



**Meeting of Deputy Ministers
Copenhagen
27 May 2010**

FINAL Report

1. Introduction

Welcoming remarks were made by the host of the meeting; State Secretary for Foreign Policy of Denmark, Michael Zilmer-Johns. He noted the mandate from Tromsø of having a Deputy Ministers meeting, and appreciated the great interest for participation in the meeting. It was unfortunate that not all PPs had been able to attend for budgetary reasons.

2. Responding to Emerging Challenges in the Arctic

A discussion on the leadership role of the Arctic Council

The session was opened with the viewing of two short films to visualize the emerging challenges in the Arctic. First, the SWIPA [Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost in the Arctic] film called “The Greenland Ice Sheet in a Changing Climate” produced by AMAP. The second was about the Arctic Species Trend Index, part of the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme (CBMP), produced by CAFF.

Interventions from Member States, PPs and Observers:

USA: Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg reminded that it was now one year since the Tromsø meeting. This DM meeting showed that we were taking the work agreed in Tromsø seriously. The AC had proved itself adaptable, proactive and efficient to handle the challenges in the Arctic. The emerging challenges could be divided into two categories. The first was where we in the AC are able to take decisions by ourselves, because all the relevant stakeholders are around our own table. We could negotiate and enter into formal arrangements.. The second category of challenges cannot be solved within the AC alone; we could also be an important partner for other processes globally that affect the Arctic. One example is the black carbon contamination. The AC has a role in defining the areas where we need more science, and pushing the scientific community forward. Scientific cooperation is also important in the sense that the legacy of the IPY, and SAON process need to find ways forward. Input and support to these processes from all AC Member States and PPs were important. Future Deputy Ministerial meetings should be designed to prepare decisions for Ministerial meetings, and should take advantage of political-level gatherings to advance important issues in the Council.

Canada: Associate Deputy Minister Colleen Swords highlighted some emerging challenges in the Arctic of importance to Canada. These included balancing conservation, sustainable use and economic development; protection of the Arctic’s incredible biodiversity; preventing oil and gas spills in this fragile environment; responding to emergencies; and preparing for potential public safety challenges. She outlined a number of steps that Canada was taking domestically in this regard and noted that a number of these challenges also required cooperative action beyond



national boundaries. The Arctic Council, the pre-eminent forum for international collaboration on Arctic issues is playing a critical role in a number of these areas.

From Canada's perspective, ensuring that the Council continues to respond effectively to new emerging issues requires developing and enhancing the policy role of the Council, improving its communication capacity, ensuring that scientific research is focused on key emerging issues, preserving and strengthening the unique role of indigenous peoples in the council and establishing an appropriate role for observers. The current development of a binding search and rescue instrument is a landmark initiative for the Council. The Council's Arctic Ocean Review project is another important policy initiative and consideration should be given to reviewing the Offshore Oil and Gas Guidelines in light of recent developments in the Gulf of Mexico. In light of the importance of Arctic science, Canada is hosting the IPY closing event in Montreal in 2012.

Denmark, Faroe Islands and Greenland: Deputy Minister Inuuteq Holm Olsen, Greenland, stated that the AC is the only circumpolar, political forum where the full range of challenges and opportunities in the Arctic can be discussed. He underlined that even if we could all agree that there is some potential for streamlining the AC, it has worked surprisingly well. The ACIA, the SWIPA, AMSA and many other reports, together with the current work in the SLCF and SAR task forces are all proofs that the AC works. Changes are being documented and decisions are being shaped by the AC and they will increasingly be made also by the Council in the future. Denmark underlined the hope that even more resources be allocated to adaptation to change, as this topic is of special importance to the peoples of the Arctic, and thus in line with the focus of the Danish Chairmanship programme.

Finland: Ambassador Hannu Halinen noted that the AC is the preeminent forum for political discussions of Arctic issues. The working groups should cooperate more and avoid overlap. He hoped the PSI would soon be operational. He mentioned 2 success stories specifically; the AMSA report and the work with the biodiversity assessment. SAR was already a milestone. But it was important to improve the outreach of the AC. The ongoing communication & outreach work will be very important for strengthening the AC. What are the emerging challenges? We need to make sure we identify them and then decide what to do about it. We must ensure a consistent follow up of the Working Group reports. The AC will become stronger by interacting with other actors in our region.

