

MINUTES. ARCTIC COUNCIL SENIOR ARCTIC OFFICIALS' MEETING Rovaniemi, Finland June 12-13, 2001 (final).

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ARCTIC COUNCIL SENIOR ARCTIC OFFICIALS' MEETING

**Rovaniemi, Finland
June 12-13, 2001**

SAO/2001/B/4.

MINUTES

1. THE OPENING OF THE MEETING AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Chair Peter Stenlund opened the meeting and the agenda (Meeting Document (=MD) SAO2001A120601) was approved. It was decided to deal the agenda item 10 (Preparations for the Johannesburg World Summit) in connection with the agenda item 4, (The report on the 10th Anniversary of the Arctic Environmental Cooperation).

2. APPROVAL OF THE AD HOC OBSERVERS

International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, IWGIA (MD 3.1.) and High North Alliance (MD 3.2.) were approved as ad hoc observers of the meeting.

3. THE REPORT OF THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARCTIC ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION AND PREPARATIONS FOR THE WSSD

- The Icelandic delegation announced Island's interest to be the next host country of the Arctic Council(=AC) after Finland. Island's offer was warmly welcome by all the member countries.
- The Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) welcome "The Conclusions of the Chair at the 10th Anniversary of Arctic Environmental Cooperation , Preparing for Johannesburg 2002 – An Initial Arctic Message" (MD 4) and endorse them as a springboard for the AC's preparations for the Johannesburg 2002; World Summit on Sustainable Development. The SAOs encouraged the Chair to consider preparations within the Arctic Council of supplementary contributions to the Johannesburg process as the preparations unfold. Statements made on behalf of the AC will be coordinated in advance and agreed by the SAOs.

- **The SAOs noted the background paper (MD 10) prepared by the SDWG as a tentative work plan for preparation of participation in the WSSD process and requested the SDWG to update the plan if needed.**
- **The SAOs encouraged the Host Country and other AC parties to raise Arctic issues at the relevant occasions of the preparations of WSSD in line with the Barrow Declaration and on the basis on the Rovaniemi conclusions and possible other documents prepared later in relation to the more specific themes of the WSSD.**
- **The SAOs invited all the working groups and permanent participants to identify for themselves relevant themes in the preparations for the WSSD and prepare within their respective mandates substantial material as building blocks for the overall AC message to the Johannesburg process. The SAOs also welcome the UNEP's initiative on having a special Arctic preparatory meeting for the WSSD.**



Norway, Canada and Denmark considered the conclusions prepared by the Chair as good springboard for future work. All the AC member states can from their part bring forward Arctic issues both in national and regional preparations for the WSSD. *UNEP* has proposed a special conference on Arctic issues as one preparatory step for the WSSD. The themes for the WSSD are still in preparatory stage, health and gender issues are expected to be included.

Norway reminded of the guidance given in Barrow declaration. The Arctic message to the WSSD should also include positive developments and results and be shorter and more focused as the one circulated by the Chair, *Norway* said. *Norway* also suggested to include more substance concerning climate change. *Canada* would like to include also broader questions of sustainable development, scientific data and results of the work carried out by the AC's working groups (=WGs). Also *Sweden, Norway, Russia and the USA* would like to have more attention paid into the work carried out in the AC and its' WGs. *Russia* was also puzzled which effects the review process carried out in the AC might have for the WSSD preparations. *Denmark* suggested that in relation to the work done on WSSD the need for revitalization of the AEPS should be borne into mind.

Sweden and Norway wanted to emphasize that the preparations for the WSSD shouldn't overtake the AC's internal work. Special important issues worth considering for the AC in the WSSD preparations are according to *Sweden* Arctic as a sink of pollutants and the use of natural resources. *Norway, Denmark, Island and Russia* suggested deeper discussion on the WSSD preparations at the November SAO meeting when it is clear which items are included in the agenda.

The USA recognized the Chair's initiative and thanked him for the transparent preparation process. *The USA* suggested some adjustments to the paper handed out at the Anniversary event. *USA* welcomed the paper as the Chair's conclusions but reminded the meeting of the improbability of having it approved as a US governmental level conclusion.

