

High-level side event: A message from the Frozen World – The Global Impact of a Changing Cryosphere

Date and time: Tuesday 12 November, 16:45-18:15

Room: Side Event Room 7

Session outline

Welcome

- Moderator Dr, Heïdi Sevestre, Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) / Arctic Council

Opening Remarks

- Mr. Morten Høglund, Chair of the Norwegian Chairship of the Arctic Council
- HE Mr. Jonas Gahr Støre, Prime Minister of Norway (video address)
- Hon. Minister Maisa Rojas, Environment and Climate, Chile

Statements: Setting the scene

- Ms. Dr. Heidi Sevestre, Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) / Arctic Council
- Mr. Dr. James Kirkham, Ambition on melting Ice (AMI)/International Climate and Cryosphere Initiative (ICCI)
- Ms. Sara Olsvig, Chair, Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), Permanent Participant of the Arctic Council: Effects of a changing cryosphere for Inuit as a People of the cryosphere and on the rights of Indigenous Peoples

Panel: Regional and Global Impacts

- Mr. Dr. Pema Gyatsho, Director, ICIMOD
- Ms. Celeste Saulo, Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Observer Organization of the Arctic Council

Ministerial Calls to Action

- Hon. Minister Ain Bahadur Shahi Thakuri, Forests and Environment, Nepal
- Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Pakistan
- Ms. Dr. Anna Lührmann Minister of State for Europe and Climate, Germany

Signing of AMI Declaration: Germany and Pakistan

Concluding key messaging

- Ms. Sara Olsvig, International Chair, Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)
- Mr. Khedrup Dorji, Youth representative ICIMOD

Optional

18:15 – 18:30 Informal media availability for onsite journalists

From 18:30 Opening of the Cryosphere Pavilion

Event description

The cryosphere is the frozen part of the world – its glaciers and ice sheets, snow, permafrost, and sea ice – that binds us together by supplying fresh water to millions of people, stabilizing the global climate, and protecting us from sea-level rise. However, the cryosphere is under significant threat from various climate change-driven factors, and the world cannot look away.

This high-level panel explores the many ways a changing cryosphere affects not just the Arctic and other cryosphere regions such as the Himalaya, and the people that call these regions home, but also the rest of the world. It looks at how these changes are speeding up at an unprecedented rate and impacting people everywhere. To name some examples: Sea-level rise from ice sheets and glaciers is flooding low-lying coastal areas and causing erosion, putting hundreds of millions of people in coastal cities and island communities at risk in coming decades. Mountain glaciers, which provide freshwater to millions of people, are melting rapidly, and snowpack is decreasing. This is leading to increased flooding and contamination of water sources, which threatens the supply of reliable freshwater to billions of people. Thawing permafrost is causing severe damage to buildings and infrastructure across the Arctic, Himalayas and other mountain regions. The changing cryosphere is also threatening homes and livelihoods, often impacting Indigenous Peoples such as the Saami, Inuit and Sherpa who also face a multitude of external compounding threats. It is also opening travel to and through the Arctic, leading to increased activity in areas such as shipping and mining exploration.

For too long, the cryosphere has been left off the global climate agenda despite its immense impacts. As Chair of the Arctic Council, Norway is determined to bring this critical issue to the forefront, convening key actors and driving action. Norway is committed to elevating the cryosphere on the global agenda, including furthering the implementation of the Ambition on Melting Ice High-level Group on Sea-level Rise and Mountain Water Resources (AMI), ensuring the world hears the urgent message from the polar and high mountains region and takes decisive action. The panel will set out by highlighting the changes scientists and Indigenous Peoples are observing and navigating firsthand, including how the Knowledge of Indigenous Peoples needs to be equitably and ethically utilized in response to these changes, and then expand its focus to encompass the national, regional, and global perspectives on this urgent issue. Concretely the session seeks to:

- Identify the primary causes of climate change and emission sources which are directly impacting the deteriorating cryosphere;
- Identify the serious impacts of climate change in the Arctic, Antarctica and mountain cryosphere and relate it to the rest of the world, especially vulnerable low-lying populations such as Bangladesh; and mountain nations such as Pakistan and Nepal;
- Emphasize the impacts on Arctic and Mountain Indigenous Peoples and the role the Knowledge of Indigenous Peoples will play in adapting to a changing climate;
- Stress the critical need to tackle emissions at national, regional, and global scales, presenting persuasive cases from the cryosphere; and,

- Advocate for decisive action based on the latest data and policy recommendations, and an urgent call from melting glaciers, and the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets.

This session not only integrates comprehensive insights from local to global scales but also transitions smoothly into actionable steps guided by the latest scientific research and policy frameworks, aiming to catalyze decisive global actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and short-lived climate forcers to limit global warming to 1.5°C.

Co-organizers:

Confirmed partnerships with:

- Iceland
- Bangladesh
- Pakistan
- Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)
- International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)
- International Cryosphere Climate Initiative (ICCI)
- Climate Policy Center (CPC)
- Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR)

Contributors:

- World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
- Nepal
- Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP)