



2022 INUIT CIRCUMPOLAR COUNCIL DECLARATION

**As declared by the Inuit of Greenland, Canada, Alaska, and Chukotka,
on the occasion of the 14th General Assembly of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)
from 19-21 July 2022, held through a hybrid gathering due to the COVID-19 pandemic,
and in the context of the Assembly theme**

INUIT – PERTUJAASSUSEQ EQQISSINERLU

INUIT - STRENGTH AND PEACE

Reaffirming that the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) exists as the unified voice for Inuit at the international level. The principal goals of ICC are to strengthen unity among Inuit of the circumpolar region; promote Inuit status, rights, and interests on an international level; develop and encourage long-term policies that safeguard the Arctic environment; and seek full and active partnership in the political, economic, and social development of the Arctic,

Emphasizing that when Inuit address issues of common concerns through a unified voice, we find strength in our unity. This principle was articulated at the founding meeting of ICC in 1977 and it remains true today,

Remembering that a strong family foundation based on Inuit kinship is necessary for the health and wellness of all our people, including the care and inclusion of our children, youth, and Elders. We should all feel safe and welcomed, and know we are valued and cherished by all,

Celebrating our rich oral history, and the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, we recognize our language, among other cultural characteristics, as foundational to Inuit culture, knowledge and identity, and our culture cannot be separated from who we are as a people. Our language is powerful. It is, and continues to be a mitigating force to every issue that impacts us, from mental health to climate change, to hunting and food security, to sustainable development,

Reaffirming Inuit Knowledge is embedded in our language, culture, values, customs, families, and our intimate relationship to the environment, we continue to develop and use our distinct knowledge,

Confirming that ICC is a safe and inclusive space, where Inuit of all ages, gender, sexual orientation, and degree of cultural knowledge and language are welcome,

Reflecting on the COVID-19 Pandemic and **recognizing** that it has amplified the concerns for equity and justice of the overall health and wellbeing of Inuit,

Recalling the 2008 Ilulissat Declaration of the *Arctic Five States* and their commitment to working peacefully within legal frameworks, we recognize the increasing competition over the control of the Arctic, and the interrelated issues of climate change, marine vessel traffic, industrialization, militarization, and other activities that continue to threaten the well-being of our environmental, cultural, food, and socio-economic security,

Reaffirming ICC Resolution 77-11, recognizing that it is in the interest of all Circumpolar peoples that the Arctic shall continue forever to be used exclusively for peaceful and environmentally safe purposes, and shall not become the scene or object of human conflict or discord,

Recognizing that our communities are at the forefront of the rapid changes occurring within the Arctic, we are acutely aware of the diverse human rights, cultural, health and social impacts related to climate change. Our knowledge, adaptation and mitigation strategies and management practices are critical to addressing the challenges,

Bringing attention to the vital role of the Arctic Ocean in shaping weather and climate across the entire planet, the Arctic Ocean, sea ice and its waters are central to our overall existence, health, and well-being,

Recalling the Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic, which calls for Arctic States to work closely and constructively with Inuit to address concerns about international relations and the resolution of international disputes and to chart the future of the Arctic,

Recognizing the need to engage with governments to enable our people to move freely across the national borders dividing our people and to establish residence in other regions of our homeland,

Recognizing that we emerged in an era of environmental and global insecurity, again the Arctic geopolitical landscape is changing, and ICC is uniquely prepared to assess and address new challenges across Inuit Nunaat,

Affirming that the Inuit Circumpolar Council is one of the founding Arctic Council Permanent Participants and we must remain an integral part of this regional organization. We express our deep concern about the current pause and call for a resolution,

Asserting that international instruments, intergovernmental fora, and Arctic specific developments that have or may in the future impact our communities, must ensure our direct participation in procedural and substantive aspects, including the Arctic Council, United Nations' entities and specialized agencies, and all other intergovernmental organizations that we deem relevant,

Stressing that our traditional foods are core to our identity and culture, and our respect for our hunters and fishers, and their invaluable contributions are celebrated. Accessibility, availability, culture, stability, health and wellness, decision-making-power and management are required for food security and a healthy environment. Our adaptive and holistic management has sustained us and our homelands for thousands of years. Our food sovereignty, our right to define our own policies and approaches, is critical to our existence and food security,

