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Memorandum 28/10/2019

Engaging youth in the Arctic Council

Purpose:

To inform the SAO agenda item on *engaging youth in the Arctic Council* this memo provides an overview of CAFF and SDWG Youth engagement including relevant recommendations. Other Arctic Council subsidiary bodies may have activities involving young people not captured here.

Recommendations:

The Arctic Council Icelandic Chairmanship Programme 2019-2021 stresses the necessity of close cooperation between the peoples of the region and beyond. The following Arctic Council recommendations emphasizing the need to engage the public, including youth, form the basis for CAFF and SDWG youth initiatives:

Arctic Biodiversity Assessment:

- Promote public training, education and community-based monitoring, where appropriate, as integral elements in conservation and management #15
- Develop communication and outreach tools and methodologies to better convey the importance and value of Arctic biodiversity and the changes it is undergoing #17

As a result of the SDWG *Conference on Strengths, Well-Being, and Engagement of Youth in the Arctic* and the SDWG Plenary Discussion on Youth Engagement in the Arctic Council (Sept 2019) the following recommendations were presented to SDWG for consideration:

- Develop an Arctic Council-wide policy on how to include youth to a greater extent, including a toolbox providing guidance on how to better engage youth.
- Normalize strategic social inclusion of youth in the work of the Arctic Council and its working and expert groups.
- Encourage inclusion and participation of youth, especially when discussing issues of concern to youth, from inception to conclusion, in research and projects alike. Consulting with youth is perceived as being a greater predictor of success, for example in relation to suicide prevention and issues related to mental health.
- Youth emphasis and involvement should not exclude continuing intergenerational collaboration, which is needed for different generations to work together and create a shared vision on the challenges ahead in the Arctic.
- Provide logistical and financial support to youth-led initiatives themed around empowerment and social inclusion of youth.
- Put youth into the protocols for policy making within the working groups of the Arctic Council.
- Establish a special Coordinator for Youth.
- Identify a Circumpolar network or networks of youth that the Arctic Council can connect with when seeking to engage youth in Arctic Council events, activities and initiatives (Arctic Youth Network; Youth Arctic Council; Youth Advisory Board; Local Youth Councils).
- Secure funds for inclusion of youth in the Arctic Council.

Activities:

CAFF and SDWG undertake a range of activities focused on engaging young people. The age groups targeted range from children to young scholars. The following provides an overview of relevant activities:

- [Inspiring Arctic voices through youth](#): a CAFF initiative is focused on advancing youth involvement and leadership in public outreach and education about the Arctic. The objectives being to:
 - Recruit and bring together Arctic youth, providing space for sharing of ideas and discussions about Arctic issues;
 - Foster presence & participation in int. Arctic issues, including in decision-making; and
 - Build capacity towards a self-sustaining network of Arctic youth.
- *Arctic Youth Exchange Network*: CAFF through its [Strategy for youth exchange](#) works to provide opportunities for Arctic youth to engage in high-level science and policy dialogues, including the Arctic Biodiversity Congress, the Arctic Council Ministerial, Senior Arctic Official Meetings, CAFF meetings and other such events. 2019 activities include:
 - Youth representatives participated in May Arctic Council Ministerial
 - US Embassy in Finland and the Finnish Environment Ministry supported Finnish and Alaskan Youth exchanges.
 - Two Finnish youth, one from Unalaska met and three from Iceland participated in the graduation ceremony for the Arctic Youth Ambassador programme in Anchorage Alaska.
 - US Embassy in Iceland supported Icelandic Youth exchange to Alaska.
 - Supporting the Arctic Youth Network e.g. through providing teleconference facilities
 - Arctic Youth session(s) held at the 2019 Arctic Circle.
- [Education toolkits for children](#): developed by CAFF to communicate information to schoolchildren in the Arctic (10-11 years old) on key Arctic ecosystems and processes. They consist of pocket guides and leader manuals with 3 completed: [Life Linked to Tundra](#); [Ponds](#); and [Spring](#). Translations available in English, Finnish, French, Icelandic, Inuktitut, Russian, Sami Inari and Northern Sami.
- *Capacity building*: CAFF works to provide experience and increase understanding of the Councils activities through providing opportunities for young scholars to:
 - Join its Secretariat to learn how an Arctic Council Working Group operates e.g. in 2018-19 a PhD student (Fulbright scholar) worked at the CAFF Secretariat.
 - Participate in meetings and activities through the CAFF-IASC Fellowship programme organized in cooperation with IASC and APECS.
- [Arctic Indigenous Languages Vitality Initiative](#): An SDWG project engaged youth and facilitated youth-elder dialogue to assess, monitor and promote the vitality of indigenous languages found across the Arctic.
- *Mental health and suicide prevention*: A series of SDWG projects ([Sharing Hope](#), [Rising Sun](#), [CREATeS](#), Local 2 Global) focused on engaging youth throughout the Arctic in conferences, workshops and activities to promote wellbeing, facilitate dialogue and empower youth.
- [Indigenous Youth, Food Knowledge & Arctic Change \(EALLU\)](#): This SDWG project focused on youth involvement and engagement, seminars and place-based workshops, local capacity

building, summer/winter schools, networking, as well as co-production of project outputs by youth themselves.

- [Arctic Children – Preschool Education and Smooth Transition to School](#): This SDWG project identifies and assesses successful practices in the field of pre-school education for children from Indigenous minorities of the North.
- *Outreach to schools and universities*: CAFF and SDWG provide lectures and introductions to Arctic issues to universities, schools, institutes and student groups.

Relevant Documents:

- [Arctic Youth Declaration](#)
- [Strategy for youth exchange](#)
- [Education toolkits for children](#)
- [CAFF Youth webpage](#)
- [SDWG Report from September 2019 Conference on Strengths, Well-Being, and Engagement of Youth in the Arctic and SDWG Plenary Thematic Discussion on Youth Engagement in the Arctic Council](#)

REQUESTS to SAOs:

- SAOs are asked to provide guidance on how to facilitate sustainable, coordinated and meaningful engagement of Youth in the Council's activities.