

Meeting of Senior Arctic Officials Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada. October 22-23, 2013. Plenary Meeting. Final Report.

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Meeting of Senior Arctic Officials
Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada
October 22-23, 2013
Plenary Meeting
Final Report

1. Introduction

1.1 Opening Remarks and Traditional Blessing

Grand Chief Ruth Massie from the Council of Yukon First Nations, and Chief Kristina Kane from the Ta`an Kwach`an Council, and Yukon Premier Darrell Pasloski delivered opening remarks. Elder Dianne Smith from the Kwanlin Dün First Nation welcomed delegates with a traditional blessing.

1.2 Welcoming Remarks

Patrick Borbey, Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials, welcomed delegates to Whitehorse for the first SAO meeting under the Canadian Chairmanship. He noted that he was using a new gavel, presented by Yukon Premier Darrell Pasloski to the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Chair of the Arctic Council, to mark the start of the second round of Arctic Council chairmanships. The gavel was made by Ken Anderson, an artist of Scandinavian and Tlingit descent who resides in Whitehorse. The Chair thanked the people and the Government of Yukon for their warm welcome and the generous hospitality afforded to the delegates participating in the Arctic Council meeting.

1.3 Roundtable Introductions

Following the roundtable introductions, a special welcome was extended to the new Senior Arctic Officials: Susan Harper (Canada), Erik Lorenzen (Kingdom of Denmark) and Thorsteinn Ingolfsson (Iceland), and to Gustaf Lind in his new capacity as SAO for Sweden.

1.4 Approval of Agenda

Background: The Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials outlined some minor changes to the agenda. The CAFF and SDWG progress reports switched places (agenda

items 6.4 and 6.7) and two items were added to the end of the agenda: Tracking Tool of Arctic Council Deliverables and Ongoing Work (agenda item 8.4), and Multilateral Audit on the Arctic States Work Related to the Arctic Council (agenda item 8.5)

Decision: The final draft agenda, with the additions described above, was approved.

2. Update from the Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials

Background: Patrick Borbey, Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials, gave a short update on the work that was done during the first few months of the Canadian Chairmanship. He began by explaining that two of the four Task Forces established by the Kiruna Declaration – the Task Force to Facilitate the Creation of a Circumpolar Business Forum and the Task Force for Action on Black Carbon and Methane – have held preliminary meetings. The Task Force for Enhancing Scientific Cooperation and the Task Force on Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Prevention will be meeting in December and January, respectively. With regard to Working Groups, the Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials noted that all six have been active and have had meetings since the Kiruna Ministerial. He also thanked Working Group Chairs for their contributions to the Tracking Tool of Arctic Council Deliverables and Ongoing Work. Next, the Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials congratulated the Arctic Council Secretariat (ACS) on its formal launch. The ACS will be responsible for monitoring progress across all ongoing Arctic Council projects. In terms of outreach, the Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials noted that he has visited all eight Arctic Council Member States and has met with a number of Permanent Participants since the start of the Canadian Chairmanship. He thanked SAOs and Permanent Participants for their hospitality and highlighted a number of conferences that he has attended, including: the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) Summit in Alaska; the Third International Arctic Forum in Salekhard, Russia; an Arctic Shipping Forum in St. John's, Canada; and, most recently, the Arctic Energy Summit and the Arctic Circle Forum in Iceland. Lastly, the Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials informed the group that he had received a letter from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), thanking the AC and AMAP for its input to the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

3. Report from the Director of the Arctic Council Secretariat

3.1 Update on the Arctic Council Secretariat Work Plan

Background: The Director of the ACS, Magnús Jóhannesson, offered a brief update on the establishment of the Secretariat and its new staff, with thanks to those who have helped along the way. He tabled the Secretariat's Work Plan for the next two years, and highlighted its focus on two primary areas: (1) communications and outreach work and (2) archiving. He also pointed out that with the approval of the Work Plan by the SAOs, the ACS will provide Secretariat support to the ACAP and EPPR Working Groups in 2014, and will work to further strengthen cooperation with other WG Secretariats.

Decision: Senior Arctic Officials approved the ACS Work Plan for 2014-2015 and, subject to one item being reviewed within two weeks, approved in principle the ACS budgets for 2014 and 2015, respectively.

