Summary report. SAO plenary meeting. Anchorage, Alaska. 21-22 October 2015.

2015-10

Arctic Council

Arctic Council Secretariat

Summary report | SAO plenary meeting

Anchorage, Alaska | 21-22 October 2015

First SAO plenary meeting during the U.S. Chairmanship

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1.1 Welcome remarks

Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials (SAO Chair) David Balton offered welcoming remarks, after which elder Eliza Jones offered a ceremonial welcome on behalf of the Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC).

1.2 Introduction of new Senior Arctic Officials, Permanent Participants, and Working Group Chairs

SAO Chair Balton welcomed Andrés Jato as the new Senior Arctic Official (SAO) for Sweden, Roberta Burns as the new Chair for the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG), and Ethel Blake as the new Head of Delegation for the Gwich'in Council International (GCI).

1.3 Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

2. Reports from other meetings

2.1 Report from the four Arctic Council Working Groups' joint meeting in Tromsø

Background

Four Arctic Council Working Groups (Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP), Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP), Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) and Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME)) held their meetings during the week of 14-18 September in Tromsø, Norway. A half-day joint session, attended by approximately 200 participants, was divided into four thematic breakout sessions on:

- Climate Change, and the Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic (AACA) project in particular (AMAP lead);
- Biodiversity reporting and assessment, the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP), and the State of the Arctic Biodiversity reports in particular (CAFF lead);
- Area-based management, and a network of Arctic Marine Protected Areas in particular (PAME lead) and
- Standardized geospatial data management and sharing (ACAP lead).

Click to see the presenter's slides and supporting documents.

Summary / Conclusion

All delegates agreed that the meeting was valuable, and the comments from many delegates indicated that it is indeed worthwhile bringing several Working Groups together, in part because of the savings in travel and time for those trying to follow the work of more than one Working Group. However, several delegates expressed the sentiment that these

meetings have a maximum reasonable size – likely around three Working Groups altogether – beyond which the logistical complexity of the meeting outweighs the value of bringing the groups together.

Most delegates felt that the Arctic Council should try something similar again in the future and some thought such an event should respond to a specific need. In terms of timing, most felt that the beginning of each Chairmanship is the optimal time for such an effort. The participation of Working Groups should rotate and the SDWG and Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) Working Groups should therefore be involved in the next meeting. The SAO Chair instructed the Working Group Chairs to consider potential Working Group combinations and be in close contact with Norway and with incoming Arctic Council Chair Finland as potential hosts and organizers for the next such event.

2.2 Report from GLACIER

Background

The United States hosted the conference "Global Leadership in the Arctic: Cooperation, Innovation, Engagement and Resilience" ("GLACIER") in Anchorage, Alaska on 30-31 August 2015. GLACIER was not an Arctic Council event but contributed to raising awareness of the Arctic around the world. The importance of a successful and ambitious outcome at the international climate negotiations in Paris in December (21st Conference of the Parties – COP21) was emphasized at the event. The U.S. SAO made a brief report to delegates on the conference outcomes and noted potential follow-up actions for the Arctic Council.

Click to see the supporting documents.

Summary / Conclusion

Several delegates expressed appreciation for the "Joint Statement on Climate Change and the Arctic" that emerged from GLACIER and ultimately agreed that the U.S. would submit the Joint Statement on behalf of the signatories. Iceland proposed that the Arctic Council have a "presence" at COP21, in Paris in December 2015 and offered the use of its reserved space for this purpose. Delegations had differing views on the appropriate nature of such a presence, ultimately accepting Iceland's invitation to display Arctic Council publications. This booth will be coordinated among Iceland, the Chairmanship and the Arctic Council Secretariat (ACS).

Several Permanent Participants (PPs) noted that there would be representatives of their organizations at COP21 in various capacities not directly connected with the Arctic Council. AMAP acknowledged that they have a pending invitation from the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) to participate at an event at COP21 organized by the NCM. Several delegates thought that it would not be appropriate to have a single Arctic Council Working Group participate in an event of this kind organized by a different entity where the Arctic Council itself is not present and thus asked AMAP not to accept the invitation from the NCM.

3. Strengthening the Arctic Council

3.1 Arctic Council relations to external bodies

Background

At the June 2015 SAO executive meeting in Washington, DC, SAOs requested an overview of how Arctic Council subsidiary bodies (Working Groups, Task Forces, *et al*) relate to external bodies. Following the June meeting, the ACS produced a summary of the Arctic Council Working Groups' existing relationships to external bodies, and a background paper containing examples of how other entities similar in some way to the Arctic Council structure their own relationships to external bodies. The U.S. produced an issue paper to outline various items for consideration by SAOs.

Click here to see the supporting documents (1, 2, 3).

Summary / Conclusion

During this discussion, SAOs expressed their intention to work towards increased visibility and transparency, not to discourage or undermine the establishment of relationships with external bodies. Several delegations emphasized that relationships may vary in form, but that both formal (memorialized through memoranda of understanding, resolutions of cooperation, etc.) and informal relationships were relevant to consider for the future. Most agreed that the nature of these varied relationships is such that it would be difficult if not impossible to prescribe a uniform set of rules to govern them. However, all SAOs agreed that, as new relationships are developing, Working Groups should contact SAOs both to inform them and to request guidance.

