



News Release

November 5, 2008 - Expert Panel Recognizes Canada's International Obligation with Respect to Arctic Science

Ottawa - An international expert panel appointed by the Council of Canadian Academies has concluded that Canada has an international obligation with respect to arctic science. In a report released today, the panel discusses the proposed science priorities for a Canadian Arctic Research Initiative (CARI).

"From an international perspective, Canada's active development of, and participation in, a robust international arctic science program is a necessity," said Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Chair of the International Expert Panel on Science Priorities for the Canadian Arctic Research Initiative. "This obligation stems from Canada's position as a steward of remarkable human and natural resources of global importance. Canada's Arctic is tightly connected to the rest of the globe, and its ecological diversity represents a large part of the total circumpolar Arctic. Without Canada's active participation, international arctic research efforts may not be as successful."

Vision for the Canadian Arctic Research Initiative

Canada's Arctic is often mistakenly perceived as isolated and remote; but this is a perception that is becoming obsolete. The Speech from the Throne of October 16, 2007 committed the Government of Canada to deliver a Northern Strategy which includes the construction of a world-class arctic research station. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), the lead federal department for the initiative, prepared a *Visioning Workshop* report to capture and define the science priorities for Canada's Arctic. INAC subsequently commissioned the Council of Canadian Academies to establish an international panel of experts to review the priorities outlined in the *Visioning Workshop* report and to provide an independent, external perspective on the findings. The panel's report, entitled, *Vision for the Canadian Arctic Research Initiative: Assessing the Opportunities* captures the deliberations of an intensive two-day panel session held in Helsinki, Finland in July 2008.

"The panel was asked to assess the priorities identified in INAC's *Visioning Workshop* report and to comment on the extent to which these priorities articulate Canada's global advantages in terms of arctic science," said Ms. Dowdeswell. "More specifically, the panel considered questions such as, 'What is Canada's unique advantage and contribution to global science?' and 'Are the proposed priorities the right ones for Canada?'"

The complete findings of the panel's report have been conveyed to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and the full report is available for download in both official languages on the Council's website, www.scienceadvice.ca.

About the Council of Canadian Academies

The primary mission of the Council of Canadian Academies is to provide independent, expert assessments of the science that is relevant to matters of significant public interest with the goal of

November 5, 2008 – 07:00EDT

informing public debate and decision making. The Council, which became operational in 2006, is supported by a founding grant from the Government of Canada but is independent from government. Its reports are prepared by panels of experts appointed by the Council having regard to broad inclusion of relevant expertise and balance among viewpoints. Panelists serve voluntarily without fees or honoraria. They serve in their personal capacities as expert authorities and not as representatives of stakeholder interests. All panel reports are thoroughly reviewed by a group of peers selected by the Council. Expert panel reports are made public in both official languages.

The members of the Council of Canadian Academies are the RSC: The Academies of Arts, Humanities and Sciences of Canada; the Canadian Academy of Engineering; and the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences. To learn more about the Council of Canadian Academies or to download panel reports, visit www.scienceadvice.ca.

For interviews and questions regarding the Council of Canadian Academies, the International Expert Panel on Science Priorities for the Canadian Arctic Research Initiative and/or the panel's report, please contact:

Samantha Rae
Manager, Communications
Council of Canadian Academies
613.567.5000 x256 (or) samantha.rae@scienceadvice.ca



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November 5, 2008 – 07:00EDT

The International Expert Panel on Science Priorities for the Canadian Arctic Research Initiative

Elizabeth Dowdeswell (Chair) - Chair, Scientific Advisory Committee, Council of Canadian Academies; Former UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UNEP; Founding President of the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (Canada)

Michael Bravo - Convenor, Circumpolar History & Public Policy, University of Cambridge (United Kingdom)

Torben Christensen - Professor, Lund University (Sweden)

Karl Erb - Director, Office of Polar Programs, National Science Foundation (USA)

Robert Finney - Senior Environmental Advisor, BP Exploration (United Kingdom)

Peter Harrison - Skelton-Clark Fellow, Queen's University (Canada)

Paula Kankaanpää - Director, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland (Finland)

Anders Karlqvist - Director General, Swedish Polar Research Secretariat (Sweden)

Peter Lemke - Director, Division for Climate Research, Alfred Wegner Institute (Germany)

Lars-Otto Reiersen - Executive Secretary, Arctic Monitoring Assessment Program (Norway)

Matti Saarnisto - Secretary General, The Finnish Academy of Science and Letters (Finland)

Joern Thiede - Former Director, Alfred Wegner Institute (Germany)

Kue Young - Professor, Public Health Sciences/Aboriginal Health, University of Toronto (Canada)



Additional Details

Report Title:	Vision for the Canadian Arctic Research Initiative: Assessing the Opportunities
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Spokesperson:	Ms. Elizabeth Dowdeswell (Chair) Former UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UNEP; Founding President of the Nuclear Waste Management Organization
Contact:	Samantha Rae, Manager, Communications, Council of Canadian Academies - 613-567-5000 ext. 256 samantha.rae@scienceadvice.ca