

**Meeting of Senior Arctic Officials  
Final Report from the Meeting  
10 February 2009  
Copenhagen, Denmark**

**In Attendance:**

**Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs)**

Chair: Karsten Klepšvik

Canada: Adèle Dion

Denmark/Greenland/Faroe Islands: Mikaela Engell, Inuuteq Olsen (Greenland)

Finland: Jyrki Kallio

Iceland: Ragnar Baldursson

Norway: Anne-Kirsti Wendel Karlsen

Russian Federation: Anton Vasiliev

Sweden: Helena Ödmark

United States: Julia L. Gourley

**Permanent Participant (PP) Heads of Delegation (HoD)**

Arctic Athabaskan Council (ACC): Chief Michael Stickman

Aleut International Association (AIA): Victoria Gofman

Gwich'in Council International (GCI): Victoria Lorraine Peter

Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC): Patricia Cochran

Russian Arctic Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON): Rodion Sulyandziga

Saami Council (SC): Gunn-Britt Retter

**1. Introduction**

**1.1. Welcoming Remarks**

**1.2. Approval of the Agenda** (AC-SAO-FEB09-Final Draft Agenda)

Decision: The agenda was approved with no amendments.

**2. Outstanding Working Group Deliverables for the 2009 Ministerial**

**2.1. The Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment**

Background: The PAME Chair provided an update on status of completion of AMSA. The 4<sup>th</sup> draft was circulated 20 January and 5<sup>th</sup> and last draft is under review (the report, its recommendations and findings). The report will include an executive summary and introduction. There are 96 key findings and 16 recommendations agreed by the PAME working group. These include recommendations to the IMO to move towards mandatory measures, cruise ship industry measures, the need for a survey on arctic indigenous peoples use of the marine environment, and to explore the design of special protected areas. The only outstanding issue is how PAME introduces the recommendations. PAME proposed next steps to complete and release report by the Ministerial.

Discussion: PAME was congratulated on the progress to complete the AMSA. SAOs and PPs requested the opportunity to comment on PAME's latest revisions to the recommendations made at the PAME meeting the previous day. SAOs supported that the AMSA recommendations should be from PAME, and that SAOs would then decide what to recommend to Ministers. The next steps as proposed by PAME were supported, including beginning to roll out the chapter layout for the report (printing deadline April 1).

The Saami Council welcomed the recommendations and the high level of attention given to safety and protection of arctic environment in the report. RAIPON noted that the Russian environmental agency had not contributed to AMSA but that RAIPON would continue to compile more data.

Decision: PAME was requested to circulate the revised AMSA findings and recommendations for comments by SAOs and PPs within 2 weeks and to incorporate and circulate the final 1 week later with a view to provide a final printed report in time for the Ministerial.

## **2.2. Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change in the Arctic (VACCA)**

Background: The SDWG Chair updated SAOs on the final VACCA report, its recommendations to continue to share information, and highlighted the need for concrete project proposals.

Decision: SAOs accepted the VACCA report and its recommendations.

## **2.3. Energy Report to Ministers**

Background: The SDWG Executive Secretary updated on the final SDWG Report on Energy and the use of the report as a framework within which to consider potential future activities.

Decision: SAOs accepted the SDWG Report on Energy.

## **2.4. SAON – Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks**

Background: The AMAP Chair noted the final SAON report "Observing the Arctic" delivered to the Arctic Council by AMAP on behalf of the SAON Initiating Group (SAON-IG). The primary recommendation of the SAON-IG is the establishment of an Arctic Observing Forum (AOF) in association with the Arctic Council and comments on its terms of reference (TOR) are requested by 31 March. The AMAP Chair also noted a document prepared by AMAP, CAFF and SDWG outlining the benefits of AC leadership of the AOF. He stressed that AC member states have the greatest need for arctic observations and should be at the forefront to develop and sustain these networks. An adhoc team is working to develop a roadmap/two year plan for establishing the AOF and this more detailed plan should be available for SAOs before their meeting in April. The costs should be equal to one SAO meeting.

