



## Utqiaġvik Declaration 2018

**As declared by the Inuit of Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka, on the occasion of the 13th General Assembly of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) from 16-19 July 2018 in Utqiaġvik, Alaska, and in the context of the Assembly theme:**

### **Inuit – The Arctic We Want**

**Appreciative** of the warm welcome from the North Slope Borough, and the community of Utqiaġvik, which lies at the confluence of the Beaufort and Chukchi seas and has been home to the Iñupiat since time immemorial;

**Reaffirming** that Inuit are one Arctic people living in four nations across Inuit Nunaat, our shared homeland, that today encompasses northern Alaska, Chukotka, Canada, and Greenland, as declared in the 2009 *Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic*;

**Further reaffirming** that the rights to lands, resources and territories and the right of self-determination, affirmed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), applies to our entire homeland, including lands, waters, ice, air space and resources;

**Celebrating** the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ICC and recalling that Eben Hopson, Sr. invited Inuit from across Inuit Nunaat to Utqiaġvik in 1977 to work together in solidarity, to share regional experiences, celebrate our strength and unity as Inuit, and pursue and coordinate collective international and local actions;

**Envisioning** a future defined by Inuit, reflective of our General Assembly theme, “*Inuit-The Arctic We Want*” and respectful of our rights, as Indigenous Peoples, to protect Inuit Nunaat and enhance our culture, health, and wellbeing and protect our language;

**Committing** to take full and effective action to prevent suicide among Inuit by advancing cultural and evidence-based interventions;

**Understanding** that food security is central to Inuit identity and way of life; is characterized by a healthy environment and encompasses access, availability, economics, physical and mental health, Inuit culture, decision making power and management, and education. Therefore, it will be promoted and endorsed in all aspects of ICC’s work;

**Acknowledging** the value of each ICC General Assembly Declaration as instrumental for guiding action on our shared priorities and for monitoring ongoing issues;

**Affirming** that this Utqiaġvik Declaration is a strategic document in support of the actions that we consider achievable over the next four years and that reflect our priorities;

**We hereby:**

1. **Thank** the city and people of Utqiaġvik for hosting ICC's 13<sup>th</sup> General Assembly;
2. **Welcome and Adopt** the ICC Report on Activities 2014–2018;
3. **Recognize** the value of the reports, and presentations provided, and discussions held throughout, this General Assembly which have informed our actions and priorities;
4. **Direct** ICC to collaborate and enhance communication within our membership and with the rest of the world.

### **International Indigenous Human Rights and International Partnerships**

The interrelated, interdependent and indivisible rights of Inuit are recognized and affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as an international human rights instrument as well as in other legal and political instruments and mechanisms, including land rights legislation and agreements, and self-government, intergovernmental and constitutional arrangements.

We were central in the creation of the Arctic Council and we remain an important voice as a Permanent Participant. Among other human rights, our United Nations Consultative Status provided us with the opportunity to advance our rights to lands, territories and resources as recognized in UNDRIP, including those lands, territories, and resources that we have *"traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired"*. Our role within the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, as a central United Nations coordinating body for Indigenous Peoples, remains a vital priority of the ICC.

Recognizing the importance of international forums, ICC will continue its advocacy work and participation in decision-making processes and pursue the following actions to affirm and strengthen Inuit rights throughout Inuit Nunaat and globally:

5. **Mandate** that ICC immediately develop a strategic plan for improving coherence and coordination of inclusive engagement in international fora and to map out the four-year term to implement and further the directives contained in this Declaration being mindful of the ICC Arctic Policy and ICC Circumpolar Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic, and the ICC Circumpolar Declaration on Resource Development Principles in Inuit Nunaat;
6. **Acknowledge** that the Arctic Council is an important forum for achieving the aims of *"Inuit-The Arctic We Want"* and that there is a need to improve capacity to fully engage in the work of the Arctic Council at the Senior Arctic Officials (SAO) and Working Group levels, including our insistence on equitable engagement in all activities and a meaningful leadership and decision making role.

