

ARCTIC COUNCIL

MEETING OF SENIOR ARCTIC OFFICIALS

Selfoss, Iceland

May 4-5, 2004

Draft minutes

1. **OPENING OF THE MEETING**

The Chairman of Senior Arctic Officials, Ambassador Gunnar Pálsson, welcomed participants to Selfoss and opened the meeting. The Chairman welcomed in particular the new SAO of Canada, Ambassador Jack Anawak.

2. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The meeting approved the draft agenda circulated on 2 April 2004, with amendments.

3. **APPROVAL OF AD HOC OBSERVERS**

The Chairman informed the meeting that the one application for ad-hoc observership, from the Arctic Circumpolar Route (ACR), circulated before the meeting, had been withdrawn.

4. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE LAST SAO MEETING**

The meeting approved the minutes of the SAO-meeting in Svartsengi, on 23 and 24 October 2003.

5. **UPDATE ON THE ARCTIC COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES**

Written reports from all the working groups had been distributed before the meeting. The Chair invited the Chairmen of the working groups one by one in alphabetical order to present their reports.

5.1. **ACAP**

The Chairman of ACAP, Mr. Bob Dyer, presented the ACAP progress report. The Chairman informed the meeting of the successful transfer of the ACAP Secretariat from Oslo to Washington. The Chairman underlined in particular the importance of completing ACAP projects and emphasized greater involvement of industry in practical solutions for project implementation. In addition, the Chairman discussed ACAP's plans to increasingly cover all the Arctic Council Member States and his intention to ensure active participation of indigenous peoples in the work of ACAP.

Furthermore, the Chairman provided an update of the implementation status of the main ongoing ACAP projects, including; the PCB projects, the evaluation of dioxins and furans in the Russian Federation project, the reduction of atmospheric mercury releases from Arctic states project, the environmentally sound management of stocks

of obsolete pesticides in the Russian Federation project, the Norilsk cleaner production project and the new project on brominated flame retardants. The Chairman informed the meeting of ACAPs continued work on obtaining long term financing for its projects. In addition, information was provided on ACAPs cooperation with international organization, including the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers environment working groups. The Chairman expressed the wish that this cooperation become a standard procedure in the future.

In its report to the SAOs, ACAP put forward four requests. Firstly, to support the proposed ACAP cooperative initiatives with the BEAC WGE and the NCM EWG. Secondly, to support outreach opportunities with industry to find solutions to environmental problems addressed by ACAP. Thirdly, to continue to evaluate options for creating financing of ACAP projects. The SAO Chair suggested that the meeting address this issue under agenda item 8. Fourthly, to expand the participation of observer countries.

The meeting acknowledged the good progress made by ACAP and congratulated Mr. Dyer on his extensive report. Some countries mentioned in particular the Norilsk project and suggested that it be held up as a showcase example to Ministers. Some countries referred to the mercury project and drew attention to measures they are taking domestically to limit their own emissions of mercury. The questions by ACAP, to be dealt with under this item, were all positively received, although, as regards the broadening of the geographic scope of ACAP, the point was made that this should not lead to diminishing attention being paid to ongoing projects in the Russian Federation.

5.2. AMAP

The Chairman of AMAP, Mr. Helgi Jensson, presented the AMAP progress report to the meeting and introduced the new vice-chairman of AMAP, Mr. John Calder. Mr. Jensson highlighted in particular the AMAP deliverables as reflected in the AMAP Strategic Plan for the next ten years. The Plan includes both large assessments by AMAP and a more short time deliverables. In addition, follow up to international conventions on pollution, such as the Stockholm convention, is highlighted and so is increased international cooperation. In addition, issues related to the communication of the AMAP findings are given attention in the Plan. The Chairman drew special attention to two AMAP projects. Firstly, the PTS project on food security and indigenous peoples of the Russian north and secondly, the completion of the so-called Lena Basin project. Finally, the Chairman pointed to the requests AMAP had put to the SAOs in its progress report. The requests all related to funding, i.e. the funding of the AMAP secretariat, the funding of data handling as regards the acidification and petroleum hydrocarbon assessment, funding the AMAP monitoring and assessment work plan and sponsoring the ACIA Symposium in November 2004.