Condemning the threats to our food security, including unprecedented salmon crashes, changes in wildlife health, environmental and industrial impacts, large-scale unsustainable commercial fisheries and **asserting** the need for Inuit to be at the forefront of management to ensure sustainability of our foods and health of our environment,

Underscoring the urgent need to address the profound infrastructure deficits, including housing; water and sanitation; telecommunications; transportation and medical facilities and services; and waste management. These deficits contribute to the vulnerability and underlying health and social challenges experienced by our people and impede our human rights,

Declaring and asserting the urgent need for basic public safety services across Inuit Nunaat and the unacceptable conditions in our communities. Everyone deserves to feel safe in their own communities, safe and free from domestic violence, substance abuse, sexual abuse, and violent crimes. Safe communities mean healthy communities, and healthy communities serve as the foundation for a thriving Inuit society,

Expressing Concern for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons crisis as well as other misdeeds by colonial powers, and the need for continued attention and action to ensure policies prioritize addressing these issues and their underlying causes,

Considering, that Inuit have experienced injustices from colonizers. The impacts of colonization are profound, and we are still learning to understand the diverse layers of trauma inflicted on us, and in our resilience, we find strength and healing,

Recognizing the interrelated human rights and specifically the right of Inuit to directly participate in processes that affect us as affirmed in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169,

Celebrating our new, provisional consultative status in the International Maritime Organization, our Observer status in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and the development of the Coalition of Indigenous Peoples Food Systems within the Food and Agriculture Organization,

Building upon the success of the Circumpolar Inuit Summit on Health and Wellness and the session focused on *'Inuit youth and connection to culture for mental wellness & suicide prevention'* we recognize the pathways Inuit youth have identified toward mental wellness as well as the barriers that many Inuit face to improve our mental health,

Celebrating the successes of the Emerging Leaders Initiative, embracing its recommendations for improving youth engagement and capacity-building, as well as, continuing to ensure that the leadership “pipeline” is intact, with clear avenues for our young people to engage in our work effectively and directly must remain a priority,

Emphasizing equitable and ethical engagement and the utilization of Inuit Knowledge is required to inform decision-making, policy, research, assessments, monitoring programs, and governance, we welcome the Circumpolar Inuit Protocols for Equitable and Ethical Engagement,

Celebrating the establishment of the International Inuit Business Association, whose purpose is to encourage sustainable and equitable expansion of the economy throughout Inuit society to promote greater self-sufficiency in Inuit Nunaat, to enhance the livelihoods of Inuit and to promote greater economic cooperation between the ICC member countries, we look forward to the first annual meeting of representatives to continue building business connections across international borders. To address and pursue these goals at an international scale, ICC representatives from Greenland and Alaska have been engaged in the Arctic Economic Council, and

Reaffirming that our sustainability depends upon a balance between a healthy environment, thriving economy, our culture and way of life.

Compelled by the above statements of issues and positions and taking them into consideration, we hereby:

1. **Welcome and adopt** the ICC Report on Activities 2018 – 2022 and endorse all forthcoming actions to continue and commence with the work necessary to respond to the concerns sincerely raised by our people.
2. **Look forward** to an in-person Delegates Meeting in Ilulissat, Greenland, in July 2023, to reflect on the progress of the work of ICC, take note of recent developments, further develop ICC work plans, including an Ilulissat Declaration, as well as celebrate our unity and culture.
3. **Declare** the priority areas during the 2022-2026 term to be Good Governance, Security and Inuit Nunaat, Health and Wellness, Language and Culture, Hunting and Food Security, Arctic Ocean and the Marine Environment, and Infrastructure Deficit. We collectively agree to the following necessary actions that will bring us towards progress for all Inuit.

