

## SDWG Report to SAOs

### **Introduction:**

The Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) and the Sustainable Development Programme were established by the Arctic Council Ministers in Iqaluit in 1998. The SDWG had 11 projects reporting to it in the period 2002-2004, and engaged in numerous other activities.

The SDWG has had four meetings during the Icelandic chairmanship period 2002-2004. The first meeting was held in Reykjavík, Iceland on 7-8 April 2003, the second meeting in Svartsengi, Iceland, on 22 Oct. 2003, the third meeting in Selfoss, Iceland, on 3 May 2004, and the fourth meeting in Whitehorse, Canada, on 14-16 Sept. 2004.

This report is organized into four main parts as follows:

- PART I. Progress During 2002-2004
- PART II. Activities Requiring Guidance from SAOs
- PART III. Deliverables for Ministerial 2004
- PART IV. Work Plans for 2004-2006

## **PART I. Progress During 2002-2004**

### **Selected Activities**

#### **SDWG Contribution to AMAP's Petroleum Hydrocarbons Assessment**

The SDWG discussed a letter from AMAP seeking advice on how to proceed with its Petroleum Hydrocarbon Assessment, notably if the SDWG could help prepare a proposed chapter on social and economic aspects of petroleum developments. The group agreed that such a chapter, assessing both the risks and benefits of such development for humans in a balanced way, would be essential in such an assessment. **It would have to be assured that the "human chapter" would not receive less resources than others.** Subsequently, AMAP decided to include such a chapter in its Assessment, and the SDWG contributed a list of contributing authors to the chapter to AMAP.

#### **Cooperation with University of the Arctic**

Cooperation with the UArctic was discussed at some SDWG meetings. It was agreed that relevant SDWG projects would contribute to the curriculum of the UArctic, subject to further discussion and agreement between parties. The University of the Arctic provided the SDWG with information on its ongoing and planned activities, which is attached as an annex to this report.

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#### **The Arctic Human Development Report (Iceland)**

The Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) was accepted as a new priority project of the Arctic Council in October 2002. It was established as part of Iceland's Chairmanship Programme, and overseen by a Report Steering Committee, but reported on its progress to the SDWG.

The AHDR will provide an orientation to the human dimensions of the Arctic, an assessment of the basic systems, and an identification of a series of crosscutting issues. Given the tight schedule imposed on this project, the AHDR can make no claim to be comprehensive, encyclopaedic, or all encompassing. The purpose of the report is to identify and provide relevant policy insights of the authors on key issues, themes and, in particular, trends that are of high

importance and immediate concern to livelihoods and the welfare of people and societies in the circumpolar region.

The essential goal of this assessment is to identify and synthesize existing knowledge in the interests of constructing and presenting an integrated picture not only of human development in the Arctic but also of the similarities and differences between life in the Arctic and life in the other parts of the countries whose northern areas make up the Arctic. The AHDR is envisioned as a contribution to the rise of scientific assessment in the social sciences more generally, as well as an important contribution to the development of a persuasive and progressive program of work for the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group.

### **Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic, SLiCA (Denmark/Greenland)**

SLiCA is a joint international project that conducts a comparative study of living conditions among the Inuit of the United States, Canada, Greenland, Saami peoples in Norway, Sweden, Finland and the indigenous peoples of the Kola Peninsula and the Yupik in Chukotka in Russia. The major objectives of the SLiCA are:

- The development of a new research design for comparative investigations of the living conditions of the Inuit and Saami populations in the Arctic.
- A mapping of the living conditions among the Inuit and Saami in the Arctic.
- Carrying out a comparative dynamic social analysis of the causal relations between various individual resources and between individual well-being and diverse political, economic, cultural and technological settings.
- An improved basis for decision-making in relation to policy planning and implementation.
- The establishment of an interdisciplinary network of researchers and research institutions engaged in living conditions research in the Arctic.
- Education and involvement of postdocs, PhD candidates and undergraduates under the SLiCA project.

