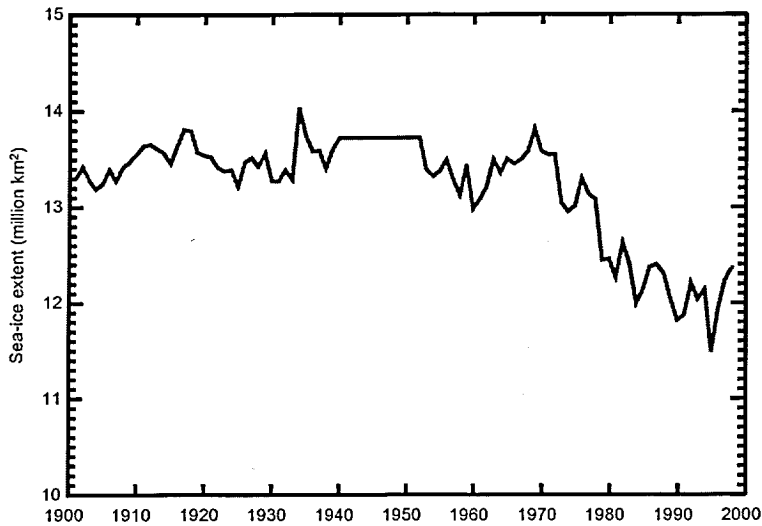


The observed change in Arctic sea-ice extent, 1900 to 1998.
The average extent for the period 1939-1952 is shown as the
data are not sufficient to show year-to-year variations.



Source: The Met. Office, Hadley Centre.

emissions. Recognizing the need for stronger action to reduce these emissions, nations negotiated the Kyoto Protocol (1997), which sets emission limitations or reduction commitments for industrialized nations relative to their 1990 levels.

Implementation of these commitments is of great concern for the Indigenous communities of the Canadian North. There is mounting evidence that climate change, ozone depletion, and ultraviolet radiation have significant cumulative negative implications not only for the circumpolar region, its wildlife, and its peoples, but for the planet as a whole.

Biological Diversity

The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity reinforces a growing commitment to sustainable development. The objectives of the convention are the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from use of genetic resources. It is a legally binding global environmental instrument that notes the importance of traditional knowledge, innovations, and practices of Indigenous and local communities with regard to the in situ conservation of biological diversity.

"The Arctic region, seemingly so pure, but already laced with deadly and invisible pollutants, has in my opinion become the canary in the mine shaft. If the canary survives, so can we all. If we can help people to see that a poisoned Inuk child, a poisoned Arctic and a poisoned planet are one and the same, then we will have effected a shift in people's awareness that will result without doubt in positive change."

—Sheila Watt Cloutier, President
of the Inuit Circumpolar
Conference, June 1998