

SENIOR ARCTIC OFFICIALS MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

**November 17-19, 1999
Washington, D.C., U.S.A.**

- Senior government officials from the eight-member Arctic Council and more than 180 delegates, met November 17-19, 1999 at the State Department in the largest participation in an Arctic Council forum. Delegates came also from the four Permanent Participants; eight accredited Observer and eight Ad Hoc Observer organizations.
- US President Clinton recognized and praised the effort of all working on the Arctic Council in a letter to the delegates distributed on November 18th.
- High-level participation was also notable: U.S. Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs Frank Loy; Chairman of the Russian State Committee for Northern Affairs Vladimir Goman; Alaska Lt. Governor Fran Ulmer (US); U.S. Assistant Secretary of State David Sandalow; Russian Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) President Mikhail Nikolayev; Lapland (Finland) Governor Hannale Pokka; Heilongjiang (China) Vice Governor Wang Xinmin; and former Alaska (US) Governor Walter Hickel.
- Senior Arctic Officials (SAO's) expressed their appreciation for the continuing efforts of the four environmental Working Groups. Chairs reported on progress that includes: developing national implementation plans for reducing contaminants (AMAP); furtherance of a circumpolar protected areas network (CAFF); progress on completion of a circumpolar map of resources at risk from oil spills in the Arctic (EPPR); and implementation of Russia's national plan of action for protection of the arctic marine environment from anthropogenic pollution (PAME).
- The officials stressed strong support for the development and implementation of an Arctic Council Action Plan to eliminate pollution in the Arctic.
- SAO's voiced support for continued development of an Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, a comprehensive effort to examine the effects of global climate change, and increased UV radiation on the arctic region.
- The assembled officials reiterated support for the early ratification of protocols on persistent organic pollutants and heavy metals.
- SAO's welcomed briefings on Sustainable Development projects, including children and youth, infectious diseases, managing regional fisheries, the health and environmental needs of indigenous communities in Russia, and endorsed a comprehensive sustainable development project on Arctic ecological tourism.
- The United States showcased representative telemedicine technologies that are improving the quality of health care available to the residents of remote settlements throughout the Arctic.