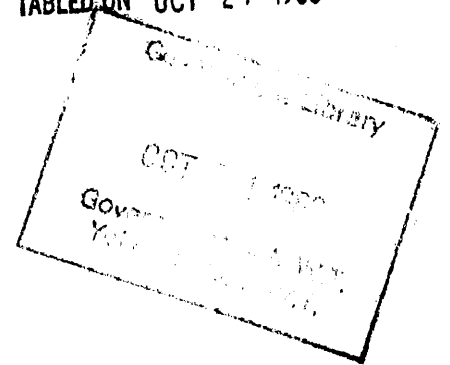


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**OVERVIEW OF CIRCUMPOLAR
AFFAIRS MANDATE, GOALS
AND OBJECTIVES**

**TABLED BY
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YELLOWKNIFE, N.W.T.

OCTOBER, 1988

-1-

CIRCUMPOLAR AFFAIRS - MANDATE, GOALS, OBJECTIVES

This paper provides Members of the Legislative Assembly with an overview of an important new initiative - the Circumpolar Affairs Program - which has been implemented by Government Leader Dennis Patterson in his capacity as Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs with Cabinet Approval.

BACKGROUND:

During the past six months, Mr. Patterson has moved quickly to begin implementation of this program which was first addressed in the "Direction for the 1990's" document tabled during the 1988 Budget Session.

On August 1, 1988, Mr. Walter Slipchenko began working in his capacity as Director of Circumpolar Affairs. He brings with him 22 years of experience in this area with the federal government and a wealth of contacts in circumpolar nations as well as the Canadian North.

Second, in late July, Cabinet approved a Circumpolar Affairs mandate, goals, objectives and workplan for the next three years.

MANDATE:

The general mandate of the Circumpolar Affairs program is to assert the N.W.T. Government's legitimate role as a major participant at the international level, with particular emphasis on responding to circumpolar issues of a political, economic, social, scientific and cultural nature and developing official contact with circumpolar governments.

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-2-

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Specific goals and objectives have been set for the short and long term. They include the following:

- Developing a Circumpolar Affairs policy to guide decision-making by Cabinet and Departments;
- Reviewing the N.W.T. Government's current involvement with circumpolar nations (and other countries such as Australia and New Zealand);
- Coordinating the N.W.T. Government's involvement in the Canada/USSR Arctic Science Exchange Program;
- Examining the N.W.T. Government's proposed role in the Canada/USSR Arctic Cooperation Agreement;
- Dissemination of information on the foreign north to N.W.T. Government departments and the Legislative Assembly;
- Identification of business and trade opportunities when the Northwest Territories has products, services and technology which can be exported, and;
- Coordination of current exchanges between the N.W.T. Government and circumpolar nations.

-3-

FEDERAL ACTION:

This is an ambitious program by a territorial government in an area which is traditionally thought to be the federal government's responsibility.

Work is underway to establish with officials from the Department of External Affairs the parameters of the N.W.T.'s circumpolar policy.

On September 30th, 1988 it was agreed that a territorial Circumpolar Affairs policy can be developed, as long as it is within the framework of Canada's national interest highlighted in a report by the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons, Independence and Internationalism, and the federal government's response by the Right Honourable Joe Clark in his report, Canada's International Relations: Response of the Government of Canada to the Report of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons.

Copies of these reports have been made available to the Legislative Assembly.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACTION:

Some of the initiatives provided by our Ottawa Office over the past six months are listed below:

- Discussions have taken place with officials from Greenland concerning a proposed educational exchange with the Baffin Region. Three Greenlandic students will be coming to the Baffin Region to study Inuktitut and English for a ten month period.
- Under the auspices of the Canada/U.S.S.R. Arctic Science Exchange Agreement, two exchanges have occurred on the subject of northern construction and socio-economic impacts of large scale development. The later exchange included a visit to Soviet Yuit Territory.

-4-

• With respect to the Canada/U.S.S.R. cooperation agreement, discussions will take place between officials of federal and Soviet governments during November in Moscow to finalize an agreement between both countries. GNWT interests have been incorporated in this programme and after it is signed, interdepartmental discussions will take place to determine specific GNWT departmental involvement in the proposed agreement.

• Our interventions together with those of the federal government helped persuade the Soviet government to permit Soviet Yuit to participate in future ICC Assemblies including the recent ICC visit to Chukotka.

TERRITORIAL ACTION:

Input from Members of the Legislative Assembly is being sought on how to become actively involved in this new initiative. Some of the ideas already brought forward include:

• Circulation of a newsletter (3 or 4 times a year) outlining current developments taking place in the foreign north together with a calendar of events (proposed conferences, seminars, and official visits) so that Members can have the opportunity to participate more actively;

• Direct involvement by interested Members in current and proposed exchanges and visits, and;

• Accessibility to translated reports on the foreign north as requested by Members.

Work is already underway in developing a draft Circumpolar Affairs policy. Members' ideas and views are important and they are encouraged to correspond directly with the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs on this issue.