7. **Mandate** ICC to initiate diplomatic talks for the purpose of laying the groundwork for negotiations to declare the Arctic as a Peaceful Zone;
8. **Direct** ICC to follow the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals closely in other countries and ensure that our peoples are informed about the progress and efforts made on these goals.
9. **Encourage** ICC to enhance Inuit participation and capacity within the United Nations General Assembly, relevant UN agencies and organizations, including but not limited to: UN Environmental Program, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization, International Maritime Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization and to implement the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in Inuit Nunaat;
10. **Direct** ICC to support and encourage the full implementation of the UNRIP in Chukotka, Alaska, Canada and Greenland and in the UNDRIP in Inuit Nunaat, as advocated by the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples Outcome Document;
11. **Engage** in the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues through active participation in bodies and instruments that ICC has participated in, and be prepared to engage in new processes within the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to further our goals and objectives;
12. **Support** the mandate of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to defend the rights of the Inuit at the United Nations Human Rights Council and expand its mandate to engage with states and other Indigenous Peoples to assist them in addressing country-specific situations, and be permitted to seek, receive, gather and consider information from all sources, including specific cases and matters of concern for Inuit rights as affirmed in the *UNDRIP*;
13. **Mandate** ICC to strengthen its role within other international, multinational and bilateral fora including the European Union and others by participating in meetings related to the Arctic;
14. **Direct** ICC to prioritize and support our youth to participate in the United Nations Global Youth Indigenous Caucus and other international meetings and conferences relevant to and of importance to Inuit;
15. **Direct** ICC to advance the rights of Inuit in the United Nations Intergovernmental Conference that will be negotiating an agreement for Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction.

## **Food Security**

Inuit food security is multi-faceted and reflective of interconnecting elements, such as language, child development, mental and physical health, high cost of transportation, economic development and management. The Arctic's living resources and the ability of our hunters to harvest and process these resources are fundamental to food security and is core to Inuit identity, making the health and availability of Arctic wildlife of utmost concern. At the same time, access to store bought foods is also a concern that needs to be addressed.

Recognizing the health of our people are connected to the health of the animals and overall environment, climate-related changes provide both opportunities and challenges that contribute to food security or insecurity. Changes, such as increasing temperatures, changes in sea ice coverage and movement, thawing permafrost, increase in storm surges, shifts in animal migration patterns, and arrival of new species is resulting in a need to adjust hunting strategies and ways of storing food. Furthermore, loss of multi-year sea-ice and thawing permafrost are leading to enhanced cycling of contaminants that may have adverse impacts throughout the food web.

Achieving food security will require holistic approaches, Inuit innovation, and depends on the capacity to mobilize governments, regional stakeholders and community residents to address the challenges faced and to move toward food sovereignty. To achieve food sovereignty there is a need for Inuit to hold authority to manage our living resources.

The following actions are needed to support food security in Inuit Nunaat:

- 16. Urge** ICC to continue its work to enhance food security through research and advocacy and further educate locally, regionally, nationally and internationally about Inuit food security priorities in order to ensure we can supply ourselves with traditional food;
- 17. Direct** ICC to address components of food security that will aid in enhancing self-governance across Inuit Nunaat, inclusive of exploring ways of enhancing our networking capabilities, facilitating the exchange of information and practices across Inuit Nunaat;
- 18. Direct** ICC to advocate for the enforcement of the International Marine Organization Polar Code, other international and national regulations, advance emergency response, and phase out heavy fuel oil (HFO) in order to minimize impacts on marine mammals and fish and to prevent disruption of seasonal hunting, and for safety and environmental protection.

## **Families and Youth**

Healthy Inuit family are central to the sustainability of our communities. Our families are changing and we recognize that the future lies with our youth to achieve "*Inuit - The Arctic We Want*". There are examples of strong families and youth that find pride, empowerment and strength within our culture, language and identity. However, our families are facing many challenges and require culturally relevant support based upon our cultural values, central to the sustainability of our families and community. The most important needs of families include poverty reduction, access to adequate housing, access to affordable energy, enhanced food security, improved health and wellbeing, and educational attainment. Inuit, states and the international community must immediately address these priorities within Inuit Nunaat.

