



## ICC Press Release

# Inuit Voices to be Heard at IMO on Critical Shipping Issues

November 9, 2021 – Glasgow Scotland – Yesterday at the 34<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Meeting of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Council, the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) became the first Indigenous Organization to receive IMO Provisional Consultative Status.

“This is a significant accomplishment for the ICC, especially given our relationship with and reliance upon the coastal seas and Arctic Ocean by Inuit communities throughout Inuit Nunaat. Our marine environment is affected by the decisions, guidelines, and policies set by the IMO. This status is crucial for us. It will be used by the ICC to represent ourselves, to advance our status, rights and role autonomously from those whose interests are not always neatly aligned with our perspectives as Indigenous peoples.” stated Dalee Sambo Dorough, Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council.

As we see the increase in Arctic shipping, Inuit must be at the highest levels of decision making to protect our marine environment. The ocean connects us rather than separates us. The oceans are a source of life for many across the globe, but for Inuit as a maritime people the sea ice and the ocean are central to our culture. The Arctic ocean and the ice connect Inuit to all other parts of the globe.

Provisional status means that ICC will provide a report to the IMO after two years to illustrate our contributions to the IMO and what we bring from Inuit across our four membership countries to this important international shipping body.

Lisa Koperqualuk, ICC Canada Vice President International, stated from Glasgow, “As we work hard at COP26 to bring our voices on climate change and its impacts in Inuit Nunaat - our homeland in the circumpolar region - I am grateful to those who have supported this effort over the past five years. Arctic shipping is critical infrastructure for Inuit. We depend on the Arctic fleet for re-supply, and it is also an integral part of our economies in various parts of the Arctic. The Arctic marine environment and our cultural connection with it and the food security it provides are paramount for our communities. This decision reflects an acknowledgment of our inherent right to self-determination. ICC will work to ensure that the Arctic shipping industry is safe and sustainable.”

This victory for Inuit will ensure that as shipping increases in our Arctic waters, Inuit will have our own voice. Community members will be heard on issues from the importance of Arctic shipping to concerns we have regarding our marine environment from potential spills, underwater noise, black carbon, safe shipping corridors, grey water discharge, invasive species, and a host of other issues.

With almost 90% of traded goods shipped by sea, Inuit must have a seat at this international table where issues that impact the Arctic, its coastal seas, and where multiple ocean governance concerns are discussed.

Today is a victory.

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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.*