

**Meeting of Senior Arctic Officials
Copenhagen
16-17 March 2011
Final Report**

In Attendance:

Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs)

Chair: Lars Møller

Canada: Sheila Riordon

Denmark/Greenland/Faroe Islands: Mikaela Engell

Inuuteq Holm Olsen (Greenland), Elin Mortensen (Faroe Islands)

Finland: Hannu Halinen

Iceland: Gunnar Gunnarsson

Norway: Karsten Klepsvik

Russian Federation: Anton Vasiliev

Sweden: Gustav Lind

United States: Julia L. Gourley

Permanent Participant (PP) Heads of Delegation (HoD)

Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC): Chief Michael Stickman

Aleut International Association (AIA): Arlene Gundersen

Gwich'in Council International (GCI): Joseph Linklater

Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC): Jimmy Stotts

Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON): Rodion Sulyandziga

Saami Council (SC): Geir Tommy Pedersen

1. Introduction

1.1. Opening of Meeting and Welcoming Words

Lars Møller, SAO Chair, welcomed delegates and noted the importance of the meeting as the last formal SAO meeting of the Danish Chairmanship and before the 2011 Ministerial in Nuuk, Greenland.

1.2. Introduction of new SAOs/ PP HoDs

Gunnar Gunnarson, new Senior Arctic Official of Iceland, Gustaf Lind, incoming SAO Chair (Sweden) and Andreas von Uexkull, incoming Senior Arctic Official of Sweden, were welcomed to the Arctic Council (AC).

1.3. Approval of the Agenda

The Chair made reference to the updated timed agenda (v2) which was distributed to all delegates on 14 March as the agenda he would run the meeting by. In addition the Chair suggested that SAOs accept a request from UNEP, who recently completed a global Assessment of Black

Carbon and Ozone to add a brief presentation by UNP/GRID Arendal on the agenda item 3 Short lived climate forcers.

Decision: The agenda was approved as amended.

1.4. Approval of Ad-hoc Observers

Decision: Four states (the People's Republic of China, Japan, the Italian Republic and the Republic of Korea) and the EU Commission were approved by SAOs as ad hoc observers to this meeting.

Thematic Areas

2. Administrative Issues/ Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Arctic Council

2.1. Information about the Ministerial meeting 12 May 2011 in Nuuk

Background: The Chair informed that the Ministerial meeting in Nuuk on Thursday 12 May will start with an opportunity for the Working Groups to conduct press briefings on their major deliverables. This will be followed by a lunch among the Ministers from noon to 2 p.m., the Ministerial Meeting from 2 p.m. to approximately 5.30 p.m. and concluded with a press conference from 6 p.m. to 6.30 p.m.

It was pointed out that there are serious restrictions of a *logistical nature* in Nuuk. It is possible only to accommodate a little more than 250 persons. Consequently it has been necessary to place some quite restrictive limits on the size of the various delegations after consultations with SAOs and PPs. And it is not possible to make exceptions to these limits.

The second serious restriction is *timing*. There are three and a half hours available for the Ministerial meeting. This time will be used for welcoming remarks, statements by the Chair, interventions by Arctic Council Ministers and Permanent Participant Heads of Delegation, signing of the documents and presentation by the incoming chair of the Swedish chairmanship program. There will be no time for interventions by observers and ad hoc observers. They are invited to present statements in writing.

The Chair also gave some general information on the process of the observer review, which has given the AC updated and valuable information on which to base their decisions in the process of strengthening of the Arctic Council.

Decision: for information purposes

2.2. Communication and outreach

Background: Mr. Giles Norman (Chair of the communication and outreach contact group) presented the conclusions and recommendations of the group. (This and all other presentations are available at www.arctic-council.org). There had been contact between the delegations since the

Torshavn meeting, preparing the ground for this meeting to now approve the guidelines for delivery to Ministers. Canada, Norway and Iceland had indicated interest in participating in the development of the strategic Communications Plan. Sweden wishes to lead efforts to develop it.