4. Chairmanship-led Initiatives

4.1 Promoting Traditional Ways of Life

Background: The Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials noted that after speaking with Permanent Participants, the emphasis of this initiative should be on *promoting*, rather than *protecting*, traditional ways of life. He stated that the Chairmanship would be looking to Member States and Permanent Participants to submit examples of best practices and he expressed his appreciation that the Government of the Northwest Territories had agreed to partner with Canada on this initiative. The aim of this project will be to create a compendium of best practices, which can be used in advocacy and promotion efforts. A project proposal will be submitted to SAOs and Permanent Participants intersessionally. The Chairmanship will submit a project proposal to SAOs and Permanent Participants intersessionally. The comments, offers and guidance given by SAOs and PPs will be taken into consideration when developing the proposal. The project will also be mindful of the work that is underway at the working group level (e.g. by the SDWG Social Economic and Cultural expert group), as well as the work underway to incorporate traditional local knowledge into the Council's work.

Conclusion: For information only

4.2 Strengthening the Arctic Council

Background: The Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials stressed the importance of this initiative and outlined some of the steps that have already been taken in the areas of: improving administrative processes, enhancing through increased communications the profile of the Arctic Council and enhancing Permanent Participant capacity. Examples of this include archiving, improving the coordination between working groups, engaging with multilateral fora and examining contributions to Permanent Participants. The Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials also encouraged the Council to renew efforts to reach out to youth and to get Arctic Council messages out to Arctic residents.

Conclusion: Strengthening the AC is a priority and will be a standing item on every SAO agenda during the Canadian Chairmanship. A separate communications plan will be discussed at the next SAO meeting, which will also consider ways to think beyond Arctic conferences and meetings and consider use of social media.

5. Task Forces

5.1 The Task Force for Action on Black Carbon and Methane and AMAP progress and plans for SLCP scientific assessment reports on BC and methane

Background: Rita Cerutti (Canada), representing the co-chairs, reported on the progress of the Task Force for Action on Black Carbon and Methane (TFBCM). The Task Force requested that those States and PPs that have not yet identified their representatives to the Task Force do so promptly. The speaker provided highlights from the first meeting held September 17-19 in Whitehorse, emphasizing that it was intended as a scoping session. She also asked for SAO guidance regarding the issue of observer engagement in TFBCM meetings, noting that at its first meeting, delegates had agreed that broad engagement, including from AC observers, would be desirable.

The Task Force hopes to deliver on-the-ground, concrete results and avoid duplication of other work. Issues under consideration include emissions inventories, national action plans, target-setting and time frame for the Task Force's work. A summary document cataloging existing work on SLCPs is being assembled as a reference document, and other inter-sessional work is taking place.

The AMAP Chair, Morten Skovgaard Olsen, said that AMAP has two expert groups in the field of SLCPs, one on black carbon and tropospheric Ozone and one

working on methane issues. Both groups will deliver technical report by 2015 and the AMAP WG intends to make a none-technical summary report on SLCF.

Decision: SAOs provided advice and support focused on: the importance of this work and strong commitment to take part in the initiative; the need to complement, not duplicate, work in existing fora; the status of scientific work; and ensuring that the work of the previous task force is taken into account. Regarding the issue of observer engagement in the meetings of Arctic Council Task Forces, guidance from SAOs will follow.

5.2 The Task Force to Facilitate the Creation of a Circumpolar Business Forum

Background: Mitch Bloom (Canada), Chair of the Task Force, presented the work of the Task Force to date. Iceland, Russia and Finland are co-chairs of the Task Force. It was noted that the business community would like to move quickly to establish the CBF which would provide advice on the activities and initiatives of the Arctic Council. It was also noted that business sees benefit in leaving it to them to work out the details of how the CBF would function. The Arctic Council needs to focus on how it will work with the CBF. From the Arctic Council side, there are many potential advantages as well, but questions remain outstanding and need to be resolved, i.e. what relation the Circumpolar Business Forum should ultimately have to the AC, what would be its role and how would members be identified/selected/appointed. The Chair cited five areas of focus for the future CBF: (1) resource development (2) infrastructure (3) shipping (4) tourism (5) small-and-medium enterprise. The next meeting will take place in Helsinki (4-5 December 2013), and report back to SAOs by the end of December as per the Kiruna declaration. Broad attendance at the Helsinki meeting is invited and encouraged.

