

Minutes (draft). Arctic Council Senior Arctic Officials meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, November 22-23, 2004.

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ARCTIC COUNCIL

MEETING OF SENIOR ARCTIC OFFICIALS

Reykjavík, Iceland

November 22-23, 2004

Draft minutes

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

The Chairman of Senior Arctic Officials, Ambassador Gunnar Pálsson, welcomed participants to Reykjavík and opened the meeting.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The meeting adopted the draft agenda circulated on 17 November 2004.

The Chairman reiterated that the main purpose of the meeting was to prepare the Ministerial meeting on 24 November 2004, including the drafting of the SAO report to Ministers and the Ministerial declaration, to which the second day of the meeting would be devoted. Furthermore, he explained that only SAOs, Permanent Participants and the Chairmen of the working groups would be attending that part of the meeting.

3. APPROVAL OF AD HOC OBSERVERS

The Secretariat received two applications for ad-hoc observership, one from the Circumpolar Agricultural Association and the other from the European Environment Agency (EEA). The two applicants were granted observer status at the meeting.

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE LAST SAO MEETING

The draft minutes from the SAO meeting in Selfoss on 4-5 May 2004 were adopted.

5. UPDATE ON THE ARCTIC COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES

The Chair invited the Chairmen of the working groups to present their reports to the meeting in a reverse alphabetical order.

5.1. SDWG

The Chair gave the floor to the Chairman of the SDWG, Mr. Hugi Ólafsson, who introduced the SDWG progress report. Mr. Ólafsson pointed to the increased responsibilities of the SDWG and informed the meeting that the SDWG would start

exploring new ways of organizing its work. Altogether, eleven projects are operated under the umbrella of the SDWG, some of which will officially conclude at the Fourth Ministerial meeting. Furthermore, Mr. Ólafsson discussed the SDWG involvement in the petroleum hydrocarbon assessment, the Arctic Marine Strategic Plan and the follow up of the Akureyri conference on ICT. The capacity-building overview of the Arctic Council initiative, led by Canada, had been completed. The development of the Sustainable Development Action Plan had been carried out under the lead of the Russian Federation, and a draft agreed in September 2004. The SDAP was intended to guide the SDWG in defining priorities and designing new activities. The AHDR would serve as a knowledge base for the SDWG. Work will continue on identifying how the Arctic Council can contribute to the follow up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and on clarifying procedures and criteria for endorsement of new projects and related processes within the working group.

The Chair congratulated the SDWG for the volume of work done over the last 2 years.

The RAIPON representative drew attention to the project on sustainable development of communities of the north and informed the meeting that RAIPON together with Finland and Canada had discussed cooperation on various projects.

The United States emphasized the importance of engaging in concrete action instead of reporting, not least as regarded the SDAP.

Canada drew special attention to the capacity building overview, which explains the extent to which capacity building is underway in the Arctic through the support of the Arctic Council.

Finland expressed the view that more work needed to be done in the health sector, including telemedicine, making use of some of the projects identified by the ICT Network.

5.1.1. Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR)

The Chair informed the meeting that an AHDR launch event had been held the previous day, where the report had been presented and gave the floor to Mr. Ólafsson. Mr Ólafsson recalled that the report got its mandate from the Ministerial Meeting in 2002, as one of the priority activities of the Icelandic Chairmanship Programme. A report steering committee comprised of representatives from all the member states and all Permanent Participants organizations as well as some observers was set up to oversee the work. The project was placed within the SDWG and coordinated by a Secretariat at the Stefansson Arctic Institute in Akureyri, Iceland. Mr. Ólafsson thanked in particular the two co-chairs, Mr. Niels Einarsson and Dr. Oran Young, and their colleagues in the executive steering committee, Ms. Ingvil Brock and Mr. Rune Fjellheim, the project manager, Joan Nymand Larsen, the science writer, Annika Nilson and all the lead authors and the contributing authors. Mr. Ólafsson then gave the floor to Dr. Oran Young.