Iceland: Deputy Permanent Secretary of State Greta Gunnarsdottir declared that Iceland as a coastal state has vested interests in Arctic affairs. Iceland wants to improve and strengthen the AC, to ensure that it continues to be the most central and preeminent arena for Arctic issues. There is higher demand for science and policy. Strengthening the AC could be done by establishing a core budget and a permanent secretariat. Iceland remains open to observers. Openness and transparency can only be beneficial for the AC. For the record, she also underlined that in the CAFF film shown at the beginning of the meeting, when describing the cod stock off Greenland, it should be referred to Greenlandic cod, not North Atlantic cod.

CAFF clarification: the specie's name is "Atlantic cod", not Greenlandic cod. In the film it was made clear that this was from Greenland.

Norway: State Secretary of Foreign Affairs Erik Lahnstein noted that there is reason to be proud of the success in shaping the AC as a relevant forum. It certainly needs further development, but we can also be content with what has been achieved. Norway is willing to contribute to the



discussions. There is a need to improve efficiency, communication & outreach, and to decide on how to include non-members. Norway is of the opinion that one should try to structure a process before the next Ministerial, in May 2011. These measures will be necessary to be able to move forward. It is important that we take initiatives both within our region, but also in other international forums, like for example the IMO.

Norway highlighted the relationship between the science and policy spheres, and Lahnstein underlined that there is continuous work on improving this relationship. One example is the integrated management plan. This means managing by not having narrow sectoral focus, but to make one comprehensive plan for an area, taking all sectors into consideration. This facilitates sustainable use of resources, maintains both the ecosystem and the environment. The Barents-Lofoten integrated management plan was the first step in this (approved in 2006). The first review will take place later this year. It is cross sectoral and science based. Stakeholder participation is an important part; all affected parties are to take part in the dialogue. The AC should explore further the possibility to exchange views on the experiences in these fields. It could help demystify the use of resources for the general public. Regarding the cod stocks, Lahnstein underlined that it should be divided between the different parts of the North Atlantic cod. The stock between Iceland and Norway is sound because of good management and a clear example on how the Arctic states can show will, determination and responsibility.

Russian Federation: Ambassador Anton Vasiliev noted that the AC is doing a good job. It is not weakened or non-efficient. Still, it might be important to raise the profile of the AC and attract more attention to the work. The Arctic Ocean Coastal States' meeting had only been enhancing the AC. According to Russia, the AC was on the right track in implementing the Tromsø declaration. But there is a need to adapt. Climate change and new technologies give rise to discuss how to improve the efficiency of AC. It was also important to give observers an appropriate role. ACAP had due to financial reasons unfortunately not been able to fulfill all parts of its mandate. Hopefully the PSI would become operational shortly, and this will enable the ACAP to speed up its work. Climate change should not be the only focus. Also sustainable development and search and rescue are crucial topics. Russia thanked Norway for interesting information regarding integrated management plans, and reminded that also the question of an International Polar Decade is requiring attention.

Sweden: State Secretary Frank Belfrage stated that it was a good idea to arrange DM meetings in the years between the Ministerial meetings. This could be one way to develop the AC further. Climate change was the obvious challenge for and in the Arctic. The sea ice is melting at a rapid speed, and we cannot know what to expect from year to year. This uncertainty factor is a daunting challenge for policymakers. The best way to handle it is to focus on prevention, preparedness and adaptation. Regarding maritime shipping, there are 2 important processes ongoing: one is the work with the IMO Polar Code. This work is well prepared and our experts have worked on it for a long time. Sweden urges all parties to contribute in a constructive manner to the ongoing negotiations in London. We cannot afford to miss this opportunity to get a comprehensive and mandatory Polar Code. The second process is the SAR taskforce, which is progressing very well and Sweden fully supports. There is a need to continue to focus on scientific work in the Arctic as follow up of the IPY, and also on the Arctic societies- the living conditions for the Arctic peoples. Furthermore, Belfrage noted that this year is the UN Biodiversity year. The Arctic biodiversity is unique. The only way to preserve the cold dependent species seems to be to reduce global warming. CO2 emissions must come down. Sweden is committed to this work. Also pleased with the SLCF task force and the fact that this is now also on the agenda of other international fora.



The scientific uncertainties should not prevent us from acting on the knowledge we already have. Sweden urged states to encourage companies to make data on gas flaring available for scientists. The heavy dependence of modern societies on fossil fuels is a major challenge in the Arctic context. It is hard to imagine how we would be able to deal with an oil spill like the one in the Mexican Gulf if something similar were to happen in the Arctic. Sweden is looking forward to the last year of Danish chairmanship and to take over as Chair after the Ministerial in 2011.