### **Telemedicine (USA)**

Three major telemedicine activities involving Arctic countries occurred in the 2003-2004 project period: the 12th International Congress on Circumpolar Health in Nuuk, Greenland (Sept 10-14, 2003) which included a telemedicine component; the ICT conference in Akeruyi (October 2003); and the US International Telemedicine Conference in Anchorage Alaska entitled *From Global to Local: Innovation and Evaluation of Telemedicine* (March 2004). This forum provided valuable mechanisms for Arctic residents to exchange information on accomplishments and challenges ahead. Proceedings from the March 2004 conference have been published.

The US International Telemedicine Conference was the final activity in Phase I of the original Arctic Council telemedicine project. The goals of the original US-lead telemedicine project have been completed. Through three international forums in 2003-2004 in Greenland, Iceland and the US, Arctic nations have shared their expertise and lessons learned. This interaction has led to additional activities in the IT and telemedicine area.

### **Emerging Infectious Diseases (US)**

The purpose of this project is to establish an integrated International Circumpolar Surveillance (ICS) system for infectious diseases by creating a network of hospital and public health laboratories throughout the Arctic. The network would allow collection and sharing of uniform laboratory and epidemiologic data between Arctic countries that will describe the prevalence of infectious diseases of concern to Arctic residents and assist in the formulation of prevention and control strategies.

Human health is a critical component of any sustainable development program. Sustainable economic development is frequently accompanied by changes in a number of factors, which impact human health and promote the emergence of infectious disease problems. With increased air travel and international trade Arctic communities are no longer isolated from infectious disease threats. Circumpolar surveillance of infectious diseases may serve as an early warning system of emerging threats and provide increased capacity to monitor the effectiveness of public health control measures.

Analysis of data for 2001 is complete and has been posted on the Arctic Investigations Program web site at [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/aip/pdf/ics\\_report2001.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/aip/pdf/ics_report2001.pdf). The 2002 report is near completion, and 2003 data is being received from all member countries. During 2002-2004 numerous presentations on the International Circumpolar Surveillance project were made at International meetings.

### **Children and Youth (Canada)**

In January 2004, a new Canadian chair took over the responsibility as overall coordinator of the Programme. Since then several changes have taken place. The most important change has been to make the Networking Programme an overarching, or umbrella, programme, which now includes the Internship Programme. The Children and Youth Initiative will present several concrete deliverables in November 2004.

### **Health Programme**

1. A Health Programme Report will be presented to Arctic Ministers in November 2004 on 16 health indicators. This report will mark the completion of the data collection and analysis portion of the project meant to provide Arctic Ministers with a baseline snapshot of the health of children and youth in the arctic. Although the project has encountered numerous difficulties in obtaining comparable data for many of the selected health indicators, the analysis of the available information does provide an overview of the present state and provides information on where more work still needs to be done to improve the health of

children and youth. Some of the resulting recommendations will also address data collection /comparability issues.

2. The collection of best practice models for practical interventions in four key target areas at the national, regional or community level was started in 2000, but was never completed due to limited response. In May 2004, countries and permanent participants agreed to continue this project with a renewed action plan which is in draft. The best practice project will collect and evaluate examples of effective health promotion programs targeting children and youth. The results of the project will be practical examples from all the circumpolar countries which can then be used as models for countries to adapt for their own population or to address other issues. The work of arctic communities in improving the health of children and youth will then be showcased at international fora.

**Networking Programme:**

**PART II. Activities requiring guidance from SAOs**

1. **Sustainable Development Action Plan**  
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2. **Project Proposal: Sustainable Development of Indigenous Peoples of Russian North**
3. **Project proposal: The economy of the north: Impacts and effects of climate change.**
4. **SDWG follow up to the AHDR**
5. **SDWG contribution to ICT Conference Follow-up**  
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6. **Aviation**  
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**7. New Telemedicine project: Cooperation Project between US and Russia**

The intent is to continue the US telemedicine project with the primary focus being the pilot project between two Russian regions and the United States. At a meeting in Anchorage in March, 2004 it was agreed that Alaska representatives, Sakha Republic and Khanty Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug would pursue a cooperative project involving information sharing and technology transfer in a pilot project. A pilot project is being designed that will place telemedicine equipment in four selected villages in both Russian regions involved.