Discussion: SAOs thanked and welcomed the work of the contact group. Sweden emphasized that communication is important and informed that Ms. Ursula Åhlen will lead the work of the Strategic Communications plan with the communication experts. Sweden invited Canada/Norway to stay involved in this work in order not to lose the useful knowledge gained in the process so far. It was underlined that the role of the secretariat in this work should be in line with the decisions taken in relation to the general “Strengthening of the Arctic Council- package”. Canada expressed that it might be a good idea to invite outside “communications” expertise. Russia, supported by several PPs emphasized the lack of Russian translation and that it is a very important issue if AC wishes to enhance its outreach in Russia.

Decision: SAOs decided to submit the Guidelines, with amendments if needed, for approval by the Ministers at the Ministerial Meeting in Nuuk. Sweden will take the lead in developing/implementing the strategic communications plan.

3. Climate Change

3.1. SWIPA-Climate Change and the Cryosphere – Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost in the Arctic (*presentation by AMAP*)

Background: SWIPA is one of the major deliverables for the 2011 Ministerial meeting. Morten Skovgaard Olsen, AMAP vice-chair, and leader of the SWIPA project informed that SWIPA has involved more than 200 scientists since 2008. The project will deliver a peer-reviewed science-document, an overview report (the so-called layman report + summary for policy-makers) and three films. The science report is now being edited and it contains recommendations. A summary for policy makers holds the essence of what was found in the science report. The science report holds 175-200 key findings and the summary has 15 findings. One finding of SWIPA is that the Arctic is continuously warming, and feedback mechanisms accelerate warming. Transportation and other commercial activities are also affected by the climate change and there is a great deal of uncertainty attached to how fast the changes will happen and what the ultimate effects will be. Olsen also informed that two new films had been produced based on the findings of the science report, one about the natural science, and another on the human impact. Each film lasts 15 min. Based on those two films there will also be made two “teaser” films lasting 3 minutes each. In addition there is also a third film on the Greenland Ice sheet. AMAP intends to translate the films into Russian, Greenlandic, Saami, Finnish and a Nordic version. AMAP wishes to make them available on the internet and distribute them widely (depending on funding). The two new films were screened.

Discussion: SAOs thanked for and congratulated AMAP with the finalization of SWIPA, a major deliverable. Several SAOs expressed that the films were very good, that they represented an excellent way of communicating with a broader audience and that they reflect positively on the AC. It was asked whether or not the films would be distributed on DVD or be shown at the Ministerial meeting. Some expressed worries as to the AC producing films, and was concerned how the films were to be used. Furthermore concern was also expressed

regarding the need for more transparency if such films were to be produced in the future, and also as to the geographical areas/regions shown in the films; films should represent all Arctic States and the full spectrum of affected Arctic eco-systems and that priority should be given to all Indigenous Peoples, and not just one or two. PPs believed that the film on the human dimension captured the conditions of the indigenous peoples very well and expressed its concerns as to the issue of how to adapt to the climate changes. The need for the Arctic Council to follow up by focusing on the Arctic food chain, on how the changes will affect the human dimension in Arctic societies and the impact on ecosystems were underlined. One state expressed that it was not able to approve films now, but needed to review the films again with experts. Whether or not the AC should produce films in the future should be addressed during the Swedish Chairmanship. Sweden noted that there is a need to follow-up on the findings in SWIPA with a resilience report, and that if AC wishes to raise awareness about itself then it needs modern ways of communicating and that the films could also be used to direct to the AC website. There were expressed concerns as to the quick shift from “traditional livelihood to new opportunities” in the film *The New Arctic Reality* which could offend some reindeer herders. Lastly, the Chair emphasized that the two films will be shown at the Ministerial Meeting, not during the meeting itself, but in the entrance hall/or corridor outside the conference hall.

Decision: SAOs thanked and congratulated AMAP with the products. SWIPA is a major deliverable. The submission of the reports was endorsed, and the films were welcomed with some reservations pending a final fact check and other necessary editing. AMAP was asked to take the comments given by the meeting into consideration, especially those concerning more transparency and the geographical coverage in the films. SAOs will take into consideration the ideas for two specific future projects: an Arctic food chain report, and a proposal for an Arctic resilience report.

3.2. Short-lived Climate Forcers (SLCF)

3.2.1 SLCFs Science Report Results

Background: Andreas Stohl, Norwegian co chair of the AMAP expert group gave a status update on the science report from the SLCF Expert Group. The report focuses on black carbon but includes plans to extend and enhance the SLCF Expert Group to develop more comprehensive coverage of the full suite of SLCFs. The group hoped to submit the report the week after this meeting, and the peer review will be finalized by May 2011. The full science report will be delivered at the Ministerial Meeting in Nuuk, 12 May 2011.

