Circumpolar Indigenous Gather for Education Conference

By Pausauraq Jana Harcharek

Undaunted by the first blizzard of the year, participants at the Circumpolar Conference on Education for Indigenous Peoples gathered in Iqaluit, the capitol of Nunavut in Canada in November 2012, the event was designed to bring educators into the same room to forge new partnerships, share information and research and have discourse regarding mutual challenges.

With a focus on the major themes of Early Childhood Education, Delivering Quality Programming and Parental and Community Engagement, the conference was organized with keynote addresses and workshop sessions surrounding a variety of topics. Speakers from Norway, Greenland, Canada and Alaska honed in on curriculum efforts/reform, parenting support programs, early childhood programs/reform and assessment fostering dialogue amongst the participants.

One of the presenters, Navarana Beveridge, Executive Director at the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, a 2010 Jane Glassco Arctic Fellow in Inuit Language and Early Childhood Education and the founder of the first Inuk Day Care “Tumikuluit Saipaakivik” stated, “[they] found that kids in Early Childhood Education who were well-grounded in their language and culture did really well when they entered grade school.” This private early learning center is run on a full-immersion policy where children are cared for and taught in a homelike environment using only Inuktitut. Living in the Arctic as Inuit is the focus of instruction.

Presenter Shanna Hagens who is a teacher at the Canadian First Nations’ Deh Gah Elementary and Secondary School in Fort Providence talked about an exciting approach where learning is done in natural contexts. An intriguing example is where “Rites of Passage Camps” are held when students approach puberty. Boys learn survival skills including firearm safety and then go out on the land. Girls make sewing kits, learn to prepare medicinal plants and pick berries in a camp

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President’s Message
Jim Stotts
“Shell’s Great Arctic Adventure”

Like others I’ve been following the evolving saga I call “Shell’s Great Arctic Adventure.” In the tradition of the old Viking sagas, this adventure has its share of highs and lows. However, right from the start, the mishaps have overpowered the accomplishments.

Why? Because of poor decision making and poor management; there have been serious miscalculations right from the start. It’s not what the insurance industry would call acts of god, its human error, pure and simple. It’s not right to blame technology or the weather for Shell’s problems; management is to blame here.

I presume everyone that follows Arctic development knows by now that the “Kulluk,” Shell’s Arctic oil-drilling ship, has run aground on an island just south of Kodiak Island in Alaska. It’s the culmination of what can only be described as a comedy of errors; or more appropriately, a tragedy of errors.

It’s only proper to state the fact that this is just the latest in a string of mishaps. It’s only proper to state the fact that this is Shell’s Arctic legacy now. We should not try to sugarcoat it any longer. We need a time-out to reconsider what’s going on here; before we make a real serious mistake that we might not be able to recover from.

ICC is not the only one suggesting that we need to take a cautious approach to development in the Arctic Ocean. The green environmental movement has been calling for the same for some years now. It’s important to mention that some in the business community, particularly in the finance and insurance sectors, are calling for caution.

Why? Because the risk outweighs the reward; tremendous amounts of shareholder capital is at risk. We are talking about potential financial misadventure of $100 billion. This is not an exaggeration; the number comes from Lloyds of London, possibly the largest insurance company in the world.

There are some in the oil and gas industry itself calling for caution. Some members of the United States Congress are calling for an investigation of Shell’s entire drilling operation. I think this is a good idea considering what’s at risk and Shell’s performance so far.

In Alaska, Inuit living along the coast from Bristol Bay to the Canadian border are nervous and worried about oil spills in the offshore from oil and gas development and increasing marine traffic. Nothing short of our culture is at stake. It’s time for the U.S. government to live up to its responsibility to all of us. It’s time to take another good hard look at Shell’s Great Arctic Adventure to ensure that it is done right.

The U.S. government does not have to reinvent the wheel to figure out how to best manage offshore oil and gas development. The Arctic Council is an organization that approaches offshore oil and gas development from a sustainable point of view and has done some good work in developing guidelines that are appropriate for the Arctic. Most recently, the Arctic Council’s Task Force on Marine Oil Pollution, Preparedness and Response concluded negotiations that resulted in a binding oil spill agreement that will be presented for ratification at the upcoming Ministerial meeting. This is a good starting point.

