

Arctic Pollution 2002

Persistent Organic Pollutants

Heavy Metals

Radioactivity

Human Health

Changing Pathways

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Preface

The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) is a group working under the Arctic Council. The Arctic Council Ministers have requested AMAP to:

- *produce integrated assessment reports on the status and trends of the conditions of the Arctic ecosystems;*
- *identify possible causes for the changing conditions;*
- *detect emerging problems, their possible causes, and the potential risk to Arctic ecosystems including indigenous peoples and other Arctic residents; and to*
- *recommend actions required to reduce risks to Arctic ecosystems.*

These assessments are delivered to Ministers at appropriate intervals in the form of 'State of the Arctic Environment Reports'. These reports are intended to be readable and readily comprehensible, and do not contain extensive background data or references to the scientific literature. The complete scientific documentation, including sources for all figures reproduced in this report, is contained in a series of five related reports: the AMAP Assessment 2002 reports, which are fully referenced. For readers interested in the scientific background to the information presented in this report, we recommend that you refer to the AMAP Assessment 2002 reports.

This report is the second 'State of the Arctic Environment Report' that has been prepared by AMAP in accordance with its mandate. It presents the results of work conducted during AMAP's second phase (1998-2002) in relation to five priority areas: persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals, radioactivity, human health, and pathways of contaminants. The assessment described in this report builds upon the previous AMAP assessment that was presented in two volumes, the comprehensive Arctic Pollution Issues: A State of the Arctic Environment Report and its related scientific background document AMAP Assessment Report: Arctic Pollution Issues, published by AMAP in 1997 and 1998, respectively.

A large number of experts from the Arctic countries (Canada, Denmark/Greenland/Faroe Islands, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States), from indigenous peoples organizations, from other organizations, and from Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, have participated in the preparation of this assessment.

Rovaniemi/Ivalo, October 2002.



Helgi Jensson
AMAP Chair



Lars-Otto Reiersen
AMAP Executive Secretary

AMAP would like to express its appreciation to all of these experts, who have contributed their time, effort, and data; especially those who were involved in the further development and implementation of the AMAP Trends and Effects Monitoring Programme, and related research. A list of the main contributors is included in the acknowledgements on the previous page of this report. The list is based on identified individual contributors to the AMAP scientific assessments, and is not comprehensive. Specifically, it does not include the many national institutes, laboratories and organizations, and their staff, which have been involved in the various countries. Apologies, and no lesser thanks, are given to any individuals unintentionally omitted from the list.

Special thanks are due to the lead authors responsible for the preparation of the scientific assessments that provide the basis for this report. Special thanks are also due to the authors of this report, Annika Nilsson and Henry Huntington. The authors worked in close cooperation with the scientific experts and the AMAP Secretariat to accomplish the difficult task of distilling the essential messages from a wealth of complex scientific information, and communicating this in an easily-understandable way.

The support from of the Arctic countries is vital to the success of AMAP. AMAP monitoring work is essentially based on ongoing activities within the Arctic countries, and the countries also provide the necessary support for most of the experts involved in the preparation of the assessments. However, this assessment could not have been delivered without the additional financial support received from Canada, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the United States; and from the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Netherlands. These finances also support the participation of indigenous peoples organizations in the work of AMAP.

The AMAP Working Group, who are responsible for the delivery and content of the AMAP State of the Arctic Environment Reports, are pleased to present their second assessment for the consideration by governments of the Arctic countries. This report is prepared in English and translated into several other languages. The English language version constitutes the official version.

A Statement prepared by the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat on behalf of Arctic Council Permanent Participants: A Call for Further Action

The Arctic is our homeland. Places that others call remote are central to our existence and have been for millennia. We, the Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic, wish to protect a way of life based on a unique economic and spiritual relationship to the land. Yet, because the wild foods we eat and water we drink are inextricably linked to the overall health of the northern biosphere, our long-term health and survival as cultures and societies depends upon Arctic nation states acting as responsible stewards of the Arctic environment.