The Vice-chairman of AMAP, Mr. John Calder, presented the assessment of oil and gas activities in the Arctic. The scope of the assessment will be quite different from the previous hydrocarbon assessment completed by AMAP in 1997, as social and economic consequences will be dealt with, in addition to environmental impacts from pollution, environmental effects from physical impacts and disturbances and effects on human health. The assessment will be carried out under a steering group, which will report directly to AMAP and other involved working groups.

The meeting recognized the good work carried out by AMAP. Some highlighted in particular the relevance of the work of AMAP to the indigenous peoples of the high north, especially in the Russian Federation. The meeting expressed satisfaction with the Lena and other Siberian rivers projects. A number of SAOs pledged financial support

in response to AMAP's requests. The hydrocarbon assessment, including in particular the inclusion of the social and economic dimension, received considerable attention. Some of the SAOs urged a pragmatic step-by-step approach as regards the assessment. The Arctic Athabaskan Council expressed the view that Arctic indigenous perspectives on Arctic oil and gas development should be reflected in the assessment. As regards the sponsorship for the ACIA symposium, a number of countries pledged support.

5.3. CAFF

The Chairman of CAFF, Mr. Kent Wohl, introduced the working group's progress report to the meeting. In his presentation, Mr. Wohl focused on two of CAFF's key projects, the ECORA project and the circumpolar biodiversity-monitoring programme. The ECORA focuses on an integrated ecosystem management approach to conserve biodiversity and ensure sustainable use. The components addressed by the ECORA include an administrative framework for the Russian Arctic for the implementation of an ecosystem management approach and improved knowledge base on the socio-economic and the biodiversity ecosystem components. The ECORA also foresees pilot projects being implemented in three model regions, dedicated to sustainable development. The Chairman stated that those would most likely include a pilot project on reindeer husbandry. The project awaited approval by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and following that, the project was expected to enter the implementation stage.

The Chairman asked Mr. Ævar Petersen, to present the biodiversity-monitoring programme to the meeting and an executive summary of the programme's framework report was circulated. In his presentation, Mr. Petersen explained that the project builds on existing monitoring programmes of the different countries. The benefit of the programme lies in the linkages at the circumpolar level. Among other things, the programme will address the impacts of climate change on biodiversity. The programme will respond to many of the objectives from Johannesburg. Mr. Petersen demonstrated a long list of stakeholders in the programme and underlined the importance of cooperation with all the Arctic Council working groups, an addition to the cooperation between AMAP and CAFF, already envisaged in the programme. The aim is to finalize the programme's framework report by the 2004 Ministerial.

Finally, Mr. Wohl announced the departure of CAFF's Executive Secretary, Ms. Magdalena Muir, from her post and introduced her successor Ms. Maria Victoria Gunnarsson. The Chairman thanked Ms. Muir for her good work in the CAFF secretariat.

In its progress report to the SAOs, CAFF drew particular attention to the increased financial costs associated with improved coordination and collaboration among the working groups and asked SAOs to clarify their expectations for the working groups as regards collaboration projects.

The meeting expressed satisfaction with the ongoing work of CAFF and congratulated the group among other things on the effective start up of the ECORA project and its successful efforts to secure GEF funding. The point was made that SAOs would want to follow closely the progress of the ECORA project due to its importance for the Arctic Council. As regards the biodiversity monitoring programme, several speakers made the point that the project offered a possibility to learn from individual domestic experiences. Some drew attention to the need to link the programme with other efforts, including the convention on biological diversity and then with the framework of the Arctic Council itself, the ACIA in particular. As regards cooperation between AMAP and CAFF, the general point was made that linkages among the

working groups would become more important if anything in coming years. However, it was observed that there was a need to focus on specifics and look into the possibility of implementing demonstration or pilot projects in suitable areas. The indigenous peoples stated that the IPS should not only be involved in the collection of data in relation to the biodiversity-monitoring programme, but also in the analysis of the data gathered. As regards the request put forward in the CAFF report, some comments were made. It was felt that it would probably not be advisable to set general rules at this stage as to how to coordinate collaboration among the working groups. Instead, the matter should be dealt with on an ad-hoc basis. Working groups should be given prior warning if they were to be asked to provide an input to work led by other working groups.

Before closing the agenda item, the Chair thanked Ms. Muir for valuable contribution to the work of the Arctic Council and welcomed the new Executive Secretary, Mrs. Gunnarsdóttir.