3.2.2 SLCF Task Force

Background: The task force co-chairs Ben DeAngelo (USA) and Håvard Toresen, (Norway) presented the “near-final” report and its recommendations. The report as submitted for SAO approval contains consensus language. The main findings in the report are summarized in seven recommendations which were presented for SAO consideration. The task force also presented recommendations how the AC should continue its work in this field.

Discussion on items 3.2.1 and 3.2.2: SAOs expressed appreciation with both reports. Regarding the organization of the future work on SLCF all agreed that it should continue, particularly

given that the task force mandate was only able to address one of the three tasks assigned to it. There were also different opinions on how to proceed (continue as task force or be organized more permanently into a working group). Most were open to discuss different models. Concern was expressed regarding the summary report being too short and not including an explanatory text. Furthermore, there was concern that the key findings seemed to have been found before the technical report had been finalized and that it lacked a recognition of the different economic and regulatory realities in the various Arctic states. There was a discussion on whether the SAOs could now approve the report given that there was a call to allow some to conduct a national review before concluding. Several states expressed disappointment should this meeting not be able to approve the report for delivery to Ministers. It was decided to create a break out group to solve the question, which came back on the last day of the meeting with an agreed text for a disclaimer to be added to the report on which there was consensus.

Decision: The SAOs agreed to approve the summary progress report as amended for delivery to Ministers.

4. Biodiversity

4.1. Short status update on CAFF activities and deliverables to Ministers

Background: The CAFF Chair Aevan Petersen gave a short report on the deliverables for the Ministerial, the plans for 2011-2013 and results from participation at the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP10. CAFF has signed an MoU with the CBD and has been participating closely in CBD activities. A result of this has been that for the first time in the CBDs Global Outlook report released late last year there was a specific Arctic section. CAFF also held a side event at the recent COP10 held in Japan which was very successful. The resolutions from the COP10 under „New and emerging issues“ now contain specific requests and mention of CAFFs activities.

Discussion: Several SAOs thanked CAFF for its presentation and the important work it is doing. There was a reminder to CAFF that national countries are responsible for managing its resources and that AC should not go into managing fish resources, for example. CAFF responded that it is not the intention that CAFF or AC should engage in management, but to provide helpful background data for the states. Outreach work by CAFF has been important and has facilitated increased awareness internationally. Appreciation was expressed for CAFF's work; a number of these deliverables being good examples of practical and decision-based tools for national authorities. PPs highlighted that protection of flora and fauna is important for Indigenous Peoples and asked Sweden in particular to take notice of this and to devote into this issue. Russia underlined that it is preparing to take over the Chairmanship of the CAFF working group and hopes to manage it smoothly.

Decision: SAOs approved the CAFF deliverables for the Nuuk Ministerial.

5. Human Development

5.1. Report from the Arctic Health Ministers Meeting (SDWG)

Background: The SDWG Chair Marianne Lykke Thomsen informed about the first Arctic Health Ministers' Meeting, which took place on 16 February in Nuuk, Greenland. The meeting was titled: "Shared Challenges, Different Solutions: Arctic Health Cooperation in the 21st Century". Key issues of the meeting were to strengthen and develop health collaboration between the Arctic Countries. Greenland's Minister of Health Agathe Fontain and Denmark's Minister for the Interior and Health Bertel Haarder hosted the meeting, which was attended by delegations from Arctic countries and Arctic indigenous peoples' organizations. The outcome of the meeting was a declaration, which will assist future health cooperation between the Arctic States, for example in the areas of knowledge sharing, health promotion and research. The host and organizers found the meeting successful, and expressed a wish for a follow-up on the conference. A website with the presentations and the declaration can be accessed via the AC website (and the Greenland Government's website).

5.2 Short status update on SDWG activities and deliverables to Ministers (SDWG)

Background: The SDWG Chair noted that at their recent meeting held in Copenhagen on February 28-March 1, the SDWG reviewed and confirmed the status of its deliverables for the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Nuuk, Greenland 12 May 2011. In addition, the EALAT project was presented by Anders Oskal. He focused on the EALAT deliverable; the IPY/SDWG EALAT report "Reindeer herding, traditional knowledge and adaptation to climate change and loss of grazing lands".

