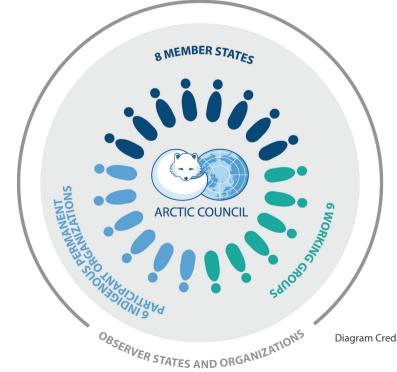


On September 19, 1996, the Arctic Council was officially established, becoming the leading forum for cooperation in the Arctic as part of the region's transformation from a zone of tension to a zone of peace.

Today, the eight Arctic countries, together with the region's Indigenous communities and an increasing number of international and non-governmental organizations, continue to work together, providing leadership on the Arctic's most important issues.





The flags of the Arctic Council Member States and Permanent Participants (Indigenous peoples' organizations) Photo Credit: Arctic Council Secretariat / Linnea Nordström

Diagram Credit: Arctic Council Secretariat

About the Arctic Council



In 1996, representatives of the eight Arctic states– Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Russia, and the USA- met in Ottawa, Canada, and signed the Ottawa Declaration. While this is considered to be the founding moment of the Arctic Council, the wheels had been set in motion several years beforehand with various national and Indigenous-led environmental initiatives as well as international advocacy. While Canada had already been championing the idea of an international council to enhance Arctic cooperation, a step in this direction came in 1991 under Finland's initiative, when the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) was approved by the circumpolar states.

To carry out the AEPS's mandate on environmental protection (later expanded to include sustainable evelopment), which had been developed with input from Arctic Indigenous groups, the eight countries greed to establish four Working Groups: Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response in the Arctic (EPPR), and Protection of the Arctic and Marine Environment (PAME).



The AEPS was a landmark step, but some, especially Canada, still saw the need r a formal and international Arctic council that would not only expand operation, but also ensure that this would include the region's Indigenous peoples. So, in 1995 and under the leadership of Inuk ambassador Mary Simon, anada began actively seeking support among the other Arctic countries to ansform the AEPS into a new international organization with a broader andate and Indigenous participation.

uncil." The American Journal of International Law 93 (3): 712-722. oants of the Arctic Council [map]. ANSIPRA / Norsk Polarinstitutt. ANSIPRA Bulletin No. 9. https://ansipra.npolar.no/image/Arctic01E.jpg



The next year, the Ottawa Declaration set up the basic framework and mandates of the Arctic Council. Among other things, it absorbed the four AEPS working groups and established the role of Permanent Participants for Indigenous organizations. As the first Chair, Canada spent the next two years overseeing the development of the Arctic Council into a functioning body. This culminated in the 1998 Iqaluit Declaration, where Ministers agreed on the new organization's rules of procedure and on the addition of the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG).

> The creation of the Arctic Council was an international cooperative effort that took nearly a decade and would not be what it is today without the work of many people, especially Indigenous leaders.