Discussion: SAOs welcomed the work of the SAON IG, stressing that SAON is a long-term undertaking and that the continuation of SAON is an important part of the IPY legacy. SAOs supported a continued AC lead in the SAON process, but some expressed reservations to establish an AOF before giving further consideration of its terms of reference (scope, mandate, structure, the role of all other partners) and the longer term financial implications. There was support for using existing institutional structures and secretariats, and that all AC working groups should be involved.

Decision: SAOs agreed to note the achievements of the SAON process to date and the need to continue SAON. SAOs accepted the SAON report, noted its recommendations and decided to endorse recommendations #2-4. On recommendation #1, SAOs will continue discussion on the Arctic Council's role in establishment of an AOF in the context of their drafting of the Ministerial declaration and SAO Report.

## **2.5. Non-CO2 drivers of Climate Change**

Background: Based on recommendations from the AMAP workshop to discuss non-CO<sub>2</sub> drivers of climate change of special relevance to the Arctic, AMAP recommended that SAOs consider some specific immediate actions. In Kautokeino, SAOs agreed to continue their consideration of the workshop recommendations and the related US proposal at their February meeting.

Discussion: There was broad support for AMAP to continue its work on the scientific aspects of SLCF. Some SAOs and PPs supported the establishment of a task force to look further into potential mitigation actions and/or broader policy responses and welcomed the US proposal to take the lead. One SAO suggested that it may be early to mandate a task force to develop concrete recommendations while still developing understanding of the scientific part of the issue.

Decision: SAOs agreed to continue their discussion on Arctic Council follow up on the issue of SLCF in the context of their drafting of the Ministerial declaration and SAO Report.

## **2.6. Nordic Mapping Agencies Proposal for an Arctic Spatial Data Infrastructure**

Background: In response to EPPR/CAFF and AMAP's consideration of the current and potential use of spatial information within the Arctic Council, the Nordic Mapping Agencies of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden and the National Spatial Planning of Greenland have proposed to enlarge the Barents Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) into an Arctic SDI, i.e. to also include other parts of Russia as well as Canada and the USA. Working Groups note the usefulness of an Arctic SDI to their activities and recommend that the Arctic Council support the initiative.

Discussion: A number of SAOs expressed their support for the proposal, while other member states are still in the process of reviewing the proposal. The USA noted a conference on arctic SDI later this year in Alaska August 4-6 (UFairbanks) and that this compliments the proposal.

Decision: Some member states requested more time to review the proposal. These states were requested to clarify their views as soon as possible with a view to a decision before the Ministerial.

## **2.7. Indigenous People's Secretariat**

Background: IPS Chair Patricia Cochrane reported on the work of the IPS Governing Board, noted the revised Terms of Reference for management of the IPS, and explained a draft proposal from the IPS Board requesting recognition of the IPS in the Ministerial declaration and SAO Report.

Decision: SAOs agreed to consider the proposed text in their drafting of the Ministerial declaration and SAO Report.

### **3. Preparations for the April 2009 Ministerial**

Background: The SAO Chair informed that the invitation and agenda for the AC Ministerial would be distributed shortly. The meeting would start at 9 am on the 29 April and end at noon, with the potential to continue into the luncheon if needed. SAO editing sessions would begin at 9 am on 26 April.

The SAO Chair also provided information on the 28 April High Level Meeting on Melting Ice to be hosted by the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs and former VP Al Gore the day before the AC Ministerial. The meeting is to draw attention to the increasing rate of melting polar ice, glaciers and ice caps, and the implications for global climate, small island states, etc. Ministers of Foreign Affairs from the arctic states, AC observe states and some other countries affected by melting ice will be invited. The meeting will include a session providing scientific background to climate change in the arctic, as well as political discussions. Envisioned outcomes include establishment of a task force to produce a state of the art report on melting ice, drawing i.a. on AC work, and a co-chairs statement, both for the purpose of reporting to the UNFCCC CoP15. In terms of the meetings relation to the AC Ministerial, there will be a joint dinner for the participants of the two meetings and VP Gore will give a presentation at the opening of AC Ministerial.

Decision: For information only. SAOs agreed to take up proposals for media events at the AC Ministerial during their drafting session.