

Canada hails Arctic Council's climate change document

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REYKJAVIK, Iceland - Canada's environment minister says people shouldn't underestimate the policy recommendations on climate change announced in Iceland Wednesday.

Many have called the recommendations approved by the Arctic Council vague and say they will lead to little action to slow global warming or help people adapt.

- FROM NOV. 24, 2004 : [Arctic nations respond to climate change with 'modest document'](#)

But Stephane Dion says for the first time, the United States has joined with other countries on a climate change issue, and he says it's a good first step.

All eight ministers with the Arctic Council stood united in voicing their support for the policy recommendations on Wednesday, after their one-day meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland.

That's despite dissent amongst the nations in past months over their wording.

In the end, a few ministers said it was the best declaration that could be adopted, at this time.



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U.S. Undersecretary for Global Affairs, Paula Dobriansky sought to dismiss the perception that the recommendations were not as strong because of the U.S.

The U.S. is the only Arctic country that hasn't ratified the Kyoto Protocol to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Dobriansky says the U.S. provided about \$2 million of the \$3 million needed for the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, and has put \$5.8 billion into projects provided the bulk of funding for the climate study

"Our government will take the Arctic Council impact assessment findings into account as we continue to respond to the change of global climate change," she said.

Federal Environment Minister Stephane Dion says the U.S. is starting to recognize the strong link between climate and human-induced pollution.

He believes the agreement on the recommendations marks a shift in U.S. policy.

"The fact that Paula Dobriansky came and accepted to sign the document is a very, very good step. You would not have seen that in the past," he said.

Many indigenous groups and environmentalists were disappointed the Arctic nations didn't make a strong call to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

They say with the rapid changes happening in the North, the Arctic Council missed an opportunity to call for global action on climate change.