

Background

The Arctic covers more than 1/6 of the earth's landmass. In this vast region lives about four million people, including 30 different Indigenous Peoples, who speak more than a dozen different languages. The Arctic Council was established in 1996 in Ottawa, Canada. It serves as a high-level, intergovernmental forum for political and scientific discussions on issues common to the governments of the Arctic region and its inhabitants.

Member States

Together, the following countries form the *Arctic Council Member States*. In addition, six organizations representing Arctic Indigenous Peoples have status as *Permanent Participants* in the Council.



Permanent Participants



The category *Permanent Participant* was created to provide for active participation and full consultation with the Arctic Indigenous Peoples within the Arctic Council. They are represented by the following organizations:

1. Aleut International Association (AIA)
<http://www.aleut-international.org/>
2. Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC)
<http://www.arcticathabaskancouncil.com/>
3. Gwich'in Council International (GCI)
<http://www.gwichin.org/>
4. Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)
<http://www.inuit.org>
5. Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East (RAIPON)
<http://www.raipon.info/>
6. Saami Council (SC)
<http://www.saamicouncil.net>

The Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat, located in Copenhagen, Denmark, provides administrative support to the Permanent Participants: <http://www.arcticpeoples.org>.

Working Groups

The Arctic Council working groups engage in issues such as monitoring, assessing and preventing pollution in the Arctic; also, climate change, biodiversity conservation, sustaining use of resources, emergency preparedness and prevention, and living conditions of Arctic residents. The resulting reports provide knowledge, advice, and recommendations to the Arctic Council. The six working groups are:

1. Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP)
<http://www.ac-acap.org/>
2. Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) <http://www.amap.no>
3. Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)
<http://www.caff.is>
4. Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) <http://eppr.arctic-council.org>
5. Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) <http://www.pame.is/>
6. Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) <http://portal.sdwg.org/>

Observers

Several non-Arctic states, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations have *Observer status* in the Council.

Observer status is open to non-Arctic states; inter-governmental and inter-parliamentary organizations (global and regional); and non-governmental organizations that the Council determines can contribute to its work.

Chairmanship

The Chairmanship of the Council rotates every two years among the eight Member States. Canada (1996–1998) served as the first Chair of the Council, followed by the United States (1998–2000), Finland (2000–2002), Iceland (2002–2004), Russia (2004–2006), Norway (2006–2009), and Denmark (2009–2011).

Sweden holds the chairmanship from 2011 until 2013. During this period, Sweden will give priority to issues that promote environmentally sustainable development of the Arctic, while making it possible to maintain positive cooperation between the Arctic states and with the Indigenous Peoples of the region.

The Arctic Council website presents news and information about its work, Member States, Permanent Participants, Working Groups and Observers:

<http://www.arctic-council.org>



Arctic Council Fact Sheet



Arctic Council Secretariat
The Fram Centre
N-9296 Tromsø, Norway
www.arctic-council.org
e-mail: ac-chair@arctic-council.org

The content of this brochure reflects the view of the
Kingdom of Sweden