

their Arctic communities, to affirm their common identity as northern countries, and to project a world-wide image of the Arctic as a unique region and global showcase of sustainable development. At the community level, the strategy would aim to develop region-wide interactive networks on matters such as the status of the child, distance education, telemedicine, consolidation and use of traditional ecological knowledge, food contamination, on-site observation and discussion of climate change, special health and social concerns of non-aboriginal northerners, artwork and the dissemination of artistic creations to southern markets, tourism, democratization and local self-government as they applied in the Russian Federation in particular, and so on. Regionally, a communications strategy would seek to enhance shared understandings of the circumpolar North and of sustainable development there among influentials and others in southern centres of decision in the Arctic countries. Opportunities would be exploited for industrial participation in telecommunications alliances. Indeed, the potential to create an Arctic equivalent of TV-5 could be explored and associated with the Canadian International Information Strategy (CIIS), either as an add-on or as a free-standing circumpolar venture. Globally, a coordinated communications effort would see the Eight project to worldwide audiences an understanding of the Arctic as a singular and creative but vulnerable region with much to offer in the evolution of a world practice of sustainable development.

Where Canada in particular is concerned, collaboration in the Arctic Council on the culture and communication of sustainable development would serve to enrich and enlarge the third pillar of our foreign policy. It would do so by multilateralizing Canadian activity in the field of international cultural, scientific, and educational activity, and by extending third-pillar operations into the realm of sustainable development at the regional and community levels. We would be in a position not only to present Canadian values and Canada's northern identity to others, but over the long haul to assimilate the northern identities of other Arctic countries, Russia foremost, to some of the Canadian way of seeing and doing things.

The Arctic Council is ready-made for multilateral third-pillar interaction among the countries of the region. It should be used for this purpose. Although Canada is especially well endowed to lead in this area, responsibility for a working group on communications could well go to Finland which is now the most wireless country in the world. Robin Higham of DFAIT's International Cultural Relations Bureau, who has been consulted, could assist in the development of a proposal for the Minister in this area. The CIIS project could also be asked to report promptly on the Arctic communications potential of the CIIS strategy.

Whether or not each of the foregoing proposals for substantive activity by the Arctic Council is moved forward by the Minister — we should take care not to overload the Council with working groups when it will also have to determine the outlines of a sustainable development programme for adoption in the fall of 1998-- there is no shortage of project themes to develop for the Minister's consideration and for discussion with his circumpolar counterparts.

A set of detailed proposals should now be worked out by the Circumpolar Ambassador and the Department in consultation with other federal agencies and, to the extent possible