



## **Press Release: Our Food Forever – Alaska Inuit Food Sovereignty Summit**

**September 10, 2019 – Nome, Alaska-** Due to increasing concern about the lack of the direct role of Inuit in management in the resources that we depend upon, the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) Alaska organized an Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Summit. The Summit brings together Inuit from across the North Slope, Northwest Arctic, Bering Strait, and Yukon Kuskokwim regions of Alaska to discuss food sovereignty. Throughout the three-day Summit, focus will be placed on developing a collective way forward to secure consistent access, management authority, and rights over our traditional food resources.

The Summit is the centerpiece of the Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Initiative. The Initiative is facilitated by ICC Alaska and is led by ICC Alaska membership organizations and collaborating co-management organizations.

On the opening day, Dr. Dalee Sambo Dorough, ICC Chair, addressed the important linkage between our human rights and food sovereignty. She shared the important elements of international human rights instruments that support our cultural integrity, and affirm our rights to management and control of the resources that we depend upon. Dr. Dorough also commented on what is needed to fully exercise and ultimately enjoy these rights.

ICC Alaska President, James Stotts, shared with the Summit Participants, that “Hunting and fishing is the basis of our traditional culture and economy. It defines who we are as a people...This [our food sovereignty] is not a new issue, we have been discussing hunting and fishing rights around dinner tables for the past fifty years. It’s time to move forward...”

Joining the Summit, is John Noksana Jr. from Tuktoyaktuk, with the Fisheries Joint Management Committee. John shared with us an overview of the co-management system within the Inuvialuit Settlement Region of Canada. The presentation offered an example of a working co-management system. One that participants responded to with interest.

Throughout the first day, participants stressed the need to move forward with unity and solidarity. Many people underscored the power of Inuit moving together, based on our own laws and cultural values. The Summit will continue to meet over the next two days in Nome, Alaska.

Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) Alaska is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization that exists to be the unified voice and collective spirit of Alaskan Inuit, to promote, protect, and advance Inuit culture and society. ICC Alaska membership includes regional organizations that represent Inupiat, Central Yup’ik, Cup’ik and Saint Lawrence Island Yupik in the North Slope, Northwest Arctic, Bering Straits and Southwest regions in Alaska.

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Over the past three days, participants emphasized the importance of unity, managing through our culture and through our values.