

ARCTIC FUTURES SYMPOSIUM 2020

RESILIENT

ARCTIC COMMUNITIES

ONLINE

30 NOVEMBER > 2 DECEMBER

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Photo: Joseph L. Cheek

Founder and organiser:



Partners:



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Arctic Futures Symposium 2020 Executive Summary

The Covid-19 pandemic made it necessary to hold the 11th annual Arctic Futures Symposium in an all-online format instead of in-person in Brussels, as has been the practice since the symposium began in 2010.

The online format attracted more attendees than usual, as it allowed more people to take part from different time zones across the world. It was held over three days (30 November - 2 December 2020) for 3-4 hours each day in the afternoon, Central European Time.

In addition to this written summary, recordings of each session are available on the International Polar Foundation's YouTube channel at:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/Polarfoundation/playlists>

Monday 30 November 2020

Welcome:

- **Joseph Cheek** (Arctic Futures Symposium Project Manager, International Polar Foundation)
- **Piet Steel** (Vice-President, Belgian Polar Secretariat; Director, IPF Board; President Corporate, EU-Asia Centre)

Opening Keynote:

- **Virginijus Sinkevičius** (European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries)

Following a brief welcome from Arctic Futures Symposium Project Manager at IPF **Joseph Cheek** and IPF Board Director **Piet Steel** thanking all of the partners for their contributions to the symposium, **Virginijus Sinkevičius**, the European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries delivered the opening keynote.

Commissioner Sinkevičius emphasised the effects of the unprecedented phenomenon climate change has been bringing to the Arctic, leaving the region with a growing collection of alarming records every year regarding temperature rise and ice loss. He made it clear that climate change is bad for business, as it hurts economies and produces high costs and losses, with no long-term gains. Instead, economies will do better by avoiding climate change as much as possible. But even with the best strategies and policies, the EU alone cannot fix the Arctic; the entire international community must be on board to overcome the challenges.

Day 1, Panel 1: Arctic Challenges

Moderator:

- **Mike Sfraga** (Director, Wilson Center Polar Institute)

Panelists:

- **Virginijus Sinkevičius** (European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries)
- **Stéphane Dion** (Prime Minister's Special Envoy to the E.U. and Europe, and Canada's Ambassador to Germany)
- **Ine Marie Eriksen Søreide** (Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway)
- **James DeHart** (U.S Coordinator for the Arctic Region)

In the first panel discussion, **Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius** built on the themes he shared in his introduction, sharing insights on the outcomes of the European Union's consultations about its Arctic policy, and plans are for the Arctic over the next few years. The window of opportunity in the Arctic is closing rapidly, and the updates the EU will eventually make to its Arctic policy reflect what the bloc sees as priorities over the next decade to promote ambitious levels of change. The three priorities of action include responding to climate change and safeguarding the Arctic environment; promoting sustainable development in the region; and strengthening international cooperation. However, they are not the EU's only focus in the Arctic. There is also broad support for expanding the EU's focus to incorporate other challenges the Arctic faces, including education, connectivity and research.

In his remarks, **Special Envoy Stéphane Dion** stated that he believes there is much to do to further cooperation in the Arctic. Canada's new Arctic Strategy underscores the desire to further collaborate with various Arctic actors in all sectors. This northern policy framework focuses international and domestic policies on promoting science and research collaboration, as well as supports a pan-Arctic network for sustainable economic development while maintaining a healthy environment in the fight against climate change. It also increases indigenous circumpolar exchange and strengthens connections overall across the Arctic.

Foreign Minister Ine Marie Eriksen Søreide began her contribution by reminding the audience that despite the growth of great power rivalry, the Arctic continues to be a region where cooperation and stability remain the norm, and the Arctic states have been working hard to keep it this way. The Arctic Council's robust frameworks have been instrumental in developing key points and conversations that build trust across borders and establish common ground. Norway understands that its interests are best served by continuing its active Arctic diplomacy in multilateral institutions that promote outside contributions, as long as they operate within existing governance structures.

Coordinator James DeHart spoke to the audience about the period of transition between administrations in the US, which may change the country's perspectives and policy stance within the Arctic. He also talked about how the change in administration will not dispel all of the challenges or opportunities in the region. Russia and China will continue to show increasing levels of interest in the Arctic. Climate change

will also remain a constant factor, requiring the new administration to reinvigorate its commitment to its allies, and maintain its focus on the region.

In the question and answer part of the discussion, **Dr. Sfraga** posited to the panelists questions such as how do international cooperation forums in the Arctic - including the Arctic Council - evolve to meet the growing interest in the Arctic; how to balance addressing climate change and economic development in the North; what role does the EU have in the Arctic and what kind of support should the bloc give; and how to engage with Russia.

Commissioner Sinkevičius responded to the question about balancing addressing climate change and economic development by saying that sustainable development means prioritising long-term societal welfare over short-term economic gains, listening to locals and those with indigenous knowledge, and protecting the environment for future generations. Above all it is important to listen to Arctic residents when making Arctic policy, such as the annual Arctic Indigenous Peoples Dialogue, and the Arctic Stakeholders forum initiative, which bring to light key issues of importance to Arctic residents such as connectivity, education, entrepreneurship training, transport connections, preserving indigenous culture, supporting research, safeguarding the Arctic environment, and raising awareness.

Special Envoy Dion addressed international cooperation, proposing a list of five things that need to be done in conjunction with its international Arctic partners: 1) fully implement the Arctic Science Cooperation Agreement to foster cross-border scientific cooperation; 2) the Ocean Partnership Declaration should be a means for science-based decision-making; 3) establish bilateral early career research exchange programmes; 4) develop greater cooperation between Canada and EUPolarNet; 5) work with EUPolarNet to establish cooperation between research stations in the Arctic.

Foreign Minister Eriksen Søreide commented on the issue of research cooperation in the Arctic. While climate change is rapidly changing the Arctic, it's also opening up enormous opportunities for international research cooperation, from both Arctic and non-Arctic states, and translate knowledge for this research into action. She used the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard as an example where such international research takes place, and where abiding by environmental legislation - which has been drafted based on research - is even more important as the environmental impact in Svalbard is far greater than elsewhere. She also cited the 2018 *International Agreement to Prevent Unregulated Fishing in the High Seas of the Central Arctic Ocean* as only possible thanks to international research cooperation. She also cited the report from the high-level panel on Sustainable Ocean Economy as an example of growing interest in sustainable ocean stewardship.

Coordinator DeHart commented on the future evolution of the Arctic Council, emphasising the need to put local communities at the centre of the discussions, whether talking about topics such as security, science, investment, resource extraction, commercial development, etc. This is one of the strengths of the Arctic Council. The pandemic has brought to the fore the isolation and lack of infrastructure in many remote Arctic communities, and the need to address these issues. He used the ex-

ample of the One Health programme of the Arctic Council in which doctors in remote communities from all across the Arctic were able to share experiences and best practices to address pandemic-related issues in their local communities.

Coordinator DeHart also wanted to build on work that has already been done to ensure high standards across the Arctic for foreign direct investment. The World Economic Forum did some work on this that was introduced in the Arctic Economic Council, and this could be taken further. He highlighted the Arctic Science Ministerial is an important forum to harness the knowledge that all Arctic and non-Arctic players can bring to the table and hoped the next would bring significant participation.

Coming back to the environment versus economic development discussion, **Special Envoy Dion** commented that science must be the basis for decisions related to economic activity such as managing fishing activities.

Foreign Minister Eriksen Søreide said what can be done is use the valuable input and practical experience of Arctic indigenous peoples because they “know nature and how to deal with nature.” International cooperation also makes this easier. She proposed that the experience the Arctic has gained can also be used in other regions of the world, because the Arctic has been able to find ways of working together and finding the right balance between conservation and production, which can serve as an example elsewhere. They’ve done this in particular by taking on the issue of preserving biodiversity.

Commissioner Sinkevičius added that the EU has always worked on protecting biodiversity and advocated establishing marine protected areas as an important element to preserve Arctic biodiversity. Cleaning up micro plastics in the Arctic marine environment is being addressed through marine and waste management legislation. Nonetheless, the Commissioner said that more should be done, especially with increased interest in the Arctic.

Coordinator DeHart pointed out that although the US may not have been in the same place as its Arctic partners on the broader issue of climate, the country has not missed a beat on investment in scientific research. NSF, NOAA, NASA and other US organisations involved in Arctic research have continued to conduct excellent research and cooperate with their counterparts globally.

This panel is available for viewing on the IPF YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfCtcZonIEQ&list=PLUd2Ya71uzhqnmqJERQLre7iCcthqz-cn>

With new Arctic policies set to be adopted and drafted by many Arctic states, the EU and Arctic Indigenous Peoples' organisations, the following three panels focused on new elements in these policy documents. These panels also discussed the best practices in drafting the Arctic policy statements and the challenges caused by the current global pandemic.

