



Press Release: Inuit call for self-determination, partnership, and recognition of human rights in science and research at International Arctic Science Ministerial

October 25, 2018 – Berlin, Germany – When it comes to Arctic science and research in Inuit homelands, there must be global commitment to engage Inuit as partners and respect their fundamental human rights. This was the main message from the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) leadership at the second Arctic Science Ministerial (ASM2) in Berlin today.

The ASM2 began today with a Science Forum which brought together scientists and science ministers from 29 governments and the European Union, Indigenous Peoples and international scientific organizations to discuss the Arctic Science and the need for enhanced coordination.

The forum was organized into three themes – 1) strengthening Arctic observing systems, 2) understanding regional and global dynamics of Arctic change, and 3) assessing vulnerability and building resilience of Arctic environments and societies.

Arctic Indigenous Peoples were strongly represented at the Science forum through the Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council. Through the Indigenous representation, keynotes and presentations the message that the Arctic is Indigenous Peoples' homelands and the need for equitable meaningful engagement came across loudly. This point was further stressed by a few of the scientists' presentations.

Regarding sustainability, research activities, Indigenous Knowledge, and Inuit rights, ICC leadership provided a powerful voice and direction to the audience. "The sustainable use of the Arctic is not a luxury for Inuit—it is life itself; it is about protecting the future of Inuit society. Not just the polar bear. Not just the seal. Not just the ice. For all of us," said ICC Canada President, Monica Ell-Kanayuk, in her keynote.

President Ell-Kanayuk further stressed the importance of Inuit self-determination in research and the need for partnership with Inuit representational organizations in all aspects of research from agenda setting and decision-making on priorities to implementation and dissemination of research activities.

Self-determination and the connection between human rights and sustainability were further stressed by Dr. Dalee Sambo Dorough, the ICC Chair. Dr. Dorough noted that, "Inuit have demonstrated extraordinary resilience against all odds. For Inuit to effectively adapt, recover, or adjust to change, respect for and recognition of our fundamental human rights should be a major dimension." Dr. Sambo-Dorough emphasized that Inuit hold many solutions for addressing the challenges they face, through Indigenous knowledge, innovation and quick, adaptive decision making. "Adaptation measures would be greatly enhanced by affording Inuit the political and intellectual space to determine and define what we believe to be vulnerabilities and to determine our collective measures for addressing them."

The ASM2 will continue tomorrow with the Science Ministerial. Here, the science Ministers and the Indigenous representatives will meet to discuss the points put forward at the Science Forum. The Ministers are expected to sign a

joint statement that aspires to enhance Arctic scientific cooperation. ICC will be represented at the meeting by Dr. Dorrough and technical staff, where we will continue to urge for evidence based information and equitable meaningful engagement for Inuit.

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Founded in 1977 by the late Eben Hopson of Barrow, Alaska, the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) has flourished and grown into a major international non-government organization representing approximately 155,000 Inuit of Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka (Russia). The organization holds Consultative Status II at the United Nations Economic and Social Council and is a Permanent Participant at the Arctic Council. ICC strives to strengthen unity among Inuit of the circumpolar north; promote Inuit rights and interests on an international level; develop and encourage long-term policies that safeguard the Arctic environment; and seek full and active partnership in the political, economic, and social development of the circumpolar North.