The Arctic Council is the preeminent international forum for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, indigenous communities and other interested parties on common Arctic issues, with particular emphasis on sustainable development and environmental protection. The work of the Council is primarily carried out through its working groups and task forces.

As the Arctic Council reaches its twentieth anniversary, it is vitally important that the Council strengthen its cooperation and engagement with accredited observers and outside entities and evaluate its internal structure. Enhancing the Arctic Council Secretariat, including through expansion of its public archive and recordkeeping practices in support of greater transparency, is also a priority for the 2015-2017 chairmanship period.

The United States is honored to be chairing the Arctic Council for the second time since the forum’s founding in 1996. The chairmanship theme, One Arctic: Shared Opportunities, Challenges, and Responsibilities, reflects the U.S. commitment to a well-managed Arctic, marked by international cooperation. In partnership with the other Arctic States and Permanent Participants, the United States is proud to initiate wide-ranging work to protect the marine environment, conserve Arctic biodiversity, improve conditions in Arctic communities and address the rapidly changing climate in the Arctic.
The impacts of climate change in the Arctic, a region where people, animals and plants have thrived for thousands of years, threaten communities and their ways of life, as well as the ecosystems upon which these communities depend.

The Arctic Council is addressing the impacts of climate change in the Arctic by targeting short-lived climate pollutants through reductions in black carbon and methane emissions.

The Arctic Council continues to advance mental wellness research to address the tragically high suicide rates that disproportionately affect Arctic communities.

Community leaders, industry experts, researchers and policymakers brought together by the Arctic Council are assessing the region’s future telecommunications infrastructure requirements for supporting regional connectivity, human services, scientific observations, maritime navigation and emergency response activities.

The Arctic is a socially vibrant and biologically diverse region that requires resources for sustainable development and environmental protection. By raising awareness of the Arctic and its role in the global ocean and climate systems, the Arctic Council seeks to educate and inform the public worldwide that the Arctic should matter to everyone.