

participants in the Council's work. Indeed, it is difficult to image a worthwhile Arctic Council without international aboriginal participation. We would be left with yet another forum for inter-governmental cooperation, but this time for cooperation among southern-based governments for whom the Arctic broadly remains a remote concern and whose activities there are all too likely to be ill-adapted in the absence of strong northern input.

If this is what we hold to be true for international policy-making on Arctic issues, it is also true for equivalent Arctic-related activity within Canada. The implications are obvious for the Interdepartmental Committee on Circumpolar Affairs, Canada's interagency mechanism for regional policy-making which is only now beginning to move beyond departmental show and tell among less than senior officials.

A political commitment should be made to widen the basis of stakeholder participation in the Interdepartmental Committee's work, renaming the committee in the process. Mirroring Canada's conception of engagement in the Arctic Council, the new institution should become a forum for direct representation of northern and other relevant Canadian stakeholders in a transparent policy-making process keyed to sustainable development and possibly also to human security. As with the Arctic Council, the new forum would function by means of a consensual process of decision in which federal government agencies alone would state a consensus that had nevertheless been actively informed by the views of those most directly affected. Certain stakeholders would be accorded permanent participant standing in the forum -- the two territorial governments, interested provinces, the Nunavut Implementation Commission, national aboriginal associations such as the ITC, the Assembly of First Nations, the Metis Council, and the Arctic Parliamentarians Committee. Others, including interested environmental NGOs and industrial associations, would take part as observers with rights of intervention. The effect within Canada would be to create a new and potent instrument for sustainable development and human security in the circumpolar Arctic, the Canadian Arctic very much included. Somnolent interdepartmental coordination and active outreach by the Circumpolar Ambassador would be superseded by a live policy process that should energize Canadian participation in circumpolar affairs including those handled by the Arctic Council.

Internationally, the effect of Canadian innovation in Arctic policy-making would be to improve the outlook for sustainable development, and for the Arctic Council itself, by setting a precedent for the adaptation of national conduct to the particular conditions of the circumpolar North. As of now, U.S. officials are using the process of drafting rules of procedure for the Arctic Council to diminish the participation of international aboriginal associations. While there is little that Canada can do about this in a consensual negotiation, it is within our power to counter the effect of U.S. actions now and over the long haul by creating and advertising a circumpolar policy process within Canada that more than substantiates everything we have been urging on the other Arctic states.