Three current issues in application of assessment process discussed in this session:

- In South Africa, people are relatively confused about what is SEA. This is affecting the proper use of SEA in development planning.
- There is a need for strategic decisions.
- Policy level is not yet included in environmental assessment and SEA in Greenland.
- Need to find a way to get through to politicians.

One or more emerging trends:

- Incorporation of climate change consideration in policies, plans and programs. This is an issue in China and South Africa, for example.
- Rapid change (economic growth vs. sustainability).
- Increase in exploration and exploitation permits (oil and minerals) is overloading the EA system.
- Reduction in ice cap size due to climate change.

Issues relating to impact assessment effectiveness:

- In South Africa SEA is not being implemented very effectively.
- A number of acronyms are very confusing.
- Economic growth at a very fast rate.

Challenges to impact assessment effectiveness:

- Capacity building
- Understanding
- Partnerships

How might these challenges be overcome:

- By calling assessment as assessment and encourage strong planning.
- Never give up and keep trying (cannot always change policies)
- Effectiveness depends largely of institutional strengthening
- A tool for SEA (www.fes.uwaterloo.ca/research/sutasm/seatools.html)

Comments on the arts and science of impact assessments:

“To achieve sustainable development in China, we need everybody’s participation.”

Other comments:

- Good exchange of knowledge, information.
- There is an urgent need for enhancing the effectiveness of decision making (SEA).
- Clarity on the added value of SEA is critical for its effectiveness as well as how to influence the behavior of key actors in the political arena.