairman of the SAOs, Peter Stenlund, opened the meeting at the Holiday Club, Saariselkä Hotel, Inari, Finland. The Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) approved the draft agenda, which was circulated by the AC Secretariat on September 8, 2002, as the agenda for the meeting.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AD HOC OBSERVERS

The SAOs granted ad hoc observer status for the meeting to the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), to the Arctic Circumpolar Route, to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and to the University of the Arctic (UArctic).

3. APPROVAL OF OULU SAO MINUTES

The SAOs approved the minutes of the SAO meeting which took place in Oulu, Finland, on May 15-16, 2002.

4. JOHANNESBURG 2002: WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Chairman, Mr Stenlund, gave a summary of the activities of relevance to the Arctic at the Johannesburg Summit. The Arctic Council (AC) organized a successful thematic parallel event with special focus on the ACIA August 30, 2002 . The Arctic as an indicator region regarding global environmental health and the AC itself were presented in the International Institute for Environment and

Development (IIED) publication “Words into Action”. AC posters made the Arctic visible both in the Conference Centre and in the Ubuntu village. Several presentations of circumpolar cooperation were given at the Canadian Pavilion in the Ubuntu village. AC Permanent Participants played an influential role at the Indigenous Pre-Summit in Kimberley and in Side Events in Johannesburg organised by the Indigenous Caucus. Successful cooperation in the AC between the PPs and MS was recognized by indigenous peoples from many parts of the world.

The WSSD expressed support for the ACIA in the Plan of Implementation. The AC was also recognized as an important contributor to sustainable development at the regional level and Mr Stenlund emphasized that it is a duty of the AC and its working groups (WGs) to study the plan carefully and do their best to contribute to its implementation. The Political Declaration reaffirmed the vital role of indigenous peoples in sustainable development. Mr Stenlund extended special thanks to the government of Canada, and Mr Randy Cleveland in particular, for their outstanding efforts in organising the parallel event.

The Chair of the Steering Committee of the ACIA, Dr Robert Corell, thanked the IPS and other indigenous people's organisations for work well done in Johannesburg. Dr Corell was particularly impressed by the fact that it was impossible to pass the exhibition hall without seeing a reference to the Arctic. Mr Corell emphasized that one of the main results of the Johannesburg meeting was that general understanding of the concept of sustainable development had changed fundamentally. In Johannesburg, the social, economic and environmental components of sustainable development were linked together for the first time in an integrated way. The Johannesburg Summit also showed the relevance of regional cooperation.

UNEP's Grid Arendal, the WWF and the Arctic Centre in Rovaniemi organised an exhibition in Johannesburg that contributed significantly to the visibility of the Arctic. Canada, the USA, Russia, the ICC and Raipon echoed thanks for the successful Arctic efforts in Johannesburg. The Russian Federation noted that among the regional actors, the Council of Baltic Sea States has a vital role in the implementation of Johannesburg outcomes.

5. THE EU'S NORTHERN DIMENSION

Denmark informed the meeting of the main results of the Ministerial Conference on the Northern Dimension in Illulissat, Greenland, on August 27-29, 2002. For this meeting, which was part of the

Danish EU Presidency, the Greenland Home Rule Government prepared a background paper on the Arctic Window of the Northern Dimension. In the conclusions of the Chair, the conference acknowledged the wish to establish closer ties with the EU in a number of areas within the interests of the Northern Dimension and the Arctic Window. Denmark hoped that the conference would be able to promote discussion of the guidelines for the EU's next action plan for the Northern Dimension covering the years 2004-2006.

Canada expressed thanks for the opportunity to attend the meeting in Greenland and requested the EU to keep the Arctic window open. At the EU-Canada Summit in December discussions will be continued. Canada felt it was important that the Arctic should be an integral part of the EU's new action plan for the Northern Dimension.