Dr. Young explained that the AHDR was a scientific assessment and not a report of findings of new research. The report had a large number of policy relevant conclusions, summarized in its final chapter. The report documented problems in the

Arctic as well as success stories and identified gaps in knowledge. Among other things it concluded that better and more harmonized data would be needed. Dr. Young stated that the AHDR could contribute substantially to the development of the Arctic Council sustainable development programme. This it would do by providing a coherent framework to set the agenda and a base line against which changes could be evaluated and judged. It would also identify a set of topics needing more concentrated attention, in addition to creating a basis for comparison with the experiences regarding human development in other regions. As regards follow up, Dr. Young emphasized the need to distribute the report, including through a web-publication, and its translation in Russian and other languages. In addition, he stated that it was important to prioritize the gaps in knowledge and pursue them over the coming 2-4 years. Furthermore, he suggested that the major results of the AHDR be conveyed to the IPY planning process. Finally, in order to enhance the voice of the Arctic internationally, Dr. Young proposed putting together a package of the major findings of the AHDR in a way that can be transmissible, to get the message out to a larger audience.

The Chair expressed satisfaction with the report and commended the co-chairs, the Report Steering Committee and the chapter authors for their dedication and hard work.

Some delegations drew attention to three aspects identified by the AHDR as being critical to life in the north, i.e., cultural integrity, contact with nature and peoples control over their own fate and stated that those aspects should be brought forward in the work of the Arctic Council. Furthermore, it was stated that the follow up to the report should be discussed in the SDWG, taking into account results of related work, including the SLICA. The AHDR should be used as a basis for future project consideration. The meeting recognized the inspirational role of the Standing Committee of the Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region in bringing report about the.

Before closing, the Chair pointed out that the Chairman of the SDWG, Mr. Ólafsson, was leaving his post as the Chairmanship of the group went hand in hand with the Chairmanship of the Arctic Council. The Chair thanked Mr. Ólafsson for the substantial contribution he had made to the work in the Arctic Council over the last two years and welcomed his successor, Mr. Boris Morgunov.

5.1.2. Family based reindeer economy, the status and management of wild reindeer/caribou populations.

The Chair gave the floor to Ms. Birgitte Ulvevadet, Project Manager, who presented the final report of the project. One of the main objectives of the project was to provide a general overview of the socio-economic situation of the Arctic indigenous peoples who make a living from herding and hunting based activities as well as an overview of the management of wild reindeer and caribou, in a circumpolar context. The project also attempts to examine the role of the entire family in reindeer husbandry. The report documents that herding and hunting economies face major challenges and even threats to their existence. The report contains several recommendations put forth by the project's international steering committee.

5.1.3. Women's participation in decision-making process in Arctic fishery resource management.

Ms. Anna Karlsdottir, Project Manager, introduced the final report of the project on women's participation in decision-making processes in fishery management in the Arctic coastal communities. The project demonstrated that although women contribute substantially to the fisheries sector, their participation in decision-making processes in this economic sector is not high. Therefore, many coastal communities may have limited adaptability and limited social sustainability in the long term. Increasing opportunities for education in the Nordic countries have given women the opportunity to seek a professional career in management of fisheries research but only occasionally do they seem to rise above mid level positions. The steering committee of the project had put forth several recommendations as part of the project report. Ms. Karlsdóttir encouraged the meeting to reflect on how to implement them in national strategies.

5.1.4. Survey of living condition in the Arctic (SLICA)

The Chair gave the floor to Mr. Birger Poppel, to present the SLICA, an international survey comparing living conditions of Inuit and Saami peoples in the Arctic. As regarded the state of the project, interviewing was completed in Canada and the United States. Interviewing was under way in Greenland, Sweden and Norway. In Finland and the Kola Peninsula, interviewing had not started due to lack of funding. Mr. Poppel demonstrated a model by which the scientists are able, through different statistical means, to test the interrelationship between the different living conditions dimensions and the social problems. As an example of a preliminary finding, it was pointed out that a combination of Western education and participation in domestic production activities like hunting, decreases the likelihood of major depression.

The Chair pointed out that the SLICA and the AHDR complemented each other extremely well and, together with the two other project reports presented to meeting, created a valuable knowledge base for the Arctic Council.

