THE CIRCLE
No. 2. 2010

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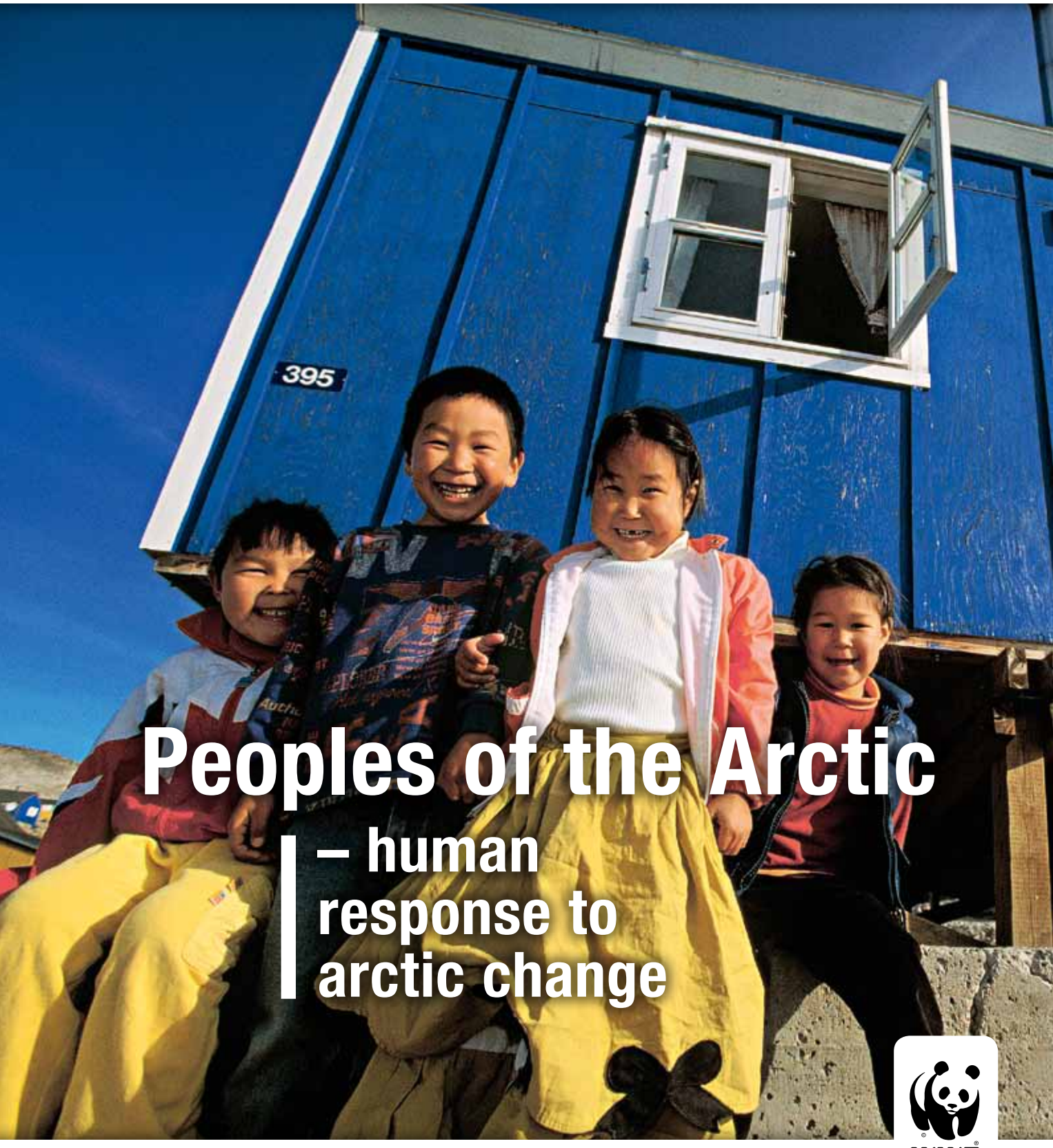

Peoples of the Arctic

– human response to arctic change

PUBLISHED BY THE WWF INTERNATIONAL ARCTIC PROGRAMME

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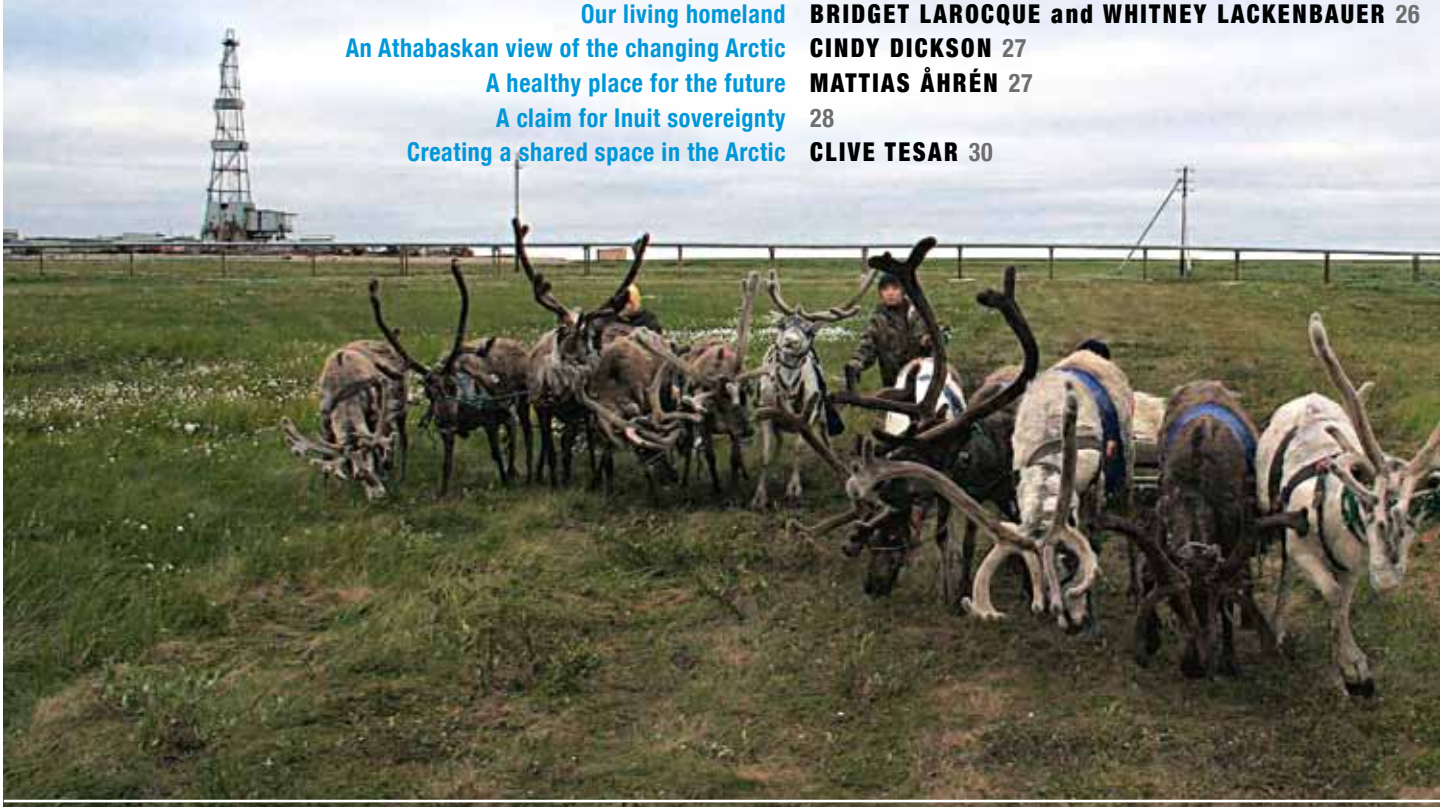

ARCTIC PEOPLES

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Film & Form/Ketill Berger, ketill.berger@filmform.no
Printed at Merkur-Trykk AS

Date of publication: June, 2010.
ISSN 2074-076X = The Circle (Oslo)

Inuit kids in front of their house, Scoresbysund, Ittoqottormiit, NE Greenland National Park, Greeenland.
Photo: Staffan Widstrand/WWF.

COVER: A Nenets herder leads a few of his reindeer past an exploratory oil well about 20 km from the Varandei terminal in the Nenets Autonomous Okrug.
Photo: B.C. Forbes

Strong voices from the Arctic

CLOSE YOUR EYES and think of the Arctic: what do you see? We're willing to bet you're seeing a picture of a barren white landscape, with maybe an iceberg or two, and a polar bear. In this issue of *The Circle*, we are inviting you to look closer into your mental picture of the Arctic, and to see the people who inhabit the landscape. People are present here, and they are often intimately affected by changes being triggered in their environments by people living far away.

Who are the people living in the Arctic? How are their lives influenced by the dramatic changes occurring in the region, as temperatures reach record high levels, the sea ice is melting with an alarming speed, and countries and companies compete for access to the wealth of arctic resources? How do people of the North cope with and adapt to these changes, and what is the role of traditional knowledge in these processes today? Is it possible to find a way forward to ensure a balance between resource exploitation on the one hand, and conservation of the Arctic's unique and vulnerable natural values on the other? How do the arctic peoples themselves contribute to these processes?

These are some of the questions we asked in this issue of *The Circle*, which focuses on arctic peoples, or human response to arctic change.

GARY MILLER
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As always, we have asked for contributions from some of the key people involved in analyzing and trying to understand these issues. But most importantly, we have invited people who live in the Arctic to share their perspectives; people from a variety of countries, backgrounds, cultures and professions – from the student/fisherman in Norway to Indigenous leaders and the Premier of Greenland.

> **"The people in today's Arctic are living through some of the most dramatic changes the region has ever seen.**

According to the Arctic Council, around four million people live in the Arctic. These people are spread out over one sixth of the Earth's landmass and cover 24 time zones, and include over thirty different Indigenous peoples and dozens of languages.

With such a population diversity, we did not expect anything else than a diversity of opinion in terms of what the challenges and solutions are.

But some important trends emerge. The people in today's Arctic are living through some of the most dramatic changes the region has ever experienced. They are in many ways living on the margins of the rest of the world, in terms of geography, but sometimes also in terms of access to resources, decision-making and human development. But as the world is turning its attention to the Arctic and its possibilities and its challenges, the peoples of the North have strong opinions. They want to be included in the discussions and they demand to be listened to. After all, these are the people who can call the Arctic their home. ○

New Arctic, new rules

A NEW, warmer Arctic cannot continue to operate under rules that assume it is ice-covered and essentially closed to fishing, resource exploration and development and shipping, WWF said in April as it launched a group of reports on protecting a newly accessible, highly vulnerable environment with profound significance for global climate, the global economy and global security.

"The melting of the arctic ice is opening a new ocean, bringing new possibilities for commercial activities in a part of the world that has previously been inaccessible," said Lasse Gustavsson, incoming Executive Conservation Director for WWF-International and currently CEO of WWF-Sweden at the launch. "What happens in the Arctic has a global environmental and economic impact. For instance, more than a quarter of the fish eaten in Europe comes from the Arctic, and yet we do not have effective rules for fishing in newly accessible areas."

