



The below speech was provided at the 11th Arctic Frontiers Conference by Carolina Behe on January 22, 2017.

Uvlaalluataq,

I am the Indigenous Knowledge and Science advisor for the Inuit Circumpolar Council. Thank you to the organizers for welcoming ICC to be part of this discussion. ICC advocates on behalf of 160,000 Inuit across, Chukotka, Alaska, Canada and Greenland. Our primary role is to represent an Inuit voice in the International arena as one of six permanent participants of the Arctic Council and holding consultative 11 status at the United Nations.

Interest in the Arctic is increasing. It is positive for the world to increasingly understand that the Arctic is connected to the rest of the world. That activities that occur around the world effect the Arctic, that changes occurring within the Arctic are connected to the rest of the world. With these interests come multiple value systems, and more people wanting to apply those value systems to decisions being made.

Should we develop or no; how do we protect one animal or another; what research questions should be developed to aid in guiding decisions making? And then there are the questions regarding adaptation and capacity building of Indigenous Peoples around tables that few Indigenous Peoples sit - what systems should be brought in to help adapt; what tools should be brought in to build capacity in Indigenous communities? These are just a few of the questions we all know are littering discussions across the world, while multiple stakeholders are brought to the table.

While it is important for people to come together, to work together, to produce knowledge together, it is also important to recognize that Inuit, Indigenous Peoples, are not just mere stakeholders - these areas are Inuit homelands and have been for thousands of years.

Throughout this time, Inuit culture has been shaped by the Arctic and is part of the Arctic ecosystem. Inuit culture is as much a part of the interlinking systems of the Arctic as the hydrological system or marine mammals. In being part of this ecosystem, Inuit have developed and continue to build upon a systematic way of knowing. A knowledge that is built on methodologies, analysis and assessment process, mechanisms for making trade-off decisions, and very importantly, a value system that guides decisions. Much of this is centered around the importance of food security.

In Inuit homelands, food security moves far beyond calories, nutrients, or purchasing power - it is the right and responsibility to take care of the Arctic, it all of life. It is an understanding of how systems interconnect, an understanding of where points of vulnerability lie, an understanding of cumulative impacts, and an understanding of health. A health that is raised through balance, a balance between all activities, well-being and gathering, preparing, consuming our natural foods.



This knowledge, is part of what Inuit have to offer at the Arctic Council and all other tables. A different way of looking at the world, a holistic way of looking at the world.

So should there be development or not? How do we protect life in a rapidly changing environment? What research questions should be developed to aid in guiding decisions making?

Key to these questions and more is balance and including Inuit in a meaningful way. 'Meaningful Way', means partnerships. Partnerships from the beginning to the end. This means that instead of only being introduced tools or regulations for adaptation, our Peoples are allowed to and supported to use the adaptive mechanisms that they have had for thousands of years. It means that instead of capacity building, we need empowerment of our Peoples to allow for equitable partnerships. It means moving into the future creating stronger platforms that will allow for equitable partnerships, allow for a co-production of knowledge, and an understanding that balance is needed.