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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
on the Meeting of the Standing Committee of
Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region**

Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association

**Östersund, Sweden
November 6, 2008**

Report

The Honourable Lorna Milne, Senator, led a Canadian delegation of two to the meeting of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (the Standing Committee) held in Östersund, Sweden, 6 November 2008. The other delegate was Mr. Massimo Pacetti. Accompanying the delegation was Mr. Tim Williams from the Parliamentary Information and Research Service of the Library of Parliament as advisor to the delegation.

The Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region is a parliamentary body comprising delegations appointed by the national parliaments of the Arctic states (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, the United States of America) and the European Parliament. The conference also includes Permanent Participants representing Indigenous peoples, as well as observers. The conference meets every two years. The Eighth Conference was held in Fairbanks, Alaska, U.S.A., 12-14 August 2008.¹

Between conferences, Arctic parliamentary cooperation is carried on by the Standing Committee, which started its activities in 1994. The Conference and Standing Committee take initiatives to further Arctic cooperation, and act, in particular, as a parliamentary forum for issues relevant to the work of the Arctic Council. The Standing Committee takes part in the work of the Council as an observer.²

MEETING SUMMARY

The Committee was informed that recommendations regarding the Sustained Arctic Observing Networks had not been finalised and so item 3 from the Agenda (Report on the Development of the IPY-Project Sustained Arctic Observing Network (SAON)) was deleted. In addition, the delegate from the Russian Federation was, as a result of illness, unable to speak to item 5, the “New Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic.” It was agreed to drop item 5 from the Agenda.

FOLLOW UP OF THE CONFERENCE OF ARCTIC PARLIAMENTARIANS IN FAIRBANKS 12-14 AUGUST 2008

Following the adoption of the Agenda (as amended) and the draft minutes of the Standing Committee meeting held at the Eighth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, the Standing Committee considered the success of the Conference and how to begin implementing the Conference statement.

A Swedish delegate stated that she felt that there had been less parliamentary participation at the Fairbanks conference than at the Seventh Conference (Kiruna, Sweden, 2006). In addition, the delegate was disappointed that the conference statement did not contain more concrete proposals that parliamentarians could act upon in their respective parliaments.

¹ The Conference report is available at: <http://www.arcticparl.org/announcements.aspx?id=3319>

² Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, <http://www.arcticparl.org/> accessed 6 December 2007

The Chair (Norway) noted that preparing a delegation was important. In Norway the preparation of members of the delegation included encouraging them to participate in order to decide each member's focus for the conference. She asked the Standing Committee to think about how best to implement the Fairbanks statement before its next meeting where a discussion of how to move forward could take place.

Various members of the Standing Committee stressed that it is essential for individual members of the Committee to promote the statement in their respective parliaments and with appropriate ministers of their governments.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARCTIC REGION

Professor Peter Sköld from the Centre for Saami³ Research at Umeå University discussed demographic changes in Arctic populations with a focus on Saami populations in Sweden.

Before discussing some of the methodologies and results of demographic research, Professor Sköld began by placing such research into the context of the International Polar Year (IPY).⁴ In the past, large scale research in the Arctic has been focussed on natural sciences. The IPY, however, has a very strong human dimension. He noted that demographics is now linked to other social issues in particular remarking that it is one thing to be alive, another to be alive and healthy.

Umeå University has the largest demographic database in Europe. It extends back to 1749 when clergy were instructed to send information on 2500 parishes, including the age, sex, occupation and causes of death of their parishioners. Church registers also include information on vaccinations.

Until 1945, following the Second World War, the registries also included ethnicity. Within the Swedish context, a database of the indigenous Saami population has been constructed allowing cradle to grave analysis of individuals for over 200 years. Such analysis is limited however, because the Saami were very mobile, so information from other countries with Saami (Norway, Finland and Russia) is needed for a complete picture.

Professor Sköld discussed some of the results of analysis of the Saami database pertaining to mortality and disease. Mortality rates were historically 2-4 times higher than the rest of Sweden but now are virtually the same. Neonatal mortality was particularly high but changes in breast-feeding habits, access to health care and more favourable climates have decreased death rates around childbirth. Diseases have also

³ "Saami" is the spelling used by the Saami Council on its English website (<http://www.saamicouncil.net/?depid=1116> - accessed 9 December 2008). In Sweden it is generally spelled "Sami."

⁴ See International Polar Year, "About IPY," <http://www.ipy.org/index.php?/ipy/about/> (accessed 1 December 2008) : The International Polar Year is a large scientific program focused on the Arctic and the Antarctic from March 2007 to March 2009. The IPY is organized through the International Council for Science and the World Meteorological Organization. It follows in the tradition of other such events in 1882–1883, 1932–1933, and 1957–1958. To achieve full and equal coverage of both the Arctic and the Antarctic, IPY 2007–2008 covers two annual cycles from March 2007 to March 2009 and involves over 200 projects, engaging thousands of scientists from over 60 nations in the examination of a wide range of physical, biological and social research topics.

Canada is a lead participating country, the federal government having committed \$150 million to the IPY.

been controlled. Saami continue to have higher death rates from accidents, but this is now due to vehicular accidents as opposed to freezing.