Canada and ICC urged clear division of the labour in the WSSD preparations. Proposal was made by *Canada, Saami Council and ICC* of forming a separate preparation team. Good preparation include both national and collective efforts. Indigenous people in the Arctic should have also strong input in the preparations urged *Saami Council and ICC*. *AAC* suggested of having 1-2 individuals taking lead on the preparations and having youth involved as well.

The Chair of the SDWG, Mr *Sauli Rouhinen* who introduced the work plan for the preparations for the WSSD (MD 10) said it would be important to have commitments to the WSSD process from different stakeholders. It is more likely to have an Arctic paragraph than separate Arctic document included into the resolution of the WSSD. Also *Island* pointed out that the Arctic may not be a specific separate issue on the WSSD. Therefore it would be desirable for the outcome of the conference to reflect the Arctic concerns at broader sense. The Arctic could also serve as an example for other regional preparations. Because the WSSD process is still in initial phase, suggestion for possible themes could be made, emphasized *Mr Rouhinen*.

Chair, *Mr Stenlund* said forming a drafting team at this point might be premature because all the themes of the WSSD are not yet announced. The paper "Conclusions of the Chair" reflected the themes brought up at the Anniversary event and shouldn't be considered as the final Arctic contribution for the WSSD. Mr Stenlund also welcome UNEP's initiative on organising a special Arctic preparatory meeting for the WSSD. Preparations for the WSSD will be on the agenda of the every SAO meeting in 2001-2002. AC's internal preparatory meeting for smaller group (f. ex SAOs) could be considered during the fall 2001. Stenlund said the best solution is to use the existing structures and the Chair as the focal point for preparations. The Chair welcomes all possible help from other member countries, permanent participants and observers.

4. THE APPROVAL OF THE WGS' OPERATING GUIDELINES: AMAP, CAFF, EPPR, PAME AND SDWG

- The SAOs approve the guidelines of the CAFF (MD 5.2.), the EPPR (MD 5.3.), the PAME (MD 5.4.) and the SDWG (MD 5.5.) . In the case of the AMAP some problems were identified. SAOs postponed the approval of the AMAP guidelines (MD 5.1.) and requested the AMAP to reconsider them on the basis of observations presented at the meeting.



Denmark pointed out the guidelines of different WGs vary quite a lot and efforts could be made to harmonize them more. *Norway* and *Sweden* said distinctions reflect the different natures of various working groups. The chair of PAME, *Mr Thomas Laughlin* pointed out that guidelines were created to serve special needs of each working group, and thus harmonization was not necessarily required. *Island*, *the USA* and *Canada* pointed out the guidelines should be seen as tools for the WGs, however, the AC's Rules of Procedure take precedence over the operating guidelines, thus there was no need at this point to go to the effort of harmonizing all the guidelines.

5. THE REPORT ON POSSIBLE WAYS TO IMPROVE THE STRUCTURE OF WORK IN THE ARCTIC COUNCIL

- The SAOs thanked the Visiting Researcher Mr Pekka Haavisto and his assistant Mr Teemu Palosaari from the Finnish Institute of International Affairs for well done work with the draft report (MD 6.) "Review of the Arctic Council Structures" and requested them to hand over their final report before the end of June. The revised report will be circulated immediately thereafter. The Chair, Mr Stenlund announced his intention to discuss the draft proposal of restructuring work with all the member states well in advance of the November 2001 SAO Meeting. A proposal will be tabled for the November SAO Meeting.



All the member countries stated that their comments are only initial because the draft was circulated only one week before the meeting. All the countries saw need for more detailed discussion at later point. *Denmark* said it should be considered if there is need for current four environmental WGs. Suggestion was made for two WGs: one for monitoring, one for implementing. *Denmark* is in favour for permanent secretariat and fishes and whales to be included into the mandate. *Denmark* requested second round of consultations where also the Faroe Islands and Greenland should be included.

