

The First Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council Iqaluit, Canada, September 17-18, 1998

The Arctic Council Iqaluit Ministerial Meeting is the first Meeting under the Arctic Council established on September 19, 1996, in Ottawa, Canada. The *Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council* created the Council as a high level forum to provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, with the involvement of the Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic; oversee and coordinate the programs established under the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy; adopt terms of reference for and oversee and coordinate a sustainable development program; and disseminate information, encourage education and promote interest in Arctic-related issues.

The category of Permanent Participation is created to provide for active participation and full consultation with the Arctic indigenous representatives within the Arctic Council.

The Council acknowledges and appreciates the contributions of the Permanent Participants: the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the Saami Council and the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, and the contributions from Observers, in the work and programs of the Arctic Council.

WE, THE MINISTERS OF THE ARCTIC COUNTRIES HEREBY:

1. **Adopt** the [Arctic Council Rules of Procedure](#) and [Arctic Council Terms of Reference for a Sustainable Development Program](#), attached as Annexes 1 and 2, respectively, to the [Senior Arctic Officials \(SAOs\) Report 1998](#);

2. **Approve** the Aleut International Association as a Permanent Participant in the Arctic Council;

3. **Welcome** and **approve** the status of Observer for:

The Federal Republic of Germany

The Kingdom of The Netherlands

Poland

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The Nordic Council

The Northern Forum

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN-ECE)

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

The International Arctic Science Committee (IASC)

The Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR)

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

The International Union for Circumpolar Health (IUCH);

4. **Direct** SAOs to continue to review applications relating to Permanent Participant status and Observer status to the Arctic Council, and to recommend applicants for approval at the next Arctic Council Ministerial in 2000;

5. **Welcome** the SAOs' Report to the First Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council and **adopt** the recommendations contained within the Report;

6. **Commit** to the well-being of the inhabitants of the Arctic, and **affirm** that the goal of the sustainable development program of the Arctic Council is to propose and adopt steps to be taken by the Arctic States to advance sustainable development in the Arctic,

including opportunities to protect and enhance the environment, and the economies, cultures and health of indigenous communities and of other inhabitants of the Arctic, as well as to improve the environmental, economic and social conditions of Arctic communities as a whole;

7. **Establish** the Sustainable Development Program, and **welcome** the sustainable development proposals from Arctic States and Permanent Participants in the areas of Arctic children and youth, health, telemedicine, resource management, including fisheries, cultural and eco-tourism, technology transfer to improve Arctic sanitation systems, and national sustainable development strategies. We **direct** the SAOs to guide the completion of work on proposals in these areas and **encourage** that funding be sought, so that projects can be initiated as quickly as possible before the next Ministerial meeting;

8. **Welcome** Canada's offer to take the lead with respect to the project on Arctic children and youth, and to provide staff support, and **welcome** the offer of the United States to take the lead with respect to the project on telemedicine, and **further welcome** the offer of the Saami Council to take the lead with respect to the two fisheries management projects. We **request** that Canada and the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme cooperate in reviewing knowledge on the impacts of environmental contamination on the health and development of children and youth, under the direction of the SAOs;

9. **Establish** a Sustainable Development Working Group, comprised of SAOs and Permanent Participants, or their designated representatives, which will meet prior to the SAOs' regular meetings, or at other times to be determined, and **request** that it facilitate completion of work on sustainable development proposals identified above, propose possible priority areas in the further development of the sustainable development program, and review specific proposals and prepare them for approval by the Ministers;

10. **Encourage** the Sustainable Development Working Group to take special note of proposals which reflect the importance of traditional and indigenous knowledge and the perspectives of indigenous communities in developing a sustainable future for the Arctic;

11. **Welcome**, and **are pleased to announce**, the establishment of a University of the Arctic, a university without walls, as proposed by a working group of the Circumpolar Universities Association. We **note** the kind offer of Finland to support the interim secretariat. We **encourage** the working group to continue its efforts and to consult with northern educational and indigenous authorities and colleges. We **look forward** to further reports on this issue and to seeking ways to promote the success of this initiative;

12. **Acknowledge** the successful integration of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) and the four working groups as constituted in the AEPS: Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme, Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna, Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment, and Emergency, Prevention, Preparedness and Response; into the Arctic Council and **direct** SAOs to continue their efforts in enabling a smooth transition;

13. **Receive with appreciation** the comprehensive Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) Assessment Report: Arctic Pollution Issues, which contains the substantive scientific documentation in support of the Arctic Pollution Issues - A State of the Arctic Environment Report, presented to the 4th AEPS Ministerial Meeting in Alta;

14. **Welcome** the establishment of the AMAP Human Health Thematic Data Centre by Denmark;

