



Press Release: Inuit Circumpolar Chair Addresses Ministers at the Second Arctic Science Ministerial

October 26, 2018 – Berlin, Germany – “The recognition of and respect for our Indigenous human rights, status and role in the Arctic should not be viewed as a threat to the work of governments, rather, it is a matter of good governance and genuine partnership needed to achieve our collective objective of safeguarding the Arctic environment in favor of all of humankind”. This was among the many points made by the Inuit Circumpolar Council Chair, Dr. Dalee Sambo Dorough, in her statement at the second Arctic Science Ministerial this morning.

Dr. Dorough further shared with the Ministers representing 29 States and the European Union, that Indigenous peoples are on the forefront of the changes occurring within the Arctic. Inuit communities are the first to witness and experience the changes that are occurring and hold detailed and complex knowledge of the relationships between Arctic systems.

Inuit are among the first to be impacted by the many changes that are occurring. For example, contaminants which are produced, used and released in the south, undergo long-range transport and bioaccumulate in Inuit homelands and in Inuit traditionally harvested foods. These changes impact Inuit food security, which magnifies the relationship that exist between the health of Inuit, animals, and plants; the condition and health of Inuit lands, sea, and air; and the cultural fabric that is held together by Inuit language, cultural expression, and social integrity.

Inuit have survived living in the Arctic through innovative adaptation and mitigation strategies from time immemorial and continue to utilize these strategies throughout communities today. Hence, there is a valuable opportunity to learn from the resilience and adaptation processes that Inuit hold.

Dr. Dorough further expanded on the immense value that comes from partnership with Indigenous communities to advance observation and monitoring programs and research. This requires Indigenous community driven research and effective meaningful engagement of Indigenous Knowledge.

The Arctic Science Ministerial will conclude today with a signed Joint Minister’s Statement.

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Founded in 1977 by the late Eben Hopson of Barrow, Alaska, the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) has flourished and grown into a major international non-government organization representing approximately 155,000 Inuit of Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka (Russia). The organization holds Consultative Status II at the United Nations Economic and Social Council and is a Permanent Participant at the Arctic Council. ICC strives to strengthen unity among Inuit of the circumpolar north; promote Inuit 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 circumpolar North.