Regarding the issue of who speaks for the Arctic Council, there was no agreement. Most delegates expressed the view that Working Group Chairs and Heads of Delegation are the primary spokespersons for Working Group activities and may speak on factual/technical matters relating to the work of the Arctic Council, but that they should not speak publicly on policy matters on behalf of the Arctic Council writ large. Some delegates prefered that Working Group Chairs, rather than secretariats, speak publicly.

The U.S. agreed to sketch out proposed guidelines for the development of such relationships with external bodies, including public speaking and representation, making sure that the guidance will not be too prescriptive and taking into account lessons learned; those proposed guidelines will be circulated in advance of the March 2016 SAO meeting.

3.2 Integrated Records Management Tool (IRMT)

Background

The Arctic Council archiving project has been a priority since the establishment of the standing ACS. One element of the project has been to establish a robust records-management system for the Arctic Council that is managed by the ACS. In January 2015 the Integrated Records Management Tool (IRMT) was provisionally approved for a trial period. A

proposed revision from the ACS, submitted to this meeting in Anchorage, includes a few suggested changes to the IRMT, as well as a proposed process through which any future updates could be considered.

Click here to see the supporting documents (1, 2).

Summary / Conclusion

SAOs approved both the revised version of the IRMT and the proposed process for considering future updates. The SAO Chair asked that the record include gratitude to Library and Archives Canada for their hard work in the development of the IRMT.

In addition, the SAO Chair instructed the ACS and GCI to discuss the possibility of adding electronic copies of Arctic Council-related records held by GCI into the Arctic Council records archive.

3.3 Report on the Open Access repository

Background

At the June 2015 SAO executive meeting in Washington, DC, SAOs instructed the ACS and the six Working Groups to complete work on the Open Access repository by September 2015. The archive now contains the vast majority of significant reports from all six Arctic Council Working Groups and central reports from the Arctic Council Task Forces. The ACS presented a summary report to delegates that includes the next steps (agreed to by the ACS and the Working Groups) to ensure continued archiving of new reports in the Open Access repository, including the development of disclaimers for past and for future Arctic Council reports to address any copyright concerns.

Click here to see the supporting document.

Summary / Conclusion

The SAO Chair thanked all those who had contributed to this effort, and instructed the ACS to continue its work to develop draft disclaimers for both future and past reports. This work will likely involve legal consultation with the U.S. Chairmanship and Norway, the host country for the ACS.

3.4 Relocation of the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat

Background

As tasked by the SAOs at their April 2015 executive meeting in Ottawa, the Informal Group on Administrative Matters ("Admin Group") has considered and reviewed a package of amendments to the ACS administrative framework (including Terms of Reference, Staff Rules, Financial Rules, and Roles and Responsibilities of the ACS Director). The amendments will enable the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat (IPS) co-location with the ACS in Tromsø by 1 January 2016.

The presenter from the Admin Group made particular note of the revised documents explaining the role of the IPS, as well as the IPS board and its functions, and he underscored

the agreement that costs related to the IPS would be covered outside the ACS budget with a separate budget and a designated account. He also drew attention to the agreed-upon budget (funded by Norway and the Kingdom of Denmark) and work plan for the IPS.

Click to see the presenter's slides and supporting document.

Summary / Conclusion

The SAOs decided to amend the Terms of Reference, Staff Rules and Financial Rules of the Arctic Council Secretariat as well as the Roles and Responsibilities of the Director of the ACS in accordance with the proposal from the Admin Group, and that the relocation of the IPS to Tromsø shall take effect from 1 January 2016. The ACS Director was instructed to make the necessary preparations for the IPS relocation in Tromsø.

The SAOs also decided that there shall be a post-relocation review of the IPS including how well the system is working with the amended documents.

3.5 Strengthening Permanent Participants' capacity

Background

At the June 2015 SAO executive meeting in Washington, DC, delegates discussed ways of ensuring PP input during the conception phase of all relevant Arctic Council projects. Two suggestions were made. The first was to create an additional element in the "Amarok" project tracking tool. The second was to create a separate checklist to serve a similar purpose. The U.S. Chairmanship, with assistance from the ACS, was tasked to look into the matter and propose a way forward.

Click here to see the supporting document.

Summary / Conclusion

Following intensive discussion, delegates reached consensus on two questions. First, after making two small amendments, they agreed to adopt, on a provisional basis, the checklist addressing PP input during early phases of Arctic Council projects. The purpose of the checklist is to alert the PPs that a particular project is getting underway in order to afford the PPs an opportunity to evaluate whether they have the resources to participate. The two amendments to the checklist are below.

- The phrase "Permanent Participant Heads of delegation" is to be changed to, simply, "Permanent Participants".
- A fourth question – "How have the Permanent Participants been contacted for this purpose?" – is to be added to the checklist.

Second, they agreed to add a yes/no element to the "Amarok" tracking tool, indicating whether the agreed-upon checklist has been filled out for any given project.

In addition, delegates agreed to look again at this checklist and how it is reflected in the "Amarok" tracking tool after a year, or after it has been deployed for a reasonable number of new projects. This will provide an opportunity for SAOs to consider again, with the

benefit of experience, whether the checklist and additional element in the tracking tool add value to the Council's work and should continue to be used in the future.