Day 1, Panel 2: Arctic Policies – European Arctic and Russia

Moderator:

- **Adam Stępién** (Researcher, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland)

Speakers:

- **Hilde Svartdal Lunde** (Senior Arctic Official, Ambassador and Special Advisor for the Arctic and Antarctic, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway)
- **Petteri Vuorimäki** (Senior Arctic Official, Ambassador, Arctic and Antarctic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland)
- **Nikolay Korchunov** (Ambassador-at-Large for Arctic Affairs, Senior Arctic Official of the Russian Federation)
- **Tonje Margrete Wisnes Johansen** (Advisor, Saami Council Arctic and Environment Unit)

Ambassador Hilde Svartdal Lunde noted that global issues such as climate change and geopolitical changes have increased international presence in the Arctic. Nonetheless, the region remains an area where international law is respected, and local cooperation is constructive. The Arctic Council remains the primary forum for Arctic governance. Its member states and permanent participants have cooperated constructively on the key issues of climate change, pollution and emergency preparedness.

Despite the pandemic situation, the Arctic Council has continued to function well. The work that has started on increased coordination on marine issues and the regional action plan for marine pollution are good examples of the responsible actions the Arctic states and permanent participants have taken. Ambassador Lunde further noted that the Arctic is not a homogenous region, and the priorities of each Arctic state are unique. Young people are of particular importance to the future of the North Norway region.

Ambassador Petteri Vuorimäki welcomed the action the EU has taken regarding the Arctic and remained convinced that the EU can play a major role in the region. Since the adoption of the previous Finnish national strategy on the Arctic, things have changed not only in the Arctic, but also in Europe and the whole world. There is a considerable level of international tension in the region, and an updated national strategy is underway to address these current issues. The pandemic has made people-to-people contact risky and has made stakeholder consultation more challenging.

Ambassador Vuorimäki stressed the need to prioritise public health in the Arctic co-operation agenda, where the Arctic Council remains as a functional forum.

Ambassador Nikolay Korchunov linked the Arctic region to Russian national security. Russia's new national strategy takes an inclusive approach, takes account of the changing environment also in the geopolitics, emphasises socio-economic development and the need to improve the well-being of the population in the region.

As a new element, Russia's policy document reflects the acceleration of climate change in the Arctic. Ambassador Korchunov also stressed the importance of having sustainable economic development and environmental protection.

Ms. Tonje Margrete Wisnes Johansen introduced the Saami Council's first Arctic strategy, published in 2020. By adopting its own strategy, the Saami Council has set up their own agenda and prioritised their needs. The strategy also works as an important tool to demonstrate what the Saami people expect from all outside guests and visitors the Arctic. The strategy prioritises climate change, environmental protection, Saami traditional knowledge and science, the sustainable development of Saami land, economic growth, and preservation of Saami culture and language.

Ms. Johansen also highlighted the challenges to the Saami cross-border lifestyle the current pandemic imposes. Reindeer herders often cross international borders when they move reindeer from pasture to pasture. In the High North of Fennoscandia, where international borders have traditionally not been highly controlled, the closure of borders to prevent the spread of the coronavirus has made this traditional crossing of borders more challenging.

During the subsequent discussion, the moderator, **Mr. Adam Stępień**, asked all panellists about the methodologies of engaging all relevant Arctic stakeholders in drafting Arctic policies, and how the international and domestic aspects of the policies support one another.

Ambassador Lunde commented that the stakeholder process in drafting the new white paper on Norway's Arctic policy involved the entire Norwegian government (led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in conjunction with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation) over a period of two years holding over 100 meetings during this time. Local, regional, indigenous, business, and researcher voices all contributed to the white paper.

Particular attention was paid to including young people, with a youth panel (16-28 years olds from diverse backgrounds and geographical locations) assessing what can be done to keep young people living in the High North. Recommendations included participation of young people in public debates and decision-making, as well as having more opportunities for education, sport, culture, job creation and the promotion of indigenous languages. The panel has led to greater funding for sports activities, an entrepreneurship fund, and the establishment of the High North Coordinator position, who will work on youth issues in the High North. Young people also have a keen interest to take part in international cooperation activities, which creates more synergies between foreign and domestic policy.

Ambassador Vuorimäki commented that he sees domestic and international issues interacting constantly, regardless of proximity to Finland. It's difficult to set international cooperation as a standalone priority because it touches everything. In the Finnish Arctic strategy, the international framework is established at the beginning. And sets the tone for the entire strategy.

Finland spent a lot of time engaging with stakeholders, holding large stakeholder events in Rovaniemi and Helsinki, with plans to hold other meetings before the pandemic happened. He agreed that it is important to engage youth as they are the future of the region.

In terms of process, focal points in all of the concerned ministries have met regularly in the strategy development process. A steering committee leads the strategy formation and a broader consultative committee that brings together municipalities and other stakeholders.

Ambassador Korchunov explained that Russia has held a number of public hearings and events in the Arctic regions dedicated to the Russia's Arctic strategy, with all main stakeholders (youth, seniors, indigenous peoples) involved. It was an open process, he stated.

All government agencies that are in some way involved with the Arctic were involved. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for external communication about the strategy, and has been working with the Minister for Far East and Arctic Development.

With the Arctic opening up more to the world and becoming more accessible, Russia believes that the role of non-Arctic states will increase, as they have contributions to make on a political, economic, social and transport front.

Ms. Johansen reminisced about how the Saami Community began with a grassroots process between the different branches of the Saami Community in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia, as well as with an open consultation in 2017 during the 100-year anniversary of the formation of the first Saami political bodies. The entire process was open and transparent.

As a grassroots organisation, the Saami Council has been able to constantly receive feedback from the broader Saami Community, and is therefore an accurate representation of the will of the Saami People.

As the Saami Community is split between four countries, the degree to which they feel they can influence the various Arctic strategies of each country varies from place to place. The Norwegian Saami Parliament seems to have the strongest voice of the four countries. She remarked that in the Norwegian strategy, each chapter has integrated Saami perspective, not leaving the Saami perspective as a side note. She encouraged Finland to take note of this and do the same as they work on their new

Arctic strategy, as everything the Arctic states are doing in the Arctic affect the Saami.

While she sees greater involvement of Saami in the drafting of Arctic strategies as a positive trend, Ms. Johansen said that it is always better to have the option to consent or not to consent to activities that affect them and their region. It is also a positive that all states have addressing climate change and sustainable development as key points in their strategies, but it is important to speak with the Saami about what sustainable development is, as the Saami have a different view of what “sustainable development” means.

Mr. Stępień asked more questions about the opinion of Arctic states and Arctic indigenous peoples on the EU’s regulatory influence on the Arctic region in setting high standards for Arctic developments, and another question (from Jan Dusík, WWF Arctic Programme) about whether climate change should be addressed in a pan-Arctic manner, as it affects all countries.

Ambassador Vuorimäki remarked in response to Ms. Johansen that the Finnish government takes consultations with the Saami very seriously. Regarding sustainable development, he pointed to the work of the Sustainable Development Working Group of the Arctic Council. He agreed that the EU sets high standards in general, and that it is an important global standard-setter in general.

Ambassador Korchunov questioned what kind of standards the EU could set in the Arctic. He pointed out that Russia introduced standards and responsibilities of organisations conducting operations in the Russian High North, including the requirement to consult with indigenous organisations from the planning stages. Russia welcomes any approach that is useful and constructive to cooperation in the High North.

He brought up the fact that at the last Arctic Council Ministerial in Rovaniemi in May 2019, there was an attempt to reach a consensus on addressing climate change, but it did not happen. He said Russia will continue to work on climate change issues in the Arctic Council, and hopes there will be more success in the next ministerial meeting.

Ambassador Lunde commented that Norway is cooperating closely with the EU on climate issues and it will do its part to fulfil the European Green Deal, adhering to the EU’s standards as an EEA country, working to provide its citizens with clean and affordable energy options, and developing and sharing climate-friendly technologies to promote an inclusive green transition throughout Europe.

Ms. Johansen stated that the Sami Council is looking forward to working with the EU on its work in addressing climate issues and sustainable development. It is an important step that the EU has a clear strategy to address these issues. She also recognised Finland for the important work they have done in including Saami voices in their new strategy.

She ended by saying the look forward to working with Russia when they take over the chair of the Arctic Council in May 2021, especially as indigenous concerns and sustainable development are high on the Russian chairmanship's priorities, and agreed with Ambassador Vuorimäki that the Sustainable Development Working Group in the Arctic Council is a good place to discuss these issues.