Regarding diseases, it was noted that smallpox rates were equivalent in Sweden as the rest of the world with 300 000 people dying in the last 50 years of the 18th century. However, though the Saami were exposed to smallpox, their mortality rates were lower. The reasons for this were explained as a result of the Saami culture. The Saami perceived the smallpox symptoms as an evil spirit and reacted by moving away from the region for years at a time. In this case the Saami's mobility gave them an unrecognized advantage over more sedentary populations.

The demographic analysis presented in the Arctic Human Development Report was discussed.⁵ Some points made included:

- There are 4 million people in the Arctic, almost half of whom are in the Russian Federation;⁶
- Overall, Arctic populations are marked by declining fertility and high mortality;
- There is a high rate of non-natural deaths (suicide and murder for instance);
- There is a net loss of population due to migration;
- Arctic demographics are complex, with regions having distinct characteristics; and
- Data is often lacking, research is needed to improve this situation.

Examining the demographics of Saami populations is difficult because it is not easy to identify who are, in fact, Saami. Self identification ended after the Second World War. Estimates therefore vary greatly. There are 8 000 registered Saami voters, but this is certainly an underestimate with other estimates being between 20 000 and 50 000.

The need for more research was stressed. The results of such research would improve responses to indigenous, national and international scientific needs (historical and medical for instance) and improve general knowledge. In the circumpolar context international cooperation on research is necessary. It was suggested that an Arctic census would be an opportunity to present a better profile and structure of the peoples of the Arctic.

Discussion

⁵ Dmitry Bogoyavlensky and Andy Siggner, "Arctic Demography," in *Arctic Human Development Report*, [AHDR], Arctic Council, 2004, http://www.svs.is/AHDR/AHDR%20chapters/English%20version/AHDR_chp%202.pdf (accessed 1 December 2008)

⁶ The AHDR Arctic encompasses all of Alaska, Canada North of 60°N together with northern Quebec and Labrador, all of Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and Iceland, and the northernmost counties of Norway, Sweden and Finland. The situation in Russia is harder to describe in simple terms. [It e]ncompasses the Murmansk Oblast, the Nenets, Yamalo- Nenets, Taimyr, and Chukotka autonomus okrugs, Vorkuta City in the Komi Republic, Norilsk and Igarka in Krasnoyarsky Kray, and those parts of the Sakha Republic whose boundaries lie closest to the Arctic Circle. Oran R. Young and Niels Einarsson, "Introduction," *AHDR*, 2004

The Committee continued with a lively discussion centred on the links between demography and other social issues, as Professor Sköld alluded to in his presentation.

The head of the Canadian delegation, after emphasising the importance of easing access to historical census records, pointed to a number of social issues in northern Canada that are linked to demographics. In northern Canada the demographic situation amongst aboriginals is different than much of the rest of the Arctic as outlined in the presentation, with fertility rates being very high leading to a very young population. Amongst the young population suicide rates are horrifically high. During the neonatal period, mothers were receiving conflicting advice on breastfeeding because breast milk is now contaminated with industrial pollutants while, on the other hand, there are well documented advantages to breastfeeding. Professor Sköld was asked if there were any studies that could clarify this problem. She concluded by stating that information gathering through an Arctic census would be valuable, but would face difficulties such as how to define the Arctic.

The Professor responded by acknowledging the dilemma faced by mothers and that the problem will only get worse as exploitation will increase pollution levels. The young population of Canadian aboriginals in the Arctic is different from other countries, and the younger population's desire for a "good life" was not easy to fulfil. He also noted that a possible census could start in traditional areas as a start, but if the focus of the census was on indigenous peoples it would have to be expanded to urban areas because, as was pointed out, that is where most indigenous people live.

He also noted that such a survey would not be possible in Sweden because the Saami by law cannot be identified. It was noted by a Saami delegate that the quantification of Saami numbers was a very sensitive question and that the history behind the sensitivity was a very important story.

Other Committee members noted the importance of following up on the Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic (SLiCA).⁷ In Sweden, statistics had been collected but there were difficulties in the follow-up arising from a lack of funds and the need for international coordination and Saami approval.

Professor Sköld noted that competition for research money in Sweden was extremely fierce with only a 5% success rate overall and that SLiCA follow-up was not identified as a priority. Coordination of efforts was also lacking in Sweden. Internationally the Professor saw an important role for the University of the Arctic. Up until now the University has been focussed on education but it could take on more of a research role.

The Chair asked if the Committee should attempt to bring forward ideas on continued research to the Arctic Council as an IPY legacy project. The professor agreed that various IPY projects that studied the interaction of people with pollution, climate change and traditional knowledge could be continued. He also made note of an IPY study on the interaction between integration, assimilation and health issues. Life expectancy may go up but this result may be being achieved at the sacrifice of culture and

⁷ See SLiCA Results at http://www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu/projects/Living_Conditions/results.htm For further information, see the "SLiCA-related Elements of the Sustainable Development Working Group Report to the Senior Arctic Officials Meeting of the Arctic Council in Kautokeino, Norway 19-20 November 2008," available at http://www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu/projects/Living_Conditions/images/Extract%20from%20SDWG%20Report_draft_081028.pdf (accessed 2 December 2008)

traditional economies. Continuation of such studies would improve the quality of the results.