AIA: Executive Director Victoria Gofman stated that AC leadership is now globally recognized. It was therefore important that the AC must be equipped with the right tools to handle challenges. For PPs, there are limits in both financing and human resources. But still, by focusing on a smaller number of projects, the AIA has been able to be represented at a meaningful level. As an example Gofman mentioned the Bering Sea Sub network where local residents in several Russian and US coastal communities gather observations on the environment and their harvest. AIA is pleased with the progress of SAON, but it is important to make sure PPs are included in the work from the beginning. The AIA appreciates and welcomes the US pledge on 0, 5 mill dollars to the SAON, encourage other states to come forward. The work of the SAR task force is especially important for the Aleutians because the area is very heavily trafficked and there are many accidents at sea. The SLCF work is also of particular interest because in addition to climate change aspects it might also reduce the health risks for the Arctic peoples.

ICC: Chair Jim Stotts underlined that there is no shortage of challenges facing the Arctic. The Arctic is in need of leadership. The parties around the AC table should and could show better leadership by making sure the AC recommendations are transformed into national Arctic policy. PPs fears to be squeezed and lose their influence in the AC to non-Arctic observers. The Gulf of Mexico oil spill is a lesson for the Arctic. There is no need to rush oil exploitation; the Arctic would probably not recover from such an accident as the one in the Gulf of Mexico. There is no need for reform of the AC, but the AC needs to refocus, to find back to the original focus; of Member States and PPs to give scientific advice on sustainable development and protecting the environment, to policymakers. Inuits do not agree that we need outsiders to come and manage the Arctic for us. The peoples of the Arctic must be consulted more than ever. Deputy Ministers should ensure increased economic support of the AC, to implement the decisions already taken in the AC. It is time for Arctic states to reset the research agenda. The states are responsible for the way forward. (“Show some leadership, please!”)

RAIPON: Vice President Dmitry Berezhevskiy stated that the climate challenges had worsened the traditional livelihood of the indigenous peoples. Pollution was a widespread problem and the consequences might be irreversible, and some may even be unknown today. ACAP works actively with reducing the contamination in the areas of the indigenous peoples in Russia. The AC should also focus more on securing the livelihood of indigenous peoples in the Arctic. The PPs should remain fully fledged partners of the AC. All Member States should accept and implement the UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples as emphasized at the recent Arctic Leaders’ Summit in Moscow.

Saami Council: Niko Valkeapää, member of the Council, said that the Saami culture depends on the living resources such as reindeer herding, coastal and inland fisheries, hunting and gathering. Without access to these resources and without having confidence in nature providing healthy food, the development of the Saami culture will be threatened. Healthy Arctic ecosystems are vital to the economies and the material production of Saami culture also in the future. Furthermore Valkeapää said that he was confident that the Arctic Council is the body that, due to its nature as a tri-party partnership between member states, indigenous peoples and researchers, is



able to shape decisions that are based on the best available knowledge, both traditional and science, and thus being able to give wise guidance to the decision-makers both at international and national level. Good governance was needed to face the evolving challenges in the Arctic.

Good governance in this case embraces the Saami peoples' right to self-determination, including the right to determine own economic and social development, through which the culture continues to be vital and constantly enriched. Mr. Valkeapää asked whether the Member States were able to confirm that search and rescue is in place to save us if an oil tanker with crude oil goes down in the Arctic, and then asked rhetorically whether it is not better to wait if we are not sure.

France: State Secretary for European Affairs, Pierre Lellouche noted that this was the first time a French minister was present at an AC meeting. This was a sign of France recognizing the urgent challenges in the Arctic, and its willingness to contribute in facing those challenges. Ambassador for the Arctic and Antarctica Michel Rocard expressed the wish of France to receive an answer to the observer question. Nothing had been heard since Tromsø. France welcomed the work of the SAR task force with great satisfaction. While understanding that the coastal states have the main responsibility, France would also like to encourage a more open exchange of information.

