

Peter the Great made this city his nation's window on the West. This impressive Institute makes Leningrad also a window on the North.

The exhibition of photographs from the historic ski-teck expedition from the Soviet Union to Canada across the North Pole is a remarkably powerful statement about the spirit of man. I salute the Canadian and Soviet skiers for their imagination and courage in carrying out this extraordinary initiative and for the advancement of scientific knowledge they have made.

That exhibition also brought home to me, again, the reality that the Arctic is a link between Canada and the Soviet Union, physically and spiritually. We are both northerners; the Arctic is part of us; its in our blood.

To Canadians, the Arctic is a vast wilderness, a homeland of ancient peoples and timeless values, a priceless dimension of our national identity. Like yours, our Arctic is, also, an important economic asset, rich in natural resources. And, like yours, our Arctic is also a stewardship of singular ecological value.

Other bordering countries also have their own legitimate interests in the Arctic. But the sheer size of our respective shares of the Arctic makes cooperation between us not just a bilateral opportunity but a global responsibility.

This week in Moscow we have made a new beginning in honouring our obligations. We signed a major new agreement on Arctic cooperation and a series of agreements on environmental protection. Together, these agreements demonstrate both the will for closer cooperation and the means to bring it about.

The Arctic Cooperation Agreement opens a new chapter in relations between the peoples of the Canadian North and of the Soviet North. The agreement builds on existing scientific and technical cooperation to promote action across the full range of civilian interests in the Arctic. The Agreement provides for bilateral programs in the key areas: economic development, particularly renewable and non-renewable resources, social and cultural issues and science and technology. A ministerial level Soviet-Canadian Mixed Commission will direct the implementation of the agreement.

Cooperation between Canadian and Soviet scientists already exists, of course. The new agreement should strongly amplify that cooperation.