

The UArctic Magazine

# SHARED VOICES

2016 SPECIAL ISSUE

ARCTIC  
COUNCIL

AT 20



UArctic



## 20 YEARS OF PEACEFUL COOPERATION

**04** Editorial from Børge Brende, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Norway.



## THE ROLE OF THE WORKING GROUPS IN THE WORK OF THE ARCTIC COUNCIL

**22** An insight into the practical work of the Council.



## ARCTIC CHANGE AND WORLD REINDEER HERDERS

**48** Indigenous reindeer herders engage in people-to-people collaboration.



## IT ALL STARTED IN ROVANIEMI

**14** Even if modest, the beginning of the Arctic Council was still ambitious.



## INTERVIEWS

The early days of the Arctic Council from personal perspectives.

**16-21**



## OBSERVER STATES IN THE ARCTIC COUNCIL

**52** Broader collaboration can help solve the challenges facing the Arctic.



## CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF THE ARCTIC COUNCIL

**06** The Arctic Council continues to strengthen under the US chairmanship.



## THE ARCTIC ECONOMIC COUNCIL

**42** Greater circumpolar cooperation with the private sector.



## THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE ARCTIC COUNCIL

**58** How can the Council adapt to a changing Arctic?



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Shared Voices 2016 Special Issue

UARctic International Secretariat  
University of Lapland  
Box 122, 96101 Rovaniemi, Finland  
secretariat@uarctic.org  
Tel. +358-16-341 341  
[www.uarctic.org](http://www.uarctic.org)

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Editorial Team  
Outi Snellman, Timo Koivurova, Stig Brøndbo,  
Scott Forrest, Hannele Palviainen

Editor in Chief  
Outi Snellman  
Managing Editor  
Hannele Palviainen

Reference Group  
Else Berit Eikeland, Lars Kullerud, Tom Fries

Graphic Design & Layout  
Puisto Design & Advertising,  
[www.puistonpenkki.fi](http://www.puistonpenkki.fi)

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- 04 **Letter from the Editor in Chief**  
Outi Snellman
- 04 **Editorial from Minister of Foreign Affairs, Norway**  
Børge Brende
- 06 **Celebrating 20 Years of the Arctic Council**  
David Balton
- 07 **Student Profile: Siri Beate Arntzen**
- 08 **International Cooperation for Arctic Prosperity**  
Sergey Lavrov
- 10 **Minister Greetings**  
Timo Soini & Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson
- 12 **Setting the Stage for Arctic Cooperation**  
Eirik Sivertsen
- 13 **Student Profile: Mikkel Bue Lykkegaard**

## PAST

- 14 **It All Started in Rovaniemi**  
Markku Heikkilä
- 16 **Interview with Mary Simon**  
Stig Brøndbo
- 18 **Interview with Thorvald Stoltenberg**  
Stig Brøndbo
- 19 **Interview with Alona Yefimenko**  
Stig Brøndbo
- 20 **Interview with Sheila Watt-Cloutier**  
Stig Brøndbo

## PRESENT

- 22 **The Role of the Working Groups in the Work of the Arctic Council**  
David Stone & Lars-Otto Reiersen
- 26 **Science to Policy: Arctic Biodiversity Assessment**  
Tom Barry & Courtney Price
- 28 **The Arctic Council: Milestones**
- 30 **The Arctic Council: A Backgrounder**
- 32 **Student Profile: Hilikka Kemppi**
- 32 **The Arctic Council: A Model for Cooperation**  
Timo Koivurova
- 34 **The Arctic Council: A Victory for Soft Law and Soft Security**  
Heather Exner-Pirot
- 36 **The Arctic Council: Maintaining Peace Through Cooperation**  
Michael Byers
- 37 **Student Profile: Alexander Saburov**
- 38 **Arctic Human Development**  
Joan Nymand Larsen & Gail Fondahl
- 40 **Student Profile: Linus Hedh**
- 40 **Towards Revival of Arctic Cooperation**  
Olli Rehn
- 42 **The Arctic Economic Council: Connecting with the Business Community**  
Tara Sweeney
- 46 **Love & Peace**  
Else Berit Eikeland & Gunn-Britt Retter
- 47 **Student Profile: Alfa Dröfn Jóhannsdóttir**
- 48 **Working Inside the Arctic Council: Arctic Change and World Reindeer Herders**  
Mikhail Pogodaev, Anders Oskal, Inger Anita Smuk, Johan Mathis Turi, Helena Omma & Ellen Inga Turi
- 52 **Observer States in the Arctic Council: A Way Forward to Better Cooperation**  
Justin (Jong Deog) Kim
- 54 **The Arctic: A Place for the Miraculous**  
Chen Yitong
- 55 **Student Profile: Caitlyn Baikie**
- 56 **Student Profile: Alexandria Griep**
- 56 **The Arctic Council Adapting to the Future**  
Arild Moe, Svein Vigeland Rottem & Olav Schram Stokke
- 58 **The Way Forward for the Arctic Council**  
Oran R. Young



Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs



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## Letter from the Editor in Chief

By **OUTI SNELLMAN**  
Vice-President Organization, UArctic

**H**as it really been twenty years? In many ways it seems now that the Arctic Council and our current era of globalization and cooperation have always been with us; they are a part of our daily life in the same way that we cannot imagine a world before the internet and smart phones. In reality, however, the change from the previous era was rapid and dramatic.

The University of the Arctic (UArctic), for which I have worked almost the same twenty-year period – although it did not officially launch until 2001 – was very much a child of the Arctic Council. UArctic's creation as an initiative of the Arctic Council was similar to the recently established Arctic Economic Council (AEC). The idea for an 'Arctic university' was first proposed in a session of the Arctic Council in 1997 and included in the Iqaluit Ministerial Declaration in 1998. Following its launch, UArctic became one of the earliest observer organizations. UArctic would not have been possible without the Arctic Council, nor the same conditions of the 'Arctic Window' that led to its creation. Following the Cold War, a new era of globalization and political mobilization towards issues of the environment, sustainable

development and human rights made the Arctic states and the Arctic peoples global leaders.

We in UArctic have been closely intertwined with the history of the Arctic Council and share a common vision of the Arctic: a region of cooperation, resilience, peace, respect and diversity. In particular, both organizations are founded on the need for decision-making based on scientific research as well as on the knowledge of northerners and northern peoples. For these reasons, it was not only logical but also an honour to accept the Norwegian Foreign Ministry's invitation to produce a special issue of our Shared Voices magazine to celebrate twenty years of the Arctic Council.

As a northerner from the small town of Sodankylä in northern Finland, I had to leave the North to become a global citizen, but was lucky enough to return. I am happy that we now live in this Arctic era in which – thanks to our collective efforts – other northerners will be able to stay in the North and still be fully engaged internationally. The Arctic Council is a symbol of this change, and we look forward to celebrating another twenty years of its success.

**T**oday, the Arctic is characterized by peaceful and stable cooperation. That has not always been the case.

During the Cold War, the Arctic was both literally and figuratively frozen. The turning point came in 1996, when representatives from the eight Arctic states signed the Ottawa Declaration and agreed to cooperate on environmental protection and sustainable development. The Arctic Council was established.

Twenty years later, the Arctic Council continues to be the most important intergovernmental forum in the Arctic. It is the only body that brings together all the Arctic countries as well as representatives of their indigenous peoples. It is the only Arctic forum to hold regular meetings at ministerial level.

The interest in the Arctic is growing. At the Arctic Council's ministerial meeting in 2013, countries far away from the Arctic were granted observer status. The observers make substantial contributions to our common knowledge about the region. We welcome increased interest in the Arctic, as long as it is rooted in respect for international law and the laws of the sovereign states in the region.

Intergovernmental cooperation in the Arctic is based on common recognition of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Often referred to as the 'constitution of the oceans', it sets out clear rules and ensures the predictability necessary for energy security, responsible management of living and non-living resources, and environmental protection.



# 20 Years of Peaceful Cooperation

By **BØRGE BRENDE**

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Norway

The Arctic Council's comprehensive studies and reports have highlighted the speed at which changes are taking place in the region. The snow is melting and the glaciers are receding at record pace. The Arctic is warming faster than any other region on Earth. Hazardous substances are accumulating in the food chains. The acidity of the oceans is raising. Species are migrating.

The consequences are far-reaching. The Greenland ice cap holds back seven metres of potential sea-level rise. The permafrost holds vast amounts of carbon dioxide and methane which are released into the atmosphere once it thaws. In other words, Arctic warming is amplifying and accelerating the global warming that is causing unprecedented damage to our planet. Although we do not yet fully understand the consequences, the changes in the Arctic make it clear that we urgently need to cut global greenhouse gas emissions and reduce the amount of pollutants currently affecting Arctic ecosystems.

It is an important objective of the Arctic Council to ensure a sustainable future for the people living in the Arctic. Infrastructure, environmental protection, and emergency preparedness and response

must meet high standards in order to allow for increased economic activity in the High North. The Arctic governments must ensure knowledge-based and responsible management of these ecologically fragile areas. Cooperation with observers, academic institutions, industry and the recently established Arctic Economic Council will be vital for sustainable development in the region.

Norway welcomes the current US chairmanship's efforts to further strengthen the Arctic Council as the premier intergovernmental forum for addressing Arctic challenges. In an increasingly unstable world, intergovernmental forums such as the Arctic Council play an important role in contributing to peaceful collaboration around the globe.

The Arctic Council is an example of international cooperation that can be followed in other parts of the world: a framework for promoting knowledge, stability and predictability based on respect not only for international law but also for each member state. Building on the remarkable progress we have made over the past twenty years, I am optimistic about our future cooperation.



# CELEBRATING

## 20 Years of the Arctic Council

By **DAVID BALTON**

Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials,  
Ambassador for Oceans and Fisheries,  
US Department of State



Photo Arctic Council Secretariat / Linnea Nordström

**T**he Arctic region is receiving unprecedented attention. Although the region is both politically stable and peaceful, the nations and peoples of the Arctic today confront extraordinary challenges and opportunities, driven largely – though not exclusively – by a warming climate. In these circumstances the Arctic Council has emerged as the premier forum in which the governments of the eight Arctic states, in partnership with six permanent participants that represent the indigenous peoples of the Arctic, strive together to understand, respond to and prepare for a quickly changing Arctic.

As the Arctic Council celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we have already witnessed a remarkable evolution in its stature and reach. The Council has produced cutting-edge analyses to inform decisions at many

levels. Its six standing working groups have completed a breathtaking range of projects and programs of direct benefit to Arctic residents and institutions. The Council has also established a permanent secretariat in Tromsø, Norway and has built – or is building – lasting partnerships with an impressive array of other bodies, including the newly established Arctic Economic Council.

In addition, the Council has served as a forum for the negotiation of two binding international agreements among the Arctic states on search and rescue, and marine oil pollution preparedness and response, and is likely to produce a third such agreement on scientific cooperation by 2017. The Council has thus contributed to a growing set of rules and norms for governing the Arctic.

The evolution of the Arctic Council has, in turn, raised questions about how it may change further. How can it use its policy-



## SIRI BEATE ARNTZEN NORWAY

Aristotle, the philosopher we refer to as one of the wisest in human history, was of the opinion that the good life lay between “the torrid South and the frigid North”. The Arctic has proved him wrong, for the moment. The question is, are we doing enough to continue to facilitate the good life of the future? Are we doing anything to stop the Arctic brain drain?

For many in today’s generation, access to a good education and a variety of career opportunities are vital when we describe the good life. In several regions of the Arctic the frequency of permanent migration to gain access to these aspects is increasing. Many of the migrators are young, and predominantly women. This leaves too many societies with an ageing population and a surplus of men. This is not sustainable development.

I have experienced being a young, ambitious female inhabitant of a small community in the Arctic Norway, thinking that my only route to create my good life was to become a “knowledge refugee”. I went to Oslo, the capital of Norway, with no plan of returning. What made me change my mind? A challenging job opportunity and an excellent education, both situated in the Arctic. If those had not existed, I would not have come back.

We talk about the brain drain and high dropout levels in Arctic communities, but the research and discourse tell us of the problem, not of the solutions. I scanned the Arctic Social Indicators report from 2014. The word “development” appears over a hundred times. The words “possibility”, “attractive” and “creation” appear seven times in total, but not once in relation to the word “jobs”.

People are the most important resource of this region. It is time to empower the people of the Arctic to build attractive, sustainable societies. We have to share knowledge of how to build businesses to the youth seeking possibilities. We can increase the quality, number and relevance of local schools and knowledge hubs. We need research on how we can help shape a modern Arctic lifestyle that is in harmony with the traditional. Last but not least, we need to tailor this to the variety of societies and cultures that exist in what we like to call “one region”.

The hard work is not to find the information but to share it. We have bodies today that can facilitate the knowledge, but there are too many examples of this knowledge gathering dust in an office instead of reaching its target audience. We need a plan together with strong voices that can inspire and empower youth to act upon the many possibilities, so that we can prove Aristotle wrong also in the future. The question is if these voices exist. If they don’t – who will take on the mission?

shaping capacity to address the new and emerging issues of the Arctic region? Are the structure and the procedures of the Arctic Council adequate to take on an expanding agenda? Does the Arctic Council have sufficient, predictable financing to carry out its growing mission? Will the Arctic Council’s permanent participants have the capacity to serve as true partners in the myriad activities? How can the Arctic Council best engage with its large and varied group of accredited observers?

As the current chair of the Senior Arctic Officials, I hope to guide the exceptional group of people who constitute the Arctic Council community toward answers to at least some of these questions before the end of the US chairmanship in 2017. By the time the Arctic Council gavel passes to Finland, I would like to be able to say that the United States fulfilled its ambition to strengthen the forum itself.



Photo Arthur Arnesen

A stylized illustration of an Arctic landscape. The background is a dark blue gradient. In the center, there are three large, triangular mountains in shades of light blue, teal, and dark blue. In front of the mountains, there are several colorful houses in red, yellow, green, and blue. The sky is dark blue with a few white birds flying. The overall style is flat and modern.

