

**THE DECLARATION OF THE YOUNG LEADERS' SUMMIT
ON NORTHERN CLIMATE CHANGE IN INUVIK, NWT
AUGUST 20, 2009**

In August 2009, sixty young Canadians gathered in Inuvik, Northwest Territories for a summit on climate change. We are from communities across Canada and are united by the magnitude of the climate change crisis, so much so that we were moved to tears by our shared experiences. We call for immediate and coordinated global action, as the world faces no graver threat. We must act now if we are to avoid dire consequences. The only thing that frightens us more than climate change is our governments' failure to respond to it.

We, the young leaders, declare that:

Climate Change is a Human Issue

Our lives have already been altered by the impacts of the climate crisis. Climate change has affected our health, our food security and our cultural identities. As Northern leader Sheila Watt-Cloutier told us, "climate change is not just an economic story, it's not just an environmental story, it's a human story."

Our North is Highly Vulnerable to Climate Change

Emissions from around the world have led to the present-day reality of climate change. The rapid changes we have seen and experienced in the Arctic show us how vulnerable the North is. As landscapes change, many animals face the prospect of extinction and those who have contributed the least to climate change are being most affected by it.

Climate Change is Happening Now

Our North is warming, our ice is melting, climate change affects us. The immediacy of the crisis was illustrated in Pangnirtung, Nunavut in the spring of 2008. Erosion and flooding washed out an essential bridge and the community experienced a loss of all water and sanitation services. These families faced the dangers and realities of climate change first-hand.

We Must Act Now

It is not too late to prevent further devastation. Canada must now be a leader in reducing emissions and motivating the world to act. We also have the responsibility to help vulnerable communities adapt. Leaders at all levels must develop and implement policies that will address the climate change crisis. As summit delegate Joel Hilchey, 26, stated "We can change the way the world does business. This is our opportunity."

The time for a strong, concerted response is now.