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CONFERENCE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

**MEETING IN STOCKHOLM**

3 March 2016

Venue: The Riksdag,

Address: Mynttorget 1, Meeting room: Skandiasalen

**Draft minutes, Stockholm**

1. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND THE PROPOSED ORDER OF AGENDA**

**ITEMS**

Decision:

The Committee adopted the agenda and the proposed order of agenda items for the SCPAR meeting.

1. **APPROVAL OF DRAFT MINUTES FROM THE SCPAR-MEETING IN**

**STRASBOURG, 16-17 DECEMBER 2015**

Decision:

The Committee approved the minutes from the SCPAR-meeting in Strasbourg, 16-17 December 2015.

1. **PRESENTATION OF THE SWEDISH ARCTIC POLICY**

Mr. Andrés Jato, Swedish Senior Arctic Official representing the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, presented the Swedish Arctic strategy to the Committee.

Ambassador Jato started out by emphasizing the importance of peace, stability and respect for international law in the Arctic.

Mr Jato moved on to how climate change will destroy living conditions for local communities and its influence on the global climate. The Arctic states have a special responsibility in mitigating global warming. The current chair of the Arctic Council, the USA, has climate change as one of the priorities of the Chairmanship, with strong support from Sweden.

Economic development in the Arctic is important but needs to be environmentally sustainable. Sweden will arrange a national conference on the Arctic in April 2016 and one theme will be business opportunities in the North.

Decision:

The Committee took note of the information.

1. **ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVES ON ARCTIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

Political adviser at the Ministry of the Environment and Energy, Dr Fredrik Hannerz presented the “Swedish environmental policy for the Arctic” from January 2016.

Mr Hannerz noted the climate change is very serious in the Arctic and according IPCC it can get up to 10 degrees warmer in the Arctic by 2100. This is a global concern as climate change in the Arctic will have global effects.

There are three overall priorities in the policy are:

1. Stronger climate efforts
2. Better protection of biodiversity and ecosystems
3. Sustainable use of resources

There is a need for stronger climate efforts after COP 21.Success on the global level is most important for the Arctic and curbing Arctic climate change. The Arctic states have a special responsibility and need to show leadership as they are both large emitters and experience the results of climate change. It should be a joint effort to communicate the effects of climate change in the Arctic to the larger international community.

Better protection of ecosystems and biodiversity, also through Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), should build on the work already going on in the Arctic Council.

Sustainable use of natural resources entails that oil and gas extraction needs to be restricted, as most resources need to stay in the ground. Where developed the highest possible safety and security measures must be applied.

Sweden supports the work in the ongoing process regarding future commercial fishing in the central Arctic Ocean.

Joint Q and A for agenda item 3 and 4.

On the question of what the concrete steps for Sweden to get rid of fossil fuels are, Mr Hannerz said that there are no more fossil fuel in heating in Sweden, and that they are now working towards the transport sector. A parliamentary committee will soon present a report on long term reduction of emissions and climate objectives for Sweden. New climate legislation is expected as a result of the report.

On a question regarding balancing industrial development and protection of the environment, ambassador Jato noted that the Arctic is a region where people live and societies must be developed on the basis of all three pillars of sustainability.

On the effects of climate change for reindeers, changing vegetation and more ice-layers (as the result of melting and freezing) on the ground were mentioned as challenges.

Sweden aims at being fossil free in 2050 but this target could be strengthened. For vehicles the aim is 2030. Nuclear power will be phased out.

As tourism is relatively green Sweden will develop this industry.

All proposed activities in the Arctic strategy and the environmental policy will take place within the existing international legal framework.

Decision:

The Committee took note of the information.

1. **PRESENTATION OF SWEDISH ARCTIC RESEARCH**

Dr. Magnus Augner, PhD, Deputy Director-General, Swedish Polar Research Secretariat, introduced the Committee to current Arctic research activities in Sweden.

Mr Augner noted that Arctic is very sensitive to climate change, and presented the “SWERUS-C3, 2014” project and “Petermann, 2015” project. The first project focused on the release of climate gasses from subsea permafrost.

CO2 and methane are drivers of climate change, with large methane emissions from thawing permafrost.

As field studies are expensive international cooperation is necessary. There is a need to collaborate on research and on a practical level.

Mr Augner further introduced the Abisko Scientific Research station in Northern Sweden which hosts 400 field scientists yearly and less than 200 of those are Swedish.

On question from the Committee Mr. Augner noted that it is an advantage with studies in different places, at the same time, and on the same topic.

It was noted that the sanction regime towards Russia is not intended to include environmental cooperation. A member of the committee reported of decreased cooperation between scientists in the Arctic countries.

Mr Augner noted the need to improve the work on national climate adaptation strategies and strengthen the international cooperation on this topic.

