



Press Release

Inuit Circumpolar Council states the Need for Inuit Knowledge in Evidence Based Decision Making

March 23, 2016 – **Iqaluit, Nunavut** – The 3rd Biennial Arctic Observing Summit concluded Friday, March 18th in Fairbanks, Alaska. The Summit brought together over 450 delegates from 30 countries, including scientists, Indigenous peoples from across the circumpolar Arctic, as well as government and industry representatives. Delegates discussed research needs related to climate change and its effects on the planet, and in particular the importance of the Arctic and its Indigenous peoples, who experience the greatest impacts.

The Inuit Circumpolar Council Chair, Okalik Eegeesiak, attended the International Arctic Assembly Day, which was preceding the Arctic Observing Summit. “After 200 of years of active Arctic research, Inuit knowledge holders are still concerned about the type of research occurring in Inuit Nunaat. There is a lack of communication with communities, lack of engagement with Indigenous Knowledge holders as research partners and little use of Indigenous Knowledge in evidence based decision making. Communities want to be part of the process, contribute their knowledge to evidence based decision making and will do what is necessary to protect the Arctic, our food and our well-being” Eegeesiak noted.

The Inuit Circumpolar Council supports the Arctic Observing Summit Conference Statement, which was released today. It highlights seven major recommendations, which emerged after three days of intensive elaborations. The recommendations include a call for the development of international principles, protocols and mechanisms that establish ethical guidelines for research, are built on trust, involve Arctic Indigenous Knowledge holders, and use of Indigenous Knowledge.

The Conference Statement concludes that “The Arctic community has the knowledge and expertise to collaborate to develop and implement a sustained observing system that supports decision-making in response to rapid Arctic change. However, resource and coordination limitations have, to date, hampered appropriate progress.”

Okalik Eegeesiak pointed to the recent Canada / US Arctic Agreement where Prime Minister Trudeau and President Obama committed to include Indigenous knowledge “more broadly and respectfully” in decision making. Eegeesiak stated, “We call on Canada and the US to show real leadership, stay true to these promises and allocate the necessary resources accordingly. We are looking forward to help them achieving these goals.”

To view the AOS Statement see <http://www.arcticobservingsummit.org/aos-2016-conference-statement-0>

For more information:
Carole Simon
csimon@inuitcircumpolar.com
P: 613-563-2642