5.2. PAME

The Chair gave the floor to the Chairman of PAME, Mr. Davíð Egilsson. Mr. Egilsson stated that PAME had focused on four main elements over the past two years; i.e. the Regional Programme of Action, the Russian NPA, the multilateral financial support of the Russian NPA and the AMSP, which had been the main undertaking of the group during this period. The Chairman pointed out that the AMSP was a document negotiated with the participation of several different actors. The AMSP points towards the ecosystem approach and acknowledges that different ecosystems can be under different pressures and require different approaches. The Regional Programme of Action Document was signed in 2003, the Offshore Oil and Gas Guidelines from 2002 had been translated into Russian and the Shipping and Water Transfer Guidelines had been issued in addition to the PAME Work Plan.

Denmark announced that it would provide the next Chairman of PAME, Mr. Frank Sonne, from the Danish Ministry of Environment and Energy.

The Chair expressed gratitude to PAME and its Chair for their excellent work.

5.2.1. Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (AMSP)

Mr. Chris Cuddy, introduced the AMSP to the meeting and stated that the plan had been launched at the Ministerial Meeting in Inari in 2002, under the lead of Canada and Iceland, to answer a need for a more forward looking and visionary and comprehensive approach to the Arctic Council's agenda on the Arctic oceans. The AMSP sets out a vision for goals and a number of strategic actions. Mr. Cuddy underlined the importance of implementing it over the next few years, e.g. in the light of managing increased shipping over the next decade. The AMSP offers a vision within the Arctic based on the ecosystem approach.

The Chair congratulated PAME on the completion of the AMSP. The AMSP would contribute significantly to integrated ocean management and the ecosystem approach. The Chair also said farewell to Mr. Egilson.

5.3. EPPR

The Chair gave the floor to Ms. Laura Johnston, Chairman of the EPPR, to present the group's report. Ms. Johnston reflected on the evolution of the EPPR through the years. An environmental risk assessment was conducted in the mid-90s, which identified the major areas of concern in the emergencies field in the Arctic as far as marine oil spills, radiological events and chemical hazards are concerned. The work in the oil and gas field is largely complete, with preparation in the last of series of tools developed by the group, the SCAT manual. Ms. Johnston underlined that although the tools were largely in place, there was need to continue to exchange information regarding the involving risks and new techniques and tools that may come into being. She also mentioned that the EPPR had a great deal to offer AMAP in looking at oil and gas development in the Arctic. Another area of work that the EPPR has been engaged in is radiological and other hazards. Work in the radiological and other hazards fields will continue, led by the US and Russia and with significant contribution from other countries such as Finland and Sweden. Ms. Johnston pointed to a number of products and projects that had come to completion in the last period, all detailed in the report to the SAOs. Furthermore, a great deal of work has gone into looking at risk assessment methodologies and training programmes for facilities with radiological and other hazards, such as chlorine. Subject to Ministerial approval, the EPPR will be embarking on a new area, natural disasters. This work will require new expertise within the EPPR and possible restructuring. Expanding the web-based circumpolar map is also among future projects. In closing, Ms. Johnston indicated that the Chair would be passing to the Russian Federation, along with the secretariat. Mr. Igor Veselov will be the new Chair and Finland had agreed to assume the role of vice chair of the EPPR.

The work of the EPPR was appreciated by the Chair, in particular its work on oil and gas.

The Russian representative read out a message from the Minister of Emergency Situations of the Russian Federation stating that Russia attaches high priority to international cooperation in the field of prevention and elimination of emergency

situations in the Arctic. International organization of economic ties in the Arctic leads to increasing shipping and passenger traffic in this part of the planet. This all helps us better understand the need for establishing an efficient monitoring mechanism, prevention of emergency situations and their liquidation in the event emergencies arise. Time had come to move from words to actions and Russia proposed to establish a network of international base points, stationing equipment and resources for monitoring and rescuing through an agreement among the Arctic states. Furthermore, he announced that Arctic Rescue would be one of the priorities of the Russian Chairmanship in the Arctic Council.