Finally, ICC has looked at offshore oil and gas development and while Inuit recognize that both a healthy environment and healthy economy are necessary, all development must proceed in a responsible, sustainable manner. To get a real understanding of the Inuit perspective on how offshore oil and gas development, and responsible resource development in general, should proceed, take a look at the Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Resource Development Principles in Inuit Nunaat available on our website: www.iccalaska.org.
The Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs) met in Haparanda, Sweden in mid-November. The meeting was interrupted by the news that RAIPON was unable to attend as reported on elsewhere in this issue of DRUM.

Ministerial Preparations: The first day of the meeting was a closed session to discuss preparations for the upcoming Ministerial meeting in Kiruna, Sweden. They discussed the wording of the Kiruna Declaration and Kiruna Statement, the SAO Report to Ministers, and how to input the various Working Group and Task Force products into the SAO report. The Working Group Chairs attended in the afternoon to discuss how to coordinate their reports with the SAO report. As the Swedish chairmanship winds down most efforts are focused on the upcoming Ministerial meeting.

Administrative: The Chair provided an overview of plans for the last part of the Swedish chairmanship. The Swedish SAO then gave a progress report on the progress of the Task Force on Institutional Issues (TFII).

Climate, Environment & Biodiversity: Participants discussed the progress and status of a number of projects and issues covered under this topical area, including: the Arctic Resilience Report (ARR); Short Lived Climate Forcers (SLCF); Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic (AACA); Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA); Arctic Ocean Acidification (AOA); Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS); Ecosystem Based Management (EBM); Arctic Spatial Data Infrastructure (Arctic SDI); Project Support Instrument (PSI); and the Sustaining Arctic Observing Network (SAON). All of these Council initiatives and projects are further described on the Arctic Council website.

Oceans: Under this theme there were discussions on: Recommended Practices in the Prevention of Marine Oil Pollution (RP3); the Task Force on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response; and the Arctic Ocean Review (AOR). Again these are described further on the Council website.

Human Development: There were discussions on: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR); and the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) Reform and Strategic Plan. These are described on the Council website.

Other Business: The Chairs of the six Council working groups made presentations on their work and discussed deliverables for the Ministerial meeting and priorities for the next term (2013-2015). There was an update report on the planning for the Environmental Ministers meeting to be held February 5-7 in Sweden. Finally there was an informational report from the Arctic Parliamentarians from their recent meeting in Iceland.

Conclusions: The Task Force on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response finished its work and a negotiated binding Agreement will be presented for ratification at the Ministerial meeting.

The Task Force on Institutional Issues (TFII) is nearly complete and the work to establish a Permanent Secretariat in Tromso, Norway is done. An Executive Director has been hired and the work plan for the next term is being worked on. The observer manual is still pending but is likely to be completed and presented to the Ministerial. Finally, discussions on how to integrate the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat into the Permanent Secretariat are ongoing and most likely will not be completed before the Ministerial but will continue into the next term.

The Arctic Council has been busy during the Swedish chairmanship and all indications point towards an even more hectic Canadian chairmanship. Each of the projects and initiatives mentioned above could result in an Article in the DRUM. Unfortunately we don't have the time or space to report this activity in great detail. We encourage you, the reader, to learn more about the Arctic Council through their excellent website, www.arctic-council.org. Change is coming to the Arctic and this change is accelerating.
The ICC Commission on Language, Culture and Education was established in 1977 (ICC Resolutions 77-01 and 77-04). The first Commission included Carl Chr. Puju Olsen (Greenland), Edna Ahgeak MacLean (Alaska) and Jose Kusugaq (Canada). A Chukotka representative did not participate until Chukotka officially joined ICC in 1992.

Some of Commission’s initial ideas were to: work on an Inuit language common writing system; develop an Inuit University; and standardize the use of the Inuit language.

The first workshop organized by the Commission was held in 1977 in Barrow, Alaska with elders and youth. There was also a non-Inuit academic individual who attended the workshop. It became apparent that he wanted to set the agenda for the Commission’s work on language. The Commission told him that this was the first time that Inuit were gathered in a workshop to begin to address the topic and asked him to be respectful and learn to be humble at the workshop. This incident is mentioned because this challenge continues today.

