

# Arctic Council Chair

May 10, 2002/PS

SAO 2002/A/Agenda item 5.0 (REV)

## JOHANNESBURG SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, 2002 - FINAL STRAIGHT

### 1. Actions taken since the Senior Arctic Officials' Meeting in Espoo, November June 2001

The Meeting of the SAOs in Espoo, Finland in November 2001 outlined Arctic Council activities in the preparatory process for WSSD in Johannesburg 26 August – 04 September this year. Since then the Arctic Council has taken the following actions:

- An information package containing the Rovaniemi Conclusions of the Chair and two fact sheets has been produced. The fact sheets are: 1) “Improving Governance and Democratic Processes: The Arctic Council as a Model”; 2) “Environment and Health in the Arctic”. The third proposed fact sheet on sustainable management and conservation of natural resources is still under consideration in the SDWG. The folder containing the facts sheets was distributed at the Arctic Side Event in New York on February 6, 2002 and to participants at PrepCom III in April.
- Arctic Council organised a side event at the UN Headquarters in connection with WSSD Prep Com II. Canada served as the lead country in organising this event and it was sponsored by the Governments of Canada, the United States, Finland and the Northern Forum. The side event was attended by approximately 200 people. The indigenous cultural content at the event contributed greatly to raising awareness of the Arctic.
- The Chair of the SAOs delivered an Arctic speech in the general debate at the official session of Prep Com II. In addition several delegations of the Arctic States included Arctic elements in their interventions during this Prep Com.
- The Permanent Participants participated very actively in the global indigenous peoples' caucus. The caucus presented a dialogue paper at Prep Com II. The paper recognizes the Arctic Council as an encouraging example and suggests that the positive lessons learned from the Arctic Council's ecosystem approach and collaborative partnership could be applied in other regions.
- At Prep Com II the Arctic as a region became visible for the first time at the global level in the Rio process. The presence of the Arctic was acknowledged by non-arctic delegations. The CSD Chairman's Paper which was presented at the final day of Prep Com II includes many themes of high relevance to the Arctic and one specific Arctic paragraph, which expresses support to the initiative to assess the environmental, social and economic consequences of climate change on the Arctic and, in particular, on the indigenous peoples living there. These achievements can be considered as a good follow-up to the work done at the UNECE-level in Geneva last year. The Chairman's Paper served as the basis for the drafting work at Prep Com III in New York 25.3. – 5.4. 2002.

- Several Arctic Council Member States had a central role at the conference “Oceans and Coasts at Rio+10” in Paris last December. Lessons learned in the Arctic were presented by the Chair. The preparatory work done at this Conference has influenced remarkably on the Prep Com meetings.
- The Arctic Council Chair called together a coordinating meeting in New York in the beginning of Prep Com III. It was attended by 7 Arctic States. A written contribution from IPS was delivered to the participants. The meeting discussed how to influence on the drafting work during Prep Com III and agreed upon how to move some proposals prepared in a paper by the Chair. The three EU members Denmark, Finland and Sweden were able to include some Arctic issues in the position papers of the EU while other Arctic states tabled some proposals directly in the working groups of the Prep Com. An interview given by the Arctic Council Chair has been published at the WSSD homepage [www.johannesburgsummit.org](http://www.johannesburgsummit.org) , “Polar Partnership promotes Sustainable Development in the Arctic”.

## 2. Next steps prior to Johannesburg

The Chairman of the Prep Com Mr Salim circulated his paper “Chairman’s Text for Negotiation” on 9 May 2002. This paper will be negotiated in Bali, Indonesia.

Arctic priorities are quite well covered in the new paper. This is especially the case as regards indigenous issues, which have been strengthened in comparison with earlier drafts. The paper deals with indigenous aspects at least in Paras 7 (f), 32 (d), 33 (e) , 35 (f), 38, 39 (f) and 41 (b). The existing good language should not be put at risk through opening unnecessary discussions.

The Para on Arctic climate impact assessment has been retained but is now including also the Antarctic in a partly misleading manner. The Arctic states could consider to suggest a more exact text as follows:

**(e) Support the Arctic Council initiative to assess the environmental, social and economic consequences of climate change in the Arctic, in particular the impact on local and indigenous communities, and welcome a corresponding assessment initiative also in the Antarctic;**

The language on chemicals is somewhat weaker than before and no specific emphasis on the Stockholm POPs Convention is made. The Arctic States could **commit themselves to re-introduce a specific reference to this convention.**

The separate paper on governance is paying appropriate attention to the regional and sub-regional level. Specific reference is made to the African NEPAD programme and to the Barbados Programme. The Arctic Sustainable Development programme could be added to the list.

