

## The Arctic Environment – From Low to High Politics

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*Environmental issues have been central in giving the Arctic a distinct regional voice and making the region a global concern. Climate change is a case in point, but long-range transport of persistent pollutants and biodiversity have also played important roles. This article places the global framing of the Arctic environment in the context of the growth of global environmental politics that has occurred in parallel with the emergence of the Arctic's current international governance structure. It specifically addresses how Arctic environmental concerns have been framed in relation to more overarching goals of sustainable development, and in relation to security. By looking at past and current 'politics of scale', the article discusses what is realistic to expect from pan-Arctic environmental governance, and how the emerging global and regional geopolitics may affect the environmental domain. When the current political cooperation started in the Arctic in the 1990s, the environment was an area of 'low politics' suitable for new cooperative ventures – then between the East and West. Since then, global environmental governance has become 'high politics' and is increasingly linked to resource politics and global markets. This development is likely to also affect the Arctic.*

### Introduction

One of the most striking trends in Arctic politics in recent years is the increasing global interest in the region. Countries far from the polar region have applied for observer status in the Arctic Council, and the European Union and countries such as China and India have made large investments in Arctic research (Chaturvedi, 2012; Jakobson, 2010). The International Polar Year of 2007–2008, which was formally concluded at the IPY Science to Action conference in Montreal in 2012, included researchers, local observers, educators, students, and support personnel from more than 60 nations (Krupnik et al., 2011).

While some of the global interest in the Arctic is stimulated by new commercial opportunities related to resources and shipping, the environment has also played a major role in framing the Arctic as a global concern. Moreover, the environment has been central in defining the Arctic as a region with its own voice in international environmental governance (Nilsson, 2012). This article discusses some of the implications of the Arctic environment as a global concern, based on the notion of 'politics of scale', with attention to how the political use of the environment has shifted over time. The term

politics of scale refers to the fact that the appropriate scales for science, management, and decision-making cannot be unambiguously derived from the physical characteristics of the environment, but instead are joint products of social and biophysical processes and often influenced by politics (Lebel, Garden, & Imamura, 2005). It places the emphasis on how different actors frame environmental characteristics and what consequences this may have for responsibility, ownership and power. While the Arctic environment has features that are relevant at a range of political scales – from local management of resources to global climate politics – the emphasis of Arctic environmental politics has shifted over time. This article highlights how some of these shifts follow more overarching developments in international environmental politics, and discusses the possible consequences of this for addressing the environmental challenges that face the region's people. The article examines three time periods, starting from 1987, and describes Arctic environmental politics in relation to two central dimensions: security and sustainable development.

### ***Security: Between Cooperation and Conflict***

The security dimension aims to capture the tension between cooperation and conflict. This dimension is relevant from a theoretical point of view based on the notion of securitization, which is the process by which a certain issue is transformed by an actor into a matter of national security (Buzan, Wæver, & Wilde, 1998). The issue thereby becomes subject to 'high politics', i.e. conceived as vital to the very survival of the state. When an issue is securitized, the state tends to pay additional attention to it. This could be positive when state intervention is needed to solve a problem, but for international issues that involve conflicting interests between states, it also carries with it an increased risk of conflict. High politics can be placed in contrast to 'low politics', which refers to issues that are not conceived as prone to, or important enough to cause, major conflict between states. The analysis addresses whether the Arctic environment is framed as low politics or high politics, and if there have been any major shifts over time. In discussing securitization and high politics, by definition the national scale is in focus. However, the national scale perspective can relate to global, pan-Arctic and local scales in different ways.

### ***Sustainable Development: Environmental, Economic or Social Concerns?***

The second dimension is sustainable development. The concept – made popular by the Brundtland report *Our Common Future* (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987) – includes environmental, economic and social dimensions, and attempts to bridge the perceived conflicts

between environmental protection and social-economic development. It has become a normative cornerstone in international environmental governance since the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, and was reinforced by the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2002 (United Nations, 2003) as well as by the focus on Sustainable Development Goals at the Rio +20 meeting in 2012. However, the tensions between environmental, economic and social dimensions have remained ever since the concept was launched. The concept also appears to be flexible enough for it to be used to serve a range of political agendas (Owens, 2003). In the Arctic, sustainable development has a central place in international cooperation. For example, it appears as one of the overarching goals for the Arctic Council (Arctic Council Ottawa Declaration, 1996).<sup>1</sup> The article analyzes what aspects of sustainable development appear to be in policy focus at different points in time.

