

AMAP 25TH ANNIVERSARY SEMINAR

The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) will sponsor a seminar in celebration of its 25th anniversary on Tuesday, 29 November 2016 at the Scandic Marina Congress Center in Helsinki.

Over its 25-year history, AMAP has produced a series of high-level scientific assessments and technical reports on a range of important topics relating to the Arctic environment. These reports have served as crucial inputs to the development of international conventions on contaminants as well as forming as the basis for actions to reduce pollution in the Arctic. This includes a major clean-up of sites of radioactive dumping in northwest Russia with the involvement of experts from Finland, Sweden, and Russia and funding by NEFCO.

AMAP has established a network of monitoring, research, and modelling activities that is capable of providing information for comprehensive assessments of the combined effects of climate change and pollution issues in the circum-Arctic region, including effects on the health of Arctic human populations. Through its community of experts working on Arctic science, including indigenous experts, AMAP has delivered a series of assessments that have been used as a basis for informing Arctic governments and other international bodies about the 'State of the Arctic Environment' with respect to pollution and climate change.

These assessments have been influential in policy-making, contributing first to the establishment and then to the further development of international agreements such as the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, and the regional agreements under the UN ECE LRTAP Convention on POPs and heavy metals, as well as more recently to the Minamata Convention on Mercury. AMAP assessments provide sound science-based information for the Arctic region to the UNFCCC processes and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports, among others. These contributions illustrate that science has formed an important basis for policy-making at the international level.

In addition to monitoring and assessment of environmental distribution and levels of persistent organic pollutants and more recent emerging chemicals, trace metals especially mercury, and radioactive contaminants, AMAP has had a strong focus on the implications of these contaminants on human health in the Arctic. This has led to health advisories in several Arctic countries.

The origin of AMAP traces back to a Finnish initiative arising from a speech by Gorbachev in Murmansk in 1987, under which Finland hosted a conference in Rovaniemi in June 1991 that adopted an Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy. This resulted in the establishment of AMAP to lead the efforts to evaluate pollution in the Arctic. Subsequently, the Arctic Council was established in 1996 and AMAP became a Working Group under its aegis.

The accomplishments of AMAP during these past 25 years, both for the Arctic and internationally, will be highlighted in the presentations at the AMAP 25th Anniversary Seminar.