



*PARTICIPATION REPORT*  
**ARCTIC CIRCLE CONFERENCE**  
**ICELAND**

**Presented to the Nordic Council of Ministers**

October 2015

**INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES**

The Arctic Circle Conference is designed to increase participation in dialogue on northern and Arctic issues and to increase international attention on the future of the Arctic. To this end, the Arctic Circle aims to create opportunities for all to attend different meetings, develop their own network and participate in informal discussions.

The Arctic Circle Annual Meeting has become the largest international gathering on the Arctic. The Assembly is held annually in October at the Harpa Conference Center in Reykjavik, Iceland. In addition, the Arctic Circle organizes small forums on specific topics, such as the 2015 forums in Alaska and Singapore, and the 2016 forums in Quebec and Greenland.

The Arctic Circle is non-profit and non-partisan. Organizations, forums, think tanks and public associations around the world are invited to hold meetings within the Arctic Circle Platform to advance their own missions with the broader goal of increasing collaborative decision-making.

For the NordMAB, the relevance of participating in the event resided mainly through the networking and visibility aspects. A workshop on NordMAB has been held and promoted NordMAB's Students on Ice project, in addition to the growing collaboration with the Sami of Sweden in connection with Pessamit. **Please see Appendix 2 for full details about the NordMAB's breakout session.**

This conference is undoubtedly a major event for the maintenance and development of NordMAB. The presence of a representative of the Nordic Council of Ministers, as well as several of our partners (Government of Greenland, Students on Ice, etc.) added to the relevance of participating.

## **PROGRAM AND ATTENDANCE**

The conference took place over 4 days, from October 15 to 18, 2015. The program included conferences in assembly by Heads of State and a multitude of "Break Out Sessions" and workshops on northern issues.

The elements of interest of the program are presented in Appendix 1.

More than 1,800 people attended, including state representatives, NGOs, business representatives, First Nations people, etc., all of whom were challenged by the Nordic issues. Among others:

- The President of Iceland, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson
- The President of the Republic of France, François Hollande
- The Prime Minister of Greenland, Kim Kielsen
- Prince Albert II of Monaco
- The Secretary General of the Nordic Council of Ministers, Dagfinn Høybråten

## **MAIN ELEMENTS OF INTEREST**

### **Meeting with the Prime Minister of Greenland**

An unexpected meeting was held with Kim Kielsen, Prime Minister of Greenland. The meeting was an opportunity to reiterate the involvement of the NordMAB in the issue of maintaining the status of RB in Greenland and the importance we attach to the progress of this topic by the Greenlandic and Danish governmental authorities.

Mr. Kielsen ensured his support and informed us that he intended to be in Quebec for a parallel session of the Arctic Circle Conference in March. Another parallel session of the Arctic Circle conference will be held in Nuuk in May, which will provide an opportunity for Greenland to organize a strategic meeting with public, private and community stakeholders involved in maintaining the designation, in order to move this topic forward.

### **Meeting with the Senior Advisor of the Nordic Council of Ministers**

The meeting was scheduled to follow up on the submission of a request for NordMAB funding for the implementation of Year 2 of NordMAB Action Plan. This was the occasion of some technical questions and others. The NCM has been very positive in accepting the application in the coming weeks.

### **Break out session on NordMAB: Nordic cooperation between biosphere reserves**

A workshop-conference proposal was developed in the summer of 2015, involving Manicouagan-Uapishka BR, Pessamit, the Samis of Gran and the MAB Sweden Committee. Despite a very high number of proposals to hold such a workshop, NordMAB has been selected (see appendix 2 for details).

Many of our contacts attended the presentation.

## **ANNEXE 1 – Elements of interest of the program**

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**08:30–10:30 OPENING PLENARY**

**Location:** Silfurberg, Second Level, Harpa

**WELCOME ADDRESS:**

H.E. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, *President of Iceland*

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**SPEECHES:**

H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco

The Honourable Philippe Couillard, *Premier of Québec*

Wang Yi, *Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China (video message)*

Angus King, *United States Senator from Maine*

**CHAIR:** Alice Rogoff, *Publisher, Alaska Dispatch News*

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**18:15–19:00 PLENARY SESSION**

**Location:** Silfurberg, Second Level, Harpa

**KEYNOTE SPEECH:**

H.E. François Hollande, *President of France*

*Introduced by President of Iceland Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson*

**CHAIR:** Alice Rogoff, *Publisher, Alaska Dispatch News*

**Economic Opportunities and Sustainable Development:**

H.E. Uwe Beckmeyer, *Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, Maritime Coordinator of the Federal Government:* Linking Technology to Arctic Sustainable Development: The German Technology Policy Approach.

