EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HuSArctic Conference Outcomes

OCTOBER 23-27, 2018

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Executive Summary of the HuSArctic Conference Outcomes
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Background
The concept of human security widens the scope of security studies and replaces the traditional focus on the state as referent object with individuals and their communities. It seeks to ensure societal well-being by addressing threats to the community, personal, political, economic, health, food and environmental dimensions of security. The Arctic encompasses a broad geographic region and, despite its common representation as a barren, uninhabitable frontier, is home to vibrant societies comprised of diverse communities (including indigenous peoples), connected and shaped through regional histories of colonialism, globalisation, and international cooperation. As such, security in the Arctic is conceivable through its human aspects and the structures that support its societal functions. Identifying and achieving human security in the Arctic requires a broad understanding of the region as comprising communities undergoing rapid changes under unique social, political, environmental and economic conditions. The final conference of the four year long HuSArctic research project (Human security as a promotional tool for societal security in the Arctic) brought together expert practitioners and academics, as well as members and representatives of local and indigenous communities, to bridge policy and decision-making addressing different aspects of security in the Arctic with academic and stakeholder input. Three major themes relating to human security in the Arctic were discussed:

1. Arctic communities: identity, culture, community values and challenges;
2. Human and societal security challenges in Arctic governance;
3. Local implications of global developments.

Summary of Discussion & Outcomes
Understandings of the Arctic are heavily debated, both in terms of physical and conceptual limits. Collective identity building is complex and fluid in a changing and dynamic global environment where indigenous peoples, local communities, transient populations such as industry or other workers, students, tourists, as well as recent migrant and refugee communities (all of which can also be compounded identities themselves), are globally connecting, such as in the Arctic. However, it was emphasized that solutions to common human security issues must still be contextual at the local level, and address the unique concerns of diverse identities within communities.

Human security threats are interconnected and influence each other. For example, health, environmental, and food security all impact each other and, although under certain circumstances can be addressed independently, a holistic approach is needed to fully achieve human security. Digital security, or infrastructural and systemic access to digital services through increased education on existing technologies, programming, and opportunities to develop digital knowledge, is also vital for community security. It is also necessary to adopt an intersectoral approach to viewing human security concerns such as personal, health, and community security and their impact on multiple and compounding identities including indigeneity, gender, age, and sexuality. Alongside these concerns, discussion also included aspects of traditional security regarding increasing militarisation in the Arctic and its impact on human security.

The expectations of rapid environmental change resulting from climate change have a disproportionate cost for communities facing the negative impacts of environmental degradation, species loss, exposure and vulnerability to hazards and the risk of disasters, especially in relation to traditional livelihoods. Furthermore, developing industries in the Arctic including tourism and extractive resources and mining, need to respect the best practices for building relationships between businesses and communities. On a local level, a clear understanding of the impacts of international cooperation, law-making, and national legislation is needed in the context of increasing centralisation of governance and services, which is straining rural-urban interactions and placing burdens on rural and remote communities.
In addition, human security intersects with international human rights law. In particular, indigenous rights and the importance of principles such as Free, Prior, and Informed Consent, self-determination, and meaningful participation were emphasized. There is a need for effective participation of rights holders (both indigenous and local communities) in projects and investments in the Arctic. These rights are more explicitly articulated in the context of increased development, industrialisation, and modernisation, with specific concerns regarding the role of tourism, marine and extractive resource industries. Fundamentally, the need for indigenous peoples and local communities to be treated as collaborative partners in developing economies and going beyond consultation, is a priority. There is also a need to explore alternative economic models, and revise the values of existing economies.

**Avenues for Action**

Discussion on human security in the Arctic illuminated broader threats based on current global trends, a failure to address the legacy of colonialism, the urgent threat of climate change, as well as unsustainable consumption patterns. This fundamentally requires states to fulfil their legal obligations to uphold and implement international human rights and standards set through international agreements at all levels of governance. **Human security in the Arctic requires the recognition of local environments as the fundamental basis for realizing the human right to a healthy environment, and the collective responsibility to promote sustainability.**

This includes a need to promote tools for self-reliance, and an awareness of the role and responsibilities of individuals, communities, industries, corporations and other existing actors towards this aim. Such tools also include understanding the opportunities and risks of digitalisation, and the need to support increased access to digital education and services. However, **individual and community responsibilities need to be balanced with the obligations of public authorities to provide services for the public good.** Policies regarding Arctic engagement should encourage partnership and collaboration with indigenous peoples and local communities that goes beyond consultation and consent, and recognises the responsibilities of all actors in the Arctic.

**A paradigm shift** needs to occur in contemporary approaches to Arctic policy-making. A **re-evaluation of norms across the systemic, community, and individual levels is required in order to achieve sustainability for current and future generations.** A shift towards the inclusion of indigenous and local knowledge and practices, as well as holistic approaches to societal well-being, are necessary for the **co-production of knowledge and capacity in the Arctic.** Ultimately, development agendas must be decoupled from an ideology based on economic growth, and indigenous philosophies to re-evaluate contemporary economies should be explored and considered in contemporary decision-making. This fundamentally requires an acknowledgement and response to the historical legacy and current impacts of colonisation in the Arctic. As such, contemporary awareness of different identities and histories in the Arctic need to be raised, and challenges addressed, through education and community engagement.

In addition, **contemporary decision-making needs to address the unique human security challenges faced by multiple, intersecting identities in the Arctic through intergenerational, gender, and minority inclusion and participation.** Societal inequalities distributed by ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, (dis)ability and income need to be addressed, and especially considered in the context of minorities within minorities. Achieving this requires **increased financial support to close gaps in data collection and knowledge regarding Arctic communities.** Specifically, funding must meet the need for disaggregated, contextualized data that is collected in a culturally appropriate manner, and includes local and indigenous communities and their knowledge.

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