



# AFN ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

RESPECTING AND PROTECTING MOTHER EARTH

## CLIMATE CHANGE



### Introduction

Climate change is a forecast change in global weather patterns. Current climate changes are generally accepted to be the result of greenhouse gas accumulation in the atmosphere.

Changes will vary in different parts of the world. For example, some regions will have more rain, while others will have less, and still others will have rain in different seasons. Other predicted changes include warmer winters, drier summers and more tropical storms. Plants and animals are expected to migrate to new regions if they can, or to become extinct in many cases.

### Considerations and Challenges

In order to slow climate change, global emissions of greenhouse gases must be reduced. This reduction requires decisive international commitments.

Given that climate change has already begun and will likely continue to some extent into the foreseeable future, adaptation plans must be developed to help people to cope with the changes that do occur. Unfortunately, adaptation plans require time and resources, but the people who are currently the most severely affected by climate change are those with the fewest resources to respond.

The United Nations is expected to negotiate a new set of climate agreements in December, 2009, in which member countries will commit to specified levels of greenhouse gas emission reductions over the next 40 years.

To date, Canada has been unwilling to proactively cut its emissions. The federal government is funding limited adaptation research in northern First Nation communities. It would be beneficial if existing programs could be expanded to serve all regions.

The Environmental Stewardship Unit (ESU) is currently assisting Health Canada with their new report entitled *Climate Change and Health Adaptation in Northern First Nation Communities*, and advocating for additional federal funding to support climate change impact and adaptation research and action in all First Nation communities. The ESU also advocates for representation of First Nations within Canadian delegations to UN climate change talks that are occurring throughout 2009, as well as for more comprehensive climate change assessments and adaptation programs to serve all First Nations.

The AFN currently attends international climate change negotiations when possible in order to lobby the Government of Canada to accommodate First Nations' interests within their negotiations. When possible, the AFN also provides comments on draft UN text that will be part of the agreements that Canada signs in December 2009.



### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For more information, please contact Environment at the AFN, (613) 241-6789 or [environment@afn.ca](mailto:environment@afn.ca).