Norway and the *USA* stressed that AC's future needs, tasks and challenges should be reflected in the review process. It should be considered how the work carried out in the different WGs could be better integrated with the work in the SDWG. Also *Norway* and *Sweden* underlined the need for a permanent Secretariat and more standing financing arrangements. WGs have to spend considerable time for efforts to find financing for the different projects. Also *the USA* saw need for improvements in the financial arrangements. *Norway* suggested a separate meeting concerning the review process before the November SAO meeting.

The USA reminded the meeting of the mandate in the Barrow Declaration regarding the review. In this context, the USA did not welcome the report's suggestions for restructuring the whole AC but promised to get back with more detailed comments on the Haavisto's review later. Also *Russia* would like to move forward noncommittally especially if drastic changes are expected. *Russia* saw need for more strategic approach in the work of WGs and is drafting a proposal into that direction for the SDWG. *Canada* reminded that the future of the ACAP has to be decided at the next ministerial meeting.

Iceland saw need for including sectoral ministries more into AC's work and more strategic approach for AC's work. *Iceland* emphasised that sustainable development should be the overarching theme of the AC, and that the structure of the WGs should be aimed at supporting that overall objectives. Thus there should be WGs dealing with the environmental aspects of sustainable development and there should be WGs dealing with the socio-economic aspects. Moreover, *Iceland* suggested that the work both on the environmental issues and on the socio-economic issues should be divided between scientific assessment, on the one hand, and on the other policy recommendations addressing the urgent issues detected in the scientific assessments. *Canada* saw need for strengthening efforts of combining social and environmental elements in the SDWG's work as well as building better bridge from monitoring to action.

Sweden drew the attention to the role of the observers in the review process. Especially the involvement of the observer countries and the Parliamentarians would be welcome. *Russia* pointed out there is no clear division of labour between different regional councils which might cause not only some overlaps but also gaps. Especially work carried out in the Barents Euroarctic Council and results of several Arctic bilateral projects should be notified in the AC.

Governor *Hannele Pokka* representing the Northern Forum regretted the missing of regional level cooperation in the AC. *Pokka* expressed the Northern Forum's willingness to deepen the cooperation with the AC.

PAME and ACAP presented a joint letter undersigned by the Chairs of the both WGs, *Per Dovle* and *Thomas Laughlin* concerning increasing efforts toward greater cooperation and coordination between the PAME and the ACAP. In the letter the PAME and the ACAP say they are willing to work together to determine how best to address and involve international financial institutions and private sector in implementation of projects. The PAME and The ACAP see potential benefit of coordinating the projects under the Russian NPA-Arctic and ACAP to achieve more. They have identified cleaner production capacity building

as an area of interest to both of the WGs . The PAME and the ACAP are hopeful that these efforts will contribute to the Council's deliberations regarding its possible new structure.

The Chair of the EPPR Mr *Pahkala* thanked the current Chair for organising fruitful meeting for the WGs' chairs in Rovaniemi in April 2001 and saw it as good starting point for the further discussion. Pahkala saw Haavisto's report interesting but it should include deliberation about future challenges and major issues as well. If EPPR was made a subgroup under the PAME, it would mean that the EPPR has to report first to the aWG and only thereafter to the SAOs. It should be considered if this is practical if the aim is to streamline the activities in the AC. The ACAP suggested it might be beneficial to bring the report to the WGs and get feedback also from that level.

7. Working groups' reports and work plans for 2001-2002

7.1. AMAP

- **The SAOs took note of the AMAP's report (MD 7.1.) and endorsed the updated work plan**
- **The SAOs encouraged the member states and other partners to take steps to ensure the timely availability of necessary finances to fulfil its work plan as requested by the Ministers.**
- **The SAOs took into consideration the increasing need to distribute the AMAP reports internationally, including in the WSSD**



The Chair of the AMAP Ms *Hanne Petersen* introduced the AMAP report and ask especially pay attention to the fact that AMAP 2002 assessments might form a significant part of the documentation supporting the message of WSSD. Additional funds are needed if additional copies of the AMAP SOAER will be distributed at the WSSD.