3.6 Written reports

Background

The six Working Groups and the ACS submitted progress reports in advance of the SAO meeting. SAOs and PPs were invited to ask any clarifying questions that they might have regarding those reports.

Click here to see the supporting documents (ACAP, AMAP, CAFF, EPPR, PAME, SDWG, ACS).

Summary / Conclusion

Some delegates commented on the CAFF, SDWG, EPPR and AMAP reports.

3.7 Treatment of potential Working Group deliverables

Background

At the recent ACAP Working Group meeting in Tromsø, one of ACAP's Expert Groups reported that they had completed two projects listed in the ACAP Working Group work plan 2015-2017 and, further, planned to publish the results in peer-reviewed journals prior to the next Ministerial meeting because the results are time-sensitive and include practical recommendations. The work will not be reported back to the SAOs in another format, nor will the reports have the ACAP or Arctic Council logo, yet these are projects that have been included in the ACAP work plan.

Delegates used this agenda point as an opportunity to discuss both (1) the appropriate timing for releasing technical and policy work emerging from the Working Groups and (2) branding guidelines for Working Group products.

Click here to see the presenter's slides and supporting document.

Summary / Conclusion

Delegates agreed that scientific or technical reports that do not contain policy recommendations and that are complete and ready to be released in peer-reviewed journals (or otherwise) could be released when they are ready. Working Groups should not feel compelled to delay publication in order to wait for a Ministerial meeting. Scientific/technical publications that do not contain policy recommendations do not require SAO approval.

However, if a product responds directly to a directive from a Ministerial Declaration or contains policy recommendations, it should be saved for release at the next appropriate Ministerial meeting. For many – or even most – products and reports, Working Groups are encouraged to ask SAOs whether a product or report meets the criteria to be "held" for release at a Ministerial meeting.

In addition, Working Group Chairs are required to bring any product containing policy recommendations before SAOs for review. The SAO Chair enjoined Working Groups: "When

in doubt about whether something constitutes a 'policy recommendation', ask", and noted that SAOs do have the possibility to review and approve a product intersessionally if Working Groups request it.

Finally, the SAO Chair pointed to a set of guidelines on communications adopted in the Nuuk Declaration (2011) that provides guidance on the use of the Arctic Council logo, as well as disclaimers for reports and other products. Due apparently to an oversight, a final version of these guidelines was never included in the Senior Arctic Officials' Report to Ministers from that meeting. The ACS will circulate those guidelines to all delegates prior to the spring 2016 SAO meeting in Fairbanks. At that meeting, SAOs may decide whether to approve those guidelines, with or without any changes.

4. The Arctic Council 20th anniversary

Background

September 19, 2016 will mark the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Ottawa Declaration and the establishment of the Arctic Council. As this anniversary will occur during the U.S. Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the U.S. asked delegates for an opportunity to discuss how the Arctic Council might commemorate this occasion.

Summary / Conclusion

The SAO Chair and many delegations urged anyone considering an event to consider the cost and effort of additional travel for those who might be invited to take part, and consider how to schedule/plan an event in order to minimize any such additional burden. The SAO Chair expressed his wish that all the various events and activities being planned can somehow make sense as a collection.

On 25 January 2016, in conjunction with the Arctic Frontiers conference in Tromsø, Norway is planning a celebration. Norway noted that, following the final decision taken in Anchorage on the co-location of the IPS with the ACS, there will be additional ground for celebration. Norway has also begun working on a magazine/publication with UArctic – "20 Years with the Arctic Council".

The United States is planning a 20th anniversary celebration and relayed tentative plans for a celebration in Washington, DC, which would not be at the level of Foreign Ministers, possibly in connection with the SAO meeting in Portland, Maine, in fall of 2016.

Finland noted that it would not be preparing anything special for the occasion. Canada noted the possibility of a celebration on 19th September – the actual date of the anniversary – in Ottawa. Without offering any specifics, Iceland noted that the presence of the CAFF and PAME Secretariats and the Stefansson Arctic Institute might create adequate "gravitational pull" to have a celebration of some kind in Iceland as well, such as in connection with the Universities of Akureyri and Reykjavik. Russia suggested that, although no concrete plans have taken shape yet, some celebration is likely there as well. The ACS presented several ideas for anniversary materials that the staff will begin working on, including a "name the

fox" contest for the Arctic Council logo and noted that the series of 77 digital photos playing during the meeting breaks are available to delegates to use as appropriate for 20th anniversary events.

In addition, Finland proposed the development of some scholarly text on the history of the Arctic Council, and the SDWG suggested including Arctic food-related events. Russia asked that the 20th anniversary be a standing item on the agenda for SAO meetings in the months ahead. The SAO Chair acknowledged each of these as a worthwhile suggestion, but delegates did not seek to reach consensus on them.

5. Climate change

5.1 Black carbon and methane

Background

Most Arctic States and some Observer States have submitted national reports on their black carbon and methane emissions, in accordance with the Enhanced Black Carbon and Methane Emissions Reductions an Arctic Council Framework for Action adopted at the Iqaluit 2015 Ministerial meeting. In addition, AMAP released its "Arctic Climate Issues 2015: Short-lived Climate Pollutants Summary for Policy-makers" on the same occasion.

Click here to see the supporting documents (1, 2).

