
Sustainable Development Working Group STATUS REPORT

Senior Arctic Officials' Meeting
12-13 November 2009, Copenhagen, Denmark



*Arctic Council
Sustainable Development
Working Group*

The Sustainable Development has held one regular meeting since the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Tromsø, Norway in April, 2009. This SDWG meeting took place in Nuuk, Greenland on 10-11 June 2009, and the minutes of that meeting are presented below as a status report to the Senior Arctic Officials for their meeting scheduled for Copenhagen on 12-13 November 2009.

SDWG Meeting Nuuk 10-11 June 2009

1. Opening

a. Welcome

This was the first meeting of the SDWG in Greenland. The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming participants to Greenland during an historic time¹ and by noting that Nuuk was the spot where indigenous peoples were recognized as Permanent Participants in the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy process in 1993.

b. Administrative Announcements

The Chair announced the administrative arrangements and social program for the meeting.

c. Approval of agenda and Minutes

Item 4 of the agenda, *Review SDWG 2009-2011 Work Plan*, was reordered as follows:

- a. Update on Status of On-going projects (Lead Countries, as appropriate)
- b. Cultural Remains: Potential New Project (Norway)
- c. Electronic Memory: Potential New Project (Russia)

Canada gave notice that it would make a short presentation under item 9, *Further development of a Strategic Approach to SDWG Effectiveness and Efficiency*.

The Chair noted that it was the practice under the Norwegian chairmanship to treat the “Minutes of the Meetings” and “Reports to SAOs” as one and the same thing, where appropriate, and this practice will be continued under the Danish/Greenlandic chairmanship.

Accordingly, formal approval was given to the agenda and to the Minutes of the last Meeting/Report to SAOs dated 20 January 2009.

d. Confirmation of Co-Vice Chairs

It was noted that the intention during the Danish/Greenlandic chairmanship is to invite co-vice Chairs to sit with the Chair and to share in the chairing of meetings. Marten Ehnberg of Sweden and Carl Christian Olsen of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) were duly confirmed as co-vice chairs.

The Chair announced that during the Denmark/Greenland chairmanship of the SDWG, it is intended to actively involve ICC Greenland in the planning and leadership of meetings in order to give Permanent Participants a more active role in the work of the SDWG. Therefore, it was agreed that

¹ The new arrangements for Greenland were announced at 10:00 am on 10 June 2009 and the formal inauguration of the new Government of Greenland occurred on 21 June 2009. The new Premier, Kuupik Kleist, was involved in the negotiations leading to the establishment of the Arctic Council in 1996.

Carl Christian Olsen would sit at the head table as co-Vice Chair to share in the chairing of the meeting.

As former co-vice chair Saami Council expressed its appreciation for this new development of the sharing of responsibilities.

2. Chairmanship Programme

The Chair advised that the Faroe Islands had not yet approached the chair to be represented in these meetings and there is no mandate to speak for them. So unless they come forward, the programme would relate primarily to Greenland. Human health will be a priority for the chairmanship. Greenland was closely involved in the establishment of the Arctic Human Health Expert Group (AHHEG) and further meetings of the group are being planned in conjunction with the International Congress on Arctic Human Health in Yellowknife, NWT, Canada in mid-July 2009. The three AHHEG representatives from Greenland have formed a small task group for the Danish/Greenlandic chairmanship. Greenland will also pay close attention to the suggestions of the Arctic Parliamentarians, and to the work of the Nordic Council of Ministers and other regional groups, on matters of human health.

The Chair announced a Seminar on Suicide Prevention will be held in Nuuk on 7- 8 November 2009. A presentation on the arrangements for this seminar was made under agenda item 6. The Chair indicated an intention to host a meeting of Arctic Health ministers during the Danish/Greenlandic chairmanship. In addition, a health conference involving the Arctic Parliamentarians is being considered. Discussions are proceeding with them and the Danish Parliament.

Finally, the Danish/Greenlandic chairmanship will pursue the ongoing SDWG projects and any new ones that are agreed upon.

During the discussions the Saami Council recommended the involvement of youth participants in the planning and conduct of the seminar on suicide prevention. A Saami youth group has held some workshops on this matter on their own initiatives and consideration could be given to their report and recommendations to the Saami Parliament. The Chair noted that the organizers were aware of this and have also involved the Inuit Circumpolar Youth Council (ICYC).

