

Radioactive waste clean-up and environmental remediation are other areas in which our Russian partners would welcome Canadian expertise. Canada can make a major contribution by promoting other policy objectives, such as non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as environmental protection. At the 1999 Group of Eight (G-8) Summit in Cologne, leaders agreed to address these issues by building a broad international partnership on expanded threat reduction. Within this initiative, activities are being considered for addressing the management of radioactive waste originating from military activities, and the decommissioning of Russian nuclear submarines, particularly at sites in the Russian Arctic. A multi-year, multi-task program would be developed to identify specific projects for these purposes, with identification of areas that best suit Canadian expertise. The adoption of a funded Canadian strategy would support our aims in the circumpolar region, allowing us to extend our participation in sub-regional groupings, such as the Baltic and Barents Councils and the Arctic Military Environmental Co-operation program, a joint Russian-American-Norwegian initiative aimed at addressing military-related critical environmental concerns in the Arctic.

Perhaps more than any other country, Canada is uniquely positioned to build a strategic partnership with Russia for development of the Arctic. In the short term, this means giving priority to addressing the socio-economic and environmental issues in the Russian North. Canadian objectives should be formulated in a way that reflects broader international goals, and Canadian activities should take into account the capacity of other partners, especially the United States and the European Union, to undertake funding responsibilities and partnerships.

Specific Canadian activities could include:

- contributing funds toward the implementation of the 1992 Canada-Russia Agreement on Co-operation in the Arctic and the North, as well as the 1997 Memorandum of Understanding concerning Co-operation on Aboriginal and Northern Development;
- working to expand bilateral economic and business ties with northern Russia, in co-operation with provincial and territorial governments, as well as business and NGO communities;
- supporting the activities of the Working Group on the Arctic and North, under the aegis of the Inter-governmental Economic Commission. This could include the creation of a Canada-Russia Northern Chamber of Commerce and the promotion of northern transportation routes; and
- including a focus on Russia in northern youth exchange programs and internships to promote people-to-people contacts for future generations.