



INUIT

Press Release

Inuit Circumpolar Council Executive Council Meets in Nuuk, Greenland

January 20, 2015 - Ottawa, ON - The executive council of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) met in Nuuk, Greenland on 13-15 January 2015 for their biannual strategy and planning session.

ICC represents the international interests of more than 150,000 Inuit from Russia (Chukotka), USA (Alaska), northern Canada and Greenland. The executive council is currently chaired by J. Okalik Egeesiak of Iqaluit, Nunavut, who was elected to the position in July 2014. The Nuuk meeting was attended by ICC regional presidents and vice-presidents from the four Arctic states where Inuit reside.

The coming year promises to be a busy one for ICC. The executive council reviewed ICC priorities, took stock of 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*. The declaration covers issues such as: the Arctic Council and other international fora; environmental stewardship; safe shipping and fisheries; sustainable economic development; Inuit health and well-being; food security; communication; education and language; and traditional knowledge and science.

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.

ICC is particularly active in the Arctic Council and in UN bodies engaged in work on indigenous peoples' rights.

As an organization with the status of Permanent Participant, ICC sits on the Arctic Council with the eight Arctic states and five other indigenous peoples' organizations that share Permanent Participant status. Canada's two-year chairmanship of the Arctic Council will conclude at a Ministerial meeting scheduled for Iqaluit at the end of April 2015, and the USA will take on the chairmanship for the period 2015 to 2017. The USA has proposed an ambitious program for their chairmanship and the ICC has written a letter of support to US Secretary of State John Kerry and to encourage additional work in the areas of food security and housing in Arctic communities.

The ICC Executive Council will next meet in Alaska in August 2015.

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