

June 10, 2002

THE FUTURE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH OF THE ARCTIC

REPORT AND WORK PLAN FOR 2002 - 2004

INTRODUCTION

The “Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic”, an initiative of the Arctic Council, was developed to contribute to sustainable development in the Arctic. Ministers of the eight Arctic Council States endorsed this initiative in 1998 and a subsequent plan in 2000. The current goals are:

- < to improve the health and well-being of children and youth of the Arctic;
- < to improve the basis for sound decision-making by increasing the knowledge and understanding of sustainable development among Arctic youth and children.

Sustainable development in the circumpolar North is only achievable if traditional knowledge and western science are promoted and made accessible to the people of the region on an on-going basis. The next generation must be well prepared to deal with issues such as environmental health risks or dangers to health brought about by social, cultural and economic factors.

Progress on the following three components:

1. The Health Programme,
2. The Networking Programme and
3. The Internship Programme,

is described herein. The proposed work plan for 2002 - 2004 was developed at a meeting of the Expert Working Groups of the three Programmes in Copenhagen in May 2002. Representatives were invited from the 8 member countries and the 6 Permanent Participants’ organizations. All countries and 4 of the Permanent Participants were represented in at least one of the Programme working groups. The collaboration of the members of the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program’s (AMAP) Human Health Expert Group in the Health Programme, and the contributions of the World Health Organization and other non-governmental organizations and of observers has been invaluable and will continue to be sought. The proposed work plan for 2002-2004 is in keeping with the Arctic Council’s focus on capacity building.

The “Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic” is a capacity building initiative and consequently responds directly to the goals of the proposed Capacity Building Strategy. Various capacity building needs such as communication, Indigenous participation, leadership, partnerships, and learning have been taken into account in the development of the Action Plans for each of the three Programmes. Children and youth will be involved in activities that strengthen their skills in these areas. Mentoring by elders in the Networking Programme is a significant element of capacity building and the value of having elders and youth from the same organizations on the International Networking Programme Committee should contribute to its success.

Progress has been made in each of the Programmes. However, the full participation of all countries and Permanent Participants is critical for this circumpolar initiative. The work plans for the new biennium reflect the concerns of both subject matter experts and young people, many of whom are volunteering their time and resources. Although most of the activities in the Action Plan fall primarily within in the jurisdiction of one Programme, efforts are being made to increase the linkages among the Programmes. To this end, there has been a recommendation for consideration of a project that will encourage young people to research and prepare short videos on a health issue, e.g. tobacco use, substance abuse, safe sex, teenage pregnancies. The proposal involves education, peer action, the possibility of having an intern administer the project, the use of the Networking Programme web site “On Top of the World” for disseminating best practices, and mentoring by members of the Health Programme.

APPENDIX 1 - Preliminary findings of the Health Programme Data for Children and Youth in the Arctic

APPENDIX 2 - List of Invitees/Attendees - Health Programme

APPENDIX 3 - Best Practice/Innovative Approaches

APPENDIX 4 - Arctic Council Internship Programme

1. HEALTH PROGRAMME

Goal

To improve the health and well being of children and youth of the Arctic

Background

The health and well-being of children and youth are the result of many inter-related factors that include socio-economic-cultural conditions, access to health services, nutrition, bio-physical health, reproductive health, psycho-social well-being and environmental contamination. For example, links between socio-economic conditions and environmental contamination are often reflected in housing conditions, indoor air quality, exposure to contaminants in food and other materials, availability of clean water and management of sewage.

The objectives of the Health Programme, developed in 2000, based on the goal *to improve the health and well-being of children*, were:

1. examination of existing baseline data and studies in key areas that are related to the health of children and youth in the circumpolar region and identification of gaps therein;
2. assessment of processes and approaches used at international, national, regional and community levels that might provide models for actions in Arctic regions; and
3. The development of an action plan that takes into account the results of objectives 1 and 2, the nature of specific issues, scientific and traditional knowledge as appropriate that will lead to the elimination or mitigation of problems associated with health.

The Health Programme Work Plan for 2000-2002 focussed on five key areas:

- A Socio-economic-cultural Factors;
- B Health Services;
- C Psycho-social Well-being;
- D Bio-physical Health; and
- E Innovative approaches or models for actions to improve the well-being of youth in Arctic regions.

Indicators of the health and well-being of young people were developed, and in June 2000 were reviewed by a Circumpolar Health Expert Group, for topics A to D. The Experts affirmed the sustainable development principle that young people are '*entitled to a healthy and protective life in harmony with nature*' and supported the notion that indicators can be used as a useful measure of the health of children and youth in the Arctic.

