

GLOBAL AGENDA

CANADA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

• Vol. 4, N° 3, December 1996 •

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Environmentally Sustainable Development...

JAN 6 1997

CANADA AND THE ARCTIC COUNCIL

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Global atmospheric change...
 pollutants... biodiversity.

These three categories are broad, and inextricably linked to each other. These three issues are the focus of the environmentally sustainable development of Canada's North.

Global Atmospheric Change

Scientists predict that the enhanced greenhouse effect and climate change will have a strong impact on the Arctic. Already there are signs of warming in the Mackenzie Basin in northern Canada, which includes parts of the Yukon and Northwest Territories as well as northern British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. There has

been a warming trend of 1.5°C this century and there is evidence that this has lowered lake levels and thawed the permafrost.

The Montreal Protocol underlines the global significance of ozone depletion in the stratosphere. The polar regions are key to understanding the ozone depletion process and to monitoring stratospheric ozone levels. The extent of impact on northern ecosystems is not well understood.

Pollutants

The North is not without significant point sources of pollution and contamination. However, it appears that much of the pollution in the Canadian North is transported by the atmosphere from distant foreign or southern domestic sources. Both the domestic Arctic Environmental Strategy and the international Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) are supporting scientific research on the sources and pathways of these pollutants in an effort to trace sources and find solutions.

Biodiversity

The conservation of biodiversity is important in the North because of the unique fragile nature of northern ecosystems and the reliance of aboriginal people on local wildlife for food. As a result, the relationship between the long-range transport of pollutants and their

effects on biodiversity becomes even more significant. The nature and extent of climate change could have a significant impact on the survival of certain species. Similarly, the effects of depleted stratospheric ozone on northern ecosystems are poorly understood. These issues are closely linked and need to be addressed in an integrated manner. The recently established Arctic Council will help to ensure that scientific expertise and information contribute to more environmentally sustainable economic management decisions.

The Arctic Council

On September 19, 1996, Canada signed the Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council along with seven other circumpolar countries — Denmark (Greenland), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States.

The Council will provide the means for improving international cooperation and consultation on Arctic issues and for helping to improve the well-being of the inhabitants of the Arctic. The Declaration established the Council as a means to:

- promote cooperation and coordination of action on common Arctic issues, particularly sustainable development and environmental protection;

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- oversee and coordinate the established programs of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy;
- develop and coordinate a sustainable development program; and
- disseminate information, encourage education and promote interest in Arctic-related issues.

Canada will chair and provide the secretariat of the Council for the first two years. Canada's Ambassador for Circumpolar Affairs, Mary Simon, will be the chair and the Senior Arctic Official for Canada.

The Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy is an effective international program of cooperation to preserve and protect the northern environment. The AEPS, which will be

coordinated through the Arctic Council, has five components: Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program; Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna; Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment; Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response; and Sustainable Development and Utilization. ❁

Canadian Cooperation in the Russian Arctic

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has funded over \$2 million worth of projects for the Russian Arctic since 1991, with another \$6 million worth of projects currently under way. The goal of these projects is to introduce sound environmental management and to strengthen the role of indigenous peoples of the North in the planning and management of their regions.

Many of the projects directly support the Arctic Council's activities or fall under the related Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS).

For example, Bovar-Concord International of Toronto is planning to set up an air-sampling station and is training Russian scientists to measure Arctic contaminants to standards required for Russia's participation in the circumpolar Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP). Other projects promote environmental protection and sound engineering for waste treatment in the North or for the management of natural resources, such as water, hydrocarbons or minerals.

Under another CIDA-sponsored project, Canadian indigenous peoples are sharing their experience with their Russian counterparts on how to gain a strong voice in political decisions at the national, regional and local levels. Working with Canada's Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference is providing input to the Russian federal government on Russia's new policies for indigenous and northern affairs. This project is also directly helping the Russian aboriginal representatives to participate in the Arctic Council.

CIDA is also supporting the efforts of a joint public-private team led by the territorial government of Canada's Northwest Territories in assisting Russians in Yakutia with modern cold-climate building technologies.

Canada's cooperation with Russia shares Canadian experience and expertise. Development will only be sustainable if governments, industry and northern peoples have the right tools, the right

techniques, and the ability to use them. These projects aim to provide just that in the Russian Arctic. ❁

GLOBAL AGENDA is published to promote understanding of Canada's foreign policy and international environmental issues. It is a quarterly publication of the Communications Strategies and Planning Division (BCF) in cooperation with the Environment Division (AGE) of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

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Ottawa, ON, K1A 0G2
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Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre **PRIORITÉS MONDIALES**.