Conclusion: The Task Force was asked to follow the guidance provided by the SAOs at this meeting, and to provide minutes/reports from their previous meetings to the SAOs. SAOs were reminded to send well-instructed HoDs with clear mandates. The PPs are interested in participating in this work.

5.3 The Task Force for Enhancing Scientific Cooperation in the Arctic

Background: Gustaf Lind, Senior Arctic Official (Sweden), and one of the co-chairs of this Task Force, reported on its progress and noted that scientific research is key in international development, and that collaboration is necessary to improve the scientific work conducted by the eight Arctic states. The first meeting of the

Task Force will be in Stockholm December 10-11, 2013. The Chair has requested that States and PPs nominate delegates and send in their preliminary views.

Conclusion: The SAOs requested that the co-chairs follow up this work and looked forward to hearing news from the first meeting.

5.4 The Task Force on Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Prevention

Background: Else Berit Eikeland, Senior Arctic Official (Norway), and one of the co-chairs of the Task Force on Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Prevention (TFOPP) noted that the first meeting of the Task Force will be in Oslo, Norway, January 16-17, 2014. At the first meeting, a document will be presented enumerating the most important areas for the Task Force to focus on. An Action Plan will be produced by the Task Force by the Ministerial meeting in 2015.

Conclusion: The SAOs thanked the co-chairs for their work in this Task Force, which is to cover a major issue - one of the main priorities of the Arctic Council.

6. Working Groups

6.1 Implementation of Recommendations from the Expert Group on Ecosystem-Based Management

Background: Julia Gourley, Senior Arctic Official (United States of America) referred to the report “Ecosystem-Based Management in the Arctic” submitted to Ministers in May 2013, which included 12 recommendations for activities to be undertaken by the Arctic Council. She expressed a desire that the Arctic Council Working Groups take a concrete, stepwise approach to the implementation of all Arctic Council recommendations, not just those of the Ecosystem-Based Management Expert Group. She asked that the Working Groups affected by the recommendations of the EBM Expert Group report regularly on their efforts, and she expressed thanks for the brief reports received from Working Groups CAFF and PAME. She asked that a summary report detailing work towards the EBM recommendations from all Working Groups be prepared for the 2015 ministerial meeting.

Decision: SAOs thanked AMAP, CAFF, PAME and SDWG for their continuous follow up work to on the EBM report recommendations, and requested that they work systematically to implement the recommendations where appropriate. The ACS was tasked to follow up with the WGs to ensure that a joint report on the

Arctic Council's follow up of the EBM recommendations is produced for the 2015 Ministerial. It was acknowledged that some of the EBM recommendations pertain primarily to governments.

6.2 Arctic Contaminants Action Programme (ACAP) Progress Report

Introduction and information items: The Chair of ACAP, Jaakko Henttonen, discussed the Working Group's multiple projects on black carbon, including a new platform in planning which has the potential to be a repository for information on black carbon in the Arctic. ACAP's work in this area is coordinated with other black carbon initiatives within AMAP, as well as with organizations outside the Arctic Council.

Other ACAP work involves (1) PCB management and destruction in Russia and (2) reduction of mercury emissions in Russia (which is in alignment with the Minamata Convention). While funding comes from NEFCO for some of ACAP's work, exploration of innovative funding possibilities is underway including the Northern Dimension EU policy. Some projects are also waiting for the inauguration of the Project Support Instrument (PSI).

Conclusion: For information

6.2.1 Obsolete Pesticides

Background: The Executive Secretary of ACAP, Timo Seppälä (Finland), explained that the Obsolete Pesticides report for phases 1 and 2 has now been finalized and is ready for approval. The report focuses on the inventory and repackaging phases. The next part of the project, phase 3, now needs to be implemented. To this end, ACAP presented three recommendations: 1) Regions working with ACAP should maintain interim storage facilities in good condition. 2) Regions working with ACAP should continue to identify and remove any remaining obsolete pesticides stored under poor conditions to better interim storage facilities until they can be disposed of in an environmentally sound manner. 3) The Russian Federation should establish facilities for the environmentally sound destruction of obsolete pesticides and other hazardous wastes as soon as possible to mitigate risks to the environment and to human health.