This panel is available for viewing on the IPF YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTH0cml22Tc&list=PLUd2Ya71uzhqnmqUERQLre7iCcthqz-cn&index=2>

Day 1, Panel 3: Arctic policies - Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Denmark

Moderator:

- **Adam Stępień** (Researcher, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland)

Panelists:

- **Friðrik Jónsson** (Director-General GRÓ, Senior Arctic Official, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Iceland)
- **Margretha Jacobsen** (Representative of the Faroe Islands in the Arctic Council)
- **Mira Kleist** (Special Advisor, Greenland Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Energy)
- **Thomas Winkler** (Arctic Ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark, Head of the Department of Arctic and North America of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Mr. Friðrik Jónsson talked about Iceland's chairmanship of the Arctic Council for which sustainability is the main focus. The four priority areas - the Arctic marine environment, climate and green energy solutions, people in the Arctic and a stronger Arctic Council - show a holistic approach to Arctic challenges. In the remaining six months before Russia takes over the Arctic Council chairmanship, Iceland will focus on the fight against marine litter.

Mr. Jónsson praised the resilience of the Arctic Council during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, he expected geopolitical tensions in the Arctic Council to grow in the future due to an ever-increasing interest in the Arctic.

Ms. Margretha Jacobsen highlighted the importance of international agreements in the fight against climate change and achieving healthy oceans. Interdependence across borders is more apparent between the different stakeholders in the Arctic.

The Faroe Islands have engaged in a new joint Arctic strategy with Denmark and Greenland, and continues to prioritise international cooperation. Sometime in 2021 the details of the Kingdom of Denmark's new Arctic strategy will be released. Its focus areas will be on sustainable development, healthy oceans, scientific cooperation, the blue bioeconomy and increasing renewable energy development.

Ms. Mira Kleist emphasised that the Kingdom of Denmark's joint strategy would be a strategy by the people of the Arctic for the people of the Arctic. The three countries in the Kingdom of Denmark will also have the chance to influence the strategy in a unique way. Greenland also plans to publish their own Arctic strategy addressing domestic issues not covered in the joint strategy with Denmark and the Faroe Islands.

Greenland will continue to welcome cooperation with a broad range of actors in the Arctic, with importance placed on the Arctic Council and the Nordic Cooperation. Furthermore, Greenland hopes to renew their fisheries cooperation with the EU in the coming years.

Ambassador Thomas Winkler added that from Copenhagen, geopolitical tensions are becoming evermore apparent in the Arctic. He feared that geopolitics could overshadow other important issues such as sustainable economic development in the region. This is why the new strategy of the Kingdom of Denmark will focus more on international cooperation and the Arctic Council.

Ambassador Winkler reiterated that the Arctic Council is still an important arena for dialogue, and that the institution is developing slowly in the right direction in his view.

During the ensuing discussion, the moderator, **Mr. Adam Stępień**, asked about ways to keep highly educated people living in the Arctic, how to get highly educated citizens to return home, and what the panelists thought about the balance between economic interests and preserving the environment.

Ms. Mira Kleist said that it is important that young people be able to complete a university degree in Greenland. This is something that the Greenlandic government and the EU has cooperated on to make possible. There is still a lot to be done since most education in Greenland above the high school level requires a high proficiency in Danish. Greenland needs continued support from its partners to continue the development of attractive educational institutions in Greenland. International researchers and corporations are encouraged to include Greenlandic youths in their projects.

Mr. Friðrik Jónsson emphasised the need for highly developed public services to attract and keep people as well as businesses in the Arctic. Economic development is a challenge that there is a discrepancy between definitions of sustainability employed in the Arctic and elsewhere in the world. For example, down production from endangered duck species is sustainable because farmers have an incentive to keep duck populations protected from predators. However, in other countries, using down from these endangered duck species is perceived as harmful to the environment.

Ambassador Thomas Winkler reiterated that cooperation is key for small Arctic states. In the education sector, the Arctic sets good example. The establishment of a foreign policy think tank in Nuuk is one possibility to attract highly educated workers.

Regarding the balance between economic interests and environmental sustainability, Ambassador Winkler stated that we are still having the same discussions as we did in 2008, without a significant change in the debate. He also supported Mr. Jónsson in the view that the Arctic needs to be better understood globally, and communication is key.

Ms. Margretha Jacobsen said that to combat brain drain, the Faroe Islands implemented a plan to keep highly skilled citizens to stay. Ms. Jacobsen also supported Mr. Jónsson's point that good public sector services are of high importance for attracting and keeping people and businesses in the Arctic.

Ms. Mira Kleist agreed with the other panelists, and supported the suggestion that we should be better at communicating how the circular economy in the Arctic works. One consequence of the lack of understanding has been the ban on all seal products in the EU, which had a big impact on indigenous communities.

She added that in addition to the international policy think tank in Nuuk, a science hub is being established in Greenland, and she welcomed cooperation with regard to its establishment.

This panel is available for viewing on the IPF YouTube Channel:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7MWK_QSdo7o&list=PLUd2Ya71uzhqmqUERQLre7iCcthzq-cn&index=3

Day 1, Panel 4: Arctic policies - North America and the EU

Moderator

- **Adam Stępień** (Researcher, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland)

Panelists

- **Meredith Rubin** (Senior Arctic Official, US Department of State)
- **David Sproule** (Senior Arctic Official, Canada; Director General, Polar, Eurasian and European Affairs, Global Affairs Canada)
- **Dalee Sambo Dorough** (Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council)
- **Michael Mann** (EU Special Envoy for Arctic Matters)

Ms. Meredith Rubin focused her intervention on the commonalities of the different Arctic policy papers from the US State Department in collaboration with its agencies in recent years. The US envisions the Arctic as an area free of conflict, where nations act responsibly, and where economic and energy resources are developed in a sustainable and transparent manner that respects the interests and cultures of indigenous peoples. The US strengthens its links to the Arctic through partnerships such as its cooperation with Greenland, its support of Arctic science and research, and its engagement with the Arctic Council's working groups and subsidiary bodies.

Increased activity in the Arctic represents both opportunities and challenges, and the US continues to take a balanced approach. The US also promotes economic

growth and improves energy security while protecting the environment by promoting good governance and environmentally responsible development with an emphasis on consistency among Arctic states.

She added that the US will continue to focus on local capacity building, support clean energy champions and introduce American technology solutions in the region. The US will continue its close collaboration with indigenous and local communities in the Arctic and with the Arctic Council.

Mr. David Sproule recalled how Canada's Arctic policy framework from 2019 was co-developed in cooperation with provinces, territories and indigenous communities. The document calls for strong, self-reliant communities working together for a vibrant, prosperous Arctic at home and abroad with a focus on people, inclusion, prosperity, health, security and sovereignty. Roundtable discussions contributed to the drafting of Canada's Arctic policy; they included diverse stakeholders such as young people, industry representatives and topic-relevant experts.

He noted that global interest in the Arctic has been growing while new opportunities have arisen due to climate change. This has led to considerable activity and interest in the region among Arctic and non-Arctic states. Although geopolitical tensions have been increasing, a rules-based international order is essential for peaceful cooperation. Canada supports broad international cooperation to address the greatest challenges facing the Arctic.

Mr. Sproule lamented that too often, Northerners have not been included in decisions that have a direct impact on them. This is why the new Canadian Arctic policy pays greater attention to inclusion and co-development of projects with local and indigenous communities.

Covid-19's arrival in the Arctic has underscored the shortcomings and vulnerabilities that the Canadian federal government has had to address. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation, especially in the Arctic Council, is necessary for addressing the impacts of Covid-19 in the Arctic.

Ms. Dalee Sambo Dorough outlined how the Inuit Circumpolar Council has remained consistent since 1977 in calling for the need for a coordinated and coherent Arctic policy, and how it's important to maintain this consistent approach. The recognition of Inuit rights as an indigenous people is essential, as well as the call to ensure stability, peace and security in the Arctic.

A recent focus of the ICC has been the adaption of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the desire to establish the Arctic as a zone of peace, to balance environmental protection and the important relationship between conservation and sustainable development. ICC has focused on social, cultural, economic, education, and scientific issues. Inuit views, perspectives and knowledge have proven important in dealing with challenges linked to climate change and in UN reports about the changes observed in indigenous homelands. Inuit voices need to be heard in decision-making processes to greater extent in the future.

With the ongoing pandemic, it's important to keep in mind other health and wellness issues of Arctic residents such as suicide prevention.

The moderator, **Mr. Adam Stępień**, asked the panellists about the expectations on investments in areas of e-health and e-services.

Mr. David Sproule said that the pandemic has brought to the fore issues such as remoteness, long distances, infrastructure gaps, and costs to provide basic services. The aim is to address these challenges with new technologies.

Ms. Dalee Sambo Dorough stressed that the so-called “new” challenges are not new for Inuit communities but have existed for a long time. Many indigenous communities remember earlier pandemics and immediately took action in the current pandemic based on community memory.

Ms. Meredith Rubin found that challenges were not limited to just one region or to one country. Many places in the Arctic face the same challenges. Therefore, the US aims to share information and experiences from all over the Arctic to strengthen communities.

Mr. Stępień then asked how the panellists viewed the changes in the geopolitical environment of the Arctic in the last years.

Ms. Dalee Sambo Dorough saw the Arctic region as a central feature of geopolitics today. The ICC remembers the Cold War, and so the Inuit hope to see continued stability in the Arctic.