Poland: Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Jan Borkowski expressed satisfaction with being able to be present at this important and timely meeting. The Polish priorities in the Arctic had recently been made public for the first time. These were to protect the environment and combat climate change. Poland acts in respect of international law, especially UNCLOS, and is certainly in favor of the Arctic states rights. The AC was certainly recognized as the most central forum in Arctic matters. Regarding the role of observers, Poland would be glad to participate and contribute to the work of the AC. 26 March 2010 Poland had organized a working meeting of observer and ad hoc observer states. The Deputy Minister thanked the SAO Chair for participating. Observers should be partners and contribute to the work of the AC. It is essential to for example have scientists take part in the Working Groups. At the moment Poland has 2 scientists taking part in work of AC Working Groups, and he hoped there will be more in the future.

Germany: Johannes Trommer, Minister Counselor at the German Embassy in Copenhagen noted that Germany feels obliged to take part in solving the challenges in the Arctic. Germany has a large scientific programme for Arctic research (largest in EU). In addition Germany is a large shipping nation. The energy resources in the Arctic are interesting for many reasons. Challenges in the Arctic will only grow more complex in the future. Germany is interested in taking part in the AC and in the working groups.

The Netherlands: Mr. Robert de Groot, Deputy Director General for Political Affairs stated that the Arctic history is very vivid and visible in the Netherlands. The Netherlands traditionally supports multilateral agreements; it fully supports the objectives of the AC and is willing to help deal with the challenges ahead. He reminded what the Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Jonas Gahr Støre, said in Beijing 2008: "... effective countermeasures for protecting the Arctic environment also have to include non-Arctic states". The Netherlands assured the meeting that it is not in pursuit of any objective in the Arctic that is incompatible with the work of the Council itself, and confirmed its commitment to protection of the Arctic environment, biodiversity, and conservation and sustainable use of its natural resources.



Mr. de Groot suggested the Arctic Council should call upon its member (and observer) states to accede to all existing legal instruments that aim to protect the Arctic environment and its ecosystems and to establish new ones in fields where this is not yet the case, such as fisheries. UNCLOS provides the basis for governance and regulation in the marine Arctic. De Groot congratulated the AC with SAR and AMSA. In conclusion, he underlined that sea level rise following climate change threatens the Netherlands. For that reason the Netherlands have a national interest in the science of glacial dynamics. One way to contribute is through scientific work: Dutch scientists have long running datasets from the Arctic that could and should be used for the common good and as a contribution to the success of the Council.

Italy: Ambassador Daniele Verga noted that Arctic issues are of genuine interest also to non-Arctic states. Climate change is not only an environmental problem. It involves all aspects of society. The new shipping routes and the more accessible Arctic Ocean may give new shape to international trade. But it also leads to increased need for SAR, pollution control, surveillance and navigation aid. Italy acknowledges that the AC has the main role. But through international cooperation we can achieve even better results. Italy has strong research traditions. Verga confirmed that Italy is willing to contribute to the AC and its working groups sharing experiences, including in SAR, SLCF, SAON.

EU Commission, Director of the DG RELEX, Gunnar Wiegand, stated that the EU has a clear Arctic vocation. Without including the current EU 7th research Framework Programme, the EU contribution to projects related to Polar research amounts to more than 200 million on top of the Member States contributions. The EU is gradually formulating its Arctic policy with clear priorities, but at the same time recognizing the Arctic Member States' legitimate interests and rights in the region. The interest towards the Arctic Council continues, despite the 2009 decision to postpone decision on observers. Hope for decision soon. The EU Commission believes in the AC, for example the 7th EU Framework Programme of Research gives a particular importance to Arctic issues and has provided the lead for one of its human health projects to AMAP. Mr Wiegand underlined that the EU Commission had no intention of squeezing out the PPs, and mentioned 4 areas where he believed the EU could add value to the work of the AC: The SAR, the SLCF, the SAON and in Integrated maritime policy.

AWRH: Chair Mikhail Pogodaev, noted that since the AWRH became observer in 2000, changes have escalated and the AC has become more important. Furthermore he informed about 2 projects being led by Norway and Finland. EALAT and the Information center in Kautokeino, Norway. The AWRH wishes to continue their contribution to the AC.

Conclusion:

The Chair concluded that it had been an open, fruitful and interesting discussion; Most of the speakers emphasized the crucial and eminent role of the Arctic Council in Arctic matters, and many examples of the ability of the Council to respond to the emerging challenges in the Arctic were mentioned. There was a strong commitment from all speakers to the AC as the preeminent forum. Many also mentioned the need to strengthen the AC, and the Chairmanship will pursue this towards the Ministerial meeting.

