



**Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting
Nuuk, Greenland**

May 12, 2011

**Inuit Circumpolar Council
PRESS RELEASE**

Together with five other Indigenous Peoples' Organizations, Inuit Circumpolar Council is a Permanent Participant in the Arctic Council. The Permanent Participants join the eight Arctic States in the deliberations and overall work of the Council, although the Permanent Participants cannot vote and sign the inter-governmental agreements developed by the Arctic Council.

In his statement at the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting today, Inuit Circumpolar Council's Chair, Mr. Aqqaluk Lyngge stressed that the strengthening of the Arctic Council structure should include a strengthening of the role and position of the Permanent Participants. "In the future we hope the Arctic states and Permanent Participants can become equals in the working and decision-making processes and further strengthen the Council", he said.

Inuit Circumpolar Council also called for an increased focus on food safety and security in the Arctic, and commended the work of the Arctic Council Working Groups on that issue. "We depend on a healthy ecosystem to sustain our culture and well-being" Mr. Lyngge said, and stressed that "food security is a global issue, and we Inuit depend on our foods for nutritional and cultural sustainability".

The Arctic is an extremely fragile environment, and Inuit are concerned about the increased industrial activities in their homeland. Thus, the ICC Chair Aqqaluk Lyngge also mentioned the newly presented Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Resource Development Principles in Inuit Nunaat, the collective Homeland of the Inuit.

"It sets out principles on what our conditions are for working together with those that want to exploit these resources. Industry, Arctic states and others cannot simply sail into the Arctic and take what they want for their benefit. We hope the Arctic Council will consider the views expressed in our Declaration", Mr. Lyngge added.

The Inuit Circumpolar Council reiterated, that in order for the Arctic to be safe and healthy, the human dimension of any development must never be forgotten. "We must keep the Arctic safe and healthy, proceed cautiously with development, and never forget, that the Arctic Council can only be as strong as its attention to the human dimension".

The Inuit Circumpolar Council Chair Mr. Aqqaluk Lyngge will participate in the BBC World Debate recorded right after the official Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting press conference.

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