Walter L. Kuehnlein, *Chairman, German Association for Marine Technology (GMT):* Technology Solutions from Germany for a Demanding Environment.

Peter Jochmann, *Head of Department Arctic Technology, Hamburg Ship Model Basin (HSVA):* Breaking the Ice: Better Preparedness of Arctic Operations.

Robert Howe, *Managing Director, bremenports GmbH & Co. KG:* Call for Action Towards Safe and Sustainable Shipping for the Arctic: Finnafjörður Port Arising Soon in Iceland.

15:30-18:00

**Nordic Nexus: Nordic Connections and Solutions for a Developing Arctic**

Organized by the Nordic Council of Ministers

**Location: Norðurljós, Harpa Second Level**

**SPEAKERS:**

Dagfinn Høybråten, *Secretary General, Nordic Council of Ministers*: Nordic engagement in the Arctic.

Höskuldur Þórhallsson, *President of the Nordic Council; Member of the Icelandic Parliament*: A Nordic Council view on Development in the Arctic.

Joan Nyman Larsen, *Senior Scientist and Research Director, Stefansson Arctic Institute, Akureyri, Iceland*: Human development trends in the Arctic. How can we achieve innovation, growth and economic development in the Arctic?

Sigrún Smaradóttir, *Research Group Leader for Business Development, MATÍS*: Bioeconomy in the Arctic.

Ásmundur Guðjónsson, *Director of North Atlantic Cooperation, NORA*: Blue bio-economy in the Arctic and North Atlantic.

15:30-16:30

**Beyond COP21 - The Arctic and Global Climate Diplomacy**

Organized by The Office of Senator André Gattolin, Vice-Chair of the European Affairs Committee, Senate of France

**Location: Viðey, Harpa Second Level**

**SPEAKERS:**

André Gattolin, *MP, Vice-Chair of the European Affairs Committee, Senate of France*: Confronting the traditional diplomacy to the climate change imperative: the case of the Arctic.

Katrín Jakobsdóttir, *Member of the Icelandic Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, Icelandic Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Nordic Cooperation 2009-2013*: How do we make Arctic policy making exemplary?

Jørgen Niclasen, *Member of the Faroese Parliament; Faroese Minister for Fisheries 1993-2003, Foreign Affairs 2008-2011, Finance 2011-2015; Member of the West Nordic Council*: Do national parliaments have a role in Arctic climate diplomacy? The case of the West Nordic Council.

Rasmus Gjedssø Bertelsen, *Professor, Barents Chair in Politics, University of Tromsø-the Arctic University of Norway*: Knowledge in global governance: the case of climate.

16:30-18:00

**Mining in Greenland - Barriers and Opportunities for Subcontractors in Greenland**

Organized by the Arctic Cluster of Raw Materials

**Location: Gamla Bió 2**

**SPEAKERS:**

Niels Tanderup-Kristensen, *Director, Arctic Cluster of Raw Materials*

Henrik Fenger Jeppesen, *CEO, Rambøll Grønland: Perspectives on Greenland - Opportunities and Challenges.*

Nungo Pedersen, *Logistical Officer, Xploration Services Greenland: Making Things Possible in Greenland.*

Per Møller-Jensen, *International Director, Orbicon: Bringing Arctic Knowledge to the Global Mining Industry.*

Carsten Dahl-Uhrenfeldt, *Director, Siemens Greenland: Sustainable Energy Supply for the Mining Industry.*

Hans Peter Hansen, *Director, Charter & Freight, Air Greenland: Securing Transportation in Secluded Areas.*

CHAIR: Niels Tanderup-Kristensen, *Director, Arctic Cluster of Raw Materials*

15:30-18:30

**Sustainable Development in Northern Québec: Challenges and Innovation**

Organized by the Québec Northern Institute and the Société du Plan Nord du Québec

**Location: Silfurberg B, Harpa Second Level**

**SPEAKERS:**

The Honourable Philippe Couillard, *Premier of Québec*

**Part A: Québec Research Experience in the North:**

Maryse Lassonde, *Scientific Director of the Québec Nature and Technology Research Fund*

Louis Fortier, *Scientific director of ArcticNet, Université Laval: A decade of research by the ArcticNet network of center of excellence.*

Marcel Babin, *Director of TAKUVIK Joint International Laboratory, Université Laval and CNRS; Vice Chair of the French Arctic Initiative: Arctic research, partnership, and new perspectives: Sentinel North.*

Nicole Biebow, *Head of International Cooperation Unit, Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research (Alfred Wegener Institute)*

René Therrien, *Vice-dean of the Faculty of Sciences and Engineering, Université Laval, The Institut Nordique du Québec: Bringing research to innovation.*

Lars Lövgren, *Kemiska Institutionen Umeå University, Sweden: The circumpolar network of ecotoxicology with mining industry as part of U. of Arctic.*

Antonia Maioni, *Associate Vice-principal, Research and International Relations, McGill University: Health and Determinants of Health.*

**Part B: Building Capacity Through Innovation: Experiences from Québec Organizations in the North:**

Christos Sirros, *Agent-General, Québec Government Office in London*

Adamie Delisle Alaku, *Vice-président, Renewable Resources, Makivik Corporation*: The Makivik Corporation as a demonstration of leadership in the capacity building in the North.

