Mahatma Gandhi University
International Centre for Polar Studies (ICPS)
Priyadarshini Hills P.O., Kottayam-686560, Kerala, India

13.02.2024

To
Natalia Nikolaeva
Member Engagement Coordinator
UArctic International Secretariat
University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland

Respected Madam,

Sub: Letter of intent for joining the UArctic membership.

I am writing to express our keen interest and intent to join the UArctic as a member through the International Centre for Polar Studies, India. Our organization is deeply committed to advancing polar research, and we are particularly interested in contributing to the UArctic network with our unique focus on the interdisciplinary study of geopolitics, international relations, human ecology, and the examination of emerging contaminants in Arctic regions.

The UArctic network's commitment to promoting education, research, and outreach aligns with our mission.

Our research initiatives within the realm of geopolitics and international relations aim to understand the evolving dynamics of Arctic governance, geopolitical shifts, and their impact on regional stability. Additionally, our focus on human ecology involves examining the intricate relationships between indigenous communities, their cultural practices, and the changing Arctic environment.

Furthermore, our commitment to studying emerging contaminants in the Arctic aligns with the global need to address environmental challenges and their potential impact on both ecosystems and human health. We believe that our participation in the UArctic network will foster meaningful collaborations, facilitate knowledge exchange, and contribute to the overall goals of understanding and addressing the complex challenges facing the Arctic.

Thank you for considering our application, and we look forward to the prospect of actively contributing to and benefiting from the rich collaborative environment that UArctic provides.

Yours sincerely,

Hon. DIRECTOR
ICPS
15.2.24

Prof.C.T Aravindakumar
Hon.Director
International Centre for Polar Studies,
Mahatma Gandhi University, Priyadarshini Hills, Kottayam, Kerala-686560

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2024 UARCTIC MEMBERSHIP APPLICANT - PROFILE

Applicant: International Centre for Polar Studies, Mahatma Gandhi University

Country: India

Membership Category: Non-Arctic

Membership Type: Other Institution

Profile Description:

The International Centre for Polar Studies (ICPS) at the Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala, is a Polar Cooperation Centre of science and social sciences. The School of Environmental Sciences, The School of International Relations and Politics, and the Inter-University Centre for Social Science Research and Extension form this interdisciplinary Centre. The ICPS research has scientific and socially significant aspects. ICPS supports a multilevel strategic approach for attaining environmentally and socially responsible development. Also, the Centre acts as a consultant in geopolitical policies and human ecological aspects for the Government of India.

Broad Vision - To develop appropriate technology and skilled human resources for Polar studies.

Mission
To facilitate human resource development in Polar studies through interdisciplinary education and research.
To create advanced facilities for enhancing research on sustainable development
To become a knowledge bank on Polar studies

Strategic/Thematic Focus Areas:

Thrust Areas- Geopolitics, International relations, Human ecology Environmental Pollution, Climate change.

The official policy on polar research becomes particularly pertinent to work synergistically with when one factor in climate changes and the intricate determinant roles these regions have in matters of global climatic systems. There are also the hydrological cycles and the possibilities for perennial availability of freshwater that need an eco-sensitive vision that the center works towards. There are of course the strategic dilemmas that open up with the opening up of sea corridors because of ice melting on the one hand and emergent commercial forays like the “Polar Silk Road” on the other. One has to have explorations with a rational and bio-strategic emphasis that the Centre seeks to work on also within the broad international frames like the UNCLOS [United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea]. One of the major emphases of the human ecological dimension of the ICPS will be to have an outlook that draws from the experience, insights, and needs of the indigenous communities scattered through the countries

surrounding polar regions. This helps to have a democratic and socially sensitive vision that informs insights. With the myriad trajectories through which environmental disasters and events like large floods may be understood, polar and Himalayan socio-hydrological work with human ecological emphasis becomes ever more significant.

As is evident from the multiple facets, objectives, and emphasis in the policy draft, there is ever more understanding of the thinning of sea ice within the total surface or the increase in navigation through ice-free zones at alarming rates and the ecological implications for life. This could very well be imagined holistically and situated socio-politically.

In the context we suggest-
Interdisciplinary understanding with a 'social scientific emphasis' on explorations of contemporaneity with a serious focus on multispecies and non-human life.

Increasing emphasis on EBM (Ecosystem Based Management) as well as the transformations in the idea of 'sustainability'. This will build upon the stated objectives; can be a point of serious engagement. There will be an emphasis on understandings that have to emerge along the lines.

Explorations that can no longer be disciplined bound and we positively work towards that end. Significant frames of understanding as well as explorations along the human ecological dimension. To develop a dynamic, spatially explicit, integrated, ecological economic model one has to draw from multimodal inquiries that work synergistically with another field as well as draw from macro issues like geopolitics, and global climatic impacts.

Institutional Collaborations, especially with states as well as institutions with personnel involved with overlapping work and work eventually in synergy with the broader ' policies' laid out.
It becomes significant that the Himalayan bio-ecological region comes into the sustainability emphasis as well as ecological governance protocols with long term plans