The Chair thanked Ms. Johnston for her excellent work and welcomed the new Chair of the working group, Mr. Veselov.

5.4. CAFF

The Chairman of CAFF, Mr. Kent Wohl, was given the floor to present the CAFF progress report. Mr. Wohl gave an account of the CAFF deliverables to the Ministerial meeting, including the Circumpolar Arctic Vegetation Map. As regarded the work of the CAFF seabird expert group, the Chairman stated that the adoption of a wide conservation approach was needed. The message from the CAFF CPAN expert group was that several messages from the AMSP needed to be addressed, including the large marine ecosystem project and the concept of marine protected areas. Furthermore, Mr. Wohl stated that the ECORA project would be in the implementation stage for the next years. The Chairman presented six different documents as an outcome of the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme. Some additional monitoring networks were to be developed, in addition to the CAFF/AMAP coordinated monitoring project. Finally, Mr. Wohl presented the new Chairman of CAFF, Mr. Esko Jaakkola.

The Chair thanked CAFF and its Chairman for excellent work. Many delegations underlined in particular the importance of the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Network. The meeting welcomed the new Chairman of CAFF, Mr. Jaakkola.

5.5. AMAP

The Chair gave the floor to the Chairman of AMAP, Mr. Helgi Jensson, who presented the AMAP report to the meeting. The main activity of AMAP had been the completion of the ACIA. Mr. Jensson also mention the PTS and the PCB projects and drew attention to AMAP's cooperation with the BEAC and NEFCO on updating the hotspots in the Barents region. Furthermore, he informed the meeting that AMAP had made plans to contribute to the IPY and make use of that opportunity to harmonize long-term observation and monitoring activities in the Arctic. The oil and gas assessment was going according to schedule and a symposium was foreseen in St. Petersburg in September 2005. Finally, Mr. Jensson introduced the new AMAP Chair, Mr. John Calder.

Next, Mr. Vitaly Kimstach was given the floor to introduce the project; Persistent Toxic Substances, Food Security and Indigenous Peoples of the Russian North. The project, initiated by the International Indigenous Organization after the release of the first AMAP assessment report, focused on the impacts persistent toxicants, primarily

POPs, can have on the health of indigenous peoples. Mr. Kimstach explained that the project had been supported financially by GEF, all the Arctic countries, the Netherlands and a number of international organizations. The project had been finalized and the report was available at the meeting. The report covered long-range transport of pollutants by air and rivers, from local sources, indoor environment and dietary and lifestyle sources of indigenous families. It contained the outcome of measurements of levels of contaminants in blood and an assessment of its effects of human health. Among other things, it indicated that contaminants from long-range transport were an important health factor.

The Chair congratulated the outgoing Chairman on the results achieved during his dedicated chairmanship. The importance of the work of AMAP for indigenous peoples in the Arctic was highlighted and the significance of the oil and gas assessment was underlined. The Chair welcomed Mr. John Calder from the United States as the new Chairman of AMAP.

5.6. ACAP

The Chair gave the floor to the Chairman of ACAP, Mr. Bob Dyer. Mr. Dyer explained that the PCB project was in its final phase and that new fact sheets were under development on PCBs. The Norilsk project on cleaner production had been completed. The brominated flame retardants (BFRs) project was about to get underway and was considered an important initiative of ACAP. Recently, the group had been focusing most actively on the environmentally safe management of pesticides stockpiles, both prohibited and obsolete. The Chairman introduced a new project under ACAP dealing with atmosphere mercury emissions. Three reports had been developed in draft forms, one focusing on the assessment of mercury releases in the Russian Federation. The Chairman also mentioned the issues of funding ACAP projects and referred to the upcoming discussion on a project support fund instrument. The Chairman informed the meeting that ACAP was working closely with the United Kingdom to become a partner in its projects. Furthermore, he stated that the group was looking at ways to expanding the focus of ACAP from Russia to all the Arctic countries.

The Chair thanked ACAP for a job well done and expressed satisfaction with the way work within the group had developed.