Russia noted that recognition of the Arctic as the home of many people was an important part of the Tromsø Declaration and that without cooperation it is difficult to live in this region. The SDWG is a priority for Russia now. The Russian President has approved the basis of Russian policy in the Arctic and the government has improved the conception of development of indigenous peoples. The Ministry of Regions is now working on a strategy for social and economic development. Russia emphasized that the input of working groups and the Arctic Council are taken into account in the preparation of Russia's strategies for the Arctic. Finland requested a website address where it would be possible to find the documents referred to in the Russian intervention.

3. Review of Outcomes of Tromsø Ministerial Meeting

Discussions on the Tromsø Declaration focussed on the high priority given to the human dimension in the SAO Report and Ministerial Declaration. The Arctic is home for millions of people and they need to be taken into account in SDWG work. There was a high appreciation of quality of life issues. SAOs and Ministers urged followup on issues relating to indigenous languages and culture. The Co-vice Chair from ICC suggested that the recommendations coming from the languages symposium (October 2008) could be reviewed with Arctic residents involved and a scoping study on these recommendations could be prepared to determine which are priorities, where work is already being done and where there are best practices that could be shared.

Increased Permanent Participant involvement was also stressed. It was noted that the SDWG has a special relationship with the Permanent Participants and must continue to advance their role in the SDWG work plan. The SDWG has had the strongest representation from Permanent Participants but at this meeting only 2 of 6 groups were present. Back to back meetings with SAOs might assist in this because of budget considerations.

Several participants also noted that the work of the SDWG has to be relevant to people in Arctic communities, with every effort being made to translate project findings in actions on the ground.

Work on adaptation to climate change was initiated during the Norwegian chairmanship but more needs to be done in terms of research and community actions.

A strategic approach to the work of the SDWG is necessary, particularly because of cross-cutting issues involving two or more working groups (e.g. SWIPA, SAON, Arctic shipping, Arctic energy, ocean management, etc.) It was noted that there is a need to have some additional discussions on the SDWG work on energy and the articles of the Tromsø Declaration which mention the role of oil and gas in sustainable development in the Arctic. The SDWG has a very full range of issues and planning meetings such as this one in Nuuk are very useful.

There was recognition of the need to balance the sustainable development and environmental dimensions of Arctic Council work. At the same time, the SDWG has been given a mandate to review and focus its work. One issue for further discussion in this regard is the possible creation of a socio-economic expert group. Experience in establishing AHHEG will be instructive in this context.

4. Review of SDWG Work Plan

a. Updates on On-going Projects

- **Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic (SLiCA):** SLiCA is working to update the data from some Saami regions for late summer or early fall 2009 so that tables similar to the Inuit data could be prepared. There are some 600 tables on the website comparing Canada, Alaska, Greenland and Chukotka. Some of the data from Canada and USA is now somewhat dated. There are some other important connections among SLiCA, Arctic Social Indicators (ASI), ECONOR, ArctiStat, SAON and the health and well-being priorities, which are relevant to the further development of this work. The project is considering how to proceed.

It was noted that SLiCA has made two valuable contributions, in addition to the data. One is methodology: the process has been participatory with the people being studied. It is an important and vital model for anything that comes next. Second is the interpretation of the data: SLiCA converted data into information for things like fate control. So this is a very important element of the work. Some of the data can be stigmatizing and how the information is used will be important. SLiCA has set the standard very high and the Arctic Council should continue to live up to this.

The Chair noted that this is related to discussions on the possibility of establishing a socio-economic experts group. Integration of this work is also relevant to the many requests for socio-economic input that are coming from other working groups, for example from SWIPA, SAON and so on. Participants observed that some attention could be given to ways to make SLiCA work more accessible, and to develop the findings to help identify coming trends. Funding will be a major factor.

- **Arctic Social Indicators (ASI):** Since the Ministerial ASI has obtained funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers to continue into a phase II which will have a workshop in the fall of 2009. The

second phase will look more closely at the indicators to see how they will operate. So this basic funding allows the work to continue. The final report of Phase I will be available by the fall.