Over the years, members have changed on the Commission from time to time but the efforts and the ideas have prevailed. Due to the small population of Inuit worldwide, progress has been slow and challenges have remained. Despite that, throughout the changes in ICC leadership, the mandate remains intact.

Most recently, ICC has been working on Inuit language issues within the United Nations and the Arctic Council.

ICC has carried the issues of language and linguistic rights widely through United Nation’s agencies including UNESCO, WIPO, UNEP, UNDP and UNPFII. The situation of the Inuit language as an issue has reached international fora and has also cemented that Inuit as an indigenous peoples have rights to retain and further develop their language, culture and education on their own terms. Both the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognize these rights.

Within the Arctic Council, the issues of language, culture and education are being addressed in several projects within various working groups. Today, ICC is leading an Arctic Council project on languages titled “Assessing, monitoring and promoting Arctic Indigenous Languages.” A workshop on this project was held in June 2012 in Ottawa and a report was provided in the previous DRUM issue.

ICC’s work on Inuit language issues, as previously discussed in the first workshop held in 1977, continues to move forward. It has not been forgotten and is still alive.

Carl Chr. Puju Olsen is the President of ICC Greenland and has been involved since the establishment of ICC. He has been one of the leaders on ICC’s work on the Inuit language. He also serves as Chairman of the Greenland Language Committee of Greenland Government and is director of Greenland Language Secretariat. The Secretariat deals with Inuit language geographical names authorization and personal names adoption in Greenland.
As we enter the New Year, ICC can look back to the year 2012 as a year of accomplishments. Each of the offices have their story to tell. The final International Polar Year (IPY) conference that was held in Montreal, Canada was the biggest event and the Inuit Studies Conference in Washington, DC, US in October was a rare but a very big event thanks to the Smithsonian Institution’s organizing capabilities. For Greenland, the past year was a special experience. ICC Greenland’s involvement in the hearing processes of the vast mining projects in Greenland has given us a new and direct role in the formation of development policies. It’s a new and direct role that will have consequences on how we operate in Greenland.

But for the Executive Council and for me personally, the Chukotka visit was the highlight of 2012. Our visit last summer in Chukotka to commemorate the 20 years anniversary of their membership left us with a feeling of warm connection to our Russian friends. The generous hospitality that was shown us by the Governor’s Office, the great work of ICC Chukotka and their close cooperation with the Association of Indigenous Peoples of Chukotka was a visible and positive experience. Besides signing the Protocol to the existing MoU the most important accomplishment is that our visit convinced us that ICC have good relationship with the Chukotkan authorities. On his Christmas letter to me the Chukotka Governor Roman Kopin said: “Reliability, stability and prosperity are an indispensable constituent part of our fruitful and successful cooperation.” He further said that he is committed to “improve the quality of life of the indigenous minority peoples living in the Northern regions and will preserve their traditions and culture too.” Governor Kopin ends his letter saying: “I sincerely hope that we will continue our fruitful cooperation.”

The structural organization of the ICC that was changed at the 2002 General Assembly has now been in effect for 10 years. ICC’s centralized structure changed and the member countries offices became independent. The Executive Council reflected that change. The international President became the Chair and Vice Chairs appointed from each country are also presidents of their country’s ICC chapters with their own rules. At the same time the finances are no longer interconnected as earlier.

It’s no wonder that our operations have changed since then. So has the role of the Chair. The Chair’s Office deals mostly with the coordination of the Executive Council meetings, and of course represents Inuit in many international meetings. Members to the various international fora where ICC is represented is divided among the offices. Where it is possible, each country will send their own representatives to important meetings. The funding for those activities is the responsibility of each of the country offices. Our activities vary in the changing Arctic and it is obvious that our approaches to this change also vary within the Inuit homelands.

