



INUIT

PRESS RELEASE

ICC Takes the Opportunity to Observe and Reflect the Arctic Council Ministerial

May 12, 2017 – Fairbanks, Alaska - ICC Chair, Okalik Egeesiak said yesterday at the Arctic Council Ministerial in Fairbanks, “Last year the Arctic Council celebrated twenty years – this year the Inuit Circumpolar Council celebrates 40 years. Egeesiak shared, “We need to take a moment to step back and observe where we have come from, where we are now, and where we want to go,” she said.

“The United States has worked hard to advance the Arctic Council and we celebrate the success of their chairmanship” offered Nancy Karetak-Lindell, ICC Canada President. “The U.S. chairmanship expanded the role of the Council and the Permanent Participants – we are moving from policy shaping to policy making and to this end, ICC believes the U.S. has made progress by supporting the peoples of the north and supporting effective policy development during their chairmanship. This is an ongoing evolution; each chairmanship moves the target forward as they bring new vision and life to the Council – this is healthy – this allows for renewal,”

As the eight Arctic states reflect on the US Chairmanship and welcome the incoming Finnish Chair, Jim Stotts ICC Alaska President offered, “We must note that the results of all of the work done during the U.S. chairmanship would have benefitted greatly from an earlier involvement of the Permanent Participants during project planning stages and through the use of Indigenous Knowledge.” Stotts said, “By using Indigenous Knowledge and science together we ensure a more complete and improved result in the work of the Council.”

“We urge the Arctic states to continue to work towards more meaningful engagement with the Permanent Participants and to continue to build upon this partnership, evolve and move the benchmark up,” stated Egeesiak.

Hjalmar Dahl, ICC Greenland President suggested, “ICC commends Finland’s effort to support the importance of education in fostering sustainable development in Arctic communities and invokes all to participate in the ICC Education Summit in 2018 in Greenland.” Dahl offered, “We cannot overstate it is time to move forward on this issue and close the gap between southern and Arctic communities. We need innovative models and equal access to high quality education at all levels, from early childhood to post-secondary.”

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