Many mentioned the oil spill tragedy in the Gulf of Mexico, and how we must learn from that, how we should organize and regulate any activity in our area. The important thing is preventing any such accidents in the Arctic. EPPR confirmed that many in the working group are following the development in the Gulf of Mexico closely, and that it will take the task to share information and lessons and transfer knowledge to the benefit of the Arctic Council.



Several speakers had expressed support for the Norwegian suggestion on integrated management plans. The AC should explore further the possibility to exchange views on the experiences in these fields.

The Deputy Ministers agreed to support the process towards a mandatory Polar Code in the IMO.

3. Search and Rescue Task Force of the Arctic Council

Chair: Mr. Andreas Nordseth, Director General, Danish Maritime Authority

Background: A presentation was given by Russian Co-Chair of the Task Force, Ambassador **Anton Vasiliev**. In the 2009 Tromsø Declaration, Arctic Council Ministers approved “the establishment of a Task Force (TF) to develop and complete negotiation by the next Ministerial meeting in 2011 of an international instrument on cooperation on search and rescue (SAR) operations in the Arctic.” Ambassadors David Balton (United States) and Anton Vasiliev (Russian Federation) co-chair the Task Force, and all eight Arctic States are actively engaged in its efforts. The Arctic SAR Task Force met in Washington in December 2009 and in Moscow in February 2010 and will next meet in Oslo, 3 days in June. The TF continues to make good progress toward a legally binding aeronautical and maritime SAR agreement that is expected to be ready for signature at the 2011 Ministerial. This means that there are fully fledged negotiations involving national agencies. The negotiations are ongoing in a friendly and harmonic atmosphere. The consensus principle applies, and nothing is agreed before everything is agreed, therefore it is not possible to disclose details from the work. While successful completion of the agreement will be good news, it should not be seen as the ultimate goal. SAR capabilities in the Arctic region are limited and the remoteness and harsh conditions of the Arctic present special challenges to conducting operations. The ultimate goal needs to be improving SAR capabilities to respond to increased human activity in this challenging region. Arctic States need to work both independently and together to enhance SAR capacity and cooperation. This TF has been an important step in fostering such collaboration.

Discussion

The progress and efforts of the TF was welcomed and applauded by the Deputy Ministers. The delegates were encouraged that the agreement, which will be a major improvement of the SAR capabilities in the Arctic, is expected to be ready for signing at the Ministerial Meeting in 2011. The importance of the Arctic states also on national level reviewing their capacities in the Arctic was noted. Regarding the status of the agreement, Ambassador Vasiliev explained that the agreement will be based on existing agreements, both globally, regionally and bilaterally. It was not possible to comment on whether the agreement would apply both at sea and on land at this point of time.

Conclusion:

The Deputy Ministers thanked the co-chairs and the members of the TF for their work, and welcomed the progress made so far by the TF. They looked forward to its continuation and urged the TF to conclude its work in due time before the Ministerial next spring, so that the Ministers will be able to sign a SAR agreement at that meeting. It was also the widespread



view that the signing of the agreement at the Ministerial meeting will only be the first step and that practical cooperation on Search and Rescue will be needed and should therefore continue.

4. Short-lived Climate Forcers

Chair: Ms. Anne-Marie Rasmussen, Deputy Director, Danish Environmental Protection Agency

Background:

One of the two co-chairs of the Task Force (TF), Mr. **Håvard Toresen** from Norway, gave a short presentation on status of the work. He underlined that he was reporting on work in progress. National inventories are in place for all 8 Arctic States, this is a good basis for further action, but there are still many uncertainties and there is a need for more knowledge. SLCF are global, but have greatest impact in the Arctic, and even if CO₂ still is the single most important contributor to climate change, reducing the SLCF may give near-term positive results for the Arctic. Focus is primarily on black carbon. There are parallel processes going on also in other international fora. Diesel engines, residential warming, agricultural burning, wildfires, shipping and gas flaring are the major sources identified. The Arctic states were encouraged to indicate their willingness to act in reducing emissions despite the scientific uncertainties. Furthermore, Mr Toresen addressed the potential health benefits in reducing the SLCF as an emerging issue and asked the Arctic states to indicate whether and to what extent the TF should consider health issues in its work. A third question was whether the TF should focus only on Arctic states, or expand its focus also to non-Arctic states. The TF will produce a technical report and a summary for policy makers to the 2011 Ministerial.