A member from Sweden suggested that a national Saami centre with secure funding would be a valuable asset as would making Sweden a more active participant in the University of the Arctic.

In conclusion, the Chair noted that the interest shown by the Standing Committee in the Professor's presentation is a reflection of its deep interest in the human dimension of the Arctic, not just energy, climate change and natural sciences as represented by the iconic polar bears.

RECENT AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NORTHERN DIMENSION COOPERATION

The Northern Dimension of European Union policy⁸ was established in the late 1990s as a European Union (EU) policy intended to deal with issues concerning western Russia, as well as to increase general cooperation among the EU, Iceland and Norway. It has since become a multilateral, equal partnership among the EU, Iceland, Norway and Russia. Canada and the United States are observers to the partnership.

The Parliamentary Conference on the New Northern Dimension Policy, held from 28 February to 1 March 2007, concluded that a recurrent Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum should be held every two years in order to discuss issues of common concern and examine the evolution of the new Northern Dimension policy. The first Forum is to be held in Brussels in February 2009. Mr Henrik Olsen from the European Parliament reported on preparations for the Forum noting that it will likely have two pillars; the Arctic and the Baltic.

A Standing Committee member from Sweden noted that the two pillars were a good start. She stressed, in a similar manner as comments made regarding the Fairbanks statement, that the outcome of the conference should include 2 or 3 priority, concrete actions that parliamentarians could implement.

A delegate from the Russian Federation noted that what he felt was necessary was an Arctic Parliamentary Forum, not an EU policy since the EU is not all Arctic. The framework for such a forum was proposed by him two years previously⁹ but the Standing Committee had not acted upon it.

The Chair emphasized that the New Northern Dimension was not an EU policy, but a partnership and that countries had not supported the idea of another forum for discussing Arctic issues. She emphasized that the Standing Committee should work hard to make its mark on the Northern Dimension.

⁸ Sometimes referred to simply as the Northern Dimension. This is not to be confused with the Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy.

⁹ After a query from a Canadian delegate, the proposal and its English translation were distributed to Standing Committee members after the Östersund meeting. It is attached as Appendix 2. As initially written the proposal is for a Northern Dimension Forum, but the initial proposal has evolved into one for an Arctic Forum, as was clear from the floor interpretation provided at the Standing Committee meeting.

THE RESULTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE ÖSTERSUND REGION

Dr. Ingemar Näslund, head of environmental monitoring for the administration of the County of Jämtland (of which Östersund is the capital) discussed the importance of establishing well understood and cost-efficient indicators of climate change for the region. These indicators can provide the basis for climate change actions, both reducing emissions (mitigation) and adaptation.

For the County of Jämtland, focus has been on the mountain regions as they provide a range of climate-related limits established by altitude that can be easily monitored. Monitoring biodiversity in particular has been a valuable tool as it is relatively inexpensive and easy for people to comprehend. Species that have been chosen for monitoring include the Arctic fox, lemming, Gyr falcon, reindeer and grouse.

In addition, the tree line is an important statistic. In the period 1975 to 2007 mountain birch, spruce and pine increased their range by 19m, 55m and 39m respectively. Peak altitude for some plants such as blueberries has also increased, now being found above 1000m, though this occurrence is rare.

The county is also focused on wind energy research in order to understand better the effects on ecosystems and society. The area has a fairly large tourist industry and understanding potential impact on tourism is important.

Dr. Andreas Gyllenhammar continued the presentation by stressing the importance of communicating information about climate change at the local level in an understandable way. The County administration publishes reports on climate-related changes in the region using statistics to which people can relate. Timing and size of floods, water clarity, freezing and ice break-up data and days of snow cover are included. In 80 years it has been estimated that days with snow cover will be reduced to 0-100 days from the current 180 days, which would have a significant impact on people's lives.

It is also important for people to recognise the economic importance of ecosystem services. The example of New York City protecting natural water filtration by investing in forest restoration upstream of the city, rather than in downstream water purification, as a cheaper means to the same end was discussed. In the County region, water quality and quantity, food (particularly through pollinators), and culture are all supported by ecosystem services.

Discussion

The Chair suggested that opportunities may arise from rising temperatures for which the region might have to ready itself. The presenters agreed, giving possibilities of faster growing forests (dependent on other factors such as insect infestations) and different tourist opportunities as examples.

The Swedish member of the Standing Committee commented on the difficulties of reconciling new energy projects such as wind with multiple other uses of the land including natural, economic and cultural, particularly regarding Saami. In response, the presenters noted that in Jämtland a decision has been made to close the mountains to wind energy in order to conserve them for other uses. Greater acceptance of wind energy projects has come from involving forest companies and by using cooperative models of investment.