Summary / Conclusion

Six of the Arctic States have submitted national reports, in accordance with the Framework for Action. Both Canada and the Kingdom of Denmark noted that they would shortly be submitting theirs. Six Observer states (France, Italy, Japan, Poland, Spain, United Kingdom), as well as the European Union, have submitted reports as well. All those Observers who have submitted reports will be invited to join Arctic States and PPs to attend the meeting of the Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane planned to take place early in 2016. Other Observer states that submit reports to the Expert Group will also be invited to participate. The SAO Chair noted that it is not too late to submit a national report and join the Expert Group. Several delegations made note of the importance of engaging Observers – not just at the project level, but also at the policy level – in this line of the Council's work. The AMAP report was welcomed as an important contribution showing that the reduction of short lived climate pollutants will lead to climate benefits and important health co-benefits.

5.2 Adaptation to Arctic change

5.2.1 Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic (AACA)

Background

The AACA project involves several products that will be completed for the Ministerial meeting in 2017. The main deliverables will be the three regional reports and a short pan-Arctic synthesis report based on those three regional reports. The first-order drafts of the

three regional reports are expected to be finalized in November 2015 and ready for peer review in early 2016.

Click here to see the presenter's slides and supporting document.

Summary / Conclusion

The SAO Chair summarized the presentation and discussion, noting:

- that the three regional reports are on target for finalization;
- that the methodology of the AACA project may be applicable to other types of work within the Council and that
- there was agreement on the importance of making use of traditional and local knowledge (TLK) in the AACA work.

The SAO Chair further noted that there was a great deal of support and enthusiasm for this project that cuts across many of the Working Groups.

5.2.2 Resilience: Arctic Resilience Assessment (née Report), invasive species, ONE Health, CLEO and Arctic Adaptation Portal initiatives

Background

The Arctic Council is undertaking several initiatives to enhance the resilience of communities and ecosystems to the changing Arctic. Initiatives include the following:

- assessment of climate change impacts in the Arctic, vulnerabilities, and best practices for resilience;
- enhancing monitoring efforts and providing tools and services to plan for change; and
- encouraging effective planning and policies.

The U.S. presenter provided an overview of several initiatives that demonstrate how the Arctic Council is currently tackling the issue of resilience, and might do so in the future. The presenter described how these and other resilience efforts cut across multiple Arctic States, PPs, and Working Groups, and how the AACA and ARA initiatives have become highly complementary – both in terms of content and expected deliverables in 2016 and 2017. For more information *see the supporting document.*

Summary / Conclusion

The SAO Chair noted that a lot of work was being undertaken in relation to resilience, that these efforts cut across multiple Working Groups, and that a number of products should come to fruition for the Ministerial meeting. As part of the discussions, Finland and GCI expressed particular support for the Circumpolar Local Environmental Observing (CLEO) tool. CAFF drew delegates' attention to a developing resilience project on invasive species. The presenter informed delegates about a workshop on resilience coming up in spring of 2016 in conjunction with the SAO meeting. In preparation for this workshop, the presenter asked Arctic States and PPs to consider the following two questions: a) describe your three most challenging resilience vulnerabilities and b) describe your top three most pressing

needs for resilience policy work. The SAO Chair asked the ACS to distribute those questions to delegations and collect the answers. Answers to these questions will feed into the resilience workshop planned for spring of 2016 which will explore the elements of a potential ongoing resilience agenda for the Arctic Council.

5.3 General discussion of climate change work in the Arctic Council

Background

Over the years the Arctic Council has delivered numerous reports on climate change, which is truly a cross-cutting issue that is relevant to most Arctic Council work. Delegates at the meeting discussed the nature of the Council's work on climate change, how it is coordinated, and whether it should continue on in the future with the same shape that it has had up to this point.

Summary / Conclusion

Climate change is, and will remain, an important element in the work of the Arctic Council. As such, the Council should continue its ongoing work in this area and consider ways to expand the range of such work. Delegates presented several ideas in this vein, including:

- working more with Observers;
- involving people in the respective governments who are responsible for global climate change policy;
- undertaking more work to highlight the relationship between climate change and weather patterns inside and outside the Arctic;
- revitalizing the Sustaining Arctic Observing Network (SAON); and
- finding a long-term home for the Arctic Adaptation Portal.

The Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) and others enjoined delegates to work to improve comprehensive monitoring and ensure that the human dimension of climate change – and, in particular, food security – remains a central feature of the Council's work. The Saami Council reminded meeting delegates of the letter from October 2014 to the SAOs, and signed by all the PPs, regarding efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. The SAO Chair asked the ACS to re-send the letter to the SAOs and PPs.

6. Environment and biodiversity

6.1 Actions for Arctic biodiversity

Background

The report "Actions for Biodiversity 2013-2021" constitutes the implementation plan for the recommendations from the "Arctic Biodiversity Assessment" (ABA, 2013). Implementing the ABA recommendations requires expanding existing efforts, exploring new directions, and developing projects to fill gaps. A tracking tool has been developed to track progress in

implementation actions scheduled during phase 2: 2015-2017. The recommendations are primarily aimed at the Arctic Council. However, success in conserving Arctic biodiversity also depends upon actions by non-Arctic states, regional and local authorities, industry and all who live work and travel in the Arctic. These recommendations, therefore, also provide a guide for action for states, authorities, and organizations beyond the Arctic Council.

