

# Utqiaġvik Declaration

**As declared by the Inuit of Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Russia  
on the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference,  
9-13 July, 2006, Utqiaġvik, Alaska.**

**Recalling** the vision and commitment of Eben Hopson, Sr. and other Inuit to promote Inuit unity and collective international action by establishing the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC);

**Recognizing** the need to remind ourselves and the world of Inuit unity, strength and diversity;

**Mindful** of declarations and resolutions adopted at previous general assemblies of ICC;

**Recognizing with Gratitude** the work of the ICC Chair and Executive Council since the ninth General Assembly;

**Committed** to renew and restructure ICC to increase its efficiency and effectiveness to represent Inuit internationally;

**Encouraged** that the newly-elected ICC Chair and Executive Council have committed to addressing the challenges and priorities set out in this Declaration;

**Recognizing** that all Inuit have the inherent right to self-determination as recognized in international law, including the right to self-government;

**Recognizing** that these rights are not fully realized for all Inuit;

**Recognizing** that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, if adopted by the UN General Assembly, would be the first comprehensive international instrument specifically addressing the human rights of indigenous peoples and thereby establishing "minimum standards" for the promotion and protection of the human rights of Inuit throughout the circumpolar region;

**Acknowledging** the circumpolar Arctic to be the world's "barometer" of environmental health; **and supporting** resolution 22/11 *Sustainable Development of the Arctic* adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme in February 2003;

**Further Acknowledging** the work of the Arctic Council from 2002 to 2004 under the chair of Iceland, and from 2004 to 2006 under the chair of Russia, and looking forward to Norway's term as chair from 2006 to 2008;

**Mindful** of the growing scale and pace of environmental change in the circumpolar Arctic and economic, social, and cultural challenges facing Inuit, including that of the rapidly-opening north polar sea route;

**Reminding** ourselves and helping others **Recognize** that the fragility of the Arctic's biological diversity makes industrial development, climate change, and other human-induced impacts a much greater concern than elsewhere;

**Understanding** that some areas of the Arctic, such as the Chukotka Peninsula in Russia, still have fewer resources and opportunities than other areas of the Arctic;

**Attentive** to the need to be financially prudent and to wisely manage the various ICC mandates with limited human resources;

**Having Participated** actively in debate at the 10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of ICC, and considered the recommendations of the assembly, including those from representatives of elders and youth;

**Hereby:**

1. **Thank** the community of Utqiaġvik for hosting ICC's 10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly;
2. **Instruct** the ICC Executive Council to annually proclaim the November 7<sup>th</sup> birth date of ICC visionary Eben Hopson, Sr. as "Inuit Day" and to urge all Inuit governments, agencies, and communities to annually proclaim this day as "Inuit Day" and conduct appropriate ceremonies and celebrations;
3. **Welcome and Adopt** the ICC Chair's report;
4. **Welcome and Adopt** the ICC Report on Activities 2002 – 2006;
5. **Welcome** the reports by Inuit leaders, including Inuit elders and youth regarding the developments and challenges facing Inuit in Alaska, Canada, Chukotka, and Greenland;
6. **Instruct** the new executive council to promote Inuit unity by strengthening ICC's regional offices;
7. **Direct** ICC to establish a committee to examine the state of Inuit rights to self-determination as recognized in international law, including the right to self-government, and recommend options to the next General Assembly to secure these rights in all Inuit homelands;
8. **Instruct** ICC to use its Arctic Council Permanent Participant status in the Arctic Council to promote legal and administrative reforms to strengthen the council and to increase the ability of Inuit to utilize the council internationally;
9. **Urge** ICC's executive council to develop initiatives that will promote Russian cooperation with ICC and, in particular, work with Chukotka Inuit to help develop the opportunities that Inuit from Chukotka have at their disposal, including small business opportunities;
10. **Instruct** ICC to continue to address the impacts in the Arctic of human-induced climate change, including:
  - a. Participation in the Arctic Council's Arctic Climate Impact Assessment follow-up activities;
  - b. Support of the climate change-based human rights petition to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and other Inuit-centred initiatives; and
  - c. Participation in implementation of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change;
11. **Instruct** ICC to maintain its efforts to reduce worldwide emissions of contaminants that end up in the Arctic threatening the health and well-being of Inuit and the natural environment, including participation in national and regional plans to implement the global Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants;
12. **Instruct** ICC to further develop and increase its participation in global efforts to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity, including an Arctic work program to implement the Convention;
13. **Instruct** ICC to support, as a priority, the final adoption of the draft UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the UN General Assembly before the end of 2006, and

