



Government of Canada

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Canada's ARCTIC COUNCIL Chairmanship 2013-2015

Welcome to Canada's North



Canadians are pleased to welcome meetings of the Arctic Council to our North over the coming two years.

We will highlight Canada's dynamic and vibrant North and showcase its peoples, cultures and stories.

Leona Aglukkaq
Canada's Minister for the Arctic Council

The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, an Inuk from Nunavut, is Canada's Minister for the Arctic Council. Her appointment underlines the priority that the Government of Canada places on the Arctic as well as its commitment to ensure that the region's future is in the hands of Northerners.

Canada's chairmanship

The Arctic Council was established in 1996, with Canada serving as its first chair. Canada is proud to launch its second term as chair (2013-15), which also marks the start of the second round of chairmanships for all Arctic states.

Development for the people of the North

More than four million people, living in the eight Arctic states that make up the Arctic Council, call the Arctic region home.

Canada's chairmanship is putting Northerners first.

The theme of Canada's chairmanship is "development for the people of the North," with a focus on responsible Arctic resource development, safe Arctic shipping and sustainable circumpolar communities.

Development for the People of the North: The Arctic Council Program during Canada's Chairmanship (2013-15)

photo: Paul Galipeau

Strengthening the Arctic Council

Since its inception, the Council has undertaken important work to address the unique challenges and opportunities facing the Arctic region. As these challenges evolve, so must the Arctic Council.

Canada is working collaboratively with its Arctic Council partners to strengthen the Council. The aim is to enhance the capacity of the Permanent Participant organizations, improve the Council's coordination and maximize efficiencies.

Highlights of the Arctic Council Program (2013-15)

Responsible Arctic resource development

The Arctic Council is working to ensure that Arctic development takes place responsibly. Businesses in the Arctic will play a strong role in building a sustainable and economically vibrant future for the region.

Establishing a circumpolar business forum – **the Arctic Economic Council** – will foster circumpolar economic development and provide opportunities for business to engage with the Arctic Council.

As activity in the region increases, Arctic states are cooperating to protect the marine environment and the livelihoods of Northern peoples.

In May 2013, the Arctic states signed an Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic. The Council has also begun work on oil pollution prevention. This work is continuing during Canada's chairmanship. Effective **action to prevent oil pollution** is critical to ensuring the protection of the Arctic marine environment.

Safe Arctic shipping

Opportunities for tourism are growing in the Arctic. By establishing **guidelines for sustainable tourism and cruise-ship operations**, the Arctic Council will encourage the benefits that tourism brings to communities while reducing the risks associated with increased activity.

Arctic Council states also continue to work closely together to encourage the International Maritime Organization's efforts to develop a **mandatory polar code** for the Arctic Ocean.

Sustainable circumpolar communities

Canada has a clear vision for the Arctic, in which self-reliant individuals live in healthy, vital communities, manage their own affairs and shape their own destinies.

The Arctic Council recognizes and celebrates the **importance of traditional ways of life** for Northern communities and is working to increase regional and global awareness of these ways of life.

Since its establishment, the Council's work has been based on collective scientific research. The Council will **enhance scientific cooperation** in the Arctic to improve shared knowledge of the region and advance our joint efforts to promote good governance in the Arctic.

The Arctic Council has long understood the importance and value of traditional and local knowledge. This knowledge has enabled Arctic residents to survive in the harsh environment for millennia. The Council is developing **recommendations for incorporating traditional and local knowledge** into its work.

The Arctic is facing rapid changes in its climate and physical environment, with widespread effects for Northern communities and ecosystems.

Short-lived climate pollutants such as black carbon and methane contribute to Arctic climate change. **Addressing short-lived climate pollutants** offers the potential for health benefits as well as climate benefits as part of a comprehensive strategy to address climate change.

Across the circumpolar region, communities are **adapting to these changes**. The Arctic Council will facilitate the sharing of communities' knowledge and best practices.

By **promoting mental wellness**, the Council will increase the ability of Arctic residents to thrive and adapt to the many changes affecting the Arctic.

The Arctic Council is continuing to pursue cooperation among Arctic and non-Arctic states to support the conservation of **migratory birds**.

www.international.gc.ca/arctic-arctique

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