International Cooperation for

# ARCTIC PROSPERITY

By **SERGEY LAVROV**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs,  
Russian Federation

**T**oday, the Arctic is a region with well-established fruitful interaction that is progressively developing despite the international complexities.

None of the Arctic Council's eighty projects have been closed, and we have much to be proud of. The financial mechanism of the Arctic Council Project Support Instrument has been launched, an agreement to establish the Arctic Coast Guard Forum has been reached, the dialogue among the Supreme Audit Institutions of the Arctic states has commenced, the drafting of an agreement on international scientific cooperation in the Arctic is underway. In addition, the Arctic Economic Council has been established recently which also contributes to effectively addressing the pressing issues facing the region.

The Arctic states have managed to combine their efforts in elaborating and implementing a positive, unifying and future-oriented agenda largely due to the constructive work performed by the Arctic Council, a unique forum which is not divided into "clubs". Its decisions are adopted by consensus and take into account the vital interests of all Arctic states with no exception. We are convinced that the experience of the Arctic Council can be also applied successfully in other regions of the world.



**“Effective solutions can be found only on the basis of true partnership.”**



Russia has always considered the Arctic as a territory of mutually respectful dialogue. We are convinced that all the necessary conditions for enhancing this dialogue have been established: international law clearly defines the rights of both coastal and other states. We are strongly committed to resolving any disputes through civilized negotiations. We hope that our Arctic Council colleagues are aware of the danger of assuming confrontational approaches and importing tensions as well. Effective solutions for preserving the unique Arctic environment, improving the well-being of the inhabitants of the Far North, including that of the indigenous peoples, ensuring the responsible use of rich natural resources for the benefit of all Arctic states can be, apparently, found only on the basis of true partnership. In this regard, we note with satisfaction that the Arctic Council Ministerial Declaration of April 2015 in Canada reaffirmed our countries' commitment to maintain peace, stability and constructive cooperation, and to respond jointly to new opportunities and challenges in the Arctic.

We are open to joint implementation of large-scale projects in the region, including in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation. This refers, in particular, to the development of oil and gas fields, the use of the Northern Sea Route as the shortest cargo transit route between Europe and Asia, and the development of industrial, transport and tourist infrastructure. We have always believed that the economic development of the Arctic should be pursued in compliance with the highest environmental standards, and with due respect for the people living in that region and the traditional lifestyle of the indigenous peoples.

We are pleased to acknowledge the first important steps taken in this direction. We have concluded the Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic, and adopted the Framework Plan for Cooperation on Prevention of Oil Pollution from Petroleum and Maritime Activities in the Marine Areas of the Arctic as well as the Arctic Marine Strategic Plan that provides a framework for protecting Arctic ecosystems. Intensive work on preserving biodiversity is being continued.

The Arctic states bear the primary responsibility for the situation in the region. At the same time, in order to ensure sustainable development of the Arctic – first of all, through addressing trans-regional issues – it is necessary to engage other international actors as well. Both Arctic and non-Arctic states have taken part in the implementation of the Arctic Council's Framework for Action on Enhanced Black Carbon and Methane Emissions Reductions, which is an example of successful joint efforts aimed at finding the best ways to address the challenge of global warming. We should actively encourage such forms of international collaboration in the region.

Russia will continue to provide comprehensive assistance to strengthening mutually beneficial and equal partnership in the region and expand it to new areas of international relations. The Arctic is our common home, so it is our direct responsibility to preserve it for the present and future generations.



Photo Jukka Lehtinen



**TIMO SOINI**

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Finland

As the Arctic Council turns twenty in 2016, it is time to assess its achievements. Its evolution as an international forum has been remarkable, and its role has been strengthened.

For the past two decades, we have enjoyed stability and good relations in the Arctic. Cooperative efforts across the borders continue to be essential when we face the challenges of climate change and globalization. Our lives are tied together with a common past, and we share a common future.

Greater understanding of the Arctic through research and scientific cooperation is one of the success stories of Arctic cooperation. The top of the world is no longer an unknown region. The University of the Arctic created by the Arctic Council has greatly contributed to this achievement. Finland is proud that UArctic was officially launched in Rovaniemi in 2001, and it is a growing network for universities and research institutes from Arctic and also non-Arctic countries.

The result of the Paris Climate Conference is welcomed by all Arctic countries and peoples. It gives a good starting point for the next twenty years of Arctic cooperation with its challenges and opportunities.



Photo Peter Prokosch / GRID-Arendal, [http://www.grida.no/photoalb/detail/taiga-landscape-near-rovaniemi-finland\\_ed9#](http://www.grida.no/photoalb/detail/taiga-landscape-near-rovaniemi-finland_ed9#)





Photo Peter Prokosch / GRID-Arendal, [http://www.grida.no/photoib/detail/river-of-us-just-north-of-selfoss-south-iceland\\_f0f1](http://www.grida.no/photoib/detail/river-of-us-just-north-of-selfoss-south-iceland_f0f1)



Photo Kristinn Ingvarsson

### **GUNNAR BRAGI SVEINSSON**

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Iceland

The Arctic is increasingly on our mind and the region has, in recent years, received substantial attention within the international arena. This is understandable. In virtue of climate change and its impact on the environmental, societal and economic development we see more and more countries and actors interested in the Arctic. This development is only likely to continue in the foreseeable future.

Since the Arctic Council was established in 1996, it has served an important role in promoting stability and cooperation between countries in the Arctic region. The Arctic Council has – in the course of its twenty years – attained major achievements, most notably through the extensive work of its subsidiary bodies, and through the crucial agreements on search and rescue and oil spill prevention.

The challenges we face in the region have, however, changed in the last two decades. The fragile ecosystem of the region is increasingly at risk, and Arctic communities are experiencing first-hand the challenges of dealing with a rapidly changing climate with far-reaching consequences and repercussions around the world.

At this watershed in its history, I believe it is of utmost importance to promote and further strengthen the Arctic Council as the most significant forum of discussion and decision-making on Arctic issues. It is the Arctic states' responsibility to ensure an auspicious development of the precious Arctic – for the benefit of generations to come. The Arctic Council will be an indispensable backbone on that journey.



# Setting the Stage for Arctic Cooperation

By **EIRIK SIVERTSEN**

Chair of the Standing Committee of  
Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region,  
Member of Parliament, Norway



Photo Stortinget

**It has been said that if you want to know what the Arctic Council will be working on two years from now, you should read the conference statements of the Arctic parliamentarians.**

**T**hrough these statements and close dialogue with the Arctic Council and several other stakeholders, Arctic parliamentary cooperation has given direction to Arctic cooperation.

The first thing we did when we met in Reykjavik for the very first time in 1993 was to call on governments of the Arctic countries to establish closer cooperation among themselves. In 1996 the Arctic Council was established, and since then Arctic parliamentary cooperation has continued to give recommendations and seek discourse to guide the further development of the Council.

From the beginning, the main focus of the Arctic parliamentarians has been on the people living in the Arctic. From the outset, the Arctic Council was focused on natural sciences, and together with the permanent participants we have worked to strengthen the human dimension in Arctic cooperation. In 1998 we recommended the establishment of the University of the Arctic (UArctic), which was officially inaugurated in 2001. Emphasizing the human dimension in Arctic cooperation in 2002, we recommended producing an Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR). The first one was published in 2004. Since then we have worked to raise the profile of Arctic cooperation in the field of human health, strengthened the capacity of the permanent participants to contribute to the Arctic Council's work, and made sure that the people living in the Arctic see first-hand benefits from economic development in their region.



**MIKKEL BUE LYKKEGAARD**  
DENMARK

For many years we highlighted the need for strengthening the Arctic Council by creating its own secretariat and a separate budget. We are satisfied with the establishment of the Arctic Council Secretariat in Tromsø, Norway, but would still like to see a more robust budget for Arctic cooperation. In 2012, we also recommended establishing an Arctic Chamber of Commerce. Two years later, the Arctic Economic Council was formally founded under the Canadian chairmanship of the Arctic Council. These are only a few examples of how our statements and close dialogue with the Arctic Council representatives have influenced the work of the Council.

The Arctic Council has proved to be dynamic, innovative and willing to take on new responsibilities. Establishing the Arctic Economic Council will improve the dialogue with the business community towards the sustainable development of the Arctic. The use of the Arctic Council as a framework for negotiating legally binding agreements between the Arctic countries has also been vital for raising the profile of Arctic cooperation. For our part, we Arctic parliamentarians will continue to introduce new ideas and innovative proposals in the evolving governance of the Arctic region.

In our conference statement from Whitehorse in 2014 there were four headlines: developing sustainable infrastructure in the Arctic, enhancing governance models and decision-making processes, strengthening northern economics and capacity building, and environmental challenges. The most important meeting in the world in 2015 was COP21, the Paris Climate Conference. Hence, the most significant task we gave to the governments of the Arctic countries and the EU Commission was to raise a strong Arctic message to communicate the consequences of climate change in the Arctic at the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations in Paris in December 2015.

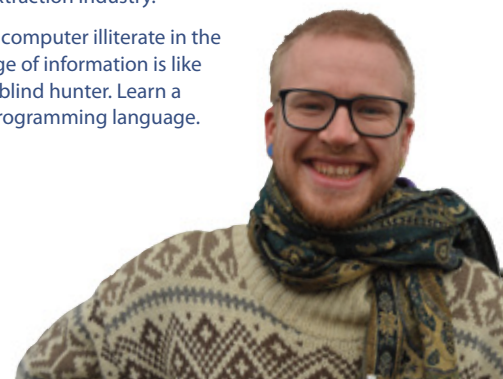
For all those of you who would like to know what will happen in the Arctic Council in 2016–2018, I would only say: the next Arctic parliamentary conference will be held in June 2016.

I am not ethnically a native of the Arctic. I was born in a small farmhouse on the countryside in Denmark and grew up in the lukewarm rain of agricultural civilization. When I was nine, I moved with my parents to Maniitsoq, a town in western Greenland. Having just about 3,000 inhabitants at the time, it was big for Greenlandic standards, and the life of the city was fueled by a shrimp processing factory and an alpine ski resort on the local glacier, Apussuit (Big Snow). Moving there was probably the single biggest turning point of my life. The wilderness provided a giant playground for me and the friends I found there, and I was adopted by Mother Arctic with an embrace of her silent, spacious magnificence.

Today Maniitsoq is depopulating, partly because the shrimp factory has closed, and partly because a political centralization plan has displaced the local administration to the neighboring town of Sisimiut, some 200 kilometers north of Maniitsoq. Most of my friends from back then, myself included, have moved away from the town, to places with more social, educational and professional opportunities. This is a general trend which can be observed globally, but I believe that it is only a phase. As I am growing older, I am seeing many of my friends return to the place they grew up in to find new ways of living there. The open frontiers and the tough and warm-hearted people of the North live in our hearts, and if you take your heart with you, you will find a way to live.

The information revolution that is currently unfolding is carrying along great opportunities for the populations of the Arctic. Poor infrastructure, harsh weather and long distances suddenly mean nothing, when you can perform virtual work from your computer. All you need to participate in the global village is a computer and a network connection. I believe that the next generation of the Arctic will consist of programmers, techies, computer specialists and network security experts. Cyberized workforces will enable independent livelihoods across borders and make the societies independent from a predacious extraction industry.

A computer illiterate in the age of information is like a blind hunter. Learn a programming language.





# *It All Started in* **Rovaniemi**

**On September 19, 1996 I was sitting in a side room of the Canadian Parliament Building in Ottawa and watching, as the only international journalist present, the modest inauguration ceremony of the Arctic Council.**

By **MARKKU HEIKKILÄ**  
Head of Science Communications, Arctic  
Centre, University of Lapland



It was a very low-key event, and almost nobody outside the room paid any attention. Speeches were given, but they hit the headlines in only two papers within the Arctic: Nunatsiaq News in Iqaluit, Canada and Kaleva in Oulu, Finland. The mood was far from sensing a historical moment; the global Arctic boom was nowhere yet to be seen.

Such was the start of the Arctic Council, but what was witnessed was not the beginning. By that time the key elements that still form the structure of the Arctic Council had already been established: indigenous peoples' participation, and the working groups Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME), and Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR), with the later addition of the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG). Arctic ministerial meetings had already been going on since 1991. All that had happened under the umbrella of the "Rovaniemi Process" which then led to the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, AEPS.

Nobody reading Arctic papers can avoid learning about the legendary speech by the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in Murmansk in 1987, the speech that now marks the border between the Cold War and the new era in the Arctic. The speech, or at least its Finnish translation, was 24 pages long, and when he finally reached the end of it he proposed many openings in the Arctic, including an Arctic environmental protection plan. Around that time Finland was seeking new international openings. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the new Ministry of Environment were occupied by ministers from the same party, the Social Democrats. The Gorbachev speech was noted, its Finnish translation delivered to the tables in both ministries. The Arctic environment looked like a good opportunity to create an international Finnish initiative.

The level of ambition was high. In those days the process was often called 'environmental CSCE'. The original CSCE (Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe) had been a European summit in Helsinki in 1975 that brought the leaders from the West and the East together, a still-remembered milestone in Finnish diplomacy.

Bringing the Arctic countries together was not an easy task, and the process was far from straightforward. Nevertheless, it happened. Already in 1989 the first negotiation round was held in Rovaniemi, Finland. In June 1991 the first ever Arctic ministerial meeting, that of ministers of environment, took place in the same location. Thus the hometown of Santa Claus got its name into the Arctic history.

Meanwhile, Canada had made its proposals to create a wider Arctic Council. After some silent years that idea moved forward and finally led to the inauguration event in Ottawa in 1996, and two years later the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy was merged to the Arctic Council. However, the Council still operates in the spirit of the Rovaniemi Process: the focus is in the environment, indigenous peoples sit in the main table, and the work concentrates on the working groups established during the process.





