



Senior Arctic Officials
Permanent Participants
Working Groups
Observers

7 October 2003

In preparation for our discussion of item 12 of the draft agenda for the SAO meeting later this month; Arctic Council follow-up of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, I would like to draw your attention to the attached text concerning the future organization of the work of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

At the last meeting of the CSD in May 2003, discussions focused, among other things, on how regional contributions to the Jo'burg implementation process should be concentrated. The main conclusion was to invite the United Nations Regional Commissions to organize implementation fora in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Jo'burg plan, in collaboration with other regional and sub-regional organizations and bodies as appropriate. The aim of such meetings is spelled out in paragraph 3(a) of the attached document. Furthermore, regional and sub-regional bodies and institutions within and outside the UN system were invited to contribute to the preparations for the CSD Review and Policy Sessions and the Intergovernmental Action Forum, see paragraph 3(d).

In view of this, I believe we should have adequate opportunities to contribute to the implementation of the plan. In addition, taking into account the outcome of the report of the 58th session of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, in June 2003, circulated with my letter of 4 July 2003, it seems that we have reason to be satisfied that Arctic issues and concerns are gradually registering with more effect within the United Nations system.

In our discussion of this matter at the SAO meeting, I propose that we concentrate on how to proceed with the implementation of the Jo'burg plan, based on the approach of the CSD, and consider in particular how we may further raise the profile of the Arctic within the United Nations.

Yours sincerely,

Gunnar Pálsson
Chairman of Senior Arctic Officials