- to **Further Instruct** the ICC Executive Council members to urge their respective governments to support the adoption of the Declaration;
14. **Instruct** ICC to use the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to defend the rights and further the interests of Inuit, including close co-operation with Arctic and other indigenous peoples of the world;
  15. **Instruct** ICC to participate in international bodies, in particular the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the International Whaling Commission (IWC), and the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO) to defend the right of Inuit to harvest marine mammals and to trade their product on a sustainable basis;
  16. **Direct** ICC to use and, where appropriate, lobby international and regional bodies such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and the European Union (EU) to help promote trade of Inuit goods and services world-wide in ways that do not adversely affect Inuit hunting, fishing, and gathering rights;
  17. **Direct** ICC to explore approaches and guidelines to protect intellectual property of the Inuit;
  18. **Urge** ICC to enter into discussions with Inuit hunters through national Inuit organizations and, where appropriate, through their regional-level entities, on existing and newly developing international sustainability covenants that both strengthen and promote the rights of Inuit to use resources in a wise and prudent manner;
  19. **Instruct** ICC to promote the redefinition of hunting and harvesting activities by indigenous peoples as a profession within all international human rights fora;
  20. **Ask** ICC to insist that Arctic governments treat the Inuit homeland as an integral whole as it pertains to policies and programs targeting the Arctic;
  21. **Request** ICC to study the socio-economic, environmental, and cultural impacts of the opening of the north polar sea on our communities;
  22. **Instruct** ICC to participate actively and fully in the Arctic Council's Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment and, upon its scheduled completion in 2008, to communicate, through appropriate national and local Inuit organizations, the results of the assessment to Inuit;
  23. **Instruct** ICC to build upon the circumpolar oil and gas assessment currently underway in the Arctic Council and to develop case studies of environmentally and culturally sustainable oil and gas development in the circumpolar world for use in communication and advocacy; and **Further Instruct** ICC to support indigenous property rights as well as land uses in managing and planning development;
  24. **Instruct** ICC to support indigenous property rights, and land, water, and air uses, as well as sustainable development projects of renewable and non-renewable resources in Inuit homelands to include enhanced governmental and private industry support for access to capital, employment, contracts, financing, royalties, local revenue, and other financial benefits of development, and to ensure that governments and companies provide formal opportunities for local Inuit involvement at the earliest stages in the managing and planning of such projects;
  25. **Direct** ICC to secure the necessary resources to hold a pan-Inuit summit on social challenges, including matters such as health and well-being, with the aim of sharing

- information on national initiatives and approaches to policy, and sharing promising practices among Inuit across the circumpolar region;
26. **Instruct** ICC, in cooperation with national and circumpolar partners, to develop a Circumpolar Inuit Health Action Plan that clearly identifies the health issues, priorities, and mechanisms in which Inuit Health priorities can be advanced; and **Further Instruct** ICC, in cooperation with national and circumpolar partners, to insist that Arctic governments support healthy communities initiatives;
  27. **Instruct** ICC to re-establish and strengthen a tradition of matching Inuit sister towns and villages in the Inuit Circumpolar countries to promote a closer cultural and economic exchange as well as to build cooperation between communities;
  28. **Instruct** ICC to develop a clearinghouse that will help record and protect traditional knowledge of Inuit and facilitate information exchange between Inuit of the circumpolar region;
  29. **Instruct** ICC to begin a process to update its *Principles and Elements for a Comprehensive Arctic Policy*;
  30. **Instruct** ICC to take the necessary legal and other steps to restructure ICC, including the adoption of the new name, *Inuit Circumpolar Council*, the new logo as adopted here, and to follow through with recommendations from the delegates;
  31. **Instruct** the ICC Executive Council to work with and support the Inuit Circumpolar Youth Council (ICYC) to further develop its organization to allow participation of Inuit youth and to more fully participate in ICC governance at the international and national levels;
  32. **Mandate** the ICC Language and Communications Commission to participate in international bodies and promote technological initiatives that will promote linguistic diversity, fight the tendencies of linguistic in Inuit language speaking areas and to promote youth initiatives, such as the Inuit Circumpolar Youth Council's project on *hipification* of Inuit culture and language;
  33. **Instruct** ICC to incorporate "capacity development" of Inuit in its plans, processes, activities and advocacy to defend the rights and to further the interests of Inuit internationally in particular in addressing social, cultural, educational, and language concerns.

**The Chair and Executive Council of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference hereby confirm that the Utqiagvik Declaration was unanimously passed by delegates at the 10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference on 13 July, 2006.**