
ARCTIC HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Arctic Human Development Report

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Foreword



It gives me great pleasure to present the ARCTIC HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT (AHDR), initiated at the Foreign Ministers meeting in Inari in the fall of 2002 as part of Iceland's Chairmanship programme in the Arctic Council.

The report represents the first comprehensive attempt to document and compare systematically the welfare of Arctic residents on a circumpolar basis. Building on the pioneering work of the Arctic Council on environmental issues, it seeks to expand our horizons by spotlighting the social, economic and cultural aspects of the lives of the people in the region. In this way, the Arctic Human Development Report should mark a substantial contribution to the work of the Arctic Council in the area of sustainable development.

From the time of its inception, the Arctic Human Development Report was an ambitious undertaking. Many obstacles, including gaps in knowledge, scarcity of data and the difficulty of coordinating the perspectives of local, regional and national contributors, had to be overcome within a very short period. Through the dedication and hard work of a great many people in the Member States and the Permanent Participants, an impressive milestone has been reached with the publication of the Arctic Human Development Report only two years later.

I would like to thank in particular the Co-Chairs of the Arctic Human Development Report Steering Committee, Professor Oran Young and Mr. Niels Einarsson for their skill and leadership in coordinating this challenging task. Lead authors and contributing authors all deserve to be congratulated on bringing the effort to fruition. Special thanks are due to Dr Joan Nymand Larsen, project manager of the Arctic Human Development Report Secretariat located at the Stefansson Arctic Institute in Akureyri as well as to Ms. Annika Nilsson, the project's science writer.

At a time when rapid change is sweeping through the North, it is my sincere hope that Member States will find in the Arctic Human Development Report a useful source of information and analysis as they seek to respond to the social, economic and cultural needs of Arctic residents in the coming years. The contents of the report should also pave the way for new research and stimulate general interest in issues of Arctic concern. To complete the picture and address major shortcomings in our knowledge of human conditions in the North, thought must now be given to appropriate follow-up in the framework of the Arctic Council.

In presenting the Arctic Human Development Report, I am keenly aware that the people responsible for the views expressed in the different chapters of the report are, in the first instance, the authors themselves. While mandated by governments, the report reflects neither the joint position of the Arctic Council nor the policies of its Member States. Such a disclaimer in no way detracts from the intrinsic value of the AHDR itself. On the contrary, by distinguishing between research and policy we are able to establish the synergy required for governments and the wider academic and research communities to work together in a purposeful manner. For it is only on the basis of an improved understanding of our circumstances in the Arctic that we can set about our task of building a better future.

Davíð Oddsson
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland
Chairman of the Arctic Council



Preface

This report is an integral part of the evolution of regional cooperation in the Arctic. The idea of carrying out an assessment of the state of human development in the Arctic viewed as a distinct region arose in large part from difficulties experienced in devising a coherent agenda for the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Programme. It is our hope that this report will not only make a direct contribution toward eliminating these difficulties but also set in motion ongoing activities that will strengthen the Council's work on sustainable development in the future.

Interest in joining a clearcut emphasis on sustainable development to the concern for environmental protection goes back to the early days of the Rovaniemi process. But for a number of reasons – political as well as technical – environmental protection became the central theme of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), while efforts to address issues of sustainable development lagged behind.

The 1996 Ottawa Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council reemphasized the theme of sustainable development, establishing a Sustainable Development Programme to complement the Environmental Protection Programme inherited from the AEPS. Yet this did not result immediately in a coherent program of activities dealing with sustainable development. Members of the Council adopted divergent approaches to this theme, and it took several years to launch a Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) with a mandate to devise a coherent program in this area.

At this stage, the Arctic parliamentarians became involved in the process. The Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR) assumed a leading role, launching an initiative resulting in a clear emphasis on human development in the Arctic at the Fourth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region in 2000 and a specific call for the preparation of an Arctic Human Development Report at the Fifth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region in 2002. As members of the SCPAR, Clifford Lincoln and Tomas Ingi Olrich were particularly effective champions of this initiative.