The following section briefly summarizes how security and sustainable development have been framed at different periods in contemporary Arctic cooperation. The periods in focus are the region-building period (1987–1996), the consolidation of Arctic cooperation (1996–2007), and the years following the 2007 sea-ice minimum.

### **1987–1996: The Region-Building Period**

Mikhail Gorbachev's famous Murmansk speech in October 1987 signaled the point at which the Arctic changed from an arena of Cold-War tensions to a region with common interests regarding environmental cooperation. Archer and Scrivener have described the interest in the environment as part of a broader development of states with Arctic interests seeking to “guard their strategic concerns, to secure access to the regions' resources, enhance the scientific understanding of the region and protect the environment” (Archer & Scrivener, 2000: 602). It was thus not only the environment *per se* that was of interest but the role of environmental protection as part of a broader political agenda of “removing some of the obstacles to the Arctic's ‘coming of age’ as an international political region” (ibid, 603).

The time has been characterized as an era of region-building and included the creation of several cooperative ventures (Keskitalo, 2004; Heininen, 2004). In relation to the environment, the most relevant ones were the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), the circumpolar political cooperation in the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), and to some extent the Barents region cooperation (BEAR/BEAC). While the Kirkenes Declaration (that set the stage for

the Euro-Barents regional cooperation) highlighted sustainable development, the 1991 Rovaniemi Declaration that created the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) focused mainly on protecting the Arctic environment. In contrast to the broader sustainable development agenda of the Barents cooperation, the actual activities in the AEPS heavily emphasized the environment, with a particular focus on pollution (organic pollutants, heavy metals, acidifying substances, and radioactivity), and conservation of Arctic flora and fauna (Young, 1998). The environmental focus had its origin in Finnish concerns about transboundary pollution from Russian smelters, general concerns about the consequences of radioactive contamination from the Chernobyl accident in 1986, North American concerns about environmental consequences of oil and gas production, and new findings about high levels of organic contaminants in Arctic people. Another sign of the environmental focus in the AEPS was that most countries were represented by their ministries of the environment. The social and economic aspects of sustainable development did not have an organizational home in any specific working group of the AEPS. A task force on sustainable development and utilization was created in 1993. It dealt mainly with sustainable use of living resources by indigenous people and brought in some of the social dimensions of sustainable development, but towards the end of this period it became dormant (Archer & Scrivener, 2000: 613).

### ***A Move Towards Cooperation and Focus on Environmental Dimensions***

In relation to the security dimension, the region-building period was a move away from a focus on military security and conflicting interests, and towards cooperation. Indeed, in a review of geopolitics in the Arctic in 2000, Chaturvedi wrote about how international politics in the Arctic had started to respond to new geopolitics compared to the Cold War era, and that there were “good reasons to expect a paradigm shift in Arctic geopolitics from high politics, ‘national security’ related discourse to low politics, environmental conservation and indigenous people related discourses” (Chaturvedi, 2000: 449). This shift was also visible in US national policy, where a focus on military security was replaced in 1994 by an emphasis on the environment and sustainable development, which paved the way for political negotiations to establish the Arctic Council (Archer & Scrivener, 2000: 614).

The environment played a special role in the Arctic’s shift away from being a region ruled by high politics, because it was an area that could be framed in relation to common interests, which made cooperation between the East and West more feasible than for issues more closely linked to national security interests. Scientific cooperation also helped Arctic states to focus on common interests. The scale was circumpolar; eight Arctic states were the founders of the AEPS, and AMAP’s first

assessments presented the first circumpolar picture of pollution pressures in the Arctic. One could thus argue that the framing of security was widened to include circumpolar environmental security. Local concerns were also present in the AEPS, for example in relation to some pollution issues and the impacts of pollution on indigenous peoples. However, the AEPS placed these concerns in a circumpolar rather than national context.