Mr. David Sproule added that besides hard security, “soft security” issues such as responsiveness to environmental disasters, pollution and the safety of people is very important.

Ms. Meredith Rubin pointed out that there has been increased attention to the Arctic in the last years, especially after the Arctic Council Ministerial in Rovaniemi in May 2019. The statement of peaceful cooperation signed by the eight Foreign Ministers in attendance should not be underestimated.

Mr. Stępień asked the panellists about their expectations for the coming 5-10 years for Arctic Council cooperation.

Ms. Meredith Rubin suggested that the Arctic Council could take a more active role in addressing the impacts of the pandemic on communities, and focus on strong, sustainable development that is transparent and respects local communities.

Mr. David Sproule expected further work on climate change issues, which is a priority for Canada and all Arctic Council members, and will be under the upcoming Russian chairmanship of the Arctic Council. The pandemic will hopefully lead to new ways of thinking and enhanced recognition and use of the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples.

Ms. Dalee Sambo Dorough emphasised economic, social, cultural and environmental security are as important as defence and security. Protection of the Arctic environment cannot be detached from other types of security. Indigenous knowledge should be put to good use in the Arctic and meaningful engagement of indigenous people in Arctic Council needs to continue.

Mr. Michael Mann offered a summary of the previous panels about Arctic policies. He reminded everyone that the EU's current Arctic policy is being updated. Geopolitical interest of the Arctic has been increasing, and the EU offers a European solution to changes happening in the Arctic. An updated EU Arctic policy should be ready for adoption in the last quarter of 2021. The public consultation of the policy has ended, and now the analysis of 140 answers around the world is being done.

The three main priorities in the 2016 version of the Arctic Policy will remain: environmental protection, sustainable development and the need to maximise international cooperation. Things have changed rapidly in last few years. The green transition is the most significant new element to come about, and the new Arctic policy needs to be in line with the Green Deal and new measures brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. The EU supports an inclusive approach, bringing young people and gender balance into Arctic discussions.

Mr. Mann stated that we need to ensure proper stakeholder engagement and to take the fact the Arctic is not uniform into account. The EU welcomes continuous feedback from Arctic communities and its internal and external policies need to work together. Hard security is an important aspect to take into account, but climate change is just as important. Also, health is going to play much more important role in the future. Concrete results are needed. This can be achieved by supporting local innovation for green technologies. Arctic has vibrant economies, e.g., blue economy, green technologies and circular economy, which are very far developed already in their respective regions. In this context the EU can play a role as a standard setter.

This panel is available for viewing on the IPF YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRO6H6G4VVM&list=PLUd2Ya71uzhqnmqUERQLre7iCcthqz-cn&index=4>

Tuesday 1 December 2020

Day 2, panel 1: Arctic community needs and preparedness

Moderator:

- **Arne Holm** (Editor in Chief, High North News at the High North Center, Nord University)

Panelists:

- **Pál Weihe** (Director of the Department of Occupational Medicine and Public Health, Faroe Islands)
- **Kristen Tanche** (Regional Health & Wellness Coordinator, Dehcho First Nations, Alumni of the Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship Program)
- **Julie Rademacher** (Head of Communication, Tele Post)

Moderator Arne O. Holm opens the session by highlighting how the broadly different regions of the Arctic face a broad range of challenges, depending on which community you view the challenges from. Composed of speakers from Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Northern Canada the his panel reflects the diversity of the challenges Arctic residents face.

Dr. Pál Weihe spoke about responding to the Covid-19 pandemic in an Arctic context. He explained the first recorded case of Covid-19 in the Faroe Islands was on 3 March 2020, and the first wave of the pandemic lasted until 22 April. There were two additional outbreaks: one in August and one in October 2020.

The Faroe Islands were well prepared for the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic and imposed only a partial lockdown. Everyone arriving in the country was obliged to take a Covid test, and anyone infected was immediately quarantined, and close contacts of infected people were advised to also quarantine. Thanks to free, extensive and available testing (they carried out over 165,000 tests - three times more than the country's population) they were able to take solid control over the pandemic. Being able to provide tests and assess these tests "locally" has been crucial to getting the Covid-19 crisis under control.

The government also provided clear and regular communication to the general public to keep everyone well-informed. Citizens have had quick and easy access to answers in case anyone wondered what they should do in a given situation.

Overall, only 500 people in the entire country were infected, with very few hospitalisations. Only three individuals needed intensive care treatment and as of 1 December 2020 there have been no deaths due to the coronavirus in the Faroe Islands.

Dr. Weihe attributed the these measures and the willingness of the Faroese population to voluntarily participate in them to the success in combatting the disease in the Faroe Islands.

He finished the discussion by saying there has been a strength in the (small) size of the community of the Faroe Islands – people were able to contact for example himself to ask simple questions, and get clarification. The close relation between the members of the community, the health personnel, business, and legislators gave them the opportunity of adapting to the virus and tightly responding to the crisis. The small size allowed them to keep this close contact and control of the community.

Ms. Kristen Tanche spoke about how her personal life and history links to her current work. After struggling with alcohol and personal issues throughout her early life, she tried to find assistance and help through official channels but struggled to find information relevant to

her indigenous Dene background. When she left her remote Dene Arctic community in the Northwest Territories she was finally able to have access to services that fit her situation. The situation made her realise that there was a severe lack of such services in her home community.

She tried to answer why this was missing through a policy paper she wrote through the Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship Program, in which she found that healthcare costs related to addiction problems in her home Dene community are, per capita, the second highest in the nation.

With issues such as intergenerational trauma, colonialism and the aftereffects of this process, she highlighted indigenous communities as particularly vulnerable. She explained that to enable a healthier population in the region there need to be services available that are suitable and adapted to the indigenous way of life and experiences. Through interviews with community members, she identified three policy recommendations: 1) more culturally relevant, indigenous Northern counsellors; 2) more in-situ community-led programs; 3) a regional health gathering where one could work towards further strengthening the regional representation and develop further recommendations together with the community.

Her life story shows that representation and participation is essential to create culturally and regionally relevant services, and by extension enabling healthier societies in the Arctic region.

Ms. Julie Rademacher gave a presentation on telecommunications infrastructure and connectivity in the Arctic, with a focus on Greenland. The country faces many challenges due to its extreme Arctic climate, geographical size and the fact that its communities are spread out over such a vast area. In this context, a solid communication infrastructure is essential.

Despite the costs related to telecommunications infrastructure in Greenland, including new satellite installations, it has been possible to reduce the costs of operation and expand coverage throughout the country. The goal of Tele-Post is to further increase speed and usage, and lower costs even further. Connectivity in Greenland has a big impact on the well-being and opportunities of Greenlanders and must be maintained and improved.

During the coronavirus crisis, TelePost has made virtual meetings possible and stay connected, regardless of heavy traffic. They hope to focus on improving the educational situation of younger generations through the web.

During the **question and answer session**, **Mr. Holm** directed questions from audience members to the panelists.

Responding to an inquiry about who finances TelePost, **Ms. Rademacher** replied that they are owned by the Greenlandic citizens, as Greenland is a very socialistic society. Customers own Telepost. The Danish government provides funding and revenue from other industries such as fisheries also helps fund Telepost.

When asked about the large disparity between those who have access to the internet (37% of Greenlanders) and those who don't (63%), she explained that TelePost is working on a new strategy for the next few years to find a way to get all of the population connected in Greenland, despite the cost. Telepost sees value in connecting remote areas where it wouldn't be seen very profitable.

Ms. Kristen Tanche responded to a question about availability of indigenous peoples in the Canadian Arctic having places to learn more about their culture and language, stating that

they're getting there, although there needs to be more work. As there has been a disconnect between the people and their culture for a few generations, a lot of indigenous peoples need to re-learn a lot of aspects about their culture. Land cultural programmes helped her to re-connect with her own Dehcho First Nations culture. It has to be a community effort, where everyone has a role to play.

Dr. Weihe was asked whether the success story of the Faroe Islands in controlling the coronavirus could be replicated in other remote parts of the Arctic, to which he responded it requires having access to sufficient PCR testing. Rapid and widely available testing was essential for stopping the spread of the virus. Also clean guidelines for preventing infection need to be shared and followed.

When asked about celebrating the Christmas Holidays with visitors to the Faroe Islands, Dr. Weihe explained that visitors must be tested before boarding a plane from their place of departure, be extra vigilant and avoid close contact for the first five days of their stay in the Faroe Islands, and receive another test after five days. If the second test is negative, people can go about their business normally. Proper testing and following guidelines is the key to success.