Decision: SAOs approved the final report from ACAP Obsolete Pesticides project in Northern Russia. The communication of the results of this work should be a matter of priority.

6.3 Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) Progress Report

Introduction and information items: The AMAP Chair, Morten Skovgaard Olsen (Kingdom of Denmark) noted that AMAP is preparing updates to three of its previous assessments. The first, on persistent organic pollutants (POPs), will build upon the 2009 assessment by including new, emergent POPs that could be considered for inclusion in the Stockholm Convention. The updated report will also add consideration of how climate change is influencing levels and effects of contaminants in the Arctic. This significant undertaking is envisioned for completion in 2017.

In the update to its radioactivity report from 2009, two changes are especially notable. First, the report will be expanded to include additional sources of radiation not covered in the previous assessment. Second, Japan has identified an expert to participate in the update.

AMAP will also update its 2009 Human Health report, and it will include food and water security. The Chair highlighted as well the highly collaborative nature of the recently released report on Arctic Marine Areas of Special Significance, in which AMAP, CAFF and SDWG were engaged. AMAP is also cooperating with PAME on the development of; *inter alia*, the Sustainable Tourism and Cruise Ship operations Initiative. AMAP intends to prepare a white paper on the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles for cross-border scientific work in the Arctic.

Conclusion: For information

6.3.1 Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic (AACA)-Part C and follow-up to Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost (SWIPA) assessment

Background: The AMAP Chair gave an update on the AACA project Part C, noting that AMAP has prepared an implementation plan, Terms of Reference for component “teams” and a strategic framework for the work. He made several key points about the work, noting (1) that it will take a regional approach, rather than covering the whole Arctic, (2) that priority-setting will be undertaken through consultations with stakeholders, including national, regional and local authorities, and that (3) it will build on existing work, and will not start from scratch. Two time-frames are proposed for the project: through 2030; and through 2080. Three pilot regions are currently being explored: the Barents Sea; Davis Strait and Baffin Bay; and the Bering/Beaufort/Chukchi Seas.

Conclusion: The SAOs took note of AMAP’s plans to undertake AACA–C activities.

6.7 Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) Progress Report

Introduction and information items: The Vice Chair of the Sustainable Development Working Group, Mikael Anzén (Sweden) introduced his presentation with a request that the SDWG in the future receive “framework” mandates, flowing from the ministerial declarations, in the same way the other WGs do, instead of having to bring each individual project to SAOs for approval. This change would ensure that, provided there is internal consensus on projects within SDWG itself, the Group does not have to come to SAOs for approval of each individual project. He also reminded the audience that the SDWG is largely composed of civil servants, rather than scientific experts. He cited three key areas of SDWG work post-Kiruna, including (1) promoting mental wellness, (2) facilitating adaptation to climate change, and (3) supporting traditional and local knowledge. He cited the launch of the Social, Economic and Cultural (SEC) Experts Group as a significant and positive step. Not all PPs and States have nominated a representative to this group; the Vice-Chair gently requested that this be done soon.

Next, the Vice Chair reviewed other ongoing projects, including (1) preservation of Arctic indigenous languages, (2) reindeer herding and youth, and (3) electronic memory of the Arctic. He pointed to the upcoming delivery of the Arctic Human Development Report II, scheduled for 2014, and cited the intersessional Arctic Social Indicators reports as an important contributor. He requested that comments on the developing AHDR chapters be delivered by December of this year.

The Vice-Chair then moved on to cover the SDWG’s initiatives in development, including further work on (1) traditional and local knowledge (2) marine subsistence mapping (3) SDWG strategic planning (4) cross-cutting activities.

Decision: It was decided that, in the future, the SDWG would receive a broader framework mandate from the ministerial declarations, more akin to the mandates of other WGs, provided there is internal SDWG consensus on projects.