5.4. EPPR

The Chair gave the floor to Ms. Johnston to present the EPPR progress report. In her presentation, Ms. Johnston mentioned that the issue of the EPPR Chairmanship was unsolved. She thanked Sweden for agreeing to host the EPPR web-site for the next five years. She informed the meeting that EPPR had completed the shoreline clean-up assessment technology manual, which was being printed. A training course to go with the manual is being developed. Work is ongoing within the EPPR in the oil spill and transportation field and more focus has been put to radiological and other hazards in the work of EPPR. Ms. Johnston drew attention to EPPR's request to expand the group's mandate and include natural disasters and asked SAOs to give directions in that matter.

The meeting commented, in a positive light, on the work of the EPPR. Among specific projects referred to was EPPR's decision to provide a practical application of the oil and transfer guidelines, the shore cleanup assessment technology manual, the circumpolar map and Arctic rescue. It was noted that many of the EPPR projects require cooperation with other working groups, including AMAP. Thus, AMAP and EPPR were urged to pay close attention to how they coordinate joint work. Support was expressed to the request for the extension of the group's mandate, although one member state requested further information by EPPR at the next SAO-meeting, as to what the extension of the mandate would involve.

5.5. PAME

The Chair invited the Chairman of PAME, Mr. Davíð Egilson, to present the PAME progress report. The Chairman explained that the main work of PAME had been related to the Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (AMSP), to be discussed under item 5.5.1. He announced that the Arctic oil transfer guidelines, led by Canada, had been finalized and asked for the approval of SAOs. In addition, he mentioned the ongoing elaboration of the PAME work plan for the period 2004-2006.

The meeting thanked PAME for its good progress and welcomed the Arctic Waters Oil Transfer Guidelines. Some mentioned the relationship between the PAME two-year work plan and the AMSP.

5.5.1. Arctic Marine Strategic plan (AMSP)

The Chair invited Mr. Egilson to introduce the AMSP. Mr. Egilson recalled the AMSP mandate and explained that the plan had been drafted through a series of consultations and workshops, arriving at the second draft, circulated before the meeting. The plan is intended to provide a coordinated and integrated strategic approach to address the challenges of costal and marine environment, applying an ecosystem based approach.

The Chair introduced Mr. John Karau who further presented the AMSP. According to Mr. Karau, the AMSP should deal with emerging issues and guide sustainable development, with respect to costal and marine areas, through an ecosystem based approach. Furthermore, Mr. Karau raised several key considerations relating to the ongoing drafting of the plan, including, how well the AMSP helped respond to the key drivers, such as climate change, and whether it should focus attention on the influence of the Russian north on the marine environment. Furthermore, he informed the meeting that the two lead countries, Canada and Iceland would produce a third revised draft to be distributed for review and comment during June 2004 with the aim to seek final SAO review and approval in August.

Delegations expressed appreciation for the work done on the AMSP. Numerous comments and recommendation were made as to the ongoing drafting of the plan. Among others, the point was made that it would be necessary to consider recalibrating the balance of issues addressed in the plan, bringing more to the forefront the more immediate issues that the Arctic Council is being called upon to deal with, including the impacts of climate change and Arctic shipping.

5.6. SDWG

The Chair gave the floor to the Chairman of the SDWG, Mr. Hugi Ólafsson who introduced the SDWG progress report. Mr. Ólafsson drew attention to the eleven ongoing projects of the SDWG and stated that some of those projects would be presenting final or substantial reports by the 2004 Ministerial, including the project on family-based reindeer economy and the status and management of wild reindeer and caribou populations, certain invasive bacterial diseases projects will present a report and the project on women's participation in decision making in fisheries management will have a final report and recommendations for further action. In addition, the children and youth project will have a report on health indicators. Mr. Ólafsson informed the meeting that the SDWG had decided to have a meeting in the fall and that an offer by Canada to host the meeting in Whitehorse had been accepted. The working group considered the meeting of vital importance for addressing its fast growing agenda. Central to that discussion were the Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) and the Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP). The SDWG requested the guidance of the SAOs on three separate items, the Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP), the ICT and a project proposal on the sustainable development of indigenous peoples of the Russian north, jointly submitted by the Russian federation. RAIPON and UNDP. The Chair of the SAOs postponed the discussion on the two first items, but invited delegations to address the new project proposal in their interventions.