While enjoying the benefits of wage-based employment in the modern economy, Arctic Indigenous Peoples continue to use and occupy huge areas of land and ocean for hunting, fishing, trapping, herding, and gathering. The extent and intensity of this land use, including species harvested, is well documented. Indeed, many Arctic Indigenous Peoples have legally recognized and enforceable rights to the land they use. Even so, the interconnectedness of Arctic ecosystems makes multi-lateral cooperation for the protection of the environment a necessity for both Indigenous Peoples and Arctic nation states.

Recognition of the circumpolar dimension of the Arctic environmental issues remains the central political reality for both Arctic nation states and Indigenous Peoples organizations. The need for Arctic international cooperation is most clearly evident in matters relating to preserving and protecting Indigenous Peoples' traditional food and diet. The species harvested and eaten vary widely. They include the domestic reindeer and fish-rich diets of Nenets or Saami, the marine mammal-rich diet of the Inuit, to the importance of wild caribou and salmon to the Athabaskan and Gwich'in peoples. The central and most distinguishing feature of the modern Arctic indigenous economy continues to be its dependence on wildlife and the habitat that supports it.

To Arctic Indigenous Peoples persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals and radioactivity in traditional food is not just an environmental or public health issue.

As one Inuit Leader recently observed, the process of hunting and fishing, followed by the sharing of food and the communal partaking of one animal, is a time honoured ritual which links Indigenous Peoples to their ancestors and to each other. The power of this connection holds Indigenous Peoples together as peoples and gives them the spiritual strength and physical energy to survive the challenges they face. To discover that the food which for generations has nourished them and kept them whole physically and spiritually is now poisoning them is profoundly disturbing and threatens Indigenous Peoples' cultural survival.

Having learned of transboundary contamination problem in the Arctic through what were essentially reconnaissance studies, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, Saami Council, and the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North became staunch supporters of and participants in AMAP. They appreciated

the need for a detailed and comprehensive examination of the issue as a prelude to doing something about it.

Since the release of the 1997 AMAP assessment report, three more Indigenous Peoples' organizations have joined the Arctic Council – the Aleut International Association, the Arctic Athabaskan Council, and the Gwich'in Council International. These groups share the concerns about the long-term impact of contaminants.

The Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic acknowledge the instrumental role AMAP has played in a number of international processes that have a direct effect on our ability to remain on the land and continue to use its resources in ways of our own choosing.

It has raised significantly the profile of environmental contamination in the Arctic as a public policy issue. But it is not the reports alone that account for this. The inclusive manner in which they were developed over a number of years by scientists from many countries, and consensus decision-making by the programme ensured that the reports and resulting recommendations were well received and considered seriously by Arctic governments. Participation of the Arctic Indigenous Peoples has been an important part of this process.

Arctic Indigenous Peoples influenced the global POPs negotiations out of all proportion to their numbers. They were able to do so, in part, because they had learned much through AMAP about transboundary contaminants in the Arctic.

Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic continue to support AMAP's efforts to assess levels of contamination in the part of the world that includes our homelands. Indigenous Peoples will continue to be involved in projects in their regions. We are also pleased that the inclusive model of working with Indigenous Peoples' organizations that was developed in the first AMAP assessment has been adopted by the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment.

The Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic continue to see contaminants and climate change variability as a major threat to our collective survival as Peoples. We call on the Arctic States to continue supporting the work of AMAP and, through financial and other support, ensure the active involvement of the Arctic's Indigenous Peoples.

We also expect the success of the Stockholm POPs Convention, where Indigenous Peoples and AMAP data played a significant role, to be repeated with the global mercury assessment now underway, and in other processes in the future.

To that end, Arctic Indigenous Peoples call upon the nations of the world to increase efforts to develop international instruments to deal with the effects of mercury and other heavy metals that threaten the human and environmental health of the Arctic and the world.

The Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat works on behalf of the six Arctic Indigenous Peoples Organizations that are Permanent Participants at the Arctic Council.