Raipon thanked Denmark for its active role as the President of the EU in promoting the Northern Dimension. Raipon was pleased that indigenous peoples were given special attention in the discussion during the Conference and Raipon expressed its willingness to cooperate in these issues now and in the future.

6. THE FIFTH CONFERENCE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

Secretary General . Guy Lindström from the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region gave a summary of the Fifth Conference of Arctic Parliamentarians held in Tromsø on August 11-13, 2002. Mr. Lindström expressed sincere thanks especially to the Parliament of Norway for a well organized meeting which was attended by 200 participants. Mr. Lindström was pleased that the initiative to prepare an Arctic Human Development Report had proceeded so well in the AC. Arctic Parliamentarians were also pleased that Iceland had included information technology as a special theme in its Chairmanship programme. Parliamentarians will make efforts to promote the implementation of the outcomes of the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development and promote cooperation with the European Union on Arctic issues. Mr. Lindström introduced to the meeting Ms Gudfridur Gretarsdottir who will succeed him as Secretary General.

Canada expressed its appreciation of the work of the Arctic parliamentarians. Parliamentarians have had a decisive role in the implementation of Canada's own Northern Dimension Policy. Canada also expressed satisfaction at deepening cooperation with the EU on Arctic matters.

The Chair expressed thanks to the Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region and their Secretary General Guy Lindström for excellent cooperation during the Finnish chairmanship. The Chair also welcomed Gudfridur Gretarsdottir and assured her of the SAOs' good wishes and cooperation.

7. BEAC SUMMIT IN KIRKENES, NORWAY, JANUARY 10-11, 2003

Norway informed the meeting about the plans to mark 10 years of Barents co-operation. A BEAC Summit will be held in Kirkenes, Norway, on January 10-11, 2003 at Prime Minister level. Preparations for the Summit are proceeding well.

8. THE INARI MINISTERIAL MEETING, OCTOBER 9-10, 2002

The draft Inari declaration contained bracketed language left for the Ministers to make the decision. The bracketed language dealt with the concept of "indigenous peoples", with sustainable use of natural resources and with radioactive emissions from nuclear reprocessing facilities. Norway expressed its deep concern about the radioactive emissions from the Sellafield reprocessing plant. Norway pointed out that radionuclides releases from Sellafield, in particular technetium 99 and iodine 129, pose a threat to the wellbeing of the Arctic marine environment. The United Kingdom responded that a lot of research on this issue had been carried out and during recent years 99 % of the radioactive releases from Sellafield have been eliminated. The UK gave an assurance that it is taking Norway's concerns and the situation extremely seriously. Recently, the UK has released a radioactivity discharge strategy. After having resolved the issue dealing with sustainable use of natural resources the SAOs agreed to submit the draft declaration to the Ministers.

The SAOs approved

- the draft agenda and the schedule for the ministerial meeting
- the draft Inari declaration and submitted it to the Ministers.
- the Report of the Senior Arctic Officials to the Arctic Council Ministers

The SAOs decided to recommend to the Ministers approval of three new observers to the Council: The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), The University of the Arctic (UArctic) and The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The application of the Arctic Circumpolar Route was rejected on this occasion because of wishes from the PPs side to obtain further information

about the organization and its ways of working. The Netherlands expressed the wish that observer countries should be more engaged in the work of the Council.

9. REPORTS OF WORKING GROUPS

All of the Arctic Council working groups, the ACAP and the ACIA submitted their reports to the Inari SAO meeting. Detailed summaries of the working group reports and work plans are included in the Inari SAO report. The full reports and work plans as well as the Executive Summary of AMAP's assessment report "Arctic Pollution 2002" and CAFF Recommendations "Arctic Flora and Fauna: Status and Conservation" are also attached as Annexes to the Inari SAO report. Below is a summary of discussions in Inari based on these reports

a) AMAP

AMAP showed the meeting the new video "AMAP II - the result" which is based on the new AMAP assessment report "Arctic Pollution 2002". The Chair of AMAP, Mr. Helgi Jensson, introduced the key findings and recommendations based on this assessment concerning POPs, heavy metals, human health, radioactivity and changing pathways which are available in the Executive Summary of the Arctic Pollution 2002 Report/Annex 2 of the SAO Report. Mr. Jensson emphasized that consumption of traditional food and breast feeding should be continued because the benefits far outweigh the risks.

