

Trip Report
Craig L. Fleener
Gwich'in Council International
Reykjavik, Iceland
November 18-26, 2004

Purpose of Trip

To attend the SAO & Ministerial meetings in Reykjavik, Iceland.

Saturday Meetings, November 20th

IPS Board Meeting

Since *Stephen Mills*, current chair of the IPS, was unable to attend I served as chair for this meetings.

John Crump provided an overall status report of the activities of the IPS. He also presented the draft 2005 workplan and budget for the IPS. A concern presented by p.p.'s focused on the need for IPS to get this information out much earlier for p.p. review and comment before the meetings. John also discussed his departure from the IPS very soon. We identified a need to convene a hiring committee to find John's replacement.

In a closed political leaders session we discussed a need for unity in our discussions and the importance to not overlap topics our during our 5 minute interventions throughout the Ministerial meeting.

We discussed a problem that many p.p.'s have experienced with limitations on our participation. Statements were made reflecting disappointment with S.A.O.'s & nations that seek to limit our participation outside of the provisions in the S.A.O. Rules of Procedures.

We discussed each of us preparing a press release for joint release during the press meeting at the Ministerial meeting.

We discussed the need of an A.C.I.A. educational tour for p.p.'s to help spread the word about climate change & its impacts on our lives.

Sunday Meetings, November 21st

PP Informal Consultation Meeting

Our informal consultation was a closed session. *Rune Fjellheim*, Saami, has served as the p.p. representative to the A.H.D.R. process and provided an update. He stated that the A.H.D.R. has shortcomings but is a good first step and will create many opportunities to address issues of climate change identified in the A.C.I.A..

We discussed the release of the A.C.I.A. and the U.S.'s footnote opposing the use of the phrase Indigenous Peoples because they believe that it may infer certain international rights that they don't agree with. The p.p.'s have also proposed a footnote that seeks to recognize our inherent right to access the resources that will become more accessible as the arctic continues to thaw.

The A.A.C. presented information on their Oil & Gas Assessment & how they have received opposition to their participating as a lead author. So, the p.p.'s discussed how we can stand united in supporting p.p.'s being lead authors in Arctic Council projects.

AHDR Release

The Arctic Human Development report was released at a public meeting Sunday evening at the Nordica Hotel. Niels Einarrson & Oran Young launched the AHDR with presentations by the co-chairs and several lead authors. I attended a portion of the meeting.

Monday Meetings, November 22nd

SAO Meeting

S.A.O.'s met today and received working group activity updates. ACAP, AMAP, CAFF, EPPR, PAME & SDWG all provided status reports. There was a detailed report of the AHDR & ACIA since they are being released at this meeting.

Financing Permanent Participants

Permanent participants were told to basically be quiet on this issue until it can get resolved. That attitude was very alarming to me. In my interventions I commented that we need to continue and elevate the funding problems.

Financing Workgroup Activities

There was also a discussion regarding methods of funding the workgroups. Of course, this received much more attention than funding p.p.'s. There was discussion by workgroup chairs on the importance of workgroups including funding for p.p.'s to participate in their activities.

Tuesday Meetings, November 23rd

Most of today was spent preparing the S.A.O.'s for the ministerial meeting. Only two representatives for each country and p.p. organization were allowed to participate. Much of the time was spent finalizing the ministerial report.

Wednesday Meetings, November 24th **Ministerial Meeting**

News Media

There was a press conference early in the meeting to allow for public involvement since the ACIA was being released this day.

Sustainable Development in the Arctic

The AHDR & ACIA were both presented. The presentations were brief duplicates of the S.A.O. presentations. However, policy document conclusions were presented by the Chair of the Arctic Council. There was a round table discussion and an opportunity for p.p.'s to make their first interventions.

Working Group Reports

The Chairs of each working group gave brief reports. This was also a shorter duplicate of the S.A.O. meeting. p.p.'s were given a second opportunity to comment during a second round table discussion.

Russian Chairmanship

Chairmanship was turned over to the Russian Minister. However, the official change-over didn't occur until the end of the ministerial meeting.

Reykjavik Declaration

The Reykjavik Declaration was adopted.

Conclusion

The Working Groups reports and actual work was remarkable over the past two years. Also, the increased involvement of p.p.'s has added to the value and credibility of their reports and work. A great deal of time was spent, by p.p.'s, working group chairs, & S.A.O.'s, trying to finalize information for the Ministerial meeting. Although the Ministerial Declaration and Policy Document were completed and provided to the Ministers there was general dissatisfaction from several of the p.p.'s because of language considered weak by several p.p.'s. Also, the S.A.O.'s talk of mandatory reductions in the time p.p.'s can participate.