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Meeting Summary Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) Levi, Finland, 19-20 March 2018

Overview:

The second regular meeting of the SDWG under the Finnish Chairmanship occurred at Levi, Finland, on 19-20 March 2018. Approximately 100 participants attended this meeting, including representatives of eight Observer states, 12 other Observer organizations and 4 other Working Groups (AMAP, CAFF, EPPR, PAME). Please see the attached participants' lists for more detailed information¹.

1. The SDWG received a welcome from SAO Chair, Ambassador Aleksi Härkönen, including some comments about the work of the SAOs to develop an Arctic Council strategic plan. The SDWG Chair, Pekka Shemeikka, welcomed new Heads of Delegation (Kingdom of Denmark, Iceland, Russia, AAC and ICC).

Decisions of Note:

2. The SDWG Chair updated the participants on a number of events since the SDWG Inari meeting in September 2017. During this period the SDWG approved a) an Annex for the Arctic Council Common Operating Guidelines (submitted to SAOs for review and approval in March 2018) and b) a new SDWG Project Proposal Template with 3 annexes respecting internal operational guidelines, communications and tracking project recommendations & follow-up (endorsed as of 16 February 2018).
3. At its Levi Meeting, the SDWG endorsed ____ new projects:
 - **Circumpolar Resilience, Engagement and Action Through Story (CREATes)** [Canada, Finland], a follow-up project from the suicide prevention project, RISING SUN.
 - **Zero Arctic: Concepts for carbon neutral Arctic construction based on tradition** [Finland, Canada]
 - **Arctic Sustainable Energy Futures Toolkit** [Canada, Kingdom of Denmark, GCI]
 - **Arctic Energy Summit 2019** [Iceland, Finland has offered to co-lead, subject to confirmation]
 - **Assessing the Use of Heavy Fuel Oil (HFO) in Indigenous Communities** [Proposal by U.S., Canada, AIA, CCU], a project to contribute to work undertaken in PAME in relation to HFOs
4. In addition, a project proposal was considered on an **Arctic Network on Occupational Health in the Arctic** [Finland], but endorsement is subject to identification of a second lead country.

¹ Representatives from all Arctic States and Permanent Participants participated in this SDWG meeting. Seventeen observers participated, including the EU and seven non-Arctic states (Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, South Korea, Spain & Switzerland) and twelve Observer organizations (Arctic Institute of North America, Association of World Reindeer Herders, IASC, IASSA, International Red Cross, Northern Forum, Oskar Commission, UNEP, West Nordic Council, WMO, WWF and UArctic).

SDWG Chair's Summary

5. The SDWG removed one former inactive project from its work plan: the **Arctic Adaptation Exchange Portal**. Data from the portal will be preserved pending possible migration of the site for purposes of implementing the web-based aspects of the **Arctic Resilience Action Framework**.

Other activities:

6. Participants heard conceptual presentations on possible new projects in two thematic areas:
 - Sustainable Business Involvement & Development: a concept paper entitled "**Arctic Food Innovation Cluster**" was presented by Canada; and
 - Economic Assessments: a presentation on an "**Arctic Blue Economy**" project was presented by WWF.
7. The **Arctic Resilience Action Framework** (ARAF) was approved by SAOs at their meeting in New York in April 2017. Through an intersessional process in June/July 2017, the SDWG formally approved a project template for ARAF and ARAF has been added to the SDWG work plan. Participants heard an update on the implementation of the ARAF project, including matters relating to the Arctic Resilience Forum to be held in Finland in September 2018.
8. Participants received reports on a number of recent events or activities that were relevant to the work of the SDWG including:
 - The Quebec meeting of the Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation
 - Helsinki meeting of the Task Force on Improved Connectivity in the Arctic
 - The Rovaniemi Arctic Spirit Conference
 - The conference in Copenhagen on 1 December 2017 entitled "The SDGs and the Arctic – Local and Global Perspectives"
 - UNFCCC COP 23.
9. Participants also discussed possible SDWG participation in a range of important events taking place in coming months, including:
 - Arctic Hubs: Building Dynamic Economies and Sustainable Communities in the North, Torshavn, May 8-9, 2018
 - POLAR 2018 "Where the Poles meet" A joint SCAR & IASC Conference, Davos, Switzerland, 15-27 June 2018
 - High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, New York, 7-18 July 2018
 - UArctic Congress, Oulu and Helsinki, 03-07 September 2018
 - Second Arctic Biodiversity Congress, Rovaniemi, 9-11 October 2018
 - Arctic Environment Ministers Meeting (AEMM), Rovaniemi, 11-12 October, 2018.

SDWG Expert Groups

10. The SDWG received reports from its Arctic Human Health Expert Group (AHHEG) and its the Social, Economic, and Cultural Expert Group (SECEG). SECEG is continuing work on a

SDWG Chair's Summary

paper and recommendations, to be presented during the Finnish Chairmanship, respecting enhancing its role within the SDWG.

Status of SDWG Projects

11. In Levi, the SDWG heard progress updates on all its projects:
- **Arctic Generation 2030** [Leads: Norway, Finland]
 - **Arctic Children - Preschool Education and Smooth Transition to School** [Leads: Russian Federation, Finland, RAIPON]
 - **Teacher Education for Diversity and Equality in the Arctic** [Leads: Canada, Finland, Norway, Russian Federation]
 - **Arctic indigenous youth, climate change and food culture (EALLU)** [Leads: Canada, Kingdom of Denmark, Norway, Russian Federation, U.S., AIA, Saami Council]
 - **Operationalizing a One Health approach in the Arctic, Part 2 (One Health)** [Leads: Canada, U.S., Finland]
 - **Gender Equality in the Arctic II** [Leads: Iceland, Sweden, Finland, AIA]
 - **Arctic Adaption Exchange Portal**
 - **The Arctic as a Food-Producing Region** [Leads: Canada, Norway, Iceland, GCI, ICC]
 - **Arctic Remote Energy Networks Academy (ARENA)** [Leads: Canada, Finland, Iceland, U.S., GCI, AIA]
 - **Arctic Renewable Energy Atlas (AREA)** [Leads: Canada, U.S., GCI]
 - **Arctic Energy Summit 2017** [Leads: Finland, Iceland, Russian Federation]
 - **Solid Waste Management in Small Arctic Communities** [Leads: Canada, Finland, AIA]
 - **Good Practice Recommendations for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Public Participation in EIA in the Arctic (Arctic EIA)** [Leads: Finland, Kingdom of Denmark, Canada, GCI]

Observer Engagement

12. The SDWG continued to employ the new format for its agenda, first initiated at the Inari SDWG meeting, to allow greater Observer engagement in agenda items relating to project work and other SDWG activities where greater Observer involvement would be beneficial. Observers made valuable interventions and contributions to the agenda.

Cross-Cutting Issues:

13. The SDWG welcomed the participation of AMAP, CAFF, EPPR and PAME in the Levi meeting. The discussions included valuable information on activities in the other working groups and possible areas for ongoing cooperation.

Communications:

SDWG Chair's Summary

14. The SDWG received an update on the work of its communications committee including the development of a photo library and new Facebook page for the working group.

Upcoming SDWG Meetings:

15. The next SDWG meetings will be:
 - Rovaniemi, 29-30 Oct. 2018
 - Kemi, 5-6 February 2019.