

The Inuvik Declaration

We, Ministers of the Arctic Countries:

Recalling that Ministers of the eight Arctic governments met in Rovaniemi, Finland in June 1991 and signed the "Declaration on the Protection of the Arctic Environments", establishing the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS);

Recalling also that Ministers met in Nuuk, Greenland in September 1993 and signed the "Declaration on Environment and Development in the Arctic.", reaffirming their commitment to collective action;

Recognizing the importance of the Arctic regions to each Arctic country, to indigenous peoples and other Arctic residents, and to the world as a whole;

Aware that the economy, health, social and cultural well-being of Arctic people are affected directly by the condition of the Arctic environment, which is sensitive to changes caused by both local and distant human activities;

Aware also that environmental changes in the Arctic regions have significant local, regional and global impact;

Acknowledging the special role and responsibilities of the Arctic Countries with respect to protection, conservation and restoration of the Arctic environment, the conservation of Arctic flora and fauna, and the special role of indigenous peoples of the Arctic in pursuit of these goals;

Acknowledging also the need for sustainable development and use of resources in the Arctic for the benefit of indigenous peoples and other people living in the Arctic region;

Convinced that the major issues of the protection of the Arctic terrestrial, freshwater, marine and atmospheric environments require local, regional, circumpolar and global cooperation and coordination;

Aware of the special needs for investment, scientific and technical assistance and international cooperation to protect human health and ecosystems in the Arctic;

Recognizing that pollution prevention, often coupled with investments to modernize aging infrastructure, is essential to the long-term health of Arctic ecosystems, Arctic indigenous peoples, as well as national and Arctic economies;

Taking into account the need for support of the programmes of the Arctic indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation in the context of the Proclamation by the United Nations (UN) Decade of the World's Indigenous People;

Reaffirming the support of our countries to the principles of the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 of the UN Conference on Environment and Development; and the Convention

on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, 1972 (London Convention); the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; the UN Convention on Biological Diversity; the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's (UN ECE) Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP), and on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context; the Global Programme of Action on Protecting the Marine Environment from Land-based Sources; and other international agreements that are relevant and apply to Arctic regions, and supporting the important contributions being made by the AEPS countries in the promotion and implementation of these agreements;

Encouraging the ratification and compliance with the global and regional international legal instruments referred to in the Third Ministerial Conference Report in the field of the environment of relevance to the Arctic region;

Taking note of the statement and recommendations of the Second Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic region held on March 13-14, 1996 in Yellowknife, Canada;

Bearing in mind that we agree to work towards and support international arrangements to control environmentally harmful emissions that may affect the Arctic, to engage non-UN ECE countries in the reduction of global pollution, and to cooperate with other international environmental monitoring, research, conservation and protection activities that are relevant to the Arctic environment; and

Having noted the progress made by the AEPS and its programmes since its beginning in 1991, and in particular the report of the Third Ministerial Conference in Inuvik Canada in March 1996.

Hereby make the following Declaration:

1. We reaffirm our commitment to protection of the Arctic environment as a priority, and to the implementation of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), as outlined in the Rovaniemi and Nuuk Declarations.
2. We adopt the report of the Third Ministerial Conference on the Protection of the Arctic Environment.
3. We acknowledge with gratitude the work and reports of the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), the Programme on Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFE), the Programme for Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME), the Programme on Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) and the work of the Task Force on Sustainable Development and Utilization (TFSDU).0
4. We welcome with appreciation the main report presented by PAME.

5. We recognize that a bold and vibrant AEPS is an essential component of a sustainable development approach in the Arctic, and emphasize the importance of integrating the AEPS Programmes with Arctic economics and social initiatives to uphold the principles of sustainable development. In view of this, we agree to establish a Working Group on Sustainable Development and Utilization (SDU).

6. We set the following priorities for the Senior Arctic Affairs Officials (SAAOs) and the AEPS Programmes.

For SAAOs, the priorities are directing the AEPS process and providing integration, policy and management direction to the AEPS Programmes and the AEPS Secretariat, as well as conducting an assessment of the present organizational structure of the AEPS with a view to ensuring cost-effective and well coordinated programmes; developing a framework and estimate for common-cost sharing, including in-kind contributions for our consideration at the next Ministerial Conference; and exploring opportunities for obtaining funds from other international programmes and international financial institutions. The SAAOs, with the assistance of the Permanent Participants, will also undertake to develop revised Terms of Reference for SDU and an initial workplan for the Arctic Council's sustainable development work, to be presented for discussion to the Arctic Council Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs).

