

Closing Comments

Session 1 In the Grip of Climate Change

Dr. Rob Huebert

SESSION THEME - *“Presentations and discussion were to focus on the range and cumulative effects of climate change impacts, the promise and limits of adaptation, and the role of the Canadian and circumpolar Arctic in developing and implementing national and global climate change policy. Particular interest devoted to adaptation strategies concerning wildlife and habitat; non-renewable resource development; community infrastructure; people, culture and society; and territorial, provincial, federal and international obligations.”*

Dr. Huebert made three major points:

1. The transformational nature of the Arctic: it is changing in every conceivable manner, and old ways of doing things will no longer suffice.
2. Any policy, domestic or international, Arctic or northern, has to be centred on those Canadians who call the Arctic home. This includes northern Canadians, with special acknowledgement of the northern indigenous peoples who have lived in the North since time immemorial. It is not a question of the south “rescuing” or “curing” the problems of the North, but rather working in partnership with Canadians who live in the region.
3. The time has come for Canadians to look for the Big Idea for responding to the challenges of the north. The transformational nature of the challenges coming forward require that we do not resort to ad hoc, piecemeal, incremental and reactive policies. We need to think big, we need to think beyond boundaries, and we must be bold.

CARC has a history of being able to facilitate this, as we know in the development of some of the ideas that led to the creation of the Arctic Council. It was in fact the participation of individuals such as Mary Simon and Franklyn Griffiths in meetings organized by CARC (as recorded in Northern Perspective) by which the idea of a Circumpolar Treaty was first examined and propagated. We are now in a time where it is necessary to start putting together such thinking again. ***Canada needs to be at the forefront, not merely reacting to the actions of others as the Arctic is transformed.***



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Session 2 The Pace of Change

Dr. Oran Young

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?”*

Dr. Young explained that there is more than one type of change. We are today operating in a very special context as regards the nature of change. Change can be daunting; can generate a sense of crisis. But changes provide opportunities as well—to change the status quo, break out of business as usual. We do not get this opportunity very often. He stressed four points:

1. Seize the opportunity. This window of opportunity will not remain open for long.
2. Domestic options or policies that should be tackled: completing the transition towards a new social contract. For example, devolution and implementation plans.
3. The international scene and the role Canada can play in this regard. Essentially there are two directions we can go in: one is highly militarized and the other involves sustainable, cooperative development.
4. Starting now to prepare for 2030. Initiate the process now.

Recommendation: launch a process today!

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Session 3 Land Claims Agreements

John Donihee

SESSION THEME - *“Implementing northern comprehensive land claims and Aboriginal self-government agreements: can we get it right? Poorly understood in southern Canada, these historic compacts between Canada and northern Aboriginal peoples are the foundation of economic and social development in the North; they create important obligations concerning consultation, accommodation, partnership and accountability. The conference will also examine the concepts of sovereignty in the context of these agreements.”*

John Donihee reiterated that land claims are connected to everything.

As land claims are complex documents, it is essential for Aboriginal youth to be educated and trained to prepare them for positions in the area of land claims and implementation.

It is critical for government employees and businesses to be educated about land claims as well.

There needs to be development of a pool of capital that cannot be moved anywhere else that northerners can access. This is integral to a renewed northern strategy.

Land Claims are not just part of the policy puzzle, they affect all activities in the north. They are legally enforceable, constitutional documents. Our approach has to be respectful and inclusive of those who hold the rights or else they might fight back.

The manner in which we approach the strategy must be carefully considered, taking into account the personalities and roles involved.

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Session 4 A Northern Science Policy

Dr. David Hik

SESSION THEME - *“The conference will review the Northern science policies and practices of other circumpolar countries, and examine Canada’s history on northern science policy, including the recent IPY initiative. Discussion will focus on the key question of what needs to be done, at what cost, and by who, to establish a northern science policy in the context of Canadian and circumpolar needs and goals.”*

Science in the North can be likened to being on a trampoline. When you are up you get a beautiful glimpse of what is around you, but you are not always sure if the trampoline will be there when you come down.

He stressed the importance of linking the need with the conduct of research and science, and advancing education opportunities in the North. Science and technology underpin all four pillars:

1. Sovereignty
2. Economic and social development
3. Environmental protection
4. Governance

People of the North must take a lead role in shaping Canada’s research agenda. In “A Northern Vision: A Stronger North and a Better Canada”, Hicks stated that it is not sufficient to study the North from afar. There needs to be a focus on innovation, through new technologies that solve problems in the Canadian North and provide solutions to the rest of the circumpolar world.

He pointed to advances in engineering and life sciences, such as alternate mapping strategies; ice research and emergency evacuation; advanced medical diagnostic technologies; biochemistry of freeze resistance in northern marine species and bioactive molecules and stress tolerant genes in Arctic tundra plants.

“It will be embarrassing if in 10 years we are importing hydrogen fuel snowmobiles from Australia.”

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Session 5 Canada's North – A New Strategy

Dr. Franklyn Griffiths

SESSION THEME - *“An important outcome of the conference will be a renewal and expansion of the Northern dimension to Canada’s foreign policy. Co-operation between the eight Arctic states and Arctic Indigenous Peoples has been achieved through the Arctic Council, but what is this “high level forum” accomplishing? The conference will examine the meanings of “national interest” and “sovereignty” in the circumpolar world, the role of global conventions in a Northern context, and the pros and cons of a legally binding Arctic Ocean treaty between the Arctic states. Is compliance with existing treaties enough? What should a roadmap to 2030 look like?”*

Dr. Griffiths asserted that because Canada has never had to contend with neighbours who could break an alliance (besides the US) or other, similar eventualities, we are not accustomed to certain forms of strategy.

He explained that Canadians have no sense that we are in danger as a country. We are attached to the largest fire station in the world, so how much fire insurance should we buy? Not very much. As a country there is no pressure to develop a strategy.

The strategy should be a spear, an elegant thing. Instead we have a northern strategy that has four pillars, which is totally immobile. It is not a strategy that can take us anywhere, other than building us a four-storey building.

Who needs a national strategy project? The Prime Minister? Who is to execute this strategy?

Many good proposals have resulted from this conference, but there is inadequate discussion as to how these demands will be realized. What is the strategy for implementation? It is rather like land claims; there needs to be a strategy for implementation of a strategy. We should be thinking about this for the future.

Dr. Griffiths believes we need to have a two-way strategy: a Northern strategy and an Arctic strategy.

He explained that in Canada, we have possession anxiety; a “use it or lose it” mentality is not appropriate. He is not certain whether stewardship or sovereignty are words that should be used.

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Closing Remarks Tony Penikett, Conference Co-chair

Mr. Penikett thanked all participants and staff that assisted in putting on the conference and providing their knowledge and recommendations. He assured the delegates that all material from the conference will be synthesized, compiled and available on the 2030 North website as soon as possible.

Closing Remarks John Amagoalik, “The Father of Nunavut”

John Amagoalik was five years old when the relocation of the Inuit from Northern Quebec took place. He spoke to the five session topics covered during the conference:

In the Grip of Climate Change: yes we are! Let’s get on with finding solutions.

Pace of Change: for us it has been very fast, and is becoming even faster. The only constant is change itself.

Land Claim Agreements: implement, implement and implement again.

Science and Research in the Canadian Arctic: If you want to do science and research, you are welcome. Don’t harm the wildlife and environment. When you have done your work, please share your findings. When you leave, please take your garbage with you.

Canadian Arctic Sovereignty: It is a very complex issue. What does it look like in the North? You are looking at it.

Mr. Amagoalik then thanked the delegates.