ISSN 1203-0848

Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council

On September 19, 1996, the eight circumpolar countries signed the Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council, summarized here.

The signatories desire to provide for regular inter-governmental consideration and consultation on Arctic issues ensuring the well-being of the inhabitants of the Arctic, sustainable development and the protection of the environment.

The Declaration establishes an Arctic Council as a high-level intergovernmental forum which is made up of the eight Arctic states — Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States of America.

The Declaration establishes the Arctic Council as a means to:

- promote cooperation and coordination of action on common Arctic issues, particularly sustainable development and environmental protection;
- oversee and coordinate the established programmes of the Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS);
- oversee and coordinate a sustainable development programme; and
- disseminate information, encourage education and promote interest in Arctic-related issues.

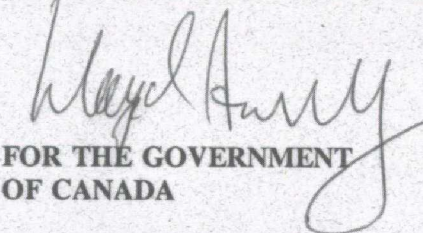
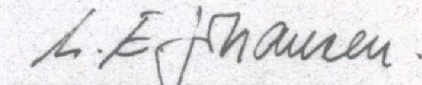
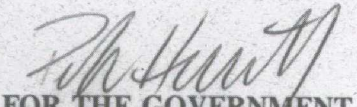
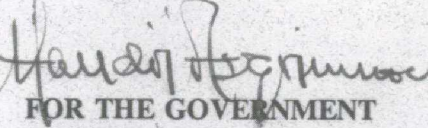
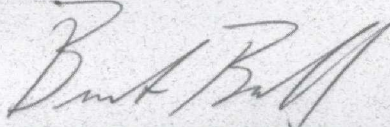

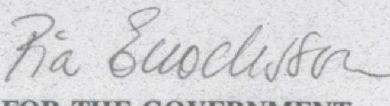
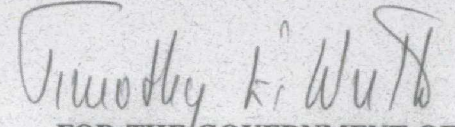
The Declaration names each of the eight Arctic states as Members and three Permanent Participants - the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the

Saami Council, and the Association of Indigenous Minorities of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation*. The Declaration allows for further Permanent Participant status for other Arctic indigenous groups and Observer status for other non-Arctic countries, and inter-governmental and inter-parliamentary and non-governmental organizations.

The Declaration establishes that:

- the Council will meet at least biennially and all decisions will be by consensus by the Members; and
- the hosting of meetings of the Arctic Council, including secretariat support function will rotate among the Arctic States. ❁

* See article on page 4.

 FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA	 FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF DENMARK
 FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF FINLAND	 FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF ICELAND
 FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF NORWAY	 FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
 FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF SWEDEN	 FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A Message from Ambassador Simon

In 1994, Mary Simon was named Canada's first Ambassador for Circumpolar Affairs. Ambassador Simon is an Inuk from Nunavik (northern Quebec), long active in broadcasting and in public policy on northern and native issues. She has been honoured for her work, with appointments to the Order of Canada, the Order of Quebec and the Gold Order of Greenland. In April 1996, Ambassador Simon received the National Aboriginal Achievement Award for her work with the environment and for raising awareness of, and promoting solutions to, the challenges facing the Inuit of Greenland, Alaska, Russia and Canada.

Canada has long wanted an Arctic Council. We saw the need for an international forum that provided a means for promoting cooperation among all the countries around the Arctic Circle and that had the participation of the northern peoples themselves.

The Council is an exciting new international cooperative initiative to pursue environmental protection and sustainable and equitable development, which includes the economic, social and cultural well-being of the northern peoples.

The Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), begun in 1991 by the eight Council member countries, will be integrated into the Arctic Council. Seemingly pristine and remote, the Arctic's fragile ecology is vulnerable to long-distance pollution from toxic chemicals, from the dumping of low-level radioactive waste, from oil spills and seepage of wastes from mines, from overfishing and from global warming, among others. The AEPS oversees joint projects to combat pollution, prevent further degradation of the Arctic environment and conserve Arctic flora and fauna.

