

Third, Canada will provide Canadian youth with opportunities to participate in the circumpolar dialogue. The Canadian Arctic Council Advisory Committee chose three young Canadians to attend the 2009 Arctic Council Ministerial meeting. Their participation enhanced the contribution of the Canadian delegation at this meeting, and this successful initiative is one that Canada will continue to support.

THE WAY FORWARD

The rapid pace of change and growing importance of the Arctic requires that we enhance our capacity to deliver on Canada's priorities on the international scene. Facing the challenges and seizing the opportunities that we face often require finding ways to work with others: through bilateral relations with our neighbours in the Arctic, through regional mechanisms like the Arctic Council, and through other multilateral institutions.

The United States is our premier partner in the Arctic and our goal is a more strategic engagement on Arctic issues. This includes working together on issues related to the Beaufort Sea, on Arctic science, on Aboriginal and Northern issues, and on a common agenda that we might pursue when first Canada and then the United States chairs the Arctic Council starting in 2013. We are also working with Russia, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Iceland to advance shared interests such as trade and transportation, environmental protection, natural resource development, the role of indigenous peoples, oceans management, climate change adaptation and scientific cooperation.

However, the key foundation for any collaboration will be acceptance of and respect for the perspectives and knowledge of Northerners and Arctic states' sovereignty. As well, there must be recognition that the Arctic states remain best placed to exercise leadership in the management of the region.

Canada was the first chair of the Arctic Council (1996-98) and will be chairing the Council again starting in 2013. The Arctic Council is the leading multilateral forum