Shortly thereafter, in the ministerial declaration adopted in Inari in October 2002, the Arctic Council approved the preparation of the Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) as a "priority project" with the goal of developing a "comprehensive knowledge base" for the work of the Sustainable Development Programme. Iceland agreed to provide direction and material support for this work as a part of the 2002-2004 Icelandic chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

In this regard, we are happy to acknowledge the strong and consistent support for our work on the part of Gunnar Pálsson, who has chaired the Senior Arctic Officials, and Hugi Ólafsson, who has headed the SDWG, during the Icelandic chairmanship. We could not have carried out the project mandated in the Inari Declaration without their steady support and wise counsel.

The preparation of the AHDR has gone forward under the supervision of a Report Steering Committee (RSC) including representatives of all the members of the Arctic Council, all the Permanent Participants, and a sizable number of the accredited observers. The two of us have served as co-chairs of the RSC, one (Níels Einarsson) appointed by Iceland, the other (Oran Young) designated by the University of the Arctic. We have been joined in forming a four-member Executive Committee by Ingvild Broch of the University of Tromsø and Rune Fjellheim of the Saami Council.

Joan Nymand Larsen has done an outstanding job as head of the AHDR Secretariat, located at the Stefansson Arctic Institute in Akureyri. We have been fortunate as well to have had the services of Annika Nilsson, a highly experienced science writer and editor who has a number of Arctic projects to her credit.

The result is a document that consists of eleven substantive chapters together with a summary of major findings, an introduction, and a conclusion. The AHDR does not constitute a negotiated document whose content has been agreed to by all those who have worked on it. Each of the substantive chapters has been prepared by one or more lead authors who have benefited in every case from input provided by a number of contributing authors. As co-chairs of the RSC, we have prepared both the introduction and the conclusion.

Each substantive chapter is signed by one or more lead authors who take responsibility for the content of the chapter. Nonetheless, the report is a coherent document. We have structured the chapters to provide an integrated picture of the state of human development in the circumpolar Arctic; we asked all lead authors to use a common template in order to produce substantive chapters that are parallel with regard to the approach they adopt and the topics they cover. At the same time, there is some variation among the chapters. While many provide surveys of well-established fields of study, others (e.g. the chapters on education and gender relations) deal with emerging issue areas and have a more preliminary character.

The preparation of the AHDR has proceeded in a transparent manner. All the chapters have been subjected to peer review at least once and often several times; the acknowledgements list all those who served as peer reviewers. Members of the RSC have also had an opportunity to review and comment on drafts of the individual chapters which have been made available for review on the SDWG website. Of course, this does not guarantee that the materials included in individual chapters are free of errors and questionable interpretations. But we can say with assurance that the report has been thoroughly vetted both by knowledgeable scientists and by representatives of the members of the Arctic Council, the Permanent Participants, and other stakeholders.

Naturally, readers will make their own judgments about the quality of the product and about the usefulness of the AHDR as a knowledge base for the work of the SDWG. For our part, we see the report as an initial step in an ongoing process. It provides a point of departure, a baseline for measuring changes over time and for comparing conditions in the Arctic with those prevailing elsewhere.

The report articulates a number of policy-relevant conclusions, lifts out success stories relating to human development in the Arctic, and identifies gaps in knowledge needing attention in the future. Ideally, the SDWG should revisit many of the topics addressed in the AHDR at regular intervals. This would provide the basis for tracking trends in human development in the Arctic and evaluating the performance of policies designed to address issues of human development from a regional perspective. Additionally, the SDWG may wish to consider launching new efforts to improve our understanding of matters that are not well understood at this time.

Niels Einarsson and Oran R. Young
Co-chairs, AHDR RSC



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Summary of Major Findings

The goal of the Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR), mandated in the 2002 Inari Declaration, is to provide "... a comprehensive knowledge base for the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Programme." This report provides a scientific assessment that fulfills this goal. To this end, the report deals with five major topics: (i) policy-relevant conclusions, (ii) success stories, (iii) gaps in knowledge, (iv) regional perspectives on human development and (v) follow up activities.

Policy-relevant conclusions

The AHDR covers a wide range of topics grouped into two broad categories: *basic systems*, encompassing Arctic demography, Arctic societies and cultures, Arctic economic systems, Arctic political systems, and Arctic legal systems and *crosscutting themes*, including resource governance in the Arctic, Arctic community viability, human health in the Arctic, Arctic education, gender relations in the Arctic, and Arctic international relations.