Iceland announced it has reserved funds for the PCB-project. *Iceland* had doubts if long scientific reports are needed for the WSSD. Rather the AC should send political messages on specific issues of importance for the Arctic. *The USA* promised support to the AMAP for the fiscal year 2002. *Finland* has allocated for the Food Security project approx. 100 000 USD. *Canada's* contribution for the AMAP is 400 000 CAD and for the reports 35 000 CAD. *Norway* thanked the AMAP for improved SAO report and welcome fact sheets. *Russia* said the food security project is an excellent example of good cooperation.

7.2. CAFF

- **The SAOs took note of the CAFF report (MD 7.2.1.) and CAFF communication strategy (MD 7.2.2.) and endorsed the updated work plan.**
- **The SAOs took note with gratitude of the overview report "Arctic Flora and Fauna: Status and Conservation" released at the 10th Anniversary of the AEPS and encouraged the CAFF to work out recommendations for the next ministerial for action on the basis of the report.**
- **The SAOs encouraged all member states and all other interested partners to raise funding for the ECORA-project.**
- **The SAOs welcome CAFF's efforts to cooperate with the other WGs and thereby avoid overlapping.**



All the member states expressed their appreciation to the CAFF for well done work on the overview report. *Canada, Finland and Iceland* said it forms a good starting point for recommendations for the ministerial meeting. The CAFF's Chair Mr *Sune Sohlberg* promised to produce the first draft of recommendation to the next SAO. In *ICC*'s opinion overview report is descriptive not analytical and therefore it doesn't generate recommendations. *ICC* seconded plan to bring the draft recommendations to the next SAOs.

Iceland expressed its' support for the project about reducing seabird bycatch in gillnet fisheries but emphasized that close consultation should be held with stakeholders, especially the fishing industry. *Iceland* will go on with financing the CAFF Secretariat and thanked other member countries for their continued contribution to the co-financing of the secretariat. *Russia* thanked the CAFF especially for its' activity in the Northern part of Russia. CAFF was optimistic that unsolved management issues in ECORA-project will be settled before the November SAO-meeting.

7.3. EPPR

- **The SAOs took note of the EPPR's report (MD 7.3.1.) and endorsed the work plan (MD 7.3.2.)**
- **The SAOs look forward to the finalisation of the circumpolar map on resources at risk from oil spills in the Arctic and encouraged the EPPR to cooperate with the other interested WGs on the possible continuation of the project.**
- **The SAOs took note of the state of the ongoing project on Source Control Management and encouraged the EPPR's cooperation with other working groups.**



The *USA* welcome the participation of the permanent participants into the project "Circumpolar Map of Resources at risk from Oil Spill". Norway asked for clarification from the USA as regards the withdrawal of the US data to this project which was supposed to be finalised before the SAO meeting. The USA informed that they would provide the date within one month. *Canada* and *Russia* stressed the importance of finalising the SCAT manual and developing further the work on prevention of oil spills. *Russia* emphasized the importance of including Russian scientist into the pilot project at Apatity Vodokanal.

7.4.PAME's report

- **The SAOs took note of the PAME report (MD 7.4.) and endorsed the work plan**
- **The SAOs took note of the progress made in the implementation of the RPA and encouraged PAME to go with the preparations for the GPA Intergovernmental Review meeting in Montreal and continue cooperation with UNEP in annual meetings of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans.**
- **The SAOs took note of the report presented by Mr Boris Morgunov from the Russian delegation on the Russian NPA, commended Russia of good progress and encouraged PAME to continue supporting Russia and ACOPS in carrying on the work further.**
- **The SAOs welcome the initiative of the USA to host an roundtable in Washington D.C. in September to initiate interest especially among the private sector in supporting the implementation of the Russian NPA-Arctic and requested the PAME to consider the need for a second roundtable on the basis of experience gained in Washington.**

- **The SAOs welcome the plan to update the matrix of the status of legal instruments.**
- **The SAOs welcome amendments and additions to the Offshore Oil and Gas Guidelines.**
- **The SAOs welcome the joint letter by the PAME and the ACAP and encouraged the PAME to continue coordination with other WGs.**