The Experts also realized that the data available do not necessarily enable good quality comparisons among Arctic States. While the focus of this initiative is on all children and youth of the Arctic, it is important to acknowledge that many of the children and youth are in the Indigenous populations, and their health status should be examined vis-a-vis that of the national populations. There is a considerable amount of data available by age group and gender, however national data for appropriate indigenous groups is not often available (and in some cases not legally reportable). Data are not always available for the same time periods or for those time periods being compared. Comparisons between regions and of regions with entire national populations also do not tell a complete story because often the proportion of indigenous to non-indigenous people in each region varies and can affect comparisons. Finally, the level of aggregation of the data can mask a significant adverse outcome in a small subgroup of a large population leading to the erroneous conclusion that all is well.

The Expert Group identified the following key elements for the success of the project:

- < effective leadership and coordination;
- < a culture of evidence-based decision making based on data gathering and assessment;
- < well documented and effective interventions and capacity building;
- < good communication, information dissemination and support; and
- < strong linkages with other groups and organizations.

These key elements were used in the roll-out of the initiative and serve as the foundation for the following report on progress.

Report of Progress and Current Status (2000-2002)

Leadership and Coordination

The need for an overall co-ordinator for the health programme continues. Canada has attempted to meet this leadership need through its federal Department of Health; however the challenges to circumpolar coordination and responsiveness continue. Country contacts have not been able to respond in a timely fashion, have not been given authorization or support to access data and information sources, and the contact persons have changed several times during this stage of the Programme's implementation. However, some member states identified new country contacts in time for a second meeting of Experts in Copenhagen in May. Other experts were identified through networks and the cooperation of members of the Expert Group bodes well for the future. While there has been and continues to be excellent cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) European Regional Office in Copenhagen, coordination between and among member states and permanent participants needs to be improved.

Data Gathering and Assessment: Creating a Culture of Evidence-based Decision-making

The Expert Group, in June 2000, had emphasized the value of the evidence-based approach as the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the health and well-being of children and youth in the Arctic. Following their deliberation and after meetings with other experts from the AMAP's Human Health Expert Group, the basic indicators in the four indicator categories were reduced to approximately 60 (see appendix in last report).

Following the Ministerial meeting in Barrow Alaska in October 2000, at which the Action Plan was approved, all country contacts were requested to submit data to the Canadian focal point. Several reminders and specific requests for clarification of data sets were sent over the following months. Many members of the AMAP Human Health Expert Group provided data and contacts for obtaining additional biophysical indicators data. Several of the AMAP experts were also able to provide data for the three other indicator categories (socio-economic-cultural, psycho-social, and health services), when it became clear that previously identified country contacts would not be able to supply any information.

All information received up to March 31, 2002 was tabulated and graphs were prepared by the Canadian coordinating office for evaluation by the Expert Group in May 2002. The information was organized when possible into comparisons of:

- < national versus regional data;
- < indigenous versus non-indigenous data;

- < male versus female data; and
- < WHO age groupings.

Despite significant effort to obtain information, there was a paucity of data from some countries which severely affected a circumpolar evaluation of the status and well-being of children and youth. There was also unevenness in reporting on all indicators and the Expert Group re-evaluated the utility of a large number (60) of indicators. Following extensive discussion, the Expert Group agreed to focus on the following key indicators that could be followed prospectively:

- < population demographics (less than 19 years of age)
- < maternal age at birth
- < prenatal care
- < immunization status
- < pre-term birth
- < low birth weight
- < breast feeding
- < infant mortality (neo-natal and post-neonatal)
- < cause specific disease incidence (cancer, diabetes)
- < major notifiable diseases (Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, Chlamydia)
- < tobacco use
- < substance abuse (alcohol, solvents and illicit drugs)
- < education
- < child abuse
- < suicides
- < unintentional injuries

Data for these indicators were considered to be more readily available and internationally comparable, and more consistent and suitable for countries to identify the key disparities between and among Arctic regions, Indigenous groups and countries. These indicators will also be appropriate as a basis for policy recommendations to improve the health of children and youth and, thus, a sustainable future for Arctic people. Key findings from the indicator information available to date are provided on the next page.

The detailed results for the revised set of indicators are provided in Appendix 1. The original indicators that were not included in the new list of 16 key indicators (see above) are still considered important; however they will not be a major focus of work in the next biennium due to the effort that would be required to collect and validate the information.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE INDICATOR INFORMATION

1. Indigenous youth at higher risk

- < High immunization rates nationally and regionally for major diseases (tetanus, pertussis, diphtheria; measles, mumps, rubella; polio; haemophilus)
- < Incidence of preterm births and low birth weight are highest among Indigenous populations
- < Neonatal/postneonatal mortality rates are higher among Indigenous populations in Canada, Greenland and in Russia
- < Incidence of Tuberculosis and Chlamydia are higher among Indigenous populations in the Canada and Greenland

2. Gender differences are significant

- < Incidence of suicides and unintentional injuries (especially those resulting from motor vehicle accidents) higher among males, particularly from Indigenous populations
- < Substance abuse is higher among males
- < Information on gender differences was not always provided by all countries, making comparisons difficult

3. Age differences exist

- < Age specific information is valuable as incidence and mortality rates varied between age groups. This data is particularly useful for time trend analysis and thus more complete reporting from all countries is needed.
- < eg. Overall mortality rates are highest among infants
For some specific outcomes, such as suicides, sexually transmitted diseases, motor vehicle accidents and substance abuse, rates are highest among 20-24 year olds, followed by 15-19 year olds.

4. Data quality is highly variable

- < Data provided/collected from different countries was not always compatible, making across-country comparisons difficult and meaningless
- < eg. Tobacco and substance abuse—variation in definitions of regular use
Child abuse—different standards in reporting and what constitutes abuse
Breastfeeding—length of time and exclusivity varied
Education—variation in what is meant by compulsory schooling, some countries lack this guideline

5. Data availability hampers comparisons

- < Considerable gaps in the data, particularly from Russia. Given the significance of this population, it is essential that these gaps are addressed
- < Gaps in reporting from northern regional areas—particularly from the US and Nordic countries

There was also a consensus among the Expert Group:

- (a) on a small number of modified or new indicators (see specific 'recommendations' for each indicator in Appendix 1) for which data could be collected and evaluated in the next biennium;
- (b) on the need to develop a policy and protocol for monitoring changes in health status over time. (It is very difficult to collect data that is comparable between countries and regions unless it is based on standard reportable criteria. For example, disease incidence data reported by ICD code is generally comparable even if not always available from each country/region, whereas social statistics on smoking, body mass index, birth weight, breast feeding, etc., are often based on surveys that vary temporally, spatially and because of the survey questions posed);
- (c) that there have been significant improvements in the health status of children and youth in many regions of the Arctic and that these should be affirmed. (This consensus was based on both indicator information and field observations by practicing health professionals. It was not considered useful to over-emphasize the current disparities between health status of Indigenous and marginalized populations with the overall national health status. Recommendations for policy changes should recognize the resilience of Indigenous communities, the importance of empowerment and the huge gains that can be made by building on positive momentum within these populations);
- (d) on the importance of tracking changes over time, both in terms of indicators and policy actions to address problems so that Arctic countries are held accountable for protecting and improving the health and well-being of their children;
- (e) that a wide view is needed of the factors that contribute to good health and well-being (determinants of health model), that the indicators must be broad enough to address potential cause-effect linkages and that action plans a policies must be directed towards improving these health issues and that there are likely to be different needs in different regions of the Arctic;
- (f) that there are strong links between health effects and exposure to environmental contaminants. (The effects emanate from both the toxic properties of the contaminants and the social consequences of a contaminant affecting the consumption of a traditional diet);
- (g) that there should be a stronger focus on the pregnant family and early family support as the key means of protecting infant and childhood development and health. (This approach includes supporting and protecting positive behavior such as breast feeding, prenatal check-ups, post-natal visits and vaccinations, community support for new families, local education for parents and children, etc.);

- (h) that a key issue is raising esteem among Arctic residents through education and skill development, tools and support from government, enabling and encouraging communities, and building on positive changes;
- (i) on the level of concern over growing diagnoses of type II diabetes, its relationship to reduced consumption of traditional diet, increased consumption of carbohydrate based diets and obesity;
- (j) on the importance of identifying for Ministers where data gaps exist so that they can develop initiatives to collect and evaluate information on the state of health of their regional populations. (This issue was a particular concern in Russia); and
- (k) that there be more Russian focus on childhood nutrition, translocation pressures from land use issues (mining and oil and gas activities), unemployment, social tension in northern urban centers and emerging access to drugs and alcohol, dislocation of students to boarding schools for educational training, stress and psycho-social problems in communities and among Indigenous people.

Capacity Building: Well Documented, Effective Interventions

The June 2000 Action Plan called for the identification and collection of well documented, low-technology, innovative approaches or best practices in four priority areas to improve the health and well-being of children and youth of the Arctic:

- < psycho-social health/suicide prevention
- < maternal and infant health
- < alcohol and substances
- < respiratory and other common infectious diseases including tuberculosis and prevention of tobacco use.