The results of AMAP's assessment were thoroughly discussed by the AMAP symposium which was held in Rovaniemi, Finland, on October 1-4, 2002. At the symposium the need to stress risk/benefit assessments instead of solemn risk analyses was urged. Mr. Jensson said it was important to convey information in such a way that indigenous people in particular, who eat traditional food, can use it in a beneficial, not a detrimental way. AMAP's role, in Mr. Jensson's view, is to distribute the results. Possible advice to a larger audience on dietary recommendations or other matters should be left as the responsibility of local authorities. Mr. Jensson also asked everybody who wished to comment on the results of the assessment to write to the AMAP Secretariat. Arctic Pollution 2002 will be translated into Danish, Greenlandic and Russian. Among the scientific reports, the human health report will be ready by the end of 2002. Others will be completed later.

The Executive Secretary of AMAP, Mr. Lars-Otto Reiersen, stated that new information on mercury will soon be available from Greenland and Russia and if requested AMAP could produce an updated

report on it. Mr. Reiersen thanked all the MS and the Netherlands for their active contribution to the implementation of the PTS Project.

Raipon stated that the PTS project was an example of real cooperation, where indigenous peoples are not only subjects of but also active participants in the research. Well functioning cooperation with local authorities has been established. According to Raipon, the Sakha and Yamal areas are interested in contributing to the funding of the project. Based on the project results, suggestions for further measures can be made and indigenous people in particular will receive immediate benefit from the results of the project.

Gwich'in Council International (GCI) expressed concern over issues relating to the radiological chapter of Arctic Pollution 2002 (page 76) which bears the title "Intake of cesium-137 in various Arctic populations and selected groups in Arctic countries". GCI pointed out that data provided by Canada was outdated and based on harvest data which could not be considered as an appropriate basis of assessment. A body of newer data for Gwich'in communities based upon dietary surveys is available. GCI also asked that further distribution of the Arctic Pollution 2002 report be halted until it is possible to insert a loose corrigendum containing newer, more appropriate data. The Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC), too, expressed concern over the data in the AMAP Report. The AAC felt it was important to assure people who eat traditional food that their diet is safe and healthy.

Mr. Jensson stated that the assessment had been prepared in accordance with the best information made available for the drafting team. The AMAP Secretariat welcomes comments and questions concerning the report and all of them will be considered thoroughly.

Mr. Jensson went on to say that he had taken note of the expressed needs to correct some data and attempts would be made to correct possible errors. Requests should, however, be made in writing to the AMAP Secretariat. The report had not yet been distributed widely. The AMAP Secretariat has the names of the participants at the AMAP symposium and loose inserts with updated data could be sent to those who had already received the report.

Canada expressed concern over data relating to old and new POPs and said that discussion on the consequences was needed domestically and abroad. Canada urged those countries which have not ratified the Stockholm Convention on POPs to do so as soon as possible.

The ICC emphasized that AMAP's new assessment shows clearly the need to continue the Council's monitoring activities.

The USA expressed concern about the need to identify adequate financing before AMAP proceeded with the additional mercury report suggested by AMAP Executive Secretary. The USA indicated it recognized the importance of mercury for the Arctic and would welcome such a report if it could be made within the current AMAP budgetary limits. However, if new funding were needed, the proposal should be discussed more thoroughly by the SAOs.

On a separate matter, the USA expressed its unhappiness that the Secretariat failed to include some corrections to the Arctic Pollution 2002 report that were sent to the drafting team following the Oulu SAO meeting. The changes were included in the Executive Summary but not the text of the AMAP report. The USA said that given the sensitivity of human health matters to local officials and communities, it was critical that the information concerning human health be accurate and fully vetted. The USA noted that the SAOs might need to require that the AMAP Secretariat provide materials in a more timely fashion for policy level review by all MS and PPs.

