

**LETTER OF AGREEMENT**  
**BETWEEN**  
**THE INTERNATIONAL NETWORK for CIRCUMPOLAR HEALTH RESEARCH (INCHR)**  
**AND**  
**THE INTERNATIONAL ARCTIC SCIENCE COMMITTEE (IASC)**

**Preamble**

This letter recognizes that there are common interests between INCHR and IASC in scientific research in the polar regions, and that there is much to be gained from developing a synergy between INCHR and IASC in promoting health research in the Arctic. Following the success of the International Polar Year where researcher teams with expertise in health, natural, and social sciences collaborated with Arctic residents in a variety of multidisciplinary projects, INCHR and IASC agreed to seek new opportunities to combine their efforts for activities related to health sciences in the Arctic, with the objective of raising the level of impact of both organizations in terms of making scientific advances, promoting knowledge translation, advising policy makers, as well as avoiding unproductive duplication of efforts.

**1. INCHR**

The INCHR is a network of individual researchers, research trainees, and supporters of research based in academic research centres, Indigenous people's organizations, regional health authorities, scientific/professional associations, and government agencies, who share the goal of improving the health of the residents of the circumpolar regions through international cooperation in scientific research.

Membership is voluntary and defined by a set of bylaws approved when INCHR was incorporated in June 2006. INCHR is governed by an elected board of directors from its membership, with at least one member from each of the following regions: (1) Canada, (2) Denmark/Greenland, (3), Finland, Norway and Sweden, (4) Russia and (5) United States. Its officers, elected from among the board members, include a President, Vice-President, and Secretary-Treasurer. There are *ad hoc* committees which are formed from time to time for specific activities, for example, organizing the annual summer institute in circumpolar health research.

INCHR activities include the geographic region comprising all countries bordering the Arctic Ocean, usually but not exclusively pertaining to the Arctic and Subarctic ecological zones, encompassing both Indigenous and non-indigenous populations. Individuals conducting human health research in Antarctica are also welcome. Health research is broadly defined and is multidisciplinary in scope, encompassing basic biomedical research, clinical investigations, and research into the health of populations and health systems.

INCHR activities are focused on four main objectives;

1. Conduct, sponsor, and promote research programs and projects investigating the patterns, determinants and impact of health conditions among circumpolar peoples and the strategies for improving their health;

2. Support research training at all levels and increase capacity for circumpolar health research in communities, service delivery agencies and higher educational institutions;
3. Facilitate exchange, communication and dissemination of research data;
4. Strengthen the health information system in the circumpolar region.

INCHR organizes and sponsors annual scientific meetings and workshops held in different cities in the circumpolar region. Its members participate in the planning of the triennial International Congress on Circumpolar Health and also contribute to other Arctic scientific forums. INCHR is a co-publisher of the scientific journal *International Journal of Circumpolar Health* and the monograph series *Circumpolar Health Supplements*. INCHR provides annual travel fellowships to members and their trainees to visit and work with member in other circumpolar countries in their research centres or projects. Starting in 2010, INCHR organizes an annual summer institute in circumpolar health research on specific topics in conjunction with its annual general meeting.

## **2. IASC**

IASC is a non-governmental, international scientific organization and affiliated to the International Council for Science (ICSU) as an International Scientific Associate. It also provides objective and independent scientific advice to the Arctic Council and other organizations on issues of science affecting the management of the Arctic region. IASC was an active member of the ICSU/WMO Joint Committee that steered the IPY process.

The IASC mission is to encourage and facilitate cooperation in all aspects of Arctic research, in all countries engaged in Arctic research and in all areas of the Arctic region. To fulfill its mission, IASC promotes and supports leading-edge multi-disciplinary research in order to foster a greater scientific understanding of the Arctic region and its role in the Earth system.

IASC was established in 1990, began operations in 1991 and today comprises 19 member countries. It is governed by a Council consisting of one delegate appointed by each of the national member organizations. The Council sets priorities and guides the work of the organization.

The core elements of IASC are its five Working Groups: Terrestrial, Atmosphere, Cryosphere, Social & Human and Marine. These international groups assist IASC in the implementation of its science mission by:

- Identifying and formulating science plans;
- Acting as scientific advisory boards to the Council;
- Encouraging and supporting science-led programs;
- Initiating conferences, workshops and events;
- Promoting future generations of arctic scientists.

IASC draws on this structure to identify scientific priorities, open up opportunities for international science planning, promote free access to Arctic areas and provide for the freedom and ethical conduct of science.

### 3. Common Interests and Practices

INCHR and IASC share a number of common interests and practices, including the convening of workshops, conferences, and reports; participation in activities at Arctic Council and the AC Working Groups; the development of integrated plans for scientific research and facilitation of scientific cooperation; promoting communications to the public, providing advice to policy makers; development of observing systems; data and information management; and development of early career scientists.

### 4. Declaration of Intent

INCHR and IASC intend to initiate joint activities, to be decided by mutual agreement. This requires no change to the terms of reference of either organization, and carries no financial implication.

To facilitate the process, INCHR and IASC agree (this list is not exhaustive):

- (i) to encourage appropriate linkages between INCHR members and IASC Working Groups, and with other scientific organizations;
- (ii) to work together in arranging workshops, conferences, and reports on topics of mutual scientific interest;
- (iii) to exchange ideas on best practices in data and information management and the development of polar observing systems, and to support and encourage the development of SAON;
- (iv) to develop combined approaches to communicating to the wider community on the significance of research in providing solutions for societal issues, including their respective experience in giving advice to the Arctic Council;
- (v) to continue supporting the next generation of polar researchers;
- (vi) to invite each other to attend the meetings of their major bodies and facilitate the exchange of information between their respective Executive Committees;
- (vii) to exchange newsletters and advertise each other's activities and web sites on their own web sites.

The agreement will remain in force for 5 years, thereafter be reviewed and continued as appropriate.

Signed

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Kue Young  
President, INCHR

Date // 2011

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David Hik  
President, IASC

Date // 2011