The first report analyzes how today's international legal regime meets the challenges posed by the unprecedented rapid change taking place in the Arctic. It concludes there are large gaps in governance and management regimes, with loopholes that could allow irreparable damage to the marine environment, its biodiversity and Indigenous peoples. The responsibilities and mechanisms for keeping marine resource extraction within sustainable limits are unclear and so are the responsibilities and mechanisms for preventing or responding to pollution accidents and shipping disasters. While the second report outlines the options, the third report proposes a new arctic framework convention as a solution that could address the urgent gaps.

Arctic response to Gulf spill

WITH THE OIL spill in the Gulf of Mexico, arctic offshore oil drilling is facing increasing opposition from local peoples. A recent poll commissioned by WWF-Norway indicated that almost one out of four Norwegians has become more negative to oil exploration in Lofoten and Vesterålen following the Gulf spill. In both Canada and Alaska, local Indigenous peoples have registered their formal opposition to drilling without reassurance that it can be done safely. In May, US president Obama canceled several lease plans and exploratory drilling was postponed in Alaska for six months. In June, the Norwegian government decided to not allow any deepwater oil and gas drilling in new areas until the investigation into the explosion and spill in the Gulf is complete. These are temporary victories for the arctic environment, although efforts are needed to ensure that these interim wins are translated into the necessary long-term protection.

Russia combats illegal fishing

THE RUSSIAN Federation has signed an agreement to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing within its waters. This agreement represents an important step in combating illegal poaching, which accounts for billions of dollars in illegal business in Russia and causes serious damage to valuable fish stocks, including sturgeon in the Caspian Sea and the Sea of Asov, and king crab and blue crab in the Sea of Okhotsk and the Bering Sea. Under the new agreement, new control measures will be implemented in ports and coastal waters to close them to all vessels involved in illegal poaching. This is important also to US fishermen as there is market competition from illegally and legally harvested pollock, salmon, and crab from Russia.

Tar sand wins in Norway

WWF-NORWAY'S tar sand campaign has so far been a success. The proposal that Statoil should withdraw from tar sand involvement got ten times more support at Statoil's general assembly meeting in May compared to last year's proposal from Greenpeace. 1.4 percent of the shareholders supported

the proposal and 1.0 percent abstained from voting. This is a clear signal from investors to the Norwegian government, which owns more than two-thirds of Statoil. The campaign – titled "We own Statoil!" – has this spring addressed Statoil´s involvement in the Canadian tar sand industry. As a result, tar sand is now increasingly recognized as one of the worst oil explorations on the planet and totally unacceptable by ethical and environmental standards.

Reducing bear-human conflict

WWF-CANADA agreed recently to pay Nunavut Department of Environment 45,000 Canadian dollars for a project to reduce polar bear-human conflicts in Nunavut communities. The agreement entered into force in May and will last until October next year. The project includes providing steel bear-proof food storage containers to two communities, and installing electric fencing around areas with chained sled dog teams. Also, WWF is partnering with Inuit in a Nunavut-wide workshop to explore techniques used to help patrol communities and reduce bear-human conflicts, including sharing first-hand stories from Inuit from Chukotka.

Chief Francois Paulette, first nation representative, from the Dene Nation in Canada, talks to the Statoil general assembly about the local impacts of tar sands.

Photo: WWF

Iceberg with artworks melts

THE FINAL MOMENT for the WWF-supported sculptures of Dutch artist Ap Verheggen has come. The iceberg on which he placed his artwork "Dog Sled Riders" earlier this year broke loose in May and drifted away from the island of Uummannaq. In June, the iceberg melted and the sculptures sank just outside of Greenland. The sculptures are a symbol of the forced changes in culture of the Inuit as a result of extreme climate change. The melting of the ice threatens the ancient culture of the Inuit. The inhabitants of Uummannaq, a tiny island in the Northwest of Greenland, are still dependent on hunting with dog sleds for their food provision. Last winter, for the first time, hunting was not possible, directly threatening their existence.

Arctic photo competition

THIS SPRING, WWF's Murmansk office organised an open climate change photo competition called 'The Arctic in the lens'. Everyone could participate with pictures of climate change impacts in the Arctic. More than 30 pictures from all over Russia were registered. The winner (see photo) was taken by Lubov Trofimova from Severomorsk in Murmansk region.

Book on arctic sustainable development

UNESCO published recently a book titled *Climate Change and Arctic Sustainable Development*, bringing together the knowledge, concerns and visions of leading arctic scientists in the natural and social sciences, prominent Chukchi, Even, Inuit and Saami leaders from across the circumpolar North, and international experts in education, health and ethics.

Who are the peoples of the North?

Arctic peoples often point out that their environment has always been dynamic and that constant adaptation to 'change' is simply a part of what they do and who they are, says BRUCE C. FORBES.

REGARDLESS OF underlying causes, the Arctic is undergoing a period of significant change that is likely to continue well into the next century, if not longer, and affect all sectors of the circumpolar North. People in more temperate zones are justifiably concerned about feedbacks to the rest of the globe, through processes like sea level rise. Meanwhile, people in the Arctic are worried about contaminants, land use, climate, security and access in the form of rights to land and sea.

BRUCE FORBES is Professor of Global Change at Arctic Centre, University of Lapland, Finland. Since 1985 his research has addressed applied geography and ecology in Alaska, Canada, Fennoscandia and arctic Russia. This work emphasizes coupled social-ecological systems and resilience at various spatial and temporal scales.

According to the landmark *Arctic Human Development Report* (AHDR) published in 2004, about four million people reside north of the 'arctic boundary' (Fig. 1). The region is rich in cultural diversity, as indicated by the more than three-dozen language families, most of them Indigenous (Fig. 1). Except for Greenland and Canada, the vast majority of the populace is non-Indigenous. Yet many territories and settlements are comprised of families and individuals of mixed heritage, so the boundary between Indigenous and non-Indigenous is often fluid. Whether present for millennia or decades, based on the land, sea or in urban centres, residents tend to develop a profound sense of place.

Despite significant emigration in recent years, particularly since the collapse of the Soviet Union, certain areas are increasing in population, such as the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Nenets Autonomous Okrug and northern Canada. The two regions in Russia are experiencing an influx because of large scale oil and gas development, which requires many new skilled workers. In northern Canada, it seems to be a combination of high birth rates/reduced mortality and resource development.

Thus it is incumbent upon both scientists and policymakers to address the needs of an ethnically mixed population. Their livelihoods range widely from subsistence or mixed economy hunting, fishing, herding and gathering to cash-based industries like forestry, mining, tourism, commercial fisheries, and hydrocarbon extraction.

ADAPTION AS RESILIENCE

AHDR was the first comprehensive assessment of human well-being covering the entire Arctic. As such, it defined who are the people of today's North,

A young Nenets boy, Anton Taleev, keeps a watchful eye on his father's reindeer in front of an exploratory oil well on the tundra near the Barents Sea coast.

Photo: B.C. Forbes

Indigenous and non-Indigenous. The Arctic Social Indicators (ASI) project responded to the AHDR by aiming to develop a set of indicators to track changes in prominent aspects of human development in the Arctic. The first phase of ASI (2006-2009) was an International Polar Year project endorsed by the Arctic Council and the report is now available online and in print form. One theme is the rapid pace of transformation in systemic patterns and processes that fit generally under the rubric of global change. These include dramatic shifts in things like land use, climate, the cryosphere, marine and freshwater systems, and wildlife migrations.

Add to these the socio-economic and cultural effects of globalization, and we see that the Arctic is closely linked to the rest of the world. Arctic peoples often point out that their environment has always been dynamic and that constant adaptation to 'change' is simply a part of what they do and who they are. Many observers have documented this historical role of adaptiveness among

compiled by:
W.K. Dallmann, Norwegian Polar Institute
P. Schweitzer, University of Alaska Fairbanks

Arctic peoples subdivided according to language families

Indo-European family
Germanic branch

Uralic family
Finno-Ugric branch
Samoyedic branch

Altaic family
Turkic branch
Tungusic branch

Chukotko-Kamchatkan fam.

Isolated languages
(Ketic and Yukagir)

Eskimo-Aleut family
Inuit group (of Eskimo br.)
Yupik group (of Eskimo br.)
Aleut branch

Na-Dene family
Athabaskan branch
Eyak branch
Tlingit branch

Arctic circle
Arctic boundary according to AMAP
Arctic boundary according to AHDR

Notes:

Areas show colours according to the original languages of the respective indigenous peoples, even if they do not speak their languages today.

Overlapping populations are not shown. The map does not claim to show exact boundaries between the individual language groups.

Typical colonial populations, which are not traditional Arctic populations, are not shown (Danes in Greenland, Russians in the Russian Federation, non-native Americans in North America).

Photo: Staffan Widstrand/WWF

Chukchi elde and hunter Pjotr Penetegui, Chukotka, Siberia, Russia.

arctic residents as a source of resilience in arctic societies.

For hunters and fishers in North America dependent on motor vehicles for transport, the soaring cost of fuel has made it prohibitively expensive to get out to their preferred hunting grounds. Reindeer herders in northern Fennoscandia face similarly high costs for maintaining their herds in addition to intensive competition from other land users (e.g. forestry, mining, tourism, and hydropower).

ASI stresses that although circumstances have changed for many residents in ways that increase their vulnerability, it would be a mistake to overlook the capacity of arctic peoples to adapt to a range of emerging stresses enumerated here.

DRIVERS OF CHANGE

There is a geography of arctic change in that the driving factors depend on where you reside. Decadal trends in climate change vary significantly among regions. Similarly, large disparities exist in the distribution of renewable and non-renewable resources, which exerts considerable control over changes in land use patterns and the development of marine systems. Within this broad template of drivers, the key issues at stake depend to a great extent on who you are and how you make your living. The concerns of an urban dweller above the Arctic Circle differ considerably from those of the hunter, herder or fisher active out on the land or the sea.

“The concerns of an urban dweller above the Arctic Circle differ considerably from those of the hunter, herder or fisher active out on the land or the sea.

Arctic residents today are subject to social, cultural, economic, and environmental forces that have given rise to a suite of interactive stresses affecting the cultural integrity dimension of human development.

The concept of traditional protected areas can seem outdated in the Arctic when we have long-distance, transboundary issues like marine pollutants and arctic haze originating in temperate zone industrial regions. These have forced us to rethink the potential avenues of arctic impacts, as well as to consider social and ecological resilience in those cases where impacts are unavoidable. Examples of rapid change that arctic peoples may have to contend with include: food contaminants, sea ice retreat, expansion of marine traffic, large scale oil and gas development, thawing permafrost, warmer winters, ice encrusted snow on rangelands, and introduced species.

