



Senior Arctic Officials
Permanent Participants

27 April 2004

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all who attended the ACIA Workshop in Nuuk on 20-22 April 2004 for the spirit of cooperation they brought to this most fruitful, informal meeting.

Following our in-depth discussion, including the thorough and comprehensive presentations of the scientists, we now have a much better view of the state of play as regards the science and overview documents. We expect to receive the science document in June 2004 and the overview document at the same time or sooner, possibly by the time of the SAO-meeting on 4-5 May 2004.

Against the background of our discussion in Nuuk, I suggest that we consider deciding upon the following issues at our meeting in Selfoss next week:

- The main elements of the ACIA section of the SAO report to Ministers (i.a. taking note of the scientific and overview documents, suggesting guidance on ACIA policy and sketching out work to be undertaken following Reykjavík).
- The main elements of the ACIA section of the draft Ministerial declaration (i.a. welcoming the two ACIA reports, taking note of their main findings and providing guidance on the next steps, including policy responses).
- The structural outline of the text to be dealt with at the SAO and Ministerial meetings in November.
- The modalities for drafting an ACIA policy text, i.e. working within existing structures.

At Selfoss we might also wish to discuss some of the basic elements to be included in a possible policy response.

As to the procedure for arriving at a policy text we discussed in Nuuk, I have in mind to propose the following:

- SAOs and Permanent Participants provide the SAO Chair with their input to the ACIA policy text by 15 July 2004. The SAOs and Permanent Participants will exercise their own discretion as to how they compile their input, taking full account of decisions taken at the Selfoss-meeting.
- On the basis of inputs from the SAOs and Permanent Participants and other relevant material, a policy text will be drafted by the Chair. The draft should be circulated among SAOs and Permanent Participants in early August 2004.
- The Chair invite SAOs and Permanent Participants to a drafting session in late August, possibly on Tuesday 31 August 2004, focusing mainly on the ACIA policy text.

Whether the eventual ACIA policy text will be presented as a part of or an Annex to the SAO report to Ministers or as a separate document, remains an open question for the time being.

I envisage presenting the above points in a slightly more elaborate form as I introduce item 6, ACIA activities, at the Selfoss-meeting and hope that we can come to a common understanding on them at the meeting.

Finally, I would like to thank our hosts, the Kingdom of Denmark and the Greenland Home Rule Government, for their warm hospitality and excellent organization of our gathering in Nuuk.

Yours sincerely,



Gunnar Pálsson
Chairman of Senior Arctic Officials