6. ACIA activities

The Chair gave the floor to the ACIA project leader, Dr. Robert Corell, to introduce the final ACIA overview document, entitled Impacts of a Warming Arctic. Dr. Corell stated that the main message from the ACIA was that the climate was warming rapidly in the Arctic, with profound effects on the rest of the planet and the people living in the region. Animal species, diversity ranges and distribution are expected to change and polar bears and other species will be in jeopardy and in some cases moving towards extinction. Rising sea levels and reduced sea ice is another impact of climate change. Some of the models used by the ACIA suggest that the Arctic ocean will be ice-free by the end of the century. The melting sea ice will not only open up the Arctic sea routes but also have enormous effects on the life of indigenous populations in the Arctic. Dr. Corell underlined the importance of integrating the

ACIA findings into the work of the IPCC and the IPY. According to Dr. Corell, the full scientific document was expected to come out in early January 2005.

Delegations congratulated the ACIA team for concluding the enormous task of assessing the impacts of climate changes in the Arctic. The ACIA was said to be by far the most comprehensive work ever undertaken in the Arctic Council and the most difficult. This success was to be attributed in large part to Dr. Corell and his very dedicated colleagues in charge of this important assessment.

Some of the observers, including the United Kingdom and the WWF, encouraged the Arctic Council to take action in response of the ACIA findings.

The Chairman of AMAP offered AMAP's assistance to the SAOs, in establish an expert group in cooperation with the other working groups and IASC, for a follow-on scientific assessment. The Chair stated that the AMAP proposal would be taken up in context the SAO report to Ministers and the Ministerial declaration.

Some delegations expressed concern as to the communication of the ACIA overview document and its contents. The Northern Forum suggested holding discussion summits around the Arctic to present the information contained in the report. The Forum expressed a wish to partner with the Arctic Council to arrange those summits.

7. FINANCING OF PERMANENT PARTICIPANTS' PARTICIPATION

The Chair recalled that at the drafting session in Reykjavik on 19-21 October 2004, a preliminary understanding had been reached as to how the issue of financing the participation of Permanent Participants in the Arctic Council should be reflected in the SAO report to Ministers and the Ministerial declaration.

Representatives of the Permanent Participants expressed their thanks to the various nations providing support for their participation and to the Icelandic Chair for its ongoing support for the efforts to secure adequate funding.

8. FINANCING OF ARCTIC COUNCIL PROJECTS

The Chair recalled the decision of the last SAO meeting to set up an ad-hoc expert group under the lead of Mr. Harro Pitkänen, Managing Director of NEFCO, to examine how a project support fund might work in practice. The group had reported to the Chair and its report had been circulated. The Chair invited Mr. Pitkänen to present the report of the group.

Mr. Pitkänen stated that the expert group had been set up at the end of the spring with experts nominated by Finland, Norway, Sweden and the United States. The group had worked throughout the summer and had delivered its report in September. The experts identified a number of specific elements, where a financial instrument could bring value added. They concluded that the process of identifying and mobilizing finance in priority projects would become more effective and that a financial joint instrument would facilitate concerted action among participants. It would provide for a swift response to the specific needs of individual projects and thereby contribute to a

smooth and effective project process and bring in specific project financing competence.

The expert group also concluded that an instrument of this kind should be exclusively orientated towards Arctic Council projects, approved according to the present modalities of the Council. Furthermore, a financial vehicle of this kind should work with specific action oriented projects. The experts emphasized that the project support instrument would be a complementary vehicle, it would be a voluntary scheme, which would leave it to the member states to decide whether to participate. Finally the expert group specifically emphasized that the modalities for a project support instrument could be tailor-made as desired by the participating contributors.

The representative of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region expressed the committee's support for the project support fund.

9. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN THE ARCTIC

The Chair informed the meeting that the ICT network, set up at the last SAO-meeting, had reported to the Chair and that its report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Chair asked the SAOs to build on the work of the ICTN while formulating recommendations to Ministers. Those questions should be dealt with in relation to work on the Ministerial declaration and the SAO-report.