The project is intended to build a network of specialists who can continue to communicate and assist each other in addressing telemedicine issues.

**8. Health Cluster**

SDWG discussed at its Whitehorse meeting the suggestion to form a "health cluster" within the SDWG to coordinate its three health-related projects. It was agreed that this could be a promising way to move health-related issues forward within the SDWG, and that a health cluster might not only work on coordinating better existing activities, but suggest ways to expand and improve the networks already in place and suggest new priorities or activities, using inter alia the Health chapter of the AHDR and the results of the Finnish-organized 2002 health workshop in Oulu, which were summarized in a memo presented by Finland. It was agreed that the first step in forming a "health cluster" would be for leaders of the US- and Canada-led health-related projects to meet with leaders for Finnish and Arctic Athabaskan Council health projects at the first opportunity, ideally in connection with the next SDWG meeting. It is asked that the SAOs formally or informally agree to these steps in the forming of a health cluster within the SDWG.

**PART III. Deliverables for Ministerial 2004**

**1. *Arctic Human Development Report***

The completed Report will be presented at the 2004 Ministerial meeting as a major deliverable as part of the Icelandic Chairmanship programme. The AHDR reported to SDWG and outlined how it could influence SDWG work. Each chapter of the AHDR will contain a mix of qualitative and quantitative information. The chapters will include a number of highlighted boxes with concise texts on case studies, pertinent issues and topics, from various sources, such as researchers, organizations, institutes and Arctic inhabitants. The AHDR will be a scientific, fully peer reviewed document. Authors will be responsible for content, which will not be politically negotiated, while care will be taken to avoid offending sensibilities. The AHDR will

not contain policy recommendations, but will be policy-relevant, identifying gaps and issues which could influence SDWG agenda. The AHDR will identify some components of well-being that are important for Arctic residents, which are not measured in UNDP Human Dev. Reports, such as: fate-control, cultural continuity, and contact with nature.

2. *Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP)*

3. *Capacity-Building Best Practices*

At the May 2004 SDWG meeting Canada introduced the penultimate draft of a compendium entitled: *Capacity Building Overview of the Arctic Council*. It is intended to be presented as a glossy publication at the Ministerial Meeting.

4. *Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic (SLICA)*

5. *The International Circumpolar Surveillance (ICS): Prevention and Control of Emerging Infectious Diseases in the Arctic*

The ICS project deliverables at the 2004 Ministerial meeting will include a comprehensive summary report on invasive bacterial diseases caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, *Haemophilus influenzae*, *Neisseria meningitidis*, Group A & B streptococcus in Arctic populations and the status of preventive measures being undertaken by the public health authorities within each participating country.

6. *Children & Youth of the Arctic*

***Health Programme:***

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***Networking Programme:***

*On Top of the World Website:* The website ([www.ookpik.org](http://www.ookpik.org)) which was designed specifically for youth was launched in September 2004 and provides an excellent platform for exchanges of ideas and a wealth of information for students and teachers.

*Arctic Council International Internship Programme:* The pilot phase of the programme has successfully been completed with 20 Northern youth having participated in a circumpolar internship.

7. *Arctic Marine Transport*
8. *Circumpolar Aviation*
  
9. *Circumpolar Telecommunications*

#### **PART IV. Work Plans for 2004-2006**

##### *SliCA Project work plans for the period 2004-2006*

team members and other social science researchers within the Arctic.