The PAME Chair *Thomas Laughlin* told about PAME's involvement in the preparation for the GPA Intergovernmental Review meeting and UNEP's annual meetings of Regional Seas Conventions. Mr *Boris Morgunov* from the Russian delegation said National Plan of Action on Protection of the Marine Environment from Anthropogenic Pollution in the Arctic Region of the Russian Federation (NPA Arctic) provides not only an umbrella for the Russian Arctic, but the base for the identification of concrete investment opportunities in this region. NPA-Arctic was integrated into Russian Federal Targeted Oriented Programme "World Ocean" at a Hearing of the State Duma in March 2001. Preparations are ahead for preparing the full scale GEF project and the Partnership Conference.

Canada expressed support for identifying hot spots under Russian NPA. RPA is good springboard for actions both in national and global arena. *Canada* also favoured the detailed review of international conventions and agreements. In the shipping project the effects of the climate change should be reflected, reminded *Canada*. *Island* is bearing half of the cost of the PAME Secretariat and expressed hope that also the other member countries could go on with their support. *Canada* expressed its willingness to support the PAME Secretariat. *Finland* supported the idea of organising Partnership Conference. *Finland* would however like to view the results of the first round-table meeting before starting preparations for the second one. The *USA* informed meeting about Alaska's extremely tough legislation on crew ships.

7.5. SDWG's report

- **The SAOs endorsed the selection of Vice-chair, Mr Hugi Ólafsson from Iceland for 2001-2002. The SAOs welcome the idea of Second Chair representing the Permanent Participants and requested the SDWG to amend its' operating guidelines accordingly.**
- **The SAOs took note of the SDWG's report (MD 7.5.1.) and endorsed the work plan (MD 7.5.2..**
- **The SAOs noted that several SDWG project deal with health issues and suggest that cooperation should be elaborated, as well as with the AMAP human health group in order to avoid overlap.**
- **The SAOs were glad to hear the Capacity Building workshop is scheduled in November and look forward to get firsthand results from the workshop at the next SAO**
- **The SAOs welcome the decision of the SDWG to prioritise projects involving at least three Arctic states, which will for its part emphasize the circumpolar scope of the AC**



Canada informed about capacity building workshop to be held in November in Helsinki, prior to the SAO meeting and hoped that all the parties would take part in the planning process. *Iceland* welcome the way in which SDWG is evolving and encouraged further actions to be taken. *Iceland* would also like to get the sectoral ministries more involved in the SDWG work and would welcome a strategic approach. *The USA* also pointed out the need to engage other ministries, especially in health issues. Alaska Commissioner of Health and

Social Services from the US delegation Ms. *Karen Perdue* informed the SAOs about the upcoming telemedicine conference.

Norway informed about the Canadian-Norwegian Seminar held in Oslo in April which was aiming at improving research and scientific cooperation in the Arctic. A scientific basis is crucial to the effectiveness of the different initiatives in the Arctic. *Norway* drew attention to the SD framework document in which six different subject areas are introduced. *Norway* would like to see projects under each of the areas in order to keep the balance between them. *Finland* informed about the upcoming youth policy experts meeting in September in Rovaniemi, which is related to Canada's children and youth initiative. *Russia* supported the sectoral approach and need to invite people from responsible ministries. *Russia* also mentioned that sustainability of life of the indigenous peoples is important, as well as health and housing issues. The *WWF* reminded about comprehensiveness of environmental issues in all work of the SDWG.

Sweden suggested that the joint Finnish-Swedish-Russian project Post-Sovjet Political and sosio-economic transformation among the Indigenous Peoples of the Northern Russia: Current Administrative Policies, Legal Rights and Applied Strategies, which had been presented at the SDWG meeting in April, to be included in the work plan of SDWG.

