

# Jokkmokk Winter Conference 2008

## Developing the North – The Next 20 Years

### Report of the outcomes from the Working Groups

*by ms. Heidi Sinevaara-Niskanen, Lapland University, Finland*

#### Introduction: Variety of approaches and methods

The aim of the Jokkmokk Winter Conference 2008 was to offer a forum for students, researchers and young decision makers to discuss the development of the North. The theme of the conference was “The Next 20 Years”. To enable co-operation among students, grass root level actors, politicians and researchers of different nationalities the task for presenting development strategies and initiatives was given for working groups. The working groups were titled: East & West and North & South. The work of the groups took place in both conference days.

To approach the broad topics and questions set for the working groups, groups exploited the lectures and discussion of the conference and also variety of practical methods. The combination of, and to some extent contradictions between, the discussion lectures of Ambassador Bo Kjellén, Dr. Carina Keskitalo and Dr. Tomas Ries on climate change, development of international cooperation, adaptation on local level and Arctic perspectives on security catalyzed the discussions in the groups. Different levels of agency and locations, places of effects, where climate change is influencing the patterns of life were specially discussed. As methods for approaching the themes groups were creatively making use of, for example, current newspaper material and SWOT – analysis (strengths, weaknesses, possibilities and threats).

## The East & West Working Groups: How to cope with climate change in the north

The task of the working groups East & West was to discuss, how the next 20 years will change our way of life. Working groups discussed and presented development strategies and initiatives on the ways we can cope with climate change and create a genuine sustainable Northern region.

To gain more active role and agency in the question of future 20 year, working groups had turned the question around by discussing the changes that we can make in our lives instead of only focusing on the changes that are about to happen. How can we change our life in next 20 years? Align with the swift in the focus of agency groups had also approached questions by asking, how to understand that something is a problem and how to react on it.

- The Role of Education

As a shared finding and proposal groups emphasized the role of education and the importance of incorporating climate change in education. Working groups proposed that climate change education should be included to the schooling system: through primary education to adult education, including variety of fields (e.g. art, culture, history, natural sciences). Teaching should entail multi-faceted approaches, education on the processes and mechanisms of climate change, and provide practical, context bound, examples of the impacts of the climate change. At the same time working group proposals highlighted the need to obtain scientific research in more accessible form and the importance to integrate indigenous culture, history and knowledge to climate change education.

- Local Activeness

As proposals and initiatives that address the local level working groups emphasized education, research, local decision making and idea of “green zones”. Local communities and towns, such as Jokkmokk, could, for example, invest on local research by funding research projects, apply gained information in education, aim to create “green zone” to the town area (no cars allowed) and aim as community to be an Arctic example for other communities.

- Positive Guidance from State Level

The essence of national level actions was a shared finding and statement of the working groups. The question of what we can do in 20 years also entails responsibility in political/ state level. Groups highlighted that consumers, along side individuals already changing their consumption patterns, should be guided and encouraged through e.g. taxing to better consumption patterns. Especially in terms of traffic, train and other forms of public transportation should be supported (instead flying).

### The North & South Working Groups: Global and northern climate conflicts

The task of the working groups North & South was to discuss, how to prevent climate change and population explosion from developing into global and Northern insecurity and conflicts. Working groups discussed and presented development strategies and initiatives on this theme.

Working groups had defined the concept of security as modern security that emphasizes the role of, for example, pandemics, organized crime, uncontrolled migration, terrorism and environmental changes as threats for security. When understood as such, along with traditional states, multilateral agents, private enterprises, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and media can be viewed as possible security actors and levels where action takes place.

- Global Adaptation fund and environmental based asylum

The North & South working groups noted the increased fossil fuel burning and human activities in the developed countries in the global north that have led to increase in green house gas emissions and e.g. raw material conflicts in the Arctic region. As the global north, developed countries, can be viewed the greatest producers of emissions the working groups proposed greater responsibility and actions from developed countries. Global north should be willing to share their resources and space with the southern countries who are consequently suffering from the high fossil emissions. Creation of specific adaptation/mitigation fund to help developing countries was suggested. Groups proposed also changes in asylum laws so that gaining environmental based asylum would be easier (than before?).

- Multilateral Cooperation

Beside the global level working groups stressed the possibilities of multilateral cooperation on producing security. The Arctic Council, The European Union, Barents Council, Nordic Council, The United Nations were mentioned as examples of agents and places of multilateral cooperation. Groups suggested on deepening the cooperation throughout binding agreements regarding environmental and climate politics. Binding agreements should be funded (e.g from the security budgets of the participating nations) and agreements used as proactive measures to protect the Arctic.

- Globalizing the National

States and national level operations have significant role in the global development. Groups highlighted how it is imperative that the states allocate sufficient funds for education and research concerning environmental and climate technology. States and other relevant actors should also export know-how and technological solutions to developing countries to assist them in utilizing their natural resources in an ecologically and socially sustainable way. Government should also find new incentives for improving the climate situation. This could include tax breaks for companies that utilize environmentally friendly technologies. States should also have the possibility to give preference to locally produced goods/to guarantee that the consumer is informed of the origin of the products.

- Including Private Enterprises, NGOs and Media

Working groups also noted the essential role of the middle-sector agents, such as private enterprises and media. Groups proposed that companies that go into business in the arctic region must take ecological, social, ethical and cultural considerations. In terms of NGOs it was suggested that states should have regulations and laws that protect and facilitate the actions of NGOs and that there should be an “arctic environmental forum” for NGOs in the arctic countries (maybe facilitated by the Arctic Council). In the media sector groups noted that journalists should receive better education concerning the challenges we are facing regarding environmental issues and climate as part of their education. It was suggested that Arctic agents, such as the Arctic Council, could be a natural part providing needed information. Media responsibility when it comes to facilitating debate concerning environmental and climate issues was stressed.

- No for nuclear power, yes for renewable energy.

As solutions for supporting the energy production and thus economic development, if the natural resources of e.g. the Arctic are not be used, groups presented several strategies. Concentrating on developing renewable energy resources, such as forestry, raising consumer awareness, reducing taxes on green energy and subsidization on public transportation where proposed as alternative solutions.

- The Policy of Small Steps

North & South working groups highlighted, similarly with the East & West groups, need for local and also “small steps” changes. Awareness raising, funding of non governmental organizations (NGOs), experiments in local communities and showing a good example as towns/ communes can have a great influence. It was noted that it lies as a responsibility with each and every one of us to minimize our ecological footprint, to be conscious and conscientious consumers.

- Arctic in 2020: Place of Research and Leading Region for Sustainable Development

Working groups also emphasized how the need and interest for nuclear power and fossil fuel is a security risk for the Arctic region, for example, in forms of oil drilling and nuclear power plants. Working groups shared view that the Arctic area should not be used for military purposes. Further development of the Kyoto Protocol and greater role of the research where seen as possible ways to protect the Arctic. It is an opportunity for the Arctic to develop to be the future leading region for sustainable development. As groups pointed out:

*“If we are willing to step up to the challenge, we are in a unique position to use our historical experience and our technological “know-how” to become a world leading region within the fields of sustainable development and peaceful coexistence.”*