But, it is important to stress that we all are bound by the General Assembly’s decisions and must operate under the Charter and the By-laws. The fact is, that in many years Inuit have been cooperating on international issues, the country member’s implementation approaches are different. As the Barrow General Assembly in 2006 theme Unity within Diversity correctly stated, that’s exactly how our daily operations could be described. Thus each of the country offices have different approaches to how they organize their work. In Greenland we have decided that the Country office will merge with the office of the Chair when Greenland has the leadership. The two Greenlandic Executive Council members are included in the daily operations and work is divided equally. Our engagement in the Arctic Council are also evolving, so are our activities within the United Nations.

The Inuit cooperation cannot be effective without understanding and respecting those differences. Political systems also vary and we operate in several languages in our daily work. In Greenland, Greenlandic and Danish are official languages and our office also uses English to connect to the United States and Canada offices and Russian to connect with our Chukotka representatives. So how diverse can it be?

I wish all of you a Happy New Year.

Chair’s Message

Aqqaluk Lynge

Unity within Diversity

2013: New Year and New Challenges

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ICC Calls on Global Leaders at UNFCCC COP 18
By ICC Canada and ICC Alaska Staff

Climate change continues to be an important topic for ICC. One effort continues to be ensuring that Inuit concerns and perspectives are taken into consideration in global decision-making processes like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The most recent UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP) 18 was held in Doha, Qatar in November/December 2012. Noor Johnson from ICC Canada represented ICC at the meeting. She attended various side events including one hosted by the Arctic Council, and met with representatives from Small Island Developing States and other members from the Arctic and Indigenous Caucuses.

ICC issued a statement on climate change and distributed it at the meeting and to the press. The statement brings attention to the Arctic environment and the fact that rapid climatic changes continue to be an increasing challenge for Inuit, as Inuit culture and identity is closely tied to the environment. Specifically, the statement said, “Sea ice and permafrost play a vital role for our global future. Inuit knowledge holders and scientists have noted the unprecedented rate of Arctic sea ice loss. The National Snow and Ice Data Centre recent report findings has confirmed the loss of sea ice is occurring much faster than previous models have predicted.”

The statement in part reads:

The Inuit Circumpolar Council urges global leaders to support Inuit in sustaining our ice-dependent lands and livelihoods by taking the following actions:

1. **Recognize the role of the Arctic in sustaining global climate systems and supporting life on earth.** Global leaders should designate avoidance of further climate change impacts on the Arctic as one of the key benchmarks for effectiveness of a Post-2012 process and support research on the relationship of a melting Arctic to global processes.

2. **Support the integration of Inuit and Traditional knowledge and local monitoring into regional and global environmental assessment processes by:**
   a. Integrating Traditional knowledge into IPCC reports and support Inuit experts to serve as authors.
   b. Supporting community-based monitoring of environmental change and developing global databases to integrate local observations and monitoring systems into regional and global scale models.

3. **Support Inuit and indigenous peoples with adaption and sustainable technology development by:**
   a. Creating a Green Technology Fund that will allow developed (Annex I) countries to allocate a percentage of their contributions for indigenous peoples from their own regions.
   b. Assisting Arctic, indigenous, and remote communities in developing renewable energy options that will increase their economic viability and decrease dependence on energy imports and outside resources.

4. **Recognize the fundamental human right of Inuit to a healthy environment, and respect Inuit sovereignty and the rights of indigenous peoples to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) as custodians of their homelands.** We call on the international community to recognize the human rights implications of climate change for Inuit and indigenous peoples, and to respect Inuit sovereignty over all decision-making processes in the Arctic.

5. **Acknowledge the important role of the Arctic Council as a model for cooperation between states and indigenous peoples, and encourage states to develop similar forums for addressing environmental challenges in their own regions.** The Inuit Circumpolar Council calls on global leaders to develop collaborative decision-making forums that include indigenous peoples as formal participants through which to tackle the issues raised by global environmental change and intersecting, trans-boundary environmental issues.

6. **Acknowledge the important role of Black Carbon as a short-lived climate forcer and develop research process to reduce the impact of short-lived climate forcers such as black carbon.** The Inuit Circumpolar Council calls on global leaders to support Inuit in developing appropriate research programs to assess the issue of black carbon and to use these results and other to take initiatives that will reduce the amount of black carbon entering the Arctic.

The full statement can be found on ICC Alaska’s website: www.iccalaska.org.