Science should be more pro-active in addressing peoples’ concerns with regard to adaptation and mitigation. This means facilitating information exchange between stakeholders, scientists and policy makers. To this end, participatory research that bridges different disciplines should be encouraged. Finally, local, regional and state institutions need to be adaptive to governance challenges by learning from each other’s experiences. ○

Photo: Kevin Schafer/WWF-Canon

Aleut fisherman unloading halibut caught in the Bering Sea on St. Paul Island Pribilof Islands, Alaska.

Sinking villages shouldn't sink dreams

In a place where a gallon of water costs 7 USD and poverty levels are twice the statewide average, imagine confronting the well over 100 million USD cost of transplanting your entire community miles away. That's the dilemma facing tiny Shishmaref, Alaska, writes TARA KYLE.

TARA KYLE is a multimedia reporter/producer born in Alaska, whose stories have appeared in FLYP Media, PBS Online NewsHour, Time.com and The Real Deal. She won a 2008 Webby Award.

THIS VILLAGE of around 600 is, along with other tiny Alaskan coastal communities such as Kivalina, Shaktoolik, Unalakleet and Newtok, at the forefront of the global climate crisis.

Shishmaref sits on an island just three miles long and only a quarter mile wide. For the past decade, the Chukchi Sea has been slowly swallowing Shishmaref. That is happening at a rate of 7–15 meters of land per winter storm, Brice Eningowuk told *Conducive Magazine* while serving on the Shishmaref Erosion and Relocation Committee in 2009.

These arctic villages were formerly protected by sea ice and permafrost, but warming temperatures are reducing these natural storm barriers at an alarming rate. Sea walls constructed in Hail Mary efforts to protect Shishmaref have repeatedly failed.

It's vital that we remember that one of the great injustices of climate change is that the first places impacted are in many cases communities already at the margins of societies.

Shishmaref and its peers are subsistence economies, built on ways of life that are thousands of years old. The Inupiaq Eskimo locals rely on a diet based around bearded seal, walrus and fish. Shipping and fuel costs make meat and produce bought in local stores problematically expensive. When storms hit, they imperil homes and businesses, as well as wash out to sea the food racks, boats and hunting gear that keep the villages' hearts beating.

Residents have resisted efforts to move to bigger towns like Nome and Kotzebue, which provide more diverse economic opportunities.

"People make their livings off carvings, because they didn't really do well in high school or have too good of jobs," a Shishmaref teen named Burt told PRX Radio and the Alaska Teen Media Institute. "It'll be harder for them to get their hands on materials for carvings, all these things will be harder to get in big cities."

Locals did vote to relocate their town in 2002, but they're pushing for a move to a closer mainland site, which will allow them to continue their traditional lifestyle. Wherever they go, the journey will come with a hefty price tag. Schools, clinics, roads, airports, and energy infrastructure must all be reconstructed.

That cost lies behind the long delay. So far, money cobbled together from the Army Corps of Engineers and other state, federal and local sources hasn't been sufficient to move Shishmaref.

For now, locals are facing dual crises: finding the funding necessary to transplant their community before more buildings – or, worse, lives – are lost, and finding the right way to mourn what's already missing. People here are young (the median age in Shishmaref is just 24, according to city-data.com), and they are coming of age amid a gulf of uncertainty.

"I can still picture where my grandfather's house was, and to think of all that land gone is really amazing," another local teen, named Theresa, told PRX. "Making us move into a city wouldn't be right. Why make us be like everyone else and lose our way of life?" ○

■ This text is adapted from an article originally published on Change.org: http://uspoverty.change.org/blog/view/sinking_villages_shouldnt_sink_dreams

"One of the great injustices of climate change is that the first places impacted are in many cases communities already at the margins of societies.

Reindeer herders' traditional knowledge and adaptation to climate change

Reindeer herders have developed unique management strategies for protection of pastures, observation of changes and rational use of the natural resources, say OLE HENRIK MAGGA and SVEIN D. MATHIESEN. The EALÁT project uses traditional knowledge and modern science to understand impacts of climate change.

THE INTERNATIONAL Polar Year (IPY) project Reindeer Herders Vulnerability Networks Study (EALÁT) was initiated in 2008 to assess the vulnerability of reindeer herding in key aspects of the natural and human environments, actively involving reindeer herders, climatologist, linguists, lawyers, biologist, geographers, social scientist, economists as well as Indigenous institutions and organisations. Sami University College in Kautokeino and the International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry (ICR) have in recent years built up a professional network through IPY with focus on human-coupled understanding of ecosystems in the North. EALÁT – which is run by these two institutions and means 'pasture' in Saami – looks at the adaptive capacity of reindeer pastoralism to climate variability and change, and on how reindeer herders' knowledge can be included in the analysis.

UNIQUE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Reindeer have major cultural and economic significance for arctic Indigenous peoples and circumpolar reindeer husbandry has a long history in the North; reindeer herders have managed vast areas in the Arctic over hundreds of years. Reindeer husbandry is today practiced in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Mongolia, China, Alaska, Canada and Greenland, and involves some 100,000 herders and 2.5 million semi-domesticated reindeer. The EALÁt project shows that the world's reindeer herders, owing to their experience, traditional knowledge and skills, have developed unique management strategies for protection of pastures, observation of changes and rational use of the natural resources which should be recognized and supported. Reindeer pastoralism, ancient in origin in all its forms, represents a model in sustainable exploitation and management of northern terrestrial ecosystems based on generations of experience accumulated, conserved, developed and adapted to the climatic and political/economic systems and changes in the north.

Reindeer herders in the circumpolar north face significant challenges related to changes in their society, the rapid changes in northern climate and the impact of industrial development on their grazing land. Experience has shown that many global environmental problems are not solved by conventional science using linear cause-effect approaches. Therefore it is important to develop alternatives to expert-driven, top-down management systems of natural resources. The human-ecological systems in the North are sensitive to change, perhaps more than in virtually any other region of the globe, due in part to the variability of the arctic climate and the characteristic ways of life of arctic Indigenous peoples. Little is known about the vulnerability of such systems to change. Understanding and measuring vulnerability requires assessment of systems' ability to adapt to impact and the extent to which freedom to adapt is constrained.

OLE HENRIK MAGGA and **SVEIN D. MATHIESEN** are project leaders for the EALÁT project at the Sami University College, in Kautokeino, Norway.

HUMAN-IN-NATURE

There are few 'pure' ecosystems without human influence in the North. Man is always a part of ecosystems. In our work we therefore use the term social-ecological systems, or the integrated concept of human-in-nature. An inter-

> **"There are few 'pure' ecosystems without human influence in the North. Man is always a part of ecosystems.**

disciplinary and multicultural approach to the factors that influence how climate change affects land-based ecosystems in northern regions is therefore important. Saami nomadic reindeer husbandry is an example of such a man-coupled ecosystem. It will be important for a sustainable reindeer husbandry that we understand how Indigenous peoples use their knowledge to understand the environment. Reindeer people's response to changes in the environment have developed operating practices that are now hampered because of several non-climatic factors such as loss of grazing land.

The terrestrial ecosystems in the northern areas are very complex ecosystems. The changes in these ecosystems are now taking place rapidly due to climatic changes and the effects of the industrial development of the Arctic. It is therefore important that we use all available knowledge, both scientific as insights from social sciences and especially Indigenous peoples' traditional ecosystem knowledge in order to understand the changes and develop new management models. This will require a new type of cooperation between industry, research, management and politics. It is important to use herders' traditional knowledge to understand the ecological contexts. Indigenous and local community participation in research is the key to improving the management of nature in the North and to avoid conflicts related to the use of nature.

Reindeer herders' traditional knowledge needs to be documented now before much of their understanding is lost owing to the societal and cultural transformations associated with globalisation. It will also be important to ensure training of Indigenous peoples in environmental and social impact assessments and in negotiations concerning industrial development projects, integrating traditional

knowledge and up-to-date scientific knowledge on impacts on Indigenous peoples and subsistence livelihoods. According to O'Brien, Hayward and Berkes "The Norwegian social contract currently focuses on autonomy and rights, fails to recognize the factors and knowledge that underlie the livelihoods of Sami reindeer herders, such as the importance of maintaining diversity in reindeer herds. The state-assumed responsibility for regulating reindeer production undermines the resilience of reindeer pastoralists by insisting on the use of equilibrium-based management tools such as carrying capacity".

A 'NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT'

We therefore want to contribute to 'a new social contract' between science and society through the development of knowledge partnership where reindeer herders' traditional knowledge and world view is included. Furthermore, reindeer herders should have the right themselves to determine their own future, based on their own philosophy of life and understanding of the world, and should be consulted, included and accepted as partners when arctic development, research and monitoring takes place on their territories. A self-sustained reindeer husbandry based on these values is important as an adaptive strategy to future climate change.

We conclude that adaptation to climate change demands the training in long-term sustainable thinking of local arctic leaders, both Indigenous and in mainstream society. This educational goal needs to be based on the best available knowledge about adaptation, that is, a combination of scientific, and experience-based traditional and local knowledge. We also recommend that national adaptation strategies must recognize minorities, Indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge, cultural and linguistic rights. ○

"Reindeer husbandry is practiced in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Mongolia, China, Alaska, Canada and Greenland. It involves some 100,000 herders and 2.5 million semi-domesticated reindeer.

Nenets reindeer herdsmen and his herd, Kanin Peninsula, Russia.

Photo:Staffan Widstrand/WWF

Using traditional knowledge to

In 2005, RAIPON conducted in partnership with UNEP an interview-based study on Indigenous people's traditional knowledge about disaster management. The study shows that Indigenous peoples of the Russian North continue to apply traditional knowledge to reduce the consequences of natural disasters, say VLAD PESKOV and OLGA MURASHKO.*

THE STUDY, *Indigenous Knowledge in Disaster Management*, focused on the Indigenous peoples of Nenets Autonomous Okrug (NAO) and Kamchatka and aimed to document how individuals perceive and manage natural disasters and extreme weather events. This included documentation of strategies for early detection of coming events, coping strategies, and perceptions of short and long-term impacts of these events on biodiversity.

VLAD PESKOV and **OLGA MURASHKO** authored RAIPON's Indigenous Knowledge in Disaster Management study.

A total of 232 people were interviewed for the study. The aim of the analysis was to summarize the information on disasters and extreme weather events in each region, and the perception of these occurrences among the Indigenous people interviewed; how traditional knowledge is used for prevention, early warning, preparedness, response and mitigation of disasters, and impacts of natural disasters on flora, fauna and ecosystems.

The Indigenous people interviewed in this study in general valued traditional knowledge in relation to early warning and coping mechanisms for natural disasters. Only a few self-confident young people, who are accustomed to the use of transport vehicles, said that they regularly rely on radio weather forecasts, compass, GPS, and other modern means of navigation and weather prediction.

However, many of the Indigenous people interviewed – especially those who lead settled lives in big settlements – did not hold traditional knowledge on biodiversity conservation and on strategies of early warning and mitigation of negative consequences of disasters. Instead they tend to look back to a past time when "elders knew everything, and could feel everything in advance". The absence of knowledge is substituted by the mythology about wise behaviour of elders in past times.

