

The Northern Forum

Number 100, Resolution

Concerning the Relationship Between the Northern Forum and the Arctic Council

Issue:

The Arctic Council is a high-level intergovernmental forum that provides a mechanism to address the common concerns and challenges faced by the Arctic governments and the people of the Arctic. Its members are the national governments of the world's eight Arctic states.

The Northern Forum is the world's only group representing subnational governments from throughout the North. For ten years, the Forum has worked at the leading edge of historical trends in broader international representation of national and subnational interests. During this time, the Forum's members have passed six Resolutions regarding the Council and its predecessor the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS).

Several of the Forum's current and completed inter-governmental projects are compatible with the work of the Council. Both groups should support joint implementation of projects, and the synergies that would develop as a result. To benefit all northern residents, preserve northern and Arctic environments, and promote peaceful international relations, the Council and the Forum should enjoy strong and effective relations.

Recommendation:

The Executive Committee recommends that the Board of Governors seek to strengthen and make more effective the Northern Forum's relations with the Arctic Council.

Be It Resolved, by the Board of Governors of the Northern Forum:

That the Northern Forum congratulates the Arctic Council on its evolution since 1996, noting particularly the involvement of Arctic indigenous peoples. The Forum seeks to develop a working relationship with the Arctic Council by:

- continuing to promote joint project implementation (see below);
- participating in plenary Senior Arctic Officials and Ministerial meetings of the Council, including seeking opportunities to brief the Council on behalf of the Forum's members;
- inviting the nations' Senior Arctic Officials and Working Group Chairs to participate in Northern Forum General Assemblies and other meetings, including giving briefings on the activities of the Council;
- promoting better coordination among regional actors working with the Council on specific issues; and
- joining with the Council to raise awareness of Arctic and northern issues, in order to address issues best resolved in national capitals and international arenas; and

That the Northern Forum hopes to maintain its status as Observer of the Arctic Council, and to help the Council better to utilize the capabilities of its Observers. The Forum also seeks eventual recognition within the Council as a Permanent Participant.

That the Northern Forum has particular interest in cooperating with the Arctic Council on sustainable development, including its economic, environmental, social and cultural aspects. The Forum welcomes the creation of the Council's Sustainable Development Working Group

(SDWG), and applauds Finland's aim to strengthen cooperation with the Northern Forum on sustainable tourism development; and

That in keeping with the Forum's mission, its members seek meaningful cooperation with the Council and the SDWG through the following and other means:

- participating in meetings of the SDWG;
- exploring closer cooperation, including joint implementation, regarding projects in tourism, reindeer, northern timberline forests, infrastructure development, coastal fishery management, information & communications technology (including telemedicine and distance education), health, education and training, the role of women, and children and youth; and

That the Northern Forum will promote closer collaboration with the Arctic Council regarding environmental issues, particularly at the project level. The Forum will seek:

- to participate in meetings of the Environmental Preparation, Preparedness and Response (EPPR), Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) and Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) Working Groups as possible and appropriate;
- to cooperate in the acquisition and use of data for projects relating to monitoring of contaminants in the environment, conservation of biodiversity and minimization of habitat fragmentation, circumpolar protected areas, conservation of biodiversity and bird species, climate change and assessment; and
- to develop northern oil spill and nuclear emission response systems that will improve coordination among regional and national governments and other appropriate entities.

Signed and Approved this 29th day of October, 2001, in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada