

**Northern Forum: 6th General Assembly
St. Petersburg, Russia, 23-25 April 2003
Briefing Note from Stephen J. Mills**

Participation by Stephen Mills, Gwich'in Council International/Indigenous Peoples Secretariat.

Stephen Mills was asked by the Northern Forum to make a presentation on the "Role of Indigenous Peoples in Northern Cooperation" to conference participants. The presentation discussed opportunities for cooperation between indigenous peoples and Northern Forum, and how these opportunities could be reflected in the Northern Forum Strategic Plan. The brief presentation (each Presenter was allotted 5-7 minutes) included the following points:

- Appreciation of Northern Forum's direct support of indigenous peoples, and projects involving indigenous peoples;
- The need for stronger participation by indigenous peoples in Northern Forum projects, with long range goal of being a member of the Northern Forum;
- The active role of indigenous peoples in the Arctic Council and the progressive nature of this relationship;
- Northern governmental bodies and departments of all scales should be working with indigenous peoples and organizations;
- The Northern Forum Strategic Plan identifies as one of its strengths "the strong and diverse indigenous cultures with values focused on cooperation and environmental conservation", yet this is not reflected in Northern Forum activities;
- First Nations governments and corporations are key players in economic development and program delivery;
- In northern Canada, First Nations governments have powers and authority equivalent to, or superceding those of, other governmental bodies. They cannot be excluded from policy and decision-making. This should be considered when contemplating the role of indigenous peoples in the Northern Forum.

Stepehn was also asked to Chair the session on Northern Cooperation Panel Discussions, which included presentations by the Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials, Arctic Council Working Groups, and World Wildlife Fund. The session highlighted the benefits and oportunites of cooperating with Arctic Council. The session was kept on track and on schedule.

Arctic Human Development Report
GCI Update from Stephen Mills
June 4, 2003

Background

The Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) is designed to be a valuable contribution to the Sustainable Development Programme of the Arctic Council. A comprehensive assessment of human conditions in the entire circumpolar world has not been carried out before. GCI is involved on the Steering Committee.

Goal

The goal is to have the AHDR completed for the fall 2004 ministerial meeting.

AHDR Update

The AHDR meeting/workshop of lead authors will take place in Reykjavik, Iceland on June 15-16. One of the purposes of this meeting/workshop will be to ensure that all those responsible for producing components of the AHDR have a common understanding of the goals of the project, the procedures to be used in pursuing these goals, and the appropriate format for individual chapters. Overall, the AHDR Lead Author meeting/workshop is a very critical meeting.

Timetable

1. First AHDR chapter drafts to be submitted for review by November 15, 2003.
2. Second AHDR chapter drafts with comments by the Executive Committee to be submitted for review by the Report Steering Committee by February 1, 2002.
3. Comments by Report Steering Committee due April 1, 2004
4. Final AHDR chapter drafts to be submitted by July 1, 2004