Executive Summary

of the AMAP 2002 assessment of Arctic pollution issues,
as adopted by the AMAP Working Group, May 3, 2002.

The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) was established in 1991 to monitor identified pollution risks and their impacts on Arctic ecosystems. In 1997 the first AMAP report, *Arctic Pollution Issues: A State of the Arctic Environment Report** was published.

The assessment showed that the Arctic is closely connected to the rest of the world, receiving contaminants from sources far outside the Arctic region. The report was welcomed by the Arctic Council Ministers, who agreed to increase their efforts to limit and reduce emissions of contaminants into the environment and to promote international cooperation in order to address the serious pollution risks reported by AMAP.

The AMAP information greatly assisted the negotiation of the protocols on persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and heavy metals to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP Convention). They also played an important role in establishing the need for a global agreement on POPs, which was concluded in 2001 as the Stockholm Convention. Persistence, long-range transport, and bioaccumulation are screening criteria under both the POPs protocol and the Stockholm Convention, to be applied to proposals to add substances to the agreements. Information from AMAP will be useful in this context in showing whether persistent substances are accumulating in the Arctic and are therefore candidates for control, and also in assessing the effectiveness of the agreements.

The Arctic Council also decided to take cooperative actions to reduce pollution of the Arctic. As a direct follow up of the AMAP reports, the Arctic Council Action Plan to Eliminate Pollution of the Arctic (ACAP) was created to address sources identified through AMAP. ACAP was approved in 2000 and several projects have begun. The AMAP information was also used in establishing priorities for the Arctic Regional Programme of Action to Prevent Pollution from Landbased Sources (RPA), developed by the working group on Protection of

the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME), and adopted by the Arctic Council in 1998.

After the first assessment, AMAP was asked to continue its activities and provide an updated assessment on persistent organic pollutants (POPs), heavy metals, radioactivity, human health, and pathways in 2002. Five scientific reports and a plain-language report have been prepared. This Executive Summary provides the main conclusions and recommendations of the 2002 AMAP assessments.

International Agreements and Actions

As described above, the LRTAP Convention protocols and the Stockholm Convention are essential instruments for reducing contamination in the Arctic. However, they cannot have any effect until they are ratified and implemented.

It is therefore recommended that:

- **The UN ECE LRTAP Protocols on Heavy Metals and POPs be ratified and implemented.**
- **The Stockholm Convention on POPs be ratified and implemented.**

Specific recommendations for monitoring activities in support of these agreements are included in subsequent sections.

Persistent Organic Pollutants

The POPs assessment addresses several chemicals of concern, including both substances that have been studied for some time and chemicals that have only recently been found in the environment.

The 1997 AMAP assessment concluded that levels of POPs in the Arctic environment are generally lower than in more temperate regions. However, several biological and physical processes concentrate POPs in some species and at some locations, producing some high levels in the Arctic.

* AMAP, 1997. Arctic Pollution Issues: A State of the Arctic Environment Report. Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), Oslo, Norway, xii+188 pp.

AMAP, 1998. AMAP Assessment Report: Arctic Pollution Issues. Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), Oslo, Norway, xii+859 pp.

The present AMAP assessment has found that the conclusions and recommendations of the first assessment remain valid. In addition:

It has clearly been established that:

Certain Arctic species, particularly those at the upper end of the marine food chain as well as birds of prey, carry high levels of POPs. Marine mammals, such as polar bear, Arctic fox, long-finned pilot whale, killer whale, harbor porpoise, minke whale, narwhal, beluga, harp seal and northern fur seal, some marine birds including great skua, great black-backed gull and glaucous gull, and birds of prey such as peregrine falcon, tend to carry the highest body burdens.

Most of the total quantity of POPs found in the Arctic environment is derived from distant sources. The POPs are transported to the Arctic by regional and global physical processes, and are then subjected to biological mechanisms that lead to the high levels found in certain species. Several potential source regions have now been identified within and outside of the Arctic. A better understanding of local redistribution mechanisms has also emphasized the important potential role of local processes and sources in determining observed geographical variability.