Interviewees often defined disasters in relation to their occupations. As one interviewee said: "For reindeer herding the disasters are blizzards, ice-covered ground, snow slides, strong rains, and mosquitoes." People talked about conditions such as lack of snow, heavy rains, droughts, and flies in the summer in relation to how they affected the harvest of fish and animals. People did not necessarily regard the disaster types listed in the questionnaire as disasters, but rather as extreme weather events to which they have adapted.

Strategies described for early warn-

PEOPLE'S OWN

WE, THE NENETS, *usually use wind as an indicator. We orient instinctively. During a blizzard I sometimes go to fetch some snow. And I'm sure I'll come back, not get lost. When dogs roll on their backs, we know – the weather is about to change. Dogs roll and howl. I check the duration of a blizzard by dogs as well: I observe the neighbours' husky, if they lie still, the blizzard is going to last long.* (Nenet woman in Bugrino, Nenets Autonomous Okrug)

TODAY *in the morning the weather has got better, but the crow says not to even think about going. We can look and say, oh, that's it. Birds never lie, they come and say: fellas, it's a wash-out. There is a front coming first, and in 40 minutes or maybe 5 hours it will result in something tough. You see, gust have started already.* (Man in Esso, Kamchatka)

ONCE I GOT *in such thick fog I thought I was lost. But I was with the reindeer, and they were trained to keep close to the tent. They should be trained to go around the tent in a circle. They eat, then lie down; eat again and lie down. Old men taught us to train reindeer so that they make circles around the tent, so you must make sure there is enough moss. If the herd is trained, you won't lose it in fog. So, I followed the reindeer in the rear and in the morn-*

cope with today's disasters

ing of natural disasters were mainly those based on observations of conditions and events that are considered to be warning signs. The most common warning signs were related to animal behaviour and to appearance of the sky (clouds, moon, sun, etc).

Strategies described for minimising negative impacts of a natural disaster include: maintaining a state of constant preparedness for the disaster; finding a safe place to wait out the disaster; relying on domesticated animals to lead the way to safety; and avoiding and mitigating disasters by regulating the size of reindeer herds and managing the use of pastures.

Reindeer herders use their knowledge of conditions and changes in the tundra and mountains to cope with extreme weather events and disasters and to minimize the loss of reindeer. Coastal inhabitants and people who fish keep safe by using their knowledge of periodicity and features of floods and landslides when making camp or crossing rivers. Marine hunters use their knowledge of the seas and weather conditions when deciding when and where to go fishing and hunting.

The study shows that Indigenous peoples of the Russian North have preserved and continue to apply traditional knowledge on early warning and strategies for mitigation of the negative consequences of natural disasters. However, there is a challenge in transferring traditional knowledge between generations. The study concluded it would be of great value to put further effort into disseminating information related to traditional knowledge on disaster management among the northern Indigenous peoples in addition to other groups in Russia and globally. ○

Photo: Staffan Widstrand / WWF

Nenets reindeer herders Chum tent, Vaigatch Island, Siberia, Russia.

*Adapted from RAIPON Indigenous Knowledge in Disaster Management study http://www.raipon.org/ikdm/Default.aspx

STORIES

ing I was at the tent. (Koryak man in Tymlat, Kamchatka)

AND ONCE IN WINTER *we were riding on a reindeer sleigh and escaped an avalanche miraculously. The old man told me, see the avalanche had started. It's no use to try to escape from it as it moves with tremendous speed. You hear a click, and then rattle and hum. So the only thing he did, he gave the reindeer the reins, and they carried us out. Just keep the sleigh stable, don't stop, and reindeer would take you out. The reindeer ran with the incredible speed, and we turned over on the last bog. And we, children, were usually tied to the sleigh. My grandfather Pavel Ichinga said afterwards it was an avalanche. Often people stop, drop the sleigh and start running. A man can't run faster than reindeer or dogs. And if you start steering reindeer, you'd only confuse them. Whip them once, and they will take you out themselves. They have senses. The same with horses. If you don't' know the place and lose your way, it's no use to keep steering yourself. Give a horse the reins, and it would take you out. The same with reindeer and dogs*. (Man in Esso, Kamchatka)

ONCE WE GOT UNDER *stone fall. There my brother helped. It's no use to run, too. He saw stones rolling from the top. Other person would run from them, but he ran towards them. I asked where he was running. And he said, before the stones gained speed, we should run towards them, where they still have low speed. So we run to the top as far as we could and then turned aside, so the stones passed us. We climbed about 10 meters. On the top you could even hold a stone. We stayed for about five minutes there, maybe more. Before the first stones took others on their way down, I think, five minutes passed*. (Man in Esso, Kamchatka)

Source: Indigenous Knowledge in Disaster Management study http://www.raipon.org/ikdm/Default.aspx

At the frontline of conservation

The 'Umky Patrols', or polar bear patrols, work between humans and animals in the Russian Arctic. VLAD KAVRY, one of the founders of these pioneering patrols, talks to MARIYAM MEDOVAYA from WWF-US.

VLADILEN KAVRY, a long-time resident of the coastal region of Chukotka, is a deeply respected native hunter with extensive knowledge of the arctic environment. Over the past 10 years Vladilen has become an important partner for biologists, local officials, and WWF. He has participated in WWF's 'Climate Witness' project and organized two international expeditions for WWF to the Russian Arctic. He is also a leader of the Umky Patrol ('Umky' means polar bear in Chukchi language) in Ryrkaipiy, Chukotka.

AT THE ARCTIC COAST of Chukotka, where the Umky Patrols work, the most noticeable climate change we observe is with the sea ice. Climate change has not affected the human population directly, people adapt easily to the changes in nature. However, the marine mammals – walrus and polar bear – have a much harder time going through this period of change. Their habitat – sea ice – is abruptly disappearing, sea ice is retreating up to 1000 km from the shore each summer. This is a big problem. We see that the animals are under stress.

First of all, it is very hard for the walrus to feed in the deep water far from the shore. This is why they create coastal haul-outs. Two of these numerous haul-outs are located very close to two villages in Chukotka – Vankarem and Ryrkaipiy. Vankarem has had a regular walrus haul-out from 1996 (see box), and Ryrkaipiy from 2007. These are the largest walrus haul-outs near human settlements in the world. This proximity creates a big problem. There is a lot of human and industrial traffic, ship loading and unloading, and air traffic – and the question is: what about the walrus?

> **"These are the largest walrus haul-outs near human settlements in the world.**

We realize that the natural habitat of the walrus – sea ice – is disappearing, but they need a place for resting and feeding. Umky Patrols take the task of monitoring and protecting these haul-outs, involving the local population. Large walrus haul-outs often result in high walrus mortality brought about by stampedes during which many young cubs are trampled by other animals. Human disturbances often trigger the stampedes, and protection of the haul-outs from human activities is necessary. This is a very big problem. In 2007, local residents initiated establishment of a nature protected area at the Vankarem Cape (Vankarem haul-out), and in 2010, protected status was officially assigned to Kozhevnikov Cape (Ryrkaipiy haul-out). This is a big victory for us, the Indigenous people here.

The walrus and polar bear are very much linked. Polar bears get attracted by the walrus carcasses. To address this, we take the carcasses from the haul-outs and bring them away from the villages to the tundra to create feeding spots for polar bears. Here Umky Patrols accomplish two goals: we

Walrus haulout near Ryrkaipiy village.
Photo: Vladilen Kavry

provide food for the bears, and we provide safety for the human population. This is a preventive measure to ward off conflict situations between humans and bears. Umky Patrols also monitor areas around villages during polar bear migrations. We inform local residents and give presentations in schools about preventive measures that people should take to avoid a conflict situation with polar bears.

Climate change is a big problem for polar bears as well. They also need sea ice, but ice is often late now – as late as

Photo: Vladilen Kavry

Polar bears are attracted to human settlements by smells of food and waste.

November. We don't really know exactly what is happening now. We see that bears are denning about a month later than previously, before the 1990s. The changes in walrus migration and polar bear annual cycle lead to increased contact between people and marine mammals. Now, since we have regular walrus haul-outs near the villages, we see the bears more frequently.

We are happy that the walrus are coming to us, and we strive to keep the haul-outs clean from human waste and trash. We also work on involving the local population more actively, particularly the young generation. Many high-school students take part in the annual haul-out clean-ups. For our future work, we would like to establish Umky Patrols along the whole arctic coast of Chukotka. ○

How the Umky Patrols started

It all began in 1996 at Cape Vankarem, on the arctic shores of Chukotka, Russia. It was a period of economic crisis in Chukotka and throughout Russia, and native people in the small village of Vankarem were just trying to survive. There were no bullets and no motors. Hunters sat on the coast and watched the walruses and whales swimming by. And the hunters reminisced: "At one time walruses came ashore at Cape Vankarem, and our ancestors hunted them with spears."

The economic crisis forced native people to think hard about how to return the walruses to Cape Vankarem. That year they decided to protect the cape. The hunters forbid local people to visit the cape during the walruses' fall migration. They shot stray dogs in the area. And the protection worked – at the end of September 1996, the first walruses came to Cape Vankarem to rest. In October there were about 5,000 walruses.

Use of firearms was banned at the walrus haul-out. Each hunter prepared a new spear, or found an old spear handed down from his father or grandfather. Everyone waited for the start of the spear hunt. And the hunt took place. Unlike firearms, spears allow people to hunt walrus without causing panic in the haul-out. The other walruses always stay on the cape.

The people of Vankarem consider 1996 the rebirth of the traditional walrus spear hunt. Since this time, every year the walruses come to Cape Vankarem, less than one kilometer from the village of Vankarem. The resting walruses stretch along about one kilometer of the beach. Today their numbers reach up to 40,000.

But after a few years, the pride of Vankarem – the walrus haul-out – began to worry some local people. Each fall, a huge number of walruses congregated at the haul-out, and they were coming closer and closer to the village. The walruses arriving at the cape were very tired, and their skin had a white color. This told the people that the walruses were having a difficult time making it through the stormy East Siberian and Chukchi Seas, due to climate change and the melting of the ice in the Arctic. In the past, the ice never withdrew from the arctic coast of Chukotka, and the walruses could rest on the ice at any time during their migration to the Bering Strait.

When the haul-out was at its fullest, dozens of walruses were trampled. Mostly they were young animals. When the sea began to freeze in November and December, polar bears came to Cape Vankarem in search of food. Large groups of polar bears arrived, creating conflict situations with people. So after the walruses left the cape in the fall, hunters began to clear away dozens of walrus carcasses.

At the initiative of the people of Vankarem, in 2006 WWF developed the Polar Bear Patrol project. The Polar Bear Patrol works to ensure the safety of people living near polar bears, to preserve walrus haul-outs and other unique places, and to help local people participate in scientific projects on polar bears and other animals. In order to keep local people safe, Polar Bear Patrol members escort children to school and to daycare, patrol the village for bears, and keep people informed about the current situation.

