

Terms of Reference for a Sustainable Development Program

February 5, 1998

Noting that the Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council provides that the Council will adopt terms of reference for, and oversee and coordinate a sustainable development program;

Further noting that the Declaration affirms the commitment of the Arctic States to sustainable development in the Arctic region, including economic and social development, improved health conditions and cultural well-being;

Affirming the commitment of the Arctic Council to the protection of the Arctic Environment, including the health of Arctic ecosystems, maintenance of biodiversity in the Arctic region and conservation and sustainable use of natural resources;

Desiring to facilitate the consideration of proposals for cooperative activities which will form part of the sustainable development program;

The Arctic Council hereby adopts the following terms of reference for the Council's sustainable development program:

1. The goal of the sustainable development program of the Arctic Council is to propose and adopt steps to be taken by the Arctic States to advance sustainable development in the Arctic, including opportunities to protect and enhance the environment, and the economies, cultures and health of indigenous communities and of other inhabitants of the Arctic, as well as to improve the environmental, economic and social conditions of Arctic communities as a whole.
2. Consistent with the Arctic Council Rules of Procedure, proposals for cooperative activities which will form part of the sustainable development program should also conform to the following requirements:

Proposals shall clearly outline the issues to be addressed and any anticipated financial needs and implications, and suggest ways of dealing with those needs and implications. A proposal should provide for participation by more than one Arctic State and should identify if a working group or other subsidiary body would be needed to oversee its implementation.

Proposals for such activities should include a description of the nature of the issue to be addressed and identify the benefit to be realized, including projected relationship to the experience and needs of the indigenous and other residents of the Arctic.

Proposals should include a description of the relationship of the proposed work to activities currently underway within the Arctic Council (e.g., AMAP, CAFF, PAME, EPPR), or in any other relevant fora (e.g., Barents Council, Commission on Sustainable Development, IASC).

3. A proposal, including any comments received, should be taken up at a Senior Arctic Official (SAO) meeting. The SAOs should consider the merit of the proposal, including the degree to which it is consistent with the Declaration and with the decisions taken at Ministerial meetings, regional applicability, level of sponsorship and sufficiency of any financial support required. The SAOs may call for further revision of the proposal or forward it to a Ministerial meeting for consideration and decision.