The Committee asked for advice on how parliamentarians can communicate information on climate change. As the presenters had stressed during their talk, they suggested keeping the response regional using understandable examples.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE KIRUNA STATEMENT

A Russian Federation delegate expressed disappointment in the implementation of the Kiruna Statement (Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, Kiruna, Sweden, 2-4 August 2006) specifically referring to the following paragraph:

Ask the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region to:

46. Consider to review the Rules of Procedure for the Standing Committee before the next conference in 2008 in order to improve the working methods;

The delegate from the Russian Federation also expressed disappointment at the lack of progress at implementing paragraph 16 of the Kiruna Statement in which the Conference asked Governments in the Arctic Region and the Institutions of the European Union to:

16. Conduct under the auspices of the UN, by the end of IPY in 2008, an international conference "The Arctic – a region of global cooperation."

Further, the delegate, making reference to the current discussion of Saami demographics (described above), felt that the Standing Committee was not concentrating on the major issues. He felt that the presentations were overly narrow (for instance concentrating just on the Saami) and did not prepare the Standing Committee for discussions.

Further discussion at the meeting hinged on implementation of paragraph 46. In the end it was emphasised that each member of the Standing Committee had a role to play in improving how the Committee operates and it was decided that the Secretary General should be asked to report on making rules of procedure more efficient.

STATUS OF THE WORK OF SCPAR

Delegates were invited to report on their country's work with respect to SCPAR. See the attached draft minutes (Appendix 1) for a summary of interventions.

During the discussion the head of the Canadian delegation voiced clear support for the West Nordic Council's statements in support of sustainable harvesting of seals. In Canada, the seal hunt supports not just indigenous populations, but numerous isolated communities in Newfoundland and Labrador and along the lower St. Lawrence River.

The Canadian delegation was interested in the Russian Federation proposal to discuss the demarcation of frontiers in the Arctic at the Standing Committee. Though unclear, the delegate was presumably referring to the system set up under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea for establishing the extended continental shelf. With

respect to the continental shelf, coastal states enjoy sovereign rights of exploration and exploitation of mineral and other non-

living natural resources of the seabed and subsoil and of living organisms belonging to sedentary species. The rights in the continental shelf do not include rights to fisheries and other living resources in the water column above the seabed.¹⁰ The claims regarding the extended continental shelf therefore have important economic implications, particularly as the sea ice diminishes.

A Canadian delegate noted that the 14 October 2008 election had returned the Conservative Party of Canada to power with a stronger minority. Not being a member of the governing party, he could not speak to the government's position but he noted that all three national parties had put northern issues on their agendas. He noted that the newly appointed Health Minister was from one of Canada's northern territories. Canada relies heavily on natural resources and has a strong, conservative banking system and had so far escaped the worst of the global financial crisis.

NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Standing Committee would take place 25 February 2009, tentatively from 09.00 – 12.00, in the European Parliament, Brussels, just prior to the First Parliamentary Forum for the Northern Dimension to be held 25-26 February.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Lorna Milne, Senator
Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association

¹⁰ For further information, see Robert Dufresne, "Canada's Legal Claims Over Arctic Territory and Waters," Library of Parliament, PRB 07-39, <http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/PRBpubs/prb0739-e.htm> (accessed 4 December 2008)

APPENDIX I



CONFERENCE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

MEETING IN ÖSTERSUND

6 November 2008

Draft minutes

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND THE PROPOSED ORDER OF AGENDA

ITEMS

The Committee was informed about changes in the agenda. Item 3 and item 5 was removed from the agenda and the excursion to “Eldrimner” was put in the program after lunch.

With these changes the Committee adopted the agenda and the proposed order of agenda items.

MINUTES FROM THE SCPAR-MEETINGS IN FAIRBANKS 11 AND 14 AUGUST 2008

The Committee approved the minutes from the SCPAR-meetings in Fairbanks 11 and 14 August 2008.

Decision

The Committee adopted the agenda and the proposed order of agenda items and approved the minutes from the SCPAR-meetings in Fairbanks.

2. FOLLOW UP OF THE CONFERENCE OF ARCTIC PARLIAMENTARIANS IN FAIRBANKS 12-14 AUGUST 2008

Ms Solberg started by concluding that the Eighth Conference of Arctic Parliamentarians in Fairbanks had been a success. The agenda items were timely and relevant, and the organizing professionally executed. However there should not be more than three speakers on one agenda item.

Ms Sinikka Bohlin noted that not so many parliamentarians were taking the floor in Fairbanks as in Kiruna. How can we engage the parliamentarians more in the debates? She wondered if language problems could be one of the reasons.

Ms Bohlin was also of the opinion that the Conference Statement from this conference was less concrete than the Statement from the conference in Kiruna.

Ms Solberg pointed at the importance of preparing the MPs in advance of the Conference. In Norway the different MPs were giving a topic of responsibility in advance of the Conference.

Mr. Niels Sindal encouraged every delegate to work towards their national government to implement the Conference Statement. We need to move in the same direction to get the things done.

Ms Solberg underlined the importance of everyone to go back home to promote the conclusions from the Fairbanks statement in their parliaments.

Decision:

The Committee noted of the reports from the Secretary General on the Conference and commented on the follow-up of the conference in Fairbanks.

