

**Declaration on Climate Change
from Youth of the Arctic**



We, youth from the Circumpolar North, realize that the world is facing a threat unlike anything ever experienced before in human history. Here in the Arctic, where the impacts of climate change are happening at an accelerated rate, we feel our physical environment, our culture, and our spirituality, are being disrupted.

Sea ice is melting, coastlines are exposed and degrading, and species are at risk. Communities are being forced to give up land based traditions and Traditional Knowledge is being lost. Indigenous Peoples 'ways of being' continue to be threatened.

Our ecosystems are disturbed; we are vulnerable.

The science surrounding our changing climate has now existed for the same amount of time that we have been alive. Arguing the validity of climate change science is no longer worthwhile— it is now time to act – and act with conviction.

We are supporting research on impacts, mitigation and adaptation to climate change. We are encouraging our peers and our communities to become informed and engaged. Individually, we are taking responsibility for our actions. By reducing our personal greenhouse gas emissions, engaging in activities with lower environmental impacts, and making conscious choices, we are reflecting the world we want to live in.

We are challenging fossil fuel development such as the proposed drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska, United States, the proposed Mackenzie Gas Project in the Northwest Territories of Canada and oil drilling in the Lensky region of Russia's Sakha Republic.

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We see the importance of taking steps now to lay a foundation for change that will reach far into the future.

The global community has come a long way in a short time. Thank-you to the United Nations for its Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Kyoto Protocol is a step in the right direction. Thank you for the considerable work carried out by the International Panel on Climate Change.

Thank you to the Arctic Council for the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment and to Snowchange for their conference on Northern Indigenous and Local Community observations of Climate and Ecological Change. These provide critical insight and raise international awareness about the situation of the North.

However, we are concerned that the work being done is not enough.

We are concerned that science is not being met with awareness, and plans are not being met with action. More effort needs to be invested by individuals, communities, and governments, if the world is to reduce or reverse the impacts of climate change. We are concerned that the public at large is still unaware and uncertain of the threats of climate change. How can people be motivated to take positive action unless they understand the urgency of the situation?

The economy should no longer come before health and well being.

Full cost accounting, or more socially and ecologically based accounting mechanisms should be developed and integrated. Long-term vision needs to be incorporated into climate change response plans, recognizing that political and business timelines are too short.

We would like to help you move forward with a multi-generational, multi-disciplinary vision: working together, leaders and youth can redesign how society operates. Together we can lobby for holistic education and climate change curriculum so that today's youth are not only climate change literate, but are equipped with the tools to act.

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The UN Decade of Education for Sustainability will end, but this task must not.

We would like you to encourage public awareness, youth involvement, and career development in the growth of closed loop industrial systems and Natural Capitalism models. Together, we can support growth in our communities by creating a diverse, no waste, solutions-based business framework that employs biomimicry.

We will learn to adapt to climate change in a way that considers the impacts of our solutions on the seven generations ahead of us. Our generations are linked, just as the Arctic is linked to the rest of the world. Choices made in the present will exponentially affect the future.

We are willing to make a difference and we challenge you to do the same.

We call on you to help us build the economic, political, and cultural infrastructure necessary for a sustainable future.

We offer you our vision of a strong North and a positive world.

If you protect the Arctic, you protect the world.

