



INUIT CIRCUMPOLAR COUNCIL PRESS RELEASE

INUIT RIGHTS OVERLOOKED IN CRITICAL DRAFT OF GLOBAL PLASTIC TREATY AT INC-5

December 4, 2024 – Busan, Republic of Korea – After seven intense days, negotiations of a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, terminated early Monday morning. It was the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee (INC-5) to develop an internationally legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

INC-5 was supposed to be the last session of the negotiation committee, with the planned outcome being agreed treaty text, ready to be signed at a ministerial meeting in spring 2025. The negotiation process started with INC-1 in Uruguay in the fall of 2022. The Inuit Circumpolar Council participated in all negotiation sessions through to INC-5.

The Busan negotiations were at crawling speed and riddled with difficulties, such as observers, including Indigenous Peoples, not having access to rooms and with no possibility of intervening and long delays caused by some countries who prolonged negotiation discussions with procedural issues. Several negotiation sessions completely excluded observers without explanations, leaving the impression of an untransparent and inefficient process.

Amid the challenges faced at this INC-5, the Chair of the negotiations produced non-papers of consolidated member state positions, without actual text negotiations taking place. ICC is very concerned with the process and the resulting text, which is now missing important language.

ICC was able to deliver a final statement in the closing minutes of the plenary. *“We urge that reference to the individual and collective rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the rights to self-determination and full and effective participation, as is affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are included in the treaty text. The Arctic is disproportionately affected by many stresses: climate change, pollution, increasing industrial development, and it is projected to also be a sink for plastic pollution, with no ability to deal with it adequately. Arctic species from cod to fulmars to belugas have been found with elevated volumes of plastic in their stomach and it is likely to get worse, negatively impacting our food security and our right to a clean, healthy, sustainable environment,”* said Lisa Qiluqqi Koperqualuk, ICC Vice Chair.

“It is deeply worrying, that states are unable to agree on such crucial negotiations. This unfortunately displays the same dysfunction as we saw at the COP29 on climate change, where text on the rights of Indigenous Peoples was removed and ambitions to act on climate change lacked. We call on states to repair these dysfunctions so we can move forward with the required urgency and agree to a strong treaty text that truly addresses plastic pollution for the sake of humanity,” says ICC Chair Sara Olsvig.

Overall, the consequence of these negotiations is no agreed treaty text. The current draft treaty text is lacking in

many areas, including no mentioning of Indigenous Peoples rights as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and human health, as well as the plastics and chemical additives not being sufficiently covered. Now more than ever, strong multilateral action is essential to address the challenges we face.

An additional negotiation session will be held in another effort to achieve agreement, but the time and place for the session is still to be determined.

-30-

CONTACT:

Sofia Geisler
ICC (Greenland)
299 34 22 25
sofia@inuit.org

Kelly Eningowuk
ICC (Alaska)
907-274-9058
kelly@iccalaska.org

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

ICC is an international Indigenous Peoples' Organization, founded in 1977 to strengthen unit 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.

-30-