3. THE DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARCTIC REGION

Professor Peter Sköld from the Centre for Saami Research at Umeå University spoke on the topic: "Demography and Indigenous Perspectives in the Arctic North".

The fourth International Polar Year has a stronger human dimension than the previous. In Sweden they have the largest historical population data base in Europe, with information at the individual level.

The Saami population data base includes complete life biographies, family composition, mortality with causes of death and migration. The population data goes back to 1749. However, when studying the Saami-population you have to look at the 4 countries where they live (Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia).

About 200 years ago there were big differences between the Saami population and the rest of the society when it comes to diseases and mortality. (Saami died more often from Tbc, pneumonia and nerve fevers.) Today there exist no real differences between the Saami population and the rest of the society. (Except for accidents – drowning and freezing.)

The Saami didn't get smallpox to the same extent as in for instance Latin America. The Saamis thought evil spirits were the reason behind Smallpox and escaped for 2-3 years before returning.

Modern Arctic Demography, as described in the "Arctic Human Development Report", lists the following facts: The Arctic is inhabited by around 4 million people, has declining fertility, high extent of non-natural deaths, and large migration out of the area. But there are large variations – differing between nations and regions.

After the Second World War there are no special numbers for Saami people/ethnic registration in Sweden. Thus it's hard to say how many Saami live in Sweden. Some persons have a possible Saami identity, some are genealogically identified, and some are officially recognized as Saami. 8000 are registered to vote in the next Saami parliamentary election.

We often lack sufficient knowledge for handling the indigenous related issues of today. The countries in the North have a special responsibility for Northern issues and especially the indigenous peoples. The research structure should be focused on the responsibilities of Northern universities, have a long term strategy involving all relevant disciplines, international cooperation, and have an indigenous perspective.

Finally Mr Sköld proposed to have an Arctic census.

The Committee raised questions concerning how to conduct an Arctic census and how to draw the line (geographically). The dangers of breastfeeding were also raised as a result of accumulating toxic pollution in the Arctic. The Committee also raised questions about the high suicide rates and the problems of loosing languages.

In spite of an ageing population in most of the Arctic, in Canada the fertility rate is high and they have a very young population.

Mr. Sköld commented on these issues and still recommended breastfeeding. The young population in Canada gives opportunities but also makes it hard for all the young people to find a job. With regards to an Arctic census we should focus on the traditional areas, but wherever the line is drawn, a census would be meaningful.

Further on lack of data on Saami population in Sweden, and who shall be defined as a Saami person, the need for more money, better cooperation, and special programs for Saamis were discussed.

Coordination could be improved through closer cooperation in University of the Arctic and by following up on IPY-projects. Many of the IPY-projects are looking at climate change, pollution, cultural changes and how these topics influence the people living in the Arctic. One might ask what you gain if you get a longer life expectancy, but lose your culture.

Decision:

The Committee took note of the information

4. RECENT AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NORTHERN DIMENSION COOPERATION

Ms Solberg briefly summed up SCPARs involvement in the Northern Dimension partnership and gave the floor to Mr. Henrik Olsen from the European Parliament to inform about the preparations for the First Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum to be held in Brussels 25-26 February 2009.

Mr. Nikolaev asked the Committee to remember his project proposal regarding the Northern Dimension. Nikolaev wanted to discuss on this basis in Brussels and asked for a stronger will to join our efforts.

Ms Solberg wanted to use the Forum in Brussels to discuss Arctic policy with the Members of the European Parliament.

Decision:

The Committee took note of the information.

5. THE RESULTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE ÖSTERSUND REGION

Dr. Ingemar Näslund, from the County Administration, talked about environmental monitoring in a climate change perspective. To provide information on the environmental status we need to use good parameters understandable by the public.

On biodiversity they monitor the changing climate and its effects on the Arctic fox, lemming, falcon, grouse, and reindeer. The alpine tree line is another parameter. The mountain birch is 19 meter higher since 1975. Today you may also find blueberry up to 1000 meters above sea level.

Mr. Näslund also mentioned the example of a (very happy) shrimp which inhabits small ponds in the higher latitude. Warmer water will make the water accessible to other organisms and the shrimp will die from the competition.

On questions from the Committee Mr. Näslund wanted more renewable energy, especially wind power. There exist large plans for windmills in Jämtland County, but there is a need of an impact study on how windmills work in harsh climate.

Dr. Andreas Gyllenhammer talked to the Committee on how to communicate climate change. How are people affected by climate change and how are they affecting the climate?

It's a complicated issue which need to be simplified – give a simple and concrete message.

We have to look at the global effects and the local effects – what will happen locally by explaining what is happening globally.

Examples are [thinner] ice on the lakes and earlier and smaller spring flood. The County Administration publish reports describing these changes.

At Storsjön they have ice dat[a] since 1870, and it has gone from 170 to 130 days of ice cover.

Snow is important in Östersund[,] and the days with snow cover, is likely to be reduced from 180 to 100 days[,] 80 years from now.

Climate change will move the existing climate in the South further north. The climate in Östersund now, will be found in Kiruna in some years.

Why is it important?