- ***Economy of the North (ECONOR II)***: The project leader advised by email that the final version of the report, ***The Economy of the North 2008***, was nearing completion and would be available in July or August 2009. No new information was available at the time of the Nuuk meeting.
- ***ArcticStat***: The ArcticStat website has been up for some time. An ongoing issue is the cost of some data sets and the translation from Russian. The sustainability of this work has to be discussed further, perhaps in the context of an integrated socio-economic function for SDWG internal work and for SDWG work with other working groups. Data is collected for different purposes and it would be helpful to elaborate on the challenges of coordinating and finding the best way to collect and share data. So it is timely to consider an integrated data set and the role of ArcticStat as a mechanism for accessing this data. This work is also related to SLiCA, ASI, AHHEG, ECONOR, the IPY legacy, the development of SAON and the Arctic Portal. The Saami Council suggested that there are also connections to the indicators work under the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- ***Arctic Languages Symposium***: Canada is considering approaches for the continuation of this work. Discussions with Permanent Participants are continuing and other states were encouraged to participate in the development of concrete proposals. There was some discussion around pulling together a small group to do a presentation for the next SDWG meeting. Iceland suggested that it would be possible to develop a "community square" within the Arctic Portal to provide a forum for culture and language. This could be considered in cooperation with Russia, given its proposal for an "Electronic Memory" project.
- ***Sustainable Development of the Indigenous Peoples of the North***: Russia noted that in relation to exploration of natural resources in the Arctic, it is necessary to give more attention to the protection of cultures and rights of Indigenous Peoples of the North. The framework of Russian national legislation is important in this regard.
- ***Arctic Human Health Initiative***: The USA advised that this initiative was an IPY project and will wind down at the Yellowknife meeting of AHHEG (July 2009).
- ***International Circumpolar Surveillance (ICS)***: This is one of the SDWG's longest-running projects and work is ongoing. It is a model that could be used for trauma work etc.
- ***AHHEG***: A meeting on AHHEG was held in Ottawa in February 2009. A nomination to this group from Russia and from each of 2 Permanent Participants are still outstanding. AHHEG will be examining their priorities and work plan for the future at a meeting in Yellowknife, Canada in July 2009. The previously-noted seminar on suicide prevention scheduled for 7-8 November 2009 in Nuuk will be a piece of this work. The Inuit human health summit (date/location?) were also referenced.
- ***Research & Action Plan for Human Health Risk Reduction***: Russia indicated that a plan had been approved but there are some questions to clarify about this work in Russia.
- ***Advancing Alcohol & Drug Abuse Treatment in the Circumpolar North***: This has been a bilateral project between Russia and USA. The Northern Forum coordinates the project and

there have been several exchanges. Funding has been an issue. Several participants regretted that this was cast as a narrow project and suggested it needs to be expanded to inform the work on suicide.

- ***Vulnerability & Adaptation to Climate Change in the Arctic (VACCA)***: Norway is considering how to do a followup project and will come back with more information at a future SDWG meeting. One idea being considered is the development of a data base.
- ***Reindeer Herding EALAT***: Seven workshops have been reported to date. The content of a February 2009 workshop in Russia is being prepared for reporting. One concrete thing coming out of the EALAT work in Russia is a plan to establish a centre for taiga reindeer husbandry. As to future work, planning is proceeding for further workshops in Russia, Sweden and Alaska. The Declaration from 4th World Reindeer Forum in Kautokeino was referenced.
- ***Circumpolar Information Tool Kit on Minerals, and Oils and Gas for Indigenous People and Northern Communities***: Canada advised that work on this project is proceeding and a tele-conference was recently held among participants.
- ***Best Practices in Eco-systems based Oceans Management (BEPOMAR)***: Norway advised that there will be some followup but this is still being discussed.
- ***Arctic Energy Summit***: The final Report of this project is still anticipated in the fall of 2009.
- ***SDWG Strategic Plan***: Canada noted that a strategic plan for the SDWG should be considered as part of the SDWG work plan with the objective of making this a deliverable for the 2011 Ministerial Meeting. This was discussed further under agenda item 9.

b. Cultural Remains Proposal

The suggestion for a project on this matter came out of the UNESCO expert meeting in Narvik, Norway following the SAO meeting in late 2007. The idea was to do something similar for cultural remains as CAFF is doing with the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment.

Each state has separate processes for assessing, listing, and maintaining cultural sites. The goal of this proposed project would be to get an international status for these sites and exchange best practices on how to maintain them in the best way. This would have a life of 3 years. A project leader, who is an expert on this work, is available. The project would be led by Norway but depends on active support and participation of experts from all Arctic States. It is not possible for the coordinator to find and define all sites alone.