Today additional Polar Bear Patrols have been created in other villages. In 2006 the people of Vankarem voted to make the walrus haul-out at Cape Vankarem a natural monument, a decision which was approved by the government of Chukotka in August, 2007. (Source: WWF-US)

Vlad Kavry and his dog Umky (which means polar bear in Chukchi language) in Chukotka, as a real polar bear walks by.

Photo: S. Kavry

From fish to oil in Northern Norway?

An upbringing in a fishing village facing the open sea, surrounded by breathtaking nature and strong natural forces, is a value in itself that should not be underestimated, says MAGNUS EILERTSEN. But today this way of living is under threat as the fisheries industry is being rationalised and the national focus is on oil and gas.

AS A FISHERMAN you harvest from the 'blue fields'; the sea. A fisherman lives in harmony with nature in many ways. Given the right management, fish is a renewable and everlasting resource, and the fisheries sector a sustainable industry.

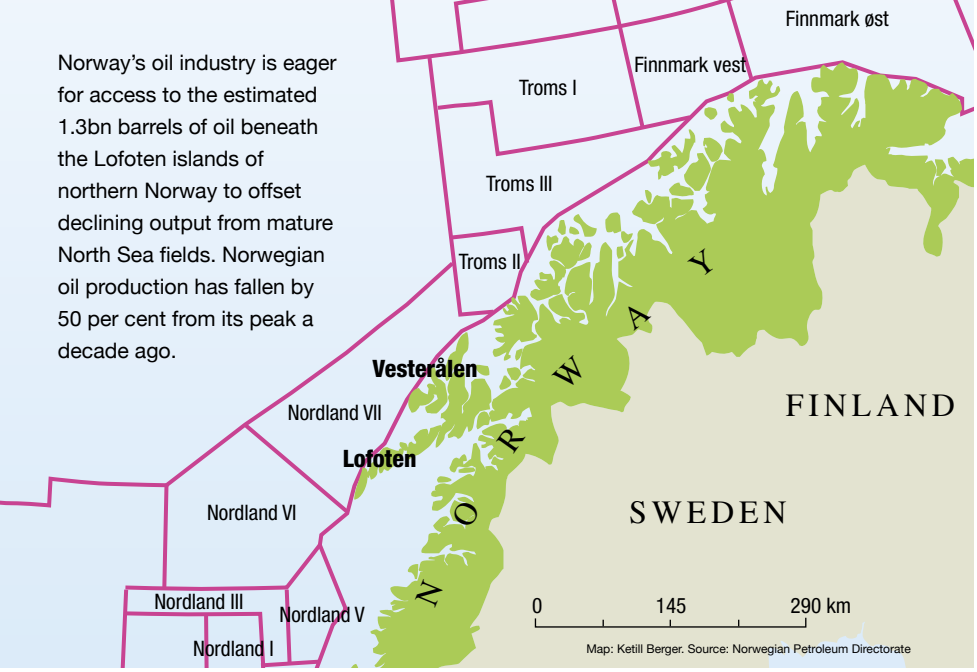
A seafarer learns early that the sea is both generous and brutal; it gives and takes. Some years the fish is plentiful and prices good, other periods are worse. This gives a realistic outlook on life and its intrinsic ups and downs.

The fisherman also develops respect for nature, the sea and the grandeur of the elements, and he is regularly reminded that the sea is a dangerous workplace. When the storm whips the ocean white, people and people's creations become small in comparison. Fortunately the safety has been significantly improved over the last hundred years and there are now far fewer accidents.

The marine resources have during centuries been the foundation for settlement in coastal societies like Lofoten and Vesterålen. Fish is still an important base for the settlements along the coast of northern Norway. But what was once the world's largest seasonal fishery, the famous Lofoten fishery, is not anymore what it was.

On the one hand, the cod from the Barents is still faithful, when it every winter swims down to Lofoten and Vesterålen to spawn. In fact Norwegian-arctic cod stock is now at a record high level,

MAGNUS EILERTSEN grew up on Værøy in Lofoten, Norway, and has previously worked as a fisherman and local newspaper editor. He has a keen interest in social development and sustainable wealth creation in the North and is now studying political science at the University in Tromsø.



Norway's oil industry is eager for access to the estimated 1.3bn barrels of oil beneath the Lofoten islands of northern Norway to offset declining output from mature North Sea fields. Norwegian oil production has fallen by 50 per cent from its peak a decade ago.

according to marine researchers. On the other hand, however, fishing boats and harvesting methods have become more effective, and fewer fishermen are needed for each produced kilo.

COASTAL DEPLETION

The traditional coastal culture in northern Norway is currently under strong pressure. The Norwegian fishery politics have contributed to a gradual depletion of the coastal areas, and the result is decreasing numbers of boats and coastal fishermen. It has also become harder to recruit young people to the fishing industry. A number of small communities in northern Norway are affected by emigration and population decrease as many young people move to cities and larger places, often for education. Many don't return to their home places. The same trend is seen in large parts of the world; more and more people live in cities and densely populated areas. The challenge is to think creatively and long-term.

The last couple of years the oil and gas developments along the coast of northern Norway have been perceived by many as the new growth impulse and the big saviour for the region. A landing installation for gas in Hammerfest has created optimism and possibly an estimated 300 new jobs. The oil industry is pressing for oil exploration in important spawning and fishing areas outside of Lofoten and Vesterålen, even if local fishermen protest and recommend against drilling here.

The oil companies are tempting with new employment opportunities and positive regional side effects if they get access. At the same time, the oil cluster in southern Norway is likely to keep most of the profits from expanded activities in the north. Landing installations like the one in Hammerfest are expensive to run, and will only be built if landing is the most cost effective solution. Offshore-developments and platforms will probably be the preferred option in most cases.

NO TO OIL AND GAS

I don't think northern Norway's future is in oil and gas development. It will possibly create local employment a few places, but from a realistic point of view, we will never see an industrial renaissance like was seen in parts of southern Norway as a result of the North Sea oil. Adding to this, the oil and gas fairytale will end after a few years. When the resources have been extracted, what can we then depend on? The only thing that Norway achieves by prolonging the oil age is to postpone a transition that we nevertheless will have to face in the future: the transition from fossil to renewable energy. I think this transition should take place step by step, and start as soon as possible, parallel with the decreasing Norwegian oil production. In this way Norway avoids a nose dive when the petroleum resources on the Norwegian shelf are depleted.

We know that the world will need food and energy. The fish outside of northern Norway is a good starting point for meeting some of the future food needs. However, better strategies need to be developed for how to use this great potential even better so that it benefits northern Norway both economically and socially.

The increasing energy need is another, immense challenge. If the vision about a renewable society should get real content, solid action must take place. If the Norwegian authorities were serious with the so-called 'northern area initiative' which was launched in 2005, they could have fully pursued development of and research on renewable energy sources. Northern Norway could have been the big arena for such a multi-project. But so far it seems that the northern area initiative was only an alibi to take out the last oil drops in the north.

Norway is today one of the world's richest countries thanks to the oil in the North Sea. Soon the Norwegian government will decide whether Lofoten and Vesterålen will be opened for oil. One thing is for sure: I will be embarrassed if Norwegian politicians don't think they can afford to protect the most vulnerable areas outside of the coast against drilling. ○

"Fishing boats and harvesting methods have become more effective, and fewer fishermen are needed for each produced kilo.

Changes and challenges in Greenland

Greenland is currently the focus of much attention globally and regionally due to mainly two things: Climate change and recent political developments, says the Premier, KUUPIK KLEIST.

CLIMATE CHANGE and the very tangible effects of global warming can easily be observed in the Arctic, notably in Ilulissat, where the glacier is reclining at rapid speed providing scientists with the opportunity to study the phenomenon – while politicians and climate tourists are flocking to witness the pace of the changes.

Greenland has been in the limelight since the inauguration of the Greenland Self-Government a year ago on Greenland's national day 21 June, 2009. On this day, the people of Greenland along with the Danish Royal Family, the Government of Denmark and members of the Parliament, the diplomatic corps and numerous friends from around the world celebrated the entering into force of the Act on Greenland Self-Government with us here in Nuuk.

> "Greenland has been in the limelight since the inauguration of the Greenland Self-Government a year ago.

AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE

The Act opens for gradual further transfer of powers and responsibilities from Denmark to Greenland in areas such as administration of justice, the establishment of courts of law and the police, among others. Very importantly, the Act provides for Greenland's own administration of the control and use of mineral and oil resources so that any public revenues from mineral and oil resource activities in Greenland in the future belong to Greenland.

It is indeed a significant milestone for the Greenland people to gain recognition as a people according to international law after having fought for it for many years, and to have the Greenlandic Inuit language – Kalaallisut – recognized as the official language.

Although it is, in legal terms, a public government, the members of both the Government and Parliament of Greenland are Inuit, which places a strong emphasis on hunting and fishing and the attachment to the land and sea and ice covered waters. In the context of global warming, we are – as a small people – faced with many challenges to our cultural survival and therefore strive to cooperate internationally to protect our cultural heritage.

There is, in Greenland, a strong solidarity with the world's Indigenous peoples, and the Government of Greenland has for many years actively promoted the rights of Indigenous peoples. One arena has been the United Nations where Greenland together with Denmark took part in the long and difficult negotiations leading to the adoption of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

SELF-DETERMINATION

While the establishment of the Self-Government arrangement – and even the Greenland Home Rule Government before that – may be seen as Denmark's de facto implementation of the Declaration vis-á–vis Greenland, we are in the Government of Greenland also striving to implement important provisions of the Declaration in our day to day work.

The government also continues to support the mandates and mechanisms – such as the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues under the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Special Rapporteur on the Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples, and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples under the Human Rights Council.

At its recent

KUUPIK KLEIST of the left wing Inuit Ataqatigiit party became Premier of Greenland in June 2009, just prior to the transformation from Home Rule to Self-Government in Greenland. Mr. Kleist has a long career in politics as well as administration and private business. He has worked extensively with Indigenous rights issues both as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Greenland Home Rule Government and as Board Member of Indigenous peoples' organizations such as Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) and the International Training Centre for Indigenous Peoples (ITCIP).

Inuit narwhal hunter Mamarut Kristiansen throwing his harpoon from his kayak, Qaanaaq, Greenland, Arctic.

PHOTO: Staffan Widstrand/WWF

9th session, the special theme of the UN Permanent Forum was about the implementation of articles of the Declaration dealing with self-determination and development with culture and identity.

This year's special theme had particular relevance to the political process in Greenland right now. Because, in order to be able to establish the necessary financial foundation to supplement our fishing industry and our limited land based activities such as tourism and sheep farming, Greenland is currently debating and preparing to embark on some potentially major development projects.

GREEN ENERGY

Early on, Greenland opted to base a large part of our energy production on renewable hydro power and has already invested heavily in the construction of four major plants to date. The latest and second largest hydro power plant was inaugurated in March. Currently, some 60 percent of the energy consumption/electricity is generated by hydro power – a figure which is expected to increase to 70 percent in 2013. However, if a decision is made to go ahead with major development projects it may involve the construction of even larger hydro power plants than Greenland has today, potentially also involving a considerable influx of foreign labour.