6.7.1 The Evidence Base for Promoting Mental Wellness and Resilience to Address Suicide in Circumpolar Communities

Background: The SDWG Vice Chair introduced the project, saying that the peoples of the Arctic bear the consequences of ongoing rapid change. There is a need to respond to the recommendations and report from the “Hope and Resilience in Suicide Prevention Seminar” accepted in Nuuk in 2009. The outcomes of current and past research will be assessed. Deliverables from this project are (1) a synthesis report, (2) a framework to scale up actions, (3)

identification of key indicators to assess resilience and wellbeing programs, and (4) a synthesis conference to take place in 2015 in Nunavut. It was noted that the ICC had specifically underlined the importance of proceeding carefully when dealing with such a sensitive issue.

Decision: SAOs approved the project while underlining the importance of keeping close contact with all the PPs as the project evolves, and taking note of the concerns expressed by the ICC.

6.7.2 Arctic Adaptation Exchange: Facilitating Adaptation to Climate Change

Background: This is the follow-up step of AACA parts A and B. A priority for the Arctic Council, it will be a portal of access to adaptation-relevant resources for decision-makers and others. The deliverables are (1) an online portal, (2) protocols for maintaining the portal, and (3) a report on indicators of adaptive capacity across the Arctic. This project is being co-led by Canada, with contribution from the Government of Yukon as part of the Canadian delegation, and from the U.S. [SAO for U.S. encouraged project leads to include the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre in the project work, noting the presentation that the YCCIC had given during the lunch hour.]

Decision: The SAOs approved the project.

6.7.3 Gender Equality in the Arctic: Current Realities and Future Challenges

Background: The SDWG Vice Chair said that the continued gender imbalance in policy and decision-making roles is notable. Women are underrepresented in many sectors. In the Northern regions of Sweden, many women move South and stay there after they have finished their education. This demographic imbalance creates negative impacts on resilience, economic activity and on men. The objectives of this project, which is co-led by Iceland and Norway, are (1) to propose policy-relevant dialogue on this issue, (2) to focus on equality issues, (3) to enhance economic and social development, and (4) to encourage cooperation between research and stakeholder networks. Deliverables are (a) a planning and steering committee, (b) a “Gender Equality in the Arctic” conference in Nov 2014, with a final report on the conference, and (c) progress in integrating gender into HOW we work on these issues.

Decision: SAOs approved the project as presented, and offers to co-lead from both the Kingdom of Denmark and Finland were welcomed.

6.7.4 Review of Cancer among Circumpolar Indigenous Peoples (CircCan)

Background: The SDWG Vice Chair noted that this project has been under development for more than 2.5 years, since the Nuuk Declaration. The objective is to review and describe patterns and trends. The deliverables are (1) a presentation of the project's findings, (2) documents and other media products, and (3) scientific papers for publication in peer-reviewed medical journals.

Decision: SAOs approved the project as presented, but recommended expanding the scope to include all the Arctic states.

6.5 Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) Progress Report

General progress report: The EPPR Chair, Ole Kristian Bjerkemo (Norway) drew attention to two initiatives. The first, to develop a plan for a circumpolar marine environmental risk assessment (CMERA), involves an upcoming workshop in Tromsø and provides a good opportunity for the involvement of other Working Groups. The second is a request from the International Maritime Organization to develop a manual for combating oil pollution under snow-and-ice conditions; this request demonstrates a positive assessment of EPPR's work by an important external organization.

Conclusion: For information

6.5.1 Routines for updating of "Operational Guidelines" of the Agreement on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic

Background: The EPPR Chair gave an update on the ongoing work to update the operational guidelines for the existing Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution, Preparedness and Response in the Arctic. He pointed out that EPPR was tasked not just with updating the guidelines, but with establishing concrete routines for conducting regular updates. The Chair emphasized that, while the involvement of stakeholders is desirable in that process, the agreement remains between the States. Accordingly, the involvement of competent national authorities is crucial.

Decision: The SAOs thanked EPPR for the valuable work of keeping the guidelines updated, as they are a critical part of the Agreement on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response, and approved the routines for updating of the

Operational Guidelines, noting that projects such as this provide useful material for the Council's public outreach.

6.5.2 EPPR Strategic Plan of Action

Background: EPPR is guided by its Operating Guidelines, where it is written that their Strategic Plan requires formal approval by the SAOs. The plan has four key objectives: (1) assessing the risk of environmental emergencies; (2) improving prevention measures; (3) improving preparedness; and (4) improving information sharing.

