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Issue Paper Toward Clarity and Transparency in Relationships with Other Bodies

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Concept Paper, for discussion

Issue Paper

Toward Clarity and Transparency in Relationships with Other Bodies

Background

The Arctic Council relies on its many relationships with other bodies to perform its work and to share Arctic expertise and perspectives in global dialogues. The enclosed *Summary of the Arctic Council Working Groups' Relationships to External Bodies*, prepared by the Arctic Council Secretariat, describes a wide array of collaborative arrangements through which Working Groups formally and informally collaborate with other bodies to import outside expertise or capacity (e.g., data) and export their expertise or capacity to other groups. In addition, representatives of the Council and its subsidiary bodies often participate in public events (e.g. speaking roles, information dissemination), representing the Council to some degree.

A number of SAOs and PPs may have been previously unaware of the extent and nature of these formal and informal relationships with other bodies. This concept paper lays out the basis for continued discussion on the topic of relationships with other bodies. Given that the Council's ability to collaborate with other bodies is vital to the Council's efficacy and influence, the objective is not to curtail or impede these relationships. Rather the aim is to ascertain whether there is consensus for additional steps to promote the clarity and transparency of existing and future relationships and to develop internal guidance on how the Council and its subsidiary bodies relate to other bodies.

Key Issues

1) How the Council Imports Expertise and Capacity

The Rules of Procedure provide two established channels through which representatives of other bodies may participate in Arctic Council meetings and activities: (1) as accredited observers, or (2) as invited experts. Beyond observers and invited experts, the *Summary of Arctic Council Working Groups' Relationships to External Bodies* identifies a number of additional mechanisms by which Working Groups obtain other expertise and capacity, such as memoranda of cooperation and similar arrangements.

With respect to these other mechanisms to import expertise and capacity, SAOs and PPs may wish to discuss the existing processes for consideration and approval of such relationships and how the Council can maintain better visibility of these relationships. SAOs and PPs may wish to consider whether additional procedures, such as timely notification and an authorization process, would be appropriate ways to facilitate consistency and transparency.

2) How the Council Exports Expertise and Capacity

Individual representatives of the Council (e.g., SAO Chair, WG Chair, Secretariats) participate in public events. Individual participation, and how the Council will be

represented, is not currently part of a formal process. Additionally, there is little opportunity to allow for input, provide broad awareness, or coordinate the participation of multiple Council representatives.

Without clarity as to when individuals are speaking on behalf of the Council, it is difficult for the Council to be represented with a unified voice in appropriate instances. Even in instances in which representatives do not intend to speak on behalf of the Council, the risk of confusion in other bodies suggests a need for transparency and clarity with the Council or relevant subsidiary body about such engagements. Applicable examples include working group presence at the Arctic Circle Assembly, UNFCCC COP, and the IUCN World Conservation Congress.

SAOs and PPs may wish to discuss current practices for participation in other bodies — in particular where a representative intends to speak on behalf of the Council, or could be confused as doing so. SAOs and PPs may wish to consider whether additional guidance, such as timely notification and an authorization process, would be appropriate ways to facilitate clarity and transparency.