Photo Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

*The Arctic Council was almost stranded right before it was created due to a dispute over the role of the indigenous peoples, **Mary Simon** reveals twenty years later.*

By **STIG BRØNDBO**  
Journalist/Communications Advisor,  
UiT The Arctic University of Norway

**M**ary Simon recalls, “We had been working hard for two years to reach an agreement and to establish the Arctic Council, but when the senior officials were brought in to finish off the work, some central representatives wanted to give the indigenous peoples a diminished role.” For her this was a no-go situation. “I am very diplomatic, but in this situation the Canadian delegation was very clear: if the indigenous peoples became only observers as suggested by the USA – and not permanent participants as agreed – Canada would walk out of the negotiations. We were ready to leave,” the former Canadian diplomat explains twenty years later.

In 1994, the now 68-year-old Canadian Inuk was appointed by the Canadian prime minister Jean Chrétien to be the first Canadian Ambassador for Circumpolar Affairs. For years she had been representing both Canadian and international Inuit organizations in indigenous peoples’ issues, including the Arctic Council predecessor, the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS). As the Canadian Ambassador for Circumpolar Affairs she was asked to step out of the Inuit role and work on creating a council for the eight Arctic nations. “We needed something more than the AEPS, something more than the environment focus,” Simon says.

The idea of an Arctic Council was not new, but bringing the idea to life was



still difficult. Simon traveled around the circumpolar Arctic to promote the new initiative, and she was met by what she describes as resistance and a ‘wait and see’ attitude. Many countries were happy with the AEPS as it was.

When Simon started to gather enough support for a new council, she knew that the standing for indigenous peoples in the AEPS was weak. As president of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC), she had been invited to an AEPS meeting to speak about the role of the indigenous people. “I soon realized that I was not a participant in this meeting – I was more of an observer that was invited to give a talk. But to me it was not right that the AEPS should discuss issues affecting the indigenous communities and just treat us as observers. I did not agree and made a big fuss about it,” Simon recalls – and laughs when telling about it.

During the meeting with the AEPS, Mary Simon eventually got it her way and was able to sit down at the table as an equal partner during the rest of the meeting. She describes this as the beginning of a new policy focus making indigenous peoples equal partners in processes addressing issues important to indigenous peoples in the Arctic. “When international forums talk about sustainability in the Arctic, they are dealing with the core issue for indigenous communities. To me it is obvious that we need to be at the table as participants,” Simon says.

The negotiations that lead to the Ottawa Declaration and the creation of the Arctic Council lasted for two years. In the beginning, junior level officials took part in the negotiations, but when the work got closer to the final wording, some of the more senior level officials from different countries came to the forefront. “And that was when some serious problems occurred. We had negotiated a good position for what is known today as the

permanent participants (PPs). But the senior officials wanted to make changes on both the role and the term ‘permanent participants’ before the ministers got involved,” Simon explains.

Mary Simon was determined to fight for the PPs’ position, and the negotiations ended up with all-night sessions discussing the PPs’ role. “We just could not agree on creating a council without the PPs at the table, and we were several players explaining why,” Simon remembers. Eventually one of the Canadian officials made it crystal clear. If the PPs’ role were diminished, Canada would walk out of the negotiations. This changed the meeting, but even two years after the Ottawa Declaration formally established the Arctic Council, there were still discussions on the PPs’ role and term. “In 1998 we discussed the term ‘indigenous people’ versus ‘indigenous peoples.’”

The Canadian chaired the Arctic Council the first two years. “I guess the perception of the public was that we really weren’t doing much during those years. But we worked 24/7 finishing off all of the work that we just postponed to be able to close the initial negotiations,” Simon says. She left the Arctic Council platform in 2003, but has continued to follow the Council’s work from the outside. Today she sees a real need for better funding for the PPs, and she questions the role of the PPs in the newly created Arctic Economic Council. “We have to be really careful that new forums and other organizations do not weaken the long fought role for the PPs in the Arctic Council,” Simon says.

Today Mary Simon is retired, but she admits that she would love to get the opportunity to chair the Arctic Council again. “When I chaired it, it was still trying to find its role. I would love to chair it as a working Council – but I realize that this will not happen. I will be too old when Canada gets to chair the Arctic Council again,” she says – and laughs again.



Photo Stig Brøndbo

*The former Foreign Minister of Norway, Thorvald Stoltenberg, was not pleased when he first heard about the plans for the Arctic Council.*

By **STIG BRØNDBO**

Journalist/Communications Advisor,  
UiT The Arctic University of Norway

**T**oday the 84-year-old former minister and diplomat celebrates the 20-year anniversary of the Arctic Council with great happiness. “We need the Arctic Council as an arena for circumpolar cooperation, but I have to admit that Norway was not a driving force in the creation of the Arctic Council back then. We did not try to stop or postpone it in any way, we just did not encourage it,” explains Stoltenberg.

Stoltenberg was foreign minister of Norway from 1987–1989 and 1990–1993. During the last part of the 1980s, the General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party Mikhail Gorbachev had a new approach and a new policy towards the West. In a speech in 1987 he encouraged new forms of cooperation in the North between the East and the West. “When I became the Foreign Minister three years later, politicians in the northern parts of Norway had been discussing some kind of regional cooperation for years. My focus was on establishing Barents cooperation, and I did not want the Arctic Council to come in its way,” Stoltenberg says.

His first approval on forming a regional platform for people-to-people contact and business cooperation came from the Russian Foreign Minister, Andrei Kozyrev. “When I called him the first time he was very positive, but he needed to get consent from President Yeltsin. When he called me back the day after, we never looked back.”

In 1993 the Kirkenes Declaration was signed, establishing the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. “During the first years there were several attempts to make Barents cooperation into something more like today’s Arctic Council, and to me that was taking it in the wrong direction. We needed a more local arena, not a big geopolitical stage,” says Stoltenberg.

When he saw that Barents cooperation was strong enough to survive its creation Stoltenberg strongly supported the Arctic Council. “But as I predicted back then, the Arctic Council will have geopolitical challenges that Barents cooperation does not have to take into consideration,” Stoltenberg concludes.





Photo: Stig Brøndbo

*During her twenty years at the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat, Alona Yefimenko has witnessed the permanent participants grow to become stronger voices.*

By **STIG BRØNDBO**  
Journalist/Communications Advisor,  
UiT The Arctic University of Norway

In 1991 the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), the Saami Council (SC) and the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) became observers in the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS). Three years later the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat was established to support the indigenous organizations in the AEPS.

"In the beginning some of the organizations that we today know as 'permanent participants' had little capacity due to a lack of funding, language problems and binding commitments from the national Arctic governments," says Alona Yefimenko, technical advisor in the Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples Secretariat (IPS). The IPS served as a communication centre for many of the Arctic indigenous peoples and promoted linkages between different stakeholders within the AEPS.

After the IPS became a part of the Arctic Council in 1996, three more organizations were added: the Aleut International Association (AIA) in 1998, the Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC) in 2000 and the Gwich'in Council International (GCI) in 2000. Today, the six organizations all have a seat at the Arctic Council table together with the eight member states. "Our role has always been to assist the indigenous peoples' organizations in preparing for meetings, facilitating dialogue between these organizations and governments, and distributing information about the Arctic Council to the Arctic communities," Yefimenko says.

The Russian-born IPS advisor has been working for the organization since 1996. In 2016 the IPS moves its office from Copenhagen, Denmark to Tromsø, Norway. "For me this will be a big change and an interesting opportunity to be part of the Arctic Council Secretariat, and I hope that the permanent participants will find our new location helpful and effective," Yefimenko says. She has witnessed the permanent participants become more efficient and grow stronger over the years. "But the IPS remains very important for the permanent participants as their support secretariat," Yefimenko concludes.



Photo Stig Brøndbo

*Twenty years ago Sheila Watt-Cloutier feared that the Arctic Council would be just another arena for diplomatic talk with no effect on the ground.*

By **STIG BRØNDBO**

Journalist/Communications Advisor,  
UiT The Arctic University of Norway

**T**he former International Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) was there when the Arctic Council was founded, representing the ICC Canada at the time. Back then, the now 62-year-old Canadian felt that she entered an arena that was very disconnected from what the Council was trying to represent. “In the early days of the Arctic Council I asked myself several times what I was doing there. The arena and the players within were so far away from our world and our understanding of what was important,” says Sheila Watt-Cloutier today.

In the beginning her most important job was to try to get the Council to understand that the Arctic is not a frozen desert, but the home of millions of people. “We needed to educate the politicians and the bureaucrats, and in the early days of the Arctic Council, our job as elected officials for our people was to bring in the human dimension to the issues we were dealing with. The gap between the world of the permanent participants and the decision makers was huge.”



In her newly published book *The Right to Be Cold*, Watt-Cloutier writes in detail about the political work and struggle the indigenous representatives in the Council met in dealing with city-living, high-ranking government officials and different understandings of the Arctic within the eight Arctic Council nations. "Because it is a consensus-based Council, things did not pass or move forward as quickly as I wanted them to. If just one country rejected the proposal, it was enough to stop important processes. It could be very frustrating," Watt-Cloutier says.

The Arctic Council platform which the Canadian Inuk found very effective from day one was the working committees. She describes them as more manageable and having greater impact, and she emphasizes the work of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) as very important. More than 300 scientists from fifteen countries managed to make the Arctic the face of a world struggling with climate. For the first time western scientists collaborated with indigenous communities on such a big scale, accepting that the wisdom of the hunters and the elders was important to fully understand what was going on in the North.

"But in the beginning also scientists were reluctant to recognize the knowledge of the people who know the lay of the land, the conditions of the ice, and who spot the changes first-hand," Watt-Cloutier explains. The scientists meant that western science was real and that the indigenous knowledge was only anecdotal – and they thought "how much more can we learn." "But at the end of that work many of them said they learned so much from the traditional knowledge," Watt-Cloutier recalls.

The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment became both a scientific document and a policy document. "When the United States understood

that the ACIA would be a very powerful piece of work, adding pressure for them to change their economic and environmental policy, the US administration tried to change the rules of the game halfway through. They tried to manipulate and stall the process, and it was necessary to play hardball," says Watt-Cloutier. The United States did not succeed in their efforts, and the ACIA became what the Canadian Inuk today reviews as a key assessment to fully understanding the effects of climate change we are facing.

Her fight for the indigenous peoples' right to live a traditional, healthy and sustainable life in the Arctic led Sheila Watt-Cloutier to a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 by the Norwegian Foreign Minister Børge Brende. In November 2015 she won the Right Livelihood Award, often called the alternative peace prize, and in her speech in the Swedish Parliament she once again addressed the impact that climate change has on the Arctic way of

**"Our hunting ground is our supermarket."**

living. "The ice has now changed so dramatically that the hunters and elders cannot read it like they used to. Our hunting ground is our supermarket, and now we often have problems getting there," she stated.


Sheila Watt-Cloutier views the 2015 Right Livelihood Award as one of the links connected to the work she started within the Arctic Council in the early days. "But my concern for the future is that many indigenous peoples in the Arctic communities don't see the link between their lives and the work of the Arctic Council. Many still question if the Arctic Council has any real effect on the ground," says Watt-Cloutier, yet knowing herself that the many assessments accomplished under the Arctic Council have been very helpful also in the permanent participants' communities.




THE ROLE OF THE

# WORKING GROUPS

IN THE WORK OF THE ARCTIC COUNCIL



By **DAVID STONE**  
Former Chair, AMAP and  
**LARS-OTTO REIERSEN**  
Executive Secretary, AMAP



**I**n the 1991 Rovaniemi Declaration, the eight Arctic states adopted the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS). This cooperative framework focused initially on science and environmental protection and management, with sustainable development being added later. To implement the AEPS, six programmes were established, each managed by a working group. The Arctic Council subsumed the AEPS and its working groups in 1996.

Collectively, the working groups provide the Arctic Council with its mechanism for undertaking work and for providing itself with information to inform the Council's decision-making. Therefore the breadth of the Arctic Council's achievements can be gained by briefly recalling representative achievements of the six working groups and their programmes.



# ACAP

## ARCTIC CONTAMINANTS ACTION PROGRAM

ACAP strives to prevent adverse pollution effects in the Arctic by reducing and ultimately eliminating such pollution. Cooperative actions are promoted to strengthen and support national activities aimed to reduce emissions and releases of pollutants including releases from contaminated sites.

Reports associated with heavy metals (including mercury) and persistent organic pollutants (POPs) include Environmentally Sound Management of Obsolete Pesticides in the Russian Federation (2013); Reduction/Elimination of Dioxin and Furan Emissions in the Russian Federation with Focus on the Arctic and Northern Regions Impacting the Arctic - Phase II (2008); Environmentally Sound Management and Elimination of PCBs in Russia (2005); Reduction of Atmospheric Mercury Releases from Arctic States; and, Arctic Mercury Release Inventory (2005). The ACAP/AMAP 2000 project on PCBs in the Russian Federation guided cooperative remedial actions and was followed between 2000 and 2004 by several AMAP reports (in collaboration with financial funding organizations) also aimed at remediation.

Reports associated with climate change include Reduction of Residual Black Carbon Emissions from Residential Wood Combustion in the Arctic (2014).

# AMAP

## ARCTIC MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

AMAP monitors and assesses the Arctic with respect to pollution and climate change by documenting pollutant levels and pathways, geophysical processes, and effects on ecosystems and human health. Assessments are reiterated to evaluate trends and to inform policy and decision-making by Arctic Council states. Examples include reports on POPs and heavy metals (environmental and human health) that led directly to the 1998 Aarhus Protocols on POPs and heavy metals (under the Convention on Long-Range Transport of Air Pollution) and to the 2001 Stockholm Convention on POPs and the 2013 Minamata Convention on Mercury. These four United Nations treaties use AMAP environmental and human health assessments for effectiveness evaluation and to identify new substances to be included in the POPs agreements. AMAP health assessments are also used by health authorities when planning dietary intervention strategies for POPs, mercury and radioactivity. Radioactivity assessments also supported the remediation of radioactive waste and nuclear submarines and safety operations of nuclear installations in the Barents region.