There is evidence that:

Adverse effects have been observed in some of the most highly exposed or sensitive species in some areas of the Arctic. Several studies have now been completed on a number of Arctic species, reporting the types of effects that have been associated in non-Arctic species with chronic exposure to POPs, of which there are several examples. Reduced immunological response in polar bears and northern fur seals has led to increased susceptibility to infection. Immunological, behavioral, and reproductive effects as well as reduced adult survival has been found in glaucous gulls. Peregrine falcons have suffered from eggshell thinning and reproductive effects. Reproductive effects in dogwhelks are associated with exposure to tributyltin.

It is therefore recommended that:

- **AMAP be asked to further enhance studies aimed at detecting effects in Arctic species relating to exposure to high levels of POPs and to integrate this information with an understanding of general population effects and health.** Without this understanding, it will not be possible to assess whether proposed and existing controls can be expected to afford the necessary protection (e.g., under the LRTAP and Stockholm agreements).

There is evidence that:

The levels of some POPs are decreasing in most species and media in the Arctic, but the

rates vary in extent, location and media or species being studied. The decreases can be related to reduced release to the environment. For example, declines in alpha-HCH in air closely follow decreases in global usage, but declines in marine biota are much slower due to a huge reservoir of the substance in the global oceans.

For other POPs, declines are minimal and some levels are actually increasing, despite low current emissions. This illustrates the long period that may pass between the introduction of controls and the resulting decrease in levels in biota, as has been observed for PCBs, toxaphene, and beta-HCH.

It is therefore recommended that:

- **AMAP be asked to continue trend monitoring of POPs in key indicator media and biota.** This will enable assessment of whether the measures taken in the LRTAP Protocol and the Stockholm Convention are being effective in driving down POPs levels in the Arctic.

There is evidence that:

POPs substances other than those included in the LRTAP Protocol and Stockholm Convention may be at or approaching levels in the Arctic that could justify regional and global action. For example, levels of the brominated flame retardants such as polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), polychlorinated naphthalenes (PCNs), and some current-use pesticides such as endosulfan have been monitored in Arctic air and biota. PBDEs are increasing in the Canadian Arctic.

It is therefore recommended that:

- **AMAP be asked to maintain a capacity to detect current-use POPs in the Arctic.** This will help ensure that Arctic States have an early opportunity to respond to a trend indicating Arctic accumulation, thus allowing a proactive approach to minimize the contamination rather than having to respond to a more serious situation later.

Heavy Metals

The heavy metals assessment focuses on mercury, lead, and cadmium.

It has clearly been established that:

In the Arctic, mercury is removed from the atmosphere and deposits on snow in a form that can become bioavailable. Enhanced deposition occurs in the Arctic. This recently discovered process is linked to polar sunrise, and is unique to high latitude areas. The resulting enhanced deposition may mean that the Arctic plays a previously unrecognized role as an important sink in the global mercury cycle.

There is evidence that:

Some of the deposited mercury is released to the environment at snowmelt, becoming bio-available at the onset of animal and plant reproduction and rapid growth. Although poorly understood, this process may be the chief mechanism for transferring atmospheric mercury to Arctic food webs.

It is therefore recommended that:

- The Arctic Council encourage expanded and accelerated research on critical aspects of the mercury cycle and budget in the Arctic. Such research should include long-range transport, mercury deposition mechanisms, processes leading to biological exposure and effects, and the influence of climate variability and change on these processes.

There is evidence that:

Despite substantial mercury emission reductions in North America and Western Europe during the 1980s, global mercury emissions may, in fact, be increasing. Mercury emissions from waste incineration are likely underestimated. The burning of coal in small-scale power plants and residential heaters, principally in Asia, are major potential sources of current mercury emissions. These emissions are likely to increase significantly due to economic and population growth in this region.

It is therefore recommended that:

- The Arctic Council promote efforts at global, regional, and national levels to quantify all sources of mercury and report results in a consistent and regular manner to improve emission inventories. Particular efforts should focus on measuring contributions made by the burning of coal for residential heating and small-scale power plants as well as by waste incineration.

