

Arctic Circle Assembly

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This semester, I had the privilege of attending the Arctic Circle Assembly 2024 in Reykjavik, Iceland, as part of The Fletcher School delegation. The experience was an unparalleled opportunity to engage with leading voices on climate policy, deepen my understanding of global environmental diplomacy, and explore new ways for advancing the clean energy transition in the Global South.

One of my most surprising takeaways from this Assembly was the strong presence of non-polar states like Brazil, Italy, and Singapore. Their engagement in this "geographically distant" forum reinforced to my perspective on how the Arctic has become a globally significant space—an arena where diverse geopolitical and economic interests converge. These countries are not only amplifying their voices but also introducing innovative approaches to address shared challenges, demonstrating that Arctic issues demand global attention and, therefore, cooperation.

At the same time, the absence of Russia this year was a stark reminder of the complexities that dominate Arctic governance. This absence left a noticeable gap, complicating the multilateral frameworks that have historically driven cooperation in the region. In contrast, China's growing presence was undeniable, particularly through its focus on rare earth minerals and energy transition initiatives. This ambition reflects broader global competition over resources and the strategic opportunities presented by the Arctic, which put the United States and its NATO allies on a very interesting position from the IR perspective.

Another particularly unexpected outcome of this experience was the spark of interest I developed in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The discussions on resource mapping, energy infrastructure, and Arctic geopolitics demonstrated the immense potential of GIS as a tool for analyzing and visualizing complex challenges. I now see GIS as a critical complement to my studies and an area of expertise I intend to explore further as I deepen my work in environmental diplomacy.

Iceland itself offered unaccountable lessons that extend far beyond its borders. The Nordic island-state's achievements in groundbreaking forms of clean energy like geothermal, and sustainable practices and technologies like carbon management provided a hopeful vision of what is possible when innovation is coupled with political will and community support. Witnessing these successes reaffirmed my belief that meaningful energy transitions are achievable when solutions are tailored to local realities while drawing inspiration from global leaders. For Mexico, this presents an exciting opportunity to strengthen North American collaboration, particularly with Canada and the United States, both of which are actively engaged in Arctic initiatives. By deepening these ties, Mexico can enhance its role in the global climate

conversation and contribute to addressing the shared trade, economical, energetical and environmental challenges of the region.

The Assembly also provided opportunities to connect with key individuals shaping Arctic policy. I had the privilege of meeting former Fletcher alumni Halla Hrund Logadóttir, General Director of Iceland's Office of Energy Affairs and a Fletcher alumna, as well as Ambassador David Balton; and U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission in Reykjavic, Erin Sawyer. Through these conversations, I gained valuable insights into the importance of international partnerships and the opportunities they present for innovative and cooperative solutions.

The Arctic Circle Assembly was a powerful reminder of the urgency of climate issues, and taking the Arctic as a peculiar study case, where environmental and geopolitical security challenges and economic interests intersect. It reaffirmed my commitment to advancing strategic, cooperative, and innovative solutions to these pressing global problems. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to represent Fletcher at this forum and for the insights and connections that will continue to shape my work in the years ahead.