Gaétan Lantagne, *General Manager, Institut de recherche Hydro-Québec*: Emerging energy technologies and R&D opportunities for northern areas.

Rodney Semotiuk, *CEO, Stolt LNGaz, Norway*: Regional LNG and Northern Development.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS:**

Yves Bégin, *Vice Rector of Research, Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS)*: New scientific skills needed for Québec Plan Nord, challenges for universities.

Robert Sauvé, *President and CEO, Société du Plan Nord of Québec*: The Plan Nord of Québec: challenges for society.

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**17:00-18:30**

**Traditional Knowledge-based Innovation in the Age of Climate Change**

Organized by the UK Science and Innovation Network and the Arctic Institute

**Location: Silfurberg A, Harpa Second Level**

**SPEAKERS:**

Victoria Herrmann, *Ph.D, Scott Polar Research Institute, The Arctic Institute*

Jessica Shadian, *Nansen Professor, University of Akureyri*

Jens-Ivar Nergård, *Professor, University of Tromsø, The Arctic University of Norway*

Thomas Thornton, *Director, Associate Professor, Oxford University*

**CHAIR:**

Robin Grimes, *Chief Scientific Adviser, Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom*

## **APPENDIX 2 – DESCRIPTION OF NORDMAB’S BREAKOUT SESSION**

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Break out session  
Arctic Circle Conference 2015

Sunday oct 18th, 16h30-18h00

### **UNESCO biosphere reserves Nordic cooperation : Fostering nordic sense of belonging**

The NordMAB network  
May 2015

#### **SUMMARY**

Led by of two First Nations leaders (Sami and Innu) and two UNESCO Biosphere Reserves’ national coordinators (Sweden and Canada), the presentation will present UNESCO’s biosphere reserves program : a world network of sustainable development learning sites.

The focus will be on its Nordic cooperation network (NordMAB), its vision and concrete realisations in the following 2 fields: Fostering Northern sense of belonging and Usage of traditional knowledge.

The presentation will include a 5 minutes video of the «NordMAB Students on ice» 2015 Arctic expedition (114 youth in Greenland and Canadian arctic) that presents a call for action on Climate Changes, as well as outcomes of the collaboration agreement between Sweden’s Samis and Quebec’s Innus.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **UNESCO'S BIOSPHERE RESERVES**

Biosphere Reserves are learning sites for sustainable development. They are sites designated by national governments and recognized by UNESCO under the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) to promote sustainable development based on the combined efforts of local communities and the scientific world.

These reserves are intended to reconcile the conservation of natural and cultural diversity and to promote economic and social development. Biosphere Reserves are therefore considered as:

- Sites of excellence, where new practices are tested and developed for better management of natural resources and human activities;
- Tools to assist countries in implementing the World Summit on Sustainable Development's recommendations and, in particular, those from the Convention on Biological Diversity and the ecosystem approach;
- Learning sites for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

The Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) is an intergovernmental, scientific programme with the goal of establishing a scientific basis for improving human relations and nature worldwide. Launched in the early 70's, MAB offers an interdisciplinary research agenda. MAB brings together several disciplines – natural sciences, social sciences, economics and education – to improve human environments and preserve natural ecosystems.

In particular, it encourages innovative approaches to economic development that respect cultural and ecological social values.

### **NORDMAB**

NordMAB is a thematic network within UNESCO's Programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB), with the objective of enhancing cooperation among Nordic Biosphere Reserves (BR). NordMAB is a network of Nordic BR, associates and partners, at the intersection of a UNESCO regional network (in Nordic countries) and a thematic network (sharing Nordic challenges) that involves Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark (Greenland), Estonia and Canada.

