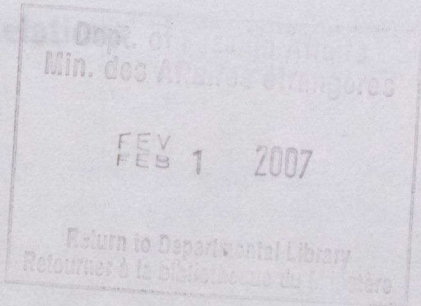


1998 National Forum on Canada's Circumpolar Relations

Whitehorse - May 9, 1998

Policy Recommendations



The federal government should review its traditional role in policy making and work towards increasing its emphasis on facilitating the links already established between circumpolar groups and regions, and fostering the growth of new relationships. The traditional top-down Ottawa driven approach needs to accommodate the uniqueness of existing and emerging relationships among circumpolar nations. In addition, the federal government should activate strategies for encouraging networks and consensus building among governments. Of particular importance is the support of circumpolar networks in the Arctic, the North Atlantic, the Arctic and the Arctic.

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The federal government should review its traditional role in policy making, which has tended to emphasize the 'strong' bilateral relations, and work towards the development of a new model of foreign policy for the Arctic. This model should emphasize joint collaboration and the participation of all parties. This approach should be characterized such areas as land claims resolution in the north, the role of the north in the development of responsibilities, and such initiatives as the Arctic Council. An essential element in this model is a 'people-to-people' approach that recognizes and embraces such elements as gender equality, cultural diversity, environmental integrity and sustainable development. Consistent with this recommendation, it is strongly recommended that the exchange of people and ideas, whether domestically or with other countries, should be an anchor for the policy process.

Northern people often feel closer to each other than to their own. Northern foreign policy should be built on the fact that this circumpolar closeness grows from common challenges (climate, border, time, geography, etc.) and the development of similar solutions to such challenges. The building and sharing of northern solutions to northern problems should be a foundation of Canada's northern foreign policy.

The federal government should take great effort to continue the CCFPD role as a first step toward embracing northern ideas in the development of northern policy. Furthermore, at the beginning of the recommendation, it is recommended that these ideas be recognized as becoming an ongoing mechanism for the future work of governments in the foreign policy development process. The traditional approach of using air missions and other forms of short term information gathering should be replaced with this more open developmental approach.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade should document its initiatives and policy development in a more 'user friendly' form. This is of particular importance in the north where there are language barriers and the current form may hinder the aims of inclusiveness, broad dialogue and understanding of policy initiatives.