



FOR RELEASE

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Canada's new leadership role in the Arctic Council will grow interest in the Canadian North

WHITEHORSE—As Canada assumes the role of chair of the Arctic Council today, the Yukon government is offering its congratulations and its assistance. Sweden has just concluded its term as chair of the council and Canada will serve in that position for the next two years.

"The Yukon government is pleased that Canada will chair this important international forum once again," Premier Darrell Pasloski said. "Yukon has been actively involved in the Arctic Council's work and will continue to engage Canada in discussions to formalize the role of northern territories. We look forward to working with our territorial partners to ensure northern priorities, perspectives and interests are a strong focus for the Arctic Council."

The theme for Canada's period as chair is Development for the People of the North. The three territorial premiers support Canada's sub-themes of responsible Arctic resource development, safe Arctic shipping and sustainable circumpolar communities.

"Together, we want to ensure that the work of the Arctic Council will have concrete outcomes that address the needs of northern residents and build strong, safe and healthy communities," Pasloski added. "The federal government is committed to hosting Arctic Council meetings in the North and I am pleased that Whitehorse was selected for the first senior officials meeting next October."

Prior to the Northern Premiers' Forum last week in Whitehorse, the NWT and Yukon premiers met with representatives of the Arctic Athabaskan Council and the Gwich'in Council International, two organizations which sit as Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council. Outcomes of that meeting were an agreement to work together to improve communications, ensure common priorities are addressed and showcase the North during Canada's term as chair of the Arctic Council.

In 1996, Canada became the first chair of the Arctic Council. It begins its second term as chair with the ministerial meeting currently concluding in Kiruna, Sweden. As part of Canada's delegation, two senior Yukon government officials are representing Premier Pasloski, who is attending the spring sitting of the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

To learn more about the Arctic Council and Canada's chairmanship, view the Kiruna meeting declaration on the Arctic Council website. For more information about Canada and the circumpolar world, visit the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada website, its news release about Canada assuming chairmanship of the Arctic Council and the Kiruna Press Package.

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