



PRESS RELEASE

Inuit Circumpolar Council calls on the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to engage Indigenous Peoples in setting a 1.5 degree pathway for global shipping

July 10 2023 - Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) called for Indigenous Peoples to be included in plans to reduce climate emissions from shipping at last week's meeting of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Delegates heard ICC calling for the inclusion of Indigenous and Inuit perspectives in the revision of the IMO strategy on the reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from shipping, and to address 20% of the shipping sector's climate impact caused by Black Carbon pollutants.

"Unfortunately, the IMO negotiations in London last week did not result in setting a 1.5 degree aligned GHG reduction pathway for the global shipping sector," said ICC Vice Chair Lisa Koperqualuk. "While a new reduction target of net zero 'around 2050' was agreed, along with 2030 and 2040 'checkpoints', the elements and measures to get there remain vague and non binding."

Nevertheless, the week did witness some victories for Inuit people, as the revised voluntary underwater radiated noise guidelines were approved. These guidelines now include explicit recommendations for ship operations in Inuit Nunaat and emphasize the need to consider Indigenous Knowledge and Inuit perspectives when addressing and reducing underwater noise in Inuit Nunaat, the Inuit homeland. Additionally, ICC and numerous states welcomed Canada's proposal to establish an Arctic Emissions Control Area, which would substantially reduce Black Carbon emissions from shipping.

The 2023 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's sixth assessment (AR6) report in 2023 confirms the escalating and accelerating impacts of climate change on individuals, particularly Inuit and other Indigenous Peoples.

"Inuit communities are facing climate warming impacts at a rate three to four times higher than that experienced in other regions of the world," said Koperqualuk. "Inuit communities are making necessary adaptations and adjustments, while dealing with the inequities caused by historical and contemporary policies made without our participation."

Koperqualuk further added, "The AR6 report recognizes that preventing or reducing severe risks in highly vulnerable regions like the Arctic requires a collective effort. It acknowledges the importance of involving Indigenous Peoples, such as Inuit, in climate change governance and promoting collaboration between the diverse knowledge systems."

Sara Olsvig, ICC international chair, emphasized, “Recognizing the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples is necessary to create a more just, equitable future for all. In addition to implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Revised IMO GHG Reduction Strategy and its implementation must ensure the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives, approaches, decisions, and knowledge.”

ICC hosted a side event at the IMO this week inviting Sherilee Harper, lead author on two Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports, to speak to how the IPCC has engaged Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Knowledge in its work and reports on climate impacts.

“The IPCC Reports are often considered the ‘gold standard’ of climate change science, and provide information to support climate change decision making and international negotiations, like the ones that happened this week,” said Sherilee Harper, Canada Research Chair in Climate Change and Health, University of Alberta. “It is important to note that the IPCC Reports clearly indicate that Indigenous Knowledge systems are essential to understand, respond to, and govern climate change. They also make it clear that addressing colonialism and upholding Indigenous Peoples’ Rights underpin successful climate change action,” Harper added.

END

CONTACT:

Christina Fields
ICC (Alaska)
(907) 952-2418
christina@iccalaska.org

Kuluk Lyberth
ICC (Greenland)
299 34 22 25
Kuluk@inuit.org

Cassandra Elliott
ICC (Canada)
613-407-2642
celliott@inuitcircumpolar.com