



Press release

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples: Inuit welcome the historic UN General Assembly recognition of a clean, healthy, sustainable environment as a human right

August 9, 2022 – On the occasion of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) welcomes the historic landmark recognition by the UN General Assembly of the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

Sara Olsvig, International Chair, Inuit Circumpolar Council:

- Recognizing the right of a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a *human right* is a paradigmatic shift in the World's view on human rights, and on our environment. For decades, Inuit have advocated for governments to recognize that the human rights of Inuit are deeply and directly affected by climate change and by pollution of our land, waters, and air. The UN General Assembly recognition of a clean and healthy environment as a human right is an important step in holding governments and businesses accountable for the protection of our Arctic environment.
- On the International Day of Indigenous Peoples, we want to remind our governments and the international society, that Indigenous Peoples must be at the table in the continued implementation of the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.
- Protecting the Arctic is to protect the planet. Inuit contribute with important knowledge about Arctic ecosystems, biodiversity, environment, sea and ice conditions and the changing climate. Engaging equitably with Inuit in the protection of the Arctic environment is instrumental.
- Inuit live from our living resources - be it for commercial or traditional use - and we are deeply connected to the land, waters, and ecosystems of Inuit Nunaat. Our health and food security, and our cultural, economic, and social survival depend on the protection of our environment. We will continue to be at the forefront of advocating for the Arctic environment to be safe and healthy, and we want to be part of the solutions governments, science and businesses seek.

The UN General Assembly passed a resolution on July 28, 2022, recognizing the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a human right. The UN General Assembly resolution can be found here: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3982508?ln=en>

The Inuit Circumpolar Council held its 14th General Assembly July 19 to 21, 2022. In the General Assembly Declaration, ICC - among other things – calls on governments to uphold their obligations to

engage Inuit and their knowledge throughout the implementation of fisheries and food security agreements across Inuit Nunaat. ICC also commits to its continued advocacy for reduction and prevention of black carbon and to participate directly in the discussion on environmental regulations of shipping in the Arctic.

ICC's General Assembly Declaration is to be found here: <https://iccalaska.org/wp-icc/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/2022ICC-DECLARATION-1.pdf>

The Inuit Circumpolar Council is an ECOSOC accredited Indigenous Peoples Organization, and – among others - holds consultative status in the International Maritime Organization IMO and is an observer in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). ICC also participates in the negotiations on a legally binding instrument under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the sustainable use of the areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ).

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