Reports on climate change include the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) (2004/5), produced with CAFF and the International Arctic Science Committee; Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost in the Arctic (2011); Arctic Ocean Acidification (2013); and several reports on short-lived climate forcers (SLCFs) (2008-2015). These reports exposed the accelerating pace of Arctic climate change. Much utilized by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, they also identified immediate mitigation opportunities for SLCFs. →

# CAFF

## CONSERVATION OF ARCTIC FLORA AND FAUNA WORKING GROUP

CAFF is responsible for addressing conservation of Arctic biodiversity and for communicating its findings to the governments of Arctic Council countries and to the residents of the Arctic. CAFF's projects provide data to support informed decision-making aimed to promote practices that ensure the sustainability of the Arctic's living resources. CAFF has produced a large number of reports related to biodiversity monitoring and species trends assessments, conservation and management strategies, protected areas, and educational material such as a series of postcards summarizing the results of the 2013 biodiversity assessment. Reports are widely utilized by wildlife, natural resource and habitat managers throughout the Arctic. Some specific examples include Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (2013); Life Linked to Ice - A Guide to Sea Ice Associated Biodiversity in this Time of Rapid Change 2013); ACIA (2004 with AMAP); Plans for Biodiversity Monitoring (2013-17); Protected Areas of the Arctic – Conserving a Full Range of Values; and Arctic Flora and Fauna (2001).

# EPPR

## EMERGENCY PREVENTION, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE WORKING GROUP

EPPR is responsible for addressing prevention, preparedness and response to environmental emergencies in the Arctic as well as search and rescue. It is not an operational response organization but provides a forum for cooperation on response, best practices, risk-assessment methodologies, and exercises and training. Representative reports concerning oil pollution include Recommended Practices for Oil Spill Prevention (2013); Behaviour of Oil and Other Hazardous and Noxious Substances Spilled in Arctic Waters (2011); the 2008 update of the Arctic Guide providing information on emergency systems and applicable agreements; and Arctic Shoreline Clean-up Assessment Technique Manual (2004). EPPR is also responsible for updating and reporting upon the operational guidelines of the Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution, Preparedness and Response in the Arctic (2013) in which Arctic States commit to cooperate and assist each other when dealing with Arctic oil spills.

Examples of reports concerning radiation emergencies include analyses of response exercises held between 2008 and 2014 that simulated different accident scenarios. More than ten reports are available pertaining to risk assessments of radiological facilities.



# PAME

## PROTECTION OF THE ARCTIC MARINE ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP

PAME is responsible for advising the Arctic Council on policy and non-emergency response measures related to protection of the Arctic marine and coastal environment from both land- and sea-based activities. Such measures include coordinated actions and guidelines aimed to complement or supplement existing international agreements. Examples include the Arctic Marine Strategic Plan 2015-2025, a framework to guide the Arctic Council's actions to protect Arctic marine and coastal ecosystem development and to promote sustainable development; Arctic Marine Tourism Project – Best Practice Guidelines (2015); Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas Guidelines (2009 and 2015); Arctic Ocean Review (2009-2013); Framework for a Pan-Arctic Network of Marine Protected Areas (2015); and Marine Shipping Assessment (2009).

# SDWG

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

SDWG proposes steps to be taken by Arctic states to advance sustainable development. Representative results and products of five of the SDWG's six thematic areas include the following:

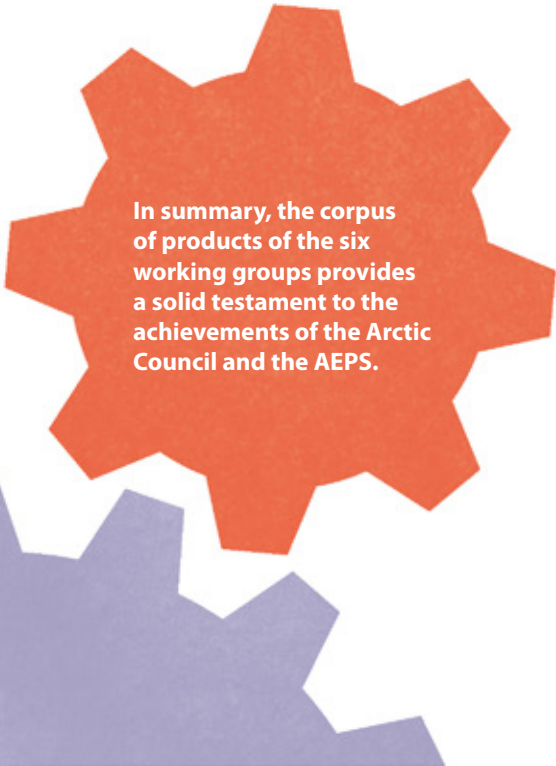
Arctic Human Health: Sharing Hope - Circumpolar Perspectives on Promising Practices for Promoting Mental Wellness and Resilience (2015); Arctic Human Health Initiative - A Legacy of the International Polar Year 2007-2009 (2013); Circumpolar Health Systems Review (2012); Hopes and Resilience, Suicide Prevention in the Arctic (2009); and Analysis of Arctic Children and Youth Health Indicators (2005).

Arctic Socio-Economic Issues: Arctic Human Development Report (2004 and 2015); Economy of the North (2008); and Sustainable Model for Arctic Regional Tourism (2006).

Adaptation to Climate Change: Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change in the Arctic (2009).

Management of Natural Resources: Youth - The Future of Reindeer Herding Peoples. Arctic Council EALLIN Reindeer Herding Youth Project 2012-2015 (2015).

Arctic Cultures and Languages: Assessing, Monitoring and Promoting the Vitality of Arctic Indigenous Languages (2013-2015); Gender and Equality in the Arctic - Current Realities and Future Challenges (2015); and Assessment of Cultural Heritage Monuments and Sites in the Arctic (2013).



**In summary, the corpus of products of the six working groups provides a solid testament to the achievements of the Arctic Council and the AEPS.**

# Arctic Biodiversity Assessment

By **TOM BARRY**, Executive Secretary, CAFF International Secretariat and  
**COURTNEY PRICE**, Communications Manager, CAFF International Secretariat

In 2013, the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), the biodiversity working group of the Arctic Council, released the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA). This was a landmark achievement in delivering a report which would contain the best available science informed by traditional ecological knowledge on the status and trends of Arctic biodiversity and which would also have accompanying policy recommendations for biodiversity conservation. The assessment explored the potentially dramatic consequences of climate change and other factors that adversely affect species and their habitats in the Arctic, providing critical information to policy makers. It found that large tracts of the Arctic remain relatively undisturbed, providing a unique opportunity for proactive action that can minimize or even prevent future problems that would be costly or impossible to reverse.

The Arctic Council ministers agreed to implement the seventeen recommendations articulated in the ABA Report for Policy Makers. At the April 2015 Arctic Council ministerial meeting, the Arctic states were presented with an eight-year implementation plan Actions for Biodiversity 2013–2021, an action plan that has been informed by discussions with Arctic Council countries, indigenous organizations, observer organizations and countries. This will act as the key guide to the Arctic Council biodiversity conservation in the coming years.

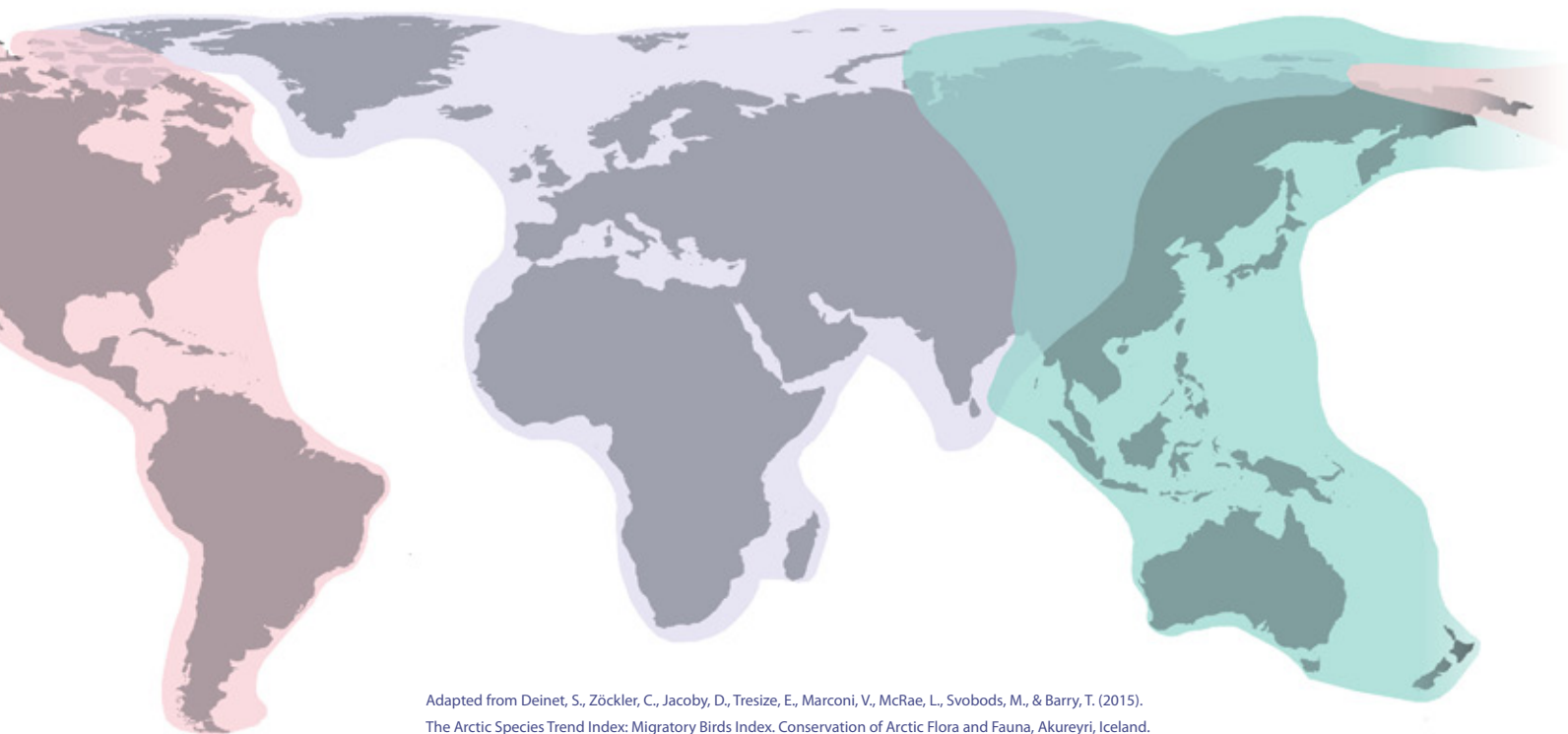
Although actions to implement the ABA recommendations are aimed primarily at the Arctic Council, its member states' and permanent participants' success in conserving Arctic biodiversity depends on actions by non-Arctic states, regional and local authorities, industry, and all who live, work and travel in the Arctic. The ABA recommendations, therefore, also provide a guide for biodiversity conservation action for authorities and organizations beyond the Arctic Council.



Delving into the report, we can see how the scientific findings led to policy recommendations and subsequently to informed policy actions. For example, ABA key finding number 3 states, “Many Arctic migratory species are threatened by overharvest and habitat alteration outside the Arctic, especially birds along the East Asian flyway.” Furthermore, an additional key finding states, “The challenges facing Arctic biodiversity are interconnected, requiring comprehensive solutions and international cooperation.” These in turn informed ABA recommendation number 8, which recommends to reduce stressors on migratory species range-wide, including habitat degradation and overharvesting on wintering and staging areas and along flyways and other migration routes. The release of the first Arctic Migratory Birds Index underlines the challenges being faced by migratory birds.

The Actions for Biodiversity 2013–2021 response is the creation of the Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI). The path from completing the ABA to the development of policy recommendations and the subsequent implementation illustrates the effective role the Arctic Council can play in promoting and facilitating global conservation actions for Arctic biodiversity and ecosystems.

A key finding of the ABA was that “Arctic biodiversity is being degraded, but decisive action taken now can help sustain vast, relatively undisturbed ecosystems of tundra, mountains, fresh water and seas and the valuable services they provide.” An overriding message is that while there is an urgency to take some actions now, all actions must be sustained over the long term. There is an urgent need to speed up and scale up actions to implement the recommendations of the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment and the commitments under related international agreements relevant to the Arctic, such as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets developed by the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.



Adapted from Deinet, S., Zöckler, C., Jacoby, D., Tresize, E., Marconi, V., McRae, L., Svobods, M., & Barry, T. (2015). The Arctic Species Trend Index: Migratory Birds Index. Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna, Akureyri, Iceland.

THE ARCTIC COUNCIL:

# MILESTONES

FOUNDATION/MINISTERIAL MEETINGS • RELATED ORGANIZATIONS • AGREEMENTS  
OBSERVER STATES • PERMANENT PARTICIPANT ORGANIZATIONS

**1956**  
Saami Council

**1977**  
Inuit Circumpolar  
Conference (now Inuit  
Circumpolar Council)

**1994**  
Indigenous Peoples  
Secretariat

**1996**  
Arctic Council  
established by the  
Ottawa Declaration

**1989**  
Beginning of the Rovaniemi Process

**1995**  
Agreement to  
Incorporate AEPS into the  
Future Arctic Council

**1987**  
Gorbachev's Murmansk Speech

**1991**  
Arctic Environmental  
Protection Strategy (AEPS)

**1973**  
Agreement on the  
Conservation of Polar Bears

**1991**  
Report: To Establish an  
Arctic Council

**1990**  
Russian Association of Indigenous  
Peoples of the North (RAIPON)



**2000**  
France

**2000**  
Arctic  
Athabaskan  
Council

**2013**  
Agreement on Cooperation  
on Marine Oil Pollution  
Preparedness and  
Response in the Arctic

**1999**  
Gwich'in Council  
International

**2009**  
Sixth Ministerial Meeting  
in Tromsø, Norway

**2002**  
Third Ministerial  
Meeting in Inari,  
Finland

**2013**  
China, India, Italy,  
Japan, Korea,  
Singapore

**2006**  
Spain

**1998**  
Germany, Poland,  
the Netherlands, UK

**2011**  
Seventh Ministerial  
Meeting in Nuuk,  
Greenland

**2014**  
Arctic Economic Council

**2000**  
Second Ministerial  
Meeting in Barrow,  
Alaska

**2006**  
Fifth Ministerial Meeting  
in Salekhard, Russia

**2013**  
Eighth Ministerial Meeting  
in Kiruna, Sweden

**1998**  
First Ministerial  
Meeting in Iqaluit,  
Canada

**2013**  
Arctic Council  
Secretariat

**2015**  
Ninth Ministerial Meeting  
in Iqaluit, Canada

**1998**  
Aleut International  
Association

**2004**  
Fourth Ministerial  
Meeting in Reykjavik,  
Iceland

**2011**  
Agreement on  
Cooperation on  
Aeronautical and  
Maritime Search and  
Rescue in the Arctic

**2001**  
University of the  
Arctic (UARctic)

**2006**  
Fifth Ministerial Meeting in  
Salekhard, Russia



THE ARCTIC COUNCIL:

# A BACKGROUNDER

## What Is the Arctic Council?

The Arctic Council is the leading intergovernmental forum promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic states, Arctic Indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular on issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic.