The SCPAR representative recalled the TRAICE project proposal put forward by the parliamentarians, with the aim of improving the access and use of information technology over national borders in a limited area of the Arctic region. SCPAR declared its preparedness to support work on the project within the Arctic Council.

10. THE EUROPEAN UNION'S SECOND NORTHERN DIMENSION ACTION PLAN

The Chair informed the meeting that Mr. Alistair McDonald from the European Commission (EC) had not been able to accept an invitation to attend the meeting.

RAIPON stated that the Second Northern Dimension Action Plan appeared to be lacking in implementation as no practical steps had been taken to realize its goals. In light of this the Arctic Council was encouraged to establish closer relationship with the EC.

The Chair said that the lack of implementation was not due to the lack of trying on the part of the Arctic Council and recalled the joint Arctic Council EC conference on 7 July 2004, focusing on various possibilities of taking cooperation with the Commission further.

12. MEETING OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF THE ARCTIC COUNCIL MEMBER STATES; REPORT

The first meeting of Ministers of Education and Science and other representatives of the Arctic Council member states was held in Reykjavík on 9 June 2004. The Chair invited Dr. Vilhjálmur Lúðvíksson, senior advisor at the Icelandic Ministry of Education and Science, to report on the meeting.

Dr. Lúðvíksson explained that Iceland had used the opportunity of a double chairmanship in the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Arctic Council to hold a meeting of Ministers of Education and Science, recognizing that cooperation in this fields would be more and more important, not least in the view of the emerging messages from the ACIA work. There was a wide and enthusiastic wish among Ministers and other representatives for a much stronger cooperation in this field. The meeting had adopted a declaration, in which it underlined that the initiative should be followed up on as soon as possible. The issue of how this should be done needed further thought, not least because of administrative differences in the way issues of education and science are handled. Dr. Lúðvíksson informed the meeting that Iceland was going to take the initiative to call the first meeting. Denmark, which will take over the Chairmanship of the NCM in 2005, had already put work of this nature high on its agenda for its Chairmanship. It was going to focus both on formal expert cooperation and the preparation for the International Polar Year and ICARP II.

The Chair thanked Dr. Lúðvíksson for advancing the issue and stated that stimulating further cooperation in the areas of research and science had been a prominent part of the Icelandic Chairmanship programme.

13. ARCTIC COUNCIL INVOLVEMENT IN THE INTERNATIONAL POLAR YEAR

The Chair gave the floor to Mr. J. Cynan Ellis-Evans, the interim Executive Director of the International Polar Year (IPY).

Mr. Ellis-Evans explained that the IPY Planning Group had finalized its work in September 2002. Its main product was the IPY Science Plan, outlining 6 themes for the IPY, including one theme focusing on the human dimension. Scientists and nations had submitted up to 500 ideas for the IPY, 32 national committees and points of contact had been established and a large number of organizations around the world had endorsed the IPY. An IPY Joint Committee had been established and a Programme Office installed at the British Antarctic Survey in the United Kingdom. Expressions of intent had been called for, with a deadline on 14 January 2005, mainly focusing on the heavy logistics projects. Mr. Ellis-Evans underlined the importance of the ACIA and the ICARP II in formulating the Arctic science responses and plans for the IPY. Furthermore, he stated that the Arctic Council, through its network and projects, would have a central role to play in delivering the IPY programmes.

Delegations expressed high interest in the IPY and welcomed the inclusion of the human dimension. The Russian delegation stated that it attached a great importance to the implementation of the IPY and expressed the opinion that a representative of the Arctic Council should be a member of the IPY Joint Committee. This view was supported by other delegations.

Canada expressed the view that the Arctic Council could make a particularly strong contribution to the IPY in two areas, i.e., the area of monitoring and observation, not least as regards the monitoring systems and the harmonization between them and in the area of human health, including work on toxic substances and some of the SDWG projects, e.g. infectious diseases and telemedicine.

This emphasis was supported by other delegations. Sweden offered to host an expert meeting during the first half of 2005, focusing on monitoring, long term observations and research, with the aim to working out an Arctic Council input to the IPY, prior to the June deadline. The United States offered to host a similar workshop focusing on the health elements. The meeting welcomed both offers.

