

SDWG/chair

A background paper for the AC/SAO meeting 12.-13.6.2001

Preparations for the WSSD A Draft AC Plan

Ref: Taking an Arctic Voice into Rio+10 – an informal Discussion Paper (Barrow)

1. Canada, in its informal discussion paper, proposed that on the part of the Arctic Council a collective approach could be brought to the Rio+10 process in order to:
 - Introduce a global linkage to broad environmental, economic, social and cultural Arctic concerns;
 - Place before a global audience, with shared concerns specific to sustainable development, significant work undertaken by the Arctic Council and its working groups;
 - Underline that unsustainable practices and behavior come with a cost that at times is paid by the environment and by people at great geographic distance from the source of such practices and behavior.
2. In its informal discussion paper Canada also suggested that the SDWG of the Arctic Council would be a logical co-ordinator for the Arctic Council in addressing the opportunities that Rio+10 presents. In so doing, it would make sense to draw on the expertise and deliberations of all the working groups of the Arctic Council, whilst ensuring that the expertise and concerns of the permanent participants are also brought forward.
3. In the Barrow Declaration ministers, *“Welcome the opportunity presented by the Rio+10 process to review the work of the Arctic Council with a view to bringing Arctic issues to the attention of the global community through the preparatory processes associated with the ten-year review of Agenda 21;”*
4. **Rio+10 and the Arctic Council – a dialogue**

In its Sustainable Development Framework Document the Arctic Council states that the Council's Sustainable Development Program has the objective of addressing the special circumstances of the Arctic in the context of the Rio process. On one hand, the themes on the agenda in the Rio+10 process should reflect the arctic concerns and on the other hand, the Arctic Council should take part in the Rio+10 process in an appropriate way.

It is necessary for the the Arctic Council to be well informed about the preparations for the WSSD (Johannesburg, South Africa, September 2002). The expectations on the AC chair in this respect should be clarified by the SAOs.

As Canada has pointed out, most governments have stressed that the 2002 review process should include a strong regional component. The UNCSD (United Nations Council on Sustainable Development) will **organize regional preparatory meetings** (such as the European PrepCom in Geneva by the UN/ECE & DESA on September 24-25, 2001) as well as **Regional and Global Roundtables for Eminent Persons** (European/North American E.P. Regional Roundtable in Vail, Colorado 6-8 June 2001). Some of the regional (or sub-regional) sustainable development processes and strategies will be presented at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, WSSD. These include at least Baltic 21 (Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region) and the Nordic Strategy on SD (Sustainable Development – New Bearings for the Nordic Countries) as well as the European Union SD Strategy.

5. The UN Commission on Sustainable Development and the Rio+10 process

The ninth session of the UNCSD was in New York on April 16-27, 2001.

Very soon after that the UNCSD will organize a series of preparatory meetings for the WSSD:

UNCSD10 1. PrepCom (Organization of further preparatory sessions; Involvement of Major Groups) in New York, 30.4.-2.5.2001

Regional Preparatory PrepComs (Europe 24.-25.9.2001 in Geneva)

Global “thematic” roundtables (Independent experts from Major Groups and Eminent Persons) Second part of 2001.

UNCSD10 2. PrepCom (Results from the national and regional preparatory processes; Main policy report by the Secretary General; Multi-stakeholder Dialogue Session by the Major Groups, Results from the “thematic” roundtables) in New York, 28.1.-8.2.2002

UNEP/Ministerial meeting (Global Environmental governance; UNEP’s input to the WSSD), February 2002

UNCSD10 3. PrepCom (First Draft of the “review” document to be negotiated; Drafting the Future Work Program for the UNCSD) in New York, 18.-29.3. or 1.-19.4.2002

UNCSD10 4. Ministerial level PrepCom (Strategic visions and policy guidance; a multi-stakeholder Dialogue Session between the Ministers and Major Groups; Elements for a concise political document to be submitted to the WSSD), Indonesia, 6.-17.5.2002

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (Adoption of Final Documents; National, regional, inter-regional and stakeholders commitments

and partnerships which do not require global negotiations will be announced as part of the Summit's outcome.) in Johannesburg, South Africa, in September 2002.

(Link: <http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/>)

Depending on the themes arising in the preparatory sessions or in other preparatory thematic conferences, the chair country of the Arctic Council or other party, if the SAOs so decide, should use the opportunity to raise arctic issues and concerns on the basis of the AC's work.

The chair country should prepare in consultation with the Member States and the Permanent Participants the main message and the overall framework of any such interventions, within the mandate given by the Barrow and earlier ministerials. The working groups should within their respective mandates prepare substantial material as building blocs for the overall message. The Conclusions of the Chair of the 10th Anniversary are being prepared with a view to serve as an additional platform for Arctic Council participation in the further preparations of the WSSD.

6. The preparatory process in the Arctic Council

Preliminary discussions on the overall strategy in the **WG chairs' meeting** in Rovaniemi on April 4-5, 2001.

First substantial and procedural discussions in the **SDWG meeting** in Rovaniemi on April 5-6, 2001.

10th Anniversary of the Rovaniemi process on June 11, 2001.

- The host country has requested the UNCSA to recognize the Anniversary as one of the regional preparatory events for the WSSD and has thus invited Under-Secretary General **Nitin Desai**¹ to Rovaniemi to join the anniversary celebrations. The Anniversary offers an opportunity for the UNCSA to present its views on the role of the Arctic in global sustainable development in front of a representative audience of experts on the Arctic environment and sustainable development. The presence of a representative from the UNCSA at the Anniversary celebrations would also make it possible to deliver an Arctic message directly to the process leading to Johannesburg.
- **The Anniversary would be an important event in the dialogue between the Rio+10 process and the Arctic, followed by a series of more targeted presentations in the regional preparatory sessions and other situations.**

AC/SAO meeting in Rovaniemi, June 12-13, 2001.

¹ **Mr. Lowell Flanders**, Assistant Director in the Division for Sustainable Development of the UN, will be representing Mr. Desai and Ms. JoAnne DiSano on behalf of the Dpt. For Economic and Social Affairs and its Division for Sustainable Development of the UN.

Discussions and decisions on the overall strategy and on the division of duties amongst the Arctic Council bodies in the dialogue between the Rio+10 process and the Council.

SDWG and SAO meetings in Espoo, November 2001.

Possible thematic preparations for the WSSD.

7. Possible themes for the Arctic Council presentations at the WSSD

- The Arctic Council Sustainable Development Program as an example of regional multi-stakeholder processes and programs, especially the participation of the indigenous peoples.
- Major concerns and main achievements
 - AMAP
 - CAFF
 - The health issue
 - ACIA
 - ... tbc

The focus of AC preparations depend on the themes chosen for the Johannesburg 2002 Summit in the PrepComs.

8. Invitations to the Arctic Council

- Oceans and Coasts at Rio+10, Unesco, Paris, December 3-7, 2001. The Chair of the SAOs invited to participate in a panel on The Regional Scale of Oceans Governance: Examining Key Ingredients for Success in Regional Cooperation.