

Observer Review Report

Please describe in no more than two pages your state's 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. Please detail any collaboration with Permanent Participants, such as project proposal endorsement and support.

Overview

Korea strives to join the global response to the challenges in the Arctic. Since joining the Arctic Council as an observer state in 2013, the Korean government has adopted mid to long-term strategies for the region with the intention to become a sustained and lasting partner in the region. These long-term strategies were renewed in 2021 through the enactment of 'Policy Framework for the Promotion of Arctic Activities' (enacted October 2021) and the adoption of '2050 Arctic Activities Strategy' (passed November 2021), both of which puts Korean's continued participation in and contribution to the work of the Arctic Council at the center of all activities.

Working Groups

Over the past two years, Korea has put its policies into action by actively engaging in the Arctic Council. More specifically, individual experts from the Korea Arctic Experts Network, comprising more than 50 experts from 23 institutions, have been regularly attending the Arctic Council working group and expert group meetings (more than 40 rounds of meetings in total during the time) and have made concrete contributions as follows:

(AMAP) Scientists from the Korea Polar Research Institute (KOPRI) have attended the AMAP meetings on a regular basis, and also have been participating in drafting the 2021 AMAP Climate Issues of Concern Report.

(CAFF) Since the year of 2016, the National Institute of Ecology (NIE) has served as an active partner in the effort to ensure the sustainability of the Arctic-breeding migratory bird population along the Central and East Asian Flyways through participation in the Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI). NIE has on several occasions cooperated with CAFF in showcasing photo exhibitions on the Arctic biodiversity, in particular during the 2021 Arctic Partnership Week in Korea. Furthermore, as part of an effort to raise awareness on the importance of international cooperation for Arctic-breeding migratory bird conservation, the NIE has released a children's storybook titled "The Spoon-billed Sandpiper's Special Journey", which has been distributed to 17 countries and made widely accessible via e-book. In addition, the CAFF Secretariat gave a seminar and a webinar in 2021 Global Ecological Cooperation Academy (August 2021) to the young Korean generation, in collaboration with NIE.

(EPPR) Researchers from the Korea Research Institute of Ships and Ocean Engineering (KRISO) have been participating in the project, "New Low Sulphur Fuels: Fate and Behavior in Cold Water Conditions" led by Norway from 2020 to 2022. Also, the Korean Coast Guard has been actively attending meetings and events hosted by the EPPR, exchanging relevant knowledge

with regards to emergency responses at sea.

(PAME) The Korea Maritime Institute (KMI) and KRISO have been regularly attending PAME working group meetings. KMI has been cooperating with the United States, Poland and the Northern Forum to identify options for leveraging Observer interests, expertise and engagement in PAME's shipping work, via the 'Systematically Strengthening Observer Engagement in PAME's Shipping Work' project. KMI has also financially contributed to the Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada for their participation in the Arctic Council Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECM) Areas in the Arctic Marine Environment project on indigenous knowledge. KMI has also taken interest in the Arctic Council's efforts to address marine invasive species in the Arctic and is represented in the project Expert Group. In addition to this, on behalf of the Korean government, KMI has submitted national information upon request by the Arctic Council.

(SDWG) KMI has sought to contribute to clean energy solutions in the Arctic through cooperation in sharing relevant knowledge in the SDWG project on Arctic Hydrogen Energy Applications and Demonstrations (AHEAD).

(EGBCM) Korea has also participated in the Expert Group meeting on Black Carbon and Methane.

Collaboration with Permanent Participants

The Korean government has also sought to expand cooperation with Permanent Participants through education programs in Korea, which aims to support students who are the Arctic natives. The Republic of Korea places its great importance on education for the future generations as potential leaders in the Arctic region. In this regard, a various set of educational opportunities including the Korea Arctic Academy have been offered by KMI and the UArctic, the KOPRI Arctic Fellowship, and scholarship opportunities at the Graduate School of Logistics of Incheon National University.

Convening of Meetings and Facilitating Dialogue

Since 2016, the Republic of Korea has hosted the Arctic Partnership Week on a yearly basis. The Arctic Partnership Week is an annual forum for Arctic dialogue among Arctic stakeholders from Korea and abroad, which is held in Busan, Korea, and it is one important avenue where Korea seeks to engage with members of the Arctic Council. At the 2020 Arctic Partnership Week, a special session inviting the Arctic Council chairmanship was held to examine ways of cooperating with the Arctic Council, and at the 2021 Arctic Partnership Week, held in December 2021, a session inviting Arctic Council Observer States was held to discuss Arctic Council experience from an Observer's perspective.

Furthermore, during the 2021 Arctic Partnership Week, a special session was co-hosted by KMI and the Embassy of Canada in Korea, providing rooms for discussion under the theme of 'Cooperating with the Arctic Indigenous Peoples', including the discussion on cooperating between Observer States and Permanent Participants through the Arctic Council. The event was notably attended by the Canadian Senior Arctic Official, and representatives from Arctic Council Permanent Participants such as the Aleut International Association and the Inuit Circumpolar Council.

In December 2021, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Korea also hosted a Sustainable Arctic Forum, in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Arctic Council. The event served as an avenue for discussing "the Present and Future of the Arctic and its Sustainable Development" with both Arctic Council members and observers.