Compliments were extended to the SDWG for the extensive work done. The time had come for the SDWG to have meetings separate from the SAO meetings. As regards the project proposal, no objections were made. However, some member states were not prepared to commit financial resources to the project. The point was made that the possibility of having other similar projects subsumed under it should be explored. Furthermore, as the project had not come about in a way that Arctic Council projects

normally do, more time was needed. The meeting decided that the proposal merited further discussion before the next SAO-meeting

5.6.1. The Sustainable Development Action Plan

The Chair informed the meeting that the Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP) had been discussed informally at a luncheon meeting of the SAOs and Permanent Participants and that a common position had been reached on the way forward. The Chair asked the meeting if it could agree to reaffirm its intention consistent with the mandate given to SAOs at the Inari Ministerial. This was to complete a proposal or recommendation for Ministers on SDAP by November and ask the Chair of SDWG, in cooperation with the Russian Federation, in this case the lead country of the project, to prepare a new draft of the SDAP. The draft would build on the current draft but also take into account written comments, already received from task force members, as well as comments made at the SDWG and SAO meetings, in addition to any further comments that Member States or Permanent Participants might wish to volunteer in the coming days. The Chair's proposal was accepted.

5.6.2. The Arctic Human Development Report

Mr. Ólafsson reported on the progress of the Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR). Work on the different chapters was in good progress but the short time available would result in tight deadlines for chapter reviews and preparations of printing. The chapters had been posted on the SDWG website. As regards the nature of the document, Mr. Ólafsson underlined that the AHDR was a scientific document and its authors responsible for its content. The document will not contain policy recommendations but it will be policy relevant to the extent that it identifies issues, which could influence the agenda of the SDWG and the Arctic Council. Furthermore, he explained that the AHDR would be different from the reports by the same name of the UNDP. The AHDR would not attempt to be a statistical exercise but would attempt to identify the components of human well-being that are important for Arctic residents.

The Chair thanked all those involved in the AHDR, in particular the lead authors for a job well done. Neither SAOs nor Ministers would want to exercise political oversight of the report. At the same time, it should be kept in mind that the greater the appeal of this report to governments, the greater the likelihood that Ministers would use it and want to follow up on it.

The Chair gave the floor to the Swedish SAO, Ambassador Ödmark, to present an invitation to the Arctic Council to take part in the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being. This is a partnership set up within the framework of the European Union's Northern Dimension and covers public health and social issues in the northern part of Europe. The partnership was launched at a Ministerial meeting held in Oslo in October 2003. The meeting adopted a declaration, circulated by the Chair in advance of the SAO meeting, setting out the mandate, objectives, and the framework for the partnership. The Swedish representative asked the SAOs to consider endorsing the participation of the Arctic Council in the partnership.

Questions were raised as to how the Arctic Council could contribute to the partnership. Support for the endorsement of the participation was not unanimous.

6. ACIA activities

The ACIA project leader, Dr. Robert Corell, updated the meeting on the state of play as regards the ACIA. Dr. Corell summarized the scientific message from the ACIA in the following way; the climate is now changing across the Arctic basin and it is dramatically impacting the people in the Arctic, their infrastructure and societies. Dr. Corell emphasized two issues in particular, firstly, the completion of the ACIA process and secondly, how to communicate its results. As regards the completion of the documents, the contents of both the science and overview documents had been frozen. The science document was more or less finalized and the body of the text should be made available to the SAOs by the end of June 2004. As regards the overview document, Dr. Corell circulated the semi-final draft and indicated that the final draft would be made available by the end of June. The communications plan presented by Dr. Corell was well received, although questions were raised as to its funding. Some stressed the importance of working closely with other bodies, including international organizations, the University of the Arctic and the observers, as regards climate change in the Arctic. The Permanent Participants circulated a paper, entitled Permanent Participants advice on communicating the results of the ACIA. The paper was welcomed by participants.

The Chair thanked Dr. Corell for his great contribution to the ACIA and underlined the appreciation of all parties for his continued engagement in the ACIA process.

