



INUIT

## ICC Press Release

### **Inuit Joint Submission to UN Special Rapporteur: Four Key Recommendations to Improve Access to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation Infrastructure**

August 27, 2021 – Anchorage, Alaska – The Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) in Canada, have made a joint submission to the UN Special Rapporteur (UNSR) on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation. The submission includes four key recommendations to undertake immediate improvements to conditions that are in many instances deplorable and unsanitary.

“Recognizing that ICC has a mandate to advocate for our Inuit rights to fresh water from the 2018 *Utqiaġvik Declaration* we urge governments in Canada, Greenland, and the USA to act immediately on the four recommendations contained in this report,” stated ICC Chair Dalee Sambo Dorough. “Further, the 2011 *ICC Declaration on Resource Development in Inuit Nunaat* states, ‘In a contemporary context, healthy communities in the Arctic require the establishment, maintenance and improvement of core infrastructure needs...’ There is nothing more fundamental than safe drinking water, and sanitation infrastructure for our communities.”

The joint submission chronicles the dire situation of the 211 communities located in Chukotka (Russian Far East), Arctic Alaska, Arctic Canada (Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Nunavut, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut), and Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland). It notes the existence of many factors in the four states that contribute to inadequate access to safe drinking water and sanitation infrastructure, detailing specific issues in each country.

The four recommendations included in the Inuit Joint Submission to the UNSR are as follows:

1. States must make major new Inuit-specific investments in Inuit community water and sanitation infrastructure and take measures to streamline processes for community procurement of funding.
2. The Arctic Council should be leveraged to support solutions for improving access to drinking water and sanitation.
3. The Government of Canada must prioritize improving water and sanitation infrastructure in Inuit Nunangat.
4. States and academic institutions must prioritize investments in Inuit-led research about drinking water and sanitation in Inuit communities.

The joint submission notes that, “Limited access to drinking water and/or rudimentary sanitation systems contribute to Inuit experiencing a higher prevalence of infectious diseases and illness, including respiratory tract, skin, and gastrointestinal tract infections... National and subnational water quality standards, including systems for surveying drinking water quality, are often monitored and enforced through cooperation between different orders of government. Availability of data and information about the status of drinking water and sanitation infrastructure in Inuit communities as well as the ability of Inuit to exercise our right to water and sanitation therefore vary significantly by jurisdiction.”

The complete Inuit Joint Submission is available online at: <https://bit.ly/3sR7pVx>

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*The Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) is an Indigenous Peoples' Organization (IPO), founded in 1977 to promote and celebrate the unity of 160,000 Inuit from Alaska (USA), Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka (Russia). ICC works to promote Inuit rights, safeguard the Arctic environment, and protect and promote the Inuit way of life. In regard to climate change, we believe that it is crucial for world leaders and governments to recognize, respect and fully implement the human rights of Inuit and all other Indigenous peoples across the globe.*