Norway advised that funding is still available for this project but indicated that there was some delay in the development of the proposal because the project coordinator had been ill. Norway will return to this project proposal at the fall meeting of the SDWG and suggested that consideration could be given to an intersessional email approval process before the next meeting, if that is acceptable to the SDWG.

At the SDWG meeting in Copenhagen in December, 2008 several questions were asked about the Norwegian project proposal on cultural remains:

- What does it mean to have "international status".
- Could this status element be phased in rather than be confirmed at the outset?

- How does this relate to sacred sites of indigenous peoples. How does it relate to their rights and interests? What role would they have?
- Who defines these sites? Importance to one culture might not be so to another.

The preliminary answers below were provided in writing by the potential project coordinator, Ms. Susan Barr of Norway:

- International status means in the first place that the Arctic Council agrees to/approves the list. That will mean that the countries hosting these heritage sites agree to accepting the chosen sites in their country as being of historic importance also for other nations and/or the international community generally (dvs det kan gjelde f.eks. nederlandske kulturminner i norsk område, eller inuit kulturminner som er historisk viktige uansett nasjonalitet). How and whether this will be brought into the UNESCO system has not been decided. This is not really a necessity for the project. At the same time "best practice" guidelines should be approved and accepted by the AC which do not set aside any national practices, but will help to strengthen the common goals of protection, preservation and information exchange concerning these special sites.
- Regarding sacred sites: I do not know the RAIPON initiative, but I don't see the one initiative excluding the other. It sounds as though RAIPON may have some advice to give to the project concerning how to define the sites.
- Who defines the sites: It was thought that ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites, Advisors to UNESCO on World Heritage) groups in each Arctic country would be a basis expert group, PP representatives are obviously welcome, and other heritage bodies in the separate countries would be contacted.

c. Electronic Memory Proposal

Russia circulated a brief document (attached as Appendix A) prior to the Nuuk meeting to build upon suggestions for an "Electronic memory of the Arctic project" (EMA) made by the Russian Foreign Minister in Tromsø in April 2009. The presentation at the Nuuk meeting was provided in Russian with some translation provided by a member of the Russian delegation.

The EMA proposal is a "high technology infrastructure Internet project", aimed at accumulating information and knowledge available in libraries, archives, museums and specialized collections on the circumpolar world, its history and development, its present and prospective development.

EMA is conceived as a combination of electronic archive, electronic library and electronic museum, to provide the whole range of information on the subject of development and living in northern areas of the world for current and future generations.

The proposal calls for the production, during 2009, of a general catalogue in collaboration with regional organizations. During 2010 the focus would be on the digital elements of the project. During 2011 the electronic archive would be created.

Russia would like to see broad participation in this project from all Arctic states and offered to discuss and distribute more detailed information on the proposal. For states that are willing to join such a project it would be necessary to discuss standards for information sharing. Arctic states can choose how they want to participate.

The Chair thanked Russia and encouraged all delegations to contact their appropriate institutions to see if there is an interest in participating and to contact Russia for more information. Several participants applauded Russia's proposal which in the spirit of IPY would continue the sharing of information with the rest of the world. It was noted that Russia comprises the largest Arctic territory

and has the largest Arctic population. There was general interest in working with Russia to develop the proposal further and to determine how best to involve the SDWG and the Arctic Council.

It was noted that there are potential linkages to the Arctic portal and the UARCTIC online library being developed in Canada. There are also linkages to other projects, one example being a project on the history of fishing in Iceland, the Faroes and Greenland.

There was some discussion about the languages in which materials would be available and other matters relating to accessibility. Russia clarified that the intention was to have a multi-language collection with even the Russian materials available in the languages of the Arctic states. As for indigenous languages, a large part of the project would be dedicated to information about northern indigenous inhabitants. It was noted that the Kautokeino Declaration from the 4th World Reindeer Herders' Congress supported this initiative. Further details are to be included in the information which Russia makes available before the next SDWG meeting.

5. Implementation of Work Plan

a. Timelines for Projects

Some Arctic states have indicated the possibility of follow-up activities in relation to a number of projects and activities that were concluded during the Norwegian chairmanship. In order to be considered for decision at the next SDWG regular meeting on 10-11 November 2009, project proposals will be required to be submitted to the SDWG Secretariat on or before 10 August 2009.

