



NORWICH MODEL ARCTIC COUNCIL

NORWICH
DECLARATION

MARCH 2022

NORMAC

NORWICH DECLARATION

On the occasion of the Sixth Ministerial Meeting of the Norwich Model Arctic Council for Schools

1. **WE**, the Ministers of the Arctic States of the Norwich Model Arctic Council for Schools (NORMAC Schools), joined by representatives of the Indigenous Permanent Participant organisations of NORMAC Schools;
2. **HAVING GATHERED** in Norwich, Norfolk, United Kingdom, on 6th March 2022 at the Sixth Ministerial Meeting of NORMAC Schools;
3. **CONFIRMING** the commitment of NORMAC Schools to raise awareness of the Arctic as a region; promote respect for Arctic peoples and their Indigenous rights; and enhance understanding of the diverse societies, economies, cultures and ecosystems of the Arctic;

HEREBY DECLARE:

Thawing Arctic permafrost

4. **RECOGNISING** that permafrost temperatures in the Arctic are rising at a much faster rate than air temperatures, and that they have risen between 1.5°C and 2.5°C over the past 30 years, causing permafrost to thaw;
5. **RECOGNISING** that permafrost thawing in Arctic regions is a growing issue that could potentially displace thousands of people from their homes and cause the equivalent of billions of US dollars' worth of damage to infrastructure;
6. **UNDERSCORING** the damage to critical infrastructure already caused by permafrost thawing, and the homelessness, death through disease, unemployment and negative economic impacts that could result without intervention;
7. **ACKNOWLEDGING** the potentially harmful consequences of increased surface run-off due to permafrost thawing, including changes to sea-ice formation and oceanic thermocline circulation, and **FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING** that fishing activities in affected areas could be negatively impacted;
8. **UNDERSTANDING** that Arctic Indigenous peoples will be disproportionately affected by thawing permafrost;

9. **REAFFIRMING** our commitment to the 2016 Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and to its goals;

HEREBY:

10. **DIRECT** the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme Working Group to conduct a pilot project, led by the United States of America, to test the effectiveness of wind-cooling systems in slowing the thawing of Arctic permafrost, with the aims of allowing time for the international community to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, and of preventing an economic crisis caused by rapid Arctic permafrost thawing;
11. **ESTABLISH** an Expert Group to research the feasibility of developing and implementing climate-resilient buildings and other infrastructure to help minimise potential damage from climate change and permafrost thawing, including the continued development of existing techniques to elevate infrastructure away from the thermally active layer of permafrost;
12. **CONSIDER** measures to invest in and implement other new or existing technologies that would help to prevent the volume of ice on Earth from diminishing at its current rate;
13. **DIRECT** the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Working Group to establish an 'Arctic Ecosystem Conservation Scheme' with the goal of introducing native, non-invasive flora and fauna to compact and stabilise permafrost in Arctic regions, including on Indigenous lands, and to investigate other ways to stabilise Arctic permafrost naturally;
14. **COMMIT**, at the discretion of each Arctic State, to set aside areas of Arctic coasts and rivers that will be off-limits to large ships and commercial fishing vessels, so as to protect flora and fauna on which Arctic Indigenous people depend for food;
15. **COMMIT** to establish new and improve existing food-supply chains for Arctic Indigenous communities, as well as any other Arctic communities at risk from food shortages;
16. **AGREE** to organise bi-annual, in-person meetings, with provision for additional emergency meetings where needed, of researchers, Indigenous knowledge-holders and health-care practitioners, to discuss and share information about emerging Arctic pathogens due to thawing permafrost;

17. **AGREE** to create an international fund, comprised of donations from Arctic States in consultation with Permanent Participant organisations, for the distribution of health-care services to Arctic Indigenous communities in which such services are limited, to be disbursed with the prior consent of these communities to the proposed intervention, and in direct communication with the multiple health-care organisations involved;
18. **AGREE** to improve capabilities to collect and exchange data on Arctic pathogens between Arctic States, Arctic Indigenous communities and international partners such as the World Health Organisation;

