



## **INUIT CIRCUMPOLAR COUNCIL PRESS RELEASE**

### **INUIT GATHER IN ILULISSAT GREENLAND - UNITED IN FIRMLY ASSERTING INDIGENOUS RIGHTS AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL**

July 20, 2023 – Ilulissat, Greenland – Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) delegates from Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Chukotka (Russia) gathered this week for our first in-person meeting in five years. The setting was the beautiful community of Ilulissat in Western Greenland. There was still a small hybrid component as the two Inuit delegates from Chukotka could not travel from Russia at this time due to the war in Ukraine.

Asserting Inuit rights at the international level as a unified circumpolar people was a central theme of the meeting. This year marks the 40th anniversary since ICC secured consultative status at the United Nations under the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

“The original vision to unite as a people across imposed circumpolar boundaries has been achieved,” said ICC Chair Sara Olsvig. “Another important goal, stated in 1977, was to bring the Inuit voice to the United Nations. We achieved that within six years. Now our vision is to strengthen our Inuit voice at the UN, and other international bodies such as the Arctic Council, which we helped create in 1996. Our intention is to further assert and bolster our Indigenous Rights and with milestone achievements such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) we created important tools to further our recognition and the advocacy for our people”

The goal of the meeting was to reflect on ICC’s progress, take note of recent developments, further advance ICC work plans, as well as celebrate our unity and culture. The delegates meeting was shaped to inform the ICC leadership on how to implement and advance the goals of the 2022 ICC General Assembly Declaration, which was renamed the “ICC 2022 Ilulissat Declaration”. Over the course of 39 clauses the Declaration includes seven priority areas ICC will focus on until 2026. They are: Good Governance, Security and Inuit Nunaat, Health and Wellness, Language and Culture, Hunting and Food Security, Arctic Ocean and the Marine Environment, and Infrastructure Deficit.

“Engaging in dialogue and learning from and with each other is key for our Inuit unity. Our in-person gatherings are therefore crucial to the work that we do on the international level. We bring the Inuit voice from each region and community through listening to our delegates. Through addressing many specific themes, we gain better understanding of the challenges we share as well as the successes we can build upon. That is why our gatherings are so important” said ICC Chair Sara Olsvig

An ICC conference always combines ceremony, discussion, debate, traditions, and a proud celebration of Inuit culture. It is a powerful gathering of Inuit leaders and onlookers spanning generations – from children and youth to elders. ICC expressed its gratitude to the community, and Mayor of Avannaata Kommunia Palle Jerimiassen for their meticulous organization and hosting of the meeting and cultural program.

The 15th ICC General Assembly is scheduled to take place in Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada in 2026. out this four-year term, the gathering in Ilulissat will provide an important venue to further discuss our priorities and advocacy,” said Olsvig.

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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.*