For AMAP, the priorities are publishing in early 1997, the State of the Arctic Environment Report (SOAER) and its accompanying technical document, the Arctic Assessment Report (AAR); holding a symposium in Norway in 1997 to facilitate a senior review of the implications to the AEPS of the AAR; preparing two short papers on i) the feasibility of developing sub-regional cooperative oil-related monitoring and assessment activities, and ii) the state of knowledge concerning organotins in the marine environment; and preparing a discussion and strategy paper evaluating priorities and options for a second phase of AMAP's work.

For CAFF, the priorities are continuing the development of the Circumpolar Protected Area Network (CPAN); assisting countries with the implementation of the Circumpolar Murre Conservation Strategy and Action Plan; and developing a draft Arctic strategy relating to the goals of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

For PAME, the priorities are to be delivered by lead countries which will coordinate the following joint efforts: to address the development of an Arctic Regional Programme of Action on marine pollution resulting from land-based activities; to develop, in cooperation with other AEPS Programmes, guidelines for offshore petroleum activities; to collect information on current and future shipping activities and their associated environmental effects; and to maintain an overview of the effectiveness of existing international arrangements relevant to the objectives of the PAME Programme area. PAME will coordinate the lead country progress reports to the next Ministerial Conference.

For EPPR, the priorities are completing the Arctic Guide for Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response; contributing to the development of preventative, mitigating and response measures for oil and gas accidental releases in the Arctic; continuing to involve indigenous peoples in accident prevention and response; preparing an analysis of the effectiveness of existing accident reporting systems; refining the Risk Analysis on Environmental Threats to the Arctic, including an assessment of the need for future action; and analysing the adequacy and effectiveness of the existing international agreements and other arrangements in the Arctic within EPPR's area of expertise.

For SDU, the priority is for the Working Group to continue to operate with the current terms of reference of the Task Force on SDU and with specific direction from the SAAOs, pending the expeditious creation of the Arctic Council.

7. We note with satisfaction the establishment of the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat and the support it has given to the AEPS Permanent Participants to facilitate their participation in the AEPS. We further note the success of the Seminar on Integration of Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge held in Iceland, and its useful recommendations, and express our thanks to the governments of Denmark and Iceland for moving forward this major component of the AEPS.

8. We recognize and affirm the right of all Arctic indigenous peoples to be represented in the AEPS. We acknowledge the contributions of the AEPS Permanent Participants, and encourage them and other indigenous peoples' organizations to participate actively in the work of the AEPS. We emphasize the importance of indigenous peoples and their knowledge to the AEPS and its programmes.

9. We affirm the need for a clear statement of ethical principles for research, data gathering and dissemination, agreeable to all countries, to Arctic indigenous peoples and to other northern residents and to the scientific community; we note the work underway by the AEPS and the International Arctic Sciences Committee (IASC). We urge that this work be completed and presented at the next Ministerial meeting.

10. We support the efforts of the Russian Federation in addressing the environmental problems in the Russian Arctic bearing in mind the Declaration of the Pan-European Ministerial Conference in Sofia, October 1995 in which matters concerning environmental financing in the central and eastern European countries for reducing current levels of pollution and the risk of environmental degradation are given particular attention.

11. We support the continuing negotiations and collaboration in relevant international fora to integrate the AEPS with local, regional, circumpolar and global environmental protection activities such as: the work currently undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to prepare for the negotiation of a global legally binding instrument for controlling emissions and discharges of persistent organic pollutants (POPs); the protocol negotiations on POPs and heavy metals under the framework of the UN ECE-LRTAP Convention; the International Atomic Energy

Agency's International Arctic Seas Assessment Programme and highly value the contribution being made by the AEPS countries in the evolution of new international agreements.

12. We endorse the EPPR recommendation that where significant accidents occur which directly or indirectly cause, or threaten to cause, environmental or health effects in the Arctic, all Arctic Countries shall, through their National Contact Points, be notified promptly and receive further information as appropriate.

13. We agree to cooperate with the Russian Federation in searching for investments required for implementing programmes and projects aimed at the conservation and restoration of the traditional habitats of the indigenous peoples of the North of the Russian Federation.

14. We agree to ensure implementation of the priorities as listed in the present Declaration and to make every effort to provide and maintain the necessary resources to enable each country and indigenous peoples to participate fully in the activities of the AEPS.

15. We are fully committed to the earliest possible establishment of the Arctic Council.

In witness whereof, we have signed this Declaration.

For the Government of Canada
Ronald A. Irwin
Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern
Development
For the Government of Denmark
Marianne Jensen
Minister for Health, The Environment and
Research and Nordic Affairs
For the Government of Finland
Markku Nurmi
Director General, Ministry of the Environment
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Inuvik, March 21,1996