## Who Takes Part?

The Ottawa Declaration lists the following countries as Members of the Arctic Council: Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States.

In addition, six organizations representing Arctic Indigenous peoples have status as Permanent Participants. The category of Permanent Participant was created to provide for active participation and full consultation with the Arctic Indigenous peoples within the Council. They include the Aleut International Association, the Arctic Athabaskan Council, the Gwich'in Council International, the Inuit Circumpolar Council, the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) and the Saami Council.

Observer status in the Arctic Council is open to non-Arctic states, along with inter-governmental, inter-parliamentary, global, regional and non-governmental organizations that the Council determines can contribute to its work. Arctic Council Observers primarily contribute through their engagement in the Council at the level of Working Groups.

The standing Arctic Council Secretariat formally became operational in 2013 in Tromsø, Norway. It was established to provide administrative capacity, institutional memory, enhanced communication and outreach and general support to the activities of the Arctic Council.

Member States • Canada • Kingdom of Denmark • Finland • Iceland • Norway • Russia • Sweden • United States

Map / © University of the Arctic 2016. Veli-Pekka Laitinen, Puisto Design & Advertising and Hugo Ahlenius, Nordpil





## What Does It Do?

The work of the Council is primarily carried out in six Working Groups:

The Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP)

The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP)

The Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Working Group (CAFF)

The Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response Working Group (EPPR)

The Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME)

The Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG)

*Read about their work on pages 22-25.*

## How Does It Work?

Arctic Council assessments and recommendations are the result of analysis and efforts undertaken by the Working Groups. Decisions of the Arctic Council are taken by consensus among the eight Arctic Council states, with full consultation and involvement of the Permanent Participants.

The chairmanship of the Arctic Council rotates every two years among Arctic states. On 24 April 2015, the second Canadian Chairmanship concluded, and the second Chairmanship of the United States (2015-2017) began.

## What Doesn't It Do?

The Arctic Council is a forum; it has no programming budget. All projects or initiatives are sponsored by one or more Arctic States. Some projects also receive support from other entities.

The Arctic Council does not and cannot implement or enforce its guidelines, assessments or recommendations. That responsibility belongs to each individual Arctic State.

The Arctic Council's mandate, as articulated in the Ottawa Declaration, explicitly excludes military security.

## What Are Some of Its Accomplishments?

The Arctic Council regularly produces comprehensive, cutting-edge environmental, ecological and social assessments through its Working Groups.

The Council has also provided a forum for the negotiation of two important legally binding agreements among the eight Arctic states. The first, the Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic, was signed in Nuuk, Greenland, at the 2011 Ministerial Meeting. The second, the Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic, was signed in Kiruna, Sweden, at the 2013 Ministerial Meeting.



**HILKKA KEMPPI**  
FINLAND

When I call myself an Arctic inhabitant in Helsinki, Finland's capital, people look at me strangely. I find myself constantly justifying my own identity to others, even though Finland has been an active spokesperson in the Arctic, the country is an Arctic Council member, Finland's capital is – after Iceland – closest to the North Pole, and I have lived a quarter of my life in Lapland which is the country's northernmost region.

Even though Finland does not have an Arctic coastline, it does not affect my identity of being Arctic. By today's climate indicators only a small part of Finland is counted as Arctic. I think that the ten-degree limit is no longer a good indicator either, because we live in a time of rapid warming, and the Arctic area decreases as a consequence of global warming and melting of the polar ice. The Arctic region is also going through such changes as emerging transport routes and increasing access to vast energy resources and mineral potential. At the same time indigenous peoples are afraid of losing their culture and language. Especially now it is time to recognize the concept of the urban Arctic, and its needs and importance as the patron of peace and diversity.

Finns need to find their northern intent and Arctic emotions. We should be proud of our Arctic expertise, and protect human rights and cultures in the North. In the publication *Arctic Design – Opening the Discussion* Tuija Seipell uses the term "Arctic hope", since the Arctic seems to be full of hope; hope for a sustainable future, and hope for a better income, for example. Seipell points out what Arctic is: more of an idea, a condition and a lifestyle, and less of a specific geographic location. For her it is an adjective, a feeling, an emotionally charged assumption. For me it is a whole identity.

The flow of people in the Arctic regions is constantly growing. Part of it is based on emigration, part on immigration, part on the tourism industry and part on the growing interest of researchers. In my vision new cities and routes are created in the Arctic, and we should welcome them. The Nordic Council's Framework Programme emphasizes the importance on investing in education, innovation and renewal, and flexibility to create sustainable economic and social growth. To do that, we need enhanced international cooperation and constant dialogue in the Arctic and between its inhabitants. The development of the Arctic in a sustainable and safe way is not possible without all countries participating – there is no room to exclude anyone from the Arctic identity.

I believe that the Arctic needs international cooperation now more than ever. Finland is willing to do her share in this regard – not least as the upcoming chair of the Arctic Council. If somebody still challenges my identity of being Arctic, I need to ask if they know how it feels to be part of something that you really believe in.



# THE ARCTIC COUNCIL, a MODEL for COOPERATION

**W**hile ministerial meetings of the Arctic Council receive most media attention, it is at the level of working groups

where most of the often tedious and not-so-exciting work takes place. From the beginning of the Arctic-wide cooperation, the strongest working group has been its science body, the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP). Over the years, also other Arctic Council working groups have started to gear towards conducting large-scale scientific assessments that identify various threats to the Arctic environment. In conducting this work, the eight Arctic states' governments need to consult indigenous peoples' organizations – enjoying the status of permanent participants in the Council – before decisions are made. If permanent participants reject a certain proposal, it is extremely unlikely for the motion to even proceed to decision-making. There is no other regional intergovernmental forum that would give such power to indigenous peoples, the original residents of the region.

Photo Juuso Voutilainen



By **TIMO KOIVUROVA**  
 Director, Arctic Centre,  
 University of Lapland

# TION

**“It is of utmost importance to keep dialogue open by focusing on sustainable development issues.”**

It is interesting to notice that it is these unique structures of the Arctic Council which have enabled the Council actors to influence global and regional environmental protection negotiations. Many pollutants from the mid-latitudes end up in the Arctic via prevailing wind patterns and ocean circulations systems, which means that the Arctic Council needs to influence environmental protection negotiations that take place on global level. The success of the Council has been manifest in these processes. Scientific assessments of environmental threats by AMAP and other working groups of the Council have served to catalyze global mercury and persistent organic pollutants (POPs) negotiations. Indigenous peoples have been able to concretize in these global negotiations what it means when pollutants arrive from outside to a region which does not even produce them. For instance, female Inuit have been exposed to POPs to the extent that their fetuses are in danger, which was conveyed by the Arctic Council indigenous organizations to the negotiation process which resulted in the 2001 Stockholm Convention on POPs.

In addition, by focusing on environmental protection and sustainable development, and intentionally avoiding to deal with military issues, the Council has been able to continue its work even in times when overall geopolitical cold period with Russia and most other Arctic Council member states is a reality.

The lessons from the Arctic Council to other regional levels of governance around the world are clear. In areas of geopolitical consternation, it is of utmost importance to keep dialogue open by focusing on sustainable development issues, that is, other than military security issues. It is not enough for the regional level to try to influence regional sources of pollution if many of the environmental problems are the result of many actions around the whole world. It is thus imperative for the regional level to try to effectively influence global environmental protection processes. One of the pathways for having such influence is assessment work that connects science with policy. By doing this together with the region's original inhabitants, indigenous peoples, it is not only legitimate but also an effective way to influence these processes, as shown by the experience of the Arctic Council.

# THE ARCTIC COUNCIL, a VICTORY for SOFT LAW & SOFT SECURITY

By **HEATHER EXNER-PIROT**  
Strategist for Outreach and Indigenous  
Engagement, University of Saskatchewan

**T**he Arctic Council has evolved significantly, and often in its lifespan as an institution, from a diplomatic curiosity to a scientific clearinghouse, and from a policy-shaping to an increasingly policy-making body. But throughout the past twenty years, criticism of the body has remained relatively constant: it has often been viewed as politically ineffective, with lots of talk but little action on issues relating to its mandates of environmental protection and sustainable development. It has made volumes of recommendations without much in the way of implementation, cataloguing or evaluation of results.

However valid these criticisms are, they discount the very real achievements the Arctic Council has made in the region. If policy implementation has not been a strength, there can be little doubt the mere fact of the Arctic Council has made the region more stable and secure in the post-Cold War period. Regional norms around environmental protection and the inclusion and respect of local and indigenous perspectives have been institutionalized in the Arctic Council and subsequently far beyond. The Arctic Council is not based on laws and agreements, but it has built a foundation on shared norms and values. This has proven a boon to the organization.




## Weaknesses or Strengths?

True to the expression, the Arctic Council's greatest weaknesses are also its greatest strengths. It has often been criticized for not discussing issues of traditional security. But this intentional omission has allowed it to compartmentalize itself from broader geopolitical events such as the interventions in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014. In addition, the Arctic Council has provided the space necessary for those types of discussions to occur, even if it was not the platform for them. After the Search and Rescue (SAR) Agreement was signed in 2011 under the auspices of the Arctic Council, the Canadian military led two meetings of the Arctic Chiefs of Defence Staff. While these have been suspended since the Crimean crisis, cooperation on SAR has continued, leading to the establishment of an eight-nation Arctic Coast Guard Forum in October 2015.

The Arctic Council has also been disparaged for its sometimes painfully slow progress on the big issues. Case in point is the long, drawn-out process on determining who would or would not be accepted as observers in the forum following rising geopolitical interest in the Arctic after 2007. For environmentalists its weak implementation of environmental protection regulations has been problematic. But this is a result of the consensus-based nature of the Council's decision-making, meaning that everyone is on board when decisions are eventually made and the sense of common purpose and ownership of Council activities is strong. This style of governance seems to have limited the kinds of cleavages one may otherwise have expected between indigenous and non-indigenous stakeholders, Russia and the West, and the Barents region versus more remote Arctic regions.

## A Victory for Soft Security

The Arctic Council has focused on issues of soft security, such as environmental protection and sustainable development. This has meant that the region is defined not by a zero-sum mentality, but rather by efforts to achieve absolute gains for all. In this, the Arctic Council has led the way to a kind of regional exceptionalism in international affairs. It proves that cooperation between Russia and the West, state and non-state actors, and traditional knowledge holders and scientists is not only desirable but possible. If it is not perfect, well, that is only compared to the ideal. The Arctic Council is a model for global governance, and it is only getting started.



THE ARCTIC COUNCIL,  
maintaining  
**PEACE** through  
**COOPERATION**

By **MICHAEL BYERS**  
Professor, Canada Research Chair in  
Global Politics and International Law,  
University of British Columbia

**For two decades, the Arctic Council has separated itself from the military relationship between Russia and the other Arctic states and focused on practical, shared challenges such as environmental protection, sustainable development, and search and rescue.**

**T**he separation from the military relationship occurred at the very beginning, with the Arctic Council's founding document (the 1996 Ottawa Declaration) stating that it "should not deal with matters related to military security." The focus on practical, shared challenges was ensured by another provision stating that "decisions of the Arctic Council are to be by consensus of the members."

One of the Arctic Council's early successes was the 2004 Arctic Climate Impact Assessment which assembled the best climate change science available at that time. The Assessment drew much-needed attention to the global climate issue and, in particular, to the rapid changes occurring in the Arctic region. Then, in 2011, a task force established by the Arctic Council negotiated a treaty on search and rescue. In 2013, another task force negotiated a treaty on oil spill preparedness and response.



At first, it seemed the Arctic Council might be caught up in the crisis that followed Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014. Canada boycotted a meeting of a task force on black carbon in response to "Russia's illegal occupation." However, Canada concurrently stated that it would "continue to support the important work of the Arctic Council." All subsequent Arctic Council meetings have included delegates from all the eight member states, and cooperation on practical, shared challenges has continued.

In May 2014, the Arctic Council established a task force on scientific cooperation, and one year later in April 2015 another task force on marine cooperation. At that time it also adopted a "Framework for Action on Enhanced Black Carbon and Methane Emissions Reductions."

In April 2015, Russia's Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Sergei Donskoi joined in the Iqaluit Declaration, agreeing to the adoption of the US program for its two-year chairmanship. Although Canada criticized Russia's actions in Ukraine during the Iqaluit ministerial summit, the practical work of the Arctic Council continued notwithstanding.

The fact is, the Arctic Council could never pose a threat to any of its member states, since the consensus requirement protects each of them from having decisions imposed upon it by the others. The consensus requirement is effectively a veto, which can act as a safety valve that avoids or redirects decision-making in circumstances where the Arctic Council might otherwise seize up under the pressure of irreconcilable interests.

The Arctic Council succeeds because it has been designed to address practical, shared problems that are amenable to cooperation. By doing so, it serves to promote interdependence, long-term stability and thus peace among its members.