Click here to see the presenter's slides and supporting documents (1, 2, 3).

Summary / Conclusion

Delegates expressed broad support for CAFF's ongoing work in this vein, and the Aleut International Association (AIA) in particular expressed a desire to increase their involvement.

6.2 TEEB scoping study for the Arctic

Background

The CAFF Working Group has initiated an effort to better understand ways that the Arctic Council can address the important topic of assessing and understanding the multiple services and values that ecosystems provide. At the Iqaluit 2015 Ministerial, Ministers approved the progress report for the scoping study on The Economics of Ecosystem and Biodiversity (TEEB). CAFF has now developed the Arctic TEEB scoping study document, which provides a basis for beginning a dialogue on the complexities of evaluating ecosystem services with the Arctic. Three documents (a memo, a stand-alone executive summary and the full scoping study) were presented. Continuing in this dialogue CAFF is exploring possible next steps and will provide an update to the SAOs at their March 2016 meeting.

Click here to see the presenter's slides and supporting documents (1, 2, 3).

Summary / Conclusion

Delegates reached consensus to approve the TEEB scoping study with, however, a caution from the U.S. that the approval extends only to the report as a tool to inform further deliberations within CAFF, and not as approval to move forward in any specific way with TEEB. In addition, two of the PPs urged that food security and the consideration of mixed economies both be considered as key components of any future work on TEEB.

Not listed in agenda – broader discussion of approach to biodiversity

Background

Following discussion of Actions for Biodiversity 2013-2021 and the TEEB scoping study, delegates to the meeting undertook a broader conversation on the Arctic Council's approach to its work on biodiversity.

Summary / Conclusion

During this brief discussion, several delegations raised the necessity of balancing, or integrating, conservation and sustainable use as the guiding principles of CAFF's work. The CAFF Chair emphasized that CAFF's biodiversity strategy does indeed look at sustainable use, and that conservation and sustainability are both reflected in CAFF's mandate. The SAO Chair observed that, while these two things are not inconsistent and current Arctic Council work may consider both, the conversation may indicate a need to consider shifting emphasis and thus the Council's focus a little bit.

7. Arctic communities

7.1 Educational toolkits for schoolchildren

Background

CAFF's communications strategy identifies four priority target audiences, one of which is Arctic residents and, in particular, younger audiences (as identified by the Arctic Biodiversity Congress and ABA recommendation #17). CAFF has developed "educational tool kits" to communicate information to school-age children in the Arctic (10-11 years old) about key Arctic ecosystems and processes. The educational kit consists of small pocket guides for children, as well as educator manuals. Three versions of these documents have been produced focusing on different Arctic ecosystems and elements:

- Life Linked to Tundra
- Life Linked to Ponds
- Life Linked to Spring

Click to see the presenter's slides and supporting documents (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7).

Summary / Conclusion

Delegates enthusiastically approved the toolkits, but offered suggestions for improvement in the future, largely related to increasing or improving the representation of indigenous knowledge (including sustainable use) and indigenous peoples in future editions. Some also noted that they preferred a more visable location of the Arctic Council logo on the pocket guides. Several delegations expressed eagerness to translate these toolkits into their local languages, and the SAO Chair encouraged all participants at the meeting to lend support, where possible, for the broadest possible dissemination in as many Arctic languages as possible.

7.2 Traditional and local knowledge

Background

At the June 2015 SAO executive meeting in Washington, DC, Working Groups were reminded to implement the TLK directive from the Iqaluit Declaration (2015). The SDWG's

project template was put forward as an example of documenting the consideration of TLK during project development. The SAO Chair was also asked to work with the ACS to develop a new component of the "Amarok" tracking tool to serve this purpose. The Working Groups were asked to report on the status of their efforts to implement the TLK directive.

Click here to see the supporting document.

Summary / Conclusion

After intensive discussions in which delegates addressed the difficult challenges of first, identifying where TLK is or is not appropriate for inclusion in a project, and second, addressing capacity gaps that may prevent inclusion of TLK in project work, delegates reached consensus on a few points. All agreed that the seven recommendations for the integration of TLK into the work of the Arctic Council that emerged from the 2015 Iqaluit Ministerial meeting apply to all Working Groups and at all levels of the Council. In addition, all agreed – though not without concerns – to adopt, on a provisional basis (1) the checklist as submitted to this meeting and (2) the inclusion of a corresponding new element in the "Amarok" project tracking tool. The checklist and the corresponding element are not an attempt to implement all seven recommendations but rather a first step. Delegates agreed to revisit both the tool itself and how it is working after acquiring a meaningful body of trial experience during this provisional adoption period. The SAO Chair proposed a review after one year, or after a sufficient number of projects; however, delegates did not discuss, or agree to, a specific date or number of projects. The SAO Chair also noted that three of the six Working Groups reported that they made some progress in addressing the seven TLK recommendations and all were encouraged to continue their work to implement the TLK directive.