### *A Circumpolar Focus*

In rhetoric, the AEPS spoke about global environmental linkages, but Young (1998: 38) highlights that the regime is just as notable for what it left out as what it included. For example, it explicitly left questions of climate change and ozone depletion to the side, with reference to existing international fora (Nilsson, 2007). However, in spite of this political reluctance to deal with some global environmental problems, the AEPS came to act in relation to global environmental politics. This was apparent from the very start in CAFF's explicit links to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Archer & Scrivener, 2000), and later in efforts towards a global convention on persistent organic pollutants (Downie & Fenge, 2003). In relation to scientific cooperation, the global scale preference was explicit from the beginning in that a major aim was to increase knowledge about Arctic processes in order to better understand the global systems of climate, weather, ocean circulation and other important environmental issues (IASC 1990 cited in Archer & Scrivener, 2000: 602).

### **1996–2007: Broadened Agenda, Environmental Security, and Increasing Tensions**

With the Ottawa Declaration of 1996, the AEPS was transformed into the Arctic Council. The goal of the Arctic Council is broader than that of the AEPS. Under the overarching umbrella of “sustainable development” it goes beyond environmental protection and from broad perspectives embraces issues such as human development, economic development, resource use and management, transport, communication, tourism, and human health. This has been apparent in both ministerial declarations and in actual activities, such as assessment processes relating to human development (AHDR, 2004) and shipping (Arctic Council, 2009). The balance between the environmental focus and broader sustainable development concerns was contentious during the negotiations, and defining the specific agenda was postponed. According to Archer and Scrivener, the genesis of the Arctic Council slowed the momentum of environmental cooperation and “revived mutual fears of hidden agendas behind the impetus of regional collaboration” (Archer & Scrivener,

2000: 616). Moreover, they note that the move towards the broader goal of sustainable development implied that “Foreign Ministers saw the Council as a mechanism to reassert their control over Arctic cooperation” (ibid, 615).

Nevertheless, environmental security, in particular in relation to people in the region, became an important part of the Arctic Council agenda. For example, the impacts of pollutants on human health were highlighted in AMAP’s assessment of pollution issues in the Arctic (AMAP; 2002, 2009), while the impacts of climate change were described in the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA, 2005). The Arctic Council took on some responsibility for addressing the causes of pressures on the environment, e.g. the new working group Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP). However, responsibilities were also placed elsewhere, mainly at the global level.

During the 1996–2007 period, Arctic cooperation also moved into areas where shared interests among the Arctic states could not be taken for granted. These included the assessments of the impacts of climate change and of oil and gas activities in the Arctic. As described in detail by Nilsson (2007), the political negotiations connected to the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment were very contentious, and included compromises that were at least partly motivated by a desire to ensure the continued existence of the Arctic Council (Nilsson, 2007: 140). It was also clear that the differences between states were directly linked to their respective stands in relation to the global climate regime. Arctic environmental politics were becoming subsumed under global environmental politics, as opposed to being a regional concern. One interpretation of the contentious nature of the ACIA policy discussion is that state interest in environmental security for people living in the Arctic was a legitimate field of activity for the circumpolar international cooperation only so long as these goals did not conflict with other state security interests, in particular that of energy security linked to the continued use of fossil fuels.

### ***Continued Consensus – At What Cost?***

The rhetorically explicit security dimension is most notable in the exclusion of military security from the Arctic Council mandate, where the Ottawa Declaration in a footnote states that the Arctic Council “should not deal with matters related to military security” (Arctic Council Ottawa Declaration, 1996). The focus of the Arctic Council has been on cooperation, and the assumption appears to have been that any diverging interests could be resolved with consensus-building processes. The fact that the Arctic Council is a typical ‘soft-law’ regime further accentuates

cooperation as opposed to handling conflicts. It is notable that the Arctic Council managed to uphold this consensus during the ACIA, in spite of diverging interests among the member states. However, it might be argued that the approach has had a high cost in terms of lack of substantial progress in addressing challenges that include conflicting state interests. For example, the mandate for the ACIA did not include discussing the driving forces for Arctic climate change (i.e. sources of greenhouse gases) and neither did the Arctic Council initiate any actions to address greenhouse-gas emissions as a result of the ACIA, in spite of the fact that Arctic countries together produce a substantial portion of global emissions. As in the region-building period, these negotiations were referred to the global level: the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