Discussion on both SDWG items: Several states were pleased with how the initiative of a Meeting of the Arctic Health Ministers is contributing to broadening the agenda of the AC, and it was suggested to formalize such "sectoral" meetings under the umbrella of the AC. Sweden also informed that it was in the process of recruiting the new SDWG Chair to work full time with SDWG. Several emphasized that the text for the Nuuk declaration on the SDWG should include language on the meeting of the Arctic Health Minister's meeting. There were concerns that SDWG's next meeting would not be until fall 2011 and that the process to endorse new projects would be delayed. Denmark was thankful for the successful Arctic Health Ministers' Meeting in Nuuk and hopes that the declaration will become an important tool. PPs informed that they are working closely with SDWG and the wish for a PP vice-chair of SDWG was launched. It was suggested to restructure the SDWG into three groups: an economical group, a human dimension group and one culture group. Especially human health and food issues were mentioned as possible new topics for the SDWG to engage in further. It was referred to the film by AMAP "*The New Arctic Reality*" and the SWIPA summary page 9, bullet point 4: how will climate change affect our societies? It is a challenge of the SDWG future work to deal with this question. Focus on the human dimension and enhancing the capacity building of the people of the north is important. It was suggested that priority should be given to a 2nd Arctic Human Development Report, the first report having been released ten years ago, and that the 2nd Report should be launched during the Swedish or Canadian Chairmanship. AMAP informed about the human health group in AMAP, about the ongoing cooperation between the two WGs, and a human health group expert meeting to be held in June under AMAP in cooperation with SDWG.

Decision: SAOs thanked SDWG, welcomed the Arctic Health Ministers' Meeting in Nuuk and approved the deliverables.

6. Oceans

6.1. The Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA) Recommendations (PAME)

Background: The PAME Chair Atle Fretheim gave a progress report on the status for the AMSA follow-up work of the 17 recommendations, which is progressing well. The AMSA recommendation I(B) on IMO measures for Arctic Shipping has been followed up in two ways: both in a separate IMO working group to focus on the IMO development of a Polar Code by 2012, led by Norway, and by developing the Phase I Report on Reducing Risks of Heavy Fuel Oil (HFO) Spills from Vessels in the Arctic (HFO Phase I Report). This work has been co-lead by Norway and USA. For the Ministerial PAME has also produced a consolidated status report on the AMSA follow-up Recommendations. PAME proposes that an updated report be sent to Ministers in 2013.

Discussion: SAOs welcomed the AMSA follow up work as a good example for others to follow. The Phase I Report on Heavy Fuel Oil Spills as a follow-up to AMSA recommendation I(B) received general support. Russia raised the issue of possible minor factual errors in the Phase I Report, and noted that corrections would be provided by Russian experts, as appropriate. Russia offered to co-lead the Phase 2 of the Heavy Fuel Oil project. Norway expressed that it hoped a task force on oil spill prevention would be established, and this would be a good example of how different parts of the AC should work together. It was proposed that a brief report from IMO on the progress with the Polar Code should be requested to inform Ministers at their Meeting in Nuuk. PAME supported this suggestion and advised to contact IMO directly. ICC noted that there ought to be follow-ups on Arctic peoples and environment and noted that bullet 2A (Arctic marine use) should be more than surveys. Some noted that there was not enough Indigenous Peoples input in the AMSA follow up work.

Decision: SAOs approved the PAME deliverables on the follow-up on AMSA.

6.2. Arctic Ocean Review (AOR) (PAME)

Background: The PAME Chair Atle Fretheim gave a brief update, informing that the finalizing of AOR Phase I Report and the development of AOR Phase II project plan have progressed through consultations and inputs received to date. PAME will submit the AOR Phase I Report to the Nuuk Ministerial meeting. The AOR Phase II project plan is presented in the 2011-2013 PAME Work Plan. Other AOR-related documents that will be available at the Nuuk Ministerial are the AOR Communication and Outreach Plan and the AOR 13-14 September Workshop Summary Report.