For those new projects or activities requiring proposals, the difficulties presented by the "90 day" rule were discussed. It was pointed out by the Executive Secretary that the meeting cycle of the SDWG often resulted in deadlines falling in the middle of holiday periods such as summer vacation or Christmas. It is difficult for many delegations to finalize and submit proposals during the summer months because of vacations. Also the 90 day rule does not really lend itself to our work in cross-cutting areas.

Therefore, there was general agreement that notification of an intention to bring forward a project could be submitted on or before 10 August 2009, with as much detail as is available at that time. The formal proposal should be submitted as early in September as possible to allow delegations adequate time for internal consultations before the proposals are discussed at the SDWG meeting in Copenhagen in November 2009.

b. Involvement of Project leaders

Discussion of this item was deferred to the Heads of Delegation meeting held on the afternoon of 11 June 2009. It was generally agreed that communications with project leaders could assist in determining an appropriate level of involvement in regular meetings. For example, a suggestion was made that the coordinators of relevant projects should be included in any discussions around the development of a SDWG socio-economic experts group.

It was also suggested that project leaders should be invited to recommend the most convenient time, based on the progress of their work, to report to the SDWG (e.g. in the fall of 2009 or in the spring of 2010)

It was suggested that attention be given to the most effective and efficient format for presentation of interim reports by project leaders.

c. Cooperation with other Working Groups

Snow, Ice, Water and Permafrost in the Arctic (SWIPA)

Mr. Birger Poppel presented an update on socio-economic issues as they relate to the SWIPA work being undertaken by AMAP. There has been a call for participation and research by social scientists, as well as for their participation on the Integration Team to ensure a social science perspective. The Greenland Icesheet portion of the SWIPA work will include a small piece on socio-economics.

A meeting of the Integration Team was held in May 2009. IASSA and IASC were involved. Progress on all the modules was reported and there was agreement to strengthen work on cross-cutting issues. Strong involvement of Permanent Participants is still needed. A cross-check of IPY projects is also needed. There was some discussion about the use of grey literature and use of SWIPA results that have not yet been peer reviewed. Some reporting and outreach will occur at COP 15 in Copenhagen.

Mr. Poppel advised that a socio-economic team has been established, roll-ups have been produced, and a contract for a film has been signed. Since November 2008 the information on SWIPA has been updated on the AMAP website (www.AMAP.no).

The socio-economic work will be integrated into all chapters, with an "integration chapter" about humans, society and the cryosphere. The core socio-economic team is part of SWIPA Integration Team. The core socio-economic team is comprised of Grete Hovelsrud (CICERO), Birger Poppel (IASSA) and Jim Reist (Fisheries and Oceans Canada). Secretariat support is provided by Bob van Oort at CICERO.

Next steps will include follow-up on the cross-check of IPY work; starting the national data check; revising the SWIPA brochure; and starting preparations for the chapters review.

In the discussions some concerns were raised about whether the SDWG was adequately involved in the process to date and where the SDWG should fit in the process going forward. It was unclear whether the integration chapter would be provided to the SDWG for review and whether it was even possible at this late date SDWG input.

In response to a question by the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat about the involvement of Permanent Participants, Mr. Poppel clarified that the presentation on the Greenland Icesheet to COP 15 was not a SWIPA presentation, but rather an Arctic Council presentation.

Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks

During discussions it was pointed out that the SDWG can make a contribution as "an observing network on the human dimension". Social sciences are giving the SDWG important base-line information on economies, well being, living conditions, languages, and so on. The view was expressed that the SDWG should not form expert groups to study the "little bits" but to track the overall well-being of human populations in the Arctic. SAON can perhaps be the overall framework for the SDWG to place its contribution on the human dimension into a broader context.

It was noted that there is still considerable confusion about SAON because it is still a work in progress. It is a layered approach to information gathering and distribution.

The matter of an SDWG nomination to the SAON process was discussed during the Heads of Delegation meeting on June 11th and it was decided that the SDWG Chair and Executive Secretary would participate in the teleconference on SAON on 14 June, pending the nomination of an SDWG representative to participate in future meetings and activities relating to SAON.

6. Arctic Human Health Expert Group (AHHEG)

Dr. Gert Mulvad presented a report on AHHEG, which will have its first regular meeting in Yellowknife, Canada in mid-July 2009, and Ms. Jette Eistrup reported on the planning for the seminar on suicide prevention which will be held in Nuuk on 7-8 November 2009.

