

Arctic Council Officials to Address Climate Change, Scientific Cooperation and More in Portland, Maine

Portland, Maine, U.S.A., September 29, 2016 – The Arctic Council’s Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) and indigenous Permanent Participant organizations (PPs) will meet in Portland, Maine on 5-6 October 2016 to discuss the Council’s ongoing work and future plans to address environmental issues and promote sustainable development in the Arctic. The Arctic Council’s SAOs and PPs meet twice yearly to receive progress reports on the Council’s work, approve publications and other products for public release, and plan the near-term and long-term direction of the Council.

On the agenda for discussion at the meeting is the Council’s work on: climate change and resilience; black carbon and methane; long-term strategic planning for the Council; oil pollution prevention and response; scientific cooperation; and other issues of concern to the Council and the Arctic region as a whole.

The United States currently holds the rotating Chairmanship of the Council. The program for the U.S. Chairmanship (2015-2017) focuses on: climate change; economic and living conditions; and Arctic Ocean safety, security, and stewardship. The Portland meeting will serve as the first opportunity for delegates to discuss the proposed program for the upcoming Finnish Arctic Council Chairmanship (2017-2019).

Delegates will also recognize the 20th anniversary of the Arctic Council. The Council was founded on 19 September 1996 with the signing of the [Ottawa Declaration](#), and the 20th anniversary is an opportunity to [recommit to the Council’s key principles](#).

“SAO meetings have been critical to the collective management and decision-making of the Arctic Council, and I expect that the meeting in Portland, Maine will contribute to the continued success and progress of the Council. This meeting will also provide an opportunity for Finland to present a proposed program for its Arctic Council Chairmanship that begins next May.”
- U.S. Ambassador David Balton, current Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials

Ambassador Balton will hold a media briefing in Portland on Friday, 7 October 2016 at 9:00am ET to share outcomes from the SAO meeting and respond to questions from media representatives. Media wishing to attend either in person or remotely should [register here](#). For more information, contact tom@arctic-council.org / +47 911 20 370.



The Council's last meeting took place in Fairbanks, Alaska in March of 2016. In Fairbanks, SAOs and Permanent Participants addressed such topics as community resilience to climate change, prevention of oil pollution in the Arctic marine environment, and incorporation of traditional and local knowledge into the Council's work.

[\[Click here to read the summary report from the Fairbanks meeting.\]](#)

The Members of the Arctic Council are the eight Arctic States – Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the United States. In addition, six organizations representing Arctic indigenous peoples have status as Permanent Participants. They are the Aleut International Association, the Arctic Athabaskan Council, the Gwich'In Council International, the Inuit Circumpolar Council, RAIPON (the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North), and the Saami Council. [Learn more about the Council and its work in our backgrounder.](#)

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