Iceland welcomed the AMAP report and recommended it to be distributed as widely as possible, including United Nations organizations.

b) CAFF

The Chair of CAFF, Mr. Sune Sohlberg, gave a summary of CAFF activities and work plan for the following two years. He pointed out especially the CAFF Recommendations: "Arctic Flora and Fauna: Status and Conservation" which are attached as Annex 4 to the SAO Report. These recommendations will support the overall implementation of the WSSD conclusions. Mr Sohlberg especially praised the project on the Conservation Value of Sacred Sites of Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic. This project was, he said, an excellent example of capacity building among indigenous people. For the Inari Ministerial a technical report on the project was produced and the next step would be to hold an international workshop. Mr. Sohlberg welcomed close cooperation with all the AC working groups on biodiversity issues.

Senior Advisor Thor Severin Larsen from UNEP Grid Arendal presented to the meeting the latest developments in the CAFF/UNEP/GEF project "ECORA: An Integrated Ecosystem Approach to

Conserve Biodiversity and Minimize Habitat Fragmentation in Three Selected Model Areas in the Russian Arctic”. The aim of the project is to contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity through the implementation of integrated ecosystem management strategies and action plans. Key components of the project are biodiversity and socio-economic inventories and assessments; training programs for local people; legislative, administrative and institutional capacity building; specific conservation measures and pilot activities to test integrated ecosystem management approaches.

Canada sees a need to increase the efforts to conserve biodiversity in the Arctic especially now, when the use of natural resources is increasing. Canada emphasized the need to engage non-Arctic states in the conservation of biodiversity especially concerning migratory birds. Canada will contribute 25 000 USD/year and possibly 35 000 USD/year in kind to the ECORA project . The Northern Forum emphasized the need to engage both indigenous and non-indigenous local people in the Ecora project.

Raipon was pleased at the progress made in the Sacred Site project and emphasized the role of traditional knowledge, especially in biodiversity projects. The Sacred Sites have been located but some of their exact locations have not been revealed to the public as a whole. Raipon considers Ecora an important project in which the participation of indigenous peoples is important. It would be beneficial, in Raipon’s view, if as many areas as possible could take part in in the Ecora project. The Saami Council pointed out that many of the areas throughout the world that are relevant from the perspective of biodiversity conservation are areas where indigenous peoples live.

c) EPPR

The Chair of the EPPR, Mr. Olli Pahkala, presented the EPPR report and work plan. The main outcome from the EPPR to the Ministers was the Circumpolar Map of Resources at Risk from Oil Spills in the Arctic. Mr. Pahkala also spoke about the successful emergency exercise involving Russia, the USA, Finland and the IAEA in Vienna that was conducted at the Bilibino nuclear power plant (Chukotka, Russia) on August 21, 2002.

d) PAME

The Chair of PAME, Mr. Thomas Laughlin, introduced PAME's report and work plan. Mr. Laughlin introduced PAME's paper on the Round Table Meetings in support of the implementation of the Russian NPA-Arctic and its associated partnership conference, which was circulated to the SAOs prior to the

Inari meeting. Mr. Laughlin said that the paper was prepared on the request of the Helsinki Preparatory SAO meeting in September 2002. He added that funding for the first round table had been secured by NOAA. Funding for the second round table is open but a tentative plan has been to organize round tables on both sides of the Atlantic. The Chair, Mr. Stenlund, said a Finnish company, JP Consulting, had expressed preliminary interest but no precise commitments had been made.