7.3 Scoping workshop on prevention, preparedness and response for small communities

Background

A scoping workshop on prevention, preparedness and response for small communities was held in Anchorage, Alaska, October 7-8 2015. The workshop outcomes included the recommendation that the project focus on acute pollution (oil spills and hazardous and noxious substances), but that the deliverables should reference interoperability and scalability that could include incidents involving natural incidents and accidental release of radionuclides. The project should result in a sustainable, long-term approach, with deliverables that add value and are measurable. The proposed deliverables will help to provide guidance to small communities, including a community preparedness matrix (based on criteria co-developed with communities), an awareness video (highlighting community challenges and solutions), and a library of best practices. The speaker from AIA mentioned a forthcoming questionnaire from EPPR and asked delegates to respond promptly.

Summary / Conclusion

No delegates expressed concerns about the workshop, and the SAO Chair encouraged all delegates to respond to the questionnaire.

7.4 Meaningful Engagement of Arctic Indigenous Peoples and local communities in Marine Activities (MEMA)

Background

The MEMA project is an effort to compile and identify main themes and practices from an existing PAME database containing some 245 entries representing documents, recommendations and guidance on engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities in Arctic marine and coastal activities. PAME held a half-day consultation/outreach meeting in Anchorage, Alaska on 19 October 2015 and will convene a workshop on best practices for engagement in conjunction with PAME I-2016 (February 2016) or, possibly, with an SDWG meeting in 2016. PAME plans to deliver a database on policies and practices to the 2017 Ministerial meeting.

Click to see the presenter's slides.

Summary / Conclusion

The SDWG Chair expressed appreciation that PAME had reached out to the other WGs at such an early stage in the development of this project; Canada noted that all projects that include communities are very welcome. The SAO Chair thanked PAME for its good work in this effort.

7.5. Reducing the Incidence of Suicide in Indigenous Groups – Strengths United through Networks (RISING SUN)

Background

The RISING SUN initiative aims to create common metrics to evaluate the key correlates and outcomes associated with suicide prevention interventions across the Arctic States. The project's impactful first workshop occurred 19-20 September 2015 in Anchorage, Alaska and included participation from community members and health practitioners affected by mental health issues in Arctic communities. The two follow-on workshops will include time for community members to share their stories about the impact of suicide in their communities.

Click here to see the supporting document.

Summary / Conclusion

Delegates expressed universal belief in the importance of the Council's work on suicide prevention. In particular, Canada asked if more information on this project could be distributed internally and also wondered if more information was available for communities. PP delegates emphasized the direct impact that this issue has in their communities and highlighted food security, local governance, economic development and health care as areas of work that relate to this issue.

7.6 Operationalizing One Health in the Arctic

Due to meeting time contraints, this agenda item was postponed to the March 2016 SAO meeting where it may be included with a report out on the resilience workshop. Click to see the supporting document that was submitted.

Not listed in the agenda: general discussion of Arctic communities

Background

The SAO Chair posed several questions to all delegates: Are we focusing on the right things in relation to our work on Arctic communities? Are there new things we should be focused on during the Finnish Chairmanship and beyond? Can we think beyond the two-year Chairmanship intervals to have a longer-term strategic vision for this work?

A number of delegates, particularly several PPs, expressed interest in pursuing these questions, including in relation to governance issues, food security, youth and education.

Summary / Conclusion

Without offering any conclusions from the discussion, the SAO Chair noted that he intends to return to these questions at the March 2016 meeting.

8. Ocean

8.1 General discussion of ocean work in the Arctic Council

Background

The SAO Chair noted that the Arctic Council has done in the past, and is currently doing, a broad range of work related to the ocean. In fact, almost all of the Working Groups and Task Forces are doing work that in some way relates to different aspects of the marine environment. He raised questions about whether this work dovetails properly with the work of other international fora relating to oceans, including the United Nations. Are the Arctic States fulfilling the commitments they have made on these issues in other fora through their participation in the Arctic Council? Are we looking ahead to the set of issues coming next?

Summary / Conclusion

PAME noted that the ocean creates special dynamics for this region because it is central to the lives of the people who live there. It is both very intimate to the local people and yet it is very global in nature. The challenge is to straddle these two perspectives successfully, something that PAME is attempting to do, including through the Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (AMSP).

Delegates undertook a general discussion of the matter without a specific conclusion. Several delegates drew attention to Arctic Ocean acidification, marine biodiversity and productivity, and microplastics in the Arctic Ocean as issues of present and increasing

concern. Norway and the U.S. both noted the importance of the Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation (TFAMC) as a mechanism to assess the network of existing ocean work within the Arctic Council and elsewhere, and to provide guidance on future issues in which the Arctic Council can provide value-added work without duplicating work that is ongoing in other fora. The SAO Chair encouraged further thinking on this issue.

8.2 Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation (TFAMC)

Background

The TFAMC was established at the Iqaluit 2015 Ministerial meeting and is co-chaired by Norway, the U.S. and Iceland. The TFAMC has a mandate to "consider future needs for strengthened cooperation on Arctic marine areas, as well as mechanisms to meet these needs, and to make recommendations on the nature and scope of any such mechanisms." The first meeting of the TFAMC took place in Oslo on 21-22 September 2015, and it is expected to complete its analysis no later than the 2017 Ministerial meeting. The U.S. co-chair presented on behalf of the TFAMC, noting that all delegations will need to have substantive discussions in their capitals about future cooperation prior to the next meeting (February 2016, Stockholm), including reflection on a "straw man" document that the co-chairs will present before that time.

