



INUIT

PRESS RELEASE

Social and research equity for Inuit - message for global leaders at White House Arctic Science Ministerial

September 29, 2016 – **Washington, D.C.** – “Equity is the foundation for the way forward if we are going to address changing conditions in the Arctic in a way that supports our people and communities.” This is the message that Inuit Circumpolar Council Chair, Okalik Eegeesiak, gave to leaders from across the globe, who were gathered yesterday in Washington, D.C. for the first-ever White House Arctic Science Ministerial.

The Ministerial focused on several themes and was accompanied by a call-to-action for new steps to better understand, address and adapt to changing conditions in the Arctic. Eegeesiak called on leaders to ensure research is conducted through equitable partnerships with Inuit, from inception to communication.

“Scientists live and breathe their research every day. Inuit live and breathe our Arctic homeland every day – we continue to be the people ‘on the ground’ year round. Together, through an equitable partnership, building on our collective strengths, we will fill our blind spots with knowledge much more efficiently than we can today.”

Eegeesiak went on to state that priority must be given to using research knowledge outcomes as a tool to reduce the social inequities that exist in Inuit communities across the Arctic.

Eegeesiak also said the time is now for Arctic science and research to fully encompass Indigenous knowledge, that it is central to setting and carrying out the research agendas across Inuit regions of the Arctic and to fully take into account all knowledge systems in the pursuit of truth in the Arctic.

“Far too often, the concerns and interests of others have framed research and science in the Arctic and Inuit rights and interests have been marginalized,” Eegeesiak noted. “This Ministerial can be a turning point in the international Arctic community where value is rightly being placed on equity for Inuit. I am thankful that our voice was heard. I am hopeful that we have the collective will to act.”

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