In the future we need to cooperate closer internationally and to a larger extent look at the facilities for research in the Arctic as common resources, with a network of bilateral agreements of cooperation.

Finally Mr Augner noted that the ocean large storage capacity of CO2, as well as the forest, but that we now emit too much CO2 in a short time period for nature to absorb.

Decision:

The Committee took note of the information.

1. **UPDATE ON THE WORK ON THE ARCTIC RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT IN THE ARCTIC COUNCIL**

Dr Marcus Carson, a Senior Research Fellow at Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), updated the Committee on the work on Arctic Resilience Assessment in the Arctic Council.

The work on resilience is a Swedish/US lead project which started in 2011 and with the final report to be presented in September 2016.

The “takes a licking and keeps on ticking” – slogan describes resilience in a good way.

Social and ecological resilience can be described as the “bounce back capacity” of the system, the ability to take on new information to set a new future course.

The resilience report identifies 18 potential thresholds for the Arctic, including Arctic sea-ice loss and fisheries collapse.

The drivers are multiple and they interact. Some are predictable and some are harder to track. Putting them together is complex as some of the drivers combined result in new drivers.

The report identifies drivers, followed by regime shifts, and ecosystem services.

There have been 25 different case studies on how do different communities respond to environmental change. There are four key findings:

* Capacity for self-organization,
* Societal diversity,
* Knowledge resources and learning capacity,
* Orientation to change.

Resilience is fundamentally about capacity for adaptation and transformation.

A system for monitoring development with indicators will be developed.

On questions from the Committee Mr Carson identified the harvesting of new species and tourism as new opportunities following the changing environment.

The ability to self-organization is identified as the most important factor to strengthen community resilience. The communities must be able to find their own solution with support from outside, but not with too strict regulations from the central government.

The different thresholds can be close or far away. The community studies have the next 10-20 years as their perspective. Short term opportunities may not be beneficial in the long term perspective.

Decision:

The Committee took note of the information.

1. **PRESENTATION FROM THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF SWEDEN**

Ms. Erika Ingvald, Head of Department at the Geological Survey of Sweden, introduced the Committee to the work of the Geological Survey of Sweden.

The Geological Survey of Sweden is an expert agency for bedrock, soil and ground water. Natural resources (develop mining, issue permits and supervise), physical planning, geological awareness, knowledge and expertise, and research are the main areas of responsibility.

Among the challenges with developing mineral resources are: environmental issues, cyclic market, land use issues, energy supply and infrastructure.

The EU raw material initiative from 2008– Europe produces 3 % but use 20 % of the world’s raw material. Initiatives to change the balance have resulted in several national mineral strategies.

Recycling of mineral will be more important in a future circular economy and will lead to a decreasing production of minerals. We will still need mines but at some point we will have enough metal to keep recycling what we have. We need to redefine waste, waste is a resource.

Nordic countries are collaborating in different ways – internally and internationally. The Fennoscandia region is underexplored when it comes to mapping of mineral resources.

Infrastructure is important when mining, including railways, to get the product to the market.

A joint Arctic project has been to create Arctic maps showing the different resources in the region.

On question from the Committee Ms Ingvald did not look at mining in the North of Scandinavia as the most important factor in developing the railway network, but rather tourism and labor market.

Decision:

The Committee took note of the information.

1. **PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONFERENCE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION IN RUSSIA 14-17 JUNE 2016**

Mr. Michael Slipenchuk gave a thorough presentation about the conference venue and the practical arrangements for the conference.

Mr. Sivertsen noted that the Committee would have to have a closer look at the timing of some of the agenda items, but that the overall preparations were progressing very well.

The Committee decided that Sweden would be the rapporteur on agenda item 1, Canada on item 2 and Finland on item 3.

The Committee agreed on the proposed format for the Conference Statement and the deadline for amendments to the first draft is 30 April 2016.

Decision:

The rapporteurs from the Committee at CPAR 12 are: Session 1 on climate change- Sweden, Session 2 on people – Canada, and Session 3 on new opportunities – Finland.

The Committee agreed on the proposed format for the Conference Statement and 30 April as the deadline for amendments to the first draft.

1. **ELECTION OF NEW VICE-CHAIR OF SCPAR**

Decision:

The Committee elected Mr Larry Bagnell from Canada as new Vice-Chair of SCPAR.

1. **STATUS OF THE WORK OF SCPAR**

The Chair informed about the upcoming “Arctic Economic Forum” in Washington D.C. 6 April 2016 where some of the members of SCPAR will participate in a panel. All members are welcome to join the meeting.

Norway reported about the Arctic Frontiers conference which took place in Norway in January. At next year’s Arctic Frontiers the Norwegian delegation is planning to organize a side event. Norway hosted a Nordic meeting on Arctic challenges and cooperation in February 2016.

Sweden informed about a new environmental strategy which being discussed in the Swedish parliament.