Click here to see the supporting document.

Summary / Conclusion

This was an item for information. During discussions, the U.S. and others noted the importance of intersessional work including responding to a needs assessment on the part of the States, and emphasized the political nature of this Task Force. Norway, supported by Russia, raised again the possibility of using the TFAMC as a forum to consider how the Arctic States will meet their existing marine commitments in other fora and under other instruments. In response to a direct question, the SAO Chair made clear that the membership of the TFAMC is the same as the membership of the Arctic Council (i.e., representatives of the eight Arctic States and the six PP organizations). The Task Force can invite experts to contribute to its work as it did at its first meeting, including chairs of relevant Arctic Council Working Groups. Observers may also participate in the Task Force, in accordance with the Observer Manual.

8.3 Arctic Marine Strategic Plan 2015-2025 (AMSP)

Background

The AMSP 2015-2025 was approved by Arctic Council Ministers at the 2015 Iqaluit Ministerial meeting. The aim of the implementation plan for the AMSP's forty strategic actions is to provide a structured approach that tracks follow-up activities (new and ongoing) in close coordination and cooperation with other Arctic Council Working Groups and with overall guidance from the SAOs. A half-day consultation with the other Working Groups took place in Anchorage on 19 October 2015.

Click to see the presenter's slides and supporting document.

Summary / Conclusion

The PAME Chair briefed delegates on the history of the AMSP, and on the importance of ongoing efforts to encourage and track implementation of the AMSP 2015-2025. Following the presentation, delegates from some States noted the importance of this work in relation to the work in the TFAMC. This item was for information.

8.4 Update on the 2016 MOSPA exercise

Background

As part of EPPR's responsibility for maintaining and updating the Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic (MOSPA) Operational Guidelines, the U.S. hosted an exercise-planning workshop on 15-17 September 2015 in Washington, DC to discuss the U.S.-led second functional exercise of the MOSPA that is planned for 2016. Arctic States, Permanent Participants and Observers participated in the workshop and worked to identify potential scenarios for the exercise.

Summary / Conclusion

The EPPR Chair drew delegates' attention to the ongoing work to choose a high-risk scenario to use in the second functional exercise of the MOSPA, coming up in 2016. She pointed out the lessons drawn from earlier exercises in Canada and Finland, and noted that the upcoming exercise will provide an opportunity to test, among other things, procedures for bringing people and equipment across borders, dealing with oiled wildlife, etc.

The Russian SAO observed that a crewless barge had drifted in recent months from the coast of Canada through Canadian, U.S. and Russian waters, and – due to good cooperation among the three countries – was eventually returned without serious incident.

Note: In related work, the U.S. delegation notified all delegates on the morning of 22 October that Secretary of State John Kerry had approved the diplomatic note informing other states that the U.S. has now ratified the Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic.

9. Other Arctic Council projects and initiatives

9.1 Task Force on Telecommunications Infrastructure in the Arctic (TFTIA)

Background

The Task Force on Telecommunications Infrastructure in the Arctic (TFTIA) was established at the 2015 Ministerial meeting in Iqaluit, Canada. The Task Force has a mandate to "coordinate a circumpolar assessment of telecommunications infrastructure and networks" and "deliver a completed assessment to include, among other things, recommendations for

public-private partnerships to enhance telecommunications access and service in the Arctic." The TFTIA is co-chaired by Norway and the Kingdom of Denmark. The first meeting of the TFTIA took place in Chicago on 23-24 September 2015.

Click to see the presenter's slides and supporting document.

Summary / Conclusion

The SAO from the Kingdom of Denmark gave a presentation on the work of the Task Force and noted the focus on communications and satellite capacity for purposes of economic growth, improving communications in local communities, environmental monitoring, monitoring of ship and air traffic, sharing scientific data, and managing search-and-rescue operations or oil spill response operations in the region. He noted the Task Force's to-do list, and requested that the co-Chairs (in absentia) provide a more precise distinction between what the private sector and the public sector do in this field. The to-do list includes:

- Identify those challenges that will best be addressed by circumpolar, rather than purely national, solutions;
- Acquire data about existing coverage, and produce "heat maps"; and
- Acquire more detailed information about needs of different user groups (e.g., communities, navigation, environmental monitoring, aviation, telemedicine...).

The speaker also requested greater clarity on the link between the TFTIA and the related Working Group of the Arctic Economic Council. Several other delegations commented on the importance of this connection. Many called for not duplicating the work between the AEC and the TFTIA and most agreed that this is an endeavor where the AEC adds value.

Canada noted the importance of considering connections with sub-federal governments in Canada, and multiple PP delegations emphasized the importance of this work in improving health services and economic development in their communities.

9.2 The Task Force for Enhancing Scientific Cooperation in the Arctic (SCTF)

Background

The SCTF held its sixth meeting in August 2015. One of the co-chairs, (the Russian SAO) gave a brief update on the SCTF's progress and further plans.

Summary / Conclusion

The SCTF will meet again in December 2015 to continue the negotiation of what will be a legally binding agreement. The work is progressing well in a very positive atmosphere, but there are still substantial issues that remain to be solved. After the agreement text is agreed upon, the process to finalize the domestic procedures will have to be completed before the agreement can be signed. For some States such processes can take up to four months. Additional time will need to be set aside for translation of the agreement text.