Discussion: The SAOs expressed appreciation of the AOR work being done, but several states could not approve the progress report, as it had been circulated late and it would require a final review by country leads on an urgent basis. Concern was also expressed that some elements of Phase 1 were not completed and that they would have to be undertaken alongside Phase 2 resulting in other possible delays. Other countries, however, were ready to approve the report at this meeting. Appreciation was given to the compilation of global and regional instruments and measures relevant to Arctic region. It was pointed out that it is important that

the findings of the AOR are communicated in a correct way. PAME noted that the leads had worked extensively to finalize the AOR Phase I Report and regretted the late submission, however asked the SAOs to note that the Phase 1 report is “work in progress” that should thus be “welcomed”, not approved, by Ministers.

Decision: SAOs welcomed the progress on the AOR Phase I report for delivery to the 2011 Ministerial meeting and supported the AOR Phase II proposal for further work with reference to the PAME 2011-2013 Work Plan.

6.3. SAR Task Force

Background: The Russian Co-Chair of the SAO task force, Ambassador Anton Vasiliev, gave a short status update on SAR. He thanked all governments and persons involved in having reached consensus on the text. After five rounds of negotiations the text of the intergovernmental Agreement on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic has been agreed. Currently the translations of the English text into Russian and French are being verified. The delegations are now also working within their governments to perform the necessary procedures to assure that the Agreement - the first ever legally binding agreement among all Arctic Council states - could be signed in Nuuk by Ministers. Now it is important to secure good implementation after signing of the agreement. Plans are being made for implementation during the first months after the signing.

Decision: SAOs congratulated the work done and endorsed that the agreement is being prepared for delivery to and signing by Ministers in Nuuk.

6.4. Behavior of Oil and other Hazardous Substances in Arctic waters (BoHaSa) project (EPPR)

Background: The EPPR Vice-Chair Ole Kristian Bjerkemo presented the BoHaSa project, which was developed in response to a request in the Salekhard Declaration to synthesize knowledge and expertise on the behavior of oil and other hazardous substances in Arctic waters and to promote the development and use of technologies and working methods that improve the capability to respond to accidents. The BoHaSa report has now been finalized and its conclusions and recommendations identify issues and challenges in responding to oil or HNS spills in the Arctic.

Discussion: The report was generally welcomed and SAOs supported the recommendations as presented. Several mentioned the wish to establish an Arctic Council task force on oil spill. It was pointed out that the report seems not to be covering topics of interest to the Arctic peoples like the use of cyanide in the gold mines. In case of a cyanide spill it could wipe out a salmon stream. EPPR expressed that Cyanide should be followed up on and hope to implement it to future work.

Decision: SAOs approved the BoHaSa report for delivery to the Ministerial meeting.

6.5. Short update on EPPR deliverables to Ministers

Background: The EPPR Vice-Chair Ole Kristian Bjerkemo gave a short report to SAOs on EPPR deliverables to Ministers, and on the draft work plan for 2011-13 and indicated that the first EPPR meeting under the Swedish Arctic Council chairmanship will take place in Whitehorse, Yukon on June 15-16, 2011.

Decision: SAOs thanked EPPR and approved its deliverables.

7. Contaminants

7.1. AMAP Mercury Assessment (AMAP)

Background: The AMAP Chair Russell Shearer (Canada) first informed briefly about the recent report on Climate Change and POPs that had been released by UNEP/the Stockholm Convention and AMAP. The cooperation had been fruitful and constructive. An outreach plan had been developed. Furthermore, he stated that the Mercury Assessment, which will be a major deliverable at the Ministerial meeting in Nuuk 2011, and which has been co-led by Canada and Denmark, consists of a science report and a highlights (layman's) report. A 4-page hand-out containing some key scientific findings from the AMAP Mercury Assessment was released at the second UNEP Global Mercury Negotiations meeting (INC-2) which took place Jan 24-28 in Chiba, Japan. Denmark, on behalf of the Arctic Council, delivered a successful intervention on mercury as a concern to the Arctic and referred to AMAP's mercury assessment and the 4-page hand-out.