The following actions are needed to support families and youth in Inuit Nunaat:

- 19. Urge** ICC to support UN member state and international activities that recognize the relationship between family and culture, that address the United Nations

Sustainable Development Goals within Inuit Nunaat and that share best practices that support and strengthen Inuit families

20. **Support** Inuit youth organizations and encourage Inuit youth to share and participate fully in all ICC activities;
21. **Advocate** for infrastructure and Inuit specific interventions that will address family violence;
22. **Consider** the unique needs and challenges based on gender in Inuit communities.

## Health and Wellness

Inuit health and wellness must be approached in a holistic way that recognizes that physical and mental health cannot be addressed separately and solutions should build upon the knowledge and strengths found within our communities. Children with mental health issues require our special support and help as acknowledged by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in Article 19 and 39.

Inuit face significant health disparities today. We experience unacceptably high rates of cancer, diabetes, infectious diseases including tuberculosis, sexually transmitted infections and diseases, addiction, and suicide which have serious, negative impacts on families and our communities. The appropriate physical and mental health services, including necessary clinical, financial and human resources, are inadequate or non-existent in Inuit Nunaat.

In particular, the ongoing mental health crisis facing Inuit of all ages today is unacceptable by any world standard. The elevated rate of suicide among Inuit is an urgent challenge.

A combination of community and evidence based, globally informed and culturally specific suicide prevention strategies and initiatives must be further developed and implemented throughout Inuit Nunaat to address risk factors and reduce suicide.

To achieve health and wellness in our communities we must start by undertaking the following:

23. **Direct** ICC to host a Circumpolar Inuit Summit on Health and Well-being focusing on efforts and initiatives to reduce and eradicate health disparities harming our families and prioritizing mental wellness, addictions, and suicide prevention;
24. **Facilitate** and support the ongoing development and implementation of regional and national evidence-based, suicide prevention strategies;
25. **Instruct** ICC to support knowledge sharing and communication of Inuit innovation and best practices around mental health and wellness, including community-based solutions and to continue to take leadership in projects and initiatives, specifically on suicide prevention and addictions to encourage meaningful connection with communities, children, and youth, and link Indigenous Knowledge and action with scientific research;

## Education and Language

Our languages are the foundation of our culture and identity; and, legally protecting and revitalizing our languages is urgent and paramount. For our languages to remain strong, Inuit language schools and learning institutions need to be established by the appropriate authorities.

The model of education introduced and utilized to this day has had limited success. Effective education requires new pedagogies that reflect our values, culture and languages. For our language to remain strong the Inuit language must be the primary language of instruction in our schools. In addition, Inuit language schools and learning institutions need to be established. Language and education supports our culture and Inuit hunting, gathering and food practices are a way which our culture is taught. ICC supports that Indigenous traditional hunting practice should sustain and enhance traditional cultural practices.

The ICC Education Summit hosted by ICC Greenland, was the first-ever international Inuit organized summit on the state of Inuit education. The Summit produced an outcome document that called for a number of essential actions.

ICC is called upon to:

26. **Support** an Inuit Education Committee with membership from all Inuit regions, to implement the recommendations developed at the ICC 2018 Education Summit in Greenland, including:
  - a. **Support** the development and implementation of Inuit-focused educational initiatives, pedagogies, assessment and evaluation practices, curricula, teaching materials and resources;
  - b. **Effect** systemic change to strengthen Inuit education grounded in our environment, including elders knowledge and experience, history, language and culture;
  - c. **Influence** educational institutions and political bodies to support and fully fund development and implementation efforts;
  - d. **Encourage** ICC to share best practises to enhance Inuit language and writing systems;
  - e. **Facilitate** communication of Inuit educational best practices; and,
  - f. **Support** the University of the Arctic as it delivers higher educational services to Inuit and other institutions that support Inuit students outside the Arctic and paves the way for student and researcher exchanges across the Arctic.

## Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous Knowledge is a systematic way of thinking applied to phenomena across biological, physical, cultural and spiritual systems. It includes insights based on evidence acquired through direct and long-term experiences and extensive and

multigenerational observations, lessons, and skills. It has developed over millennia and is still developing in a living process, including knowledge acquired today and in the future, and it is passed on from generation to generation. Under this definition, it is recognized that Inuit Knowledge is a way of life. It goes beyond observations, ecological knowledge, and research, offering a unique 'way of knowing'.