The inaugural meeting of AHHEG was held in Ottawa in February 2009. Questions being considered at the first regular meeting in Yellowknife in July 2009 include: what are the major health challenges in the Arctic; are there successful practices to highlight; which actions are necessary to improve things? Specific topics include mental health, nutrition and quality of health care. There is general agreement within AHHEG that mental health is a key factor and suicide is a primary issue.

Dr. Mulvad noted that other groups, such as the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, have health issues on their agendas and noted a recent SCPAR conference statement relating to linkages among health policy, cultural values, climate change, young people, risk reduction, alcohol, and so on.

Dr. Mulvad also made some comments on health promotion, prevention and treatment. He pointed out that there was disproportionate attention being given to treatment and prevention, and too little attention to health promotion, which he described as embracing important cultural and personal dimensions. He noted that prevention tries to eliminate risk, while promotion requires generating energy for wellness. Treatment needs to be followed by health promotion, especially for suicide prevention.

The meeting of AHHEG in Yellowknife will be held on the margins of 14th International Congress on Circumpolar Health (11-16 July 2009). The ICCH will host about 500 people. Participants were advised that the ICC is also planning another Inuit health summit.

Jette Eistrup spoke about the tragedy of suicides in the Arctic and in the Indigenous populations the world over, noting that the World Health Organization estimates that there is a suicide every 40 seconds. When compared to national statistics, there are striking differences in the Arctic. In Greenland the rate is 15 times higher than the national average, while in Canada and Alaska the suicide rate in the North is also very high. Finland has developed a suicide prevention strategy. In Greenland the strategy is 5 years old and is being implemented.

Suicide is a multi-factored problem and it is necessary to deal with all aspects. "Why does it happen?" is the usual question, but answers are difficult to find. The seminar will help determine what we know about initiatives that actually work. It will gather experts who are focused on this problem and practitioners who work every day on risk factors and resilience. Ms. Eistrup urged SDWG participants to work with their networks to find good people who can attend the seminar and exchange experiences. The intention is to have an invitation-based work shop that mixes theory and practice. Financing is a critical factor SDWG representative were asked to assist.

During the discussions some mentioned the importance of language and the elder-youth connection in sustaining community wellness. It was stressed by several participants that youth need to be engaged. Reference was made to a workshop held by Saami youth. Sweden urged AHHEG to develop a work plan so that Sweden can formalize their participation on the group.

7. Opportunities to Cooperate on Health

The Chair noted that she had seen some reference to a project entitled "*Opportunities for collaborative action on the health of indigenous and Remote Northern Communities under the umbrella of Northern Dimension Partnership*". This project apparently focuses on healthy lifestyles and social well-being; however, there was not enough information to share at this time, although

Arctic Council is listed as a partner. Canada and Finland undertook to try to obtain more information so that it can be shared during the AHHEG meeting in Yellowknife.

8. Presentation on Greenland Self-Government

Mr. Mininnguaq Kleist, Head of the Self-Government Office, Secretariat to the Cabinet/Premier's Office, made a presentation on the historic changes occurring in relation to governance in Greenland. In 1979 Greenland Home Rule Act was passed to initiate a long process towards self-government for Greenland. This Act remained in force until 21 June 2009 when it was replaced by new act. The 1979 Act said nothing about mineral rights or international relations. In the 1990s, Greenland formed its own Self-Government Commission to try to determine internally what Greenlanders wanted; how their society and their country were to develop; and what the relationship between Greenland and Denmark should be. A report was prepared in Danish and Greenlandic.

Then in 2004 a joint Greenlandic and Danish commission was formed to promote self-government within the framework of the existing Kingdom. Eight Parliamentarians from Greenland and 8 from Denmark, as well as experts from both sides, were involved. Work was finished in April-May-June 2008 and the Commission issued a new report which was handed to the Danish Prime Minister and the Greenland Premier. In June 2008 a full day presentation of the report occurred. The new Act relating to Greenland Self-Government will come into force in June 2009. The popular referendum on the Self-Government Act was held on 25 November 2008 to determine if self-government would replace home rule. Then town meetings were arranged in all communities with both for and against representatives involved. Thirty-five (35) different meetings were holding. In addition there were consultative meetings with students. TV and radio programmes and Internet website provided additional information to Greenlanders (see: www.nanog.gl).