There is strong evidence that:

There is a trend of increasing mercury levels in marine birds and mammals in the Canadian Arctic, and some indications of increases in West Greenland. The effects of these levels are not well understood. However, there are also examples of stable or decreasing levels in other regions, perhaps indicating the importance of local or regional processes.

It is therefore recommended that:

- AMAP be asked to continue temporal trend monitoring and the assessment of effects of mercury in key indicator media and biota. This will enable assessment of whether the measures taken in the LRTAP Protocol are being effective in driving down mercury levels in the Arctic.

There is evidence that:

Current mercury exposures pose a health risk to some people and animals in the Arctic.

These risks include subtle neurobehavioral effects.

It is therefore recommended that:

- In view of the fact that reducing exposure to mercury can only be addressed by regional and global action to reduce worldwide emissions, and acknowledging the assessment for global action undertaken by UNEP and its resulting proposals, the Arctic Council take appropriate steps to ensure that Arctic concerns are adequately addressed and to promote the development of regional and global actions.

It has clearly been established that:

Dramatic reduction in the deposition of atmospheric lead has occurred in Arctic regions where the use of leaded gasoline is banned. Arctic-wide elimination of leaded gasoline use will reduce lead exposure in other regions of the Arctic. Although levels in wildlife and fish have not measurably declined, likely reflecting continued uptake from the large reservoir of lead deposited in soils and sediments, lead levels in the environment are expected to diminish over time if current trends continue.

It is therefore recommended that:

- The Arctic Council support continued efforts to eliminate the use of leaded gasoline in all Arctic regions.

It has clearly been established that:

Certain regions of the Arctic contain elevated lead levels in the environment because of past or current use of lead shot by hunters. Even though lead shot is banned in Alaska, for example, lead blood levels in endangered US populations of Steller's eiders are above known avian toxicity thresholds for lead poisoning, which may be responsible for observed reduced breeding success. In Greenland, lead shot appears to be a significant source of human dietary exposure to lead.

It is therefore recommended that:

- The Arctic Council encourage a complete ban on the use of lead shot in the Arctic, and that enforcement be improved.

There is evidence that:

Cadmium levels in some seabirds is high enough to cause kidney damage. Monitoring data on cadmium in the abiotic and biotic environment to date provide no conclusive evidence of trends or effects. However, cadmium accumulates in birds and mammals and not enough is known about possible effects.

It is therefore recommended that:

- The monitoring of cadmium in the Arctic be continued to support human exposure estimates.

There is evidence that:

Levels of platinum, palladium, and rhodium have increased rapidly in Greenland snow and ice since the 1970s. These elements are used in automobile catalytic converters to reduce hydrocarbon pollution. The toxicity and bioaccumulation potential of these elements are largely unknown, which prevents assessment of their potential impact in the Arctic.

It is therefore recommended that:

- **AMAP be asked to consider the need to monitor trends of platinum, palladium, and rhodium in the Arctic.**

Radioactivity

The radioactivity assessment addresses man-made radionuclides and radiation exposures deriving from human activities.

It has clearly been established that:

In general, levels of anthropogenic radionuclides in the Arctic environment are declining. Most of the radioactive contamination in the Arctic land environment is from the fallout from nuclear weapons testing during the period 1945 to 1980. In some areas, the fallout from the Chernobyl accident in 1986 is a major source. For the Arctic marine environment, a major source of radionuclides is the releases from European reprocessing plants at Sellafield and Cap de la Hague.

However, releases from the reprocessing plants have resulted in increases in levels of some radionuclides in the European Arctic seas during recent years, in particular technetium-99 and iodine-129. The present doses to the population are low but the present levels of technetium in some marine foodstuffs marketed in Europe are above the EU intervention levels for food to infants and are close to the intervention level for adults.