4. **Direct the** ICC Executive Council to appoint a working group to evaluate ICC's governance structure and develop recommendations to be tabled for endorsement during the 2026 GA addressing the integration of democratic principles, improving collaboration, transparency between regions and inclusiveness of ICC's work as well as the effectiveness of its advocacy and responsiveness to Inuit priorities.
5. **Direct** the ICC Executive Council to improve upon the first ICC strategic planning workshop held in 2018, to assess the current opportunities at the international level, identify gaps in our areas of influence, and strategically develop a united, cooperative plan.
6. **Direct** ICC to continue to improve internal and external communications through effective, ongoing collaboration and continue the Circumpolar Waves podcast.
7. **Instruct** ICC Executive Council to continue to evaluate and strategize ways to use the Arctic Council as a key arena to further the interests of Inuit and to strengthen the unique role of ICC as a Permanent Participant in the Arctic Council.
8. **Instruct** the ICC Executive Council to continue participation in relevant UN entities, specialized agencies, and other intergovernmental fora, including follow-up on the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and direct engagement with Special Rapporteurs to advance Inuit status, rights, and roles as reflected in this Declaration.
9. **Assert** that the rules governing our marine regions must stem from Inuit and cannot be created without us. For example, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and other instruments were created without us. This must not happen any longer.
10. **Call on** researchers, policymakers, governments, as well as relevant institutions to respect and support the right of Inuit to self-determination in all aspects of research conducted in Inuit Nunaat, to engage Inuit and our communities equitably and ethically and work with us to bring forward the best available information to make sound decisions that respond to conditions facing Inuit.
11. **Direct** ICC to implement the Circumpolar Inuit Protocols for Ethical and Equitable Engagement at the international level to force a paradigm shift within institutions and forums that guarantees *nothing about us, without us*.
12. **Call on** the ICC Executive Council to investigate the feasibility of conducting a research project, including a methodology and funding plan, to analyze the elements concerning Inuit sovereignty and self-determination, including the affirmation of such rights by the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

13. **Commit** to advance and address the rights of Inuit children and youth, including the rights to education, physical and mental health, housing, freedom of expression as well as the protection and availability of social and cultural rights, such as learning and speaking the Inuit language and its dialects, rights that are recognized by various international human rights instruments and in particular, the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (ILO 169). Child sexual abuse and gender-based violence must be addressed, and actions consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child must be ensured, including engagement of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to draw attention to the conditions facing Inuit children and youth.
14. **Call on** governments to address the ongoing mental health crisis of high rates of suicide amongst Inuit through culturally appropriate approaches. When our people commit suicide, it has a negative impact in our communities and across Inuit Nunaat.
15. **Commit** to implementing the Emerging Leaders' recommendations and other initiatives to ensure unity, solidarity, and cohesion on the issues that shape our work, and resist attempts to use youth for political purposes.
16. **Direct** the ICC Executive Council to identify best practices for the healing, health, and wellness of our communities, and to raise awareness about and support efforts to overcome the systemic discrimination of Inuit where it is known to exist.
17. **Direct** the ICC Executive Council to support work being done by Inuit governmental institutions and service organizations and **call** on local and national governments to work directly with our members, utilize models developed by our people, and fund and implement equitable basic services, specifically, necessary public safety services, training and infrastructure needed to support our communities.
18. **Commit** to actively support Inuit language initiatives across all member countries and commit to participate in international cooperative opportunities to strengthen our language. In particular, **commit** to engage in the UN International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022 – 2032 by advancing and sharing the work of Inuit to use, revitalize, reclaim, promote, and maintain our language and its multiple dialects as well as to call upon governments to implement policies, programs, and provide financial resources and materials to ensure materials and services are available in the Inuit language.
19. **Direct** the ICC Executive Council to identify funding to support the Inuit Education Committee through the 2022-2026 period for the Committee to conduct work complementary to advancing our language. Such activities may include literature, music, theater, writing, and other cultural gatherings or festivals.
20. **Commit** to work towards eliminating threats to our food security and sovereignty within international forums and venues, by building upon the recommendations put forward by the Food Sovereignty and Self-Governance: Inuit Role in Managing Arctic Marine

Resources project and the Alaskan Inuit Food Sovereignty Initiative, as well as other Inuit led initiatives, and work towards the vision articulated at the Inuit Wildlife Management Summit, to galvanize a unified pan-Arctic Inuit voice concerning the protection, access, sharing and management of our food systems.

