

## Session 2 - The Pace of Change

### Session Theme

*“The conference will consider the nature and rate of change anticipated in the economic, environmental and social state of affairs in Yukon, NWT, Nunavut, Nunavik and Nunatsiavut to 2030. What do demographic, social, cultural, economic and environmental trends tell us about the Canadian north in 20 years time?”*

### Session Paper Author

Dr. Oran Young, Donald Bren School of Environmental Science and Management, University of California

### Panel Members

Dr. Chris Southcott, Chair & Research Director, Social Economy Research Network for Northern Canada

Stephen Kakfwi, Kakfwi & Associates,  
former Premier of the Northwest Territories

John Crump

Ron Cruikshank, Director, Yukon Land Use Planning Group

### Summary of Session Paper – The Pace of Change - Dr. Oran Young

Dr. Young focused the audience on two concepts. First, that the Arctic has experienced two state changes during the past 25 years (one in the late 80s/early 90s; the other in the 2000s to present). Second, that each of these state changes has major consequences for governance and policy making in the Arctic.

He defined “state change” as a sharp shift or flip in a complex and dynamic system. It tends to be non-linear, often happens abruptly, and is typically irreversible. State changes arise following tipping points and are easier to recognize in retrospect than in advance. He also suggests that “good crises are too valuable to waste” – there are opportunities in them.

Examples of state changes include collapse of USSR and collapse of cod fisheries.

The first state change (late 80s/early 90s) was driven by the end of the Cold War, collapse of the Soviet Union, and resulted in the “reconnection of two halves of the circumpolar Arctic”, namely the Soviet side and the North American/NATO side. It is represented in the iconic 1987 speech by Gorbachev in Murmansk declaring an “Arctic zone of peace”. Major consequences of the change include the unleashing of pan-Arctic cooperation, circumpolar cooperation, the AEPS, conceptualization of the Arctic as a distinct region, and the emergence of new non-state voices (e.g., the Arctic Council).



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This is best described as a “delinking and decoupling” kind of state change, wherein the Arctic emerged as a distinct policy agenda and various cooperative arrangements and initiatives were developed (e.g., IASC, AEPS, AC, NF, BEAR, IPS). Most initiatives featured capacity building and emphasized the growth of knowledge in contrast to regulatory initiatives – the goal was to grow and improve scientific knowledge and change the way people think since these cooperative bodies had no authority to make rules or enforce regulations.

The second state change began in the early 2000s and continues to this day. The major drivers are climate change, globalization, and the opening of the Arctic to outside interests. The iconic moment of this state change was the release of the 2004 Arctic Climate Change Impact Assessment Report. The consequences of this change, which is still unfolding, include the rise of new economic interests, energy, shipping, fishing and tourism in the North. There is a growing prominence of outside actors active in shaping Northern affairs and the emergence of contentious issues (such as disputes over jurisdiction). The media is having a “field day” with depictions of the Arctic as undergoing “meltdown”, as the “perfect storm” and as vulnerable to armed clashes over resources.

Whereas the first state change resulted in a “decoupling” process, the second state change can be described as a “linking” change. The implications for governance include shifting views regarding who the legitimate stakeholders are (e.g., conflicts over whether the Arctic 5, Arctic 8, or outside actors such as China and the EU are legitimate stakeholders in Arctic matters). Dr. Young argues that Canada will have to address the claims of actors like the EU and China, and can’t simply ignore them. There has, belatedly, been a politicization of the Arctic policy agenda as new actors aim to intervene. There has been a tendency to marginalize the innovations of the 1990s, such as the Arctic Council, as other powers shape the agenda. New regulatory arrangements are now needed (e.g., a Polar Code for Arctic shipping). The Arctic Council has limited authority in this realm and is not likely to get increased authorities any time soon. But there is a need for a regulatory regime, not simply voluntary guidelines.

***Whither the Arctic?*** Dr Young argues that the Arctic currently hangs in the balance between two possible outcomes. First, there is a risk of a slide towards high politics, conflict, confrontation, jurisdictional battles, and a new “Great Game” of geopolitical tension in the region. But there is also the possibility of an alternative, and that is to emphasize the Arctic as a complex, dynamic system, to engage in cross-border collaboration and eco-based management, to ensure non-state actors have important roles, and to pursue sustainable development, not just environmental protection.