This panel is available for viewing on the IPF YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7OigL02CWE&list=PLUd2Ya71uzhqnmqUERQLre7iCcthqz-cn&index=5>

Day 2, Part 2 – Pollution, Climate Change and Biodiversity: Challenges and Solutions

Moderator:

- **Philippe Archambault** (Scientific Director, Arctic Net; Professor of Marine Biology, Université Laval)

Panelists:

- **Kjersti Eline Tønnessen Busch** (CEO, SALT Lofoten AS)
- **Lisanne Raderschall** (Policy Analyst, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities, OECD)
- **Andres Sanabria** (Policy Analyst, Economist, Regional and Rural Development, OECD)
- **Hjálmar Hátun** (Senior Research Scientist at the Faroe Marine Research Institute and Lecturer at the University of the Faroe Islands)
- **Ellen Avard** (Director, Nunavik Research Center)

Dr. Kjersti Eline Tønnessen Busch started by briefly describing SALT, an organisation that focuses on marine management, coastal societies, and marine litter, with a special focus on estimating amounts and cleaning up marine litter all along Norway's coasts with the goal of protecting the environment - especially the flora and fauna that can be adversely impacted by marine litter.

Using mapping, random sampling of coastline transects, and observations from citizen scientists, SALT has found (preliminarily) that the further north along the coast of

Norway one goes, the more prevalent marine litter is. They've found that an estimated 100 million objects and 10,000 metric tonnes of litter in Norwegian waters comes from the fishing industry. Citizen scientists have found rope, beverage bottles and expanded polystyrene (EPS).

Dr. Busch went not to explain that SALT focuses a lot of its efforts on preventive measures and action to stop littering. For example, SALT has produced educational videos and materials featuring Crown Prince Haakon targeted at young people starting out in the fishing industry to raise awareness of the pollution the industry can create.

Clean-up activities are a big part of SALT's arsenal to combat marine litter. IN 2019 the organisation had 43,000 volunteers help them clean litter from beaches. SALT's efforts have shown clear results: Between 2011 and 2018, the Lofoten region in Norway has seen a significant reduction in marine litter.

SALT also works on professional clean-up activities, cooperating with local authorities and the Norwegian Retailers Fund. Clean-up activities are now organised in all coastal Norwegian counties. The fishing industry is also engaged in keeping litter out of the sea. They are encouraged to deliver litter free of charge to several harbours all along Norway's coasts.

The Norwegian military has also been involved in clean-up initiatives. The "Great Clean-up Action 2020", which was the largest ever known clean-up action to date, cleared 50 metric tonnes of marine litter from a 1km stretch of beach in Finnmark County, Norway thanks to the efforts of members of Norway's military who worked the beach for one week.

When asked, Dr. Busch explained that the Norwegian Environment Agency supports various cleanup actions in Norway, and funds to help cleanup actions from both the public and private sector have been increasing over the last several years. The Norwegian Retailers fund uses money charged for plastic bags towards efforts to clean up the oceans.

Lisanne Raderschall and **Andres Sanabria** presented on how mining in northern Sweden contributes to regional economic development and how mining can be a more environmentally sustainable activity in the Arctic. The OECD Mining Regions and Cities Initiative has sought to develop a toolbox with recommendations and evidence to benchmark and inform regional development in the mining and extractive industries; produce a series of case studies to deliver region-specific recommendations; and develop a global platform for mining regions and cities where knowledge can be shared.

To help regions and municipalities develop their strategy for improving the quality of life of citizens and climate neutrality, the speakers presented some recommendations for the mining in Northern Sweden. He mentioned both the benefits of mining for regional development, including high-wage jobs, innovation, and investments in infrastructure and services such as health centres, as well as certain drawbacks to mining, including environmental and social impacts, volatility in regional growth, un-

even distribution of productivity gains with some revenue from the mines leaving the communities where the material is mined. Nonetheless, as mining is an important source of income for many Arctic regions, there is an end to make it more sustainable while making sure locals reap the benefits from mining activities.

He went on to focus on a case study of the Upper Norrland region (Västerbotten and Norrbotten Counties), which contains 9 of the 12 most active mines in Sweden and 90% of the iron ore produced in Europe. The study identified opportunities in the region such as high environmental standards in mining operations; a highly skilled labour force; reliable green energy infrastructure and high broadband coverage. It also highlighted challenges the region faces such as low interaction between municipalities, universities and SMEs, leading to low entrepreneurship; a shrinking workforce; an unpredictable and non-transparent regulatory framework; and little link to land-use planning in regional development.

They ended by proposing recommendations to improve mining in northern Sweden, including: defining a long-term vision to support environmentally-friendly sustainable mining practices and technologies; strengthening the integration of municipal governments and universities to foster innovation; enhancing the entrepreneurship culture and innovation capacities of SMEs; strengthening the brand name of Sweden's mining "ecosystem" as an internationally recognised sustainable mining trademark; adopting instruments to improve the regulatory framework; developing clear and consistent guidelines for the mining industry; strengthening the capacity of rights holders, including the Saami; creating an effective dialogue and co-ordination framework between municipal and regional councils focused on land use and economic development.

Dr. Hjálmar Hátun focused his presentation on climate variability and its effects on marine resources in the sub-Arctic. The region of the ocean around the Faroe Islands is warmer than any other marine area at the same latitude (in either the Northern or Southern Hemisphere). With sea surface temperatures between 5 and 10C, this area can be seen as a climate oasis in the North Atlantic. This is due to the Gulf Stream (as part of the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation, or AMOC) and warm, moist winds carrying around 300 Petawatts (3×10^{17} Watts) of energy flux to the region.

The strong winds south of Greenland cool the water in the North Atlantic, which makes it sink to the bottom of the ocean and mix deeply. This in turn brings nutrients to the surface of the ocean that nourish primary producers in the marine food chain such as algae, which flourish during the spring and summer when the sun is more present.

The Subpolar Gyre - a cold-water current that circulates to the south of Greenland - blocks warm ocean currents from travelling further north when it is strong. But when it's weak, warm waters are able to penetrate further to the northwest to the Faroe Islands. When the Subpolar Gyre is strong, waters around the Faroe Islands are colder and less saline; when the Subpolar Gyre is weak, the waters around the Faroe Islands are more saline.

The strength of the Subpolar Gyre varies over time. It was very strong in the 1970s and 1990s, but since then, it has weakened and the waters around the Faroe Islands have become warmer and saltier, until becoming stronger again in 2015. This variability is shown in the "Gyre Index", which can be compared to other indices such as the Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation (AMO), sea-surface temperature, etc, all of which are interlinked and influence the climate in Europe. A long-term trend is clearly visible, which can be associated with global warming.

Dr. Hátun has studied the variation of the mixing of cold, fresh and warm, salty waters on marine ecosystems, looking at the entire food chain from phytoplankton up to fish, seabirds, and whales. Two marine biomes exist in the North Atlantic: to the immediate west of Ireland, Scotland, the Faroe Islands, to the south of Iceland, and to the west of Norway lies the Boreal marine biome - a zone with warmer, more saline waters, and a large diversity of species. West and north of this biome lies the Arctic Biome, which is colder, fresher water, and a lower diversity of species (yet higher stocks of certain fish species). To the southeast, to the west of France, lies the much warmer Lusitanian Biome, and further to the west in the middle of the North Atlantic is the North Atlantic Drift. All of the biomes influence one another, and vary in size and shape depending on the intensity of the Subpolar Gyre.

Predictability in marine science is a hot topic. As it is well understood, this entire area of the North Atlantic is relatively predictable. However, researchers (including Dr. Hátun) are trying to see if this predictability might be translated further north in the High Arctic.

Dr. Hátun concluded his presentation by talking about the "Cold blob" of cold water that appeared in the North Atlantic in 2015. Despite global ocean temperatures being warmer than average, this one area of the North Atlantic was the only area of the world's oceans that was significantly cooler than average. Some researchers claim this might have been linked to a weakening of the AMOC, although Dr. Hátun doesn't believe it is, but is rather due to the stronger Subpolar Gyre in 2015, which influences type and abundance of fish species. When asked about it, Dr. Hátun showed that the blue whiting fish was less abundant during a strong Subpolar Gyre period in the early to mid 1990s, but was much more abundant from the late 1990s until the mid 2000s, when the Subpolar Gyre was weak.

Dr. Ellen Avard explained that the Nunavik Research Centre has been active since 1978 by Inuit with the goal of helping the Inuit communities and their research needs in Nunavik. Country food - food that is hunted and fished - is an important part of the Inuit diet and lifestyle. The Research Centre studies the animals hunted and fished and the ecosystems they live in through several projects.

The Animal Health & Human Health programme focuses on looking at parasites in walrus. Walrus meat is analysed to ensure it is safe to eat. The Walrus Habitat project is investigating the connections between global warming, sea-ice loss and walrus population. Inuit elders and hunters are included in the project.

The Fisheries and Climate Change programme investigates how climate change impacts fish growth, migration, and spawning. Another programme, Fisheries and Min-

ing, is looking at how mining impacts fisheries, in particular contaminant levels, how the diet of the fish is affected, and the disease in the fish populations. The research found that the fish are healthy and safe for human consumption. Yet another programme is looking at the prevalence of micro plastics along the shorelines of Nunavik.