Discussion

NEFCO referred to their paper dated 17 May 2010 where it was proposed to establish, within the AC, a SLCF initiative for project implementation and demonstration. The hope is to have a discussion on this at the next SAO meeting in October. An AC initiative should be able to produce tangible results. Deputy Ministers generally appreciated and supported the work of the TF although some felt the TF's timetable was somewhat ambitious. There was general agreement on the need for policy measures despite scientific uncertainties. There is enough knowledge to act upon. However, several countries pointed to the need to continue collecting more knowledge to be able to prioritize measures when shaping their national policies. All states, including observers, were encouraged to contribute to this process. Deputy Ministers supported the idea of giving stronger focus to health issues in developing the recommendations from the SLCF TF. There was agreement that the TF should concentrate first on inventories and policies in the Arctic states, and then to afterwards consider to also include non-Arctic states. However, it was underlined several times that observers were very welcome, and encouraged, to contribute here. Some pointed to the need to get more knowledge specifically in the areas of gas flaring and shipping, and the need for the TF to be responsible when making its recommendations. Russia announced that they will send 2 additional experts to the TF.

Conclusion:

The progress made so far by the TF was welcomed and Deputy Ministers looked forward to its continued work and to seeing the final report including policy recommendations at the next



Ministerial meeting. The work of an Arctic emission inventory on black carbon being conducted was welcomed and it was noted that data from shipping and gas flaring are needed. The need for the countries to provide more data was stressed. An overview of the existing regulations related to BC is of relevance, and here we need to recognize that existing international regulations are in place. Regulation of black carbon in relation to health protection seems to be considered. The TF conclusions should firstly be discussed at international level within the AC and at a later stage with relevant non-Arctic nations. The TF was encouraged to coordinate and follow up with the ongoing work on SLCF within IMO, CLRTAP and UNEP, and the initiatives of NEFCO and the USA were welcomed.

5. Sustaining Arctic Observation Network (SAON)

Chair: Mr. Hans Müller Pedersen, Deputy Director General, Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation

Background: One of the Co-chairs of the SAON Steering Group (SAON SG), **John Calder**, reported on progress to date and presented some key issues for discussion. What tasks should the SAON focus on, and how should the SAON be organized to achieve the tasks? Regarding the tasks Mr. Calder highlighted the national inventories and the promotion/facilitation of data access as the most important. There are different models for institutional framework and also for financing of SAON that need to be further discussed. There will be a report ready for the 2011 Ministerial meeting, and at the next SAO meeting in October SAON should appear on the agenda for reporting of status and in-depth discussion.

Discussion

Generally there was strong support to the progress and plans for further development of SAON. The task oriented, step wise approach was applauded. The SAON SG was encouraged to work towards consensus on an institutional framework to present to SAOs October 2010. (The secretariat option received some support). Some states underlined the need for a light and flexible framework that could be expanded as needed. It was asked what role the indigenous peoples had to play in SAON, and the answer was that those PPs that had volunteered are in the SG. Community based monitoring is included. Regarding financing, the US would like to see funding from at least 2 other countries before the pledged US funding is assured. The US also remarked that they would like to see more Arctic Council member participation in SAON meetings. Non-Arctic partners and observers were encouraged to contribute, both financially and practically. Germany pointed to the fact that they are contributing by hosting the IASC secretariat. The level of data that are to be supplied to SAON was discussed (not raw data). There will be a SAON meeting in August 2010; the importance of all Member States being present there was underlined.

Conclusion:

The Deputy Ministers thanked the SAON co-chair and the members of the SAON Steering Group for their work, welcomed the progress made so far by the Steering Group and looked forward to its continuation. The SAON co-chair and the SAON Steering Group were asked to take note of the reactions at this meeting and to take them duly into account in the future work.



Adjournment of meeting

On behalf of State Secretary Zilmer-Johns, the SAO Chair thanked all the participants in the meeting, the Deputy Ministers and their alternates, the SAOs, PPs and Working Group Chairs, the Observers and everybody else who contributed to the debate and the arrangement. The meeting had been successful, and fully and efficiently lived up to the intended purpose of the Deputy Ministers' meeting decided by the Ministers last April in Tromsø, Norway: "to further strengthen the political role of the Arctic Council by having a meeting at deputy Minister level with representatives of Permanent Participants, do discuss emerging issues between Ministerial meetings". A special thanks went to Tana Stratton, who was about to leave her position at the ACS.