The technetium information adds further weight to the recommendation made by AMAP to the Arctic Council in Barrow in 2000 that:

- **‘The Arctic Council encourage the United Kingdom to reduce the releases from Sellafield to the marine environment of technetium, by implementing available technology.’**

There is evidence that:

Radionuclides in sediments are now a source of plutonium and cesium-137 to the Arctic. Earlier releases such as those from Sellafield that have deposited in sediments in the Irish Sea, especially cesium-137 and plutonium, have been observed to remobilize so that these deposits are now acting as sources to the Arctic. Thus, even if operational releases of these radionuclides from reprocessing plants are reduced, releases from environmental

sources such as contaminated sediment in the Irish Sea and the Baltic Sea will be observed in the Arctic.

It is therefore recommended that:

- **The Arctic Council support a more detailed study on the remobilization of radionuclides from sediment and its potential effect on the Arctic.**

It is apparent that:

There is continuing uncertainty about the amount of radionuclides present at a number of sources and potential sources in the Arctic. Access to information about civilian and military sources continues to be a problem.

It is therefore recommended that:

- **The Arctic Council promote more openness of restricted information from any sources.**

It has clearly been established that:

Compared with other areas of the world, the Arctic contains large areas of high vulnerability to radionuclides. This is due to the characteristics of vegetation, animals, human diets, and land- and resource-use practices. On land in the AMAP area, there is considerable variation in vulnerability due to differences in these characteristics. In contrast, vulnerability associated with releases of radionuclides to the marine environment is relatively uniform and similar to that for other areas of the world. Maps of vulnerable areas, when combined with deposition maps, can be useful in an accident situation. The information on vulnerability is of importance for emergency planning.

It is therefore recommended that:

- **AMAP be asked to clarify the vulnerability and impact of radioactivity on the Arctic environment and its consequences for emergency preparedness planning.**

It is apparent that:

When performing risk reducing actions, close links to assessment programs are important and interventions should be prioritized in relation to the extent and magnitude of threats posed by nuclear activities, especially in respect to accidents. Interventions themselves can also have negative effects for humans and the environment, and careful judgments have to be made together with environmental impact assessments prior to carrying out a project. It is the view of AMAP that this has not always been done in interventions adopted to date.

It is therefore recommended that:

- **Risk and impact assessment programmes be performed prior to implementation of action to reduce risk.**
- **Risk and impact assessments, including accident scenarios, be performed with regard to**

the transport of nuclear waste and fuel within the Arctic and nearby areas and with regard to planned storage and reprocessing within the Arctic and nearby areas.

It is apparent that:

The protection of the environment from the effects of radiation deserves specific attention. The current system of radiological protection is entirely based on the protection of human health. This approach can fail to address environmental damage in areas such as the Arctic that have low human population densities. Recently, an international consensus has emerged that the rapid development of a system and a framework for the protection of the environment needs further effort. The International Union of Radioecology (IUR), with support from AMAP, was one of the first international organizations to promote and present such a system and framework.

It is therefore recommended that:

- **AMAP be asked to take an active part in the continued efforts to address environmental protection, with special responsibility for the Arctic.** This should include the task of adding the need for protection of the environment into monitoring strategies and assessment tools.

It is noted that:

Since the previous AMAP assessment, nuclear safety programmes have been implemented in Russia at some nuclear power plants and other nuclear installations relevant to the Arctic.

It is therefore recommended that:

- **The Arctic Council continue its cooperation with Russia to improve the safety and safeguarding of nuclear installations and waste sites.**

Human Health

The human health assessment considered health risks associated with exposure to contaminants in relation to other lifestyle factors determining health. This assessment has extended geographical coverage and confirmed the conclusions and recommendations from the first assessment.

It has clearly been established that:

The highest Arctic exposures to several POPs and mercury are faced by Inuit populations in Greenland and Canada. These exposures are linked mainly to consumption of marine species as part of traditional diets. Temporal trends of human exposures to POPs have so far not been observed. Exposure to mercury has increased in many Arctic regions while exposure to lead has declined.