To prepare in due course for such projects, the Parliament also opted to renew its legislation for the protection of cultural heritage as well as to adopt legislation to ensure the promotion and retention of the Greenlandic language. The Greenland Parliament Act requires

all private and public companies and institutions to develop language policies, promoting knowledge of Greenlandic language, culture, history and society.

Last year, TELE Greenland inaugurated a submarine fiber optic cable connecting Greenland with North America and Europe. This major investment was carried out under the motto 'Greenland at the Centre of the World' in order for Greenland to participate in the global world on the best possible conditions. With this new tool at hand, my government is promoting a number of projects to intensify and enhance the use of information technology in various sectors of the society.

MINERAL RESOURCES

Other major developments are in the area of minerals and petroleum. On 7 December, 2009 the Greenland Parliament adopted the "Mineral Resources Act" providing for Greenland's own administration of the control and use of mineral resources in Greenland.

These days, the Government of Greenland experiences a lot of attention to our offshore oil and gas exploration projects. We clearly favour a precautionary approach to the exploration and exploitation of resources – both renewable and non-renewable. However, as it is also argued in the climate negotiations, Greenland has the right to a resource base and the right to development – to be carried out according to the highest standards, utilizing the best available technology.

The whole issue of resource development in the Arctic is of course a very sensitive issue in more than one way and provides both opportunities and major challenges. Right now, as was stated at the outset, huge international attention is being paid to the Arctic – and to Greenland with its central position – with regards to access and division of territory and resources.

ARCTIC COOPERATION

Greenland has been actively participating in the establishment and work of the Arctic Council, and before that in the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy. One of the noble features of this high level forum is the fact that it recognizes the right of arctic Indigenous peoples to sit at the table with the arctic states.

This protocol, unfortunately, was set aside at the recent meeting of the so-called five Arctic Coastal States, also excluding other member states of the Arctic Council, despite earlier calls to be inclusive. With regards to representation from Greenland, clear provisions in the Act on Self-Government and other agreements between Greenland and Denmark provides for our inclusion and participation in the talks.

The arctic states, Indigenous peoples and arctic communities agree to base the division of the continental shelf and its resources on existing international treaties such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, UNCLOS.

There is also agreement on the fact that the Arctic Ocean generally needs better protection from increased traffic, which could cause shipping disasters and oil spills, and that a mandatory regulation in the form of an Arctic Code should be developed and implemented via the International Maritime Organization, IMO. The Arctic Council has already approved the so-called Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas Guidelines, which Greenland is in the process of implementing and which must now be implemented in the whole region.

The already incurred increase in traffic by cruise ships has prompted the need for enhanced public safety measures in arctic waters. It has therefore also been agreed that there is a need for enhanced public safety via arctic Search and Rescue (SAR) cooperation. Much to our satisfaction a task force has been established and is working diligently to develop modalities for a legally binding SAR for adoption at the next Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting to be held in Nuuk, Greenland in the spring of 2011. ○

Voices of the Arctic

■ The Arctic has a population of about four million, including over thirty different Indigenous peoples.

■ In the Arctic Council, Indigenous peoples are represented through a category called Permanent Participants, which was established in addition to the Member States to provide for participation of and consultation with arctic Indigenous peoples.

■ We invited all the Permanent Participants to share their thoughts on their vision of the Arctic, what they see as the key challenges in reaching this vision and how their organization will contribute. Here is what they said.

States, organizations and strategical issues in the Arctic:

PEOPLE ACROSS BORDERS

Sources : Arctic Council; Norwegian Polar Institute, *Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council*, map complied by Winfried Dallmann; Global Security, Washington DC; Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Canada; International Boundaries Research Unit Database, University of Durham. Updated with expert feedback.

MAP: Philippe Rekacewicz, UNEP/GRID-Arendal

Our living homeland

The Arctic is not just a resource frontier, or a theatre for geopolitical grandstanding, or a barometer for global climate change. It is our living homeland, and will continue to be so in the future. Our foremost priority must be to ensure that the Arctic continues to provide for its people, say BRIDGET LAROCQUE and WHITNEY LACKENBAUER from the Gwich'in Council International.

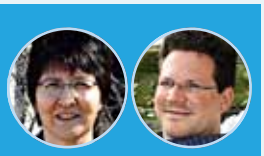
SUSTAINABILITY IS key. The Brundtland commission defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". So what are our needs? Some are shared with everyone: clean air and water, safe drinking water, pesticide-free food, and healthy ecosystems. The Gwich'in and other Indigenous people also rely heavily on traditional country foods for physical and cultural sustenance. Continuing to live off the land is key to a high level quality of life that bridges traditional and contemporary ways. We seek a future of self-sufficiency, human and environmental security, and economic development rooted in principles of self-government and active participation in national affairs. This begins with the settlement of land claims, and the fulfillment of commitments made in those agreements.

Sustainable development is not a nation-specific issue, however, and requires engagement with the larger circumpolar world and beyond. Uncertainty related to climate change poses key challenges. Strong national and international leadership is needed to balance economic development imperatives with environmental protection. To ensure that northern resources benefit northern peoples, Indigenous groups, governments, and private industry must forge practical partnerships to attract investment to the Arctic. By extension, collaboration with non-government organizations is important to set agendas and strengthen regulations to ensure that development is sustainable.

The Arctic Council remains the primary intergovernmental forum for regional cooperation in addressing environmental and sustainable development challenges in the circumpolar north, and plays a vital role in conveying arctic perspectives to other international and global organizations. The six Permanent Participants ensure that arctic Indigenous representatives play a central role in defining priorities. Non-arctic nations and bodies are anxious to formalize their involvement in the Council, but future changes cannot be allowed to dilute the strength and influence of Indigenous around the table.

Gwich'in Council International will continue to contribute to agenda-setting, policy development, and decision-making at the local, regional, national and international levels. We believe that arctic peoples' perspectives must frame communication strategies, underpin social networks, and guide research relationships. Accordingly, we will continue to protect and conserve our Arctic by sharing our history and story by working through coalitions (such as the Northern Voices Coalition), in alliances (such as the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat), and in partnership with organizations like the University of the Arctic.

Too much of the current political rhetoric about arctic sovereignty and security swirls around boundary lines and competition for resources. We need to remember that sovereignty is really about what happens *within* national boundaries. For the 9,000 Indigenous people of Gwich'in descent in Alaska, the Yukon, and the NWT, our homeland transcends international borders. So too must our vision for sustainable development. We are stewards of our homeland, and resilient people. We are our nations' sovereignty. The future of the Arctic is our future. ○



The Gwich'in Council International (GCI) was established as a non-profit organization in 1999 to ensure all regions of the Gwich'in Nation in the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Alaska are represented at the Arctic Council, as well as to play an active and significant role in the development of policies that relate to the Circumpolar Arctic. **BRIDGET LAROCQUE** is executive director of GCI, and **WHITNEY LACKENBAUER**, Ph.D. is an adviser to GCI.

An Athabaskan view of the changing Arctic

There is a solid consensus that environmental, economic and social change in the circumpolar North is accelerating, writes CINDY DICKSON of the Arctic Athabaskan Council. Notwithstanding the projections of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, we don't know in any detail what our region will look like in the future. But we do know that we will have to adjust and adapt to what's coming.

PERHAPS FOUR VISIONS of the North—wilderness, homeland, industrial frontier and research park—will determine what our region looks like in decades ahead. The balance between these visions and the public policies to which they give rise will be different in each of the eight arctic countries. So, while we talk more and more about the circumpolar Arctic as an evolving geopolitical region, let's remember that national differences in the circumpolar world will continue to be important.

Athabaskan peoples have been adapting to the forces of 'modernity' and 'globalization' for decades. It is only more recently, particularly in Canada, that we have negotiated potentially far-reaching land claims and self-government agreements that provide us with institutions, decision-making processes, money, and ownership of land and natural resources to enable us to implement our vision of the north as homeland. The other three visions of the north should, themselves, adjust to our homeland concept. But these agreements which have taken decades to negotiate have to be fully and properly implemented. This is hugely challenging and requires the Government of Canada and Athabaskan peoples to work together in a firm partnership.

I can't predict the future, but I'm optimistic that Athabaskan peoples will successfully move into the future, whatever that future holds. ○

CINDY DICKSON is the Executive Director of the Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC), The AAC is an international treaty organization established to represent the interests of United States and Canadian Athabaskan member First Nation governments in Arctic Council fora, and to foster a greater understanding of the common heritage of all Athabaskan peoples of arctic North America.

A healthy place for the future

The Saami Council's vision for tomorrow's Arctic is an Arctic with a healthy environment and productive ecosystems that continue to provide the necessary livelihood services, writes MATTIAS ÅHRÉN.

OUR CULTURE depends on living (natural) resources through reindeer herding, coastal and inland fisheries, hunting and gathering. Without access to these resources and trust in that nature will provide us with healthy food, the development of our culture will be threatened. Healthy arctic ecosystems are vital to our cultural material production also tomorrow.

The key to keep this vision true is to get recognition by regional and local authorities for our role as Indigenous peoples to protect and develop the arctic environment as a healthy place to live our lives in the future. The value of ecosystem-based livelihoods needs to be recognised in the race for short-lived fortunes in the Arctic. Good governance needs to be ensured now in order to face the evolving challenges in the Arctic. For us, the concept of good governance embraces the Saami peoples' right to self-determination, including the right to determine our economic and social development, through which our culture continues to be living and constantly enriched. ○

MATTIAS ÅHRÉN is President of the Saami Council, a voluntary Saami non–governmental organization, with Saami member organizations in Finland, Russia, Norway and Sweden. Since its foundation in 1956 the Saami Council has actively dealt with Saami policy tasks. The primary aim of the Saami Council is the promotion of Saami rights and interests in the four countries where the Saami are living.

A claim for Inuit sovereignty

EDITOR'S NOTE: The past couple of years have seen a flurry of books, articles and learned papers arguing about who owns the Arctic. Russian politician and adventurer Artur Chilingarov placed a Russian flag on the sea floor under the North Pole. The five states with coastlines north of the Arctic Circle met in Ilulissat, Greenland, issuing the Ilulissat Declara-

We, the Inuit of Inuit Nunaat, declare as follows:

1. Inuit and the Arctic

1.1 ***Inuit live in the Arctic.*** Inuit live in the vast, circumpolar region of land, sea and ice known as the Arctic. We depend on the marine and terrestrial plants and animals supported by the coastal zones of the Arctic Ocean, the tundra and the sea ice. The Arctic is our home.

1.2 ***Inuit have been living in the Arctic from time immemorial***. From time immemorial, Inuit have been living in the Arctic. Our home in the circumpolar world, *Inuit Nunaat*, stretches from Greenland to Canada, Alaska and the coastal regions of Chukotka, Russia. Our use and occupation of Arctic lands and waters pre-dates recorded history. Our unique knowledge, experience of the Arctic, and language are the foundation of our way of life and culture.