Nature is important, economic and culturally. Clean water can be calculated and fishing provides food. Cultural aspects –like the possibilities to go skiing – are also important.

Finally Mr[.] Gyllenhammar suggested more competitions between regions and countries. Wh[ich] is best at eco farming, or [at] reduc[ing] emissions from cars?

In questions from the Committee Mr[.] Gyllenhammar explained they work especially towards students and teachers in schools. He underlined the importance of communicating the affects of climate change in a long term perspective.

With regards to new possibilities as a result of climate change it was mentioned that the forestry industry will benefit and maybe a warmer climate will attract more tourists.

Decision:

The Committee took note of the information.

6. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE KIRUNA STATEMENT

Mr. Nikolaev and Ms Solberg commented on the work that had been done to implement the Kiruna statement from 2006.

Decision:

The Committee decided to ask the Secretary General, together with the national secretariats, to make a report reviewing the Rules of procedure of the Standing Committee before the next meeting of SCPAR.

7. STATUS OF THE WORK OF SCPAR

West-Nordic Council

Mr. Kári P. Højgaard, Chairman of the West – Nordic Council, reported on the Council's recent activities. At the Annual Session in August the Council recommended to ensure sustainable utilisation of all living resources, a continuous environmental research, and a comprehensive cooperation between search- and rescue institutions in the region. The Council also expressed support to all countries engaged in sustainable whaling and sealing, and the importance of this to the Arctic peoples. Mr. Højgaard also criticised the European Union for banning sale of sealskins.

Education to unskilled workers is the main topic until the next Theme conference to be held in Greenland in June next year. Finally Mr. Højgaard criticised the United Kingdom for using the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act of 2001 against Iceland.

Senator Lorna Milne voiced her support for the views on sustainable sealing and its importance to the native peoples.

Iceland

Mr. Sigurður Kári Kristjánsson from Iceland informed the Committee of the upcoming Icelandic Chairmanship of the Nordic Council of Ministers. In its Chairmanship program Iceland will include:

Mapping of vulnerable areas of the North Atlantic[;] coordination of know-how in the field of environmental technology and renewable energy[;] and environmental contingency planning in the North Atlantic.

Iceland has been hit very hard by the international financial crises and is seeking all means to concur the crisis with necessary support. The Icelandic Minister of Foreign Affairs met with her Norwegian counterpart Mr. Støre to discuss the matter, and agreed on financial assistance as well as investigation in the events which lead to the crises.

The Ministers also signed an Agreement concerning trans-boundary hydrocarbon deposits.

Finally Mr. Kristjánsson criticised the United Kingdom for applying the Anti-Terrorism Act against a NATO ally. It has made the economical situation in Iceland much worse and should be greatly criticised by other countries.

Sweden

Ms Bohlin reported from her participation at the Conference "Human Dimensions in the Circumpolar Arctic". The 22 October Nordic, Baltic and Arctic cooperation was debated in the Swedish parliament, and the issue of an Arctic treaty was mentioned by many. There will be an interpellation debate on Arctic cooperation in the Swedish parliament early next year.

The 11 March 2009 a third seminar together with the Swedish IPY-committee will focusing on the legacy of the IPY, the need for a Swedish policy for the Arctic region and the future management of the Arctic region.

As President elect of the Nordic Council Ms Bohlin plans to arrange a meeting next year between the Chairs of the parliamentary bodies of the North, to address coordination and cooperation between the parliamentary bodies.

Denmark

Mr[.] Niels Sindal informed the Committee about the results of the Danish – Greenlandic Self – Rule Commission. The Commission has finished its work and delivered the results to the respective governments. The Commission has decided that the Home-Rule Government in Greenland will have the right to secure minerals from the Greenlandic underground, but revenues shall be deducted from the Danish block grant. For oil in the Greenlandic underground the first 75 millions goes to the Greenlandic Home-Rule, then the revenues are divided, with the block grant of 3.2 billion DKK is reduced. Greenland will however still be a part of the Danish Kingdom. The agreement will be sent to a referendum in Greenland later this month and hopefully get into force from the 21 June 2009, the Greenlandic National Day.

Denmark will also be taking over the Arctic Council chairmanship in the end of April 2009 and a seminar will be arranged in the Parliament to raise the attention on Arctic issues.

Saami Parliamentary Council

Mr. Lars Anders Baer, President of the Saami Parliamentary Council reported from the Second Saami Parliamentary Conference 28 October 2008 in Rovaniemi. The Nordic Saami Convention is high on the agenda of the Council and next week, 12 November the ministers responsible for Saami issues, will meet to decide the further process of the Nordic Saami Convention.

In Sweden the Saami people is still waiting for the bill from the government on Saami issues, and is now expected to be presented in the beginning of next year.

Finland

Mr. Hannes Manninen reported from the Nordic Council session which took place in Helsinki the week before. Mr. Manninen also informed the Committee about the opening of many mines in the North of Finland.

The Finnish parliament will discuss a report on energy and climate from the government next week in parliament. The draft Nordic Saami Convention and ILO convention are being debated, and entails many difficult discussions.

Finland had local elections 26 October where the Conservative party gained some ground and the Social Democrats and the Centre Party lost almost three percentages each.