15. **Reaffirm** our commitment from the Alta Declaration to take the findings and recommendations from the AMAP Report, Arctic Pollution Issues : A State of the Arctic Environment Report, into consideration in our policies and programmes, to increase our efforts to limit and reduce emissions of contaminants into the environment and to promote international cooperation and make a determined effort to secure support for international actions in order to address the serious pollution risks reported by AMAP;
16. **Recognize** the need to continue to identify actions to address the pollution sources identified in the AMAP Report, and **instruct** SAOs to continue to develop an overall plan of action complementary to existing legal arrangements and the Regional Programme of Action for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities. This plan, the Arctic Council Action Plan to Eliminate Pollution of the Arctic (ACAP), should include actions of a wide scope on pollution prevention and remediation measures, also including the identification and implementation of specific co-operative projects;
17. **Welcomewith appreciation and support** the three-part cooperative pilot project for the phase out of PCB use, and management of PCB-contaminated wastes in the Russian Federation as an example of a cooperative project under ACAP, and **endorse** Part I of the PCB project, which has financial and other support from all Arctic States. We **encourage and support** AMAP in its activities to complete Part I of this project;
18. **Agree** to work vigorously for the early ratification and implementation of the Protocols on the elimination or reduction of discharges, emissions and losses of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and of Heavy Metals under the framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution. We **encourage** other states to do the same, with the aim to bring the Protocols into force as early as possible. We **fully support** regional cooperation to facilitate the delivery of the measures that are needed to meet the obligations of the Protocols on POPs and Heavy Metals;
19. **Strongly welcome** the establishment of an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee under the auspices of United Nations Environment Programme to work towards the conclusion of a global agreement on POPs by the year 2000, and **encourage** the Arctic States to act together to assist the early conclusion of such a global agreement;
20. **Welcome and endorse** the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) Strategic Plan for the Conservation of Arctic Biological Diversity as an overall framework for CAFF activities; **encourage** its timely implementation through more detailed Work Plans, to be approved by SAOs; and **welcome** CAFF's continued role in coordinating the implementation of the Circumpolar Protected Areas Network and the conservation strategies for murres and eiders;
21. **Welcome** CAFF's intention to prepare an overview on the status and trends in changes to ecosystems, habitats and species in the Arctic and to identify elements of a program to monitor circumpolar biological diversity and to assess, in collaboration with AMAP, the effects of climate change and UV-B radiation on Arctic ecosystems;
22. **Endorse** the Emergency, Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) Work Plan set forth in EPPR's Strategic Plan of Action; **ask** the working group to initiate new projects and activities as indicated in the chapters: Activity Areas and Possible Future Activities of the Work Plan; and **endorse** the development of a Circumpolar Map of Resources at Risk from Oil Spills in the Arctic;

23. **Welcome** the Field Guide for Oil Spill Response in Arctic Waters, as a source of information on how to deal with oil spills in the Arctic; and **take note** of both the report of Phase I Analysis of Communication and Notification Systems in Place for Arctic Risks and the Revised Environmental Risk Analysis of Arctic Activities;

24. **Welcomewith appreciation** the Regional Programme of Action for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (RPA); **agree** to work vigorously for the early implementation of the actions described in the first phase of the RPA and in a manner consistent with the associated international agreements and arrangements; **further agree** to develop additional actions to protect the Arctic marine environment; **recognize** the important role of the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) in the implementation and further development of the RPA; and **accept** the kind offer of the Government of Iceland to host the PAME Secretariat on a voluntary funding basis;

25. **Support** the efforts of the Russian Federation to develop and implement a Russian Programme of Action for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (Russian NPA-Arctic); including seeking appropriate support to help Russia finalize the Russian NPA-Arctic and host a Partnership Conference to be organized with the assistance of the Advisory Committee on Protection of the Sea which would seek funds to remediate regional priority pollution sources and activities identified in the RPA and Russian NPA-Arctic;

26. **Promote** the application of the Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas Guidelines and recommend their review in the year 2000;the assessment of current and potential shipping activities to assist in determining what, if any, additional Arctic shipping measures are required, including work on an International Code of Safety for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (Polar Code) under the auspices of the International Maritime Organization (IMO); and an assessment of the adequacy of existing international agreements and arrangements related to the protection of the Arctic marine environment;

27. **Acknowledge with appreciation** the voluntary contributions in support of the Working Group secretariats and request that Arctic States consider taking part in voluntary, adequate and reliable funding of all Working Group secretariats, as appropriate;

28. **Undertake** to strengthen our efforts to achieve reliable funding systems for all Arctic Council activities, including seeking support from other international and regional fora and governmental and non-governmental sources;

29. **Request** Arctic States to consider the financial questions involved in securing the participation of the Permanent Participants in the work of the Arctic Council and in the operations of the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat. We **acknowledge with appreciation** the generous financial support by Denmark, Greenland and Canada to the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat;

30. **Emphasize** the need for the Arctic Council and its programmes to cooperate closely with existing organizations such as the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the Nordic Council of Ministers, and other appropriate fora, including scientific bodies;

31. **Take note** of the statements and recommendations of the Third Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, held April 22-24, 1998 in Salekhard, Russia, and of the Summary Report of the Circumpolar Conference and Workshop on Sustainable Development in the Arctic: Lessons Learned and the Way Ahead, held May 12-14, 1998

in Whitehorse, Canada, as well as the Experts Workshop on Sustainable Development in Northern Timberline Forests, May 10-11, 1998 in Whitehorse, Canada; and **encourage** SAOs to consider the recommendations in the development of project proposals and future activities of the sustainable development program;

32. **Acknowledgewith appreciation** Canada's role in chairing the Arctic Council since its inauguration and in hosting the first Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council;

33. **Acceptwith appreciation** the offer of the United States of America to chair the Arctic Council and to host the second Ministerial Meeting of the Council in 2000.

Signed by the representatives of the Arctic States in Iqaluit, this 18th day of September 1998.

**For the Government of
Canada**

Lloyd Axworthy
Minister of Foreign Affairs

**For the Government of
Finland**

Pekka Haavisto
Minister for Environment and
Minister at the Foreign Ministry
(development co-operation)

**For the Government of
Norway**

Knut Vollebæk
Minister for Foreign Affairs

**For the Government of
Sweden**

Anders Bjurner
Deputy State Secretary

For the Government of Denmark

Niels Helveg Petersen
Minister for Foreign Affairs

For the Government of Iceland

Gudmundur Bjarnason
Minister of the Environment

**For the Government of The Russian
Federation**

Vladimir Goman
Chairman of the State Committee for the
Development of the North

**For the Government of The United States of
America**

Wendy Sherman
Ambassador