8. ACAP's report

- **The SAOs welcome the report of the ACAP (MD 8) and took note of the progress report on Annex A projects**
- **The SAOs approved as new Annex A projects the following Annex B projects to be initiated following the SAO-meeting:**
 - **Reduction of Atmospheric Mercury releases from Arctic States (project no. 4)**
 - **Environmentally sound management of stocks of obsolete pesticides in the Russian Federation (project no. 5)**
 - **Outspread and Implementation of the Cleaner Production Methodology in the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (project no. 7)**
- **The SAOs encouraged the ACAP to develop further the project on Guidelines for performing Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) of handling and storage of radioactive waste in Russia (project no. 6) to be later included as a Annex B category project.**
- **The SAOs took note with appreciation of the new pledges and commitments as regards the financing and encouraged member states and interested partners to continue their efforts to raise funding for the ACAP-projects.**



Mr *Per Døvle*, Chair of the ACAP Interim Steering Committee reported about the ACAP activities and work plan. He paid especially attention to the Interim Steering Committee meeting held in Oslo in April and noted that the meeting had lacked the participation of the Permanent Participants. In the April meeting, it was discussed about financing and investment phase for projects and about the possibility to get also the international financial institutions involved.

Finland informed that it is in the process of allocating 500 000 FIM to the ACAP projects. *Norway* was happy to see the great progress in financing after Barrow and told that it is committed to the ACAP very

seriously and finances the secretariat. *Norway* also encouraged the ACAP to seek actively for international financing.

Russia supported the proposals made by the ACAP and emphasized the need for coordination between Arctic Council working groups, especially regarding PCBs. *The USA* expressed commitment especially to activities concerning mercury and told it will work out for the US strategy for participation. *Canada* told it is contributing to Annex A and B projects. *Denmark* and *Iceland* expressed their support to Annex B projects to become Annex A projects. *The Saami Council* noted that IPS participated in the ACAP meeting in April and told that Saami Council is committed to participate in the future. The *PAME* and the *ACAP* both welcome and commended comments from the Russian Federation.

9. The ACIA's report

- **The SAOs took note with appreciation of the report of the ACIA (MD 9).**
- **The SAOs welcome with appreciation the fact that all member states participate as well as the AMAP and the CAFF into the ACIA**



Dr Robert W. Corell gave short presentation about ACIA to the meeting. The permanent participants were encouraged to participate into the ACIA. Financing of the ACIA is on stable condition. *Canada* expressed its' willingness to host the next ACIA meeting. *Russia* noted that it is very important to involve scientists from all countries and expressed its' support to the activities on climate change by the AC's working groups. *Iceland* was glad to see the progress and noted President Bush's recent statement in confirming the results of scientists. *Denmark* congratulated the ACIA for the work done and planned. In *Norway's* view the seminar held in St. Petersburg was a success and told that it is contributing 3,3 million Norwegian kronor to the ACIA this year, in addition to in kind contributions. *Norway* hopes it can maintain the same level of support also in the future. *Finland* noted that the Finnish scientists are actively involved in the ACIA. *Sweden* congratulated the ACIA for work well done so far and noted it as a truly circumpolar project.

The *WWF* informed about its three-year project on climate change that is closely coordinated with the ACIA and told that it supported financially St.Petersburg conference. *ICC* reminded about the political importance of the subject and proposed that responsible government officials on climate change would be invited to the SAO meetings as well .

10. University of the Arctic

- **The SAOs took note of the progress achieved in the work to establish the University of the Arctic and received with appreciation the Report from the University of the Arctic to the SAOs (MD 11).**
- **The SAOs congratulated the UArctic of the establishment of circumpolar administrative structure and acknowledged the initial funding provided by the Finnish Ministry of Education.**
- **The SAOs took note of the work on a curriculum for Circumpolar Studies, led by Yukon College and the Stefanson Arctic Institute in Akureyri.**
- **The SAOs took note of the work on the Arctic Learning Environment, the portal to distance and networked learning, led by Athabasca University.**
- **The SAOs took note of the North2North Mobility program developed by Finland. The program will start as soon as at least three Member States have decided to participate**

- **The SAOs encouraged appropriate government agencies to consider their possibilities to provide core funding for the UArctic and thus secure the establishment of the circumpolar network University.**



Representatives of the University of the Arctic (professor Oran Young, Ms Sally Webber and Ms Outi Snellman) reported to the SAOs about UArctic accomplishments during the past years, reminded the SAOs about the mission of the University and informed about the core programmatic activities (BCS, ALE, North2North). Professor *Oran Young* paid attention to the future challenges as well; inclusiveness, multiple academic cultures and core funding.