## ALEXANDER SABUROV RUSSIA

My generation of Russian citizens, who are about 25 years old now, witnessed impressive developments during the time of our youth. Among these I would firstly point out the rapidly increasing quality of life, fast-spreading ICT, and new study and career opportunities both home and abroad. During our childhood Arctic cooperation was just starting, and since then it has gradually and successfully been developing. Unlike our parents we didn't experience closed borders; quite many of us who live in the Northwest Russia studied in Norwegian, Finnish and Swedish universities in the Barents region and have good friends there. Twenty years of international cooperation in the Arctic has ensured not only good people-to-people contacts but also effective intergovernmental interaction. Joint efforts of the Arctic states contribute to advanced research and practical solutions in the fields of environmental protection, search and rescue, infrastructure development and maintaining cultural diversity.

Two or three years ago it was hardly possible to imagine that the current state of international relations would be characterized by such serious conflicts, tensions and disturbances on global level. Nowadays it is a reality in world politics. Fortunately the Arctic is still one of the cooperation arenas between Russia, European countries, the US and Canada. I believe it is a mission of great significance, not only for politics but also for northerners in general, to sustain peaceful relations between countries, regions and people. In my view it is important that existing collaboration within the Arctic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the University of the Arctic, the Northern Forum, the Northern Dimension, the International Arctic Science Committee and other forms of cooperation will be supported and developed. It is also important to make sure that these organizations are represented by all the countries and stakeholders in order to be able to listen and understand each other.

As an inhabitant of the North I see that the Arctic continues to be model region of international cooperation in the future. Time has shown that prohibitions and sanctions from both sides is totally unproductive and inefficient. Our countries have more common interests than conflicts of interests. Arctic cooperation has been proving this for twenty years, and hopefully the next generations of northerners will also live in a peaceful and developing region.



**T**he Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) I and II and their companion reports Arctic Social Indicators (ASI) I and II have made important contributions to our understanding of the state of human development in the Arctic, including methods for measuring and tracking changes in Arctic human development. These reports – produced under the auspices of the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG), and with the project secretariat hosted by the Stefansson Arctic Institute since 2002 in Akureyri, Iceland – address critical issues and emerging challenges in Arctic living conditions, global change impacts and adaptation, and indigenous livelihoods, while documenting the disparities that persist between and within regions, and between indigenous and non-indigenous residents of the Arctic.

The AHDR and ASI publications are academic reports – the result of a close and ongoing collaboration of extensive networks of primarily Arctic social scientists – and written for several audiences, including governments, communities and other

stakeholders at all levels, as well as students of University of the Arctic and other post-secondary students. The authors also wrote with the Arctic Council very much in mind: the reports aim to help inform the work of the Arctic Council, and in particular that of the SDWG, in furthering sustainable development in the Arctic.

The AHDR process was initiated in 2002 following a mandate by the Inari Declaration to present the most up-to-date information about the state of Arctic human development and the major trends unfolding in the region, in order to provide a comprehensive knowledge base for the SDWG. The first AHDR report in 2004 – the priority project of the Icelandic Arctic Council chairmanship – provided important baseline information for the Council, policymakers and others who deal with issues of human development and societal transformation in a time of rapid environmental, cultural, political, economic and social change. It also has been widely used as an education tool, including as a text in many university courses. The current AHDR-II from 2014 looks at change since the first report's baseline data and likewise spans a wide range of topics: Arctic populations and migration, culture and

identities, economy, politics, legal issues, resource governance, health and well-being, and education and human capital.

New evidence on Arctic human development points increasingly to both disparate and common regional processes across the Circumpolar North, as well as the criticality of the global linkages between the Arctic and more southerly regions, and the complex interactions between different sources and scales of changes. In this regard, AHDR-II highlights a number of major trends including the intensified migrations; the increasing penetration of new ideas, norms and values; the growing interest in Arctic resource development; and changing governance structures that both enable and challenge northern communities.



**The myriad vulnerabilities and uncertainties confronting northern residents in these times of rapid change call for an understanding of trends in Arctic human development to develop policies and practices for addressing these challenges.**



Major findings of AHDR-II have relevance for policy makers at various levels, including for priority setting by the Arctic Council and the SDWG. For example, the report finds that the rapid and stressful changes highlighted in the first AHDR continue today, but are amplified in rate and magnitude; accelerating urbanization poses multifaceted challenges to human development in the Arctic; interest in the Arctic is growing, while the Arctic is also becoming more marketable; and continued innovation in governance is occurring at all scales, but at the same time the demands on

local and indigenous representatives present challenges in terms of human and fiscal capacity.

The AHDR and ASI networks have benefited from their longstanding collaborations with the Arctic Council and the SDWG. Although the Arctic Council did not formally endorse the final AHDR-II due to issues concerning specific wording and

scientific independence, the report received notable mentioning in both the Senior Arctic Officials' Report to Ministers and in the Iqaluit Ministerial Declaration, signaling the importance of this assessment as a contribution to the pursuit of a better quality of life for all Arctic residents and more sustainable futures.



# Arctic Human Development

By **JOAN NYMAND LARSEN**, Senior Scientist, Stefansson Arctic Institute  
and **GAIL FONDAHL**, Professor, University of Northern British Columbia



**LINUS HEDH**  
SWEDEN

Ever since I was young the Arctic and the exploration of it has fascinated me. Reading about the great quests 150 years ago, setting off towards the literally “white spots” on the map, still wake a longing for the inaccessible, the barren landscape and fascinating wildlife. Those are my romanticized images of the Arctic.

Currently I am finishing my master’s degree in animal ecology at Lund University. My interest in the Arctic has followed me into my studies, which partly focuses on bird migration between higher and temperate/subtropical latitudes. Due to my area of interest, my view of the future might be biased towards the environmental issues that we, the Earth and not least the Arctic, are faced with. If the worst predictions for the future are correct, this threatens at least my childhood picture of a barren but thriving Arctic. Nowadays, big parts of the Arctic are more accessible. New techniques have also made the Arctic an object for new kinds of prospecting, which has made large multinational companies once again focus northwards.

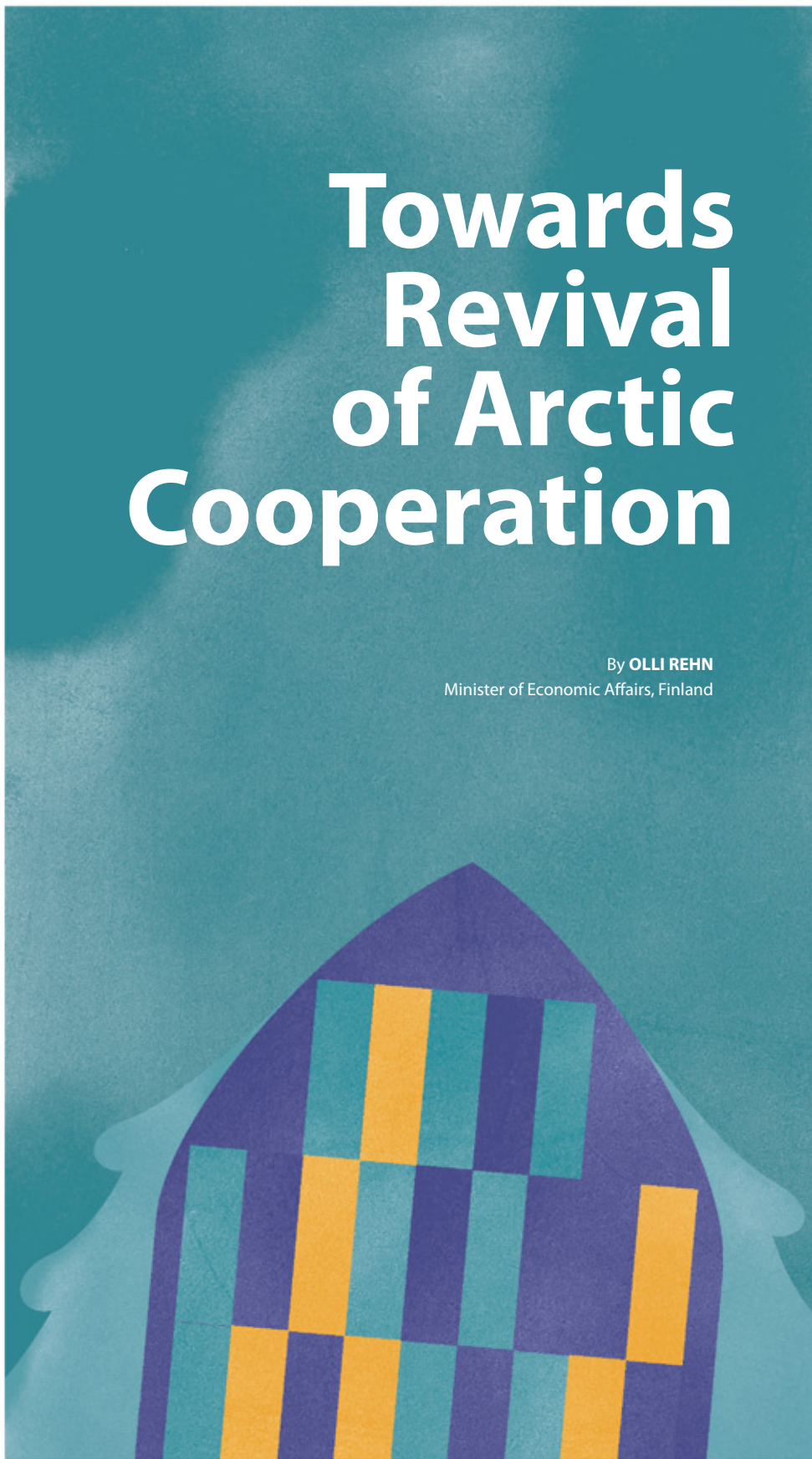
However, from a biological research or recreational point of view the accessibility is invaluable. This is mainly due to collaboration and networks between universities, research institutes and outdoor organizations. For my own studies I got the opportunity to work on my master’s project in Abisko (in Sweden, 68 degrees north) thanks to ongoing research programs that already had a developed infrastructure.

Maybe it is a little naïve to have the cake and eat it at the same time; after all, a key part of my image was inaccessibility. But I truly believe that broad collaboration in the Arctic is important to maintain in the future. Only by gaining knowledge and by sharing this knowledge to all nations involved can we halt negative effects of the environment on international level. However, gaining this knowledge has to be done with respect to the nature and the people living in the Arctic. It is my hope that we can face these issues together and in the future still be able to enjoy the landscape and fascinating wildlife of the Arctic.



# Towards Revival of Arctic Cooperation

By **OLLI REHN**  
Minister of Economic Affairs, Finland





I believe that the Arctic region needs enhanced international cooperation more than ever, and the prospects for cooperation in the Arctic cover several fields.

In my capacity as the Minister of Economic Affairs of Finland, my focus in this article is on economic and research cooperation, as the development potential of companies and states is enormous in the Arctic region.

The Paris climate agreement in December 2015 is a historic achievement. This is the case particularly for the Arctic, which is not only a home for four million people but also a key player and stakeholder in the combat for a sustainable future. The Arctic has undergone and will undergo a substantial transformation due to globalization and environmental changes. This rapid transformation stems mainly from the abundant natural resources of the Arctic, both renewable and non-renewable. The other driver is climate change and the melting of the polar ice sheet, which opens possibilities for new transport routes. This has great strategic global influence.

Finland's national Arctic strategy positions us as an Arctic country with clear goals and responsibilities to which we want to contribute and see progress. Moreover, the strategy looks at the region not only from a political but also from an economic perspective. It also defines Finland as an Arctic state as a whole.

An important part of cooperation in the North is the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in which Finland just transferred presidency to the Russian Federation. The objectives – sustainable development and political stability in the Barents region – remain relevant today.

It is estimated that the oil reserves in the Arctic can last until the end of this century, and gas reserves even longer. Mineral deposits are rich and can create incentives for developing new technology in underwater mining, for example. Under suitable circumstances the Arctic region can develop into an investment area that will create prosperity for people and companies for years to come.

The announced investment plans in the region are already significant. The current investments plans in the Barents region alone are estimated to be over 140 billion euros.

Safe shipping in the long icy Arctic routes is a powerful eye-opener to show how crucial cooperation between different companies, organizations, services and states really is. We often think that icebreakers are the key to safe passage in icy conditions, but this is only the tip of the iceberg in safe navigation. I am proud to mention that Finland has built 60 percent of all the icebreakers in the world. The newest one, still in the shipyard, will be equipped with environmentally friendly LNG dual fuel engines.

To harness the full potential of the Arctic region, we need to get the infrastructure right. For instance, data traffic between Europe and Asia is growing steadily. Digitalization, cloud services and the Internet of Things will further boost the need for a fast and secure connection. Plans for laying a cable in the seabed of the Northeast Passage have been brewing during the past decade, and Finland supports this concept.

Operating in the Arctic benefits from the broad international cooperation in research and development. As an innovation and knowledge-based economy, Finland has a lot to offer in this regard. For example,

Photo Sakari Piippo / Prime Minister's Office



the Academy of Finland's Arctic Academy Programme (ARKTIKO, 2014–2018) aims to study and understand the change factors affecting the development of the Arctic region, the transformation process and the dynamics of change. The Arctic Seas programme by Tekes, the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation, aims to develop essential business areas, such as marine technology, marine transport, offshore solutions and environmental technologies.

In light of recent geopolitical developments, the aim of the Arctic Council to restore peace and constructive cooperation in the region is more than welcome. We should not miss the potential for the sustainable future of the Arctic, and Finland is willing to do her share – not least as the incoming chair of the Arctic Council.

Finland may be a small country by some standards, but our knowledge and experience in Arctic issues makes us larger than we seem. In the words of Iceland's first female president, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, "There is no such thing as a small nation." We must think big and act big in the Arctic issues, together with our partners.



