



The 2017 International Conference on Arctic Science: Bringing Knowledge to Action

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Russia's economy is being benefited by tourism, which Russian officials recognise as an important economic activity in the Arctic. An announcement by Igor Chernyshenko, a Member of Murmansk's Federation Council, during the forum indicated that processes had now been put in place to further facilitated international tourism to the Russian Arctic for Murmansk and Arkhangelsk would now be opened to 72-hour visa-free visits by foreign nationals, as per a decree by the Russian Government.

The forum again emphasised the importance of the Arctic region for the rest of the world as the the Finnish President Sauli Niinistö eloquently highlighted when he said that “the Arctic is a place where the East meets the West; if we lose the Arctic we lose the whole world”. In addition, the forum drove home the message of collaboration with regard to ensuring a sustainable future for the Arctic and that friendship between the Arctic nations serves as a solid foundation for such collaboration for “nothing is more precious on this earth as a good friendship”, as the Icelandic President Gudni of Johannesson stated.

However, the hopes of the presidents of the Scandinavian countries and the words of Dmitry Rogozin about the fact that “... that the Arctic will be able soon to cool – tensions between Russia and the West and open the way to a real dialogue” has not yet been developed.

More information on International Forum “The Arctic – Territory of Dialogue” can be found on <http://forumarctica.ru/news-from/vystupleniya-zarubezhnyh-gostej-na-tseremonii-torzhestvennogo-otkrytiya-foruma/>.

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The 2017 International Conference on Arctic Science: Bringing Knowledge to Action

(24–27 April 2017, Reston, Virginia, USA)

The Arctic has always been a region of interest for multiple actors. Now that the period of Arctic hype has passed, the need for scientifically accurate decisions on different aspects of the Arctic environment, societies and economy is becoming even more important. The 2017 International Conference on Arctic Science: Bringing Knowledge to Action organised by the Arctic Council's Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) provided an overview and highlighted recent policy-relevant scientific information concerning a range of Arctic issues. The conference was held in Reston, Virginia, United States from 24 to 27 April and brought together more than 300 experts, ranging from scientists to decision-makers, in order to identify, explore and create mechanisms and venues where science and knowledge can inform the development of policies and decision-making.

Several intense days of conference discussions and talks were structured around the recent major AMAP assessments and reports, covering POPs trends and contaminants, human health

and the economy of the North. The program included plenary and breakout thematic talks as well as poster sessions. The regional focus stayed within the scope of AMAP, covering the Iceland-Barents region, the Canadian Archipelago-Greenland region and the Eastern Siberia-Beaufort region. Scientific talks within the breakout sessions of each regional context were summarised by expert panel discussions to find out best practices of translating the knowledge into action.

Other Arctic Council Working Groups (WG) also held sessions during the conference. At the Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) WG sessions the challenges to oil spill response, response countermeasures, marine ecosystems feedbacks and marine risk management were covered. The Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna WG discussed the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP), its key instrument for the implementation of and recommendations for the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment.

Special sessions within the program covered the topics of Arctic policy and governance as well as natural hazards management. The large plenary panel “Knowledge to Action” framed the major topics, following up with breakout sessions on community engagement, implementing actions, education and outreach and non-arctic country perspectives.

Moreover, the conference was the official publication date and place for five AMAP assessments: The Snow, Water, Ice, and Permafrost in the Arctic (SWIPA) assessment; the Chemicals of Emerging Arctic Concern assessment and the three Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic (AACA) assessments for the Barents Area, Bering/Chukchi/Beaufort Region and the Baffin Bay/Davis Strait Region. A few weeks later, all assessments were presented at the 2017 Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting.

The AMAP Working Group has traditionally been very supportive to different expert groups and scientists, including early-career scientists. The Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS) and AMAP have a long-standing partnership cooperating on different activities. During the Reston conference, APECS, AMAP and IASC (International Arctic Science Committee) organised a workshop for early-career scientists and other interested conference participants to discuss the process of how scientific assessments are developed, implemented and disseminated, as well as the impact they can have to various audiences. The workshop covered the complexity of all stages of assessments from their initiation, organisation, funding, incorporating of traditional knowledge to the review process. It included the experiences from a variety of stakeholders and research groups from AMAP, CAFF, the US Global Change Research Program, NOAA, Inuit Circumpolar Council Alaska, American Geophysical Union, Sami University of Applied Science and media representatives.

A post-conference workshop was jointly organised by AMAP and the EU-PolarNet. It aimed at discussing not only the emerging outcomes of the conference, but also to determine common research needs for further scientific understanding of the impacts of the rapidly changing climate on the Arctic cryosphere. In addition, it discussed the need to investigate options for adaptation to these changes by Arctic communities and residents.

The 2017 International Conference on Arctic Science in Reston was a success bringing together diverse audiences from scientists, policy-makers, indigenous groups to media, and setting up the scientific ground for the future of the Arctic dialogue.

To learn more about the conference, please visit: <http://www.amap.no/external/2017-International-Conference-on-Arctic-Science/>

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