The report contains a large number of policy-relevant conclusions. But two broad propositions stand out:

- ✓ Arctic societies have a well-deserved reputation for resilience in the face of change. But today they are facing an unprecedented combination of rapid and stressful changes involving environmental processes (e.g. the impacts of climate change), cultural developments (e.g. the erosion of indigenous languages), economic changes (e.g. the emergence of narrowly based mixed economies), industrial developments (e.g. the growing role of multinational corporations engaged in the extraction of natural resources), and political changes (e.g. the devolution of political authority).
- ✓ The issues that dominate the Arctic agenda today typically involve institutional issues or matters of governance. These concerns arise at the local level (e.g. creating co-management regimes), the regional level (e.g. resolving frictions between public governments and indigenous peoples organizations, finding ways for county, state, and territorial governments to generate needed revenues), and the circumpolar level (e.g. sorting out relations between the Arctic Council and the Northern Forum).

Arctic success stories

There is no denying the existence of serious social problems in many parts of the Arctic. Yet it would be wrong to convey a sense of gloom and doom in addressing human development in this region. The problems are accompanied by genuine success stories, including the ability of Arctic peoples to retain a clear sense of cultural identity under considerable pressure, the effective use of advanced technologies in areas like telemedicine and the delivery of education, and the creation and refinement of innovative political and legal arrangements that are responsive to the needs of a range of stakeholders.

The important thing in this context is to strike a proper balance, recognizing the problems but at the same time celebrating the successes.

Gaps in knowledge

The AHDR is a scientific assessment. Its goal is to take stock of and synthesize all available knowledge pertaining to human development in the Arctic; it is not a report on the findings of new research.

In the process, the report has identified major gaps in knowledge that require attention in the near future in order to provide a firm basis for the development of the Sustainable Development Programme. Specifically, the report calls for a concerted effort to address the following topics:

- *Demography* – a regional demographic profile based on common data protocols,
- *Cultures and societies* – a better understanding of the effects of cumulative changes on cultural identity and social well-being,
- *Settlers* – more knowledge of the experiences of recent settlers and Arctic residents of mixed heritage,
- *Industry* – an enhanced understanding of the arrangements needed to ensure that modern industrial activities do not undermine community viability in the Arctic,
- *Governance* – a sustained effort to compare and contrast the results of institutional innovations introduced in different parts of the Arctic in recent years.

Regional perspectives on human development

Tools like the UN's Human Development Index (HDI) have become more sophisticated in recent years. There is no doubt, for instance, that the HDI, which includes measures of longevity and education levels as well as GDP per capita, is a far better measure of human development than GDP per capita alone.

Yet there is a need for measures of human development that are better suited to the conditions prevailing in a region like the Arctic. Partly, this is a matter of adjusting for regional conditions. School enrollments, for example, may not be a good measure of education in societies where subsistence hunting and gathering remain important and knowledge is passed on from one generation to another through experiential learning.

In part, it is a matter of identifying additional aspects of human development that are widely regarded as critical in a particular region. In the Arctic, human development is closely associated with:

- *Fate control* – guiding one's own destiny,
- *Cultural integrity* – belonging to a viable local culture,
- *Contact with nature* – interacting closely with the natural world.

Follow-up activities

The AHDR should be viewed as part of a process rather than an end in itself. A number of specific steps can and should be taken to follow up on this initial effort:

- *Dissemination, education and outreach* – The AHDR should be translated into other languages (e.g. Russian) and made available electronically to students and other interested parties,
- *Monitoring* – the SDWG should organize a workshop to devise a small number of indicators to be used in monitoring or tracking changes in human development in the Arctic over time,
- *Gaps in knowledge* – the SDWG should organize an off-the-record, brainstorming workshop to set priorities and identify procedures for addressing the gaps in knowledge identified in the AHDR,
- *International Polar Year planning* – Those involved in the IPY planning process should make use of the AHDR in developing an agenda for human dimensions research,
- *Arctic Human Development posters and pamphlet* – It would be helpful to encapsulate some of the main messages of the AHDR in a set of posters and a pamphlet for use in a variety of public settings.