*The Arctic Economic Council:*

# Connecting with the Business Community

By TARA SWEENEY  
Chair, Arctic Economic Council

**In just a few short years, the Arctic region has exploded in popularity and is recognized as the largest emerging market opportunity on the globe. The eyes of the world are looking north, with massive interest in gaining a foothold in this growing and increasingly accessible region.**

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Photo: Mia Bennett



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his amplified interest and attention carries with it additional responsibility; it also brings incredible opportunity.

That is why,

through many years of discussion and negotiations, the Arctic Council formed the Arctic Economic Council (AEC) in 2014, a move that has served as a hallmark of the Canadian chairmanship. During the time of the US chairmanship, through 2017, the AEC will focus on four key areas that include maritime and telecommunication infrastructure, responsible energy and economic development in the Arctic, the promotion of stable and predictable regulatory frameworks, and Arctic stewardship. The AEC is governed by a 42-member board of directors from the eight Arctic states and six permanent participant organizations.

**“This is a region with the greatest resource available to any potential investor: local perspective, knowledge and insight.”**

The AEC sets the table for the Arctic business community to have a meaningful voice in the responsible and sustainable economic growth of our homelands. The underlying principles for the creation of the AEC were to create a new independent forum of business representatives to facilitate Arctic business-to-business activities, promote responsible economic development, and provide a pan-Arctic business perspective to the work of the Arctic Council. Its purpose also includes facilitating responsible trade and investment in the Arctic through collaborative environments that bring together financial experts and potential investors. The advantages and benefits may be local, but the AEC is designed to be a resource for Arctic as well as non-Arctic stakeholders.

Businesses need certainty and regulatory stability in order to minimize their risks while pursuing projects or investing in the Arctic. Dealing directly with the closest stakeholders during this process helps to provide that assurance. The most strategic vehicle for incentivizing short and long-term investment in the Arctic is to partner with those who will share in the results and responsibility. This is a region with the greatest resource available to any potential investor: local perspective, knowledge and insight. The value of local alignment is often overlooked and is therefore a focus of the AEC.

When you see the other themes of focus, the balance of AEC’s mission becomes clear:

1. Establish strong market connections between the Arctic states
2. Encourage public-private partnerships for infrastructure investments
3. Create stable and predictable regulatory frameworks
4. Facilitate knowledge and data exchange between industry and academia
5. Support traditional indigenous knowledge

However, our communities cannot connect with opportunity if they are not well-connected. Reliable high-speed broadband in our regions remains a priority for the AEC and would enable Arctic governments to deliver improved health and education services, spur economic development, empower local businesses, and allow consumers access to video and other high-speed applications. The current lack of high-speed internet service within large areas of the Arctic impedes progress, from environmental protection in our communities to even emergency preparedness.

The AEC is supported by the pillars of collaboration, partnership, innovation and peace, and as the current chair, I look forward to building momentum in the Arctic in order for our regions to realize their enormous economic potential.



The Arctic Council has established two key circumpolar international organizations through their Ministerial Declarations. The 1998 Iqaluit Declaration established the University of the Arctic, while the 2015 Iqaluit Declaration established the Arctic Economic Council.

**The First Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council**

**The Iqaluit Declaration 1998**

11. **Welcome**, and are **pleased to announce**, the establishment of a University of the Arctic, a university without walls, as proposed by 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;

**On the occasion of the Ninth Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council**

**The Iqaluit Declaration 2015**

8. **Welcome** the establishment of the Arctic Economic Council, and **look forward** to developing a cooperative relationship with this body in order to increase responsible economic development for the benefit of the people of the Arctic,

It was quite an achievement that the Arctic indigenous peoples got a seat as permanent participants at the table; first at the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), which then developed into the Arctic Council with the mandate to discuss environmental protection and sustainable development. The Arctic indigenous peoples welcomed this initiative, and today, could you even imagine what the Arctic Council would be without the indigenous peoples? The Arctic Council is unique. It is the only forum in the world where the indigenous peoples and the states sit at the same table.

The Senior Arctic Officials' (SAO) meetings are all organized in small communities in the Arctic. Travelling to these meetings is a reminder for all of us that the Council is built on the well-being of the people of the North. Every visit to an Arctic community is teaching us that the Arctic is not one but different places with varied population and various needs and priorities related to sustainable development.

The Arctic Council is sometimes accused of being ineffective, with most of the time spent talking and agreeing on irrelevant matters. Our colleagues ask what exactly

we are doing in the SAO meetings. Do we need a separate forum just to agree and be friends with Arctic states and indigenous peoples? Is the main objective environmental and climate issues or peace and love in the Arctic?

Such questions relate to what appears to be the most effective form of international cooperation, namely the treaty-based cooperation where the strongest voice is heard and disagreements are resolved by majority vote. Such cooperation might polarize disagreements and not give room to build consensus. The decision-making process in the Arctic Council is



LOVE & PEACE

By **ELSE BERIT EIKELAND**, Senior Arctic Official, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway and  
**GUNN-BRITT RETTER**, Head of the Arctic and Environment Unit, Saami Council



inspired and modeled after the indigenous consultations with extensive dialogue until an agreement is reached. Such processes can be demanding, but there are no clear winners or losers. We all move to a new understanding. The strength of consensus is the power behind the decision.

Strengthening and further developing the Arctic Council should be based on this consensus-based decision-making process. To answer the questions above: yes, the Arctic Council is about the environment and climate change and promoting sustainable development in a changing Arctic. In addition, the Arctic Council is about building trust and cooperation between all key stakeholders in the Arctic. Fundamentally, the Arctic Council is about peace and love. That is why it is worth celebrating.

## ALFA DRÖFN JÓHANNSDÓTTIR ICELAND

The Arctic covers a wide range of issues that are highly important to Iceland, concerning the environment, sustainable and responsible use of natural resources just as well as social development in the area. Maybe it comes as no surprise that ocean and marine affairs interest me highly as I come from Iceland – but the changes in the social scenery in the midst of the rapid political, economic and cultural changes taking place are the most important in my opinion. Well-being, human rights and cultural heritage tend to score low on the spectrum of priorities vis-à-vis the horn of plenty which has resulted in a scramble for natural resources or in some cases a race between states. These changes have consequences all over the world, and as the changes happening in the Arctic serve as a warning sign for the rest of the world, it's pressing to think of the local residents' rights in all this – in order to lead by example.

One of the challenges facing the the Arctic Council is to preserve the unity and harmony between the member states, to ensure full participation by all eight Arctic states in all decisions. It's going to be challenging to develop collaboration with the growing number of observers, which is a clear indication of how important the Arctic has become in international eyes.

One might ask why we, who belong to one of the wealthiest nations of the world, live with constant periodic overthrowing of the economy with asset prices collapsing, inflation soaring through the roof and the currency collapsing. Yet, we are considered to be in top positions in comparison with other countries in terms of prosperity, happiness, equality and social security. We have diverse employment opportunities and strong natural resources. We have health care, strong educational system and ambitious cultural standing. The Icelandic population is over 300,000, and a little over 200,000 live in or near the capital area. It is a huge challenge for the rural areas in Iceland to keep the traditional practices alive. The rural communities that have depended primarily on fishing and agriculture have to adapt to changing sceneries like so many other in the Arctic, which has resulted in too many rural communities being abandoned.

The Arctic Council is the most important consultative forum on all Arctic issues, and it has to be open to all. As the island's first inhabitants, Icelanders are in a way also 'indigenous', and that to me is worth a whole lot. It makes us strong and resilient. It makes us stand up for ourselves and gives us courage when we need it the most. It makes us better at adapting to changing landscapes and lives. When push comes to shove we stand together – and now more than ever we need to do just that.



Working Inside the Arctic Council:

# ARCTIC CHANGE AND WORLD REINDEER HERDERS

By **MIKHAIL POGODAEV**, Chair, Association of World Reindeer Herders and  
**ANDERS OSKAL**, Director, International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry

In collaboration with **INGER ANITA SMUK**, **JOHAN MATHIS TURI**,  
**HELENA OMMA** and **ELLEN INGA TURI**

**R**eindeer herding is a circumpolar phenomenon, found in ten states across the Circumpolar North. It represents traditional, nomadic ways of life for 24 different indigenous peoples across the Arctic, and involves close to 100,000 people in all. Reindeer herding peoples follow their reindeer, while engaging in a diversity of traditional activities including hunting, fishing and gathering. Reindeer herding thus represents a diversity of nomadic Arctic livelihoods and cultures, joined together by the utilization of domesticated reindeer.

Association of World Reindeer Herders (WRH) is the international organization for reindeer herding peoples. The history of our international collaboration started back in 1990. WRH is a Civil Society Organization (CSO), representing Arctic indigenous peoples; it is an organization working for reindeer herders, composed of reindeer herders, benefitting reindeer herders' societies. We represent 25 years of history of transboundary people-to-people cooperation between pan-Arctic indigenous peoples.

Arctic change, globalization and our dependence on Arctic nature are key factors why the Arctic Council is decisive for our peoples' sustainable futures. →







## The History of Reindeer Herding and the Arctic Council

During the first US chairmanship, Norway and other Arctic Council members recognized world reindeer herding as significant for the Arctic, yet not represented in the Council. Thus by Norway's initiative WRH became an observer in 2000.

This meant that also reindeer herding issues were lifted into the international agenda, in a time of rapid Arctic change. It resulted in the first Arctic Council reindeer herding projects, highlighting the state of world reindeer husbandry and reindeer food processing. WRH also contributed substantially to the Council's Arctic Climate Impact Assessment report.

These efforts led to the establishment of International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry (ICR) in 2005, following Norway's offer to the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Iceland in 2004 to host and fund the Centre. This capacity building has aided WRH's initiation of further Arctic Council reindeer herding projects, positively engaging states and permanent participants, including SDWG/IPY EALÁT-EALLIN-EALLU and CAFF Nomadic Herders. This further assists our contribution to assessments, reports, task forces and other work, and ICR is regarded as an important contributor to knowledge production in the Arctic Council.

## Towards Our Future

Our horizon shows a future that is very challenging in terms of Arctic change. The current international situation also adds to this.

The Arctic Council is, however, a pioneer in including indigenous reindeer herders and their traditional knowledge, providing us room for improving our own communities and well-being. The Arctic Council has managed to reach into and inform small pan-Arctic reindeer herding communities, giving voice

to local indigenous peoples and our traditional knowledge, facilitating education (in cooperation with UArctic), and providing unique opportunities for our youth. World reindeer herders today know about and count on the Arctic Council.

As the Arctic Council is celebrating its history, we remain dedicated to take active part, to contribute, to consult, and positively impact its work to the best of our ability – for the benefit of the Arctic peoples.







## Projects with the Arctic Council

Arctic Council/IPY EALÁT:  
**Reindeer Herding,  
 Traditional Knowledge  
 and Adaptation to  
 Climate Change and  
 Loss of Pastures**  
 (2007-2011)

**Leads / Co-Leads**  
 Norway, Russia, Saami Council,  
 RAIPON. Project managed by WRH  
 and ICR. Sustainable Development  
 Working Group (SDWG)

**Focus**  
 Increased understanding of  
 impacts of climate change, loss of  
 pastures and adaptation options.  
 Circumpolar community-based  
 workshops and seminars. Being  
 “the voice of reindeer herding  
 peoples” to the Arctic Council,  
 defining examples of traditional  
 knowledge use in adaptation to  
 change.

**Legacy**  
 Establishment of the UArctic EALÁT  
 Institute as a human legacy of IPY  
 and SDWG.

Arctic Council EALLIN:  
**Reindeer Herding Youth**  
 (2012-2015).

**Leads / Co-Leads**  
 Russia, Norway, Saami Council,  
 UArctic and others. Project  
 managed by ICR and WRH (co-lead  
 by indigenous youth themselves).  
 Sustainable Development Working  
 Group (SDWG)

**Focus**  
 Being “the voice of reindeer  
 herding youth” on challenges  
 and opportunities of a changing  
 Arctic, including on human health,  
 Arctic change and globalization,  
 technology, management, economy  
 and capacity building.  
 UArctic Training of Future  
 Arctic Leaders program, for 160  
 circumpolar indigenous youth.  
 Competence and confidence  
 building for indigenous youth.

**Legacy**  
 Establishment of the Arctic  
 Indigenous Peoples Culinary  
 Institute, under the direction of  
 indigenous youth.

Arctic Council EALLU:  
**Indigenous Youth, Climate  
 Change and Food Culture**  
 (Ongoing, 2015-2019)

**Leads / Co-Leads**  
 Norway, USA, Russian Federation,  
 Canada, Greenland, Saami Council.  
 Project managed by ICR and WRH  
 (co-lead by indigenous youth).  
 Involving UArctic. Sustainable  
 Development Working Group  
 (SDWG)

**Focus**  
 Utilizing Arctic indigenous peoples’  
 traditional knowledge on food  
 and culinary traditions as a novel  
 approach to adapt to Arctic change.  
 Education and training programs,  
 an Arctic Council Cookbook,  
 documentation of traditional  
 knowledge, regional community-  
 based workshops and seminars.

Arctic Council  
 NOMADIC HERDERS Project:  
**Enhancing the Resilience  
 of Pastoral Ecosystems  
 and Livelihoods**  
 (In preparation, 2012-)

**Leads / Co-Leads**  
 Norway, Russia, Saami Council. AC  
 project parts managed by ICR and  
 WRH. Conservation of Arctic Flora  
 and Fauna Working Group (CAFF).  
 UNEP Endorsement

**Focus**  
 Protection of biodiversity and  
 development of reindeer herding  
 livelihoods in the taiga areas of  
 Sakha Republic, Russia. The project  
 is ready for startup, currently  
 awaiting funding clarifications.



