Dear Ambassador Stenlund,

The United Nations Development Programme in the Russian Federation has been working in the Russian Arctic for several years concerning sustainable development and environment protection. In this regard, I write to submit UNDP Russia’s application for Observer status at the Arctic Council.

UNDP Russia implemented a $1 million Capacity 21 project in the Murmansk Oblast from 1995 to 1998, and is currently developing several projects for Russia’s Arctic and Northern regions. These include the following UNDP/Global Environment Facility (GEF) projects:

- Conserving the Globally Significant Biodiversity of Taimyr, including its Keystone Population of Wild Reindeer: A Demonstration;
- Cost Effective Energy Efficiency Measures in the Russian Educational Sector (project sites are in Murmansk, Arkhangelesk, and Karelia);
- Demonstrating Sustainable Conservation of Biological Diversity in Four Protected Areas in Russia’s Kamchatka Peninsula;
- Conservation Management of Wild Salmonid Diversity in Kamchatka; and
- North Pacific Transboundary Fisheries Stock Conservation and Management Project.

These sustainable development projects not only focus on Arctic biodiversity conservation and energy efficiency issues, but also include important components that address socio-economic and alternative livelihood options, as well as strengthening indigenous communities.

The $13 million Kamchatka Protected Areas Project has already been approved. We anticipate that the remaining projects will be submitted for approval to the GEF Secretariat before the end of the year. As such, UNDP Russia will be implementing approximately $30 million worth of projects in Russia’s Arctic and Northern regions over the next 5 years.

Ambassador Peter Stenlund,
Chairman of the Arctic Council Secretariat
Arctic Council Secretariat
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Finland

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Given the similarities between the mandates of our two organizations, UNDP is the UN’s leading sustainable development agency, it would be extremely beneficial if UNDP Russia could be an Observer to the Arctic Council. Observer status would help to ensure that UNDP Russia projects are coordinated with and complementary to any being designed or implemented by Arctic Council Members and other Observers.

I have attached brief summaries of the projects listed above.

I look forward to hearing from you and stand ready to provide you with any information that you may require regarding this application.

Yours sincerely,

Frederick Lyons,
UN Resident Coordinator and
UNDP Resident Representative.