FORM & FUNCTION

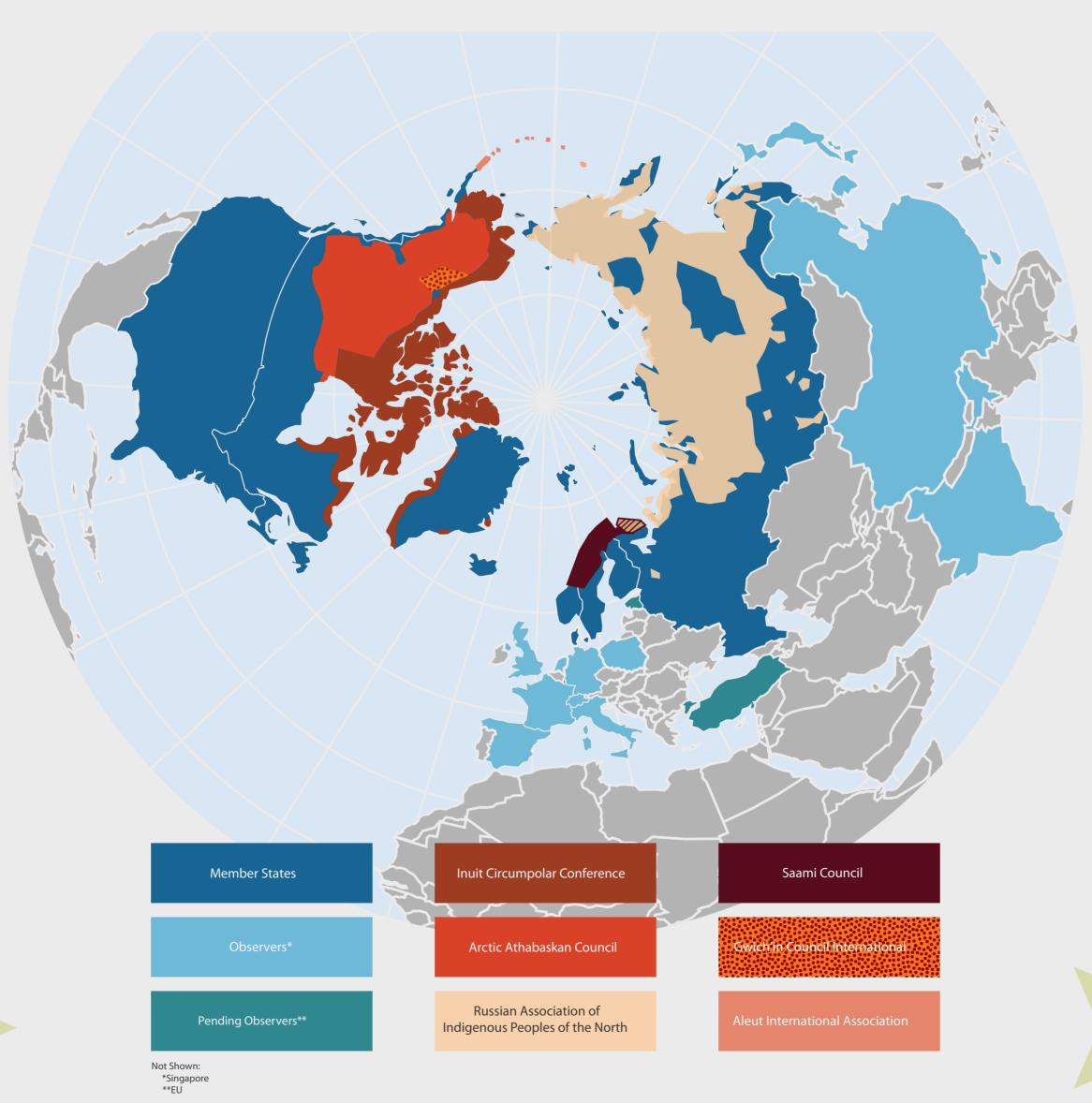
The Arctic Council is a high level forum. According to its mandate, on matters of common Arctic issues, it promotes cooperation, coordination, and interation between the Arctic states, as well as the involvement of Indigenous communities and other residents of the Arctic.

The Arctic Council's main areas of focus are on sustainable development and environmental protection. Matters pertaining to military security are not within its mandate.

As a forum, it does not have a programming budget. Programs and initiatives are sponsored by Arctic states, and sometimes by other bodies. It also cannot enforce whether its recommendations and guidelines are carried out; it is the responsibility of Member States to do so.



The Arctic Council Today



The Arctic Council is formally comprised of the eight Arctic states ("Members"). As of April, 2020, six Permanent Participants and 38 Observers also participate in the Council's meetings and events. Subsidiary bodies such as Working Groups and Task Forces additionally carry out specific objectives decided on by the Council.

