CO-CHAIRS’ SUMMARY:
Arctic Council Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation II (TFAMC-II)
2nd Meeting, Québec City, February 15-16, 2018

Introduction

The second TFAMC-II meeting, hosted by Fisheries and Oceans Canada in Quebec City, Canada on 15-16 February 2018, was co-chaired by Anita Mäkinen (Finland), Jóhann Sigurjónsson (Iceland), and Gabriel Swiney (USA). Representatives from all Arctic States attended the meeting. Two Permanent Participant organizations (Aleut International Association and Saami Council) and all Arctic Council Working Groups were represented. Accredited Observers attending the meeting included one state (Spain) and four organizations (CCU, UNEP, WMO, and WWF).

The meeting started with introductory remarks by the Canadian SAO Alison LeClaire. She updated the Task Force on the process that has begun in the Arctic Council in response to the Ministerial instruction for the SAOs to develop a strategic plan, and on the results of the special session on strategic planning that was hosted by Canada in London, UK on 25-26 January 2018. Among other key issues discussed in London, the SAOs deliberated on TFAMC-II’s work, and there was a sense that it would be beneficial for the Task Force to focus, during its second meeting, on the second half of its mandate on the development of recommendations for enhancements to existing Arctic Council mechanisms, rather than on the development of Terms of Reference for a possible new subsidiary body. The SAOs appreciate the work so far on the ToR for a potential subsidiary body and do not want to lose the results of the Task Force’s efforts, but they want to align this work with the overall strategic work of the Arctic Council. The Canadian SAO urged the TFAMC-II delegates to think about how they could leverage the excellent work of all Arctic Council Working Groups, Task Forces, and Expert Groups to ensure that the Arctic States and Permanent Participants can act as responsible stewards of the Arctic marine environment.

In their introductory remarks, the Co-chairs reminded delegates that, according to the TFAMC-II’s original roadmap adopted in Helsinki in September 2017, the second meeting of the Task Force was, among other things, supposed to focus on complementary enhancements to existing Arctic Council institutions. All delegations supported the change of plans, though some members of the Task Force expressed concern that it was difficult to provide recommendations regarding only half of the TFAMC mandate.

Brainstorming on Possible Enhancements to Existing Arctic Council Institutions

To stimulate the discussion on possible enhancements to existing Arctic Council mechanisms it was proposed that the meeting should operate under the Chatham House Rule, so that the group could freely discuss ideas, recognizing that there can be some sensitivities. For the first half of the brainstorming exercise the Co-chairs suggested that the following documents form a background for the discussion: the Co-chairs’ non-paper of 15 January 2018, the memo provided by AC WG Chairs prior to the meeting, as well as AC Working Group Common Operating Guidelines. Otherwise it was a free and open discussion, not restricted to any particular issues. The key issues raised included: the
role of SAOs in reviewing and coordinating marine-related issues; PPs’ capacity to participate in Arctic marine stewardship; better coordination of WG activities and Work Plan development; engagement of Observers in marine research; formalized cooperation with external bodies; dedicated meetings on marine issues, including Ministerial meetings; dedicated professional marine capacity and increased communication capacity at (one of) the Secretariats; increasing the Arctic Council’s profile with respect to its marine work; etc.

The second half of the brainstorming session was structured around the nine functional needs identified by TFAMC-I. Canada had prepared a matrix with their proposals for enhancements which would help to meet the different functional needs. This matrix served as a point of departure for deliberations on the ways of improving, modifying, and strengthening existing Arctic Council mechanisms to meet the identified needs. TFAMC delegates could not identify complementary enhancements that clearly met three of the functional needs: (1) extending cooperation throughout the marine stewardship cycle, (2) integration across sectoral and jurisdictional boundaries, and (6) regional cooperation on area-based stewardship.

**Discussion of Draft Recommendations Regarding Complementary Enhancements to Existing AC Mechanisms**

Based on the detailed input from Working Groups, Arctic States, PPs, and Observers, provided both prior to the meeting and during the meeting, the Co-chairs prepared the *Draft Recommendations of the TFAMC Regarding Complementary Enhancements*. The proposed recommendations include enhancements to Secretariats, WG operations, SAO operations, Ministerial operations, and external communications and cooperation regarding marine issues. These enhancements could be made gradually or in a step-wise fashion. Some of the suggested enhancements imply amendments to the AC Rules of Procedure. As an alternative to amending the Rules of Procedure, these enhancements could be made through Annexes to the Rules of Procedure that would limit their effect to consideration of marine issues. These enhancements could also be made on an informal basis.

**Next Steps**

Based on the deliberations of the meeting in Québec City, the Co-chairs completed the *Draft Recommendations of the TFAMC Regarding Complementary Enhancements*, which was sent out to delegations on 16 February 2018. Delegations were given two weeks to provide their comments on the draft recommendations, with the final deadline for comments set to 2 March 2018. The Co-chairs will integrate all comments and produce a new draft, which will be presented for SAOs to consider at the SAO meeting in Levi. The Co-chairs will also seek guidance from SAOs regarding TFAMC’s future steps, and how to address the remaining portion of the TFAMC mandate as well as those functional needs which have not been adequately addressed through the complementary enhancements discussed by the Task Force. Depending on the SAOs’ decision, it will be clear if TFAMC-II will have another meeting or if its work will be finalised intersessionally. If there is a need for the Task Force to meet face-to-face again, the next meeting will most likely take place in September 2018, back to back with the next PAME meeting in Vladivostok, Russia.