The Russian Federation expressed satisfaction over cooperation with PAME regarding the NPA-Arctic and the preparation of round tables and welcomed further cooperation on these matters. Canada felt PAME's support for the NPA-Arctic was important and expressed support for the round tables. Norway reminded delegates of the new developments especially connected to the use of natural resources in the Arctic and the challenges to the AC these developments cause in the form of increased oil and gas transportation. Norway is paying a lot of attention to the work of PAME and feels that PAME should have the capacity to be active in facing new challenges. Norway reminded delegates of the agreement MS reached in the review process concerning PAME and emphasized that all the MS should have equal opportunities to participate in the formulation of the proposals introduced in the name of the working groups. Norway also voiced support for the plan to organize the first round table meeting in the USA.

Iceland emphasized PAME's special ability to work on marine pollution. Iceland said it was looking forward to the strategic plan and stressed that work on it should be conducted in an open and transparent way.

e) SDWG

The Chair of the SDWG, Mr Sauli Rouhinen, introduced to the meeting SDWG's report and work plan. Mr Rouhinen was especially happy about the speedy progress of the project proposal on the Arctic Human Development Report. Mr Rouhinen said that in the future SDWG should make further efforts to develop projects focused on the economic aspects of sustainable development. Mr Rouhinen expressed satisfaction with progress made especially in SLICA and in health projects. Mr Rouhinen also welcomed Canada's diligence in identifying best practices in the field of capacity building.

Special focus in the SDWG's report to the meeting was given to three projects: Sustainable Reindeer Husbandry, Sustainable Development of Northern Timberline Forests and International Circumpolar Surveillance: Prevention and Control of Emerging Infectious Diseases in the Arctic. The first two gave their final reports to the Ministers in Inari.

The Project Manager of the Reindeer Project, Johnny Leo Jernsletten, expressed thanks for the active participation in this project throughout the circumpolar area. Fruitful cooperation with the Russian Federation was a cornerstone of the successful completion of the project. In connection with the Inari SAO and Ministerial meetings the project organized a mini seminar on the results of the project. The final report of the project could be described not as a scientific report but as an overview of the occupation. The fundamental viewpoint has been that reindeer husbandry is a way of life rather than only a form of production. The loss of this industry could mean the loss of many Arctic cultures and of the bedrock of the identity of many indigenous peoples. As main challenges Mr. Jernsletten listed the loss of pasture land, predators, the expansion of the oil and gas industry and evolving infrastructure. Mr. Jernsletten stated that the project had met with positive attitudes among the national governments and that reindeer meat was regarded as a clean Arctic product. He also said that the project made it clear that the AC was seen as a high political forum where questions concerning reindeer husbandry could be discussed.

The Sustainable Reindeer Husbandry Project will have a follow-up. The working title for this follow-up project is: 'Reindeer Husbandry and Wild Reindeer/Caribou'

The Saami Council expressed its thanks for the excellent report and expressed concern over the increasing number of predators. The Saami Council also emphasized the spiritual input involved in reindeer husbandry. The USA expressed gratitude that Alaska too was included in the project.

The final report of the Sustainable Development of Northern Timberline Forests was introduced by Dr. Marja-Liisa Sutinen and Dr. Ludger Müller-Wille. They emphasized that the tundra-taiga zone should be understood as the site of multidisciplinary issues where focus is not only on forest but also on land use issues. Utilization of local knowledge including indigenous traditional knowledge is important. The project has gathered a set of recommendations which are available as an Annex to the SDWG Report to the Ministers. The project arranged a workshop in Rovaniemi, Finland, in May 2002. The workshop reviewed recent research in the field. Special emphasis was placed on the social and economic consequences of global change and on ecosystem management in these regions. Ms Sutinen and Mr Müller-Wille emphasized the need for continuous circumpolar monitoring of human aspects and species as well as the need for development of more effective legislation. The issue of securing the legal and economic status of reindeer herding and the natural forest structure was also highlighted.

