



INUIT CIRCUMPOLAR COUNCIL PRESS RELEASE

ICC PARTICIPATES IN HISTORIC FIRST MEETING OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY SUBSIDIARY BODY ON ARTICLE 8j

November 18, 2025 — Panama City, Panama— Inuit Circumpolar Council delegates participated in the First meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and Other Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity Related to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (SB8j-1) embodying traditional lifestyles in Panama City, Panama, last week. This historic meeting aimed to further develop and clarify the work of this new Subsidiary Body.

ICC participated in the Subsidiary Body meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to represent Inuit voices and concerns, alongside Sámi, as part of the Arctic sociocultural region. The ICC delegation included Kiana Foster (Canada) who is a participant in the Inuit Youth Engagement Programme. At the meeting, ICC delegates strongly asserted the need for a distinctions-based approach to the rights, knowledge, and participation of Indigenous Peoples in biodiversity conservation and at the CBD.

ICC Chair Sara Olsvig commented on the meeting, “The continued conflation of Indigenous Peoples with local communities dilutes the rights of Indigenous Peoples and must immediately end. All three UN mechanism on the rights of Indigenous Peoples have called on all UN bodies and conventions to employ a distinctions-based approach, fully upholding the rights of Indigenous Peoples. The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues provided recommendations to the CBD encouraging parties to guarantee a human rights-based approach and to address the conflation of Indigenous Peoples with other groups of society. ICC is concerned by party statements that mechanisms such as the UN Permanent Forum are not directly relevant to the CBD process, and we firmly call on parties to ensure that Indigenous Peoples fully enjoy the universal human rights affirmed through the UN Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

SB8j-1 was the opportunity to start on a good path forward for this unique and vital body of the CBD. States’ lack of willingness to compromise and negotiate in good faith on the programme of work and modus operandi is disappointing and ICC hopes for a better path forward.

“The enhanced and equitable participation and meaningful engagement of Indigenous Peoples in the Convention of Biological Diversity is critical for the conservation of global biodiversity. Parties must respect Indigenous governance and self-determination within the CBD and the Subsidiary

Body on Article 8(j). Importantly, there must be a recognition and acknowledgement that Indigenous Peoples are not the same as local communities embodying traditional lifestyles,” said Vice-Chair Herb Nakimayak. “There is significant work ahead of COP17 to ensure this Subsidiary Body is established in a good way, upholding the rights of Indigenous Peoples and respecting Indigenous Peoples governance.”

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Founded in 1977, Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) is an international Indigenous Peoples' Organization representing Inuit from Alaska, Canada, Kalaallit Nunaat, and Chukotka. ICC is dedicated to strengthening Inuit unity, advancing Inuit rights and interests internationally, and formulating long-term policies to protect the Arctic environment. It also strives for full and effective participation and meaningful engagement for Inuit in the political, economic, and social development of the Arctic.

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