

Town Hall Report

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This session was well represented by various experts. All speakers emphasized importance and usefulness of these reports for indigenous communities, young researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders. Reports helped to promote the International Polar Year; they are being used in practical ways by the University of the Arctic, governments, indigenous peoples etc.

We heard about some success stories in employing those reports (e.g. the increasing role of IT, telemedicine programs in the Canadian North, etc.).

However, some concerns have been raised regarding the necessity of a follow-up and the development of strategies for further action. There are some areas which require further consideration, for example:

- There are gaps in the right of Indigenous Peoples and the scope of jurisdictional capabilities obtained by public governments in the North
- Issues of ownership rights on land and resources, issues of gender etc.
- Need for evaluation of social indicators in the North which may help address challenges of economic development, social-cultural transformations and well-being of Northern citizens
- Acknowledgment that despite similarities there are differences within each Arctic state which may require unique regional solutions

- There is still a so-called knowledge clash between indigenous visions and scientific observations
- Cooperation among Arctic States on the application of these reports leaves much to be desired

What is the next step?

1. It was suggested to improve awareness and accessibility of information contained in these reports to the general public, Northern communities, etc. by means of organization of open town-hall meetings; including report findings in the educational materials, school curricula, sharing info with various parties.
2. To develop a better partnership and working relations between scientific communities, indigenous peoples and others. To ensure greater involvement of Northern communities. Focus on a community-based approach.
3. To promote Northern knowledge among policy-makers, the public and young generation. Need for a better dialogue and communication. Moving beyond those reports, focus on innovation and vision/dimensions for further action.

These reports are one of a kind but much more has to be done.