Only three countries and no Permanent Participants responded to requests for these models (see Appendix 3). This activity is still considered important, and a concerted effort will be made to collect more case studies of this nature.

Although a symposium had been planned for the fall of 2001 to communicate and validate the findings from the analysis of the health data and to showcase best practice models, this event was deferred as insufficient input from member states and Permanent Participants was provided under the 2000 Action Plan. A symposium or similar event is proposed for the next biennium.

To maximize the dissemination of the information to Arctic populations and other key stakeholders, and to minimize costs, every effort will be made to link this with another significant circumpolar health event such as the next International Congress on Circumpolar Health in Nuuk, Greenland in 2003.

Communication, Information Dissemination and Support

The proposed internet searchable data base of best practice models, collected papers and other materials that may be of interest to communities was not created, as the materials for inclusion were not completed during the past biennium. This is an activity that is proposed for implementation in the 2002-2004 period, and will be coordinated with the work of the Networking Programme.

Once collection is completed, encouragement and support will be given to member states to promote pilot projects in some or all of the four priority areas or to extend existing projects to other locations within the country.

Linkages with other groups and organizations

Experts at the May 2002 meeting of the Initiative affirmed the importance of capacity building and the development of effective partnerships. Participants applauded the work of the Human Health Expert Group of AMAP and the contribution of the WHO to the children and youth initiative. Other strategic linkages and partnerships will benefit from further strengthening. Current and future partnerships could include:

(a) for the Arctic Council,

- Infectious disease project
- Telemedicine Project
- Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Project on Food Security (Russia)
- Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic (SLICA)
- University of the Arctic
- Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP)
- Arctic Climate Impact Assessment(ACIA)
- Arctic Human Development Report
- Proposed Capacity Building Initiative

(b) for other Agencies,

- European Union
- World Health Organization
- Barents Council
- Council of Baltic Sea States
- Nordic Council of Ministers
- Northern Forum
- Other Arctic Council observers
- Other UN Agencies: UNICEF, ILO, UNESCO
- International Union for Circumpolar Health

RECOMMENDATIONS TO MINISTERS FOR THE HEALTH PROGRAMME FOR 2002-2004

It is recommended that the Ministers Place their primary policy focus for improving the health and well-being of children and youth in the Arctic on:

- (a) the long term gain that comes from primary, secondary and post-secondary education and training;
- (b) 'positive 'promotion models in the Arctic which embrace community wellness, the family and early childhood education;
- (c) protecting and supporting the pregnant family; and
- (d) empowerment of communities to act and take responsibility (through elders, youth, local resources and cultural vehicles).

2. Provide vigorous support for:

- (a) the collection of national, regional and community best practices models;
- (b) the collection of missing national, regional and indigenous specific indicator data from all countries in the circumpolar region and especially from Russia and its five northern regions in the socio-economic/cultural, health services, psycho-social well-being, and bio-physical health areas defined by the Health Programme;
- (c) coordination and integration of indicator development and utilization among and between jurisdictions and agencies to increase comparability and power of the indicators data;
- (d) greater cooperation between universities, governmental and non-governmental agencies and institutes and permanent participants in data gathering and evaluation.
- (e) fundamental and applied health research (environmental, social, cultural, medical, psycho-social and socio-economic) in the circumpolar region that will enhance understanding of current and emerging issues in the Arctic related to the health and well-being of children; and
- (f) protection of the Arctic population from the effects of environmental contaminants as described by the AMAP's Human Health Expert Group.

3. Approve and support the 2002-2004 Action Plan for the next biennium.

HEALTH PROGRAMME PLAN 2002-2004

Support a coordinated approach by identifying contacts with authority and resources to meet the commitment agreed to by Arctic Council Ministers

Collect key health data, in accordance with international standards, and continue epidemiologic assessment to support recommendations for policy action, and develop a policy and protocols for monitoring of trends in health status over time.

Collect and share examples of innovative approaches, pilot projects or best practices which could form the basis for new policy and programming across circumpolar regions.

Strengthen capacity building through information dissemination and enhanced communication through the use of the Arctic Council website and international conferences/symposia

Strengthen linkages, integration and co-operation among governmental and non-governmental organizations whose interests relate to the health of children and youth and sustainable communities in the circumpolar region.

The 2002-2004 Action Plan for the Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic continues to affirm the health of children and youth as a major element of sustainable development. Only children and youth with a hope for their future life, and who are empowered and participate in decision-making affecting their own lives, will effect sustainability.

Work undertaken through this Action Plan, together with strong ministerial policy support should increase the gains already visible in health indicators in several parts of the circumpolar region.

