



Laureates:

Mairead Maguire, Ireland (1976)
Rigoberta Menchu Tum, Guatemala (1992)
Jody Williams, USA (1997)
Shirin Ebadi, Iran (2003)
Leymah Gbowee, Liberia (2011)
Tawakkol Karman, Yemen (2011)

Dear Heads of State in the Arctic Council,

2015 was the hottest year in recorded history. It surpassed five other milestones in the last decade alone. Climate change is threatening hundreds of millions of lives and livelihoods across every continent, making it not only the environmental challenge of our time, but also a critical issue of human rights, justice, and equity. As recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize, we believe that it is one of the greatest threats to global peace and stability.

Nowhere are the effects of global warming more stark than in the Arctic, where temperatures are rising twice as fast as the global average. All of the nations who share borders in this remarkable region also share an obligation to act to protect it.

2015 was also the year that oil giant Shell withdrew from the Arctic. And the year the world signed a major climate agreement in Paris, at which many of you formally declared your aspirations to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees or less.

In 2016, you have the opportunity to demonstrate this leadership by acting with urgency to safeguard the Arctic, both by tackling your nation's emissions and by keeping the Arctic off-limits to more high risk, high cost fossil fuel development.

The Arctic Council can set a model for the rest of the world by removing Arctic waters from any future oil and gas exploration. For the sake of this and future generations, we cannot continue to explore for, and exploit, more oil. This is oil that we simply cannot afford to burn if we are serious about meeting our climate goals. Our shared Arctic waters, which sustain a unique variety of wildlife and indigenous ways of life, are an ideal reminder of our moral obligation. We must do all we can to preserve our natural heritage and protect our climate.

It is unacceptable that, as Arctic sea ice melts, as melting permafrost collapses communities, and as livelihoods and cultures that have been sustained for centuries are threatened, countries continue to allow, incentivize and even drive exploration and production of oil and gas in this very region. Our dangerous addiction to fossil fuels has taken us to the ends of the earth, but it is there that it must stop.

Advocating for peace, justice and equality

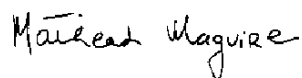
All Arctic nations share a unique responsibility. The best available science tells us that for a reasonable chance at a safe climate future, some 80% of fossil fuel reserves must stay in the ground. This means leading us towards a clean energy future, rather than locking the planet into decades of unwanted carbon pollution by allowing the continued exploitation of the Arctic.

The Arctic Council has the opportunity to serve as a model of the international cooperation that will be needed as we collectively phase out fossil fuels and transition the world to cleaner, more sustainable sources of energy.

In addition to the devastating impacts of climate change that drilling would only make worse, the Arctic is also one of the most sensitive ecosystems on earth. The risks of spills and the impossibility of tackling a disaster in remote and unpredictable waters is simply not worth it.

We urge you to seize this moment, to set a high standard for multilateral climate leadership, to protect the Arctic Ocean from the dangers of fossil fuel extraction, and to lead as the world builds the safe, clean, and renewable energy future we need.

Sincerely,



Mairead Maguire, 1976



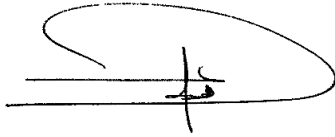
Rigoberta Menchú Tum, 1992



Jody Williams, 1997

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shirin Ebadi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a vertical line through the middle of the name.

Shirin Ebadi, 2003

A handwritten signature in black ink consisting of a large, stylized loop on the left and a vertical line on the right, with a horizontal line crossing both.

Tawakkol Karman, 2011