It is therefore recommended that:

- **The monitoring of human exposure to mercury, relevant POPs, including dioxins and dioxin-like compounds and other chemicals of concern, be continued in order to help estimate risk, further elaborate geographical trends, and begin to establish time trends of exposure.**

There is evidence that:

Subtle health effects are occurring in certain areas of the Arctic due to exposure to contaminants in traditional food, particularly for mercury and PCBs. The evidence suggests that the greatest concern is for fetal and neonatal development. In the Arctic, human intake of substances with dioxin-like effects is a matter of concern, confirmed by recent results from Greenland. Increasing human exposure to current-use chemicals has been documented, for example for brominated flame retardants. Others such as polychlorinated naphthalenes (PCN) are expected to be found in human tissues. Some of these compounds are expected to add to the total dioxin activity in humans. The AMAP human health monitoring program includes a number of measures of effects, ranging from biomarkers of effects at the molecular level to epidemiological outcomes.

It is therefore recommended that:

- **The human health effects program developed by AMAP be more extensively applied in order to provide a better base for human risk assessment especially concerning pre- and neonatal exposures.**

It has clearly been established that:

In the Arctic, diet is the main source of exposure to most contaminants. Dietary intake of mercury and PCBs exceeds established national guidelines in a number of communities in some areas of the Arctic, and there is evidence of neurobehavioral effects in children in some areas. In addition, life-style factors have been found to influence the body burden of some contaminants, for example cadmium exposure from smoking. In the Arctic region, a local public health intervention has successfully achieved a reduction of exposure to mercury by providing advice on the mercury content of available traditional foods. The physiological and nutritional benefits of traditional food support the need to base dietary recommendations on risk-benefit analyses. The health benefits of breast-feeding emphasize the importance of local programs that inform mothers how adjustments within their traditional diet can reduce contaminant levels in their milk without compromising the nutritional value of their diet.

It is therefore recommended that:

- **In locations where exposures are high, carefully considered and balanced dietary advice**

that takes risk and benefits into account be developed for children and men and women of reproductive age. This advice should be developed by national and regional public health authorities in close consultation with affected communities.

- **Studies of the nutrient and contaminant content of traditional food items be promoted in order to assess their benefits and to estimate exposures as a basis for public health interventions.**
- **Breast-feeding continue to be recognized as a practice that benefits both mother and child.** Nonetheless, if contaminant levels increase or more information indicates increased risk, the potential need for restrictions should continue to be evaluated.

It is noted that:

From the Arctic human health perspective, it is of utmost importance that considerations for global actions against POPs and mercury take into account the concerns for Arctic human health. The Stockholm Convention and the LRTAP protocols should be properly monitored in the Arctic to determine whether their implementation is effective in protecting human health.

It is therefore recommended that:

- **AMAP participate in the global monitoring of human exposure to be established under the Stockholm Convention on POPs.**
- **The Arctic Council monitor proposals for global action on mercury being undertaken by UNEP, and contribute as necessary to ensure that Arctic concerns related to human health are adequately addressed.**

Changing pathways

The assessment of changing pathways provides an introduction to the types of changes on contaminants pathways to, within, and from the Arctic that might be expected as a result of global climate change and variability.

There is evidence that:

The routes and mechanisms by which POPs, heavy metals, and radionuclides are delivered to the Arctic are strongly influenced by climate variability and global climate change. These pathways are complex, interactive systems involving a number of factors, such as temperature, precipitation, winds, ocean currents, and snow and ice cover. Pathways within food webs and the effects on biota may also be modified by changes to climate. Studies using global change scenarios have indicated the potential for substantial changes in atmospheric and oceanographic pathways that carry contaminants to, within, and from the Arctic. These effects mean that climate-related variability in recent decades may be responsible at least in part for some of the trends observed in contaminant levels.

It is therefore recommended that:

- **AMAP be asked to further investigate how climate change and variability may influence the ways in which POPs, heavy metals, and radionuclides move with respect to the Arctic environment and accumulate in and affect biota.** This will enable Arctic States to better undertake strategic planning when considering the potential effectiveness of present and possible future national, regional, and global actions concerning contaminants.