

IV. Regional Cooperation

Governance in a Rapidly Changing Arctic

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Rapid changes in the Arctic pose a number of critical questions for those interested in pursuing governance for sustainable development. This presentation addresses four of these questions: (i) What paradigm or framework should we use in framing issues of governance in the Arctic? (ii) Who should be treated as legitimate stakeholders in addressing concerns about Arctic governance? (iii) Do we need a separate agreement or governance system for the Arctic Ocean? and (iv) Should we aim to reach agreement on a legally binding Arctic Treaty or Charter? In discussing these questions and formulating preliminary answers to them, the presentation devotes particular attention to the role of the Arctic Council? Although the council is weak in many ways, it has played a significant role in the years since its establishment in 1996. But is the council up to the task of responding effectively to the critical questions that are now coming into focus? If not, what alternative arrangement(s) would be both desirable and feasible?