### **2007 – Present: Globalization, Sovereignty and Security**

The year 2007 marked a distinct shift in the Arctic political climate. The sea-ice minimum in September 2007 caught many observers by surprise, as did the planting of a Russian titanium flag on the sea floor at the North Pole. As noted by Young (2012), the Arctic is now in the midst of a transformation driven by the combined forces of climate change and globalization. Signs of this shift include increased attention to new potential for oil and gas development, shipping, fishing, and tourism. As the consequences of climate change in the Arctic have become more and more apparent, an increasing number of voices have called for a stronger Arctic political regime to address the problems ahead, including suggestions to both strengthen the Arctic Council and to create new regimes (Young, 2011, Koivurova & Vanderzwaag, 2007). The five Arctic coastal states have created their own forum, emphasizing the Law of the Sea as the most relevant for solving potential conflicts over territory and resources (Arctic Ocean Conference, 2008). State interests in the Arctic region have become increasingly articulated in Arctic strategies and policies (Heininen, 2011; Huebert, Exner-Pirot, Lajeunesse, & Gullede, 2012).

#### ***Onus on Economic Development***

How can recent events be described in relation to the two dimensions of sustainable development and security? With respect to sustainable development, it is clear that interest in economic development has become much more prominent. In the current discourse, economic development includes issues related to exploitation of natural resources, transport, and tourism, which are all portrayed as providing major new economic opportunities for the region. Heininen notes that economic development is the main priority or key objective of all Arctic states as well as the

European Union (Heininen, 2011: 74). The social dimension is captured in what Heininen refers to as regional development, including attention to the potential for new resources to contribute to regional economic growth and employment. However, the economic value of developing Arctic natural resources is not only, or necessarily, related to the region itself. National interests are equally important, in particular for countries with large reserves of oil and gas, such as Russia (Solanko 2011; Glomsrød & Aslaksen, 2008).

The environment is still a major theme in all Arctic policies. Huebert et al. (2012: 2) discuss it through the lens of environmental security, defined as “avoiding or mitigating acts leading to environmental damage or deterioration that could violate the interests of states and their populations, in particular their northern and northern indigenous peoples”. Also addressed is the “need to maintain the region’s environmental integrity in the face of increased economic activity”. Thus, environmental protection is framed in relation to exploiting the region’s resources, that is, at the very heart of conflicts built into the concept of sustainable development. In the Arctic Council, the mitigation of climate change has yet to be addressed by any common initiatives for limiting emissions of greenhouse gases. The major initiatives so far aim at gaining a better understanding and mapping of the sources of so-called short-lived climate forcers, such as soot. The major mitigation initiative on soot – the Climate and Clean Air Coalition launched in 2012 – is not under the auspices of the Arctic Council, and is global rather than regional in its ambitions (US State Department, 2012). However, adaptation to climate change is being promoted as an area of common interest for Arctic international cooperation, for example through the newly launched initiative Adaptation Action for a Changing Arctic. Neither does the Arctic Resilience Report explicitly address the mitigation of global drivers of change; its main aims are to better understand change itself and associated risks.

### ***Security and National Interest***

When looking at the security dimension, the shift in political climate in the Arctic is even more notable, and security appears as a new catchword in several of the national Arctic policy statements (e.g. energy security). Interestingly, environmental change has also become framed as a security concern (Huebert et al., 2012), for example with calls for more civil and military surveillance in areas that were previously protected by the sea ice. The formal cooperative agreements discussed in the Arctic Council deal with such issues as search and rescue, and response to oil spills in the Arctic, which link civil and military security operations. By contrast, the human security issues that are

relevant for people living in the region have not been in focus for binding agreements about cooperation.