As regards the ACIA policy process, the work of the so-called policy drafting team had been put on hold as of 2 December 2003 and since that time, the responsibility for the policy aspects of the ACIA had rested with the SAOs. The Chair informed the meeting of consultations among Member States and Permanent Participants on the issue, including their informal workshop in Nuuk, Greenland, on 20-22 April 2004. The meeting accepted the Chair's proposal that further work on the policy text build on the chapter division and structure of the updated London version of the draft policy document. Furthermore, that SAOs and Permanent Participants would continue to work on the text within the existing structures and processes of the Arctic Council, coordinated by the Chairman of the SAOs. In addition, this work would take full account of possible new elements introduced in Nuuk.

The meeting also accepted the Chair's proposal regarding the process to be followed, according to which the SAOs and the Permanent Participants would provide the Chair their input to the ACIA policy text by the 15 July 2004. On that basis, a policy text would be drafted by the Chair and circulated among SAOs and Permanent Participants in early August 2004. An ACIA drafting session, focusing on the ACIA policy text, would be held, possibly towards the end of August. No decision was taken as regards the format of the policy text.

7. FINANCING OF PERMANENT PARTICIPANTS' PARTICIPATION

As a background to the discussion on this topic, the Chair recalled the two suggestions put forth at the last SAO-meeting on funding of the participation of Permanent Participants in Arctic Council activities, i.e. a Canadian suggestion to set up a core fund for the indigenous peoples activities and a proposal to have all Arctic Council projects, especially new projects, dedicate a part of their budget to indigenous peoples involvement. SAOs and Permanent Participants had had written contacts on the matter and the Permanent Participants had presented a discussion paper, circulated on 11 March 2004. Furthermore, the Chair recalled two of the suggestions he had made in his letter of 19 April 2004, i.e. to consider the Canadian proposal and to consider the possibility of committing to further exploring ways and means to better ensure

representation of the Permanent Participants in the approved projects of the Arctic Council. In addition, the Permanent Participants themselves would be asked to explore possibilities for further cooperation among themselves and making the best possible use of the resources already at hand.

The discussion on this issue revealed that the basic concept of the proposal to dedicate part of project funding to the participation of Permanent Participants was acceptable and that Member States were prepared to discuss modalities. The adoption of rigid rules in this regard would be avoided. Furthermore, funding of Permanent Participants activities would in the first instance be the responsibility of the Member State concerned. The meeting agreed to ask the Chairmen of the working groups to advise the SAOs on how the concept could be carried out in connection with new activities or projects, based on previous experience. Based on their input, SAOs would look towards finding appropriate language for the SAO report to Ministers and eventually a recommendation to Ministers.

8. FINANCING OF ARCTIC COUNCIL PROJECTS

The Chair recalled the revised discussion paper on financing Arctic Council projects, circulated on 16 April 2004, and underlined that the aim of the paper was to outline a concept, taking account of the views expressed at the last SAO-meeting. The Chair drew attention to a change of terminology. A project support fund (PSF) would be substituted for trust fund.

The Chair introduced Mr. Pitkanen, Managing Director of the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO) and invited him to comment. In his presentation, Mr. Pitkanen emphasized that the PSF was aimed at concrete action-oriented projects. He further explained that one of the constraining factors of such projects was to identify effectively the resources needed to carry out the preparatory process in order to proceed within a desired timeframe from ideas to action. The PSF would not change the modalities or the structures prevailing in the Arctic Council. Its aim would be to seek to enhance the existing processes and overcome some of those constraints in moving from research monitoring and basic programme activities to concrete steps to eliminate pollution. The PSF was expected to add value to project financing through the pooling of resources and in that way to improve effectiveness. Furthermore, the PSF would also bring in additional expertise and experience to financial engineering and effective resource management.

The meeting thanked Mr. Pitkanen for his useful overview. Delegations agreed that the time had come to take further steps as regards the PSF, by looking into the practicalities of the concept. It was agreed to set up a small group of qualified experts to examine how such a project support fund might work in practice, making use of examples for demonstrative purposes. The group should report to the Chair and its aim should be to accomplish its work prior to the next SAO-meeting in November. The Chair stated that he would be in contact with the SAOs as regards establishing the expert group. Finland proposed that the first meeting of the group take place in Helsinki and offered the premises of the Foreign Ministry for that purpose.

9. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN THE ARCTIC; PROPOSALS TO MINISTERS

The Chair informed the meeting of developments since the ICT conference in Akureyri in October 2003. In cooperation with SAOs and Permanent Participants, the Chair had been working on concrete suggestions as to the possible recommendations to be made to Ministers as regards ICT in the Arctic. The outcome of that work had been

presented in the Chair's discussion paper of 7 April 2004 and in an updated version on 30 April 2004. The discussion paper envisaged, among other things, the setting up of an ICT task force to oversee ICT activities of the Arctic Council.

It was the view of most delegations that an ICT network (ICTN) should be set up instead of an ICT task force. The objective of the ICTN would be to facilitate, support or encourage projects based on the outcome of the Akureyri conference. The ICTN should be responsible to the Chair of the SAOs and base its work on the ICT discussion paper circulated prior to the meeting. The SAOs would draw upon the work of the ICTN in formulating recommendations to Ministers in November 2004. Furthermore, it was decided that SAOs, Permanent Participants and the relevant observers would be invited to nominate representatives to the ICTN.

10. THE EUROPEAN UNION'S SECOND NORTHERN DIMENSION ACTION PLAN; ARCTIC COUNCIL FOLLOW-UP

The Chair recalled the two decisions taken at the last SAO-meeting, i.e. to identify Arctic Council projects for possible cooperation with the European Commission on the basis of the SNDAP and to examine the possibility of a workshop with the Commission to focus on concrete projects for cooperation. The Chair informed the meeting that a list of Arctic Council projects had been identified with the assistance of the working groups and submitted to the Commission. Regular contacts had been maintained with the Commission with the aim of specifying possible cooperation and at the same time exploring the possibility of a workshop. The overall feedback from the Commission had been positive, although no commitment had been made on either side to cooperate on specific projects.

The Chair welcomed the representative of the Commission, Mr. Frederik Svedang and invited him to present the latest developments as regards the SNDAP.

Mr. Svedang pointed out, among other things, that the Northern Dimension, following the enlargement of the European Union and the establishment of the European Neighborhood policy, was mainly concerned with the relations between the EU and Russia. Furthermore, he stated that the EU's aim was to organize a joint seminar with the Arctic Council in July 2004 and that many cooperation possibilities existed, although the Northern Dimension did not have its own funding instruments and worked instead through the existing instruments and structures. In addition, Mr. Svedang pointed to the need to avoid duplication and overlap of the work of different organizations in the north and informed the meeting that the Commission was looking at setting up the Northern Dimension Information System, i.e. a simple information sheet collecting information on the work of each body to be circulated among them.

The discussion among delegations on this topic expressed a continuing interest and commitment of the Arctic Council in engaging with the Commission in the different areas of mutual interest. Delegations welcomed the workshop scheduled for July 2004.

11. ARCTIC SCIENCE SUMMIT WEEK; REPORT

The Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW) took place in Reykjavík Iceland on 21-28 April 2004 in conjunction with the Icelandic Chairmanship as part of its efforts to enhance research cooperation in the Arctic. The Chair invited Dr. Kristján Kritisjónsson, Chairman of the organizing committee, to present the ASSW report. Mr. Kritisjónsson explained the ASSW concept and drew particular attention to two events organized during the week. Science day was devoted to the theme "Adaptation to climate change." It was divided into two sessions, one focusing on environmental

studies and the other on studies related to the social and economic impacts of climate change. Another day, Project day, was devoted to discussion on the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, the Second International Conference on Arctic Research Planning (ICARP II) and the International Polar Year (IPY). In addition, the ASSW discussed numerous other topics, including the International Study on Arctic Change (ISAC), run by the United States, and a possible workshop on an Arctic marine transport in Cambridge.

In an effort to establish closer links between the science community and the Arctic Council, the Chair had invited Dr. Patrick Webber, the President of the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) to address the topic of the Arctic Council and the IASC in partnership.