Until recently, important circumpolar issues of environmental protection and of social and economic

development for northern peoples were looked at in isolation. Under the Council, both areas can be considered together in a more balanced way. This approach, linking environmental protection, sustainable development and human rights, is true to the principles that the eight Arctic countries, as part of the global community, agreed to under the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

In Canada, during this first year of the Council, I will meet with interested Canadians and Northerners to hear their ideas on ways to improve environmental protection, economic prospects, education, health and other aspects of life in the North. The challenge for us all will be to translate ideas into effective and practical measures.

The Arctic's Indigenous peoples have always stressed that the first step towards achieving sustainable and equitable development is to recognize the fundamental link between cultural diversity, differing knowledge systems and a deeper understanding of environmental and ecological processes. It is my sincere hope that the Arctic Council will pioneer innovative approaches that respect both cultural diversity and the integrity of the Arctic environment. 🍁

The Association of Indigenous Minorities of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation (AKMNSSDV, R.F.)

The AKMNSSDV, R.F. is a non-governmental organization which represents the cultural, economic, environmental, political and social interests of the 31 Indigenous peoples of the Russian North with a total population of over 200 000. Founded in March 1990, the Association adopted its current name at its Second Congress in November 1993. In March 1994, it was incorporated as a public

organization with the Russian Ministry of Justice.

The Charter defines the main objectives of the AKMNSSDV, R.F. as follows:

- to promote the unification of the Aboriginal peoples of the North;
- to defend their rights and interests; and
- to resolve problems relating to the socio-cultural and economic development of these peoples.

The organization deals with such issues as self-government, the safeguarding of rights, the preservation of identity and the environment.

The Inuit Circumpolar Conference

The Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) is an international organization representing approximately 130 000 Inuit living in the Arctic regions of Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Chukotka, Russia.

The principal goals of ICC include the following:

- to develop and encourage long-term policies that safeguard the Arctic environment;
- to seek full and active partnership in the political, economic and social development of circumpolar regions;
- to secure recognition of the Inuit right to self-determination and their equal rights as a people.

ICC views the Arctic Council as an essential step towards the comprehensive Arctic policies and coordinated action that are needed

to address the many social, economic and environmental issues important to the well-being of Inuit and the environmental integrity of the Arctic.

The Saami Council

The Saami Council is a representative body for cooperation among the Saami of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Established in 1956, the Council is also listed as a non-governmental organization within the United Nations.

information about Canada's North. This data is used to establish national and international boundaries, produce topographic maps and aeronautical charts and provide an overall picture of the landmass.

• Health, Safety and Environmental Protection:

A wide range of activities — from investigating natural hazards to studying climate change to ensuring the protection of the Arctic's fragile ecosystems — contributes to the health and safety of Canadians as well as to the protection of the environment.

Most scientific research carried out in the Arctic, whether by NRCan scientists or those from other government agencies, universities or industry, requires logistical support. This is supplied by NRCan, which coordinates aircraft and other field requirements from its two Arctic bases.

More information about NRCan activities is available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca>. 🍁

Science and Technology in the North

Exploration and development of the Arctic's natural resources are increasing rapidly. And so is the need for a thorough scientific understanding of this environmentally unique region. The science and technology activities of Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) help provide the needed knowledge base.

NRCan works with various government agencies, universities and international research programs to ensure that the development of the North's natural resources contributes to a safe and healthy environment. NRCan also supports the use of traditional knowledge and the meaningful participation by Aboriginal peoples in development as well as in environmental decision making.

The department's northern science research is grouped into five programs.

• Minerals:

NRCan geoscientists provide geological maps, models for identifying and locating deposits, and innovative exploration concepts and technologies that help industry identify new mineral resources. The

department's research also focuses on increasing the efficiency of mineral production.

• Energy:

Precise three-dimensional pictures of the northern Canadian sedimentary basins aid in new discoveries and in assessing resource potential. Marine geoscience surveys and engineering studies provide information for offshore oil and gas well-siting, environmental impact assessment, and locating pipelines and loading/shipping facilities. The department also researches alternative and renewable energy resources and examines ways to reduce the environmental impacts of hydrocarbon and biomass-based fuels.

• Forestry:

NRCan researchers monitor northern Canada's forest ecosystems and develop better ways of protecting and enhancing their health, diversity and productivity.