Huebert et al. (2012) sum up Arctic policies presented by nation states as expressing a desire for cooperation, but also a resolve to protect national interests. National interests are also a significant driver behind the ongoing mapping of the Arctic sea floor and its geological features. This mapping is key to submitting and substantiating claims to economic zones beyond the continental shelf to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

From these developments, it appears as if environmental concerns have been subsumed under the more overarching goal of sustainable development, *and* that sustainable development is increasingly tied to economic interests and to rhetoric of national interest and security. Moreover, while the circumpolar perspective remains important, national interest has a much more prominent place in the rhetoric than in previous decades. National interest is primarily related to issues of sovereignty and access to economically important natural resources, rather than environmental security.

If this is indeed a trend, it raises new questions about the conditions for environmental politics. Specifically, it is necessary to ask whether the environment has shifted from being a low politics issue, and therefore amenable to cooperation, or if it is better understood as a potentially volatile, or 'malign' issue area closely linked to conflicting national interests, with different types of challenge regarding the potential for cooperation (Underdal, 2001).

It is tempting to describe current developments in the Arctic in terms of classic realist politics, which place the emphasis on states as the major actors and self-interest as the major motive affecting international relations (Dunne and Smith, 2001; Lamy, 2001). However, the international political landscape today includes a range of regimes that mediate the self-interest of actors (Krasner, 1983; Keohane and Nye, 1994; Lamy, 2001) and within which national self interest is both defined and redefined. A simplistic realist analysis may therefore reach misleading conclusions. Instead we are faced with a situation in which conflict (potential and real) and cooperation are present at the same time. Moreover, the situation requires attention to new issues at the nexus of different types of resources, rapid environmental change, globalized markets, and shifts in power among global actors. Analysis that takes this new situation into account requires new analytical tools that are beyond the scope of this article, but important for understanding current developments in the Arctic.

## **The Arctic in the Global Context**

As noted by Young (2012), Arctic change is closely related to global environmental change and to globalization. Historically, also, the political climate in the Arctic has often been closely linked to global politics (Chaturvedi, 2000). Therefore to understand the conditions that generate the region's environmental politics requires a closer look at the global political context. Since the 1980s, this context has changed in ways that may indicate a shift toward treating the environment as an arena for high politics.

The region-building period in the Arctic (1987-1996) coincided with high hopes about global environmental governance, and indeed for multilateralism in general, following the end of the Cold War. A case in point was the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and the optimism that the Rio agenda created. Several international environmental conventions were signed at the Rio conference, including the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, which are most relevant for the Arctic. The rhetoric of sustainable development held the promise that the different interests of the global North and global South could be bridged, but in reality many of the conflicts remained (Linnér & Jacob, 2005).

Moreover, as time moved on it became increasingly clear that it would be difficult to reach the high goals of halting dangerous anthropogenic climate change and biodiversity loss. Conflicting interests has caused considerable difficulties in implementing these conventions. In international biodiversity governance, issues of economic rights to biological resources were for a long time a major stumbling block (McGraw, 2002), and it was only recently that some tricky issues of access and benefit sharing have been resolved. In the climate regime, lack of US participation in the Kyoto Protocol has stymied progress since 1997. The failure of the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Change Conference to reach agreement on continuing the Kyoto Protocol further exacerbated the difficulties. Furthermore, in 2011 Canada announced that it would leave the Protocol. The 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) did not offer much hope that national interests could be bridged in agreeing on what sustainable development means. Moreover, dependence on fossil fuel remains strong, both globally and in many Arctic countries.

It would probably be too optimistic to assume that the Arctic would provide a more likely setting for strong environmental agreements, especially given that several Arctic states have a strong national interest in fossil fuels, both in relation to national economies and national energy security. The

agreements that are being negotiated under the auspices of the Arctic Council deal with issues other than addressing the causes of environmental change in the Arctic. Rather, they focus on paving the way for economic development in the region, in particular with regards to the marine Arctic. The 2011 search and rescue agreement is one example. Another is the ongoing negotiation over cooperation in the event of oil spills. Though such cooperation is relevant for protecting the local environment, it is more likely to legitimize further oil exploitation than reduce the emphasis on extracting and using fossil fuels.

The increased focus on conflicting national interest does not necessarily equal increased risk for military confrontation. Rather, the Arctic states appear willing to adhere to international law, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) that defines national rights to resources in the Arctic Ocean; Norway and Russia recently signed a border delimitation agreement with reference to UNCLOS. Nevertheless, these actions still emphasize national rather than circumpolar interests.

