**ICC PRESS RELEASE**

**Arctic Council at 25 – Plaudits for Early Achievements**

**Inuit Say it Needs to Understand “Meaningful Engagement”**

September 19, 2021 – Anchorage, Alaska – The Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), as one of the original Permanent Participants to the Arctic Council, says there is much to be proud of in terms of accomplishments over the past quarter century. ICC praised the many Senior Arctic Officials and Permanent Participants for pushing significant policy recommendations forward, and eventually adopted by the Ministers of the eight Arctic states over the past two and a half decades.

“Inuit from our four circumpolar countries – Alaska, Canada, Chukotka (Russia), and Greenland – have consistently brought our voice to the Arctic Council Ministerial meetings, Senior Arctic Official gatherings, and participated in the deliberations of the Arctic Council’s working groups since its inception,” said ICC Chair Dalee Sambo Dorough. “In fact we were there before its inception as our former Chair, Mary Simon, now Governor General of Canada, was instrumental in its creation in Ottawa on September 19, 1996.”

ICC Chair Dalee Sambo Dorough hosted an episode of the ICC’s UNIPKAAT Circumpolar Waves Podcast discussing 25 years of the Arctic Council with ICC Canada President Monica Ell-Kanayuk, ICC Greenland President Hjalmar Dahl, and ICC Chukotka President Liubov Taian. It is available here: <https://bit.ly/3gwLV9w>

“I think that meaningful participation is key for Indigenous peoples, not only in the Arctic, but worldwide in any international Indigenous forum,” said ICC Greenland President Hjalmar Dahl. “Within the Arctic Council, as Permanent Participants, we have the right to speak but not a right to vote, which I see as a problem. Something has to be done in that area.”

ICC Canada President Monica Ell-Kanayuk spoke about the fact that on the issue of climate change, Inuit had alerted the world over 40 years ago, before scientists became interested in it. She spoke about the constant struggle to be heard. “If our voices cannot be heard, we are invisible. The planet and resources are all connected. The oceans are all connected. We must see beyond borders and work as one to protect the planet. More importantly, we must work collectively to ensure equity.”

A philosophical comment on the occasion was voiced by ICC Chukotka President Liubov Taian. “It is the 25th anniversary of the Arctic Council. If we think about it from a human perspective, 25 years old is a good grownup age, but still the age of becoming more mature. I wish this process of becoming more mature for us and the Arctic Council will be successful in the sense of increased cooperation between Chukotkan Inuit and the Arctic Council.”

In May 2021 at the 12th Arctic Council Ministerial meeting held in Reykjavik, Iceland, ICC Alaska President Jimmy Stotts commended the Arctic Council for returning to its original objective of trying to balance sustainable development and protection of the environment. “I spoke to this body two years ago in Rovaniemi of the need to find that balance. ICC believes the Arctic Council is still attempting to find that balance. Thankfully, global climate change is once again back on the agenda.”

“On behalf of the 180,000 Inuit across our four circumpolar nations we celebrate the accomplishments of the Arctic Council over the past quarter century,” stated ICC Chair Dalee Sambo Dorough. “Our hope is clearly that as we move forward together our contributions are not only heard, but substantially reflected in the work, deliberations, and decisions of the Arctic Council.”

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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 180,000 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.*