

# 2030 NORTH

## **Changes Inside, Outside North Need Quick Effective Response**

Canadians need to pay attention to the “new reality of the North” as the region is being transformed from the outside by climate change and from within, by new agreements.

That was the message from an important conference involving key northern and southern representatives. “2030 North” was organized by the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee (CARC), Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) and the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary.

“Canada’s North has become the focus of a complex set of domestic and international geopolitical forces,” said conference co-chair and ITK president, Mary Simon. “And, all Canadians need to pay attention to that new reality.”

“The changes to and in the north have not just local, but national and international effects, and make the Arctic central to the future of Canada,” says co-chair and former Yukon Premier, Tony Penikett. “The scale of change requires action, urgency, and leadership. Canadians’ choice is to harness change, or to be swamped by it. If we do not want to be swamped, we need an integrated transparent and coherent vision for the Canadian North.”

The conference participants concluded that there are immediate actions that need to be taken. For instance, since climate change is driving so many of the changes in the north, Canada needs to have a position ready to take to Copenhagen next December that will help reduce global greenhouse gas emissions to a level that will minimize changes to the region.

Recommendations from the conference also included the need to adjust to the settlement of northern claims. Canada should take immediate steps to begin to properly implement the settlements--this is relevant to both aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians. These claims settlements also set new patterns for governance, and they are the basis for a new economic engine of the north.

Conference participants said it is important for Canada to get its own northern affairs in order as it prepares to take on the role of chairing the eight-nation Arctic Council in 2013.

Another major part of this initiative, as identified by the conference participants, is to allow and enable local people in Canada’s north to govern locally. The federal role is to focus on the national and international level, investing strategically in northern governments. Northerners must set the agenda in other respects as well, such as the development of programs for scientific study.

In international relations, cooperation not conflict must be the dominant view. As many people at the conference stated, Canada’s claim to the north is through the people who live there and we

must strengthen the bonds that hold us, as arctic peoples, together. Participants said Canadians must also recognize the interests and influences of the rest of the world on the North, and of the north on the rest of the world. The north is not a sealed space, so we must allow a place for interests from outside the north in international discussions. Northerners also want a place in the international discussions to ensure that their interests are represented in Canada's international role.

The participants in the conference will now use all of the information gleaned over the three-day conference to generate a report setting out a strategy for further action.

**For more information:**

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