The Beluga Population Studies programme is one of the longest-running research projects. It collects information from hunters on whales they catch and this data is used to inform policy makers. A new programme, the Seal Health Study, is working with hunters to collecting formation about parasite and contaminant levels in seals. This study also include a major youth training component.

More information: <https://www.makivik.org/nunavik-research-centre/>

This panel is available for viewing on the IPF YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IncsPaqV2qM&list=PLUd2Ya71uzhqnmqUERQLre7iCcthqz-cn&index=6>

Day 2, Part 3: Resilience through Empowerment

Moderator:

- **Embla Eir Oddsdóttir** (Director, Icelandic Arctic Cooperation Network (IACN); Chair, SDWG)

Panelists:

- **Crystal Martin Lapenskie** (President of National Inuit Youth Council (NIYC))
- **Vilena Valeeva** (Research Associate, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies)
- **Isak Utsi** (Mayor of Arjeplog, Sweden)
- **Marya Rozanova Smith** (Professorial Lecturer at the George Washington University (GWU) and Advisor to the Chancellor at the Russian State Hydrometeorological University (RSHU))
- **Andrey Petrov** (Director, ARCTICenter, University of Northern Iowa)

Ms. Crystal Martin Lapenskie started the session by discussing the empowerment of Arctic indigenous youth in Canada from the perspective of the National Inuit Youth Council (NIYC). The council's role is to advance the priorities of Inuit youth in Canada, where most of their focus lies in cultural and language sovereignty. These two aspects relate to a person's identity and has been a big influence on the Inuit people for many years. Lapenskie emphasised the work of the NIYC to continue the empowerment of Inuit communities, as well as advancing cultural programmes on land initiatives. Ms. Lapenskie also underlined the effects of low self-determination and lack of control over who a person is as key to one's mental health. The Inuit community has the highest suicide rate in Canada and the highest rate of food insecurity. In many places there is also a housing crisis.

She also emphasising the lack of infrastructure, healthcare, and other basic human needs in many communities, which the general population in Canada is starting to recognise. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought to the attention of the general Canadian population the large movement of indigenous youth and young adults who are interested in pursuing self-determination. In addition to stopping the spread of virus, she stated that in order to have secure communities, the key issues regarding infrastructure, healthcare, mental health, and employment must be addressed in order to have vibrant communities.

Ms. Vilena Valeeva from the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), which specialises in trans-disciplinary and co-created research, presented a case undertaken during the Horizon 2020 Blue Action Project, *Yamal 2040: Scenarios for the Russian Arctic*. The presentation explained how co-created research practices and inclusion of Arctic residents in research projects can be beneficial for both Arctic residents and scientists, as well as contribute to enhancing resilience in Arctic communities.

Collaborating with the Institute for World Economy, International Relations of Russian Academy of Science, and Berlin-based consulting organisation, Foresight Intelligence, the project aimed to respond to the challenges the Yamal region has been experiencing, such as climate and environmental change, as well as economic, social, and political challenges. The study also had the goal to help stakeholders develop greater capacity to adapt to climate change and to proactively prepare for an alternative and uncertain future of the Yamal region.

The team of researchers who worked on the project created three scenarios to better understand the risks and opportunities regional changes may create in the future. Based on three workshops, participants living in the Yamal region developed different ways to handle future uncertainties and proactively prepare for changes brought about by climate change.

Mr. Isak Utsi, Mayor of Arjeplog, Sweden and member of the Saami Community expressed his concern about the declining population in Arjeplog, an issue many Arctic regions face. More and more young people are leaving the municipality to seek a wider range of both educational and job opportunities. According to Mr. Utsi, making an investment in the younger generation is needed in order to attract and ensure that young people in Arjeplog have the opportunities that make them want to stay. He emphasised the importance of being able to offer higher-level education and to strengthen cooperation with universities.

Mr. Utsi suggested safeguarding and promoting economic activity and cultural heritage in the Arctic by taking advantage of the region's strengths, such as conducting winter tests on automobiles and traditional reindeer husbandry. One challenge for Saami companies and businesses is that they are often quite small. Therefore, politics at the local level need to reflect the small Saami corporate structure better to safeguard their needs and interests, which will help contribute to the development of their traditional activities.

Prof. Andrey Petrov and **Prof. Marya Rozanova-Smith** continued the session by focusing on gender empowerment in the Arctic regions. Dr. Petrov mentioned that the *Gender Equality in the Arctic Phase 3* report - a key deliverable of Iceland's 2019-2021 Arctic Council Chairmanship - will be published in 2021. The report will consist of six chapters. Profs. Petrov and Rozanova-Smith are co-authors of one chapter, *The Role of Gender Empowerment in Building Arctic Resilient Communities*.

The report will look at empowerment through the lens of three domains: political, economic, and civic empowerment. Prof. Petrov emphasised that the most important part of empowerment is to empower decision-making, which leads to a high level of self-determination and the ability of Arctic residents to pursue dreams and opportunities.

Prof. Rozanova Smith gave some examples from the report regarding gender gaps and gender empowerment in the Arctic regions. For example, an indicator of women's representation in elective regional and city bodies demonstrates that women remain less likely to participate in the political sphere than men across most Arctic regions, with the exception of the Chukotka region in Russia, Västerbotten, and Norrbotten Counties in Sweden, and Nordland county in Norway.

The report makes several conclusions: Firstly, all genders' empowerment is key to community sustainability, resilience, and success. Secondly, moving gender empowerment from the periphery to the centre of public policy discourse and decision-making is vital to achieving sustainable development goals in the Arctic. Thirdly, women's access to and participation in political, economic, and civic spheres must be improved.

They ended by stressing that there are no one-size-fits-all policy solutions in the Arctic. Due to the differences between Arctic communities and the understanding of what gender equality means between different regions of the Arctic, policy solutions need to make sure that regional and local level of empowerment is an approach individual communities are interested in pursuing.

This panel is available for viewing on the IPF YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldXvaX0M48A&list=PLUd2Ya71uzhqnmqUERQLre7iCcthqz-cn&index=7>

Wednesday 2 December 2020

Day 3, Part 1: A Uniquely Arctic Entrepreneurship and Investment Culture

Moderator:

- **Doris Carson** (PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, Umeå University)

Panelists:

- **Trevor Bell** (Geographer and University Research Professor, Memorial University of Newfoundland; Founder and Director of SmartICE)
- **Emil Skjervedal** (Head of Business Department, Kommuneqarfik Sermersooq)
- **Christian Vintergaard** (CEO, Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship)
- **Tor Erik Somby** (Co-founder, Tundra Drone AS)

Prof. Trevor Bell gave a presentation about SmartICE, a small business of which he is the founder and director. He expressed the great benefits of running a business that both addresses local priorities and maximises social impact.

Inuit communities who live along Canada's Arctic coastline depend heavily on their ability to travel across the sea ice. It is essential for them to preserve their culture and lifestyle, especially as they travel across the ice to hunt for food. However, climate change poses a big threat for these communities due to the increasingly unstable and unpredictable sea ice. SmartICE helps the Arctic indigenous communities by observing data about the stability of the sea ice and providing the locals with information on where they can travel safely.

Prof. Bell stressed that it is important for SmartICE to attract new investments, make use of local supply-chains, and involve the local community in the decision-making. This also supports a local Inuit entrepreneurship culture, as it puts a heavy focus on job creation and gives people the opportunity to stay in their local communities.

Mr. Emil Skjervedal spoke about Sermersooq Business, the business department of Sermersooq Municipality, Greenland - the largest municipality in the world in terms of area and home to Greenland's capital, Nuuk. Sermersooq Business focuses on developing local businesses, attracting investments, promoting entrepreneurship, and doing so with a clear action plan.

Businesses operating in the municipality have for the most part been willing to follow the strategy Sermersooq Business has laid out. The organisation fosters sound dialogue with citizens, organisations, businesses and local authorities across a number of different sectors throughout the municipality. Sermersooq Business has created a strategy that incorporates local knowledge. This plan has included the creation of several business councils throughout the municipality, all of which bring in local actors and business representatives. These business councils in turn advise businesses in their respective focus areas.

Another aspect of the strategy is to focus on local, national, and international initiatives, as these are of great importance to the country's relatively small economy. Greenland is a young investment market, but there is still a great deal of comparability in terms of investments and return on investments when comparing it to the rest of the world.

Mr. Christian Vintergaard explained how the Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship tries to foster a better entrepreneurship culture in Greenland. One of their focus areas is to incorporate courses on entrepreneurship and improving competencies in this area at early stage and throughout the educational system.

The foundation has collaborated with the Greenland's self-rule government on how to most effectively integrate entrepreneurship curricula in schools. They opened their office in Greenland in 2018 to bring their programmes closer to Greenlandic students. They also have their own board in Greenland, which has been working the last two and a half years on improving the competencies of teachers and professors, as well as adapting their Danish programme to a Greenlandic market.

So far, they have had great success with bringing their programme to Greenland. However, COVID-19 has posed as a challenge, so they have moved towards more digital solutions during this period. When students have finished a programme, the Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship also offers grants to those who wish to create their own startup.