This Action Plan provides a framework and details recommended actions for implementing the broad recommendations arising from the Health Programme Expert Group Meeting in Copenhagen, 4-7 May, 2002. It also takes the next step towards taking the work of the Expert Group and organizing it into a coordinated and integrated design which will provide direction for action over the next two years including the completion of the collection, evaluation and comparison of all indicator data and best practices by 2004.

The Action Plan reiterates the importance of strong project support by all Arctic countries, including financial and human resources, in order to produce meaningful output upon which recommendations for actions to reduce or minimize health disparities can be based.

HEALTH PROGRAMME ACTION PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Time Line	Strategies	Actions	Budget/2 years
Oct. 2002 - Sept. 2004	<p>Leadership and Coordination</p> <p>Continue with overall coordination of the Health Programme by Canada, with each member state and Permanent Participant appointing a single contact person responsible for liaison with the coordinator</p>	<p>Assure project sustainability by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordination of data collection and assessment. 2. Coordination of the collection of innovative approaches or best practices. 3. Providing leadership in planning and implementing the dissemination of all material related to the Health Programme. 	\$200K USD*

Time Line	Strategies	Actions	Budget/2 years
Oct. 2002 - Sept. 2004	<p>Data Gathering and Assessment</p> <p>Coordinated data collection, analysis and long-term monitoring</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue data acquisition from Member States, Permanent Participants, and from WHO and other relevant databases. 2. Ensure that current and future data indicators are consistent with international standards. 3. Complete epidemiologic assessment of health data and prepare health indicator report for all circumpolar populations to inform policy decisions. 4. Develop policy and protocols for monitoring trends in health status over time. 	<p>Each country will be responsible for its own costs of obtaining and submitting the material.**</p>

Oct. 2002 - Sept. 2004	<p>Capacity Building</p> <p>Well documented, effective, low cost/low tech interventions of innovative approaches, pilot projects or best practice models which can be shared to enhance and support communities' capacity to deliver effective programmes and support policy change at a national or regional level.</p>	<p>1. Develop a comprehensive inventory of innovative models available across all countries/circumpolar regions.</p> <p>2. Strengthen communication and networking among and between Member States and Permanent Participants through the officially designated country and PP contacts, and through informal channels.</p> <p>3. International event/symposium in 2003.</p>	<p>Each country will be responsible for its own costs of obtaining and submitting the material.</p> <p>\$550K USD***</p>
Time Line	Strategies	Actions	Budget/2 years
Oct. 2002 - Sept. 2004	<p>Communication, Information and Support</p> <p>Strengthen communications and networking.</p>	<p>1. Implement an internet clearinghouse of innovative models on the Arctic Council/Networking Programme website.</p> <p>2. Member States encouraged to support/ extend programs or pilot projects in areas covered in the broader recommendations.</p>	
Ongoing	Linkages	Sustain partnerships with relevant organizations/agencies	
Total			\$950 K USD

* Canada's contribution as lead organization.

** Costs of obtaining and submit data to be covered by each member State. Estimated at \$40K USD per country.

*** Cost based on travel, translation and support. In-kind facilities of the WHO Regional Office in Copenhagen or other supporting organization may be used. Each country will be responsible for the participation of representatives from its national jurisdiction and Permanent Participants. Overhead costs may be recovered through a registration fee.

2. NETWORKING PROGRAMME

Background

1998 - 2000

The long term objective of engaging and empowering youth was supported by the 1998 - 2000 Networking Programme in its effort to create tools and foster youth and intergenerational events that would support the sharing of information, traditional ecological knowledge and experiences relevant to sustainable development and health in the circumpolar North.

The initial work plan for the Networking Programme was prepared in Toronto at a meeting of international experts in March 1999. Each member state and Permanent Participant was invited to submit two names - one elder (wise, experienced person) and one youth - to form part of the international committee. *Learning for a Sustainable Future*, a Canadian non-governmental organization, was contracted to lead the Networking team.

This network is expected to create a forum in which children and youth will:

- < build a sense of identity, solidarity and pride;
- < grow to understand the similarities among northern traditions and cultures and respect differences among them;
- < share ideas and hopes for the future;
- < identify activities which will contribute to the sustainability of a healthy environment and the well-being of their local community, and support each other in creativity and working towards change;
- < participate in existing community and youth programmes and, where appropriate, create new groups focused on specific interests; and
- < learn and practise the skills of planning and decision-making and the values of commitment and co-operation.

The first step in its plan was to set a vision of the future that would lead to a consideration of what must be changed, what must be preserved and what must be done to achieve the vision.

The design of "On Top of the World", the website of the initiative, provided the basis of a virtual network as it was expected that the primary means of communication among network members would be the Internet.

