



## **Arctic Change - Global Effects**

### **Statement Prepared for Arctic Environment Ministers' Meeting**

Many environmental challenges face Arctic societies. The oft-entwined impacts of globalisation and climate change pose both threats and opportunities for the Arctic region, its local and indigenous people, living conditions and the state of natural environment.

Economic globalisation promotes the diversification and intensification of resource extraction in the Arctic, while climate change may increase the accessibility of such resources in some areas. Political globalization encourages the utilization of Arctic resources (including transportation routes) in the face of increased political tensions in other areas of the world and increased cooperation in the Arctic. Cultural globalization, encouraged by communications technologies, increases the social and cultural diversity of the Arctic, but can also threaten the erosion of cultural norms and values, as well as local languages.

Improving Arctic residents' quality of life and further developing Arctic human capital development must be prioritized above other considerations in decision-making regarding the Arctic and its linked socio-ecological systems, to help ensure their resilience in the face of future predicted and unpredictable changes.

Environmental challenges in the Arctic comprise a multiplicity of social facets, from underlying individual and group values and behavioral patterns in terms of both causal mechanisms and responses, to historical and political economic contexts, to name just a few. IASSA encourages increased international cooperation among scholars both within the social sciences, and in conjunction with natural and physical sciences with the goal of better understanding and addressing the multifaceted causal mechanism and potential for adaptation and social resilience.

Tradition and local knowledge, wisdom and practices need to be taken into account in understanding the unique Arctic environment. Involving local populations in research focused on understanding changing Arctic environments is critical. Decisions need to be consistent with their values, needs and desires for improving their quality of life as well as compatible protecting the unique ecosystems.

IASSA supports new initiatives of the Arctic Council such as ARR and EBM, as they are directed to sustainable Arctic, and encourages the promotion of educational opportunities linked to these projects, and the wide dissemination of the projects' findings.