### ***Global Markets and Resource Scarcity***

The drive to secure resources is hardly limited to the Arctic. The world is experiencing an unprecedented increase in demand for natural resources. According to Andrew-Speeds et al. (2012), this demand is likely to accelerate in the next 10–20 years, bringing with it an increased risk of scarcity and volatile markets. In their report about the nexus between access to land, energy, food, water and minerals, the authors highlight that actions relating to one resource will increasingly affect other resources, and the interdependences between issue areas are much more complex than when resource scarcity was discussed in the 1970s. Moreover, they are also linked both to an unprecedented rate of global ecological changes (see Steffen et al., 2002 for review) and the emergence of new global players with political and economic weight. Many of these new players come to environmental negotiations with different perspectives and priorities than the old industrialized world (Hallding et al., 2011).

As early as 2000, Chaturvedi predicted that neo-liberal, market-access oriented globalization as a general trend would also affect the Arctic. In contrast to older state-centric geopolitics, the shared ideology of market economics binds actors together in ways that go beyond territoriality. It is in this context that “the long-standing image and reality of the Arctic as a supplier of natural resources is currently being reinforced” (Chaturvedi, 2000: 451). With globalization, links between environmental

change and resource demands are not likely to remain only a local or national issue, or even a matter only for Arctic states. China is already calling itself a “near-Arctic state” (SIPRI, 2012). As pointed out by Andrews-Speed et al., markets now transmit effects between different types of resources and between regions in an unprecedented way. With its riches of fossil fuels, minerals and marine fishery resources, the Arctic is also part of this development. While previous Arctic politics have been affected by global international affairs mainly via those states with territory in the region and which are part of Arctic cooperation, it is now increasingly likely that it will also be affected by global resource politics. Examples includes China’s increasing demand for resources to maintain its transition from an agrarian society to a key player in the global economy (Burgos Caceres and Ear, 2012), and the interest expressed by several Asian actors to use previously ice-covered waters to connect Asia to European markets. The latter includes interest in the Northern Sea Route, and how it intersects with Russia’s Arctic ambitions. Because the politics of resources and trade are usually linked to national interest, it should come as no surprise that Arctic politics are becoming a part of global high politics.

The new developments outlined above have two key implications for environmental politics in the Arctic. The first is that increasing exploitation of resources and shipping have direct impacts in the form of emissions, spills from accidents and land use changes. The second is that different actors are increasingly using environmental politics as an arena to address much broader issues, including security, resource politics and trade. The more that the Arctic environment is framed as a global issue, the more it is likely to be drawn into broader geopolitics. And indeed, since the 1980s scientific developments together with Arctic political cooperation have in fact strengthened the framing of the Arctic environment as a global issue.

## **Conclusion**

If we compare the situation when Arctic cooperation began 25 years ago with the Murmansk speech, and 2012, it is clear that the environment is moving away from being an area of low politics. Rather, with the Arctic increasingly embedded in a context of global development that places emphasis on access to scarce natural resources, the Arctic environment is being linked more and more to high politics and national security concerns. With respect to sustainable development, states that want to position themselves in the ‘race for resources’ can use the elasticity of the sustainable development concept to shift emphasis to economic development and away from environmental protection. The social development dimension of the concept can also easily be framed in economic terms, for

example in relation to employment opportunities. Thus, the movement of the Arctic environment from low to high politics is driven by two interrelated developments. One is that negotiations on international environmental agreements increasingly focus on issues of national interest. The other is the importance of the Arctic region in the global race for increasingly scarce resources.

What are the consequences for Arctic environmental politics? Given present trends and that the Arctic Council tends to seek consensus, contentious issues are likely to be pushed to fora outside the circumpolar cooperation, either at the global or national level. The greatest potential for cooperation might be in areas that support economic development where environmental and economic concerns are perceived as going hand-in-hand. The years ahead may come to embody a compromise of sustainable development where the role of the environment for longer-term sustainability is lost.

## Notes

1. Ottawa Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council (1996): “The Arctic Council is established as a high-level forum to: a) provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, with the involvement of the Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic.”

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