9.3 Unmanned Aircraft Systems

Background

In June 2015, the AMAP Expert Group on Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS EG) finalized the document "Implementing Scientific Data Collection across the Arctic Oceanic Region Utilizing Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)," also known as the "UAS white paper." AMAP also finalized its work on an Arctic Science Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) Operator's Handbook.

Delegates were asked to consider (1) whether the UAS white paper could be approved, and (2) whether it might serve as the basis to work towards a more formal agreement of some kind on this issue.

Click to see the presenter's slides and the supporting documents (1, 2, 3).

Summary / Conclusion

Delegates approved the white paper in the form in which it was submitted to the meeting, gave clearance for the "pre-publication" disclaimer to be removed, and applauded AMAP's groundbreaking work in this area. However, several delegates expressed doubts about the possibility of working toward a more formal agreement and some suggested that AMAP first test whether the white paper is achieving its goal before discussing the possibility of a binding agreement. Some delegates also questioned whether the Arctic Council would be the appropriate forum in which to develop such as agreement, even if there were a desire to pursue one. As a result, there was no agreement to act on the suggestion to take further steps in that direction. The U.S. indicated the desire to think about hosting some kind of celebration of the report's release in March that would include the broader scientific community.

9.4 Future Arctic Leaders

Background

Canada hosted the Future Arctic Leaders Workshop on April 23, 2015 in Ottawa. Youth from several Arctic States participated and provided an opportunity for young leaders selected by Arctic States and Permanent Participants to come together to learn about the Arctic Council and to discuss how the Arctic Council could work to ensure a healthier and more prosperous Arctic. The outcomes from the workshop, including the papers written by the youth participants, along with information on the workshop and recommendations, have been compiled into the final report, now available for review.

Delegates were asked to consider, in particular, whether there are ways in which the Arctic Council could act upon the recommendations by the participants in the Future Arctic Leaders Workshop.

Click here to see the presenter's slides and supporting document.

Summary / Conclusion

The speaker (Canadian SAO) asked the WGs to consider the recommendations. There were many positive comments from State and Permanent Participant delegates on the Future Arctic Leaders Workshop, including the observation that three participants in the Workshop were also present in the room for this SAO meeting (two as part of the Saami Council's delegation and one for AIA). The SAO Chair called attention to the recommendations and asked Working Groups and the Communications & Outreach Group to review them to see which elements, if any, could be followed up on and to report back to the next SAO meeting.

10. Other business

10.1 Multilateral audit report on the Arctic Council

Background

The audit authorities of the Kingdom of Denmark, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States conducted a study of their national authorities' work with the Arctic Council. The study includes several recommendations to the Arctic Council.

Click to see the presenter's slides and supporting documents (1, 2).

Summary / Conclusion

The speaker (Norwegian SAO) noted both the challenge and the value of educating audit authorities about the work of the Arctic Council, and highlighted that the audit authorities had reported concerns about the structure of the Council, including overlapping mandates of Working Groups, Task Forces and Expert Groups, and transparency and accountability in the Council's work. Norway shared that this audit has led to a series of changes to improve internal coordination and increase awareness, as well as transparency and accountability. The U.S. informed delegates that they are developing a national report of implementation of key Arctic Council commitments and mandates that have come from the various Ministerial Declarations in hopes of inspiring other Arctic States to do the same.

10.2 Oil prevention lead & follow-up to the Task Force on Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Prevention (TFOPP)

Background

At the June 2015 SAO executive session in Washington, DC, EPPR and PAME were asked to come to agreement on a single point of contact for any follow-up work from the Framework Plan for Cooperation on Prevention of Oil Pollution from Petroleum and Maritime Activities in the Marine Areas of the Arctic. The Framework Plan was welcomed and adopted by Ministers at the 2015 Iqaluit Ministerial meeting, and it was decided to begin implementing the Framework Plan through Working Groups, expert-level dialogues and further actions.

Summary / Conclusion

As instructed, EPPR and PAME reached agreement on this point; the EPPR Chair will be the point-of-contact for follow up work on this Framework Plan, assisted by the vice-chair of PAME.

Norway noted a desire to speak informally with PAME and EPPR about potential follow-up on the Framework Plan and the work of the TFOPP more generally.

10.3 Miscellaneous other business

- The group reached consensus to adopt the proposed addendum to the Observer Manual for Subsidiary Bodies, as adjusted between days 1 and 2 of the meeting and circulated to States and PPs on day 2. The final version is to be circulated via the ACS.
- Norway informed all delegates that the Secretariat for the Arctic Economic Council had been formally opened in Tromsø on 8 September.
- The SAO Chair announced that during the Executive Session there had been a discussion on the review of Observers. He noted that the Arctic Council has committed itself to review the activities of Observers. The purpose of the review is to provide feedback and improve the engagement of Observers. The SAOs have decided not to review all Observers for the time being, but to first review those accredited in 1996 and 1998. The other Observers may be subject to review during the next Chairmanship and under each Chairmanship roughly half of the Observers will be reviewed. The Chairmanship will send written notification to Observers. The requirement for all Observers to submit information about their activities 120 days before the next Ministerial, as described in the Rules of Procedures of the Arctic Council, will still apply.