If applicable, please describe in no more than one page your state's 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.

Overview

In 2021, Korea passed the Act on Promotion of Polar Activities in the Polar Region and the 2050 Arctic Activities Strategy, providing a legal framework for Korea's commitment to the Arctic region. For example, the 2050 Arctic Strategy identifies the following as the key objectives: 1) contributing to resolving common issues in the Arctic region; 2) expanding Korea's diplomatic horizons in the Arctic; 3) engaging in Arctic activities for sustainable development in the Arctic; and 4) laying the foundations enabling Korea's activities in the Arctic.

In accordance with these national frameworks, Korea strives to enhance its contributions as an observer to the Arctic Council by taking part in Arctic Council agenda and taking further initiatives to seek new cooperative projects in order to contribute to joint response to the Arctic issues such as climate change, environmental conservation and sustainable development.

Korean Network for the Arctic Cooperation (KoNAC)

Korea plans to establish a new set of networking group with enhanced level of expertise and the scope of responsibilities, called the "Korean Network for the Arctic Cooperation (KoNAC)". KoNAC will consist of Korean representatives from the six working groups, both at the government level and expert level and will hold regular meetings to seek new cooperative projects for each working group and collaborate on analysis of major issues and proposal-drafting for cooperative projects.

Cooperative Projects

The Korean government shall keenly seek activities to contribute as an observer state, including ongoing cooperative projects. It shall also conduct further studies and draft plans to discover new cooperative projects in advance, and constantly reviews proposals for joint engagement with Arctic coastal states. In particular, the Korea Coast Guard will continue to cooperate with the Arctic Council and ACGF in preparation for the safe use of Arctic routes and share experiences regarding maritime safety

The Republic of Korea will further enhance its educational support projects currently under progress and hold joint seminars and meetings with indigenous organizations, to explore new cooperative projects to strengthen practical exchange. Korea will provide scholarship opportunities to students of Arctic indigenous background to pursue Master's program on northern logistics in Korean graduate school.

Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement

As a country with strong linkages to the ocean, Korea is keen on promoting the sustainability of the ocean and looks forward to continued engagement in the Arctic Council's work related to ocean sustainability. In particular, Korea has been an active contributor to the establishment of governance in the Central Arctic Ocean as a Party to the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean (CAOFA). The treaty, which entered into force in 2021, embodies the joint will of several of the members of the Arctic Council as well as non-Arctic states to advance sustainability of biological resources in the High Seas in the Central Arctic Ocean. Korea is honored to host the inaugural Conference of Parties in November 2022 in Incheon.

If applicable, please describe in no more than one page your state's 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.

International Science Research Cooperation

The Republic of Korea actively conducts scientific research that addresses major Arctic issues such as climate change, marine ecosystem, and marine environment through its polar-related research institutes (KOPRI, KMI, etc.) and state-led R&D projects, utilizing its Arctic Dasan research center (Tromsø, Norway) and six circum-Arctic observation nodes as well as its icebreaking research vessel Araon.

In particular, Korea participates in major scientific consultative bodies such as the International Committee for Polar Sciences (IASC), non-governmental observer organization of the Arctic Council, as well as the following joint Arctic research programs (MOSAiC, SAS, YOPP, etc.):

(MOSAiC) International joint research survey for the observation of environmental changes in the Arctic Ocean which uses the German Icebreaking research vessel (Polarstern) (involving Germany, US, UK, Korea, etc from Sept 2019 to Oct 2020);

(SAS) Simultaneous field observation of circum-Arctic climate change, marine environment, and ecosystem using icebreaking research vessel (involving Korea, US, UK, Japan, China, etc in 2020-2021);

(YOPP) Project that involves focused observation, data exchange, and capabilities organized by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to improve predictive capabilities of polar regions and global environments (2019-2022).

In addition, Korea has participated in Norway's Governance of Marine Plastic Litter in the Arctic Project (GOMPLAR), to respond to litter in the Arctic-Northern Pacific Ocean, through a consortium between research institutes of Norway, Korea, China, and Japan

To further enhance Arctic Ocean research capacity, Korea plans to build the next-generation icebreaker research vessel capable of conducting research on the high altitude of the Arctic Ocean (project launched in April 2022).

Building Partnership

Since 2011, Korea has been inviting experts across the Arctic and non-Arctic regions to the North Pacific Arctic Conference* to facilitate the exchange of ideas and dialogue. The co-hosts of the event, KMI and the East-West Center publish materials on Arctic affairs. The event is regularly participated by experts from the Arctic states including the US and Canada and non-Arctic states such as Korea, China and Japan.

Korean government also had a high-level representation in the Arctic Circle Assembly, held in Reykjavik in October 2021. On this occasion, the 2nd Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs reiterated Korea's wish to contribute to the Arctic region in his keynote speech.

Korea has also been an active participant in dialogues between the members and the observers of the Arctic Council, such as the Dialogue with Arctic Council Observers held on April 21st 2021. Korea believes that the rapid changes in the Arctic and the challenges they bring, can be better addressed when both Arctic and non-Arctic countries come together and use their best joint efforts. To cope with the enormous challenges of the Arctic, non-Arctic countries should be invited to play a greater role working together with the Arctic countries.