The US reported of the visit of President Obama to Alaska in August 2015. In the proposed budget 150 million dollars are allocated for the prospecting of a new icebreaker.

Russia reported about a discussion to safeguard national security in the Arctic which includes an integrated system of transportation in Arctic Russia including railways, the Northern Sea Route, and port development.

A roundtable for improving legislation for the Arctic has been held in the State Duma. A new law in for the Arctic is expected to be discussed after the Duma elections in September 2016.

Finland is preparing for the AC Chairmanship from 2017 – 2019. 7 March 2016 there will be an Arctic meeting to further Arctic strategies after the midterm evaluation of the national Arctic strategy of Finland.

The European Parliament noted that the new EU Arctic strategy soon will be presented.

Denmark/Greenland informed about the establishment of a “Friends of Greenland” network in the European Parliament.

The Arctic Winter Games will commence in Nuuk 5 March.

Uranium extraction in Greenland is still a difficult topic in Greenlandic politics. A

Midterm evaluation of the Danish Arctic strategy is underway.

Canada informed about the new international Arctic research station which is ready in 2017. A new Polar Icebreakers will be ready 2022.

There is much work on housing and infrastructure development in Northern Canada, and the Government will look at the Marine Protected Areas in the Canadian Arctic and see if more should be protected.

The Secretary General represented SCPAR in two panels at the Arctic Frontiers conference in Norway in January 2016.

Decision:

The Committee took note of the information

1. **NEXT MEETING OF SCPAR**

Decision:

The next meeting of the Committee will be in Bodø 24 May 2016.

1. **PRESENTATION OF THE US CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE ARCTIC COUNCIL**

Ms Adrianna Muir, the Deputy SAO, joined the meeting via telephone from Washington D.C. to update the Committee on the work for the US Chairmanship of the Arctic Council 2015-2017.

The US Chairmanship program has three main priorities:

1. **Arctic Communities** – including renewable energy and telecommunication infrastructure.

**2. Arctic Ocean-** including Search and Rescue exercises and marine environmental protection.

**3. Arctic Climate –**including short-lived climate pollutants, adaptation and resilience.

The Chairmanship is conducting a review of observers to the Arctic Council. Finally an important part of the Chairmanship is outreach and raise awareness of the Arctic.

Decision:

The Committee took note of the information.

1. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

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**MEETING IN STOCKHOLM**

2-3 March 2016

**Draft list of participants**

MEMBERS

Canada Mr. Larry Bagnell, MP

Mr. Larry Maguire, MP

Mr. Thai Nguyen, Analyst, Parliamentary Information and Research Service, Library of Parliament

Ms. Guyanne L. Desforges, Assosiation Secretary

Denmark/Greenland Mr. Aaja Chemnitz Larsen, MP, Denmark/Greenland

Mr. Peder Pedersen, Head of Section

European Parliament Mr. Jørn Dohrmann, MEP

Ms. Amelia Padurariu, Administrator

Finland Ms. Katri Kulmuni, MP

Mr. Samu Paukkunen, Counsellor of International Affairs

Iceland Mr. Jon Gunnarsson, MP

Ms. Arna Bang, Adviser

Norway Mr. Eirik Sivertsen, MP

Russia Mr. Vladimir Torlopov, Senator

Mr. Nikolai Dankov, Counsellor

Mr. Michael Slipenchuk, MP

Ms. Irina Kuzmina, Secretary

Sweden Ms. Sara Karlson, MP

Mr. Lars Tysklind, MP

Mr. Hans Wallmark, MP

Ms. Phia Andersson, MP

Mr. Pyry Niemi, MP

Mr. Björn Söder, MP

Ms. Eva Hjelm, International adviser

Ms. Sarah Everås Sidibé, International adviser

USA Mr. Isaac Edwards, adviser

OBSERVERS

Nordic Council Mr. Steingrímur J. Sigfússon, MP, Iceland

Mr. Torkil Sørensen, Senior adviser

West-Nordic

Council Ms. Inga Dora Markussen, Secretary General

SECRETARIAT Mr. Bjørn Willy Robstad, Secretary General

GUESTSMr. Marcus Carson, PhD, Senior Research Fellow, Stockholm Environment Institute, Assoc. Professor of Sociology

Mr. Erika Ingvald, Fil Lic. The Royal Swedish Academy of Science, Member of Swedish National Committee for Geological Sciences  
Magnus Augner, PhD, Deputy Director-General, Swedish Polar Research Secretariat

Mr. Andrés Jato, Swedish Senior Arctic Official, Ministry of Foreign

Affairs

Mr. Fredrik Hannerz, Political Adviser, Ministry of Environment

Ms Kristy Plan, US Embassy

INTERPRETERS Ms. Alexandra Turganova Lööw

Mr. Alexandre Tchekhov

Arctic Council Chairmanship (2)