21. **Call** on our governments to uphold their obligations to engage Inuit and their knowledge throughout the implementation of the commitments, provisions, and agreements across Inuit homelands, as it relates to fisheries and food security, including the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean and the need to establish similar agreements throughout the Arctic Ocean such as in the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area through equitable partnerships with Inuit.
22. **Commit** to engage in the Coalition on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems that emerged from the UN Food Systems Summit, including actions to protect and ensure the indivisible and multiple dimensions of our distinct hunting, fishing, and harvesting rights.
23. **Reconfirm** that Inuit led adaptation and mitigation to climate change remain priorities, and we call upon the world to take immediate action necessary to address the inequity of climate impacts by respecting our inherent right of self-determination in decision-making processes in the Arctic.
24. **Will** continue to advocate at every level for global policy and approaches to cap global temperature rise to 1.5°C. and continue efforts to secure equitable participation of Inuit in climate change-related processes and programs at local, regional, national, and international levels.
25. **Reassert** that Inuit are an integral part of the Arctic environment. The global community must recognize that our environment, especially our ocean and ice, plays a critical role in global temperature regulation, biodiversity and overall health and wellbeing of the world. The Arctic environment must be protected through partnership with Inuit.
26. **Commit** to continued participation in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC]; the Paris Agreement; the Conference of the Parties [COPs]; and the Facilitative Working Group [FWG] of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples' Platform [LCIPP] to recognize and advance the value and necessity of Inuit leadership and Inuit knowledge in climate governance, assessments, and policy and decision-making.
27. **Advocate** for financial support for Inuit defined and led climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies to ensure that we can address present and future challenges as well as gaps that exist within our communities.
28. **Urge** governments to recognize the false dichotomy between the developing and developed world, and advocate for and pursue opportunities to establish a fund that

Inuit may equitably access similar to climate vulnerable communities in non-G20 countries and seek an Indigenous focal point within the Global Environment Facility for financial assistance.

29. **Will** continue to elevate Inuit Knowledge in decision making through our work and advocacy, to inform local, regional, national, and international climate research, knowledge synthesis, and policy development in all climate governance actions, including use of Inuit Knowledge within different forums to advance our interests.
30. **Commit** to actively use the ICC Observer status within Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), including galvanizing support for Inuit knowledge holders to serve as substantive authors and contributors, and to advocate for an Indigenous Peoples' Expert and Indigenous Knowledge Holder Advisory Body to the IPCC.
31. **Support** community-driven research and promote the utilization of Inuit monitoring systems.
32. **Commit** to continued advocacy for reduction and prevention of black carbon, a short-lived climate forcer, in the Arctic environment through decarbonizing the Arctic shipping fleet and reducing diesel consumption in Arctic communities in favor of renewable energy sources while affirming that we will not in any way bear the cost of transitioning to safe alternative fuel sources.
33. **Direct** the ICC Executive Council to hold discussions with our people on issues related to our ocean, ice, and the marine environment, to proactively address our concerns, and to ensure this information is used to effect change.
34. **Commit** to participate in the negotiations of a legally binding instrument under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), to advocate for the recognition of Indigenous peoples' rights and a role for Indigenous Peoples within applicable BBNJ governance structures.
35. **Advocate** for guaranteed Inuit access, use, ownership, control, and management across our land and waters to perpetuate our way of life and the sustainable harvest of those resources that we depend on for nutritional and cultural survival while safeguarding Arctic ecosystems and ensuring our food security.
36. **Commit** to explore ways and means to facilitate the unimpeded cross border travel between Canada and Greenland to enhance hunting activities, as recommended by the Pikialasorsuaq Commission.
37. **Call** on the ICC Executive Council to consider the feasibility of a project, including a process and funding plan, to research the current practices of our governments

regarding cross border movement of our peoples within Inuit Nunaat. The project should investigate the different legal and policy positions on this topic leading to cooperative discussions with our governments to have simplified visa applications or visa free travel for our people within Inuit Nunaat to enhance cross border movement and migration.

38. **Agree** to continue to participate directly in discussions on safety and security of Arctic shipping, environmental regulations and guidelines concerning marine and atmospheric pollution and disturbances by ships, and implementation of the Polar Code and Polar Code 2 deliberations consistent with our participation at the Arctic Council and our new consultative status within the International Maritime Organization.
39. **Call** on our governments to collaborate closely with us to close the infrastructure gaps throughout Inuit Nunaat by committing to new, major investments and initiatives to build capacity within our communities, prioritizing housing, water and sewer, marine transportation, energy, telecommunications, public safety and health and other social welfare facilities. Infrastructure development must be led and informed by our people, be climate resilient, and funding processes must be structured to ensure ease of Inuit access.

**The Chair and Executive Council of the Inuit Circumpolar Council hereby confirm that the
2022 Inuit Circumpolar Council Declaration
was unanimously adopted by
Delegates at the 14th General Assembly of the Inuit Circumpolar Council on 21 July 2022**

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Lisa Koperqualuk, Member

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