Inuit have a right to self-determination in all facets of life, including in the promotion of Indigenous Knowledge and research.

Recognizing the work that ICC has done to advance the understanding and utilization of Indigenous Knowledge it is important to continue this work and furthermore focus on advocating for Inuit driven research and monitoring, equitable partnerships in all aspects of research, information sovereignty, and working to increase intellectual and political space for Inuit across scales.

To advance self-determination and recognition of Indigenous knowledge the following is needed:

- 27. Direct** ICC to facilitate the development of International Inuit protocols on the equitable and ethical utilization of Indigenous Knowledge and engagement of Inuit communities to provide guidance to international fora, such as the Arctic Council
- 28. Instruct** ICC to engage appropriate international forums (e.g. Arctic Council, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Convention on Biological Diversity, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) in all aspects of Arctic science and research to contribute to the advancement of Inuit self-determination by promoting and contributing to activities that achieve partnerships and reflects the utilization of both Inuit Knowledge and science;
- 29. Direct** ICC to continue to educate the international community on what Inuit Knowledge is and to work to make political and intellectual space for Inuit Knowledge holders at international fora by protecting the intellectual property rights of Inuit Knowledge holders;
- 30. Call** for an Inuit review of the consultation process of the Arctic Council Arctic Science Cooperation Agreement, and all appropriate United Nations agencies to identify actions to ensure these legal instruments adhere to the human rights affirmed in the *United Nations Declaration*.

## **Sustainable Wildlife Management**

Sustainable wildlife management is an important element for achieving Inuit food security. Inuit have rights in national and international agreements that protect indigenous hunting and fishing activities. These human right instruments affirm Inuit rights to self-determination, including our right to govern wildlife management. We have experienced international trade bans and treaties that prevent us from exercising our rights to use Arctic living resources with serious impacts on our culture, health and economies. We will exchange information amongst ourselves to build capacity regarding human rights instruments and apply them to co-management regimes and other governance bodies to advance our food sovereignty and self-governance of land, wildlife and ecosystems.

Inuit strive to build on human rights instruments, including the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, to assert and advance self-determination to protect our rights to hunting, fishing, and gathering. The 2017 ICC Wildlife Management Summit hosted by ICC Canada concluded that as we move forward collectively to achieve healthy and sustainable use of resources across Inuit Nunaat, we must continue to share our unique knowledge and experiences with each other to advocate for the utilization and equity of Indigenous knowledge within wildlife management practices, and evaluate what approaches and practices that best serve and support our rights and self-determination on wildlife management issues.

The following actions are required to support sustainable wildlife management:

- 31. Direct** ICC to support the Circumpolar Inuit Wildlife Committee whose mission is to collaboratively, cooperatively and inclusively preserve and protect Inuit food sovereignty by providing a unified Inuit voice led by a wildlife strategy for 2018-2022;
- 32. Urge** ICC to support a Circumpolar Inuit Wildlife Network to link activities on various bi-lateral and international wildlife activities including, but not limited to, the Arctic Council's Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Working Group, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the Convention on Biological Diversity and others, and to support information sharing, learning and communication about Inuit rights, wildlife management and food sovereignty within the Wildlife Network and with the Wildlife Committee;
- 33. Direct** ICC to participate collectively and strategically to ensure the Convention on Biological Diversity post 2020 action plans support and enhance our monitoring and sustainable use of Arctic biodiversity and for Convention on Biological Diversity to support on-going participation of Inuit throughout its working groups and intersessional meetings;
- 34. Engage** in the process of formally establishing the International Union Conservation Nature Indigenous Peoples Organization (IPO) category that enhances and nurtures current IPO participation and encourages and facilitates new membership;
- 35. Collaboratively** identify opportunities for our collective engagement in the United Nations Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species Rural Communities to safeguard the distinct rights of Inuit as an Indigenous people.

## **Environment**

Our environment continues to undergo profound, rapid and unpredictable change. Our communities witness and suffer the effects of these changes and respond by sharing our knowledge, adapting our communities, working with researchers and negotiating national, bilateral and international agreements to reduce or eliminate the causes of these changes where possible.

