

## **The Second Inter-Polar Conference: Connecting the Arctic with the Third Pole HKH – Cryosphere, People, and Climate Change (2025)**

*Building a resilient future for all, taking actions towards preserving the Earth's cryosphere.*

*Join us on 3–5 September 2025 at ICIMOD, Kathmandu, Nepal, as organisations from the Arctic and Hindu Kush Himalaya consolidate initiatives to take knowledge to actions for cryosphere, people, and climate.*

**The call for paper abstracts is now open. Read below for guidance on how to submit. Deadline for submission: 30 April 2025.**

### **Background**

Primarily composed of snow, ice, and permafrost, the cryosphere is a vital lifeline for all life on earth. Its albedo, the bright white surface of snow reflects large amounts of sunlight back into space, contributing to stabilising Earth's temperature. Glaciers and ice sheets act as massive reservoirs of freshwater, providing water sources for many regions. However, rising temperatures are causing rapid thawing and subsequent decline of the cryosphere resulting to negative global effects such as sea-level rise, water scarcity, and carbon release.

The Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region, sometimes known as the 'Third Pole' is home to the world's largest ice reserves outside of the polar regions, supporting rich biodiversity, vital ecosystems and provides water for Asia's major food-producing river systems. It sustains life for over 240 million people in the mountains and 1.65 billion downstream. Declining cryosphere will significantly impact local communities and ecosystems with large scale consequences such as reduced water supply from melting Himalayan glaciers, threatening agricultural production, ecosystems, tourism, and the region's overall resilience.

Building on the success of the [First Inter-Polar Conference](#), the second edition is being planned for 3–5 September 2025, in ICIMOD, Kathmandu, Nepal. The conference is jointly organised by the [Arctic Centre of the University of Lapland](#), ICIMOD, and the [Ocean Policy Research Institute](#) (OPRI) in collaboration with the [UArctic Chair in Arctic Legal Research](#) and the [UArctic Law Thematic Network](#).

The conference will be a platform to share the latest scientific knowledge and understanding on changes occurring in the cryosphere in the Arctic and the HKH region and on collaborative solutions towards preserving the cryosphere.

The conference will contribute to the objectives of the [International Year of Glaciers' Preservation \(IYGP\)](#) 2025, which aims at taking immediate action towards preserving the cryosphere for building a resilient future for all—highlighting the importance of cryosphere and their critical contributions to ecosystems and society.

## **Cryosphere, people, and climate change**

The decline of the cryosphere has numerous negative global effects like climate change acceleration through carbon release and albedo reductions, sea-level rise, weather perturbations, (disturbances or changes in the atmosphere that can influence weather patterns) and intensification of extreme weather events, as well as regional effects related to water and food security, transboundary conflicts, infrastructure challenges, and severe impacts on Indigenous and local livelihoods. We aim to promote and share knowledge and understanding on how to best respond to changes in the cryosphere in the Arctic and the HKH region, as well as build resilience in the face of changes already occurring in both regions. We intend to bring together world experts and knowledge holders to share their perspectives and jointly produce novel insights that can be translated into concrete actions and long-term strategies with a forward-looking approach. Besides this, we aim to build a lasting and durable network of scholars and stakeholders from both regions to continuously engage in dialogue, and share experiences, and expertise.

### **Objectives of the conference**

- Explore the impacts of climate change on the cryosphere and ecosystems, resulting in multiple hazards for human communities and ecosystems in the Arctic and the HKH regions
- Identify key challenges and response mechanisms, research gaps and needs, potential regulatory and policy tools, and realistic and practicable solutions that can be promoted through IYGP and scaled through the UN Decade of Action for Cryospheric Sciences 2025–2035.
- Facilitate inter-polar knowledge sharing and collaborative solutions for sustainability and resilience by involving early-career scholars, knowledge holders, relevant stakeholders, and experts
- Continue efforts to create a global knowledge network on Arctic-Third Pole connections

Under the special theme – cryosphere, people, and climate change – the conference will focus on the following sub-themes and their relevant disciplinary angles:

### **Understanding cryosphere changes and their impacts**

- What are the socio-ecosystem impacts of climate change in the Arctic and the HKH regions?
- What are the effects of climate change on local and Indigenous livelihoods?
- What are the risks of extreme events in both regions?
- How does climate change impact food and water security in both regions?
- How does climate change in either region influence the other?

## **Protection, preservation, and conservation**

- What legal and governance regimes are available in both regions in the context of climate change-cryosphere interactions?
- How do traditional knowledge systems in both regions interplay with other knowledge frameworks?
- What novel or traditional measures exist to adapt to or mitigate the effects of climate change in both regions?
- What are the transboundary challenges arising from cryospheric decline in both regions?
- How can international collaboration be enhanced through science diplomacy in both regions?

## **Socio-cultural dimensions of cryosphere-climate change interactions**

- How do different local and indigenous communities experience and understand the climatic and environmental changes occurring in both regions?
- How does the resilience of local and indigenous communities manifest itself in response to climatic and environmental changes?
- How are the climatic and environmental changes depicted artistically?
- How do local and Indigenous communities' religious or spiritual beliefs interact with the climatic and environmental changes?
- How can local and Indigenous communities come together to learn from each other's experiences?

## **Abstract format:**

1. Presentation title
2. Author(s)
3. Email address(es)
4. Abstract (up to 200 words)
5. Keywords (4-5)

## **Timeline**

- 31 January 2025: Call for abstracts open
- 30 April 2025: Deadline for abstract submissions
- 15 June 2025: Notification of acceptance
- 30 June 2025: Registration deadline following confirmation of participation
- 01 August 2025: Submission of draft papers (up to 2,000 words)
- 3–5 September 2025: Conference

- 01 December 2025: Final papers submission (for consideration to be published in *Italian Polar Journal* (IL POLO))

### **Submission process**

The organisers are inviting scholars and researchers to submit research abstracts on the topics indicated in the preceding paragraph. The authors of the selected abstracts will be expected to present their papers at the conference on 3–5 September 2025. Submissions will be assessed based on their quality and thematic relevance. Selected papers will undergo revisions and be published in *Italian Polar Journal* (IL POLO).

Interested scholars may submit their abstracts to [interpolarconference2025@gmail.com](mailto:interpolarconference2025@gmail.com). Please make sure to include author's last name followed by "Abstract\_IPC\_2025" (Example: "Anthony\_Abstract\_IPC\_2025") in your email subject line.

Selected presenters will receive email notification for the acceptance of the abstracts. Upon confirming their participation following the timeline suggested, presenters must arrange their travel and accommodation in Kathmandu, Nepal. The conference organisers will not provide any financial and/or practical assistance. The submission deadline is 30 April 2025.

### **Inquiries:**

For inquiries, please email at: [interpolarconference2025@gmail.com](mailto:interpolarconference2025@gmail.com)

For more information, visit the Inter-Polar Conference event page [here](#).