Decision: The SAOs reviewed and approved the Strategic Plan.

6.6 Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) Progress Report

Introduction and information items: Chair of PAME Hugi Olafsson (Iceland) began by cataloguing the Group's ongoing work, including (1) follow-up to the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment, (2) follow-up to the Arctic Ocean Review, (3) an update to the Arctic Council wide Arctic Marine Strategic Plan, (4) ongoing work on the ecosystem approach to management as it applies to the marine environment, (5) a new project, Framework for Arctic Marine Protected Areas, and (6) a collection of outreach and cooperation initiatives with other Working Groups and with organizations outside the Arctic Council. The Sustainable Arctic Tourism Initiative (SATI) provides good opportunities for collaboration between Working Groups. Plans for the SATI include an initial focus on cruise ship operations and to respond to AMSA 1(d) to consider (1) collection and assessment of existing information on Arctic cruise ship operations, (2) preparation and inventory of existing laws and policies, and (3) a series of workshops to gather information, identify best practices, and develop a document for publication. Canada is in the process of developing a draft work plan for the cruise-ship guidelines initiative, and PAME has reached out to Arctic Council working groups seeking their collaboration on its development. PAME will reach out to Arctic States to submit information on their domestic rules and policies pertaining to Arctic cruise tourism.

PAME is also working on the identification of specially designated Arctic high seas marine areas which is in the assessment phase of protection needs. A draft report is expected in spring 2014. The PAME Chair also reported on an invitation from the World Maritime University (WMU) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to the Arctic Council to co-sponsor a workshop in April 2014

on the Polar Code. PAME was of the opinion that this could be a positive development for the Arctic Council.

Conclusion: After a discussion on the Sustainable Arctic Tourism Initiative, it was concluded that PAME should take the guidance from SAOs into consideration as they continue to develop the project. WGs were invited to continue the dialogue on the scope and cross-cutting interests including terrestrial and cultural considerations in the cruise ship guidelines and Sustainable Arctic Tourism Initiative after this meeting. The extension of the project to include terrestrial tourism was also proposed. Regarding the potential WMU/IMO workshop on the Polar Code, a PAME proposal for Arctic Council involvement will be sent soon to the SAOs for approval.

6.6.1 Development of a revised Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (AMSP)

Background: the PAME Chair informed the meeting of the development of a revised Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (AMSP), 10 years after the first AMSP. He highlighted that such a revised plan will be the foundation for the Arctic Council's work on marine issues for the next 10 years. It must take into account the work of other Arctic Council Working Groups, including: the recent Arctic Ocean Review; the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment; the Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost in the Arctic report; and other relevant Arctic Council outcomes. The other Arctic Council Working Groups have been invited to nominate an expert in a steering group for the revision of AMSP. A final version is planned for submission at the 2015 ministerial meeting.

Conclusion: SAOs thanked PAME for the update, noted its importance and urged other Arctic Council working groups to nominate experts for this work. PAME was encouraged to work towards a focused document that takes into account new challenges and has an added value.

6.4 Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) Progress Report

6.4.1 Implementation of the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA)

Background: The CAFF Chair, Risa Smith (Canada) reported on the Group's move from the publication of the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment to implementation measures for its recommendations. Analyses of what can be implemented, by whom, and within what time frame should be completed within the next few weeks. The Chair pointed also to the Group's efforts to acquire and integrate

traditional and local knowledge in its work, and to mainstream its work by working with businesses and groups outside of the biodiversity expert community. Response from industry has been great.

The Chair moved on to cover several current reports and events, including “Life Linked to Ice” (which was to be featured in an outreach side event at the Whitehorse SAO meeting), its expected follow-up to ICC’s “Ice is Our Highway” study, and the upcoming Arctic Biodiversity Symposium, which will be hosted by Norway.

Conclusion: The SAOs were pleased with the early implementation work on the ABA recommendations, commented on the progress described and provided guidance on the CAFF approach to implementation of ABA recommendations. There will be a travel fund for PP participation at the ABA conference in 2014. The Chair encouraged all attending the Whitehorse SAO meeting to attend the CAFF “Life Linked to Ice” outreach event, taking place the evening of October 22 involving local, PP and Yukon government biodiversity experts and hosted by the Yukon Science Institute.

