Rapid changes in the Arctic pose a number of critical questions for those interested in pursuing
governance for sustainable development. This presentation addresses four of these questions:
(i) What paradigm or framework should we use in framing issues of governance in the Arctic? (ii)
Who should be treated as legitimate stakeholders in addressing concerns about Arctic
governance? (iii) Do we need a separate agreement or governance system for the Arctic
Ocean? and (iv) Should we aim to reach agreement on a legally binding Arctic Treaty or
Charter? In discussing these questions and formulating preliminary answers to them, the
presentation devotes particular attention to the role of the Arctic Council? Although the council is
weak in many ways, it has played a significant role in the years since its establishment in 1996.
But is the council up to the task of responding effectively to the critical questions that are now
coming into focus? If not, what alternative arrangement(s) would be both desirable and feasible?