To make the latter possibility come to fruition requires choice and purposeful action at all levels, from the individual to the highest levels of national and international government. Dr. Young expects that a regulatory framework will gradually be established in different sectors, and ideally an ecosystems-based management framework will guide this emergent regulatory regime.

*A complete copy of the paper can be found in PDF at [www.carc.org](http://www.carc.org) click on 2030 NORTH.*

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### Summary of Panel Comments – The Pace of Change

**Dr. Chris Southcott:** Dr. Southcott began by observing that the shifts that have occurred in the past 25 years, particularly globalization, have largely resulted in positive change for northerners. If one surveys social science research results from across the circumpolar North (i.e., the Arctic Community Development Report), there is a generally positive assessment of the impacts of globalization. There is a sense that globalization led to the empowerment of Indigenous peoples and has had generally positive outcomes.

Regarding the first state change mentioned by Oran, this is an important shift to understand and to welcome. Are we going through a second change? Dr. Southcott suggests that the elements are there to suggest so, but whether or not a shift happens remains to be seen. He said that he tends to think more positively. As someone who worked in the North in the 1970s and then in the 90s, it's hard to see a return to a previous era of high politics. Engagement of northern communities in their own affairs has shifted so much that he doesn't think communities would allow high politics to dominate, or to be left out of northern political affairs. As a social scientist in the 70s, Dr. Southcott said they used to tell people what they had to do, how they were going to research them. In the 1990s, communities tell researchers how they are going to engage in research.

In sum, while there is a risk of a high politics era emerging, Dr. Southcott argues that we must ensure that the process of empowerment continues and that northerners have increased capacity to deal with issues. If we continue to build capacity, empower communities, they will say, like Ed Schulz said this morning, "I don't think so" when faced with developments and policies they do not support.

**John Crump:** Mr. Crump began by clarifying that he is not here representing UNEP, but is instead conveying his personal thoughts and response to Dr. Young's paper.

He agrees with Oran's main arguments, but also adds that it's important to recognize that the state change we're going through is also dramatic globally. When climate change impact assessments were first developed, nobody expected Arctic to be the highlight of these reports. But today, there is a high level of understanding of the importance of climate change in the Arctic, even if that understanding is not deep enough and there has not been sufficient push for action.

Mr. Crump agrees that there are opportunities in state changes, and that this is not the time for business as usual in the Arctic. Instead, it is crucial to develop policies with allies and not in a vacuum. As found in a UNEP study two years ago into the impact of global climate change on ice and snow (including Arctic, Antarctic, and glaciers around the world), ice and snow melt affects billions of people around the world. These are not people without rights, cultures, and ideas about what needs to be done. How do you hear them? Who's listening? The international negotiation process is slow, "but it's the game we've got", so it's crucial that we focus on ensuring people gain access to climate change negotiations and that their rights are prioritized.

There are a number of organizations with interests in the Arctic. Mr. Crump discusses the Many Strong Voices program, which brings together groups from across the Americas, EU, South Pacific, and so on to exchange information and experience regarding adaptation to climate change. The organization shares knowledge across the regions and tries to raise awareness and influence the global climate change negotiation process.

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In sum, any Arctic policy has to have a global connection. We are in a new era. The Arctic Council has in some sense been surpassed by this new era, and it needs to be supported and strengthened as the “glue” that holds the Arctic states together. We need to strengthen the Arctic Council and look at mechanisms we can develop to guide governance in the coming years. There is nothing to be afraid of regarding opening doors to other countries and alliances. Canada has the opportunity to develop alliances between Arctic and other countries of the world. And finally, any policy development has to recognize that Canada is not seen to be serious in its commitments to the Kyoto Protocol, and this must be addressed.

**Ron Cruikshank:** Ron began by describing his relationship with Gwich'in Chief Hyacinthe Andre, and how he experienced the pace of change in the North firsthand, but maintained his integrity.

He described state changes in the Yukon and NWT, including the decline of caribou herds and efforts to manage this. He also described cultural state changes, triggered by residential schooling, and the positive changes flowing from the Land Claim agreements. He suggested that the Berger inquiry might represent a tipping point for governance in the NWT.

