

Cover Sheet

Full name of state or organization:

United Nations Environment Programme

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Is your state or organization still interested in continuing as an Observer of the Arctic Council?

Yes No

Observer Report

Please describe in no more than 2 pages your state or organization's contributions to the work of the Arctic Council's Working Groups, Task Forces and/or Expert Groups since the time of your most recent report, or in the previous two years. Please highlight contributions to specific projects, such as through proposals, concept development, in-kind and financial support, and hosting of meetings. If applicable, please include mention of collaboration with Permanent Participants, such as project proposal endorsement and support.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has been active as an Observer on the Arctic Council since 1996, taking part in the Council's Ministerial, Senior Arctic Officials meetings and, together with its collaborating centre GRID-Arendal in Norway, has engaged actively in the efforts of most of the Council's scientific and technical working groups. Notably, UNEP continues to provide technical support on a number of assessment and monitoring activities as described below. UNEP's World Conservation Monitoring Centre also contributes to the Arctic Council work on Arctic Biodiversity indicators, Arctic peatlands, protected areas, sea birds and wilderness protection, and biodiversity gap analysis. Finally, as the organization responsible for setting the United Nation's environmental agenda and along with the Multilateral Environmental Agreement Secretariats it administers—including those on biological diversity, hazardous waste, and chemicals and mercury—UNEP has provided global outreach for some of the Council's work.

Since May 2014, UNEP has engaged in the Council's work, as follows:

- Supported the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna/Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative (CAFF/AMBI): UNEP in partnership with CAFF/AMBI hosted an Experts workshop in October 2014, which led to the development of the AMBI Americas Work Plan which was adopted by the Arctic Council at the April 2015 Ministerial meeting. UNEP's continued support in 2015 funded a consultant to convene five expert working groups to develop "Implementation Strategies" respective to each of the priority thematic areas defined in the Work Plan. In addition to providing needed funding support and technical inputs on migratory bird flyways, UNEP's role as a part of the AMBI Steering Committee has been to raise awareness of and build political support for AMBI in North America, while also providing advisory services to the Working Group. The UNEP consultant also prepared an institutional "crosswalk" between AMBI activities and existing institutional frameworks (e.g. CMS, CBD, Ramsar) to ensure coherence. The Draft Implementation Strategy will be finalized during the Summer of 2016 for submission to the CAFF Board in August, and possibly to the Arctic Council in September 2016.
- Participated in the CAFF-led *Progress Report on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity* (TEEB) scoping study together with WWF's Global Arctic Programme and GRID-Arendal to identify a number of the critical links between biodiversity, ecosystem

services and Indigenous Peoples (*April 2015*).

- Participated in the Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation and shared information and lessons learned on existing regional cooperation models under the Regional Seas Programme of UNEP (*Ongoing*).
- Shared information on UNEP's experience as the Council explores a possible Regional Seas Agreement. UNEP is inviting the PAME working group to attend annual meetings of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (*December 2015 - ongoing*).
- Provided input to the recent Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) working group activities related to co-management activities for the Indigenous Peoples' experience database and shared information on the UNEP ecosystem-based management guidelines. At PAME's request, UNEP will provide information on its global initiative on marine debris (*May 2016*).
- In partnership with the Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP), UNEP supported the Russian Federation project "*Support to the National Plan of Action for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment.*" Major results of the project include the adopted Strategic Action Programme for the Russian Arctic Environment, which was reported to the Arctic Council. In partnership with AMAP, UNEP implemented a project on Persistent Toxic Substances, Food Security and Indigenous Peoples of the Russian North.
- Recently, UNEP has begun to support the Council's outreach work through the promotion of information on the Arctic in its web-based reporting system UNEP Live under the Polar Arctic page and links to data providers and short briefings <http://uneplive.unep.org/region/index/AR#.VykDONQrJmM> (*March 2016*).
- UNEP houses the Secretariat of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC), of which seven of the eight the Arctic Council member states are partners. The CCAC has worked to shape the expertise and good practices needed to address black carbon and methane abatements. Many of the CCAC initiatives on black carbon and methane are relevant for the Arctic Council members, including a study on impacts from maritime traffic.
- In 2014 the CCAC Secretariat and UNEP contributed to the Task Force on Black Carbon and Methane, which in 2015 became an Expert Group. In March 2016, a CCAC Working Group suggested there be more scientific collaboration and perhaps back-to-back meetings between the CCAC and its Scientific Advisory Group and the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) and possibly also the Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane. Discussions are also underway aimed at strengthening collaboration to develop more robust metrics for accounting for climate and multiple benefits and impacts from black carbon reduction (*March 2016*).

