

Climate Change: Papers from the Conference

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The following series of twelve papers on northern climate change arose from a call for papers to complement discussions at the March 2001 Circumpolar Climate Change Summit in Whitehorse, Yukon. I am extremely pleased by the quality and diversity of papers we received in response to this call, and I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to all of the authors who submitted papers and reviewers who supplied thoughtful comments and suggestions. I believe this collection succeeds in furthering our understanding of northern climate change, and will strengthen the foundation upon which deliberate actions on the climate change across the circumpolar North will be based.

The first two articles explore broad directions for climate change policy in northern Canada. "An Exploration of Potential Directions for Climate Change Policy" provides information, suggestions and a possible framework for developing integrated climate change policy options, and discusses the need for coherent regional public policies. Newton and Burton argue that if Northerners are to cope effectively with the potential impacts of climate change, it is important that a better understanding of what may happen and what is already happening is achieved, as well as what precautionary actions can be taken now and what actions will be required in the long term be determined. Morrison, in his note "Adapt or Mitigate" expands on this discussion by pointing out some potential conflicts and incentive problems that might arise in a northern response to climate change. He discusses the inherent tradeoff between the notion of action aimed at adapting to climate change and actions at mitigating the causes of climate change in the North.

The next two papers arose from the project led by the NCE that reviewed available information on climate change impacts in northern Canada. The aim of this project was to compile available information into a single database, and to analyze where there is information and where there are gaps in our understanding. The project provides northern communities, researchers and policy makers with a number of tools to assist with setting priorities for climate change research, monitoring, technological development, and policy development. Gill et al. provides an overview of the project. Duerden focuses his discussion on what we know, what we don't know and what we need to know about climate change and human activity in northern Canada.

The papers by Ogden and Maissan focus on climate change activities in the Yukon. Ogden summarizes another NCE project, "ExChanging Ideas on Climate Change." The NCE discussed climate change with individuals and organisations in communities across the Yukon during the summer and fall of 2000. This work was a follow-up to the May 2000 NCE workshop "Taking Action on Climate Change in the Yukon" where participants recommended the NCE visit Yukon communities to record community observations on climate change, and discuss what should be accomplished in the Yukon to tackle climate change in the short and long term. Maissan provides a concrete example of successful technology adaptation in his paper on "Wind Power Development in Subarctic Conditions." The author provides an account of the steps that were taken by Yukon Energy to overcome problems with severe rime icing on commercial wind generating equipment.

The seventh article is text from the presentation given by Gaillard during the opening plenary that discusses the issue of "Canada's Sovereignty in Changing Arctic Waters." Gaillard debunks concerns that Canadian sovereignty is in peril because the permanent arctic ice cover is receding. He explains that Canadian sovereignty over lands and waters of the Arctic is firmly entrenched in law, and does not change whether or not the waters are covered with ice. He also explains that any future increase commercial shipping in and through the Arctic waters will need to obey Canadian law by virtue of historic title.

The final five papers discuss climate change issues in other regions of the circumpolar North. Käyhkö provides perspective from the Finnish Global Change Research Programme on global change science, and argues that a revolutionary approach to research is required. He explains that the environmental, social, economic, moral and ethical dimensions of climate change establish a need to integrate environmental science and socio-economic research.

Sulyandziga and Vlassova explain that climate change is not a priority topic for many indigenous peoples of the Russian North. However, the sustainable development of traditional lifestyles is a dominant concern, and the authors argue that climate change dialogue in this region needs to be presented within the context of traditional indigenous philosophy which has a holistic view of the five elements, or spheres, of human activity (spiritual, cultural, social, economic and natural).

Speranskaya provides perspective on the role of Russian non-governmental organizations (RNGOs) in prevention of global climate change, and on how to reach clarity on joint-implementation (JI) projects in Russia. In her first paper, she explains that RNGOs have not been broadly involved in climate change discussions, either nationally or internationally. Recognizing the value of this form of dialogue, EcoAccord convened a workshop that re-

sulted in the creation of a new RNGO coalition on climate change. Speranskaya's second paper introduces the Russian National Energy Strategy and discusses the role of RNGOs in promoting the establishment of a centralised system to coordinate reporting and evaluation of JI projects. Toivinen and Koulikovskaya continue this discussion through an exploration of international transfer mechanisms within the Kyoto Protocol framework for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The authors suggest that existing Russian federal law "About Agreements of Product Sharing" provides a mechanism for the negotiation, transfer and trading under the Protocol.