During the referendum there was 71.96 % voter participation with Yes= 75.54% and No = 23.56%. The formal process of passing the Act was done by the Danish parliament on 21 May 2009. Formal celebrations of the new Act took place on 21 June 2009.

The Self-Government Act has home rule content, as well as provisions on minerals and petroleum resources, courts and independence, and so on. The Preamble says that Greenlanders are a people with rights of self determination in international law. The Act is based on Greenland and Denmark being "equal partners". Greenlandic becomes the official language. Rights and control of minerals and petroleum resources will be taken over by Greenland. A progressive and clear economic arrangement is included. A block grant from Denmark will continue but eventually this could be displaced by oil or mineral revenue. A concrete secession procedure is included in the Act with a requirement for a referendum and negotiations between governments.

New political opportunities will be created and people will be closer to decision making. Competence will be transferred gradually in 33 areas: aliens and border control; ship registration and maritime matters, food and veterinary matters; intellectual property; etc.

Self-government is not independence: Greenland is still under the Danish Crown. The new Greenland Premier, Kuupik Kleist, is also the foreign minister.

During discussions it was pointed out that the timing on oil and gas and minerals development is uncertain. It will likely be 15 to 20 years before revenues would flow to Greenland. If minerals or petroleum are not discovered, there is abundant hydro power. If plants are developed, this will cut community operating expenses drastically. This is expected to strengthen the economy. The focus of Government of Greenland will be on the education system and the people.

As for the development of a new constitution, this is provided for in the new Act and it will be up to the new coalition government.

9. Strategic Approach

Canada made a presentation on the on-going efforts to improve the strategic planning of the SDWG. It was noted that the Arctic Human Development Report had provided a framework to gauge areas of work, but consideration needs to be given to the way projects are assessed. The SDWG as it is constituted does not have the capacity to determine how projects or priorities are assessed. The SDWG is a different sort of working group comprised of government officials rather than scientists.

Other working groups have human dimensions in their work and this is increasing. At the same time the Arctic Council is moving away from the AEPS "pillared approach" into a more holistic, assessment-based, scoping process where all the working groups are involved.

So Canada looked at some of these things in considering the way forward. Sweden produced some useful work in relation to project procedures and the SDWG Executive secretary has prepared draft integrated rules of procedure. So the tools are there for assessing projects but historically the SDWG agenda has been more *ad hoc* than strategic because states' interests have tended to lead to certain projects being pushed forward under the various thematic areas. The question facing the SDWG is: "Given scarce resources, gaps and needs, how do we decide what to do?"

The options for the ways forward include: 1) continue in the current fashion; 2) pursue the "status quo plus"; 3) develop a strategic approach.

It is incumbent on the SDWG to have a plan that goes beyond a single chairmanship. Canada is prepared to do some inter-sessional work to lead to a fulsome discussion in November 2009 and outline a workplan that could extend beyond the Danish chairmanship. Such an approach could include development of a strategic document and workshops, teleconference and other communications to develop the ideas and make this strategic plan a deliverable for the Ministerial in 2011.

As a first piece, Canada suggested preparing a draft project proposal template. As for expert groups, it will be necessary to consider whether they are intended to be permanent or *ad hoc*, and how the SDWG should relate to them. It will be necessary to create a structure that anticipates changes. An integrated data collection and integration group could be considered. The SDWG relationship with other Working Groups is important. While SWIPA might be covering the human dimension, the SDWG is being marginalized by that process.

If this approach is acceptable, the Danish chair can be a time for the SDWG to define itself, create an effective operating structure and ensure SDWG is proactive in relation to the human dimension in the Arctic.

During the discussion it was acknowledged that the SDWG has produced a considerable volume of good work, but there was general agreement that there is an opportunity to improve the SDWG effectiveness and efficiency. Sweden, Norway, Finland, Saami Council, and UArctic expressed interest in participating in the task force which Canada proposed to establish. Canada undertook to follow-up after the meeting with a proposed time frame and process to develop terms of reference for a task force and a way forward.

10. New Developments

The Chair noted that the SAO chair had called a meeting of the Working Group Chairs for 08 September 2009 in Copenhagen.

The Chair indicated that this will be a standing item on future agendas so that participants can update the group on upcoming conferences, workshops or events that might be of general interest.

11. Next Meeting

The Chair proposed that the next regular meeting of the SDWG would be held in Copenhagen on 10-11 November 2009, immediately before the SAO meeting which is scheduled for 12-13 November.