All of the Arctic Council's decisions are made by consensus: all voting parties must agree. While all present at meetings participate fully in the discussions, the only parties that ultimately may vote are the Members.

The Arctic Council's Chairmanship rotates between its Members, changing every two years. Canada held the first Chairmanship from 1996-1998; currently, it is held by Iceland for the period 2019-2021.

A permanent Secretariat was established in 2013. It is located in Tromsø, Norway.

| Permanent Participants |
|---|
| The role Permanent Participants have n |
| Arctic Council unique among internation |

ey have the right to participate in all meetings;

e Senior Arctic Officials and Ministers.

neetings, their representatives sit with Member

lditionally, they, along with Member states, can

opose new projects for the Council to undertake.

Observers

3 Non-Arctic states 1 Intergovernmental & Inter-Parliamentary Observers 2 Non-Governmental Observers

Observer status is open to non-Arctic states, global and regional inter-governmental and inter-parliamentary organizations, and non-governmental organizations. Observer members nay participate by serving on working groups; otherwise are present to observe AC meetings.

Subsidiary Bodies Six Working Groups Task Forces Expert Groups Other Groups

Working Groups

The mission of the Arctic Council is carried out through the six working groups. Working groups provide assessments and analyses. Decisions are then made through the consensus of the eight Arctic States. Permanent participants are fully consulted and involved in the decision making process.

Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP)* Monitoring program for Arctic environments, ecosystems and society

Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)* Program to maintain Arctic biodiversity

Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME)* Leads conservation and sustainability initiatives of marine ecosystems

Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPPR)* Prevention of and protection from accidental contaminant and pollution release

Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG; est. 1998) Environmental and economic protection and enhancement in Arctic communities

Arctic Contaminants Action Program Working Group (ACAP; est. 2006) Reduction in emissions and pollution

A Timeline of the Arctic Council in Context

1980-2000

10/1987 Mikhail Gorbachev calls for Arctic to be "zone of peace" Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy and the Declaration on the Protection of the Arctic Environment adopted Soviet Union opens Northern Sea Route to foreign vessels 12/1991 Russia is established from USSR dissolution 9/1996 Arctic Council established by signing of Ottawa Declaration Igaluit Declaration Aleut International Association approved as Permanent Participant Sustainable development working group (SDWG) established Germany, Netherlands, Poland, UK approved as Observers 4/1999 Territory of Nunavut (Canada) is established

2000-2010

10/2000 Arctic Athabaskan Council and Gwich'in Council International approved as Permanent Participants France approved as Observer 5/2005 Arctic Climate Impact Assessment published 10/2006 Arctic Contaminants Action Program Working Group (ACAP) established Spain approved as Observer 8/2007 Arktika-2007 expedition plants Russian flag on ocean floor at North Pole 9/2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 5/2008 Ilulissat Declaration 9/2008 First commercial ship transits Northwest Passage Greenland referendum expands home rule, makes Greenlandic only official language

2010-2020

Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic, the first legally binding Arctic Council agreement Norway and Russia sign Treaty on Maritime Delimitations and Cooperation in the Barents Sea and Arctic Ocean Arctic sea ice hits record low yearly minimum Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response, the second legally binding Arctic Council agreement Italy, Japan, China, India, Singapore, South Korea approved as Observers 1/2014 Arctic Economic Council established 2/2014 First Model Arctic Council 4/2016 Signing of Paris Agreement 1/2017 Polar Code comes into force 5/2017 Álgu Fund established by Permanent Participants Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation, the third legally binding Arctic Council agreement Switzerland approved as Observer 1/2018 Arctic Council nominated for Nobel Peace Prize China publishes its Arctic policy 10/2018 Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean, signed by 9 countries plus EU 12/2018 Arctic Council receives 2019 IAIA (International Association for Impact Assessment) Global Award Rovaniemi Joint Ministerial Statement 10/2019 First joint meeting between Arctic Council and Arctic Economic Council 11/2019 US gives formal notice of intent to withdraw from Paris Agreement