Ron suggested that there are six waves of change affecting the Yukon:

- Land Claims Agreements;
- Devolution;
- New Development Assessment;
- Regional Land Use Planning;
- Single Resource Management Plans; and
- The big project such as oil and gas development in the Yukon.

He commented that change is not always progressive – sometimes we deteriorate to a lower state, and change is not always linear. What other types of change affect the North? What changes are specific to the Arctic? He doubts whether either ecosystem-based management or high politics will prevail – there will likely be a mix of the two.

Ron also commented that if state change is irreversible, then predicting it is very important. They have tried to do this in the Yukon with their caribou herds, and have development threshold-based planning methods to manage caribou according to decisions about habitat incursion.

He asked: ***What is not changing in the North? Do a series of state changes lead to system transformation? When will the Arctic not be the Arctic?***

Finally, he concluded by noting that for Chief Hyacinthe, the loss of language, culture, and harvesting capacities would have greatly upset him.

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**Stephen Kakfwi:** Mr. Kakfwi began by observing that in his short life he has seen a lot of changes. He has seen the world from the top as a premier, through meetings with the prime minister, and also from the “floor level” of the Gold Range bar in Yellowknife. It is a blessing to appreciate the perspective of politicians, business people, people that live on street, young people, and the last of the traditional chiefs.

He noted that his family adopted a boy according to Dene practices about 20 years ago, and named him “a man without arrows” (Keenan). He mentioned this because this boy was born at the time Gorbachev was on the world stage and beginning the endings of the Cold War and tearing down of the Berlin Wall. He and his wife thought that surely there is hope that the coming generation of young people could take us on the road that Sheila was talking about last night – a world without war, where northerners lead and manage the North, a cooperative, benevolent world that is different than anything that has been done before. It is essential that Arctic peoples be fully recognized, empowered, and take the lead.

They named their son in the hopes that in his lifetime his name would become emblematic of not needing to belittle, classify, berate, but instead recognize gifts. We do not need war. That Arctic is a last frontier, and we can choose to do something different there, to reverse waste and pollution. In short time that mankind has been on this earth, it hasn’t taken us very long to bring the world to the brink. All the other animals are fine. The Earth was in great shape until we came along. We can do something about it.

**“My Berlin Wall is still up”.** Although apartheid was dismantled in South Africa, for me it is still here in Canada. If there is any possibility to do something in a real way, control has to be with Inuit and other northern Indigenous peoples.

We need empowerment. Over the last fifty years we have been shackled, discriminated against, and held back by the policies of this country. But during that time we have changed the constitution, changed the map of Canada, and have done so with the federal government and INAC fighting us every inch of the way. We cannot have a policy, or an opportunity to do something real and positive in the Arctic unless Inuit and First Nations are truly free and allowed to take the lead. We have to be empowered. We can’t have Canada saying “it’s our resources, we’ll decide, we’ll consult”. This attitude has to dramatically change. We cannot afford to go into this next millennium with the Indian Act still intact. The government is still colonial in the North, the people do not control their resources and do not have the money to effectively run programs. We can’t do it without these things. That is what my message is. If we are going to do something positive we cannot let Ottawa be in charge anymore.

Canada needs to change its attitude quickly. It is Canada that needs reshaping, not the North. Canada needs an attitude adjustment.

We have to get rid of the Indian Act and Indian Affairs.

Give the North the resources and empowerment to become truly liberated.

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### **Recommendations from Presentation and Panel – The Pace of Change**

1. Establish a regulatory regime based on an Ecosystems Based Management framework that emphasizes the Arctic as a complex, dynamic system:
  - Engage in cross-border collaboration.
  - Ensure non-state actors have important roles.
  - Pursue sustainable development, not just environmental protection.
2. Ensure that the process of empowerment continues and that northerners have increased capacity to deal with issues and reject inappropriate development and policies:
  - It is essential that Arctic peoples be fully recognized, empowered, and take the lead.
  - Control has to be with Inuit and other northern Indigenous peoples.
  - Focus on ensuring people gain access to climate change negotiations and that their rights are prioritized.
  - Northern people need control over resources.
  - Get rid of the Indian Act and Indian Affairs.
  - Give the North the resources and empowerment to become truly liberated.
3. Support and strengthen Arctic Council the glue that holds Arctic states together and develop alliances between Arctic and Non-arctic States.
4. Canada must demonstrate a serious commitment to Kyoto and its successor.

