



PRESS RELEASE

ON THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES INUIT AND SÁMI CALL FOR ACTION

April 25, 2017 – UN Headquarters, New York - ICC Chair Okalik Egeesiak, led the Inuit delegation to the 16th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and spoke on behalf of the Arctic Caucus which consists of the Saami Council, the Sámi Parliaments, Inuit Circumpolar Council, and Arctic Indigenous youth representatives.

“The adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples September 13, 2007 by the UN General Assembly was a major achievement to protect and promote the rights of Indigenous peoples. The affirmation of the right to self-determination and rights to lands, territories and resources reflect collective human rights that are of utmost importance to Indigenous peoples throughout the world,” stated Egeesiak.

“As we mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration, Arctic Indigenous peoples continue to urge our respective governments to initiate national follow-up processes to implement the Declaration,” offered President of the Saami Council, Åsa Larsson Blind. “We call upon all Arctic States to take active measures toward substantive implementation of the interrelated rights of Arctic Indigenous peoples in close cooperation and with the meaningful participation of the peoples concerned.”

The Member States have a commitment to respect, promote and advance, and in no way diminish the rights of Indigenous peoples, and to uphold the principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. “However, we must continue to encourage countries to implement the UN Declaration at the national level as one of the primary commitments of member states. Indigenous peoples across the Arctic and those across the globe, remain focused upon the solemn commitments to ensure domestic implementation of rights affirmed in the UNDRIP. When the original commitments were made, there was a sense of urgency”, suggested Hjalmar Dahl, President of ICC Greenland.

Egeesiak said, “ICC and Inuit remain hopeful about the future to come and the realization of more comprehensive efforts in cooperation and partnership with UN member states to improve the world for not only Indigenous peoples, but for all of humankind.”

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