Arctic Council Encyclopedia Article

Arctic Council

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Arctic Council

The Arctic Council is a cooperative environmental protection council composed of eight governments whose goal is to protect the Arctic's fragile **environment** while continuing economic development. Established in 1996, the Council plans to protect the environment by protecting **biodiversity** in the Arctic region and maintaining the sustainable use of its **natural resources**.

The Arctic Council was formed on September 19, 1996, when representatives from Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the United States signed a *Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council*. The work and programs founded under the former Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) have become integrated into the new Arctic Council, which provides for indigenous representation—including the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the Saami Council (Scandinavia, Finland, and Russia) for the Nordic areas and the Association of Indigenous Minorities of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation—at all meetings. The indigenous people cannot vote but may provide knowledge of traditional practices for research and a collective understanding of the Arctic. As members of the Council's board, they can recommended ways to spread the work and benefits of **oil drilling** and mining businesses among indigenous communities while minimizing the negative effects on their land.

The **World Wildlife Fund** oversees the Council's work on protecting the Arctic's **wildlife** and vegetation from various destructive activities, such as diamond mining and **clearcutting**. There is also evidence that the Arctic area receives a disproportionate amount of **pollution**, as witnessed in the overall land and water degradation.

Former Canadian Environment Minister Sergio Marchi is a supporter of the Council's work, emphasizing "The Arctic is an environmental early warning system for our globe. The Arctic Council will help deliver that warning from pole to pole."

Resources

Organizations

Arctic Council, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Unit for Northern Dimension, P.O. Box 176, HelsinkiFinland FIN-00161 +358 9 1605 5562, Fax: +358 9 1605 6120, Email: Petri.Ojanpera@formin.fi, <http://www.arcticcouncil.org 003E;