



INUIT

## Press Release

### ICC Calls on the Global Community to Work with Inuit for the Future of the Arctic Ocean

**United Nations Headquarters, New York, NY. - June 7, 2017** - In celebration of World Oceans Day on June 8, Herb Angik Nakimayak, Vice President of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, called on the global community to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 to "conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources" and to work closely with Inuit and those who live in the Arctic when the global community considers the Arctic Ocean.

Inuit must be part of any decision making, whether it is using the Arctic Ocean for extractive industries, fisheries, shipping, legislation or marine policies that impact the people who live there. "It is the Inuit position that any action or intervention that affects our ice, the Arctic Ocean and the lands we live upon must protect the environment, wildlife and, therefore, Inuit, in such a way that we can continue to live off this land and sea. This is the standard of sustainable use that we insist upon," offered Nakimayak. "I grew up on the Mackenzie Delta and Beaufort Sea. Since I was a child I have travelled on and over the sea ice. I have hunted the marine mammals that help provide our food security and sustain our communities", reflected Nakimayak.

Climate change is a major threat to the Arctic Ocean, but so is seismic testing, ship noise and traffic, marine pollution, new chemical contaminants, ocean acidification and significant concerns about microplastics that are showing up in Arctic marine mammals. Inuit can offer solutions for the management of the marine environment, for example through the recommendations of the ICC led Pikialasorsuaq Commission.

The *Pikialasorsuaq*, or "Great Upwelling", is the largest Arctic polynya and the most biologically productive marine region north of the Arctic Circle. ICC initiated the Pikialasorsuaq Commission to address an ecosystem that has supported Inuit communities for millennia and one that is at risk from climate change and industrial and shipping activities. The Pikialasorsuaq Commission's goal is to provide a body of evidence, key principles and recommendations to make certain Inuit are central to the future of the Pikialasorsuaq and an Inuit vision of the management of the area is implemented. The intricate sophistication of Indigenous knowledge and understanding of the region can be mobilized and integrated in multiple, innovative ways. The Commission is developing a framework for an Inuit led management and monitoring plan that will ultimately support Indigenous knowledge and policy/control as central components of potential Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs), resulting in a novel and effective approach to self-determination.

"For Inuit, the sustainable use of Arctic marine resources and the future of the Arctic Ocean and sea ice is not a luxury - it is life itself, it is about protecting our culture. Inuit are adapting to the changes and we will continue to thrive in the changing Arctic – we have much to learn and much to teach the world" stated Nakimayak.

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