

GLOBAL AGENDA

CANADA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

• Vol. 4, N° 3, December 1996 •

ures

Environmentally Sustainable Development...

JAN 6 1997

CANADA AND THE ARCTIC COUNCIL

 RETURN TO DEPARTMENTAL LIBRARY
 RETOURNER A LA BIBLIOTHEQUE DU MINISTRE

Global atmospheric change...
 pollutants... biodiversity.

These three categories are broad, and inextricably linked to each other. These three issues are the focus of the environmentally sustainable development of Canada's North.

Global Atmospheric Change

Scientists predict that the enhanced greenhouse effect and climate change will have a strong impact on the Arctic. Already there are signs of warming in the Mackenzie Basin in northern Canada, which includes parts of the Yukon and Northwest Territories as well as northern British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. There has

been a warming trend of 1.5°C this century and there is evidence that this has lowered lake levels and thawed the permafrost.

The Montreal Protocol underlines the global significance of ozone depletion in the stratosphere. The polar regions are key to understanding the ozone depletion process and to monitoring stratospheric ozone levels. The extent of impact on northern ecosystems is not well understood.

Pollutants

The North is not without significant point sources of pollution and contamination. However, it appears that much of the pollution in the Canadian North is transported by the atmosphere from distant foreign or southern domestic sources. Both the domestic Arctic Environmental Strategy and the international Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) are supporting scientific research on the sources and pathways of these pollutants in an effort to trace sources and find solutions.

Biodiversity

The conservation of biodiversity is important in the North because of the unique fragile nature of northern ecosystems and the reliance of aboriginal people on local wildlife for food. As a result, the relationship between the long-range transport of pollutants and their

effects on biodiversity becomes even more significant. The nature and extent of climate change could have a significant impact on the survival of certain species. Similarly, the effects of depleted stratospheric ozone on northern ecosystems are poorly understood. These issues are closely linked and need to be addressed in an integrated manner. The recently established Arctic Council will help to ensure that scientific expertise and information contribute to more environmentally sustainable economic management decisions.

The Arctic Council

On September 19, 1996, Canada signed the Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council along with seven other circumpolar countries — Denmark (Greenland), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States.

The Council will provide the means for improving international cooperation and consultation on Arctic issues and for helping to improve the well-being of the inhabitants of the Arctic. The Declaration established the Council as a means to:

- promote cooperation and coordination of action on common Arctic issues, particularly sustainable development and environmental protection;

IN THIS ISSUE: FOCUS ON THE ARCTIC

| | |
|---|---|
| • Canada and the Arctic Council | 1 |
| • Canadian Cooperation in the Russian Arctic | 2 |
| • Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council | 3 |
| • A Message from Ambassador Simon | 4 |
| • Science and Technology in the North | 5 |
| • Canada's Report on Arctic Contaminants | 6 |
| • State of the Arctic Environment Report due in June 1997 | 6 |
| • Ambassador Fraser's Column | 7 |
| • Facts and Stats | 8 |

Continued on page 2