Finland repeated its' willingness to support the mobility program with 500 000 FIM per year, during 2002-2004 on the condition that at least two other countries will join the program. *Canada* congratulated the UArctic about the great progress made since Iqaluit ministerial meeting. UArctic is one of the main priorities of the Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy. Canada is spending approximately \$400000 to support UArctic activities which includes specific support for the development of the Bachelor of Circumpolar Studies. Canada is looking closely at the North2North proposal and hopes to participate in the initiative in the future.

Iceland told that University of Akureyri is much interested in UArctic and Iceland is also hoping to be able to join the North2North program. *Sweden* noted that the progress made is much welcome and considered the mobility program as an important element. *Sweden* is willing to participate in North2North and is considering the same funding level as Finland. The Swedish Government has reserved 100 000 Swedish kronor already this year for the coordination of the Swedish part. Sweden hopes that an overall evaluation of the mobility program would be carried out by the end of the year in order to decide about continuation. ICC, AAC, Raipon and Saami Council also expressed their support to the UArctic.

11. Presentation of Arctic Policies and Activities of the EU

- **The SAOs took note of the report on the EU's Northern Dimension delivered by the EU's prevailing Chair country Sweden. The EU's Northern Dimension offers new opportunities also to the Arctic.**
- **The SAOs took note of the report delivered by Mr Renato Batti from the European Commission and found it helpful and highlighting the considerable interests of the EU in the Arctic.**
- **The SAOs considered the idea of inviting representatives of relevant DGs to Arctic Council SAO-meetings.**
- **The SAOs welcome the idea of joint report on Arctic Environment by EEA, UNEP/Grid/Arendal and the AMAP. The SAOs reminded of the AMAP's data policy, which clarifies also the data ownership in this case.**

... ..

Director *Hans Olsson* from the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs presented the main steps and priorities of the EU Northern Dimension policy. He pointed out especially the environmental sector and environmental partnership in which Sweden contributes together with the international financial institutions, such as EBRD, NIB and EIB. Sweden hopes that other countries will also join it. Olsson reminded about the importance of the MNEPR agreement (Multilateral Nuclear Environmental Programme in the Russian Federation) – no projects

on nuclear waste can be carried out unless MNEPR is finalized. Olsson pointed out also modern information technology and the transatlantic cooperation.

Mr *Renato Batti* from the European Commission noted that the Northern Dimension Action Plan that was adopted at the European Council meeting in Santa Maria da Feira, Portugal, in June 2000, encourages the Commission to seek contacts with the Arctic Council. Mr. Batti noted the Arctic Window, an initiative made by Greenland/Denmark, and especially three potential areas of cooperation: environment, sustainable development and research. The European Unions has been actively involved in the Arctic area and has contributed a lot in various projects in the European part of the Arctic, especially in the Russian Federation. The EU involvement is growing in the framework of the Northern dimension.

Mr *Lars Kullerud* from the UNEP/Grid Arendal informed about the EEA (European Environment Protection Agency) and the AMAP cooperation in preparing a report about the relationship between the Arctic and Europe (MD 12.3). He also wished that all working groups and the indigenous peoples would get involved with this project.

12. The Arctic Transport and Infrastructure

• **The SAOs endorsed the Finnish initiative and the Tornio-Haparanda workshop that offers the first circumpolar opportunity to governmental transport experts to discuss the need for circumpolar cooperative activities in the transport sector. The SAOs also recommended close cooperation between the Host Country and the CITF Task Force in Alaska and look forward to receiving a report on the Tornio-Haparanda Workshop at the November Meeting of the SAOs, which will discuss the need for the cooperative activities on transportation in the Arctic. The Chair promised to pass on all the comments received to the organisers of the Tornio-Haparanda workshop.**



Finland presented its initiative on Arctic Transportation (MD 13.1) and reminded about the outline paper sent to AC member states earlier. Preparations of the related Workshop for governmental experts in Tornio-Haparanda on the 26 – 27 of September, 2001 is under preparation by the Finnish Ministry for Transport and Communication. *Sweden* welcome the Finnish initiative and encouraged networking with the Barents initiative that would take place back –to-back in Haparanda.