ICC continues to remain engaged in climate change forums like the UNFCCC and monitors progress at this forum and other related international decision-making forums. The UNFCCC COP 19 will be held in Poland next December.
RAIPON Missing at Arctic Council
By ICC Alaska Staff

ICC was surprised to learn at the Senior Arctic Officials (SAO) meeting in mid-November in Haparanda, Sweden that the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) would not be able to attend because of restrictions imposed on them by the Russian Justice Ministry. The Ministry claims RAIPON is out of compliance with domestic law concerning non-governmental organizations within Russia. RAIPON has been in existence for more than twenty years representing indigenous peoples from northern Russia, and is one of the three original Permanent Participants (PPs) to the Arctic Council together with the Saami Council and ICC.

As a result of the restrictions, RAIPON is prohibited from meeting in Russia and abroad, including Arctic Council meetings. There is some confusion with conflicting stories being told on this situation and it has been hard to know what is happening to resolve the issue. International media is following this development closely. It is expected that the Russian SAO will report on any progress on this matter at the upcoming SAO meeting scheduled for mid January.

The Arctic Council, including the five PPs attending, made a statement urging the Russian Federation to resolve the matter as soon as possible so that RAIPON can participate again at the Council. ICC is hopeful that this will be resolved soon so that RAIPON will be able to attend the Ministerial meeting next May in Kiruna, Sweden, if not sooner.

UN World Conference on Indigenous Peoples
By ICC Alaska Staff

Delegates from ICC and the Saami Council met October in Nuuk, Greenland to finalize an Arctic Declaration, which will be presented at a meeting to be held June 8-13 in Alta, Norway. This meeting, hosted by the Saami Council, will have approximately 400 indigenous delegates from around the globe in attendance. The purpose of the Alta meeting is to prepare for the upcoming United Nations World Conference on Indigenous Peoples to be held in 2014 at UN Headquarters in New York City.

The Arctic region represents the Inuit and Saami peoples and they are represented by ICC Greenland Executive Council Member, Hjalmar Dahl, at the World Conference Global Coordinating Group (GCG). Sara Larsson from the Swedish Saami Parliament is his alternate to the GCG. The GCG is quite busy planning and coordinating conference activities.

The Arctic Declaration will be presented in Alta to be negotiated and merged with declarations from the other six regions representing the world’s indigenous peoples. Each region will have 57 delegates and funding has been secured for delegates travel costs to attend the meeting in Norway. ICC will divide 29 delegates amongst its four countries, and the final decision on the makeup of the ICC delegation will be resolved at the upcoming ICC Executive Council meeting in mid January.

ICC Alaska has informed its member organizations to start thinking about who should represent their regions at the Alta meeting. There will likely be a preparatory meeting for the ICC Alaska delegation prior to departure to Norway. There will be more information forthcoming as the meeting draws near.

Chair for the National Strategy on Inuit Education and former ICC President Mary Simon shared Canada’s National Strategy on Inuit Education; “First Canadians, Canadians First,” where recommendations range from developing a program to mobilize parents to creating Inuit-centered curriculum and increasing postsecondary opportunities for Inuit.

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The conference proved to be an excellent exchange opportunity for Alaskans who attended. Jana Harcharak (North Slope Borough School District), Beverly Eliason (ICC Alaska), Nina Rearden (Alaska Native Education Association), Chris Simon (State of Alaska Department of Education) and Dr. Ray Barnhart, Beth Leonard, and Sean Topkok (University of Alaska Fairbanks) participated from Alaska.

Jana Harcharak represents the North Slope Region in the newly established ICC Alaska Education Workgroup with Pauline Harvey from the Northwest Arctic Region, Yanyuk Berndette Alvanaa-Stimpfle from Bering Straits Region, and Renee Green from the Southwest Region. Seeking improvements to Inuit education systems is the second priority set by the ICC Alaska Board of Directors. ICC Alaska is currently fundraising to begin a project to develop an “Alaskan Inuit Education Improvement Strategy,” that the Workgroup will oversee.

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The Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) is an international non-governmental organization (NGO) representing the Inuit of Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka. ICC Alaska, along with other members, strives to strengthen, protect, and develop Inuit rights in the circumpolar region.

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