Of considerable value and potential use was a Directory of Youth Programming prepared by Benoit Associates, a Canadian consultant on childhood development issues. The Directory covered programmes for mainstream youth as well as youth at risk. The examples include peer-based or peer helper programmes, intergenerational programmes, community-based programmes, new technology programmes, arts-based programming, adventure programming, mentorship programmes, internship programmes, micro finance, service programmes, social marketing programmes, and "edutainment".

2000 - 2002

An elder and a youth from each member State and Permanent Participant were invited to a Networking workshop in Copenhagen in June 2000. Fifteen people attended the workshop. A review of the work of the Programme and consideration of work being done by other Arctic organizations (Nordic Council of Ministers, Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Northern Forum) as well as by Arctic states and the Permanent Participants, resulted in the identification of projects for the next biennium. The intention was to focus on educational activities through sharing of ideas and experience pertaining to sustainable development, adapting best practices to different environments, strengthening northern cultures, and encouraging entrepreneurship among youth. Proposals included:

- (a) Creation of a web site dedicated to the interests of children and youth living in the circumpolar region;
- (b) Development of a database directory to facilitate the exchange of curricula, projects, programs, resources and materials appropriate to the teaching of sustainable development in the Arctic;
- (c) Organization of a camp sponsored by the Saami Council that would bring together youth from throughout the circumpolar region in the summer of 2002. A video of this event was also proposed;
- (d) The organization of an art contest focusing on a theme related to Rio +10 with the winning entries being organized for exhibit at the WSSD conference in South Africa in October 2002.

It is anticipated that the International Networking Committee will continue to work with the co-ordinator to implement the program. It is defining terms of reference and has identified the following as important to their mandate:

- < Further engage youth, both in their opinions and their involvement;
- < Become more familiar with each country's and organization's institutions and governance;
- < Foster a greater understanding of sustainable development among Arctic children and youth;
- < Establish better relations and partnerships with governments and identify where government priorities coincide with "Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic" objectives;
- < Utilize and encourage the involvement of media in Children and Youth projects.

The Committee has expressed the desire to collaborate with Arctic Council Working Groups such as AMAP, CAFF, and PAME, in the participation and mentoring of children and youth in the projects of these committees. To this end, the committee has undertaken to write a letter, ratified by all members, expressing to the Chairs and membership of these Committees the hope that children and youth can be included in a very active and engaged way, in the work that they are doing. The Committee also wishes to express its willingness to co-operate with these Working Groups in developing strategies to achieve this goal.

Progress Report

1. The International Networking Committee was reconvened via e-mail in the summer of 2001 after an extensive campaign to enlist additional elders and youth representatives. To date, only Iceland and Sweden have chosen not to participate, although efforts are ongoing to fill these vacancies. The Committee operates primarily via e-mail and is working effectively despite the limitations of the medium, the geographic remoteness of many of the members and limited resources to support the work of the Committee.
2. An assessment by the International Networking Committee members of the preliminary design of “On Top of the World” after its first year of operation led to constructive recommendations for its continued improvement and future development. While funding limitations have made it difficult to support these changes or expand existing features, the site has been upgraded and enhanced with the assistance of a school and a voluntary Information Technology group. Plans to relocate the web site to the Arctic Council server are also under negotiation and should be completed by October 2002. The website will provide an opportunity for children and youth of the Arctic to register themselves as part of the network, find out about the Arctic Council, discuss ideas and share opinions, exchange news, report on projects and activities, learn about Arctic cultures and traditions, and find out more about sustainable development.
3. The Learning Exchange involves the development of a compendium of best practices for teaching and learning about sustainable development in the Arctic. The directory provides basic descriptions, costs of acquisition, and identification of project co-ordinators or locations where material might be obtained. Where needed, member states are responsible for arranging for translation into other languages. While funding has again placed limitations on the scope of this project, its addition to “On Top of the World” will represent a useful and important resource for teachers and youth-serving agencies in the Arctic.
4. Plans are being finalized for the Saami International Youth Camp 2002 in Finnmark. It will be a 10 day event consisting of both a coastal and inland program for 30 circumpolar youth aged 15 to 21. Enthusiasm surrounding the event is high. The International Networking Committee has undertaken a broad based selection process in support of the camp, and results indicate that there will be a diverse, high calibre representation of northern youth in attendance. The Saami will also undertake the production of a video of the camp which, upon completion, will be made available through the “On Top of the World” web site. The video could also be broadcast on local or national television channels. It will be a way of sharing traditional knowledge and raise the profile of the Arctic Council.
5. Despite efforts to secure sponsorship for the art contest focussing on sustainable development and the Rio process, funding has not been forthcoming. The anticipated collaboration with UNEP to display the exhibits at the WSSD conference in South Africa will therefore not be possible.