We know that the Arctic environment is unique and plays a fundamental role in global climate change regulation. Our culture is dependent on the land and sea, therefore



the sustainability of the Arctic environment and its living resources is crucial to our communities and a focus on supporting families and Inuit society. More than 40 years ago, concern for the security and integrity of the Arctic environment prompted the establishment of ICC. ICC was the first non-governmental organization to call for the precautionary principle and vocalized the human rights dimension of the implications and impacts of a rapidly changing Arctic environment.

The following actions are required to protect Inuit Nunaat and guide academic institutions, governments, and researchers in the conduct of the Inuit Nunaat research:

- 36. Enhance** ICC's work with Arctic research efforts, such as the Arctic Council's Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme Working Group, Sustained Arctic Observing Network, International Arctic Science Committee, the European Union, and during high-level ministerial processes to ensure our views and concerns are addressed on how research in the Arctic should be conducted and to highlight ethical approaches for research in the Arctic advance Inuit self-determination in research;
- 37. Urge** ICC to promote the interconnectedness of drivers of change and the interrelated impacts and implications on our health, economy and environment in high level political discussions and decision-making at fora such as the Arctic Council, the European Union and United Nations agencies among other relevant international fora;
- 38. Mandate** ICC to participate actively in the operationalization of the United Nations "Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform" to create a space to share best practices, relevant climate change programs and policies, and build capacity for Indigenous Peoples to engage in the United Nations Framework Convention Climate Change process;
- 39. Instruct** ICC to share research and actions that build climate resilience and to share and showcase the adaptation and innovative mitigation responses, including but not limited to monitoring the movement of animals due to climate change, erosion and community relocation, that are being designed and implemented by our communities across Inuit Nunaat;
- 40. Direct** ICC to advocate its positions on contaminants through the implementation and effectiveness monitoring regimes of the United Nations Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the United Nations Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee and the United Nations Minamata Convention on Mercury;
- 41. Recognize** the importance of short lived climate forcers such as black carbon and support work through programs such as the European Union Action Program on Black Carbon;
- 42. Support** national and global programs that safeguard our marine ecosystems and wildlife from marine litter and micro-plastics;
- 43. Direct** ICC to advocate for Inuit-led environmental monitoring and management of Inuit Nunaat (marine and terrestrial) and adopt in principle, the report, *People of the Ice Bridge: The Future of the Pikialasorsuaq*, and establish a committee to advance the implementation of the recommendations. These include creation of

an Inuit Management Authority, an Inuit-led monitoring regime, and increased mobility for Inuit between Canada and Greenland, with the goal of supporting similar authorities across Inuit Nunaat. These initiatives should be undertaken with an objective of improving the self-sufficiency of Inuit over time with the overall objective of aligning economic development and cultural way of life.

## **Sustainable Development**

Our economy is changing rapidly with growing international interest in marine shipping, commercial fisheries, tourism and natural resource development. Economic development is central to the sustainability of Inuit communities. As noted in the 2011 “ICC Declaration on Resource Development Principles in Inuit Nunaat” healthy communities and households require a healthy environment and a healthy economy. We know economic development and social and cultural development must go hand-in-hand, resulting in self-sufficiency, which is an essential part of greater political self-determination.

We recognize that employment and wealth creation are building blocks for autonomy and that equitable sustainable economic development and employment must be a priority. Building capacity is a key to success and a foundation for economic vitality. Strategic issues in the employment sector are at a critical state which will require a long term, sustained and well-funded employment training effort that must link with coordinated efforts with the education system, the employment and training system, and employers.

We are part of a connected world and connectivity or broadband, is crucial to provide societal benefits (e.g. health care, public safety, education, training, business and social services). The Arctic poses extreme challenges to connectivity and overcoming these challenges requires political will, and infrastructure.

The 2014 Kitigaaryuit Declaration called for the ICC Economic Summit. The 2017 ICC Economic Summit hosted by ICC Alaska was tasked to cultivate collaboration amongst Inuit businesses internationally. The Summit established the International Inuit Business Council (IIBC) to cultivate business collaboration amongst Inuit across the circumpolar region and established a Task Force to develop Terms of Reference for an International Inuit Business Association. These Terms of Reference and a Report are now ready for further consideration and implementation by the Inuit business community.

