



Arctic Council

The Background:

The Arctic Council has its origins in the 1991 Arctic Environment Protection Strategy (AEPS). On Finland's initiative, environmental ministers of Arctic countries met in Rovaniemi, Finland in 1989 to discuss cooperative measures to protect the Arctic environment. Eight signatories went on to sign the Ottawa Declaration in 1991, from which the council was formed. Today, the Arctic Council serves as a high-level intergovernmental forum for dialogue and cooperative coordination on Arctic issues among states, Arctic inhabitants and Arctic indigenous. In particular, these issues largely concern the sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic including the conservation of the Arctic environment, resolution of international boundaries, northern indigenous rights, and sustainable development.

The effects of global warming have perhaps been most prominent in the Arctic region. Evidence of climate change can be most visibly seen in the vast amounts of sea ice loss, glacial melt, the thawing of permafrost, and the changing habits and biodiversity of Arctic inhabitants. What measures must be taken to address the continually depreciating state of the Arctic environment? Perhaps the biggest issue is that the Northwest Passage is attracting economic interests similar to how the Suez Canal did in 1869. The opening up of the Arctic will also open up significantly shorter shipping routes between Asia, Europe and North America. This will only continue the trend of environmental degradation as human presence increases.

The focus of this committee will be on the environmental state of the Arctic, border disputes in the region, the amount of natural resources and how they should be divided, the rights of the indigenous in the area, security, and search and rescue operations.