In conclusion, the Chair stated, among other things, that the ideas put forth during the discussion should be drawn upon in the drafting of the documents for the Ministerial meeting.

13. The Circum-Arctic Environmental Observation Network (CEON)

The Chair gave the floor to the President of the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), Dr. Patrick Webber, to brief the meeting on the Circum-Arctic Environmental Observation Network (CEON). Dr. Webber stated that CEON was a joint project of the Forum of Arctic Research Operators (FARO) and IASC, supported by the Royal Swedish Academy of Science, the United States National Science Foundation and several Arctic groups. The CEON aims at harmonizing different activities in an Arctic observatory system and meeting emerging monitoring research and policy needs at high north latitude by making data available that is adequate and suitable for addressing serious and well-defined key scientific questions and uncertainties. The CEON is an international initiative, which should identify gaps, eliminate overlaps and increase harmonization. Dr. Webber asked the meeting to comment on possible ways of strengthening the coordination and cooperation between the Arctic Council and CEON.

Sweden commented that the combined work of AMAP and CAFF and CEON could prove very useful to the IPY process.

In closing, the Chairman emphasized the importance of establishing informal contacts with CEON, prior to the next meeting of SAOs.

14. FOLLOW-UP ON THE PROGRESS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

The Chair gave the floor to Dr. Lars Kullerud, rector of the University of the Arctic to present a report.

Dr. Kullerud explained that the University had been growing fast over the past two years, comprising seventy-two members. The BA studies programme, developed by researchers throughout the Arctic, had been finalized and was being offered in four universities in the Arctic. The UArctic places high importance on the mobility of students and has developed a mobility programme, already up and running. Furthermore, Dr. Kullerud stated that the UArctic had started working on a

curriculum devoted to climate change, following up on the ACIA. Dr. Kullerud emphasized especially the importance of indigenous peoples organizations forming part of the UArctic. Finally, Dr. Kullerud welcomed the AHDR as an important contribution to studies in the Arctic.

The Chair thanked the University of the Arctic in particular for its support to the Icelandic Chairmanship.

15. 3rd OPEN MEETING OF THE NORTHERN RESEARCH FORUM; REPORT

The Chair invited Mr. Lassi Heinenen, Senior Scientist at the University of Lapland, to present the outcome of the 3rd Open Meeting of the Northern Research Forum, held in Yellowknife on 15 -18 September 2004.

Among the items addressed at the forum was how to implement and promote capacity and speed up human change in the North, not least in light of the ACIA and AHDR. The forum concluded that the North was resilient and that it was important to have both traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge. Furthermore, issues of governance were identified as being of great importance for region-building. In addition, the importance of tourism as the main industry in the North was underlined. Finally, security issues were also discussed. Mr. Heinenen circulated the forum's report at the meeting.

The Chair commended the NRF for organizing the 3rd open meeting and particularly for involving young researchers and academics.

16. PREPARATIONS FOR THE FOURTH ARCTIC COUNCIL MINISTERIAL MEETING

16.1. REVIEW OF THE SAO REPORT TO MINISTERS

16.2. REVIEW OF THE REYKJAVÍK DECLARATION

The discussion on the review of the SAO report to Ministers and the Ministerial declaration resulted in final drafts of both documents, which were presented to the Ministerial meeting on 24 November 2004. Therefore, the discussion on those documents will not be accounted for in these minutes.

16.3. APPLICATIONS FOR FULL OBSERVER STATUS IN THE ARCTIC COUNCIL

Two parties had requested full observer status in the Arctic Council, the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO) and the Arctic Circumpolar Route (ACR). The Chair asked the meeting if both could be granted observer status to the Council. The meeting accepted to recommend to Ministers that NEFCO and the ACR be accepted as observers.

17. OTHER BUSINESS

Before closing the meeting for the day, the Chair asked Mr. Victor Tatarintsev to bring the meeting's best regards to the Russian SAO, Mr. Vitaly Churkin, who had been taken ill, and wished him a speedy recovery.