6.4.2 Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program

Background: The CAFF Chair discussed the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program, which is an ongoing programme. She expressed enthusiasm at the progress that has been made and the Program’s decision to emphasize both data-collection and deployment/provision of data for others. Within the CBMP, the Chair discussed the existing terrestrial, marine, and freshwater monitoring plans, and said she hopes to have leadership from one of the States on a needed coastal monitoring plan as well. The CBMP is also developing indicators, while ensuring that it is not duplicating other organizations’ existing work.

Conclusion: SAOs expressed general support for the programme.

6.4.3 Migratory Bird Conservation Project

Background: The CAFF Chair pointed out that the Arctic Migratory Birds project in particular offers unique opportunities for collaboration at the circumpolar and global levels. It is thus a great opportunity for observers to get involved.

Decision: SAOs commented on the project plans, gave guidance to the co-chairs on the scope, and expressed general support for the project. They stressed, in

particular, the international nature of the project and the potential for observer engagement.

7. Opportunity to discuss written reports

7.1 Project Support Instrument (NEFCO)

Background: The PSI is an instrument for financing prioritised Arctic Council projects.

Action: For information. If there are questions related to this report, these should be forwarded to the ACS, which will communicate with NEFCO in order to find answers.

8. Any other business

8.1 Northern Federal University of Archangelsk (NArFU) Study Tour

Background: Anton Vasiliev, Senior Arctic Official (Russian Federation) presented briefly on a proposed idea to bring high-level university students to the Northern Arctic Federal University for an international marine study tour along the Northern Sea Route. The trip is proposed for July or August 2014, and it would be planned to include 7 participants from each country. Each country would define its own criteria for inclusion, and the SAO encouraged States to think of university students as their primary target audience. The SAO requested a preliminary “nod of approval” from his colleagues before asking his partners in Russia to put together a more detailed proposal.

Conclusion: For information only.

8.2 Arctic Frontiers 2014 Conference update

Background: Senior Arctic Official Else Berit Eikeland introduced the group to plans for a panel to be held at Arctic Frontiers in Tromsø in January 2014 on the development of the Arctic Council. SAOs and PPs will be invited to speak, particularly as the Indigenous Peoples’ Secretariat is undertaking preparations to move to Tromsø. The panel is also likely to include Observers, who will be able to speak about their own experiences within the Arctic Council. Invitations are en route.

Conclusion: For information only.

8.3 3rd International Conference on Arctic Research Planning (ICARP III)

Background: Volker Rachold, Executive Secretary of the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) gave a presentation of IASC and the plans for the 3rd International Conference on Arctic Research Planning (ICARP III). AMAP, IPS and AC Observer organizations (IASSA and UArctic in addition to IASC) are involved in ICARP III. The conference is an opportunity to coordinate Arctic research agendas (among other goals) – it will not create new science plans, but will instead attempt to survey and integrate existing plans in order to identify both redundancies and gaps. It is hoped that this will eventually result in a consensus statement identifying the most important research needs for the next 10 years. The connection and potential to link to the upcoming Arctic Biodiversity Symposium was noted.

Conclusion: For information only.

8.4 Tracking Tool

Background: The SAO Chair informed the meeting that the Chairmanship and the ACS had been working with the WGs to develop a tool for tracking progress of all Arctic Council projects including all projects that were mentioned in the Kiruna SAO report. Colour codes will indicate whether projects are on track, or if special attention/action is needed. This new initiative is still being refined, and will be updated. A draft version of the tool is available on the meeting website. In addition, this would accommodate Council observers, who had expressed interest in having additional details of AC projects in which they might be able to engage in, the SAO chair said.

Decision: The ACS is tasked to continue developing the tracking tool with input from all of the Council's Working Groups, and to keep it updated.

8.5 Multilateral audit on the AC

Decision: This item was deferred to a later meeting.

9. Closing of Meeting

The SAO Chair noted that Japan had submitted a statement to the meeting, and that this was available for delegates. He then thanked everybody for their contributions to the meeting.