NordMAB biosphere reserves have the following issues in common:

- Large territories and small population
- Remote and sparsely populated regions
- Youth leaving for larger centers
- High quality but fragile natural environments
- Abundant natural resources
- Large-scale industrial projects
- Presence of First Nations
- Cold climate
- Arctic, sub-arctic and/or boreal environments

## **BREAK OUT SESSION OBJECTIVES AND CONTENT :**

1. Present UNESCO's biosphere reserves program and network (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/man-and-biosphere-programme/>)
2. Present UNESCO's Nordic collaboration network of Biosphere Reserves: NordMAB. Present its action plan and vision.
3. Present results and concrete realisations in the following 2 fields :

a) Fostering Northern sense of belonging

Presentation of the partnership between NordMAB and Students on Ice through the experience of two NordMAB youth that participated in the 2015 SOI Arctic expedition (Greenland and Canada). The expedition is a profound hands-on experience for youth to expand their knowledge of the changing circumpolar world, foster a new understanding and respect for the planet, and gain the inspiration and motivation needed to help lead us to a healthy and sustainable future.

5 minutes video of the youth during the expedition, their reasoning and considerations during the program, including visits to Arctic communities, acquire of first-hand knowledge and insight into the dynamics of climate change, traditional knowledge, scientific research, policy and other important Arctic and global topics.

b) Usage of traditional knowledge

Presentation of the Innu – Samis collaboration through NordMAB, consisting of the creation of a common territorial agents training program linked with international internships for Samis in Innu communities and Innus in Sami communities. As well, consisting of good practices sharing on the challenges of women in indigenous communities . The Innus of Pessamit and Samis of Gran has been collaborating since 2013 on those 2 aspects.

## **RELEVANCY FOR THE ARCTIC CIRCLE CONFERENCE PROGRAM**

The break out session links with the following conference objectives

- Sea ice melt and extreme weather (climate changes)
- The role and rights of indigenous peoples
- The prospects and risks of oil and gas drilling
- Clean energy achievements and sustainable development

## **SPEAKERS**

### **Jean-Philippe L Messier, NordMAB leader and National Chair of Canadian Biosphere Reserves.**



Jean-Philippe L. Messier is the founder and current director of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve of Manicouagan-Uapishka, known to work closely with large private sector (including hydroelectricity, mining and logging companies); different levels of government; academia; First Nations; NGOs etc. He is also chairing the Canadian Association of Biosphere Reserves and regularly called upon to represent his region, Quebec or Canada on UNESCO bodies. Current leader of NordMAB network, he did numerous capacity-building missions in Greenland, Scandinavia and Russia, among many other places around the world, which made him awarded by his government in 2014 for achievements that have been recognized beyond the borders of Québec (Alphonse-Desjardins award).

### **Raymond Rousselot. Vice-Chief, Pessamit Innu Community, Québec, Canada**



Raymond Rousselot is the Pessamit Innu Community Vice-Chief. Born in the fifties in a hunter family, he learned from his grandfather that was living traditional life until he was 90 years old. After his studies in wildlife management, Mr. Rousselot did business development since 40 years in this sector, as well as in forestry. He is now the Vice-Chief and the elder of the Pessamit Innu Council.

### **Johanna MacTaggart. National MAB coordinator, Sweden.**



Ms MacTaggart is the national coordinator of Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) in Sweden since 2008. Her mission is to guide new biosphere reserve initiatives towards a UNESCO nomination and strengthen the national MAB-network. She is also the primary developer and coordinator of BR Lake Vänern Archipelago, designated in 2010. Other assignments: Swedish delegate to UNESCO MAB International Coordinating Council (2013-2017), current member of jury of the Swedish Geological Heritage Award (2012-), Geological Survey of Sweden (SGU), and Secretary General of Civilscape (2011-2014). Ms MacTaggart has a MSc in ecology (2003) based on her work on Vendace, *Coregonus albula*, and Smelt, *Osmerus eperlanus*, a food web analysis in Lake Vänern.

### **Tobias Jonsson, Chief of Grans Sami community**



Mr Tobias Jonsson is a Sami reindeer herder and the chairman of his reindeer herding community Grans sameby. In this capacity he has extensive experience of negotiations on land use and exploitation, ranging from Swedish authorities and the courts to foreign companies. He is now leading his community towards cooperation with other indigenous communities in the Arctic Region. Reindeer herding is his ancestral heritage and it is facing great challenges. According to Mr Jonsson the Earth should be seen through the eyes of the reindeer, a perspective from which humans stand to learn. His heart is in developing and co-creating a future for his people with the reindeer, Man and the Biosphere, in which they can not only survive but thrive. Mr Jonsson is active in the Biosphere Region process of Vindelälven-Juhtatdahka.

#### **ORGANIZER**

NordMAB  
[www.nordmab.com](http://www.nordmab.com)

#### **INSTITUTIONAL REFERENCES**

UNESCO MAB thematic network

#### **CONTACT PERSON**

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