

The Canadian government will work with provincial and territorial counterparts, granting institutions, foundations and private-sector interests, as well as interested Arctic Council partners, to promote enhanced and connected Canadian and cross-polar expertise in academic, NGO and northern-based institutions. The focus will be on determining how to develop a University of the Arctic distance-education program, as well as a research network that can be linked, as appropriate, to the policy process, including the work of the Arctic Council. The federal role will focus on partnership and seed resources, helping to make the connections between research and policy development and building linkages with policy-making bodies such as government agencies and the Arctic Council.

Some specific initiatives to be considered include:

- developing a University of the Arctic distance-education program;
- increasing the number of northern youth internships, youth employment and student exchanges, and education options through the University of the Arctic and affiliated colleges within the circumpolar region; and
- providing partnered funding for the development of a Canadian circumpolar policy research network, linking complementary Canadian institutions. The effort would also include linking up with other circumpolar research centres.

Cooperation in Northern Russia

A prosperous Russia is crucial to the stability of the international system, and a sustainable and prosperous North is crucial to the stability of Russia. With only 8 percent of the national population, the Russian North produces 20 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), and is one of Russia's leading hard currency-earning regions. With 80 percent of the North's total population, Russia is by far the most populous circumpolar area. In 1997, some 12.1 million people, including 200 000 Indigenous people, lived in the Russian Far North.

The collapse of the Soviet development strategy has had environmental impacts that are well known and impossible to ignore. For example, sulphur dioxide discharges from metal and mining enterprises have damaged vast territories in the Kola Peninsula. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, 150 nuclear reactors from decommissioned submarines are waiting to be dismantled in Murmansk and Arkhangelsk. The Agency report also states that more than 8500 tons of highly enriched spent fuel is waiting to be reprocessed and properly stored around the Barents Sea, and an additional 500 million cubic metres of low-level radioactive waste remains to be treated.

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