

## Arctic Environmental Security and Inuit Communities



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## Arctic Indigenous Peoples

Around 4 million people living in the Arctic (Arctic Human Development Report);

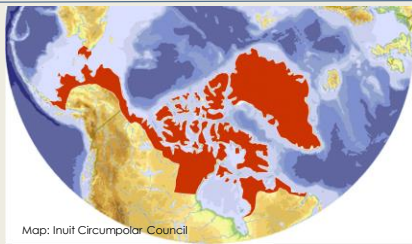
Over 40 ethnic groups live in the Arctic;

Approximately 10% of the total population is Indigenous.



Credit: Hugo Ahlenius, UNEP/GRID-Arendal

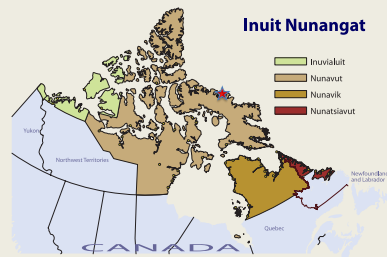
## Circumpolar Inuit Regions



Map: Inuit Circumpolar Council

- ≈ 155,000 Inuit worldwide
- ≈ 55,000 Inuit in Canada
- ≈ 51,000 in Greenland (+15K to 20K in Denmark)
- ≈ 13,500 Inupiat and 22,000 Yupik in Alaska
- ≈ 1,700 Inuit in Chukotka, Russia

## Circumpolar Inuit Regions



Inuit homeland, including land, water and ice

## What does security mean to Inuit?

“Security doesn't come from the comfort that some find in icebreakers, sonars, and military capabilities...”

Security from our societal perspective comes from access to the basic essentials of life: **food, shelter and water.**”

- Udlorak Hansen, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK 2013)



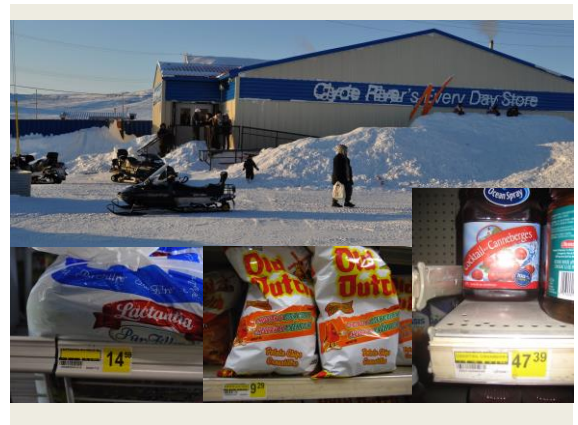
## Food Security in Clyde River, NU

Main subsistence species: Ringed seal, caribou, narwhal, Arctic char

Early 2000s: Nearly 2000 lb of ringed seal per household per year

Slight increase from 1980s, but over same period, population increase of 250 – 300% (Wenzel 1991, 2005)





### Food Security



Source: Alaskan Inuit Food Security Conceptual Framework: How to Assess the Arctic from an Inuit Perspective (ICC 2015)

### Threats to food security:

- Climate change (access/availability)
- Contaminants (quality)
- High cost of hunting equipment (access)
- Transmission of knowledge, lack of hunters (access)
- High cost of store-bought food (access)



## Water/Ice

"Life in the Arctic is dependent on movement, and sea ice is integral to that movement"

- The Sea Ice Is Our Highway (ICC 2008)



## Community-based sea ice monitoring



Photos: Shari Gearheard



### Knowledge co-production:

Collaborative development of knowledge by Indigenous knowledge holders and conventional scientists.

## Housing and Infrastructure



- Housing crisis in Nunavut – Majority of households live in public housing
- Waiting list of more than 2,000 households
- Many 2 – 3 bedroom units housing 3 generations

## Climate Change & Infrastructure

Severe storms & high wind events, coastal erosion:

- Houses and infrastructure repair, relocation needed

Permafrost melt:

- Slumping of housing, asphalt, bridges, other infrastructure

Wildfires:

- 2015 – Wildfires in Alaska equal to size of state of Massachusetts

Shipping, oil and gas infrastructure:

- Increased services, increased risk for wildlife/subsistence

## Housing and Infrastructure

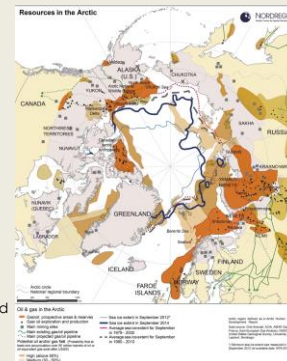


Shishmaref, Alaska



Tuktoyaktuk, NWT, Canada

## Resources & Infrastructure



Credit:  
Linus Rispling and  
Johanna Roto,  
NORDREGIO



### Strengthening Environmental Security

- Use precautionary principle in development, shipping – priority for harvesters
- Mitigate climate change
- Support adaptation (relocation, infrastructure)
- Address gaps in basic needs (housing, food)
- Support Indigenous knowledge transmission & cultural programs
- Devolve decision-making/ involve Arctic Indigenous residents
- Community-based monitoring/observing – need for local, baseline information