1.3 ***Inuit are a people.*** Though Inuit live across a far-reaching circumpolar region, we are united as a single people. Our sense of unity is fostered and celebrated by the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), which represents the Inuit of Denmark/Greenland, Canada, USA and Russia. As a people, we enjoy the rights of all peoples. These include the rights recognized in and by various international instruments and institutions, such as the *Charter of the United Nations*; the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;* the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;* the *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action*; the Human Rights Council; the Arctic Council; and the Organization of American States.

1.4 ***Inuit are an indigenous people.*** Inuit are an indigenous people with the rights and responsibilities of all indigenous peoples. These include the rights recognized in and by international legal and political instruments and bodies, such as the recommendations of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the 2007 *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP),* and others.

Central to our rights as a people is the right to *self-determination*. It is our right to freely determine our political status, freely pursue our economic, social, cultural and linguistic development, and freely dispose of our natural wealth and resources. States are obligated to respect and promote the realization of our right to self-determination. (See, for example, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights [ICCPR],* Art. 1.)

Our rights as an indigenous people include the following rights recognized in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)*, all of which are relevant to sovereignty and sovereign rights in the Arctic: the right to self-determination, to freely determine our political status and to freely pursue our economic, social and cultural, including linguistic, development (Art. 3); the right to internal autonomy or self-government (Art. 4); the right to recognition, observance and enforcement of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements concluded with states (Art. 37); the right to maintain and strengthen our distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining the right to participate fully in the political, economic, social and cultural life of states (Art. 5); the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect our rights and to maintain and develop our own indigenous decision-making institutions (Art. 18); the right to own, use, develop and control our lands, territories and resources and the right to ensure that no project affecting our lands, territories or resources will proceed without our free and informed consent (Art. 25-32); the right to peace and security (Art. 7); and the right to conservation and protection of our environment (Art. 29).

1.5 ***Inuit are an indigenous people of the Arctic.*** Our status, rights and responsibilities as a people among the peoples of the world, and as an indigenous people, are exercised within the unique geographic, environmental, cultural and political context of the Arctic. This has been acknowledged in the eight-nation Arctic Council, which provides a direct, participatory role for Inuit through the permanent participant status accorded the Inuit Circumpolar Council (Art. 2).

1.6 ***Inuit are citizens of Arctic states.*** As citizens of Arctic states (Denmark, Canada, USA and Russia), we have the rights and responsibilities afforded all citizens under the constitutions, laws, policies and public sector programs of these states. These rights and responsibilities do not diminish the rights and responsibilities of Inuit as a people under international law.

1.7 ***Inuit are indigenous citizens of Arctic states***. As an indigenous people within Arctic states, we have the rights and responsibilities afforded all indigenous peoples under the constitutions, laws, policies and public sector programs of these states. These rights and responsibilities do not diminish the rights and responsibilities of Inuit as a people under international law.

1.8 ***Inuit are indigenous citizens of each of the major political subunits of Arctic states (states, provinces, territories and regions).*** As an indigenous people within Arctic states, provinces, territories, regions or other political subunits, we have the rights and responsibilities afforded all indigenous peoples under the constitutions, laws, policies and public sector programs of these subunits. These rights and responsibilities do not diminish the rights and responsibilities of Inuit as a people under international law.

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2. The Evolving Nature of Sovereignty in the Arctic

2.1 "Sovereignty" is a term that has often been used to refer to the absolute and independent authority of a community or nation both internally and externally. Sovereignty is a contested concept, however, and does not have a fixed meaning. Old ideas of sovereignty are breaking down as different governance models, such as the European Union, evolve. Sovereignties overlap and are frequently divided within federations in creative ways to recognize the right of peoples. For Inuit living within the states of Russia, Canada, the USA and Denmark/Greenland, issues of sovereignty and sovereign rights must be examined and assessed in the context of our long history of struggle to gain recognition and respect as an Arctic indigenous people having the right to exercise self-determination over our lives, territories, cultures and languages.

2.2 Recognition and respect for our right to self-determination is developing at varying paces and in various forms in the Arctic states in which we live. Following a referendum in November 2008, the areas of self-government in Greenland will expand greatly and, among other things, Greenlandic (Kalaallisut) will become Greenland's sole official language. In Canada, four land claims agreements are some of the key building blocks of Inuit rights; while there are conflicts over the implementation of these agreements, they remain of vital relevance to matters of self-determination and of sovereignty and sovereign rights. In Alaska, much work is needed to clarify and implement the rights recognized in the *Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA)* and the *Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA)*. In particular, subsistence hunting and self-government rights need to be fully respected and accommodated, and issues impeding their enjoyment and implementation need to be addressed and resolved. And in Chukotka, Russia, a very limited number of administrative processes have begun to secure recognition of Inuit rights. These developments will provide a foundation on which to construct future, creative governance arrangements tailored to diverse circumstances in states, regions and communities.

2.3 In exercising our right to self-determination in the circumpolar Arctic, we continue to develop innovative and creative jurisdictional arrangements that will appropriately balance our rights and responsibilities as an indigenous people, the rights and responsibilities we share with other peoples who live among us, and the rights and responsibilities of states. In seeking to exercise our rights in the Arctic, we continue to promote compromise and harmony with and among our neighbours.

2.4 International and other instruments increasingly recognize the rights of indigenous peoples to self-determination and representation in intergovernmental matters, and are evolving beyond issues of internal governance to external relations. (See, for example: *ICCPR*, Art. 1; *UNDRIP*, Art. 3; *Draft Nordic Saami Convention*, Art. 17, 19; *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*, Art. 5.9).

2.5 Inuit are permanent participants at the Arctic Council with a direct and meaningful seat at discussion and negotiating tables (See 1997 Ottawa Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council).

2.6 In spite of a recognition by the five coastal Arctic states (Norway, Denmark, Canada, USA and Russia) of the need to use international mechanisms and international law to resolve sovereignty disputes (see 2008 *Ilulissat Declaration)*, these states, in their discussions of Arctic sovereignty, have not referenced existing international instruments that promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples. They have also neglected to include Inuit in Arctic sovereignty discussions in a manner comparable to Arctic Council deliberations.

3. Inuit, the Arctic and Sovereignty: Looking Forward

The foundations of action

3.1 The actions of Arctic peoples and states, the interactions between them, and the conduct of international relations must be anchored in the rule of law.

tion, a document that affirmed that the states in question would divide jurisdiction over much of the Arctic between them, according to the rules of the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

This is the context in which Inuit have met to consider the question of their place in the discussion over who owns the Arctic. Inuit are the original settlers of much of the arctic coastline in question, and users of offshore resources. They

are found from Russia's far east, across Alaska, across Canada's three northern territories, to Greenland. The document below is the Inuit response to questions of the disposition of their homeland.

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3.2 The actions of Arctic peoples and states, the interactions between them, and the conduct of international relations must give primary respect to the need for global environmental security, the need for peaceful resolution of disputes, and the inextricable linkages between issues of sovereignty and sovereign rights in the Arctic and issues of self-determination.

Inuit as active partners

3.3 The inextricable linkages between issues of sovereignty and sovereign rights in the Arctic and Inuit self-determination and other rights require states to accept the presence and role of Inuit as partners in the conduct of international relations in the Arctic.

3.4 A variety of other factors, ranging from unique Inuit knowledge of Arctic ecosystems to the need for appropriate emphasis on sustainability in the weighing of resource development proposals, provide practical advantages to conducting international relations in the Arctic in partnership with Inuit.

3.5 Inuit consent, expertise and perspectives are critical to progress on international issues involving the Arctic, such as global environmental security, sustainable development, militarization, commercial fishing, shipping, human health, and economic and social development.

3.6 As states increasingly focus on the Arctic and its resources, and as climate change continues to create easier access to the Arctic, Inuit inclusion as active partners is central to all national and international deliberations on Arctic sovereignty and related questions, such as who owns the Arctic, who has the right to traverse the Arctic, who has the right to develop the Arctic, and who will be responsible for the social and environmental impacts increasingly facing the Arctic. We have unique knowledge and experience to bring to these deliberations. The inclusion of Inuit as active partners in all future deliberations on Arctic sovereignty will benefit both the Inuit community and the international community.

3.7 The extensive involvement of Inuit in global, trans-national and indigenous politics requires the building of new partnerships with states for the protection and promotion of indigenous economies, cultures and traditions. Partnerships must acknowledge that industrial development of the natural resource wealth of the Arctic can proceed only insofar as it enhances the economic and social well-being of Inuit and safeguards our environmental security.

The need for global cooperation

3.8 There is a pressing need for enhanced international exchange and cooperation in relation to the Arctic, particularly in relation to the dynamics and impacts of climate change and sustainable economic and social development. Regional institutions that draw together Arctic states, states from outside the Arctic, and representatives of Arctic indigenous peoples can provide useful mechanisms for international exchange and cooperation.

3.9 The pursuit of global environmental security requires a coordinated global approach to the challenges of climate change, a rigorous plan to arrest the growth in human-generated carbon emissions, and a far-reaching program of adaptation to climate change in Arctic regions and communities.

3.10 The magnitude of the climate change problem dictates that Arctic states and their peoples fully participate in international efforts aimed at arresting and reversing levels of greenhouse gas emissions and enter into international protocols and treaties. These international efforts, protocols and treaties cannot be successful without the full participation and cooperation of indigenous peoples.

Healthy Arctic communities

3.11 In the pursuit of economic opportunities in a warming Arctic, states must act so as to: (1) put economic activity on a sustainable footing; (2) avoid harmful resource exploitation; (3) achieve standards of living for Inuit that meet national and international norms and minimums; and (4) deflect sudden and far-reaching demographic shifts that would overwhelm and marginalize indigenous peoples where we are rooted and have endured.

3.12 The foundation, projection and enjoyment of Arctic sovereignty and sovereign rights all require healthy and sustainable communities in the Arctic. In this sense, "sovereignty begins at home."

Building on today's mechanisms for the future

3.13 We will exercise our rights of self-determination in the Arctic by building on institutions such as the Inuit Circumpolar Council and the Arctic Council, the Arctic-specific features of international instruments, such as the ice-covered-waters provision of the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*, and the Arctic-related work of international mechanisms, such as the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the office of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples, and the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

4. A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic

4.1 At the first Inuit Leaders' Summit, 6-7 November 2008, in Kuujjuaq, Nunavik, Canada, Inuit leaders from Greenland, Canada and Alaska gathered to address Arctic sovereignty. On 7 November, International Inuit Day, we expressed unity in our concerns over Arctic sovereignty deliberations, examined the options for addressing these concerns, and strongly committed to developing a formal declaration on Arctic sovereignty. We also noted that the 2008 *Ilulissat Declaration* on Arctic sovereignty by ministers representing the five coastal Arctic states did not go far enough in affirming the rights Inuit have gained through international law, land claims and self-government processes.

4.2 The conduct of international relations in the Arctic and the resolution of international disputes in the Arctic are not the sole preserve of Arctic states or other states; they are also within the purview of the Arctic's indigenous peoples. The development of international institutions in the Arctic, such as multi-level governance systems and indigenous peoples' organizations, must transcend Arctic states' agendas on sovereignty and sovereign rights and the traditional monopoly claimed by states in the area of foreign affairs.