##### *Product Development and Processing in Sustainable Reindeer Husbandry (Ofelas) work plans 2004 - 2006*

##### *Sustainable Model for Arctic Regional Tourism (SMART) work plans for the period 2004-2005*

##### *Future of Children & Youth of the Arctic work plans for 2004-2006:*

The Initiative will concentrate efforts on producing results through several new projects, which fall within its original mandate, for the coming two years. Overall, the Children and Youth Initiative will need to have greater active participation from Member states and Permanent Participants. In the next two years, more emphasis will be placed on building up a network of committed contacts, initially via conference calls and emails. The Initiative will focus on a few key deliverables and work towards achieving them, as opposed to taking on too many projects, which has been done previously, with limited success.

##### Health Programme:

The Programme will develop a set of Best Practices for the Health Programme that will be useful for Northern communities.

##### Networking Programme:

##### *A. Internship Programme:*



The Circumpolar Young Leaders Internship Programme will develop its own identity and efforts will be placed on the branding of the Programme. To this end:

- The University of the Arctic will develop and deliver a two-week on-line course for the interns that will cover topics in northern sustainable development, the workings of the Arctic Council, cross-cultural communications and leadership skills.
- A mentor programme will be set up, whereby Elders and former interns will act as mentors to new interns.
- At the mid point of their placements, there will be an in-person debriefing. This event will coincide with an Arctic Council meeting, workshop or an event related to an Arctic issue held in one of the circumpolar countries (e.g. Arctic Circumpolar Universities Conference).

At the end of the Programme, participants will be subscribed to an alumni listserv where they will continue to interact with one another as well as, be kept informed of upcoming events and issues in the North.

B. *On Top of the World Website: (www.ookpik.org)*

#### Arctic Marine Shipping work plans for 2004-2006

#### Circumpolar Telecommunications work plans for 2004-2006

#### Telemedicine work plans for 2004-2006

New project activities may be contemplated in the context of the ICTN work. Telemedicine activities are anticipated to continue with the cooperation project between the USA and Russia. Participation in the project by some Russian companies dealing with telemedicine equipment will be studied.

#### The International Circumpolar Surveillance (ICS): Prevention and Control of Emerging Infectious Diseases in the Arctic work plans for 2004-2006

The ICS project is ongoing and long-term. The work plan for 2004-2006 includes:

- Continue surveillance of invasive diseases caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, *Haemophilus influenza*, *Neisseria meningitidis*, and groups A and B streptococcus in the US Arctic, northern Canada, and Greenland.
- Expand surveillance of invasive diseases caused by *Haemophilus influenza*, *Neisseria meningitidis*, and groups A and B streptococcus to include Iceland, Norway, Finland and northern Sweden.

- In collaboration with Health Canada, provincial and territorial public health partners we plan to investigate the apparent emergence of *Haemophilus influenzae* type a among aboriginal children in the US Arctic and northern Canada.
- Continue the pneumococcal Quality Control program between reference laboratories in the US Arctic and Canada, and extend this program to include reference laboratories in northern Europe, and other pathogens under surveillance.
- Plan and conduct ICS steering committee meetings in conjunction with the 15<sup>th</sup> European Congress of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases to be held in Copenhagen Denmark, April 2-5, 2005, and in conjunction with the International Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases to be held in Atlanta GA in 2006.
- Plan and conduct an ICS invasive bacterial disease working group meetings in 2005 and 2006.
- Plan and conduct an Infectious Disease Working Group meeting in conjunction with the International Conference on Circumpolar Health to be held in Novosibirsk, Russian Federation June 2006.
- Support the establishment of an ICS hepatitis B working group and laboratory activities focusing on the determining the incidence, risk factors and possible interventions among persons with chronic hepatitis B in circumpolar countries.
- Through the Arctic Council and the Norwegian Institute of Public Health and other multinational cooperatives continue to establish partnerships within the Sanitary Surveillance and Epidemiology Centers in the Barents Sea and Far East regions of the Russian Federation.
- Explore options for establishing an ICS International Fellowship program for 2005-2006.
- Explore options for expanding ICS to include surveillance of injuries and non-infectious diseases of concern in circumpolar regions.

*Women and resource management in the rural North work plans for 2004-2006*