European Parliament

Mr. Henrik Olsen reported that Vice President Diana Wallis had given speeches at the conferences "Common Concern for the Arctic" in Ilulissat in September and at the Northern Dimension Conference in Helsinki in October.

9 October the European Parliament passed a resolution on Arctic governance.

Norway

Ms Solberg reported from a meeting she participated in 13 October in Tromsø on Arctic cooperation hosted by the Norwegian State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ms Solberg further reported from a meeting with representatives from University of the Arctic. Uarctic has developed a new strategy document and proposals for different ways to finance the institution.

In the Norwegian parliament they have increased the budget for the Norwegian Polar Institute.

Russia

Mr. Usoltsev sits in the special committee for the High North in the State Duma. The Chair of the Committee participated in Northern Dimension debate in Helsinki 26 October. The Committee has arranged [a] meeting with NGOs on indigenous peoples['] issues to discuss the situation, and the need to get the laws implemented[,] [b]ut they are also concerned about other people living in the North, not only indigenous peoples. New legislation will be adopted.

In his speech to the Security Council meeting in September President Medvedev gave a priority list including infrastructure, telemedicine, local aviation, and traditional livelihoods of the local peoples. Solving the housing problems in the North is of high priority.

There is process of establishing the frontiers in the Arctic, also in the Russian Arctic. This topic should also be discussed further in SCPAR.

Canada

Canada had a national election 14 October which gave the Conservative party increased support, but will still be a minority government. In the new cabinet a representative from the North is the new Minister of Health.

Parliament has not been seated yet since the summer and the Throne speech will be given 18 November outlining the new government policies.

The global financial crises [has] not hit Canada hard. The Financial institutions are strong with good regulations. But the downturn in the American economy has hit the exporting industry.

Decision:

The Committee took note of the information

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of SCPAR will be the 25 February 2009, tentatively from 09.00 – 12.00, in the European Parliament, Brussels. The meeting will take place in advance of the First Parliamentary Forum for the Northern Dimension which is to take place in the European Parliament from lunch to lunch 25-26 February 2009.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.



CONFERENCE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

MEETING IN ÖSTERSUND

6 November 2008

Draft

List of participants

MEMBERS

Canada

Senator Lorna Milne

Mr. Massimo Pacetti, MP

Mr. Tim Williams, Science and Technology Division,
Parliamentary Information and Research Service

Denmark

Mr. Niels Sindal, MP

Mr. Peder Pedersen, Adviser

EP

Mr. Henrik Olsen, Principal Administrator, Inter-
Parliamentary Relations

OBSERVERS

Nordic Council

Mr. Niels Sindal, MP

Mr. Torkil Sørensen, Senior Adviser

West-Nordic Council

Mr. Kári P. Højgaard, President of the West-Nordic Council, MP from the Faeroe Islands

Mr. Thordur Thorarinsson, Secretary General

GUESTS

Mr. Andreas Gyllenhammar, Consultant

Mr. Peter Sköld, Associate Professor of History,
Umeå University

Mr. Ingemar Näslund, Head of environmental
monitoring

SECRETARIAT

Mr. Bjørn Willy Robstad, Secretary General

INTERPRETERS

Ms Alexandra Turganowa Lööv

Mr. Alexander Tchekhov

APPENDIX 2:

PROPOSAL FROM THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION FOR A PARLIAMENTARY FORUM (TRANSLATED FROM RUSSIAN BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE SECRETARIAT)

Project to discuss

Offered by M. Nikolaev, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation,

Member of the Standing Committee of the Conference of the Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

Regulations of Parliamentary Forum of Northern Dimension

Structure and Role

1. The Parliamentary Forum of Northern Dimension (PFND) is a popular Forum of Parliamentarians of European Union, Russian Federation, Island and Norway, who take part in its activity as representatives (delegates) of their parliaments.
2. The goals of PFND activity are to strengthen positions of region and develop regional cooperation especially in such areas like:
 - a) Cooperation to strengthen peace, freedom, democracy and prosperity;
 - b) Free and accessible cooperation in interests of increasing free trade and investments, sustainable development and rational use of natural resources;
 - c) Cooperation in non-military spheres focusing on peace and security in region;
 - d) Protection and support of the development of different cultures and nations in region.

Membership

3. Membership in PFND should be proportional for the country partners of the Northern Dimension. It must to be the equal number of members from the European Union, Russian Federation, Island and Norway, which will not exceed ten persons, who:
 - a) show interest in the development of dialog between parliamentarians in region;
 - b) accept goals and PFND principles.
4. The issues concerning membership should be revised from time to time.

5. The representatives of the Arctic Council, Nordic Council, Nordic Council of Ministers, Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) and other international organizations can take part in PFND meetings as associated members, observers or other persons with suitable status determined by the Annual Meeting.