• Geomatics:

Using up-to-date remote sensing, global positioning and survey technology, NRCan collects and publishes a range of geographical

Canada's Report on Arctic Contaminants

The Canadian Arctic Contaminants Assessment Report will be released in early 1997 by the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The report summarizes the data collected over the past six years under the Canadian Arctic Environmental Strategy's Northern Contaminants Program. Information for the report comes from more than 100 Canadian participants in the Northern Contaminants Program, representing federal and territorial governments, northern aboriginal organizations, and universities. A "highlights" summary, directed towards the general public, also draws upon input from community participants. The participation of northern communities is a key component of the Northern Contaminants Program.

The report describes the extent of the problem in the Canadian Arctic and provides some comparison to other parts of the world. The report will discuss the sources of contaminants, pathways they follow to the Arctic, the geographic and the regional trends of contaminants and their impact on the ecosystem and

human health. Looking forward, the report identifies where new research is most needed.

In Canada, the report and "highlights" summary will be distributed to northern organizations, libraries, schools, universities, communities, government agencies and key audiences south of 60°N. The report will also be circulated in the international scientific community, particularly among the circumpolar countries.

For copies of the report or for more information, please contact:

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State of the Arctic Environment Report due in June 1997

The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program's (AMAP) first "State of the Arctic Environment Report" will be published in 1997. Accompanying it will be the "AMAP Assessment Report", a scientific report. Both documents will be presented to Ministers responsible for the Arctic at their meeting in Norway in June 1997.

The AMAP was established in 1991 under the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS). Its mandate is to monitor the levels of contaminants in the Arctic and to assess their effects. Priority is given to persistent organic pollutants (POPs), certain heavy metals, radionuclides and, for Norway, Sweden and Finland, acids.

An international working group, consisting of representatives of the

eight member nations of the AEPS, implements the AMAP. Canada chairs the Working Group until the end of 1997. Norway has provided a Secretariat. Several

As well as preparing its own national report on the state of its Arctic environment, Canada is also contributing to AMAP's report on the state of the circumpolar Arctic environment.

international organizations also contribute to the Working Group, as do the observer nations (Germany, Poland, the Netherlands and Britain).

The AMAP is built, as far as possible, on existing national and international programs. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development coordinates Canada's contribution, which comes mainly from Canada's domestic Arctic Environmental Strategy (AES). All relevant government departments and agencies participate in Canada's contribution to the AMAP.

The involvement of northern indigenous groups is of paramount importance to the AMAP. The Inuit, Saami and Indigenous Peoples of the Russian North participate in the Working Group. The Inuit Circumpolar Conference and Saami Council have been involved in drafting sections of the reports, particularly those concerning indigenous populations and human health.

Looking North for Answers

by the Honourable John Fraser, PC, QC
Canada's Ambassador for Environment and Sustainable Development

Visitors to the Arctic are amazed by the natural state of this immense region of the Earth. People live in relatively small settlements, with few of the activities that we associate with environmental damage. Many Aboriginal people in the Arctic still rely on "country food." It is part of their cultures and is often the basis of a healthier diet than expensive food from the south can offer. Yet, the appearance of environmental purity is deceiving.

In some places in the high Arctic there is a brown smog called "Arctic haze," despite the lack of local pollution sources. Air and water currents have brought persistent organic pollutants such as PCBs and dioxins into the region, resulting in concentrations of PCBs in both adults and children that frequently exceed acceptable levels.

Between October 8 and 10, I had the opportunity to take part in a unique conference in Iqaluit, Northwest Territories, that addressed these and related issues. Iqaluit will become the capital of the new Nunavut Territory in 1999. "For Generations to Come," was sponsored by the Canadian Polar Commission, Canada's national advisory agency on polar research issues. The goal of the conference was to bring together Canadian expertise on northern contaminants, to

examine the effectiveness of current strategies, to review government policies on these contaminants, and to evaluate Canada's contribution to international contaminants activities.

At one level, the conference offered a chance to identify concrete ideas on steps to remove or reduce the presence of contaminants in the Arctic environment. Moreover, it was a chance to discuss the effectiveness of existing environmental policies in Canada, such as the Arctic Environmental Strategy. In any case, it is crucial that we assess how effective such policies have been in reaching the goals set out five or six years ago, and identify where we could go from here, both domestically and internationally.