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO MINISTERS FOR THE NETWORKING PROGRAMME
FOR 2002-2004**

It is recommended that Ministers approve the continued selection of projects according to the following criteria:

- < advancement of sustainable development in the Arctic;
- < involvement of at least three countries and/or Permanent Participants;
- < youth involvement in implementation of the project; and
- < clear identification of mechanisms for the funding of any initiative, project or event by the proponents
- < an identifiable leader (country or Permanent Participant) who is responsible and accountable for the development, funding and implementation of the project.

NETWORKING PROGRAMME PLAN 2002-2004

Objective: To foster and create cultural exchanges for youth

- (a) International youth program for reindeer herders in Russia will involve the exchange of traditional ecological knowledge of reindeer and herding, the exchange of information regarding modern herd management, and development of a reindeer herders' guide.

Funding: Leadership (RAIPON and Russia)
Travel and registration will be the responsibility of participants.

- (a) International Summer Youth Camp to be located in Alaska will focus on the exchange of cultural and traditional ecological knowledge of Alaskan indigenous peoples.

Funding: Leadership - ICC Alaska
Travel and registration will be the responsibility of participants.

Objective: to educate Arctic youth on sustainable development by engaging them in “hands-on” learning opportunities.

- (b) Seminar to showcase capacity building workshops developed by Arctic Council members and Permanent Participants to facilitate the sharing of successful programs. Propose workshops to be presented will include: Management of international projects (Norway), Consensus building and conflict resolution (ICC Canada), Traditional ecological knowledge (Saami Council).

Funding: Leadership - ICC Alaska
Seminar - ICC Alaska
Workshops (Norway, ICC Canada and Saami Council, etc.)

- (c) Identification and exchange of information on summer job programs within member countries and organizations with a view to encouraging the exchange of circumpolar youth for useful activities. A letter to summer job program managers, prepared and endorsed by the International Networking Committee, would facilitate the creation of these exchange opportunities.

Funding: Leadership - ICC Greenland
Travel costs to be borne by participants.

Objective: to encourage educational systems to adopt and utilize tools and programs relating to sustainable development.

- (e) Promotion of outreach programs such as GLOBE and the New POPs through the Networking Programme web site, “On Top of the World”.

Funding: Leadership - dependent on the programs.
Project - to be determined.

- (f) Preparation of a youth friendly resource book on sustainable development activities, projects and organizations targeted to high schools.

Funding: Leadership - ICC Alaska
Project - ICC Alaska and others

- (g) Continue the development of “On Top of the World” and a materials exchange database for teachers.

Funding: Leadership - Canada
Web site development -Tampere Technological Institute (Finland), Government of Nunavut

Objective: to educate youth in traditional businesses such as reindeer herding, in sustainable development and the stewardship of the environment,

- (h) To extend the ability of children and youth to access internet-based programs described on “On Top of the World” and other internet-based resources. The project would include development of between five and ten Youth Environmental Information Centres in northern Russia. Given the importance of Internet access as a basis for many of its projects, the International Networking Committee members have endorsed this initiative to allow equality of opportunity and participation of all children and youth of the Arctic and to facilitate exchange between Russian children and youth and those of other circumpolar nations.

Funding: Leadership - RAIPON, Russia
Project - Russia and philanthropic organizations

- (i) Internet Salmon Project. Using the “Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic” web site, Top of the World, as the basic tool to convene a “community of interest” around the subject of salmon, this project will provide for the collection and exchange of information and data, best practices and projects including traditional ecological knowledge, salmon harvesting practices, the health of populations and the enhancement of habitat.

Funding: Leadership - Arctic Athabaskan Council
Project - Existing funds

3. INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

Background

In 1999-2000, the International Institute for Sustainable Development in co-operation with the Secretariat for the “Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic” provided four northern Canadian youth between the ages of 19 and 30 with a six-month international work experience and training program, two in the Arctic and two in African countries. The success of this pilot project led the Arctic Council Ministers to endorse a revised Arctic Council Internship Program which now seeks to involve youth from other circumpolar countries. During the past biennium a second phase of the pilot project was implemented with four internships in Arctic countries. The goal of the proposed program is to facilitate the exchange of youth between circumpolar countries in order to provide them with practical work experience abroad in areas related to sustainable development.