Discussion: SAOs agreed that this was an important assessment, a major deliverable and a big success which shows how the AC can work to influence global processes. Some Arctic States highlighted domestic successes in substantially reducing Mercury emissions. Several SAOs noted that global emissions should be reduced too and AC could play a role in this. Many speakers stated their willingness to approve the report for delivery to Ministers. It was stressed that the results shown in the assessment are very disturbing, especially for the promotion of the traditional lifestyles of the Indigenous Peoples. Many believed that the AC should continue to give high priority to this issue, and it was suggested that the mercury text for the Nuuk declaration should be strong and clear. In order for levels to drop in the Arctic, we need global controls and a global agreement. ICC informed that it supports a legally binding agreement and an abandoning of amalgams.

Decision: SAOs approved the mercury assessment products for delivery to the Ministerial Meeting in Nuuk.

7.2. Short status update on ACAP activities and deliverables to Ministers (ACAP)

Background: The ACAP Chair, Andrey Peshkov (Russia), gave a short report to SAOs on ACAP deliverables to Ministers, and on the draft work plan for 2011-13. ACAP informed that the next ACAP WG meeting will be in Washington 24-25 March to finalize work plan, proposals to declaration and progress report including main achievements 2009-2011.

Discussion: SAOs will be waiting for the work plan of ACAP to be finalized at next week's meeting. AIA and RAIPON both welcomed ACAP's Indigenous Peoples' contaminants action program. AMAP would be pleased to cooperate with ACAP on black carbon issues. ACAP pointed out that it would like to continue to collaborate with AMAP on several issues.

Decision: SAOs agreed to consider further deliverables and the work plan when they have been delivered to SAOs, and to pass on the deliverables to the Ministerial.

7.3. Update on the Project Support Instrument (PSI) (NEFCO)

Presentation: Husamuddin Ahmadzai, special advisor of NEFCO informed that contributions have been given from Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. PSI has also recently received funding from the Sami Parliament. NEFCO asked the SAOs to consider contributing to the PSI.

Discussion: The Saami Council informed that the pledge to contribute to the PSI was given in 2006. The funds (12.900 EURO) had now been transferred by the Norwegian Saami Parliament to the PSI.

Decision: SAOs thanked NEFCO for the presentation and the report on the PSI, thanked the Saami Parliament for their contribution and invited Parties to consider contributing to the PSI and encourage Parties that have pledged to deposit their contributions with the Fund Manager to enable the Fund Instrument to become operational during 2011.

8. Data, Observations and Monitoring

8.1. SAON – Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks (AMAP)

Background: The US SAO informed that the small group of member states and PPs which was formed after the Torshavn meeting had addressed the question on the way forward for SAON. The group had come up with a compromise solution which had now been discussed by SAOs. The proposal is to create a semi-autonomous body which would allow SAON to create its own operative procedures, and where the AC and IASC would co-sponsor the SAON. The AC will chair the SAON and the IASC will provide a co-chair. The PPs would have the same status as they have now in the AC. The rationale for the decision was the wish of the SAOs to both let the SAON develop further to enable it to fulfill its important tasks, and still to keep SAON under the AC umbrella. There had been some concern with the model of letting SAON develop totally independent from the AC. Therefore the SAOs and PPs have expressed a wish for a trial period of 2-4 years to see how this new arrangement works, without precedence for future arrangements. AMAP will be providing the SAON secretariat services. There was a proposal that the new name be something else than 'SAON Council', as this name could cause confusion. It was informed that IASC is meeting later in March 2011, so the AC decision should be communicated to IASC in time for their meeting.

Discussion: John Calder, Co Chair of the SAON Steering Group encouraged the AC to contact IASC at the earliest possible time to inform about the decision.

Decision: SAOs asked that US SAO communicate on behalf of the Council its decision to continue cooperating with IASC on the SAON and that the AC would provide the Chair and that IASC provide the co-chair. It was noted that this be done in time for the upcoming IASC meeting.

8.2. CBMP - Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme (CAFF)

Background: The CAFF Chair Aevar Petersen (Iceland) gave a short status update on the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme (CBMP). The Marine monitoring plan has now been completed and been approved by the CAFF board. The Arctic Marine Biodiversity Monitoring Plan (CBMP-Marine Plan) is the first of the CBMP's four pan-Arctic biodiversity monitoring plans.

Discussion: SAOs thanked CAFF for the presentation. AMAP informed that it has participated in several of the expert groups that were set up, and that AMAP will work closely with CAFF CBMP.

