



INUIT

Press Release

ICC Calls for a Global Fund for Indigenous Peoples to Advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

May 12, 2016 – **UN Headquarters, New York** – Okalik Eegeesiak, Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) and Hjalmar Dahl, Vice Chair for Greenland are attending the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in New York City this week. The UNPFII is as an important venue for the promotion of dialogue between governments, Indigenous Peoples and the UN system. Indigenous peoples from all corners of the globe have called for appropriate resources to participate in achieving the 2030 sustainable development goals.

“ICC recognizes the advances made by various Arctic States to recognize the rights of Indigenous Peoples and also urges countries to commit actively to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)” stated Eegeesiak. “While I am encouraged by Canada’s renewed commitments to Indigenous Peoples in Canada, concerns remain regarding the foundation by which the states present today may undertake to engage Inuit and other Indigenous Peoples”.

Jim Stotts, Vice Chair for Alaska said, “the UNPFII provides an opportunity for Inuit in Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Chukotka to work closely in cooperation and collaboration with the larger global Indigenous community on the many issues concerning us all.” He went on to say, “I’m also encouraged by the recent announcement from the Canadian government on the implementation of the UN Declaration, this is a positive development for Inuit and for Canada”.

Denmark with Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, and Norway noted that Indigenous Peoples are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of global climate change and the increasing pressure on the world’s natural resources. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples clearly recognizes that respect for Indigenous Knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contributes to sustainable and equitable development. Eegeesiak welcomed these remarks and encouraged all states, “to adequately fund human rights work by Indigenous Peoples in their respective countries. It is only through the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples that States will move towards achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”

Hjalmar Dahl said, “Indigenous Peoples need to control the development within the six mandate areas of the Forum and participate in decision-making processes in these areas.” Dahl encouraged the Forum “to support the establishment of a global fund for financing the participation of Indigenous Peoples to international meetings dealing with Indigenous issues, and that such fund is established and managed by the Indigenous Peoples themselves.”

Okalik Eegeesiak concluded by saying, “This week States have the opportunity to advance Indigenous Peoples, health, education, environment and inclusion in decision making that affects the lives of Indigenous Peoples. Inuit look forward to working with the global community with greater optimism.”

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