



time of a permanent multilateral body in which Indigenous Peoples have an integral, ongoing role ... Canadians have been accused of living North and looking South. The foundation of the Arctic Council will, I hope, make Canadians look North and realize that – to the North, we belong to a region, the circumpolar region.”

Through May and June Canadians meeting in Whitehorse, Yellowknife, Iqaluit, Quebec and Edmonton were invited to reflect on this challenge and were asked to generate ideas and recommendations that could be useful in developing a northern frontier for Canada's foreign policy. National Forum participants were encouraged to think about the newly created Arctic Council and the possible role for the Council in Canada's national interests and in international affairs.

Their recommendations form the contents of this report. This work by more than two hundred Canadians covers trans-boundary challenges like airborne pollution and nuclear contamination of the Arctic Ocean, opportunities for practical cooperation with Arctic neighbours like a University of the Arctic, barriers and opportunities for people-to-people cooperation and trade across state boundaries, and both bilateal and multilateral relations in our circumpolar region.

This was exciting work. For a great many of the National Forum participants this was a first-time opportunity to think about the North and foreign policy as a common theme. The results show a great range and depth of specialized knowledge in civil society. The results also show a passion for two concepts that go to the heart of our Canadian identity – our northern identity and our worldly identity which includes playing a helpful role in international affairs.

Aboriginal elders, scientists, businesspeople, students and others generated ideas and recommendations that include information sharing with Arctic neighbours, broader use of traditional knowledge and education cooperation, sharing the Yukon Model of resource and land claims conflict resolution, and leading in environment and human rights issues. Without a formal discussion of “soft power”, the 1998 National Forum participants made important contributions to articulating Canada's soft power interests and opportunities in the circumpolar region.

In his letter in this Report, Foreign Affairs Minister Axworthy points to the value and impact this work. The draft reports and recommendations from the five National Forum meetings were immediately made available to the Minister and other policy makers, who are drafting Canada's circumpolar policies and approaches to the Arctic Council Ministers' meeting.

Especially important for us at the Centre are the recommendations on public participation in foreign policy.

“The federal government should take great effort to continue the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development fora as a first step toward embracing northern ideas in the development of a northern foreign policy. It is recommended that these fora become an ongoing mechanism for the involvement of northerners in the foreign policy development process. Traditional consultations and other forms of short term issue-based information gathering should be replaced with this more open developmental approach.”

This echoes the Report of the 1997 National Forum (Asia-Pacific) , “The Forum is not a singular event, but part of a larger foreign policy process that places considerable value of citizen input and further develops the multi-sector foreign policy network in Canada.” These views build on similar recommendations from the 1996 National Forum (Peacebuilding/Communications), “The National Forum is valuable and should be continued”.