OBSERVER STATES IN THE ARCTIC COUNCIL:

# A WAY FORWARD TO BETTER COOPERATION

By **JUSTIN (JONG DEOG) KIM**Director General of Strategy Research Division,  
Korea Maritime Institute

**C**urrently the Arctic Council observers consist of 32 non-Arctic states, international organizations, interparliamentary organizations and NGOs, which is more than twice the number of Arctic Council member states and permanent participants combined. Of those, twelve are observer states: seven European and five Asian. The Asian nations first obtained observer status in 2013, seventeen years after the inception of the Arctic Council. With the accession to the Arctic Council as observers by states located in the Far East of the Eurasian continent and on the coast of the Northwest Pacific, such as China, Japan, and Korea, a Northern Seas Network was formed, connecting the North Atlantic, the Arctic Ocean and the North Pacific.

The Arctic encompasses all political, economic, social, environmental and climate change-related challenges facing the global community. There are international political issues at play among states, vast potential for economic development, indigenous peoples' ways of living that need be respected, an attractive natural environment, and the fact that the Arctic is at the forefront of climate change

effects. All of these challenges cannot be said to be the sole responsibility of any single Arctic state, and it is clear that Arctic states cannot overcome those challenges by themselves alone. Making up 44% of the world's population (about 3.2 billion), the economic and ecological imprint of the observer states is significant, which makes their involvement, and that of the entire global community, in solving the broad challenges confronting





the Arctic region crucial. This requires active participation and promotion of understanding among the Arctic states and observers, which could be better facilitated if a well-organized plan was in place that allowed for the utilization of observers' capabilities.

However, the Arctic Council's Rules of Procedure and the Observer Manual for Subsidiary Bodies only generally outlines the role of observers, and unfortunately does not provide for a specific action plan, such as procedures and follow-up measures for promoting and making use of observer participation. A more transparent and reasonable model for observer involvement could be devised if the above-mentioned shortcomings were complemented, and more specificity was provided.

Furthermore, the positive role of observer state participation could become more apparent if such projects are devised that enable the utilization of observer states' capabilities, such as experience in polar science and observation, research icebreakers and scientific research stations. In addition, historically, the Arctic region has developed alongside the subarctic region through sharing culture and traditions, but now there is little way of promoting social understanding between the two regions through the means of culture. Exchanges between the Arctic and non-Arctic future generations are particularly limited. Recently through the University of the Arctic (UArctic) such needed exchange was begun. The Korea Maritime Institute, a non-Arctic member of UArctic since 2014, and the UArctic International Secretariat launched the first Korea Arctic Academy (KAA) in August 2015. Eleven students from seven Arctic states, including six indigenous students from Finland, Canada, Russia and Greenland, and nineteen Korean students and young researchers participated in the pilot program, becoming the "KAA 1<sup>st</sup> 30". Through this opportunity, they had the chance to introduce their cultures to each other, and share challenges and possible solutions facing the Arctic region. Visits to Arctic-related institutions in Korea also showcased Korea's capabilities as an Arctic Council observer state and our willingness to cooperate.

Going forward, observers should actively seek ways to more reasonably participate in the Arctic Council, contribute in scientific research, promote cultural understanding, and contribute in sharing visions among future generations. I am sure these efforts will help establish a solid foundation for better cooperation in the Arctic.



Photo Lawrence Hislop



**Just two weeks ago, I was checking the temperature of Rovaniemi in Finland, which was the destination of my forthcoming trip. It was to be around -3°C during that week. I laughed, “Wow, it’s not so cold in the Arctic!”**

I continued my regular habit of reading news on the Arctic and saw that the town of Mohe, in northernmost China, was as cold as -57°C in mid-November. It was a really interesting coincidence and contrast at that moment, reminding me that some places in China are sometimes colder than the Arctic.

China is deeply affected by climate change, and at the same time becoming the world’s largest emitter of carbon dioxide. As the early alarm for global climate change, the Arctic is currently suffering the most dramatic warming on the globe. Linkages between China and the Arctic have increased in recent years, especially after China became an observer of the Arctic Council. Many policymakers and experts in China have interests in climate change, scientific research, maritime shipping in the Arctic, for example. However, even with that very few ordinary Chinese people have much knowledge about the Arctic.

During the years of my Arctic research, I’ve also been observing the relationship between the Arctic and China, through attending international conferences and academic communication with Arctic scholars and members. Since 2013 when China became an observer at the Arctic Council, I delightfully discovered that the opinions on the Arctic from Chinese media and cyber citizens were not as shallow anymore. Many officials and scholars talked about respect, responsibility, environmental protection and international collaboration. In the meantime, several scholars from Arctic countries told me they used to have much doubt and suspicion towards China’s attitude and activities in the Arctic, but they have changed their mind in recent years. They even sincerely told me they think the central government should clearly announce China’s Arctic policy or publish a paper as soon as possible, which would much more transparently clarify China’s attitude to the Arctic with positive effect.

THE ARCTIC:

# A PLACE FOR THE MIRACULOUS

By **CHEN YITONG**, Student Representative of Board of Governors of UArctic, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Polar and Deep Ocean Development Centre, Koguan Law School, Shanghai Jiao Tong University





I see the Arctic as a place for the miraculous. No other international organization besides the Arctic Council recognizes indigenous people as permanent participants. Outside the Arctic, I see no region with so many soft laws working effectively and being obeyed by so many countries. I also witness the transformation from soft into “hard” laws, with binding agreements on oil spills and search and rescue. While the phenomenon of fragmentation of international law obviously occurs in the Arctic, we see new traditions and innovations in international law and governance. With the Arctic Council and its parallel frameworks like UNCLOS I believe the Arctic miracle will continue.

Photo Peter Prokosch / GRID-Arendal, [http://www.grida.no/photo/lib/detail/rovanieni-airport-in-cold-winter-finland-where-to-go-from-here\\_da67](http://www.grida.no/photo/lib/detail/rovanieni-airport-in-cold-winter-finland-where-to-go-from-here_da67)

## CAITLYN BAIKIE CANADA

The Arctic has been growing in importance on the global scale in the past decade for various reasons such as climate change and the growth, development and opportunities seen by nations that an ice-free Arctic would present. The Arctic is also seeing social changes amongst the people who call it home, including Inuit, the culture I identify with. For millennia we have relied on the seasonal freeze and thaw in the Arctic for survival and cultural preservation. As a youth of the Canadian Arctic, this is what I worry about the most for the future of the Arctic, and not only for its people but for humanity as a whole. Many headlines are published daily about the vanishing Arctic ice, and mentions of what is being done in research to monitor these changes, but where is the dialogue about Arctic people and their changing livelihoods?

When decision makers, researchers and those interested in the Arctic discuss what is important for the future of the Arctic, it is essential that the dialogue and terminology is not solely research focused. We have spent decades collecting, reporting and publishing climate data. While it is still vital to a healthy future, I and many other circumpolar indigenous people believe that you cannot talk about environmental changes and impacts without realizing what it means to people’s health, cultural survival and identity. It should be and is indeed the same conversation to me and others who call the Arctic home.

Environmental research alone will not be enough to influence the changes needed to sustain the Arctic. The Arctic needs more research focused on the impacts of major climatic changes to its people, in collaboration with its people. At my university, Memorial University of Newfoundland, I have been a part of collaborative research projects focused on the subarctic environment and how to mitigate health impacts brought on by inadequate infrastructure. This collaborative research alone has had positive results, because it incorporated data and the perspectives, needs and concerns of the people it was impacting.

The same can be said about other tables. Until you incorporate indigenous and Arctic perspectives to any discussion about our Arctic, you will not be honoring the voices that matter the most in the Arctic. To achieve success in the Arctic today and in the future, collaboration and opportunities provided to youth such as this one – to write, to share and to hopefully impact how the Arctic is viewed on the global scale – will contribute positively to Arctic futures.



**ALEXANDRIA GRIEPP**

## THE UNITED STATES

At my home institute Iisagvik College in Barrow, Alaska, I am currently finishing my science degree in allied health and applying to programs within the US to obtain my Bachelor of Nursing to work within the vicinity of Barrow and its surrounding villages. I have been living in Barrow (which is located within the Arctic) for about five years, and have become adapted and have learned so much about the culture of the people who live in that area, and also just how precious the Arctic is.

In January 2014, I embarked on a north2north exchange to the University of Tromsø in Alta, Norway. I learned how to cross-country ski, cook Norwegian food, camp in the frigid outdoors, and learned about the importance of *friluftsliv*. This term literally translates to “open-air life”, and it taught me the importance of embracing nature and how to enjoy it as a way of life. In August 2015, I embarked on another journey to the Korea Arctic Academy in Busan, South Korea. It was a week-long trip, and I learned so much about the Korean culture and how the Korea Maritime Institute partners with many maritime institutes of their area and others.

Through these two excursions and living in the Arctic, I have come to recognize the importance of renewable energy and the real truth about global warming and its impacts on the Arctic and the Earth. This is very important for me since I am more mindful about my own expenditures on the environment. I am always advocating and educating others any moment that I can about the importance of recycling, energy consumption and just researching about being more “green” all around.

It seems many people of my generation are becoming more accustomed to the changes within the Arctic and the Earth. I believe everybody should play their part in the conservation efforts for lessening the impact of global warming. My hopes for the Arctic collaboration are to continue the ongoing research of climate change and to always be exploring new ideas for renewable energy so we can have a healthy Earth for decades to come.



## THE ARCTIC COUNCIL ADAPTING TO THE FUTURE

By **ARILD MOE**, Senior Research Fellow and **SVEIN VIGELAND ROTTEM**, Senior Research Fellow, Programme Director and **OLAV SCHRAM STOKKE**, Research Professor, Fridtjof Nansen Institute

**T**he Arctic Council is now the most important international forum specifically addressing Arctic affairs. The establishment of a permanent secretariat in Tromsø, Norway has raised its political visibility and increased its capacity for further advances.

The Council’s strength is derived from its roles as a knowledge producer and agenda setter as well as from its ability to include, represent and empower relevant stakeholders. Its ability to form a platform for negotiating binding agreements between the member states has further increased its significance. These various roles and qualities must be maintained and elaborated as the world faces new challenges in a changing Arctic, and as the Council expands its scope of activities.

Four aspects of this process deserve particular attention:



## Participation

The larger number of participants active in the Council's work spurs broader expectations for influence as well as tangible results. The Council must ensure that it benefits from the aspirations of new participants and the resources they offer by improving conditions for their engagement. It should take a dynamic approach to the structuring of instruments and measures, including how it organizes and defines the responsibilities of the working groups, and enable the financing and co-financing of projects by non-members to a much larger extent than today.

## Representation

By including a broader set of stakeholders in its work, the Council has responded to a growing need for integration between regional and global agendas. However, bringing in non-Arctic stakeholders is not enough. The Council should ensure that the Arctic dimension is properly represented in all relevant international conferences.

**“The Council’s strength is derived from its roles as a knowledge producer and agenda setter.”**

## Information

The Council must develop a more coherent information strategy, exploiting the full potential of its secretariat. This strategy should ensure that scientific knowledge produced in the working groups and elsewhere is communicated in formats that maximize its relevance to the Council meetings, supporting the action-oriented policy debates. An information strategy should also target the international community with quality information in an accessible format, additional to the scientific reporting from the Council's bodies.

## Implementation

The Council needs to improve its efforts to stimulate the implementation of commitments taken on by members. This includes more meaningful reporting on how Arctic Council policy recommendations and guidelines, as well as agreements negotiated under the Council, have influenced the conduct of authorities, communities and industries. Procedures for such systematic follow-up of Council commitments can build on existing experiences, also at the working group level, with regular reporting on substantive implementation.

The Arctic has undergone a political renaissance with an emphasis on cooperation rather than conflict, which is why the Council is perceived as a highly relevant arena by all Arctic states, permanent participants, non-Arctic states and other stakeholders. To ensure that this position is maintained, its structures and procedures must constantly be perfected and adapted to changes in the region as well as to the aspirations of its stakeholders.

**Despite its soft law status and limited organizational capacity, the Arctic Council has proven more successful than most of us present at its creation in 1996 anticipated.**

**W**hat are the sources of this success? What are the prospects for the future in a rapidly changing Arctic that is linked more and more tightly to the global system? Are there ways to improve the Council's performance going forward?

The key to the success of the Council lies in its generative role. It has performed well in identifying emerging Arctic issues (eg impacts of persistent organic pollutants, challenges to social welfare), framing them for public consideration, and moving them up on the Arctic policy agenda. In the process, the Council has played an influential role in developing a policy discourse highlighting the Arctic as a distinct region that has emerged as a zone of international peace and sustainability. These are formidable accomplishments for a body that lacks the authority to make formal decisions, much less the capacity to implement them.



# THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE ARCTIC COUNCIL

By **ORAN R. YOUNG**

Professor Emeritus, University of California, Santa Barbara



What then lies ahead for the Council during an era in which global forces loom large as determinants of the fate of the Arctic? Prominent among these are environmental challenges (eg greenhouse gas emissions), economic swings (eg world market prices of hydrocarbons), and geopolitical shifts (eg the rise of China, the renewal of geopolitical tensions). The Council has little capacity to influence, much less to control, these forces. Yet, it would be wrong to conclude that the Arctic Council has been overtaken by events, so that we will look back and see it as a mechanism that proved useful in the aftermath of the Cold War but was marginalized by increasingly powerful global forces as we move deeper into the 21st century.

The way forward is to embrace the Council's generative role and adapt it to the challenges of the next phase. The Arctic remains a zone of peace, despite initiatives that some see as provocative. We do, however, need a narrative that clarifies and explains the peacefulness of the Arctic as a region, while acknowledging shifts in the deployment of military forces and initiatives involving new infrastructure driven largely by domestic considerations. Similarly, the Arctic has the potential to become a showcase for sustainability in a human-dominated world, but this will also require the development of a new discourse, one that builds on the idea of stewardship as the key to sustainable human-environment

relations. It may also require adjustments in the Council's organization to emphasize the pursuit of sustainability as the paramount goal.

None of this requires transforming the Council into a 'normal' intergovernmental organization. It would be a mistake to try to do so. However, it does highlight the importance of setting priorities strategically and framing all major initiatives as contributions to the exemplary role of the Arctic as a zone of peace and sustainability.



**“The Arctic Council  
is a model for global  
governance, and it is only  
getting started.”**

Heather Exner-Pirot