6. PFND meetings are held annually.

a) Date and place of each Annual Meeting will be defined in previous meeting.

b) In case when National Parliament is represented by an official delegation the participation of the other parliamentarians - members of this parliament as particular persons is possible due to recommendation and agreement of their parliament.

c) Associated members, observers or other persons with a due status are invited to attend PFND meetings.

d) Welcoming side arranges necessary organizational activity of the Annual Meeting including preliminary approval of the meeting agenda with the Executive Committee assistance and sets up the Secretariat to assure the Annual Meeting activity.

e) Welcoming Parliament bears the expenses of the organization of the meeting. Participants bear themselves the expenses to attend the meeting. The quantity of the participants in the delegation is limited. There can be included no more ten parliamentarians in the delegation.

f) The President of PFND takes the chair at the Annual Meeting since the opening until the Chairperson of the meeting would be elected.

g) The Chairperson of the Annual Meeting is a member of the welcoming parliament elected by the participants of the Annual Meeting.

h) Participants of the Annual Meeting approve the agenda recommended by the Executive Committee.

i) The Chairperson leads the process of work and keeps up with regulations. The Chairperson opens, stops and closes meetings, informs about the results of work and announces closing meeting.

j) The Chairperson has the right to appoint deputies who can be members of the Executive Committee to preside if necessary at separate meetings of working groups within the framework of the Annual Meeting.

k) PFND decisions at the Annual Meeting are adopted by consensus. Each delegation has one voice only. The members can discuss any issue freely. But in case when it is needed to make an important decision the principle of unanimity must be used.

1) Welcoming Parliament sends to parliamentary delegations message requesting proposals to discuss at the next Annual Meeting which should be submitted at indicated term.

m) The Executive Committee considers proposals to include to an agenda additional issue to discuss.

n) The project of the resolution on any issue should be distributed to all participant delegates for the acquaintance before its submission for consideration.

o) It is possible to make a speech in front of participants when the Chairperson gives the floor.

p) Any participating delegate can speak on any topic included in the agenda when the Chairperson gives him the floor.

q) The Chairperson of meeting while giving the floor to participating delegates should follow two following principles:

1. Fidelity to the development of open and constructive dialogue.

2. Equal respect to all participants' opinions.

r) Participating Delegates have prior right to take the floor. Associated members, observers, and other official participants can speak when the Chairperson gives the floor with the consent of present delegates.

Status of the President

7. Welcoming Nation appoints the President from the Welcoming Parliament who is the President from May of the previous year of the Annual Meeting till April of the next year of the Annual Meeting.

The President represents PFND and he is the Chairperson of the Executive Committee.

The President is a Chairperson at the opening of the Annual Meeting as well.

The Executive Committee

8. The structure of the Executive Committee:

a) The Executive Committee has 9 members.

In addition to the President, who is the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, there are two members of the Executive Committee from the parliaments of the European Union, Russian Federation, Iceland and Norway.

b) Membership at the Executive Committee:

- The membership at the Executive Committee is open to all PFND nations-members.

- The members of the Executive Committee should be active national parliament members.
- In case if one of the Executive Committee members is not able to act as a member due to his (her) resignation, death or disqualification as a national parliament deputy the national parliament should appoint another deputy who is able to act as a member till the next Annual Meeting.
- Members of the Executive Committee can be reappointed.

Executive Committee Responsibilities

- a) The Chairperson of the Executive Committee is the President of the Parliamentary Forum of the Northern Dimension.
- b) The Executive Committee can offer recommendations on political issues of PFND and on issues concerning the management of the PFND at the Annual Meeting to discuss.
- c) The Executive Committee in coordination with the nation-organizer of the Annual Meeting makes the project of an agenda and the schedule of the Annual Meetings events.
- d) The Executive Committee consults the nation-organizer of the Annual Meeting on issues, which are necessary to discuss at the Annual Meeting.

The Term of Office of the Executive Committee member

- a) The term of office for the Executive Committee member is two years from May a year when Annual Meeting is hold till April of year after two years period under conditions to maintain the following:
- b) The half part of the Executive Committee members should be re-elected annually.
- c) For the member who represents the nation - organizer of the Annual Meeting the term of office should begin from May of the previous year of Annual Meeting till April of the next year after Annual Meeting.
- d) Each parliament is free to independently determine the election procedure of its members for the Executive Committee

Working Group

9. Annual Meeting can by the Executive Committee recommendations form working groups to consider specific issues. There can be created a working group at the meeting to prepare the draft of the joint communiqué for the discussion, approval and publication at the end of the Annual Meeting.

Working groups make their prior themes to discuss at the meeting. Working groups give their reports on results at the Plenary Session of the Annual Meeting. Reports about the activity of the Executive Committee and working groups can be submitted at the Annual Meeting in oral or in written form.

Issues not considered by the regulations

10. The President takes decision concerning all issues not considered by the regulations after the Executive Committee recommendation.

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association
ACTIVITY	Meeting of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region
DESTINATION	Östersund, Sweden
DATES	November 6, 2008
DELEGATION	
SENATE	The Honourable Lorna Milne, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Massimo Pacetti, M.P.
STAFF	Mr. Tim Williams, Analyst
TRANSPORTATION	\$13, 623. 25
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 945. 33
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0. 00
PER DIEMS	\$ 750. 93
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0. 00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$ 0. 00
TOTAL	\$ 15, 319. 51