In his presentation, Dr. Webber introduced IASC as a non-governmental international membership organization to facilitate cooperation on all aspects of Arctic research, in all countries engaged in Arctic research and in all areas of the Arctic region, integrating human, social and natural sciences. The IASC provides a forum for linking together ongoing and planned bilateral projects to achieve added value and avoid duplication and advises on funding and implementation of accepted projects. Dr. Webber specifically mentioned the International Science Initiative in the Russian Arctic (ICIRA), set up to advise the IASC Executive Committee on the development and promotion of international cooperation in the Russian Arctic. Dr. Webber emphasized the importance for IASC of collaborating with as many organizations as possible and developing partnerships, for example the ISAC, CEON and IPY. In addition, he reiterated IASC's full support to the ACIA scientific report. Furthermore, Dr. Webber mentioned that the southern polar region had well established bodies for dealing with Antarctic science, including the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) and Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs (COMNAP), which are linked under the Antarctic Treaty system. However, the northern polar region does not have a comparable system for Arctic science. As an answer to that need, he pointed to the Arctic Council as a medium for linking science bodies and governments. There was a great opportunity for a better and firmer relationship between the Arctic Council, IASC and the Forum of Arctic Research Operators (FARO). Linking this cooperation in the north with the Antarctic Treaty system could, in his view, assist considerably with the development of IPY.

The meeting expressed the view that the ASSW was a valuable opportunity to get the dialog between the science community and the Arctic Council underway and expressed anticipation for continuing dialog with IASC, both within the framework of the ICARP and the IPY.

Finally, the Chair expressed his thanks to the President of IASC for the enormous contribution of IASC to the ASSW.

12. MEETING OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF THE ARCTIC COUNCIL MEMBER STATES

The Chair briefly introduced the background of the meeting of Ministers of Education and Science of the Arctic Council Member States, scheduled to take place on 9 June 2004 in Reykjavík Iceland, organized by the Icelandic Chairmanship and the Icelandic Ministry of Education and Science. The Chair invited Dr. Vilhjálmur Lúðvíksson from the Ministry of Education and Science to provide an account of ongoing preparations for the meeting.

Dr. Lúðvíksson explained that the objective of this meeting was to explore closer cooperation between the Arctic Council Member States in the field of education

and science, recognizing that education, science and technology innovation as driving forces of socio-economic development. The focus of the meeting would be to identify a suitable framework for such cooperation, for instance, through the exchange of students and scientists, to promote institutional links and exchange policy experiences on measures to promote socio-economic innovation and sustainable development, relevant in the northern regions. The outcome of the meeting would take the form of a Ministerial statement or declaration, calling for concrete follow up. Dr. Lúðvíksson then explained the set-up of the meeting, which is in two sessions, held back to back with a meeting of the Nordic Ministers of Education and Science, and identified the speakers that had been selected.

The idea of the meeting was welcomed by delegations. However, the different level of participants from the Member States might cause difficulties for some delegations. The Chair explained that it was not possible for practical reasons for everybody to be represented at the same level. Therefore, the meeting was not one of the Education and Science Ministers exclusively, as other representatives from the Arctic Council Member States were also included.

13. ARCTIC COUNCIL INVOLVEMENT IN THE INTERNATIONAL POLAR YEAR

The Chair explained the ongoing involvement of the Arctic Council in the International Polar Year (IPY) since the last SAO-meeting. The working groups had been invited to identify activities or concrete projects of relevance to the IPY. Their input was forwarded to the ICSU planning group as an input of the Arctic Council, emphasizing in particular the need for including the human dimension in the IPY and underlining the importance of climate change and the ACIA. In addition, the Chair had drafted a joint statement on the implementation of the IPY, signed by several science organizations, underlining the Arctic Council's commitment to the IPY and the importance of the Council's involvement for the science organizations involved.

The Chair welcomed Mr. Chris Rapley, Director of the British Antarctic Survey and Chairman of the ICSU planning group for the IPY, to the meeting and invited him to provide an overview of the IPY preparations. According to Mr. Rapley, it was foreseen that a manageable number of core activities, plus a wide range of associated activities, would constitute the IPY. Mr. Rapley explained that the main task of the ICSU planning group had been to gather the numerous ideas from the science community and different organizations and develop, on this basis, an initial high-level science plan by October 2004. Following that, a joint ICSU/WMO body could be set up to further prepare the IPY. The planning group had received a very strong response, including inputs from scientists of 27 countries and 30 ICSU and non-ICSU bodies. Altogether, over 340 ideas had been received. In addition, national committees and national points of contacts had been established. All the ideas had been categorized into a set of themes and twenty-two core activities had been selected and were being discussed. Mr. Rapley underlined the importance of linkages between the different bodies engaged in polar science in defining and implementing the actual activities of the IPY.

