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RENEWAL OF CANADA-USSR ARCTIC SCIENCE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

The first joint meeting of the Coordinating Group of the Canada-USSR Arctic Science Exchange Programme was held in Ottawa, February 23-26, 1987. It concluded with the signing of a Protocol extending the Exchange Programme for another two years. This coordinating Group was established under the terms of the Protocol of Canadian/Soviet consultations on the Development of a Programme of Scientific and Technical Cooperation in the Arctic and the North which was signed in Moscow in April 1984. Under this Protocol, exchanges are organized under four basic themes: Geoscience and Arctic Petroleum, Northern and Arctic Environment, Northern Construction, Ethnography and Education.

The primary goal of the Programme is to provide a forum for the exchange of useful scientific information. In the document Canada's International Relations-Response of the Government of Canada to the Special Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons which was tabled in the House of Commons on December 4, 1986 it was stated that: "The government believes that its existing Arctic Exchange Program is a unique and valuable arrangement, providing contacts between scientists of both countries, and giving Canadian scientists improved access to Soviet research and experience in the Arctic."

The programme contributes in general to better and broader Canadian-Soviet relations. It is also considered that it could open the door to fruitful commercial cooperation in certain areas of Arctic development where Canadian capabilities, equipment and machinery could match Soviet needs. In the wider context of East-West relations, the programme can contribute to improve the dialogue and to lessen tensions.