Dr Alan J. Parkinson from the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention introduced to the meeting the progress report from the SDWG project on International Circumpolar Surveillance: Prevention and Control of Emerging Infectious Diseases in the Arctic. The main objectives of the project have been to establish an integrated network of hospital, public health and reference laboratories throughout the Arctic, to monitor infectious disease rates and trends, identify risk factors for disease, evaluate intervention options and monitor intervention effects. Dr Parkinson stated that the project had proved to be very successful and clear evidence had been found that supported the use of available vaccines to reduce rates of pneumococcal diseases among peoples living in the North American Arctic. As future objectives of the project Dr Parkinson mentioned enhancing linkages to other bodies conducting infectious disease surveillance, such as the World Health Organization, EU and Pan American Health Organization and expanding the project to include surveillance of other infectious diseases and pathogens important to Arctic communities.

Canada asked whether a functioning national network for the distribution of vaccines would be essential in this context, to which Dr Parkinson replied that every country is responsible for gathering necessary data, building up control programs and effectively channeling resources.

Progress in SLICA was also discussed at the meeting. Data collection in SLICA is progressing well but there have been problems in finding financing for the project in some countries. ICC expressed support for SLICA and welcomed all the MS to participate in the project. Raipon told about an ongoing health project in the Chukotka area and asked for support for it.

The Russian Federation stated that the work carried out in the SDWG was of utmost importance to the whole Council because of the human aspect. The Russian Federation was very pleased with the final report of the reindeer project because the economic aspects of this livelihood were considered thoroughly.

10. ACAP

The Chair of the ACAP Steering Committee Mr. Per Døvlø gave a summary of the latest developments of the ACAP, especially concerning the PCB Project's Phase III. The proposal on the implementation of Phase III was delivered to the SAOs prior to the SAO meeting. Mr. Døvlø stated that NEFCO would contribute financial support to two projects: destruction of liquid PCB and cleaning of transformers.

Finland expressed its satisfaction that external funding from the IFIs is available to the ACAP Projects. Finland hoped that Phase III of the PCB project could be launched soon. Finland and the USA expressed interest in providing technical assistance for some of the Phase III projects. Finland emphasized the need for coordination in the implementation of Phase III. Canada, Norway and the USA encouraged cooperation with the IFIs as well but pointed out that before contacting the IFIs thorough consideration at the SAO level is needed as agreed in the review process. Norway emphasized the need to secure the financing package for the projects before starting the implementation phase.

11. ACIA

The Chair of the ACIA, Dr Robert Corell, presented the progress report on the ACIA. The ACIA represents a unique way of working where the scientific approach is integrated with indigenous perspectives. Dr Corell emphasized that the Arctic provides a preview of earth's future climate. He listed, as some of the most visible changes, increases in precipitation, storm surges, coastal erosion and uv-radiation and rises in winter temperatures. Other changes include thawing of previously frozen ground, variations in the number of animal species, alterations in ecosystems, reductions in the extent and thickness of sea ice, increased river flows in Siberia, warming of Arctic oceanic waters and a record low level of stratospheric ozone. The submission to the AC of the final report of the ACIA and policy recommendations is scheduled for the 4th AC Ministerial meeting in the fall of 2004.

The drafting team of the policy document is jointly chaired by AMAP and CAFF and there are members of every MS and three PP representatives. GCI, supported by Canada, expressed the wish that all the PPs should be allowed to participate in the drafting team's work. The SAO meeting made the decision that every PP should be granted the possibility to join the drafting team's work.

Norway expressed deep concern over the rapid advance of climate change and emphasized the importance of the ACIA policy document. Sweden stressed the need to engage the SDWG better in the work of the ACIA. Russia informed the meeting about the World Climate Conference due to be held in Russia in 2003. Presentation of the ACIA in that conference would be important. Russia also wanted to know more about how the ACIA is dealing with increased precipitation and thawing of permafrost because of the considerable problems these phenomena could cause to infrastructure. A lot of scientific research on these topics is available in Russia. Dr. Corell responded that in the ACIA report one chapter will be devoted to infrastructure, adding that many Russian scientists are involved in the work of the ACIA and the engagement of even more would be welcome.