Passing Indigenous Knowledge from elders to youth

1. **ACKNOWLEDGING** the concerns of Arctic Indigenous peoples regarding the preservation of their cultures, and **CONVINCED** of the need to preserve those cultures;
2. **CONCERNED** by the threat of loss of Arctic Indigenous cultures due to changes in the environments on which those cultures depend;
3. **AFFIRMING** that the preservation of Indigenous languages is vital to the preservation of Indigenous Knowledge;
4. **RECOGNISING** that Indigenous peoples have been living sustainably in the Arctic for generations, and **FUTHER RECOGNISING** that Indigenous Knowledge can make a valuable contribution to understanding and coping with climate change;
5. **RECOGNISING** the discrimination faced by Arctic Indigenous peoples, and that this discrimination is due, in the largest part, to the lasting effects of colonialism;
6. **DETERMINED** to ensure that Indigenous Knowledge is respected, that Indigenous knowledge-holders control to whom it is passed, and that the recipients of Indigenous Knowledge have a sincere desire to learn from it;
7. **RECOGNISING** that adequate social infrastructure is vital to the quality of life of Arctic Indigenous communities, and therefore to the preservation of Indigenous Knowledge;
8. **UNDERSTANDING** that oil spills in Arctic regions would have disastrous consequences for Arctic communities and the Arctic environment;

9. **DESIRING** to ensure full consultation with and involvement of Arctic Indigenous peoples, and their communities, in activities addressing Arctic-related challenges, which requires reliable means for passing Indigenous knowledge between generations, and **FURTHER DESIRING** to find a means for Arctic Indigenous peoples also to control ownership of this important Indigenous Knowledge;

HEREBY:

10. **PLEDGE** support for Arctic Indigenous peoples to create archives of their Indigenous Knowledge and culture over which they will have full control;
11. **ESTABLISH** a 'Day of Appreciation' for Arctic Indigenous cultures and Indigenous Knowledge;
12. **DIRECT** the Sustainable Development Working Group to undertake an 'Arctic Indigenous Peoples' Movement' project that will:
 - a. Develop a 'cross-Arctic' passport allowing Arctic Indigenous peoples to move across state borders within their respective historic territories for the purposes of sharing Indigenous Knowledge, or of traditional economic activity such as reindeer herding or hunting;
 - b. Issue these passports to a small trial group according to special eligibility criteria;
 - c. Monitor the trial group, and assess whether these passports are an effective way to enhance communication between Arctic Indigenous communities;
 - d. Provide for border control and security;
13. **FACILITATE**, so far as possible within each Arctic State's national jurisdiction, the introduction of Arctic Indigenous languages into the curriculum of local primary schools, and optionally also into the curriculum of local secondary schools, whether as the language of education in these schools, or through timetabled lessons;
14. **FACILITATE**, so far as possible within each Arctic State's national jurisdiction, the introduction of non-compulsory lessons for Arctic Indigenous children of school age, outside of the classroom, in which they can learn traditional Indigenous practices in their communities;

15. **UNDERTAKE** to develop new initiatives, or further support existing initiatives, focused on mental health in Arctic Indigenous communities, in order to help protect and revitalise Indigenous cultural identity, such as mental-health helplines, training for Indigenous individuals to provide mental-health counselling in schools and communities, or advice and support from the World Health Organisation for mental-health programming in Arctic Indigenous communities that desire such advice and support;
16. **UNDERTAKE** to promote Indigenous-led and co-produced climate-change research and monitoring, including the integration of Indigenous Knowledge on Arctic terrestrial and coastal environments into climate-change research wherever possible, and in collaboration with representatives from environmental non-governmental organisations such as the Circumpolar Conservation Union;
17. **DECIDE** to take steps to reach an international agreement to establish criteria for the allocation of responsibility for reducing the risk of oil pollution in the Arctic, and to increase capabilities for preparedness for and response to oil-pollution incidents in the Arctic and on the traditional lands of Arctic Indigenous peoples.

Disclaimer

This sixth Norwich Declaration represents the collective agreement of the student delegates to the Norwich Model Arctic Council (NORMAC) of March 2022, an educational initiative for secondary schools, and it does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Polar Aspect or Norwich School.



NORWICH SCHOOL

NORWICH MODEL ARCTIC COUNCIL FOR SCHOOLS IS AN EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVE OF POLAR ASPECT
IN COLLABORATION WITH AND HOSTED BY NORWICH SCHOOL