Mr. Tor Erik Somby, the co-founder of the startup Tundra Drone, gave a presentation about how he is working with new and innovative solutions for drones that can operate in extreme polar conditions. Mr. Somby, who has a background in marketing and is a part of the local Saami community in Finnmark, also reminded the audience that there are vast opportunities in Norway for receiving state assistance to create innovative startups.

Tundra Drone is currently working on three areas of development: bright lights on drones that allow them to operate in the dark; siren and dog sounds coming from the drone to help herd sheep and reindeer; and investigating new applications for the drones.

Today's technology is so advanced that the startup can use 3D- and PCP-printers to create their drone parts. Technological solutions have become much cheaper in recent years, making it easier for startups to use them. In Mr. Somby's opinion, they have just as many possibilities for success as they would have other places in the world.

During the **question and answer session**, **Dr. Carson** asked what implications the pandemic will have for small businesses in remote communities the Arctic.

Mr. Somby said that some good things that has come out of the pandemic is that in small communities, the coronavirus isn't as prevalent, and the people are more open to having online meetings, which saves time. On the positive side e-commerce has

also taken off (which benefits businesses like his), however the tourism industry, which brings a lot of revenue in the Arctic, is suffering.

Prof. Bell said that the pandemic hasn't impacted their activities at all. It's not necessary for people from the south to travel to them in the High North. In such situations, people are using Smart Ice more as they hunt and fish for food. The Canadian federal government helped their business to expand into new communities and help them adapt to the pandemic.

Answering another question, Prof. Bell explained that the local communities can adapt to local needs as the service is run by the individual communities who tell operators when to go out on the ice and give feedback about new technology that can be used to adapt to new sea ice conditions. The service also documents Inuit traditional ecological knowledge, which helps younger generations learn how to travel safely on the ice and preserve their cultural traditions.

Answering a question about the extent to which Greenland looks to the US, Europe, Russia, or China for foreign investment in Greenland, **Mr. Skjervedal** explained that there is a dependency on foreign investment when it comes to large infrastructure projects. In general Greenland is open to investors, regardless of where they come from. The US has stepped up their presence in Greenland, which will strengthen the ties between the two countries. There are Chinese investors in mining of rare earth metals. Greenland is "open for business" in general.

When asked about untapped potential in sectors outside of the extractive industries in the Arctic, he mentioned that the new airport being built in Nuuk will be a "game changer" in terms of increasing the nascent tourism industry. There is a lot of room for growth. He also mentioned the culinary sector as a potential sector for significant sources of income, which could be helped by the tourism industry.

When questioned about engagement with indigenous communities in terms of providing them with education adapted to a Greenlandic audience, **Mr. Vintergaard** responded that the educational culture in Greenland is not very different from the educational culture in Denmark. While there hadn't been much of an entrepreneurial culture before, one is emerging, and teachers in Greenland are eager to have their students engage in entrepreneurial projects. The remoteness and language barrier posed a challenge, but there was no cultural barrier in terms of education. In order to transition away from just fishing and mining, it's important to import the necessary skills - especially digital skills - to work in other sectors, or teach them to locals.

When responding to a question about support that exists for starting a business in their various regions, **Mr. Somby** explained that in Norway, they are lucky to have government grants for help entrepreneurs. Innovation Norway helps potential entrepreneurs to see whether their idea is worth pursuing, and give them commercialisation grants. In his case, the Saami Parliament and local investors also helped. He stressed the importance of entrepreneurs being able to make a convincing pitch, from a problem-solution perspective.

To the same question, **Prof. Bell** said that there both regional and Inuit government grants are available for Inuit-owned businesses. But there is also support from governments and businesses when it comes to climate change adaptation initiatives. SmartIce works with tourism, outfitting, and fishing industries to help them retain their profitability in with ice conditions becoming less predictable due to climate change. Increased interest in mining and the shipping that goes with it to transport the minerals out has the potential to create conflicts with local communities who would prefer to see the ice remain intact and not broken by ships travelling through, and SmartIce helps to mediate these conflicts.

This panel is available for viewing on the IPF YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xh708tfyAqY&list=PLUd2Ya71uzhqnmqJERQLre7iCcthqz-cn&index=8>

Day 3, Part 2: The EU's Engagement in the Arctic and Implementing the EU Green Deal" (Part 1)

Moderator:

- **Marie-Anne Coninx** (Former EU Ambassador at Large for the Arctic, European Union)

Panelists:

- **Anne Bergenfelt** (Senior Advisor in the Cabinet of High Representative and Vice President of the European Commission Joseph Borrell Fontelles)
- **Urmaz Paet** (Member of the European Parliament (Renew Europe Group))
- **Elle Merete Omma** (Head of EU Unit, Saami Council)
- **Anu Fredrikson** (Executive Director, Arctic Frontiers)

In this session and the following one, participants discussed the particular challenges Arctic countries face when implementing policies to fight climate change, but also how the region is feeling at the local level the impact of global shifts, such as increasing demands for raw materials that are sourced in the region.

After the moderator, **Ms. Marie-Anne Coninx** set the stage, **Ms. Anne Bergenfelt** presented the European External Action Service's perspective and reflection to design an updated EU Arctic policy. This new strategy will replace the previous one (released in June 2016) and will have an enhanced focus on geopolitical issues in the context of a rapidly changing world.

As demand for various resources increases, so will the interest of new players in the region (i.e. China, Japan, Singapore and the US). The EU's new Arctic strategy, due in 2021, will also underscore the importance of cooperation at various levels (regional, bilateral, multilateral) for security in the region and will seek to take into account the livelihoods and cultural heritage of local inhabitants. The EU's Arctic policy will also have a strong focus on climate action and green growth, highlighting that "there can be no development unless it's sustainable."

Similarly, **Mr. Urmas Paet** emphasised that the Arctic is receiving increasing attention from global actors. The growing needs for raw materials and green energy could be potential sources of conflict, which is why international cooperation on the ground is of utmost importance.

Especially concerning is the behaviour of Russia, which is mobilising rapidly in the region and beginning to run missile tests. According to Mr. Paet, the EU needs to be better prepared to respond to Russian provocations and must develop an updated Arctic strategy taking this into account. Stepping up EU collaboration with NATO is ideal, he stated. Furthermore, the EU should seek to increase its soft power in the region, through programmes related to sustainable development, research, science, and innovation.

Ms Elle Merete Omma underscored that indigenous peoples are affected disproportionately by climate change, even though they produce the least greenhouse gas emissions. The Green Deal proposed by the European Commission has great potential, but lacks a holistic analysis and would benefit from having a stronger emphasis on collaboration with indigenous peoples to implement the proposed goals, as indigenous peoples valuable experience and data to contribute.

Ms. Omma also drew attention to the fact that some mitigation projects could have some undesirable direct or indirect effects on local indigenous populations. For example, infrastructure projects for wind energy can have negative impacts on their traditional lands and livelihoods (especially reindeer herding pastures), as well as disrupt natural habitats of local fauna. In addition, increased mining activities related to manufacturing batteries and energy production may also at times come into conflict with traditional livelihoods.

Finally, **Ms. Anu Fredrikson** spoke about the possibility for the EU, as the world's largest trading bloc, to lead by example and "reconcile economy and ecology". Even in an era of increasing protectionism, the EU has retained the capacity to negotiate and conclude major free trade agreements, such as the ones with Canada, South Korea and Singapore.

Because of its sheer size and the attractiveness of its markets, the EU can have a regulatory impact on a global level by "exporting" its standards, especially when it comes to the Arctic, she argued. The EU needs to seize this opportunity to promote standards and norms that will have a positive impact on the environment. It can be an opportunity to export "the best of the Arctic."

In her final point, Ms Fredrikson brought up the point that there is still a need to reconcile ecology versus economy with regard to sustainable development. Co-implementation of the Green Deal, with involvement of all stakeholders, from national down to local representatives, indigenous peoples, civil society, and research institutions needs to be holistic, as a sector such as transport for example also touches many other sectors.

During the **question and answer session** Ms. Coninx mentioned that the EU needs to be more visible about the EU's actions in the Arctic. She then asked additional questions to the panelists.

When asked about how to streamline the Arctic in the external policies of the EU, **Ms. Bergenfelt** responded that the policy documents countries and organisations around the world have created over the years are an invitation for the EU to engage with external actors. Arctic policy is reflected in all sorts of EU policies, whether it's health, youth, connectivity, trade, gender, etc. and these policies are reflected in the EU's external action. Policies shouldn't be viewed alone as "silo" policies, but as part of something bigger. She stated the EU looks forward to working with the incoming administration in the US.

