



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
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Report on the Arctic Council Senior Arctic Officials Meeting Yellowknife, Canada October 22nd and 23rd 2014

I attended the Arctic Council Senior Arctic Officials Meeting in Yellowknife October 22nd and 23rd 2014 as the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region's official observer. Despite a full agenda I was given time to make a presentation on the recent conference in Whitehorse, Canada focusing on the conference statement.

The following is a summary of the reporting areas which should be of significance to Arctic Parliamentarians:

- **Task Force on Black Carbon:** September meeting Iqaluit focused on a Framework Document for presentation to the Ministers. Final meeting of the Task Force is in Tromso, Norway November 17- 18th.
- **Task Force on to facilitate the Creation of a Circumpolar Business Forum:** First Meeting of the Arctic Economic Council was held on September 2-3 in Iqaluit, Canada. The council's linkage to the Arctic Council has yet to be determined, but will operate as a separate entity. Canadian businessman Tom Paddon is the chair. Main areas of focus - regulatory frameworks, traditional knowledge, stewardship of small business, market connection.
- **Task Force for Enhancing Scientific Cooperation:** Canada and Russia co chairs.
- **Task Force on Marine Oil Pollution Prevention:** the text of the final deliverable for the Ministers meeting has been agreed upon, with the next meeting in Helsinki, Finland at the end of November. The US does not support a binding agreement at this time, collaboration between the Arctic States Regulators Forum is a likely good instrument.
- **Arctic Contaminants Action Programme (ACAP) Reduction of Black Carbon:** A report was presented on wood heating appliances showing the large difference in particulate emission from traditional appliances to modern wood pellet equipment. There needs to be a Black Carbon outreach Strategy. Uniform measurement methods and emission units should be agreed on by Arctic States.

- **Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme:** The areas covered under this program are Short Lived Climate Pollutants, Human Health Assessment, Persistent Organic Pollutants, and Radioactivity Assessment.
- **Sustainable Development Working Group Promoting Traditional and Local Knowledge Arctic Adaptation Exchange:** This initiative will create an adaptation portal online to allow Arctic people and agencies to share information and best practises on adaptation to changing Arctic conditions. It is to be launched in April 2015.

US Arctic Chairmanship Plan

A very detailed presentation of the plans of the United States for its Chairmanship of the Arctic Council was made on the second day. Their Agenda was divided into three main areas:

1. Impacts of Climate Change

- The priority areas will continue with the work on the Short Term Pollutants and their need for mitigation. A second priority under this subject will be Arctic Adaptation and Resilience at a local level and a call to action to deal with the risks and vulnerability of Arctic Regions. The third area will be Embracing Arctic Climate Science, topographic modelling, freshwater movement, an Arctic indicators network for each state, development of an Arctic Observers program.

2. Stewardship of the Arctic Ocean

- The US will work on the creating a Pan-Arctic network of Marine Protected Areas with special attention to the Regional Seas program, marine environmental protection, oil spill preparedness, Arctic Coast Guard Program, public awareness efforts on Arctic Ocean Acidification.

3. Improving economic and living conditions in the Arctic

- This area will include efforts to examine renewable energy deployment and remote community partnerships for renewable energy. Community sanitation and health will also be a focus. An Arctic Water Resources Vulnerability Index, developed In Alaska will be utilized as the framework for an adaptive capacity tool kit. Fresh Water Security will be a measurable product. Work will continue on Suicide Prevention. Telecommunications Infrastructure is another subject area the US wants to concentrate on.

As well, the US will open up a public outreach campaign for its own citizens on the nature of their country as an Arctic State.

The US will also look to initiate Phase 2 of the IMO Polar Code