The USA expressed the wish that drafts of the ACIA's decisions, especially the policy paper, should be brought to the SAOs early enough for consideration, in advance of the spring 2004 SAO meeting at the latest. The USA was worried that the schedule proposed for drafting of the Policy paper, as outlined in Annex 9 of the SAO report, might prove to be unrealistic. Policy makers should be reserved enough time for consideration of the recommendations introduced in the policy paper. Dr Corell promised that for the next SAO meeting a more detailed schedule would be made. Denmark pointed out that when drafting ACIA documents the special characteristics of Greenland and Faroe Islands should not be overlooked.

The Northern Forum expressed the wish for close cooperation with the ACIA, emphasizing the importance of engaging all Arctic people, indigenous and non-indigenous, in this work. The Chair, Mr. Stenlund, echoed this wish, stating that all MS should have close dialogue with their citizens about the characteristics and consequences of climate change.

12. TAKING WING – CONFERENCE ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN IN THE ARCTIC

Ms Laura Tohka from the University of Lapland reported on the results of the Taking Wing Conference. All the presentations and papers given at the Conference have been published in book form in English and Russian and it is attached to the Inari SAO Report as Annex 10. Ms Tohka described the role of the reference group of the conference as essential in creating a fruitful programme and thanked the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) and the Northern Forum for their generous assistance. The main recommendations of the conference are included in the Inari SAO report. The Conference was action-oriented and served as a good platform for further networking. Ms Tohka emphasized that in the conference the need for special data collection was expressed repeatedly.

The SAOs welcomed with gratitude the final report of the Taking Wing conference. The SAOs, assisted by the SDWG, will consider and approve possible project proposals arising from the recommendations adopted by the conference.

Norway was pleased that the conference was able to engage new people in Arctic cooperation. Norway is considering making a proposal at the SDWG for a project on resource management, focusing on

women's and indigenous peoples' participation in decision making processes, with particular emphasis on fisheries.

Canada welcomed Norway's initiative and stated that the level of discussion at the conference was remarkably high. . One of the main goals of the conference, awareness boosting, was certainly achieved.

13. ICELANDIC PRESIDENCY OF THE AC

Iceland presented its programme for the AC Chairmanship for the years 2002-2004. The full Programme is available on the AC web pages at http://www.arctic-council.org/files/PROGRAMME_ICE/PROGRAMME_ICE.pdf. In addition to the environmental work of the council, Iceland will focus especially on the wellbeing of the people of the Arctic. The AHDR, information technology and research will be the main priorities of the Icelandic term. Iceland will finance the AHDR Secretariat and asked MS to nominate representatives for the Steering Committee of the project. The main responsibilities of the Steering Committee will be the organization and division of work in the project and the identification of writers for different chapters. The AHDR will be prepared in close cooperation with the UArctic. A conference on information technology will be organized back-to-back with the second meeting of the SAOs in 2003.. The next meeting of the SAOs is scheduled for April 9-10, 2003. On behalf of all PPs, GCI expressed the wish to meet with the incoming chair, Iceland, as soon as possible for discussion about future cooperation.

14. OTHER BUSINESS

NCM informed the meeting about its new Arctic Cooperation Programme. Advisor., Walter Parker, from the US Delegation, informed the meeting of the latest developments in the Circumpolar Infrastructure Task Force. The CITF will continue its efforts to improve circumpolar transportation, both airborne and maritime. Arctic telecommunication problems will be discussed at a telecom expert group meeting in Washington DC in February 2003. The IUCN informed the meeting about its Arctic Strategy. The University of the Arctic gave a report of its activities, which are included in the Inari SAO Report. Representatives of the World Bank, the Nordic Investment Bank, NEFCO and the EBRD briefly presented their ongoing activities in the Arctic and their perspectives for future cooperation with the AC and its subsidiary bodies.

15. NEXT MEETING

The next Arctic Council SAO meeting will be held in Iceland in April 2003.

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