

Coordination on Arctic issues, as for other environmental issues, hinges on the building of partnerships between MEAs, UNEP, inter-governmental and national organizations and NGOs in the implementation and "operationalization" of the *four Cs*: coordination, coherence, compliance and capacity-building. Under this vision, coordination is a process rather than a

one-time event and requires continuous dialogue between the partners.

It is expected that this study will facilitate the identification of synergies and interlinkages between MEAs and relevant partners on Arctic issues, and encourage partners to develop joint programmes and help identify funding opportunities. Enhanced cooperation will

speed our progress towards our goals of protecting the environment and achieving sustainable development.

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BARBARA WILLARD/UNEP/TOPIAM PICTUREPOINT

Area of work

Issues affecting Arctic ecosystems and indigenous peoples

Relevant activities

Need for future work

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

CITES works towards ensuring that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. Because the trade in wild animals and plants crosses international borders, the effort to regulate it requires international cooperation. The convention provides a framework for the implementation of national legislation.

Not a geographic focus on the arctic region, but on CITES listed species. The role of indigenous communities in the management and regulation of trade in CITES-listed fauna and flora is recognized by the parties and reflected in a number of CITES activities and decisions. CITES resolution 8.3 recognizes that unless conservation programmes take into account the needs of the local people, and provide incentives for the sustainable use of wild flora and fauna, conversion to alternative forms of land use may occur. The parties recognized that commercial trade may be beneficial to the conservation of species and ecosystems and/or to the development of local people when carried out at levels that are not detrimental to the survival of the species in question. CITES resolution 12.30 on compliance and enforcement, recommends that parties promote incentives to secure the support and cooperation of local and rural communities in managing wildlife resources and therefore combating illegal trade.

A number of species relevant to the arctic area are listed in the three CITES Appendices, and trade in these species and their parts and derivatives are subject to the provisions of the Convention.

Under the CITES Action Plan, Parties to the convention are encouraged to develop and implement appropriate economic, education and awareness programs that lead to local involvement in wildlife management and stimulate participation in combating illegal trade within and from producing countries.

World Heritage Convention (WHC)

The WHC provides one of the most widely accepted universal international legal instruments for the protection of the cultural and natural heritage. The World Conservation Union (IUCN) is an international, non-governmental organization that provides the World Heritage Committee with technical evaluations of natural heritage sites and, through its worldwide network of specialists, reports on the state of conservation of listed properties.

The World Heritage Convention is concerned with the need to fill critical gaps for new nominations of arctic ecosystems, since only one Arctic World Heritage site has been inscribed.

Denmark has nominated a natural site in Greenland this year. IUCN is currently evaluating the Greenland site (evaluation will be ready in May 2004).

Only one Arctic World Heritage site has been inscribed so far.

United Nations Convention Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

The UNFCCC has the ultimate objective of stabilizing the greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level is to be achieved a timeframe sufficient to allow eco-systems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.

Sea level rise, warming sea surface temperatures and any changes in sea-surface temperature and intensity. Further temperature warming would increase stress on the arctic ecosystem and result in an increased frequency of diseases for all life forms. Changes in ocean chemistry resulting from higher CO₂ levels may also have a negative impact on the health of the arctic ecosystem. Regarding assessments, there are many polar climate change (Arctic and Antarctic) topics that are likely to be key issues in the 4th Assessment Report of the IPCC. Among these are observed and projected changes in sea ice and ice sheets, which influence not only the climate of the polar regions but also lower latitudes. Sea level rise is clearly another topic with important connections to polar climate, particularly for future projections over long time scales.

Links to the Arctic through participation in GCOS, etc. and to indigenous people through their participation in the UNFCCC process as a special group. The IPCC conducts periodic, independent scientific assessments of various issues on climate change. (Note: IPCC is an independent body, but also responds to the needs of the UNFCCC for scientific information on climate change related issues.)

Further research on the impacts of climate change in polar areas. Continuation of the assessment of latest information, including on the impacts of climate change on Arctic regions. To develop policies/projects/activities, to sustainably manage the Arctic ecosystem, as part of adaptation strategies.

Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the Ozone Layer

The objective of the Vienna Convention is to protect human health and the environment against the adverse effects resulting from modifications of the ozone layer. The Montreal Protocol, which operates under the framework of the convention, has the objective to protect the ozone layer by taking precautionary measures to control global emissions of substances that deplete it.

Under the Montreal Protocol's assessment process, the Scientific Assessment Panels look at the ozone layer depletion in the stratosphere including over Antarctic and Arctic.

The environmental effects have also looked at the effects of ozone layer depletion on various ecosystems including in the polar regions.

Continued monitoring of the ozone layer.

Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA)

Land-based activities affect the quality and quantity of water flowing into rivers, streams and eventually the coastal and marine environment. More than half of the world's population lives within 200 km from the sea. Healthy coastal environments are essential to human health, the development of human activities as well as to the survival of the marine environment. The GPA addresses threats to coral reefs; the GPA principles can be incorporated into national legislation and management schemes.

The *Regional Programme of Action for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment from Land-based Activities*, (RPA) is a regional non-binding action plan without convention. The RPA follows UNEP's GPA methodology with POPs as the number one priority pollutant to be addressed. The RPA illustrates the efforts of the Arctic countries to implement the GPA on a regional level. The Arctic Council's working group addressing protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) is currently developing an Arctic Marine strategic Plan (AMSP) through integrated approaches, including the ecosystem approach, in addressing the challenges of coastal and marine environments. New or innovative approaches, including large marine ecosystems and integrated coastal zone management will be considered. The indigenous peoples groups that are partners to the Arctic Council are fully and actively involved in the development of the AMSP.

Examples of developments in addressing sources of pollution from land-based activities include the Russian NPA-Arctic, which even though not an Arctic Council project, has been supported by the Council through the PAME working group. The Russian NPA-Arctic comprises, among other issues, three demonstration projects that will provide a basis for wider application of approaches and techniques for environmental restoration and damage prevention within Russia, within the arctic community of states and globally. One of these demonstration projects involves the establishment of a demonstration of indigenous peoples community organization on three fronts: enhanced involvement in governance; enhanced public health and sanitary services; and the creation of protected buffer zones under native jurisdiction in areas of intense natural resource development.

All efforts will be made to ensure that emerging issues, such as links with the climate change issues of the Arctic as addressed by the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) and concerns of indigenous peoples be addressed in the AMSP. PAME has proposed to review current threats, new information, and adequacy of existing measures related to land-based activities with a view towards expanding the RPA to additional source categories.

Further information:

Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and UNEP Chemicals
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Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
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Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)
www.wcmc.org.uk/cms
Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA)
www.unep-aewa.org
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
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