However, this was less a conference about science or policy than a conference about people. In fact, in this conference, as well as at three previous regional forums, people at the community level across Canada's Arctic discussed the issues as they saw them. The uncertainty that many Northerners feel about contaminants in their environment and their concerns about how research had been done in the past came through clearly.

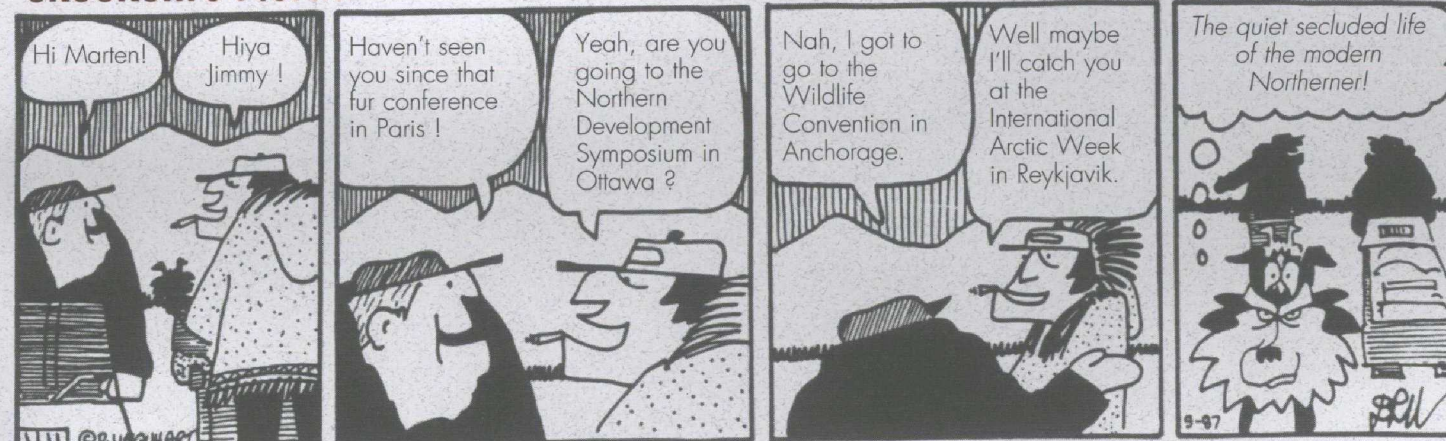
Scientists are finding that they must communicate their findings, clearly and in a way that crosses cultural

and linguistic boundaries. Only then can people decide how safe it is to eat seal meat, or fish in a particular lake. Research agencies are beginning to listen to Arctic residents who face potential risks. They are working together to identify the most important gaps in our knowledge. They are setting up research priorities and ways of doing research that reflect the concerns of Northerners.

The conference made it clear that we still do not know enough about the level of contaminants and their effect on the Arctic environment and wildlife. We need to learn more about trends and risks. We need to know more about the scale of effects.

Action to reduce the impact of these and other pollutants on the people of the North is more than a question of environmental and human health. It has a strong moral quality. The preservation of Aboriginal cultures in the Arctic depends in large part on the preservation of the traditional food supplies, so much a part of those cultures. These people want to maintain their traditions. They deserve to be heard as the world sets its environmental priorities. Through institutions such as the Arctic Council, the UN Environment Program and the work of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, they should be!

Skookum's North



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Facts and Stats

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- * The northern territories range from 60° N to 83° N latitude and include the Arctic Islands as well as islands in Hudson Bay. They account for roughly 40 per cent of Canada's land mass, but less than 1 per cent of its population.
- * The territorial governments, in cooperation with the federal government, are trying to reduce their dependence on the non-renewable resource sector by expanding the use of renewable resources and tourism.
- * Aboriginal people form the majority of the northern population. In the Yukon, people with Native ancestry accounted for 23 per cent of the population in 1991; in the Northwest Territories, they represent 62 per cent of the territorial population. In the eastern Arctic (Nunavut), Inuit make up 84 per cent of the population. Inuit also reside in northern Quebec and Labrador.
- * Native people have the highest birth rate in Canada, and have a high proportion of people under 25, compared to the national average.
- * In both territories, political development hinges on the continued transfer of provincial government-type responsibilities from federal departments and agencies to territorial public institutions. After several years of concentrating on land claim negotiations, territorial governments will likely focus now on devolution planning, particularly with respect to natural resource issues.

Source: Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

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