4.3 Issues of sovereignty and sovereign rights in the Arctic have become inextricably linked to issues of self-determination in the Arctic. Inuit and Arctic states must, therefore, work together closely and constructively to chart the future of the Arctic.

We, the Inuit of Inuit Nunaat, are committed to this Declaration and to working with Arctic states and others to build partnerships in which the rights, roles and responsibilities of Inuit are fully recognized and accommodated.

On behalf of Inuit in Greenland, Canada, Alaska, and Chukotka
Adopted by the Inuit Circumpolar Council, April 2009

Patricia A.L. Cochran, ICC Chair

Edward S. Itta
ICC Vice-Chair, Alaska

Tatiana Achirgina
ICC Vice-Chair, Chukotka

Duane R. Smith
ICC Vice-Chair, Canada

Aqqaluk Lynge
ICC Vice-Chair, Greenland

Creating a shared space in the

Indigenous peoples have had good reasons to be concerned when it comes to environmental and conservation groups, writes CLIVE TESAR. WWF is now working to create a space in the Arctic where it is clear that ecosystems are not just about animals, but about people too.

IN DECEMBER last year, I was standing in a big tent in a public square in Copenhagen watching as Indigenous leaders from different parts of the Arctic passionately voiced their concerns about the impacts of climate change on their caribou and reindeer. The tent had been planned for, paid for, and staffed by WWF to ensure that climate change impacts on the Arctic got a hearing during the climate negotiations in the city. The presentation on caribou and reindeer had originally been planned for the negotiating centre, as a side event. However, by that point in the negotiations, organizers had shut out many of the people who would have been speaking, and even more of the people who might have listened. So they came to the WWF tent, and made their presentations to an overflow audience there – it was an overflow audience in a tent that held 250 people. At that moment, I was proud of the organization I had joined.

CLIVE TESAR is Head of Communications at WWF's International Arctic Programme and is currently also responsible for the organisation's work with Indigenous peoples. He grew up in Canada's Northwest Territories, and spent ten years travelling the Canadian Arctic as a reporter, producer and host for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. For ten years prior to joining WWF, he worked across the Arctic as a communications consultant for NGOs, Indigenous peoples' organisations, and governments.

For ten years prior to joining WWF, I had often worked for and with Indigenous peoples' organizations. I was very familiar with the concerns of Indigenous peoples when it came to environmental and conservation groups. They had good reason to be concerned. For instance, some environmental and animal rights groups had teamed up years before in a concerted effort to halt the hunting of seals. That led to the collapse of Inuit sealing as a profitable sideline that enabled Inuit to pursue traditional lifestyles. For instance, in northern Canada Inuit used to sell thousands of seal-skins, the by-products of a sustainable subsistence hunt. Inuit still hunt seals in northern Canada – they need the meat. But the skins are no longer saleable, undermining the economics of the hunting culture. Even now, there is sometimes conflict between well-meaning environmental initiatives and Indigenous peoples; for instance Saami in northern Sweden are concerned about the impacts of a large wind farm on their traditional pasturing areas.

One of the reasons I joined WWF as opposed to any other organization was that it has big visions for the Arctic. It understood the coming threats of climate change to the Arctic. It understood that these threats could wipe out entire ecosystems, from the tiniest life-forms to the largest. It had plans to tackle the threats, both in terms of preventing them, and in adapting to them. But what really differentiated WWF from anyone else working in the Arctic, was that it also understood that ecosystems are not just about animals, but about people too. In the Arctic, this means largely Indigenous peoples, who have lived in the region for hundreds of years, for thousands of years, or as some Indigenous peoples put it "since time immemorial". These people are not just residents of the Arctic, they are part of it – it has formed them, and they have formed it, as they pursued their hunting, fishing, and herding lifestyles. To deal with the changes in arctic ecosystems means dealing with the people who live there, as part of the system, respecting their knowledge of the system, and their place in it.

So how can arctic peoples be assured that this time it is different, that WWF is unlike some of the other organizations and will treat them fairly? One way is to look back at history. WWF has a history of working in the Arctic that goes back to the 1970s, when it began working with Inuit in the Canadian Arctic to conserve areas that were important to local people, and important to humanity. In 1996, WWF first

"To deal with the changes in arctic ecosystems means dealing with the people who live there, as part of the system, respecting their knowledge of the system, and their place in it.

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developed its statement of principles on Indigenous peoples, a document that was revised in 2008. This provides Indigenous peoples with predictability on how they will be treated by WWF. The principles clearly state WWF's support for Indigenous peoples to exercise land, governance, and resource rights on their traditional territories. They also speak of the place of traditional knowledge in decision-making, and the right of Indigenous peoples to be consulted before WWF undertakes any conservation activities on their traditional lands. These principles are how Indigenous peoples can be assured that WWF will treat them fairly: the principles provide a form of accountability – wherever we work, we can be held accountable to the words in the principles.

Building on the principles, what WWF is now trying to create in the Arctic is a metaphorical version of the arctic 'big tent' that we erected in Copenhagen - we are looking to create a space that Indigenous peoples and conservation organizations can share. We are taking practical steps to achieve this. For instance, we have contributed and continue to contribute to helping Indigenous peoples bring their concerns about the changing Arctic to wider audiences (see the brief piece of the Indigenous peoples' global summit on climate change as an example). In some Canadian arctic communities this summer, we will help communities deal with conflict with polar bears by helping pay for bear proof areas to store food.

Photo: WWF

Indigenous people speaking in WWF's Arctic Tent of the changes to caribou and reindeer populations.

Despite having many common interests, WWF will not always have the same opinions as Indigenous peoples. How could we hope to have, given the diversity of opinion within the world, and the diversity between Indigenous peoples? But we are creating a space where Indigenous peoples can be assured that WWF will be sensitive to their points of view, where they will be consulted if our efforts affect them, and where they can hold us accountable. Indigenous peoples will be an essential part of this space, the 'big tent' of people working to ensure the Arctic in which they and their parents grew up will become an Arctic their children will recognize and enjoy. ○

Indigenous peoples' summit on climate change

By CLIVE TESAR

Just over a year ago, WWF helped support the first ever Indigenous peoples' summit on climate change. We also convened a panel session on how non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Indigenous peoples can better work together on climate issues. More than 200 people gathered in Anchorage, Alaska to share stories and strategies.

WWF sees Indigenous peoples as key allies in promoting international action on climate change. The very direct relationship with the environment experienced by some Indigenous people makes them able to tell people about the changes they are experiencing in that environment. At the summit, speakers from the South Pacific spoke of their crops withering in the heat, delegates from the Caribbean spoke of living in fear of increasingly violent and frequent storms, and people from the Arctic spoke of the sudden, sometimes deadly unpredictability of time worn travel routes.This authentic experience of change is more effective than scientific studies in persuading people of the reality of climate change. We need this more than ever today, as recent polls show that fewer people in several countries are now questioning whether climate change is real.

In addition to highlighting the reality of change, I believe Indigenous peoples have an important role to play in catalyzing a response to that change. By reaching across national borders, and acting as a concerted group, they can help exert pressure at the international meetings that must ultimately help coordinate a global response to a global problem. As Indigenous speaker Winona LaDuke told the Summit: "We are a fortunate people, we have a shot at making a difference."

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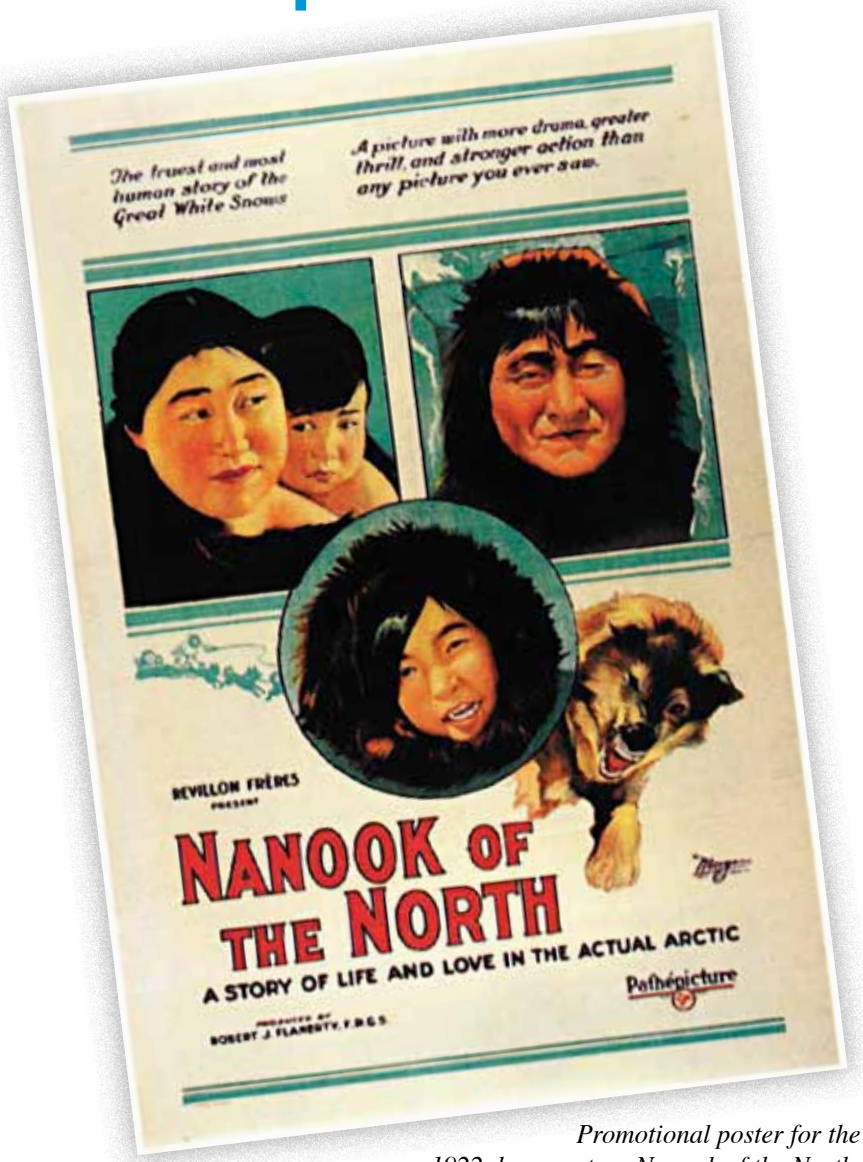
The Picture



Promotional poster for the 1922 documentary Nanook of the North.

Nanook of the North

Nanook of the North is a 1922 silent documentary film by Robert J. Flaherty, capturing the struggles of the Inuk Nanook and his family in the Canadian Arctic. The film was one of the first to document the lives of Inuit and set the image of the Inuit for generations. In 1989, *Nanook of the North* was one of the first 25 films to be selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant".
(Source: Wikipedia)