In December 2001, the International Institute for Sustainable Development was contracted to undertake the following activities in support of this initiative:

- (a) Preparation of a working paper which reviews the experiences of northern youth in international research and work experience programs. The goal was to identify best practices and tools for supporting young northerners in these programs and to assess their value in promoting sustainable development.
- (b) Expansion of a directory of current international research and work experience opportunities for youth within the Arctic Council’s member countries.
- (c) Development of a directory of potential host organizations willing and able to accept participants between April 2001 and March 2002 and in the future.
- (d) Formation and co-ordination of an International Internship Co-ordinating Committee to facilitate the exchange of circumpolar youth in work experience/internship programs.

To date the following tasks have been accomplished:

Working Paper

The goal of the Working Paper is to review the experiences of northern youth in international research and work experience programs. Canadian youth from northern Canada who have formerly participated in international internship opportunities have been contacted and interviewed. Efforts are now being made to identify and contact youth from other circumpolar countries who have participated in an internship/work exchange program. It appears that few northern youth have participated in programs of this type.

Directory of International Research and Work Experience Programs in the Circumpolar Countries

This directory is an important step in developing the funding model for the Arctic Council Internship Program, as support will in large part be based on existing study and work abroad programs in member countries. The directory is divided into two sections; one which describes programs specifically for northern youth and a second which focuses on programs with an Arctic focus that are open to all youth from a particular nation or sector.

An Internet search has been conducted to identify potential programs suitable for inclusion in the directory. These organizations have either been contacted and a draft copy of the directory has been distributed to members of the Arctic Council International Internship Committee.

Directory of Host Organizations

Host organizations for the Arctic Council Internship Program may be non-governmental organizations, private sector companies, business associations, indigenous organizations, educational institutions, research organizations, public health institutions, national governments, or international organizations. All host organizations are required to work in areas that contribute to sustainable development.

The International Institute Sustainable Development has contacted a variety of organizations in each Arctic State regarding their interest in serving as host organizations. Several of these organizations have already expressed interest in hosting interns. More organizations will be contacted during the upcoming month as the International Institute for Sustainable Development develops a comprehensive list of potential placement locations.

Arctic Council International Internship Co-ordinating Committee (IICC)

The objectives of the International Internship Co-ordinating Committee and the roles and responsibilities of committee members have been defined. The mandate of the IICC is:

- < to facilitate the exchange of youth between circumpolar countries in order to provide them with practical work experience abroad in areas related to sustainable development.

Each Arctic country and Permanent Participant has been requested to nominate a representative. Each participating country is responsible for funding its own participation in the Co-ordinating Committee and encouraged to access funding to support its Arctic interns. Currently, the confirmed participants are Canada, Finland, USA, RAIPON and the Arctic Athabaskan Council. Denmark and Norway have

indicated an interested in continuing participation. The Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) will select interns in the near future, and both CIMO and Barentsplus may be in a position to fund two Russian interns.

Activities of the committee members will include:

- < Identifying potential host organizations in their country.
- < Sharing information on best practices and lessons learned through use of a listserv.
- < Tracking the number, activities and post-intern positions of Arctic Interns in their programs.
- < Forwarding the names of interns and the results of their experiences to members of the International Internship Committee.
- < Co-ordinating material for analysis and inclusion in a biennial report submitted to the Arctic Council.

<p>RECOMMENDATIONS TO MINISTERS FOR THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME FOR 2002-2004</p>

Recognizing that northern young people will need to have a strong command of sustainable development issues to work effectively across national boundaries and to make informed decisions about the environment and development problems facing their region, it is recommended that Ministers encourage internships providing professional work experience with organizations in the Arctic region so that interns will make a difference in their communities and on the world stage.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME PLAN FOR 2002-2004

- < Co-ordinate and administer the Internship Programme for 2002 - 2004 including the identification and screening of potential host organizations/employers willing to accept youth from other circumpolar countries, normally for 6 month placements; financing or locating funding for work/training experience for 1 - 4 northern youth per country and Permanent Participant; administration of the recruitment and application process; and ensuring that interns are adequately prepared and suitably placed.
- < Explore opportunities for marketing the internship and exchange programs with other Arctic organizations such as the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Northern Forum, Nordic Council of Ministers, University of the Arctic and the European Union.
- < Encourage placement of interns with secretariats of the Arctic Council Working Groups and Arctic Council Observers.
- < Establish Internet linkages between the sites of member countries that describe existing Internship and Exchange programs.
- < Cost per participant: Between \$8000 USD and \$12,000 funded by member countries' organizations (covers insurance, visa, basic living expenses and some administrative costs). In most cases the cost of transportation will be funded by the intern. Host organizations provide both cash and in-kind contributions.
- < Other costs: International co-ordination - \$18,000 USD
International Internship Committee meeting - \$25,000 USD
Travel and accommodation of Internship Committee members - in - kind.