



FOR OUR FUTURE: INDIGENOUS RESILIENCE REPORT SUMMARY

First Nations, Inuit and Métis have been adapting to climate change—and all kinds of change—since time immemorial. Their leadership is pivotal in many spaces, including rural and urban homelands, the boardrooms of governments and organizations, the lecture halls of universities, out on the Land, Water and Ice, and in virtual spaces. The report, *For Our Future: Indigenous Resilience Report*, is the first Indigenous-led National Knowledge Assessment that draws on Indigenous knowledge, perspectives and experiences to explore multidimensional and intersecting aspects of climate change impacts and adaptation.

Through the collaborative process with an Indigenous-majority author team, five key messages emerged with a shared context of growing urgency. The key messages of the report are intended to be broad enough to reflect various homelands, based on the distinct backgrounds and histories of First Nations, Inuit and Métis. They draw from a set of shared principles rather than attempting to represent all Indigenous Peoples and regions across Canada.

Indigenous Peoples have unique strengths for responding to environmental and climate changes

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis have consistently faced and adapted to change, including impacts from environmental and climatic changes. We continue to respond and are increasingly taking leadership in climate research, policy and solutions. This must include a transition away from deficit-based approaches that view our communities through lenses of vulnerability and risk, towards strengths-based approaches that recognize our knowledge, skills, actions and abilities. This work, led by our Indigenous women, youth, scientists, researchers, activists, leaders, Knowledge Keepers and advocates, includes stepping into leading roles to address climate change, drawing on their knowledge, laws, language and culture.

Despite progress, our efforts in climate action cannot be detached from our ongoing endeavours to address the ongoing legacy of colonization. Historical and ongoing colonial laws, policies and practices have led to significant social, spiritual, cultural, political, economic and environmental changes that are inseparable from the lived realities of Indigenous Peoples.

Climate change is one of many crises that First Nations, Inuit and Métis face

The deep relationship with our Lands, Waters and Ice mean that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis experience the impacts of climate change more intimately. Many of our communities practice livelihoods that are closely tied to the Land, like hunting and harvesting, but we also depend on the Land for maintaining our identity, cultural practices and passing this knowledge on to future generations. These connections and relationships vary not only between but also within our communities (e.g., between North, South, rural, urban and genders).

When the Land, Water, or Ice changes, we change. We feel it physically but also emotionally and spiritually. We grieve the loss of connection to our Lands and Waters and the loss of our ability to practice our life ways. The physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual impacts that we feel from climate change are all connected. We have already been using interconnected approaches to respond to climate change, and this must continue as we find solutions to current and future changes.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems and lived experiences are essential components of climate action

For too long, there have been studies on First Nations, Inuit and Métis, our homelands, and our knowledge, without our direct involvement in the research process. This is now changing, through our rising leadership in research and policy, concrete actions and fostering of meaningful partnerships.

As the original researchers of our homelands, we have always relied on our knowledge systems to understand the world around us. We refer to these as “systems” because they encompass more than just a set of observations or information—they include all that we use to create, manage, apply, and share our knowledge.

These knowledge systems are transmitted through our languages, grounded in our protocols, and encompass our world-views and values. These systems also embody highly detailed and technical methods, language, approaches and understandings. Our Elders, harvesters and other knowledge-holders are experts in observing, monitoring, and assessing the world around us, including the changes in climate and environment.

The food, water, and energy nexus is central to First Nation, Inuit and Métis climate leadership

Food is central to our ways of life. Our traditional foods have sustained us for millennia, not only through nourishment, but also by sustaining our culture, language, values, and knowledge. We have the right to food sovereignty and to access the foods we choose. Due to colonialism, our communities, both in urban and rural contexts, face food insecurity rates higher than other populations. We deserve equity and access to adequate, affordable, and healthy foods.

Water and energy are also key priorities for our communities. Access to and protection of healthy water in both built and natural environments, is essential for us and for our more- than-human relations. We need innovation, localization, and security in energy sources, which benefit our communities and create meaningful economies. The impacts of climate change bring new, compounding, and serious challenges to our food, water and energy security.

In response, we are reasserting our authority and decision-making to restore our systems of food, water, and energy. Revitalizing our economies—grounded in our relationships with the Land, Water, Ice and all beings—is crucial to this process, as well as to broader efforts to transition to a low-carbon future.

Self-determination is critical to Indigenous-led climate action

Indigenous People possess the right to self-determination, to govern ourselves and exercise rights for the well-being of our lives, the Land, Water, and Ice, as well as for future generations and all life. In the context of climate change, past approaches to research, scientific inquiry, assessments, program design and delivery, funding, and policy development have not been led by us. This is changing. We are taking leadership and innovating in climate research, policy and actions that reflect our respective realities and experiences. These processes are generating knowledge and actions that inform responses to the climate change impacts our communities face.

Within diverse Indigenous societies, women, youth, and gender-diverse individuals are also assuming leadership roles and defining climate action. As the climate changes, our ability to govern ourselves is affected, as relationships to the natural world are disrupted. As we move into the future, we must adapt our governance structures to maintain and transform decision-making processes for the benefit of all. It is critical that our governments maintain authority and jurisdiction over our Lands, Waters, Ice, and territories, and maintain our ability to exercise our rights and responsibilities.

We invite you to continue engaging with us—First Nations, Inuit, and Métis across the country—as we transform research and knowledge production in our communities and on our Land, Water and Ice.