- GRID-Arendal contributed to AMAP's "Adaptation Actions for the Changing Arctic" (AACAC) project by providing content on environmental impacts in the Barents Sea region and reviewing the resilience chapter.
- GRID-Arendal is also working with the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat on a story map project chronicling the role of Indigenous Peoples in the evolution of Arctic environmental politics and the influence they have had on the development of the Council; participated in the first Coastal Expert Workshop on the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme (March 2016); worked with the CAFF Secretariat on a proposal to make a film about the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative; and joined with AMAP and the Norwegian Research Council to support its work in the EU-Polarnet Project.
- The project "Enhancing the Resilience of Trans-Boundary and Site Specific Pastoral Ecosystems and Livelihoods of Nomadic Herders" (short title: Nomadic Herders) is endorsed by CAFF. The project is one of the few Arctic Council-endorsed projects run by Observers (UNEP and World Reindeer Herders), and led by Indigenous Peoples. In April 2012, the Nomadic Herders was awarded a project preparation grant (PPG) by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in order to develop a Full-Sized Project (FSP) focusing on biodiversity conservation and reduction of land degradation in Mongolia and Sakha-Yakutia. The PPG was submitted in April 2016 to the GEF Secretariat for endorsement. If funded by the GEF, this will be the largest international collaboration project focusing on reindeer husbandry, Indigenous Peoples and the environment.

If applicable, please describe in no more than 1 page your state or organization's future plans for contributing to the work of the Arctic Council's Working Groups, Task Forces and/or Expert Groups. Please highlight intentions to contribute to specific projects and to collaborate with Permanent Participants.

- UNEP is seeking to join the Arctic Data Partnership and is working on a UNEP GEO-Polar Assessment (Arctic and Antarctic) in which government representatives and scientific members of the Arctic Council and specifically the relevant working groups (i.e., AMAP, CAFF, PAME, SDWG) will be invited to take part (*Anticipated release late 2018*).
- UNEP seeks to support the work of the Arctic Council through its Early Warning and Assessment work.
- UNEP in collaboration with UNDP, the EBRD and the World Bank have proposed a major Arctic environmental protection project in the Russian Federation for the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The project is an international program called "Russian Federation – GEF Partnership on Sustainable Environmental Management in the Arctic under rapidly Changing Climate" (Arctic Agenda 2020).

- UNEP plans to continue supporting the Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation by providing input relating to existing regional cooperative models.
- UNEP plans to continue supporting PAME on marine issues, including marine debris.
- UNEP seeks to continue its work on AMBI and migratory bird issues with the CAFF.
- UNEP will seek to facilitate collaboration on black carbon and related issues.
- UNEP seeks to continue work with Permanent Participants. UNEP's activities on Indigenous Peoples' issues in the Arctic are distributed globally through its annual reports to the UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues.

If applicable, please describe in no more than 1 page your state or organization's contributions to other aspects of the Arctic Council and its goals not covered by the previous sections since the time of your most recent report, or in the previous two years.

UNEP provides scientific expertise, assessments and information that can enhance and complement the work of the Arctic Council. One example is the GEO 6 Regional Assessment for North America (May 2016) that addresses changes in the Arctic as a priority issue in North America. This report was developed by a team of experts in North America, and will feed into the well-regarded Global Environment Outlook (GEO 6) Assessment, expected to be released mid-2017.

As the U.N.'s voice for the environment, one of UNEP's strengths is its ability to convene representatives of U.N. Member States in support of Arctic Council priorities, as well as the business sector, NGO's, academia and the science community and other stakeholders whose actions and work impact the Arctic. One example is the aforementioned effort that UNEP has undertaken on the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative, working closely with the CAFF working group, to convene experts and governmental representatives from Southern Hemisphere States as well as the Arctic to discuss solutions to habitat loss for migratory Arctic bird species in the Americas.

We have outlined some additional possible future actions within the Council's work in response to the previous question. We will be looking for possible future initiatives that might assist with other aspects of the Arctic Council's goals, and will bring them to the attention of Council members and the Council's working groups as appropriate.