When questioned about the possibility of larger involvement of the EU and NATO in "hard" Arctic security advocated in Germany's new Arctic policy, as well as calls from other countries for the EU to have a greater role in security in general, and how this could be carried out in practice, **Mr. Paet** responded that there are many aspects to security. He argued that the EU Institutions should speed up its planning process in this regard, as Russia, China, and the US have concrete plans and actions in the Arctic. It is the "direct duty" of the European Union to support the security of its own member states, including Sweden, Finland and Denmark, which have territory in the Arctic. As the US has large consulate in Greenland, and China's activities in Greenland and other parts of the Arctic are increasing, the EU needs to open its own consulates in Greenland and the Faroe Islands to be more present in the region. He also argued that the EU and NATO should exchange security information with regards to what is happening in the High North, and that as the EU creates a new common defence and security policy, the changing security situation in the Arctic should also be included. The EU should insist that anyone conducting activities in the Arctic adhere to international law, especially UNCLOS.

When asked whether certain economic development in the Arctic, especially in the mining sector, should happen, even if it's "green" mining **Ms. Omma** said that she's wary that mining can ever really be "green", just different degrees of environmentally harmful. In order to have sustainable indigenous communities in the Arctic, it is important to have meaningful dialogue with indigenous peoples concerned by mining activities, with an informed consent process.

Ms. Fredrikson stated that anyone involved in Arctic policymaking these days needs to stay on top of the conversation and be open to discussing "new topics" and be open to including an increased number of stakeholders in order to remain relevant. expanded on other areas where the EU could be influential. The business community, non-Arctic stakeholders, and NGOs would like to have a seat at the table in addition to the Arctic states and Arctic Indigenous Peoples. However, she mentioned that Arctic youth are becoming an increasingly important stakeholder to invite to the discussions, as well as regional voices such as the Arctic Mayors Forum. We should also be conscious of emerging topics and expand our "Arctic language" to include security in order to keep the region stable and secure.

Responding to a question about how other international actors such as the US, Russia and China can follow the EU's efforts to green its economy, **Ms. Coninsx** responded that addressing climate change needs to be done at a global level. Even if the EU reaches its stated goal of becoming a climate neutral continent by 2050, it won't help the climate if there isn't strong engagement from other continents. She said it was positive news that the US will once gain have an Administration interested in addressing climate change, and that China is making efforts to address climate change and sustainability. Even with partners where the EU has less of a close partnership such as Russia, she is encouraged that there are forums such as the Barents Euro Arctic Cooperation and conferences where themes such as climate change can be discussed.

Answering a questions about the EU's China policy, Ms. Coninsx mentioned that the EU started an Arctic dialogue with China 2019 and that she herself had been sent on a mission to China. She found that there is already a lot of international cooperation between the EU and China on Arctic research, and a lot of dialogue on climate change. It is necessary to have China on board as addressing climate change can only be done if you have countries like China on board.

In her final words on the panel, **Ms. Omma** mentioned that the EU has one of the world's most sophisticated indigenous peoples' policies from an external foreign service point of view. It could be interesting to see if it might be possible build on the existing external platform and turn the focus of these external policies inward to shape internal EU policymaking.

In her final words, **Ms. Fredrikson** said that she believes in the power of the markets, and that there will be an increased demand for green solutions to meet our needs. This will drive the green transition forward in Europe and globally.

This panel is available for viewing on the IPF YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=revE6uaL82A&list=PLUd2Ya71uzhqnmqUERQLre7iCcthqz-cn&index=9>

Day 3, part 3: The EU's Engagement in the Arctic and implementing the EU Green Deal (Part 2)

Moderator:

- **Marie-Anne Coninsx** (Former EU Ambassador at Large for the Arctic, European Union)

Panelists:

- **Einar Gunnarsson** (Ambassador for Arctic Affairs, Iceland; Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials)
- **Veronika Veits** (Director for International Ocean Governance and Sustainable Fisheries, in the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) European Commission)

- **Tomas Norvoll** (President, Nordland County Council and Chair of the Board, North Norway European Office)
- **Elin Mortensen** (Head of Mission of the Faroes to the EU)
- **Christian Keldsen** (Director, Greenland Business Association)

Ms. Coninsx continued to moderate the second panel on the same theme.

Einar Gunnarsson started off his intervention by giving a brief clarification of that the Arctic Council is an international forum for the eight Arctic states, and not a governing body for the Arctic as some people sometimes mistake it to be. The analysis and the knowledge produced by the council aims to give policy recommendations on environmental protection and sustainable development in the Arctic.

The EU's role in the Arctic can be summarised by the very common phrase of "One can neither take the European Union out of the Arctic or the Arctic out of the European Union." One can find some very clear parallels between the EU Arctic policy and the EU Green Deal, especially on the understanding that sustainability stands on three pillars and requires a balance between the three. The EU has an important legislative role in the fields of environmental protection and sustainable development in the Arctic, and is a very valuable partner to the Arctic Council.

Veronika Veits stated that DG Mare will hold the pen for updating the EU Arctic Policy in 2021 and was at the time of the symposium busy analysing the 140 responses received during the public consultation on the policy. The summary of the contributions was made available in early 2021. Some of the preliminary findings indicate a broad support for the existing policy from 2016 and its three priorities. More than 70% of respondents considered that addressing climate change and safeguarding the Arctic environment are still relevant, while also pursuing sustainable development in the region. Various respondents highlighted the potential for the EU to advance its cooperation in particular areas such as space programmes, research funding and scientific expertise.

Veits also explained why an update on the EU Arctic policy is needed. As had been highlighted consistently during the three days of the Arctic Futures Symposium, the challenges in the Arctic are ever increasing due to the impacts of climate change, increasing economic pressure, and geopolitical interest. The updated policy will take into account the experiences gained with the current policy from 2016 and provide a long-term strategic outlook for the years ahead.

As of 2021, **Tomas Norvoll** will also be the chair of Northern Sparsely Populated Areas (NSPA), a network which represents the 13 northernmost regions in Sweden, Finland and Norway. In his talk he explained the issue of the "Arctic paradox" and how the EU can contribute to solving this challenge. A resource paradox is often recognised as a land which is rich in natural resources, but with slow economic growth and poor development. This is a reality in many Arctic regions, where economic growth in the Arctic does not always improve the situation for local populations and doesn't prevent the population from leaving, hence the term, "Arctic paradox."

Mr. Norvoll considers the Arctic paradox as one of the main challenges which need to be addressed by EU in order to develop prosperous, resilient and living societies in the Arctic. The EU's top priorities should be to assist the European Arctic regions in overcoming this Arctic paradox by adapting a holistic approach with, among other things, a greater focus on social science research and local knowledge production in Arctic communities.

Mr. Norvoll also called for a long-term investment commitment from the EU to unlock the potential of the European Arctic regions. A continuation of fair state aid rules is one important part of that. Taken together, this would contribute so that Arctic communities would be seen as not only raw material providers but as innovative, attractive and resilient communities to live and work.

Ms. Elin Mortensen urged people to recognise that there are many thriving regions and cities in the Arctic. The general discussion about the Arctic tends to reproduce a stereotypical view of a cold region far away from everything, only facing challenges such as increased de-population. The thriving cities of Reykjavik and Nuuk, for instance, are also part of the Arctic, and these places need to be highlighted when discussing the future of the Arctic.

She stated that the EU is making an important contribution to a stable and balanced development of the region, and the focus should be on strengthening the partnerships the coming years. The current agreements between the EU and the Faroe Islands are extremely important. However, these partnerships are sectorial in nature and partnerships with a holistic approach are needed. The Faroe Islands is in many ways a strategic partner with regard to the EU Arctic policy, something European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has also stated, and something which should be further enhanced in the updated Arctic policy.

Mr. Christian Keldsen discussed some of the challenges he experiences when it comes to sustainable development in Greenland. The geographical structure – with a large area with many sparsely located settlements – creates certain challenges when it comes to economic development.

Greenland is in many ways in the process of diversifying their economy by moving into industries such as tourism and mining. This must be done while also maintaining cultural heritage and local lifestyles. The challenge is how to balance the need to be a key player on the global arena through, for example, maintaining international certification of sustainable fisheries, while also ensuring the needs of the local communities.

Another challenge Greenland faces is the loss of competences, partly due to the fact that most economic initiatives in Greenland tend to be active only for a limited time period. Mr. Keldsen called for long-term initiatives to access resources and competences in order to enable a sustainable development of the region.

The question and answer session touched upon different connections between the EU Green Deal and the updated EU Arctic Policy.

Ms. Elin Mortensen stressed that even though the Faroe Islands are not part of the EU, there is no doubt that EU's ambitions for a green transition will affect them both directly and indirectly.

Ms. Veronika Veits from DG Mare emphasised that there are parallels between the objectives and the headlines in the Green Deal, and the challenges and interests that must be addressed in the Arctic Policy. The two also need the same ingredients: research and innovation, sustainable investments, a balance between conservation and sustainable use, and investment in further cooperation. Therefore, the updates on the Arctic Policy will be consistent with the objectives and priorities with the EU Green Deal.

This panel is available for viewing on the IPF YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IQHsTHPkmY&list=PLUd2Ya71uzhqnmqUERQLre7iCcthqz-cn&index=10>