Commissioner *Walter Parker* from the US Delegation reported briefly on the Alaskan initiative (MMD 13.2), Circumpolar Infrastructure Task Force (CITF), which also has been endorsed as a Northern Forum project. Two meetings will be held before the Tornio-Haparanda workshop, the results of which will be brought to Finland.

The USA hoped that also other than governmental actors would be included in the Arctic Transportation initiative, including think-tanks, observers, research people etc. *Sweden* welcomed the Finnish initiative and encouraged cooperation with other related initiatives in the region. *Canada* supported the comprehensive circumpolar approach and told it intends to participate the Tornio-Haparanda meeting. *Canada* also noted that CITF can make a substantial contribution to the Finnish initiative. *Norway* considered it very important that also sea transport is included in the discussion. Sea transport will increase in connection with the development of oil and gas fields in the North. The safety aspect is of particular importance. The *WWF* expressed also interest in contributing to Arctic Transportation initiative.

13. Gender Equality Issues

- The SAOs approved the initiative of the Host Country to organise a Conference on Women in the Arctic in 2002
- The SAOs took note with appreciation the funding offered by the Nordic Council of Ministers and welcome this observer organisation as a co-organiser. The SAOs welcome also other interested parties to join as organising or supporting partners.
- The SAOs decided to establish a reference group with the task to assist the Host Country in organizing this conference and requested member states, permanent participants and interested observers to appoint their representative to the group.



Ms *Leila Räsänen* from the Finnish Ministry on Social Affairs and Health/ Unit for Gender Equality Issues, presented the Finnish initiative (MD 14) to organize a conference on Women in the Arctic in August 2002. *Sweden* warmly welcomed the initiative and noted that gender issues should be a part of all activities of the AC. *Sweden* also proposed that the pilot study would look at the present projects at stake in the AC and see how they are linked to gender equality. *Russia* told that this issue has full support from relevant Russian institutions and that comments for contacts has already been received. Especially indigenous women need to be taken into account, men's rights shouldn't be forgotten either. *The USA* told about the Alaskan State Regional Forum for Women which is interested in this initiative. *Norway* expressed appreciation for the initiative and referred to other conferences and initiatives on women and gender equality in the Nordic, Barents and Baltic Areas. One should draw upon the results from these initiatives. *Norway* pointed out the mainstreaming aspect which also should be reflected in the Arctic Council's work. It could also be constructive to include men's role and situation. *Canada* considered this as a very important initiative and expressed its willingness to assist and participate in the preparations. *Canada* also reminded of the results of the Whitehorse Conference. *Denmark* noted this issue to be a keen interest especially for Greenland and hoped for participation on a non-selected basis. *Iceland* also considered the initiative an important one and promised to come back soon with a contact name. *Gwich'in International* expressed support for this initiative as well.

14. Any other business

Mr *Clifford Lincoln*, Chair of the Arctic Parliamentarians' Committee introduced Human Development Report and pointed out that carrying out of the executive work does not fit in the role of the parliamentarians but rather the AC. It was decided that this initiative would be dealt deeper in the next SDWG meeting in November. *Denmark* encouraged contacts with SLICA (Survey of the living conditions in the Arctic).

IUCN thanked for being granted Observer status in Barrow and informed that an IUCN Arctic strategy and Action Plan.

The Nordic Council of Ministers informed that a new Arctic Strategy is under preparation and that it will be discussed among the Nordic SAOs as well.

The Chair informed that the **next SAO meeting** is scheduled to Espoo (right next to Helsinki) on November 6-7, 2001. The dates for the next AC Ministerial meeting are also under consideration, but the final dates can not be decided before the Danish EU-presidency calendar is decided upon.

