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2006

Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG)

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Sustainable Development of the Arctic Cities – Third World Urban Forum Networking Event Proposed Outline

Propose

To provide an outline of a networking session to profile the Arctic Council's approaches and activities related to sustainable communities for the Third World Urban Forum (WUFIII), in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, June 19-23, 2006.

Background

The Twentieth Session of the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) in 2005 called on WUF III to address sustainable urban/community development in the circumpolar north. As such, the Forum will look to:

- raise the awareness of the international community of the sustainable development challenges of the far north and the Arctic region;
- consult about the sustainable development of cities and other human settlements and the promotion of improved shelter infrastructure in the far north and the Arctic region, as well as about the creation of favourable living conditions for the indigenous peoples of that area; and,
- compile information on training activities in the far north and Arctic region as a basis of further cooperation between UN-Habitat and relevant partners.

The overarching theme for WUF III is *Turning Ideas into Action* with the focus on profiling concrete actions. To achieve this, the Forum will consist of plenaries, roundtables, networking sessions (similar to panel discussions), exhibitions and side events.

At the Senior Arctic Officials meeting in Khanty-Manisysk, October 10-13, 2005, the possibility of the Council's participation in the Forum was raised with Member States, and it was recommended that a proposal be submitted to UN-Habitat for consideration – the process to be lead by the Sustainable Development Working Group.

A proposal was submitted to UN-Habitat October 2005, for a networking session entitled: *Sustainable Development of the Far North – Sustainable Communities and Human Settlements*. This proposal was accepted by UN-Habitat during its early application approval process.

Approach

The networking events are a key element of the Forum and offer an intimate venue which allows for exploratory discussions as well as presenting an opportunity for participants to get to know each other's organization. The ultimate goal of these events are to build knowledge, strengthen partnerships, create new ones, and provide platform for novel ideas and practices.

In regards to UN-Habitat's resolution on the compilation of information on northern training activities, there is a synergy with the Council's document *Capacity Building Overview of the Arctic Council*.

In light of this, we propose that key initiatives drawn from the *Capacity Building Overview of the Arctic Council* document be brought forward to the Forum as examples of the Council's regional collaboration and approach to sustainable urban/community development.

Network Session Structure

The Forum's networking sessions are two hours in length, providing an opportunity to profile activities and allow for discussion. The date of the Council's session is to be confirmed.

The structure of the Council's networking session should provide a venue for interactive dialogue on its activities and approaches to sustainable communities. As such, we propose profiling four Arctic Council's initiatives (approximately 15 minute presentations) followed by a facilitated interactive discussion, with the purpose of exploring other approaches and looking at possible partnerships.

To showcase the breadth of Council activities, we propose showcasing the following initiatives:

- *Ecological and Cultural Tourism* – The Sustainable Model for Arctic Regional Tourism (SMART) assists the Arctic tourism sector in expanding their potential based on the cultural and natural environment of the Arctic. As part of the broader sustainable development of the North, this project supports benefits that are economic, social, and environmental. The project's goal is to create resources, tools, and incentives that can be used directly by small and medium-sized tourism businesses or groups involved in rural or tourism development and to offer professional training in this field.
- *Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic (SLICA)* – New economic and cultural indicators are being developed to describe the living conditions of Inuit and Saami communities in the Arctic. Current measures show higher unemployment and lower income levels, poorer health, and more social problems among Inuit and Saami peoples than among the rest of the northern population. The new indicators will help to establish baseline information on present living conditions. Any changes in these conditions in the future can then be measured against this baseline.
- *Women and Resource Management in the Rural North* – The goal of this initiative is to analyse and document the involvement and role of women and indigenous peoples in natural resource management in the Arctic. Coordinated by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Northern Feminist University, **the project objectives include:**
 - describing, systematizing and comparing the roles of women in natural resource management in Arctic areas, with particular attention to decision-making positions;
 - developing tools and strategies that can be used to promote participatory values and practices; and,
 - promoting international cooperation on gender equality in natural resource management.
- *Family-Based Reindeer Economy and the Status and Management of Wild Reindeer /Caribou Populations* – Rapid growth of wild reindeer/caribou herds is a key factor in

reindeer husbandry. This project is developing a better understanding of the relation between herd fluctuation and management and its influence on the indigenous communities. Reindeer husbandry is traditionally managed by families, with family members playing different roles in different societies in the circumpolar area. With today's rapid changes in societal structure, reindeer families use different strategies to respond to external pressures. This project looks at these responses, assessing whether outside pressures are strengthening or weakening the family role.

Networking Session Format

To facilitate discussion, the format of the session should be informal allowing for an exchange of views, approaches and ideas. As such, we suggest the following format:

- Introductory Remarks – by the Chair of the Arctic Council or that of the Sustainable Development Working Group
- Presentations (4 presentations)
- Open Discussion – facilitated/moderated by Canada's Senior Arctic Official.

Work Plan

March 2006

Inform the SDWG of the opportunity presented by the Forum to showcase the Council's approach to sustainable community development. Submit, an approach for participation at this event for consideration.

If accepted the proposal would be presented to SAOs for approval.

April 2006

Present networking session outline to SAOs for approval.

May 2006

Work with project leads in the development of the networking session.

June 2006

Participate in the Third World Urban Form networking events.

Communications/Distribution Plan

UN-Habitat and the Canadian WUF Secretariat have an established communications plan for the promotion of the Forums networking sessions. In addition, the Chair of the Council in the past has often spoken at various international events and fora to advance the Arctic Council's position on a number of issues. A similar approach could be taken to promote the Council's networking session.

Approximate Cost

Arctic Council Networking Event 2005-2006 (Cdn Funds)

Networking Event	\$ 0
Translation	\$ 4,000
Administration	\$ 1,000
Travel	\$10,000
Permanent Participant Participation	\$10,000
Total	\$25,000

Environmental Impact Assessment

Zero Impact

Project Sustainability

The objective of the networking session is to advance the Council's mandate as a regional forum for sustainable development by sharing its approaches and successes in addressing sustainable community development. It also present a venue to examine and explore possible partnerships.