

## Press Release

### **Inuit Circumpolar Council Executive Council Meets in Bethel, Alaska**

August 20, 2015 – Bethel, Alaska - The executive council of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) held its Executive Council Meeting in Bethel, Alaska on 18-19 August 2015.

ICC represents the international interests of more than 160,000 Inuit from Russia (Chukotka), USA (Alaska), northern Canada and Greenland. The executive council is currently chaired by J. Okalik Egeesiak of Iqaluit, Nunavut, for the term 2014-2018.

The executive council discussed ICC's progress and priorities recognizing the progress and planned strategies to implement their mandate. This 4-year mandate was provided to the ICC leadership at their general assembly in Inuvik in late July 2014 where Inuit adopted the *Kitigaaryuit Declaration*. <http://www.inuitcircumpolar.com/declaration---2014.html>.

ICC is also guided by two other declarations adopted by their membership. The *Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic* (2009) states that the conduct of international relations in the Arctic and the resolution of international disputes in the Arctic, must involve Inuit. The increasing global demand for Arctic minerals, hydrocarbons and living marine resources led Inuit to also adopt the more recent *Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Resource Development Principles In Inuit Nunaat* (2011) to set principles on resource development that call for an Inuit role in governance, management, development, or use of resources in the Arctic regions where Inuit live.

Areas of discussion included ICC's active involvement in the Arctic Council and in UN bodies engaged in work on indigenous peoples' rights as well as the three ICC summits scheduled to take place during this mandate. The three summits are on Wildlife Management, Education and Economic Development.

The ICC executive council was warmly welcomed by the community of Bethel, Alaska. While in Bethel, ICC toured Oscarville, Alaska. This is a small community in the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta region located just outside of Bethel. Oscarville has been selected to be part of a pilot project and the goal of the project is to take a holistic approach to create a healthier, thriving and sustainable community to address the many elements of sustainability through community engagement and interagency partnerships. This will begin the creation of a statewide model for community development.

ICC Chair, Okalik Egeesiak is especially humbled and privileged to have been welcomed by the Chief Alexie Nicholai Sr. and his community. Egeesiak is also looking forward to continue the Alaskan visit in Anchorage where she will meet with various organizations to promote ICC priorities and country specific opportunities.

The ICC Executive Council will next meet in Canada in January 2016.

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