

## ARCTIC RESILIENCE CITIES NETWORK

The effects of our changing climate are arguably more visible in the Arctic region than anywhere else on earth. Rising temperatures, shifting weather patterns and intensified natural hazards are already altering the living environment, economic basis, values and mind-sets of arctic populations. Models suggest that these trends will only intensify over the coming century.

Frozen lakes and rivers used as transport routes by indigenous communities are melting; earlier Spring thawing is altering fishing and other natural cycles upsetting hunting and trapping traditions; the Northern Sea Route will be navigable 120 days/year (currently 30); and by 2100, summers in the Arctic will be largely ice-free.

If well-managed, these challenges can bring fresh opportunities to the region such as increased trade and access, new investments in infrastructure, the opening of new markets, and the threats can be mitigated. However, as urbanization and climate change are already taking place, the communities and inhabitants of this extreme region need to act now to ensure that they are adequately prepared to withstand, continue, and adapt.

### KEY ISSUES



#### POPULATION

The Arctic region is home to 4 million people and is set to grow. As new opportunities emerge, urbanization will occur. The City of Yakutsk (Russia) is planning for a 30% population increase in the coming 15 years.



#### INVESTMENT

Major investment in infrastructure is required as access and transport routes open. Urbanization requires investment in housing and basic services for new arrivals. Sound investment and capacity development should go hand-in-hand.



#### INDIGENOUS CULTURES

Climate change is threatening indigenous communities. These vulnerable groups often have less voice. Preserving traditional ways of life where possible and preparing for displacement are pressing issues.



#### CLIMATE

As in all regions of the world, the Arctic is facing new and magnified hazards as a result of climate change. In this extreme environment sea-level rise, coastal erosion, melting permafrost can have devastating consequences.



#### RESILIENCE

Ensuring resilience in the region depends on a transformative approach to planning, development and governance and must be addressed with all stakeholders, especially vulnerable groups.

### COMMON CHALLENGES, COORDINATED RESPONSES

Collaboration between Arctic cities, their local governments, and cultural heritage leaders is required now more than ever. Sharing knowledge, experience and practical tools on addressing key challenges can save time and resources and build solidarity among communities. At national and global level, collective lobbying can help ensure equity, safety, resilience and sustainability in the villages, towns and cities of the Arctic. To facilitate this coordination and provide impartial advocacy and convening support, UN-Habitat is proposing the **Arctic Resilient Cities Network (ARCN)**.

## ARCTIC RESILIENT CITIES NETWORK AREAS OF ACTION



### Address risks faced by indigenous communities

Small indigenous communities are already at risk from sea-level rise, coastal erosion and ultimately forced displacement. Their livelihoods and culture are threatened, access to appropriate land for relocation is stymied by national and sub-national limitations on land expropriation and acquisition, and their fate is often suspended in temporary stasis.

**The Arctic Resilient Cities Network can collaborate to create awareness, build solidarity and capacity, and urge action to create sustainable and dignified solutions for these communities.**



### Coordinate development responses

Development responses by authorities at city and regional levels can be ad-hoc and/or disjointed resulting in ineffective action, wasted resources or, at worst, exacerbate problems.

**The Arctic Resilient Cities Network can provide capacity, knowledge, and skill transfer to support strategic planning with a resilience focus on future development and governance programmes.**



### Harness change

The changing climate of the Arctic poses many challenges for settlements however it will also open new economic opportunities and accelerate urbanization and its positive attributes (economies of scale, resource efficiency, etc.).

**The Arctic Resilient Cities Network can be a significant platform for advocacy, raising both the challenges and opportunities to a global level. UN Habitat's programming and linkages with the global community of practice, notably the Making Cities Resilient Campaign, Smart Cities, and United Cities and Local Governments, will benefit Network members.**



### Build resilience capacity

Arctic cities and towns need to be given the capacity to measure resilience and develop tailored actions that address vulnerabilities from all plausible risks; natural, and human-made.

**The Arctic Resilient Cities Network can provide a platform for all member settlements and stakeholders to share and access UN-Habitat's Urban Resilience Programme tools, guidelines, and methodologies to better measure resilience, and improve decision-making.**



### Create awareness

Solidarity, collaboration, and exposure in the international arena will help raise awareness of challenges faced by Arctic cities and their implications for the planet. Through collective advocacy and increased recognition of achievements, resources and support can be leveraged.

**Through the Arctic Resilient Cities Network, members will be recognized for building equitable, safe, resilient and sustainable villages, towns and cities in line with global intergovernmental frameworks for development.**

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