



Press Release: Arctic Indigenous Peoples at the Second Arctic Science Ministerial

October 26, 2018 – Berlin, Germany – As the world comes together to discuss, coordinate, and address Arctic science and research needs and priorities at the second Arctic Science Ministerial (ASM2), we, the Arctic Indigenous Peoples, are faced with the need to once again remind those in discussions that the Arctic is our homeland, there is a need for evidence-based information to be rooted in *both* Indigenous Knowledge and science, and there are legal and moral obligations to meaningfully and effectively engage Indigenous Peoples at all tables and throughout all conversations.

During the first day of the ASM2, which consisted of the Arctic Science Forum, Indigenous Peoples demonstrated strong voices, contributions, and potential paths forward that should be reflected in the Ministers' Joint Statement. Indigenous Peoples have stressed that to protect the Arctic, we must protect Arctic Indigenous Peoples, that sustainability within the Arctic is not a luxury or research topic for those that live in the Arctic but rather it is about life itself. Our connection to our natural environment is a vital part of our identity and culture. We have worked to ensure that the world understands our relationship to our lands, territories, and resources, which we have demonstrated since time immemorial. This profound relationship defines our identity and is revealed through our knowledge, languages, and cultures.

Many speakers and audience members of the Arctic Science Forum stressed the need for observations to be gathered from remote areas of the Arctic throughout the entire year, and the need for specific observations on physical and biological processes. The solution to all these challenges must include meaningful and effective partnership with Indigenous Peoples and their communities and, importantly, inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge through a co-production of knowledge.

While many call for the recognition of the significance of Indigenous Peoples and the assertion of their meaningful inclusion, we continue to face marginalized inclusion in processes that demonstrate a lack of understanding of meaningful engagement. For truly meaningful engagement, Arctic Indigenous Peoples must guide and lead the engagement process.

With this in mind, we share with the world the Ottawa Indigenous Knowledge Principles developed and adopted by the Arctic Council Permanent Participants (2014).

WORKING DEFINITION – INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE: ¹

Indigenous Knowledge is a systematic way of thinking and knowing that is elaborated and applied to phenomena across biological, physical, cultural and linguistic systems. Indigenous Knowledge is owned by the holders of that knowledge, often collectively, and is uniquely expressed and transmitted through indigenous languages. It is a body of knowledge generated through cultural practices, lived experiences including extensive and multigenerational observations, lessons and skills. It has been developed and verified over millennia and is still developing in a living process, including knowledge acquired today and in the future, and it is passed on from generation to generation.

Fundamental Principles for the Use of Indigenous Knowledge in Strengthening the Work of the Arctic Council

1. The use of Indigenous Knowledge is an overarching mandate of the Arctic Council and is a central commitment for implementation by the Senior Arctic Officials, Permanent Participants, and all Arctic Council Working Groups.
2. Indigenous Knowledge enhances and illuminates the holistic and shared understanding of the Arctic environment which promotes and provides a more complete knowledge base for the work of the Arctic Council.
3. Recognition, respect, trust, and increased understanding between Indigenous Knowledge holders, scientists, and representatives of the Arctic States are essential elements in the meaningful and effective inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge in the work of the Arctic Council.
4. The inclusion, use, review, and verification of Indigenous Knowledge in the work of the Arctic Council will occur at all stages of every agreed-to initiative and will be led and facilitated by the Permanent Participants. Recognizing that Permanent Participants will determine the appropriate use of Indigenous Knowledge in work of Arctic Council.
5. Indigenous Knowledge is the intellectual property of the indigenous knowledge holders, therefore policies and procedures for accessing data and information gathered from Indigenous Knowledge holders should be developed at the appropriate ownership level, recognizing and adhering to each Permanent Participants' protocols.
6. In order to maintain the integrity of specialized information and avoid misinterpretation of Indigenous Knowledge, it is crucial that evaluation, verification and communication of analyzed information be conducted by Indigenous Knowledge holders with appropriate expertise, to be identified by Permanent Participants.

7. Each of the Permanent Participants represent their respective cultures, communities, people and Indigenous Knowledge systems and holders; processes of including Indigenous Knowledge in the work of the Arctic Council will respect and reflect this diversity.
8. The inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge in the work of the Arctic Council requires adequate capacity and resources to address the unique needs and circumstances of the cultures, languages, communities, governance processes, and knowledge systems of Arctic indigenous peoples represented by the Permanent Participants.
9. Indigenous Knowledge and science are different yet complementary systems and sources of knowledge, and when appropriately used together may generate new knowledge and may inform decision making, policy development and the work of the Arctic Council.
10. The use of Indigenous Knowledge within the Arctic Council must benefit the knowledge providers and appropriately credit indigenous contributions.
11. The co-production of knowledge requires creative and culturally appropriate methodologies and technologies that use both Indigenous Knowledge and science applied across all processes of knowledge creation.
12. Communication, transmission and mutual exchange of knowledge using appropriate language conveying common understanding, including strategies to communicate through indigenous languages, is critical to work of Arctic Council.
13. Recognize the need to bridge knowledge systems, including leveraging existing indigenous knowledge networks, institutions and organizations, as well as developing education strategies to broaden mutual understanding.

It is imperative to recognize that collaborations with Arctic Indigenous Peoples requires equitable engagement in all processes from beginning to end and inclusive of full recognition of Indigenous Peoples authorities, governance systems, and collective rights. Therefore, we call for full and effective participation in the development and signature on international agreements and statements from here forward.

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