Decision: SAOs welcomed the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Monitoring Plan for delivery to Ministers.

9. Working Group Administration

9.1. Working Group Progress Reports and Draft 2011-2013 Work Plans

Background: Working Group Progress Reports contain information on project progress and outcomes intended for Ministers, including special issues for SAO consideration. The Draft Work Plans outline the suggested priorities of the Working Groups for the next period (the Swedish chairmanship).

Decision: SAOs welcomed the Working Group Progress Reports and Draft 2011-2013 Work Plans.

9.2. AMAP 20th Anniversary Conference - "The Arctic as a Messenger for Global Processes - Climate change and Pollution"

Background: The AMAP Vice-Chair Morten S. Olsen informed that AMAP, together with the Universities of Copenhagen and Aarhus, will arrange an international conference 3-6 May 2011 in *Festsalen*, Frue Plads 4, 1168 Copenhagen K, Denmark, where the scientific findings from the 2011 SWIPA and 2011 Mercury assessments will be presented. To date, over 120 abstracts have been received for presentations. 350 experts are expected to attend the conference. There are a limited number of seats (400). A detailed programme will be circulated later. Danish and Swedish Ministers have confirmed that they will speak at the

conference. Key recommendations from the conference could be presented by the Danish Minister at the Nuuk Ministerial meeting.

Decision: SAOs thanked AMAP for the information.

10. Any Other Business

10.1. The 4 Councils of the North

Background: The chairs of the four councils of the North (The Euro-Arctic Barents Council, The Nordic Council of Ministers, The Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Arctic Council) meet once a year to exchange views and experiences. In 2011 it is the AC's turn to host such a meeting. It is scheduled for 7 April in Copenhagen.

Decision: For information purposes.

10.2. International Congress on Circumpolar Health (IUCH)

Background: President Michael Bruce of the International Union for Circumpolar Health (IUCH) (www.iuch.net) gave a brief presentation on activities of the IUCH surrounding the upcoming International Congress on Circumpolar Health which will take place in Fairbanks, Alaska, USA from August 5-10, 2012. The scientific program is expected to bring approximately 800 health care leaders, decision makers and researchers from all over the world to Alaska. Papers and posters will be presented in a variety of topic areas. For more information visit: <http://www.icch15.com>

Decision: For information purposes.

10.3. International Polar Decade

Background: AMAP Chair Russel Shearer started by mentioning that a new book is about to be published on the outcome of the IPY. AMAP has since the Thorshavn meeting been working to develop a further understanding of the concept of an International Polar Decade (IPD). Even if the goal of an IPD is starting to be formulated, the idea has not yet been completely defined. But still there is enough knowledge to propose language for the Nuuk declaration. There is an upcoming WMO-Roshydromet workshop on IPD 14-15 April in St. Petersburg (by invitation only). The workshop outcome will be presented to SAOs at their April meeting. Shearer presented some IPD considerations from AC viewpoint, and suggested the following next steps: continue to develop the concept, produce a scoping paper, SAOs to consider text for Nuuk declaration.

Discussion: it was pointed out that the human dimension and traditional knowledge should be included and integrated from an early stage of the planning of a possible IPD. Therefore, the scoping workshop should include also social/human experts.

Canada reminded that they are hosting the closing IPY conference in Montreal, April 2012. It was suggested that given the rapid changes in the Arctic, there is a need to focus on how to better predict and adapt to the changes. The wording in the Nuuk declaration on the IPD could be even stronger, but would need to have some provisions on funding and so on. Several PPs noted that indigenous peoples should be invited in at early stage, and Russia said that it would take it into consideration, to invite also PPs to the workshop. There was a suggestion to make the Montreal conference also the opening conference of IPD. Some concerns about the developing of an IPD before having evaluated the IPY were expressed. During IPY one had seen a fierce competition for attention and resources between social sciences and natural sciences.

Decision: SAOs thanked AMAP for the information.

10.4. Closing of Meeting

The Chair thanked all participants, and especially the Danish SAO, Mikaela Engell, who after many years in the Arctic Council is leaving her position. Many speakers took the floor to thank the Danish Chairmanship and the SAO Chair for his leadership over the two last years.