**The Chair proposes that the SAOs exchange views on the state of the preparatory process for Johannesburg, the Chairman’s Text and request the delegations of the Arctic states and representatives of the PPs attending Prep Com IV in Bali, Indonesia 27 May – 7 June, 2002 to defend the Arctic language in the Chairman’s Text and propose amendments where there is an urgent need to do so.**

## 3. Actions in Johannesburg

WSSD is a huge event – close to 70.000 people are expected to visit Johannesburg. The task given by the Ministers in Barrow could be considered as three-fold:

1) **to attach attention to the Arctic region and its population at the official Summit.** This could be done through inclusion of Arctic elements in the official speeches delivered by the Heads of the delegations of the Arctic states.

2) **to influence on the documents** prepared for adoption by the Summit. This work is under way and must be finalized in Bali.

3) **to attach attention to the Arctic outside the Summit proceedings.** This is a demanding task in competition with numerous events and certainly with Africa in focus. There are basically two methods:  
- organising a Side Event in the venue of the Summit;  
- organising an Arctic exhibition at the Ubuntu Exhibition 10 August 2002 – 10 September 2002.

A well-planned **side event** could be considered as the more cost-effective alternative. It should focus on a few topics of interest to the world public and be directly and explicitly relevant to the Summit's goals and objectives. Side events focusing on partnerships, follow up activities and commitments will be prioritized by the WSSD Secretariat.

The Arctic Council could be presented as an already operative partnership of the willing. ACIA could be presented as an example of on-going work. AMAP's and CAFF's monitoring and assessment reports could also be presented. Indigenous traditional knowledge on climate and biodiversity could be used. Cultural performances by Arctic indigenous peoples is a "must". Closing date for submission of side event proposals is 1 July, 2002. The Secretariat will confirm the approved side events by 26 July, 2002.

The Host Country has, after having consulted the SAOs, booked a **page in the publication "Words to Action"**. Since then the Chair has received new information on this publication. **The status as an official publication of WSSD seems questionable.** In addition, it seems as the UNCSO has given its support to another publishing initiative "**Johannesburg Summit 2002**". The status of these two initiatives need to be further checked before taking the final decision on possible participation.

Organising an **exhibition** is complicated and expensive and the SAOs have informally **agreed not to engage the Arctic Council in such an endeavour.** UNEP (Grid Arendal), WWF and the Arctic Centre in Rovaniemi are preparing an exhibition on the Arctic. The exhibition is not yet fully financed. A possible exhibition would certainly contribute to the general goals of the Arctic Council but the Council as such can't be politically responsible for the contents in this possible exhibition. The SAOs could encourage the organizers to continue their efforts.

**Northern Forum** has offered continuing partnership with the Arctic Council in organising additional activities during the preparatory process and on the spot in Johannesburg. The assistance of Northern Forum as a co-organizer and sponsor of the side-event in New York was very valuable. Northern Forum could be invited to co-organize a side event.

The **Permanent Participants** are planning further activities both in Bali and in Johannesburg. The Host Country is supporting financially the Saami Council in this respect. The Chair of the IPS Board, Mr Pavel Sulyandziga has written to the Chair of the Arctic Council and requested the Arctic States to provide funding for each PP to allow them to attend Prep Com IV and the Summit.

The **Nordic Council of Ministers** has decided to jointly present the Nordic Strategy “ Sustainable Development – New Bearings for the Nordic Countries”. This strategy includes some Arctic elements. NCM is planning a side event as well as an exhibition in Ubuntu Village.

Representatives of the delegations of Arctic States, PPs and observers could present the Arctic case at **NGO-meetings**, in the case they would be invited to do so. **Parallel Events are organised outside the venue of the Summit.** Among these are a Civil Society Forum, a Business Forum and a Local Government Session.

The Chair invites the SAOs to

- a) confirm the intention to organise a side event in Johannesburg and invite Northern Forum to co-sponsor this event;**
- b) take note of the possible contribution to an official WSSD publication;**
- c) inform each other on planned national activities of relevance to the Arctic;**
- d) discuss and decide on possible additions to the Arctic folder “ An Arctic Message to Johannesburg 2002 Summit” on the basis of preparations by SDWG;**
- e) encourage possible activities by permanent participants and observers which contribute to the general goals of the Arctic Council. Existing material, such as the folder “ An Arctic Message to Johannesburg 2002 Summit” and AMAP’s fact sheets, could be distributed at events organised by partners.**