

WWF's Statement for the Arctic environment ministers meeting Jukkasjärvi 5-6 February 2013

WWF welcomes the Ministerial dialogue on Arctic issues relevant to the mandate of environmental ministers.

The last Environment Ministers' meeting in Ilulissat in 2010 was a good opportunity for Ministers to discuss issues and compare positions. However, it did not produce concrete results, beyond supporting and encouraging various actions to be taken by other actors. WWF suggests that the coming meeting of Environment Ministers could display a higher level of ambition, and ensure that the relevance of the meeting is clearly demonstrated by agreeing on specific actions the Ministers can commit to and deliver on for the next Ministers meeting in two years.

WWF acknowledges the complex nature of the topics for consideration (ecosystem based management; Arctic biodiversity; and short-lived climate pollutants), and therefore recommends to the Ministers that they lead national coordinated cross-departmental approaches that address these topics. The topics require an integrated framework to ensure transparent coordination between sector issues and to allow the Arctic states to assess and manage comprehensively the cumulative and long-term effects of different human activities in the region.

Ecosystem based management

While the Arctic Council considers broad implementation of ecosystem based management (EBM), Ministers could focus on a concrete expression of EBM through implementation in pilot regions/projects in the Arctic. These pilots should be implemented through a comprehensive and coordinated cross-departmental cooperation and design and, in the case of transboundary regions establish bilateral or multilateral cooperation as necessary. Ministers should consider developing collaborative regional level ecosystem based management plans and develop and operationalize management objectives. The principles underlying the design of such projects should follow the recommendations set out by the Arctic Council's Expert Group on ecosystem based management. Progress on the implementation of ecosystem based management in such pilot regions could be reported at the next Environmental Ministers meeting (in 2015) as well as presented at the Arctic Council.

Arctic biodiversity

A primary consideration in implementing measures to conserve Arctic biodiversity relates to the above section on EBM. A prominent recommendation of the Arctic Council's Arctic Biodiversity Assessment is that Environment Ministers should implement the ecosystem approach within their respective jurisdictions and develop policies to be implemented nationally as well as across institutional barriers

and international borders. We therefore urge the Arctic Environment Ministers to recognise their unique role in operationalizing the ecosystem approach for biodiversity conservation, protection of the environment and ecosystem services both within and across sectors.

Another recommendation for the attention of Environment Ministers flowing from the policy recommendations of the Arctic Council's Arctic Biodiversity Assessment is for them to consider concrete national commitments to implement the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme while ensuring full cooperation between Arctic states and engaging relevant research stakeholders and knowledge holders.

WWF also highlights relevant action for Ministers related to the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), in particular implementation of CBD COP-11 Decision XI/6.

- commit to the development of further Arctic ecosystem resilience assessments and reports;
- advance the work of identifying Arctic areas of high ecological and cultural significance (terrestrial, coastal and marine) to move forward development of an Arctic network of protected areas and other means of ecosystem conservation through management
- ensure the full and effective participation of Indigenous and local communities in research projects and programmes on Arctic biodiversity.

Ministers may commit to lead a cross-departmental process with regards to the CBD Aichi Biodiversity targets and fully incorporate Arctic work and Arctic examples into appropriate national strategies for delivery on Aichi Biodiversity targets and other relevant national biodiversity targets. Environmental ministries can commit to full incorporation of Arctic deliverables including through the Arctic Council process into their reporting on implementation of the biodiversity programmes of work.

Short-lived climate forcers (SLCF)

Ministers may support development of a stepwise approach for addressing SLCF emissions reduction based on analysis done by the Arctic Council. This approach could include:

- further development of scientific knowledge and data on short-lived climate pollutants and their climate and environmental effects through enhanced cooperation among Arctic and other states
- compilation of best mitigation practices and technologies available
- development of guidelines for implementation at national level;
- pilot projects to test practices in different Arctic regions
- consider development of Arctic agreement on cooperation to reduce emissions of short-lived climate pollutants.