The meeting thanked Mr. Rapley for the presentation. Many of the comments made focused on what was seen as weak IPY content in the human dimension. References were made to the joint statement prepared by the Chair and decided that the SAOs would adopt a reply to the joint statement and submit both documents to the

science organizations listed in the joint statement, as well as to the ICSU planning group and the WMO.

13.1. THE INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF ARCTIC INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY-BASED ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING & INFORMATION STATIONS (AICEMI)

The Executive Secretary of the Aleut International Association, Ms. Victoria Gofman, introduced the International Network of Arctic Indigenous Community-Based Environmental Monitoring & Information Stations (AICEMI). The main aim of the network is to create capacities for better understanding of environmental changes by scientists and local residents by creating an inventory and by digitally connecting existing community based environmental monitoring. Furthermore, the network should create a system where the scientific research could benefit the communities, in which it takes place, making use of the knowledge and experience of indigenous peoples. It was proposed to develop the overall scheme in parallel to the development of the IPY, to which it should be linked.

In the discussion on this item, the Chairman of CAFF suggested that the AICEMI concept be incorporated into the CAFF monitoring programme in addition to the joint monitoring between CAFF and AMAP. This suggestion was well received by delegations. The Circum Arctic-Environmental Observatories Network (CEON) also belonged in this groups of monitoring activities.

14. FOLLOW-UP ON THE PROGRESS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC

The Chair acknowledged Professor Oran Young who presented the report on the University of the Arctic.

Among other things, Mr. Young mentioned that the UArctic had approximately 250 students, and that their number was expected to grow steadily. He introduced a new publication from the UArctic, called “On top of it - overcoming the challenges of ICT and distance education of the Arctic”. Furthermore, he informed the meeting of growing interest in the UArctic, eleven applications for additional members had been received in addition to those fifty-nine member organizations the UArctic already had. Professor Young recalled the Inari declaration’s paragraph encouraging appropriate authorities in the Member States to increase their efforts to secure financing of the core activities of the UArctic. Professor Young thanked the Member States for their support and asked them to consider inserting the same message into the 2004 Ministerial declaration.

15. INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR HYDROGEN ECONOMY; POSSIBLE ARCTIC COUNCIL OBSERVERSHIP

The Chair recalled his letter of 3 February 2004, regarding the possibility of the Arctic Council joining the International Partnership for Hydrogen Economy (IPHE) as an observer and informed the meeting that the Council’s interest in doing so had been conveyed to a meeting of the IPHE Implementation and Liaison Committee on 2 March 2004. The meeting had concluded that the message from the Arctic Council should be introduced to the IPHE Steering Committee. Furthermore, the Chair informed the meeting of the IPHE Steering Committee’s meeting in Beijing in May 2004 and asked the meeting for guidance as to the message to be conveyed to that meeting. Delegations suggested keeping the issue of hydrogen as well as the Council’s interest in the IPHE alive within the Arctic Council, although reference was also made to the fact that the

Arctic Council had not had the chance to explore the use of hydrogen in the context of the work of the Arctic Council.

16. THE CIRCUM ARCTIC ENVIRONMENTAL OBSERVATORIES NETWORK (CEON)

Discussion on this item was postponed until the next meeting.

17. PRESENTATION FROM THE ARCTIC ATHABASKAN COUNCIL

Mr. Keith Maguire, AAC policy analyst, assisted by Dr. Chris Paci, AAC advisor, gave a presentation on the Athabaskan peoples and the work of the Arctic Athabaskan Council, representing the interests of United States and Canadian Athabaskan members.

18. PREPARATIONS FOR THE FOURTH ARCTIC COUNCIL MINISTERIAL MEETING

The Chair drew attention to draft outlines for the SAO report to Ministers and the Ministerial declaration circulated prior to the meeting.

19. OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Johnson from the UNEP GRID/Arendal introduced the report Arctic Environment - European Perspectives. Why should Europe care?, developed jointly by the Europe Environmental Agency and UNEP GRID/Arendal with a contribution from AMAP and others.

20. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on 22-23 November 2004, in Reykjavik. The Ministerial meeting is scheduled for the following day, the 24th of November.