The following action are required to achieve these goals:

- 44. Direct** ICC to advocate for policies that facilitate cross-boundary Inuit trade, employment, and travel, across our circumpolar homeland;
- 45. Urge** ICC to promote sustainable economic and business development through the Arctic Council and its working groups, the United Nations agencies, and collaborate with other economic development fora and networks focusing on the Arctic, including the Arctic Economic Council (AEC);

46. **Instruct** ICC to advocate for high-capacity broadband internet, share best practices and engage in international discussions on broadband development in Inuit Nunaat;
47. **Urge** the use of the internet to increase availability of Inuit language programming through television, radio, and other platforms, as well as the connectivity of residents in Inuit communities;
48. **Direct** ICC to support responsible mining policies that reflect the 2011 “ICC Declaration on Resource Development Principles in Inuit Nunaat”;
49. **Urge** ICC to compile Arctic tourism best practices, and develop an ICC Statement on Tourism to help guide tourism initiatives;
50. **Utilize** Indigenous Knowledge to advise all future processes of the Central Arctic Ocean Moratorium on Commercial Fisheries;
51. **Instruct ICC** to explore and pursue potential for mapping and other visual aids related to Inuit sea ice and coastal sea use and the multiple dimensions of such use of our Arctic homelands and territory;
52. **Direct** ICC to advocate for our rights to fresh water;
53. **Urge** ICC to advance within the Arctic Council an agenda to address a crisis of public infrastructure in Inuit Nunaat including energy, roads, housing, sewer and water, and to promote investment in climate resilient infrastructure;
54. **Acknowledge** the Terms of Reference prepared by the Task Force on an International Inuit Business Association and urge ICC to support the formation of an International Association for Inuit Businesses.

## **Communication and Capacity Building**

Inuit are more connected today than ever before due to the advent of the internet and social media. However, practical measures should be taken that enhance communications with and between Inuit that in turn foster greater cooperation and unity. Improving access to information about ICC and its work is necessary to enhance the impact and effectiveness of ICC as an organization, including at the local, regional, national, and international levels.

Achieving greater cooperation and unity among Inuit remains a priority. ICC is uniquely positioned to facilitate formal opportunities for academic, professional, political, and cultural exchange between our membership.

In order to build on our past achievements in these areas, enhanced communication is required to promote understanding of Inuit priorities and activities among our membership as well as more broadly at the national and international levels. This can be achieved by facilitating access to information about ICC activities in a timely manner, creating greater transparency and understanding of ICC’s governance structure and priorities, as well as by coordinating communications with and between Inuit regions and their respective media. In addition, ICC will pursue novel initiatives that foster greater social, cultural, and political exchange between Inuit regions in order to enrich Inuit cooperation and unity.

The following actions are required to achieve these goals:

55. **Develop** a comprehensive four year communications strategy and action plan by January 2019 that includes practical measures for achieving greater cooperation and unity among Inuit;
56. **Facilitate** a formal program of professional exchange through exchange of Inuit professionals between member countries;
57. **Develop** greater awareness and understanding among our people about ICC's participation in international fora and the connection to our communities;
58. **Support** communities who are working to reclaim formal recognition of their original place names.

**The Chair and Executive Council of the Inuit Circumpolar Council hereby confirm that the 2018 Utqiagvik Declaration was unanimously adopted by delegates at the 13th General Assembly of the Inuit Circumpolar Council on 19 July 2018.**

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Okalik Egeesiak  
ICC Chair

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Nancy Karetak-Lindell  
Vice-Chair, Canada

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Hjalmar Dahl  
Vice-Chair, Greenland

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Herb Nakimayak  
Executive Council Member, Canada

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Nuka Kleemann  
Executive Council Member, Greenland

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James Stotts  
Vice-Chair, Alaska

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Tatiana Achirgina  
Vice-Chair, Russia

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Vera Metcalf  
Executive Council Member, Alaska

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Elena Kaminskaya  
Executive Council Member, Russia