



## **INUIT CIRCUMPOLAR COUNCIL PRESS RELEASE**

### **INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE STRONGLY ASSERTED AT THE CENTRAL ARCTIC OCEAN FISHERIES AGREEMENT (CAOFA) COP3, AS IMPLEMENTATION WORK ADVANCES**

**June 18, 2024—Incheon, South Korea**—The Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) participated at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP3) of the Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement (CAOFA) in Incheon, South Korea. ICC asserted that including Indigenous Knowledge will bring a more robust understanding of the central Arctic Ocean ecosystem and result in better informed decision-making. ICC also emphasized the importance of Inuit engagement and reiterated the need to understand and consider the intricate knowledge Inuit hold about the ecosystems of Inuit homelands, including the ice, waters and seas through the interconnections of hunting, culture, food sovereignty, food security, and ways of life.

During COP3, the Joint Program of Scientific Research and Monitoring (JPSRM) Implementation Plan was adopted—with Indigenous Knowledge strongly reflected in the approved text. Parties will now prepare for the Scientific Coordinating Group to implement this research plan in the years to come. Inuit contributions to the JPSRM Implementation Plan bring a holistic understanding of the Arctic marine ecosystem, which looks at the relationship between the interrelated and interdependent components of the ecosystem and includes Inuit as a part of the ecosystem.

Additionally, an Interim Conservation and Management Measure for exploratory fishing was agreed to, which prohibits exploratory fishing in the Agreement Area while the Parties continue to negotiate Exploratory Fishing Conservation and Management Measures, as part of the long-term goal of safeguarding healthy Arctic marine ecosystems and ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of fish stocks. The Parties will continue negotiations to build upon this measure, with the aim of having it passed at the next COP.

ICC has worked closely with our national delegations and other Parties since the initial negotiations of the Agreement, to include Indigenous Knowledge in a co-production of knowledge approach and to bring understanding to the Parties that the central Arctic Ocean is historically and culturally important to Inuit. Working together in the spirit of the Agreement to safeguard and protect the central Arctic Ocean and its adjacent seas is critical for Inuit, and ICC will remain actively engaged in the CAOFA now and into the future.

ICC's presence at the COP3 included ICC Executive Council Member Herb Nakimayak (Canada), ICC Vice-Chair Marie Greene (Alaska), Kuluk Lyberth (Greenland), Vernae Angnaboogok (Alaska) and Leandra Sousa (Alaska).

*As a marine people, Inuit are intimately connected to the sea, ice and waters in and around our homelands, and our full and effective participation in governance regimes related to these waters is an important component of implementing our rights. Much work still lies ahead, but the adoption of the Joint Program of Scientific Research and Monitoring Implementation Plan with Indigenous Knowledge included is a testament to the strength of the governance regime established through the Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement.*

–Sara Olsvig, ICC Chair

*“Indigenous Knowledge is central to the work of the agreement. As rights holders living in the Arctic, our in-depth and extensive knowledge does not just flow from benefit of geography, but from a holistic and intimate connection and interaction with the Arctic ecosystem we call home.”*

– Herb Angik Nakimayak, ICC Executive Council Member

*“It will take all of our collective knowledge to improve our understanding of the central Arctic Ocean ecosystem, to understand baseline conditions, to determine if fish stocks exist in the Agreement Area, and how future activity will impact the CAO ecosystem, its adjacent seas, and Inuit, as we live closest to the Agreement Area.”*

– Marie Greene, ICC Vice Chair

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*ICC is an international Indigenous Peoples' Organization, founded in 1977 to strengthen unity among Inuit of Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka. ICC promotes Inuit rights and interests at the international level, develops and encourages long term policies that safeguard the Arctic environment, and seeks full and effective participation and meaningful engagement in the political, economic, and social development of the Arctic region.*

*ICC holds Consultative Status II at the United Nations Economic and Social Council, is a co-founder and Permanent Participant at the Arctic Council, an Observer at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and holds Provisional Consultative Status at the International Maritime Organization alongside other advisory and consultative roles across numerous international fora.*