

**Canada's Prime Minister to serve as patron of the
Inuit Circumpolar Council's quadrennial General Assembly**

For immediate release

11 March 2014 – Ottawa – Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper has accepted the invitation of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) to serve as honorary patron for the ICC General Assembly held in Inuvik this summer.

As Honorary Patron, Mr. Harper lends his name and support to this important gathering of Inuit from Greenland, Chukotka (Russia), Alaska, and Canada. Inuit leaders and delegates come together once every four years to give direction to its international body, set policies, and celebrate the unity of Inuit across the circumpolar world.

Hosting the ICC General Assembly comes to Canadian Inuit only once every 12 years. With a theme of “*Ukiuqtaqtumi Hivuniptingnun – One Arctic One Future*”, it will address issues such as Arctic sovereignty, economic and resource development, political developments, healthy communities and family wellness, food security, sustainable resource use and management, environmental challenges and many others.

“We are very pleased that the Prime Minister has accepted the ICC invitation to preside over this international celebration of our people. This is truly a major historical event as the Arctic gains prominence on the world stage,” said Duane Ningaqsiq Smith, President of ICC Canada. Mr. Smith’s organization is responsible for hosting the event along with local host, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC).

Over six hundred participants are expected to come to Inuvik, located in Canada’s western Arctic, to observe the proceedings, and take part in the celebration of Inuit culture. IRC Chair and CEO, Nellie Cournoyea said, “We are pleased with Prime Minister Harper’s decision to serve as Honorary Patron of the ICC General Assembly. We look forward to hosting and welcoming delegates and visitors to the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.”

ICC Chair, Aqqaluk Lynge, from his office in Greenland, stated, “having Canada’s Prime Minister serve as Honorary Patron is a strong indicator of the importance of ICC as a body that can directly address the impacts of our changing Arctic”.

-30-

For more information:

Corinne Gray
ICC Canada Executive Director
cgray@inuitcircumpolar.com
+1 613 563 2642