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### **Recommendations from Small Discussion Groups – The Pace of Change**

Three questions were posed to lead the Small Group Discussion, based on the presentations, the discussions and your own experience:

1. What are the essential components of a Northern Strategy related to governance that will guide Canada forwards to the year 2030?
2. What additional public policy issues need to be addressed for an effective Northern Strategy?
3. What specific action or policy recommendations are critical to a future northern governance strategy, and who should take the lead in implementing them?

### **Recommendations**

The main theme emerging from the discussion groups was that devolution of decision-making power from the federal government to the territorial and indigenous governments should continue. Northerners need to be empowered to manage their own affairs.

Many groups commented on the need to build capacity among northerners while cautioning against the continued idea that northerners are not yet “ready” to govern themselves. It is the aspiration of the discussion groups that by 2030 issues of governance and questions of funding and responsibility will be resolved.

Many groups commented on the need to move beyond consultation models towards empowerment and co-management. Consultation does not ensure meaningful engagement of northern priorities or empower northerners to manage themselves. In particular, empower northern governments to control their own resources rather than have them controlled by federal government. Devolution of federal powers to territories also includes moving from INAC to territorial leadership.

Although most discussion groups focused on national and regional governance issues, the themes are applicable to international arenas as well. Namely, Indigenous peoples need to be integrated as full partners in decision-making at all levels. This requires a change of attitude about the capacities and role of Northerners. Stephen Kakfwi is calling for decolonization of the Arctic.

Finally, many groups focused on education, training, and capacity building in the North as crucial to resolving governance issues.

1. Foreign Policy:
  - Bring back the Arctic Ambassador.
  - Increase the role and strength of the Arctic Council.
  - Worry less about Arctic waterway traffic and more about people.
  - Focus our foreign policy on issues of human security rather than sovereignty.

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### 2. Domestic Issues:

- Empowerment and Capacity Building.
- Need to develop institutional memory – too much turnover and need to build capacity in house.
- Implement a more regularized high-level political meeting between the federal, territorial, and northern Aboriginal governments. The federal government needs to work in collaboration with empowered territorial and Aboriginal governments.
- The attitude of big government towards the north has to change. Let Northern people handle their basic decisions, stop the patronizing approach and belief that big government, top-down management is the way to govern the North.
- Decrease bureaucracy and streamline processes without compromising community input and engagement.
- Develop capacity so that northerners hold the majority of business and government positions in the North. This includes education and training. But, it is also important that devolution is not hampered by the notion that northerners are not yet “ready” to manage their own affairs. They are ready and require the funds, training, and empowerment to do so. If capacity is not there, it can be purchased.
- Subsidize travel within and to/from the North to facilitate participation in national programs, discussions, meetings, etc.

### 3. Federal government must implement existing commitments in land claims agreements:

- Provide adequate funding to do this.
- Co-management is more effective than consultation models. Ensure meaningful northern and northern Indigenous representation in the management of resources and land use planning.

### 4. Education and Training:

- Shift focus from doing research in the North to providing training in the North.
- Be more sensitive to cultural issues when northerners relocate to receive training.
- Shift focus from doing research in the North to providing training in the North.
- Provide community-based education that includes youth, Elders, families, etc.
- Encourage qualified northerners to stay in the North.
- Develop different models of education to suit northern needs, including suited to mature students, experiential knowledge, culturally relevant.

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- Strengthen and develop University of the Arctic to be better suited to northern issues, concerns, and needs. Design it within the North to ensure it is effective and supported.
5. Economic Development:
- Revise and rethink federal plans to implement a Northern Economic Development Agency. This duplicates already existing economic planning and development capacities in the North and risks sidelining hard-fought northern jurisdiction over their own affairs. Also, a lot of money that could go elsewhere.
  - Develop entrepreneurship opportunities with grants and loan programs.
  - Develop subsidies to encourage business in the North.
6. Give the North legislative powers and jurisdiction over resources.

### **Recommendations for the Conference Conveners about 2030 NORTH**

- Build meaningful consultation and opportunities for feedback into the process (unlike this conference and how it is structured). This is highly contested material and there has not been enough opportunity for feedback and audience response.
- The questions should be different for each discussion session.