1. Inuit and the Arctic

1.2 Inuit live in the Arctic. Inuit live in the vast, circum-polar region of land, sea and sky known as the Arctic. We depend on the marine and terrestrial plants and animals that inhabit the Arctic Ocean, the tundra and the sea. This is our homeland.

1.2.1 Inuit have been living in the Arctic from time immemorial. From time immemorial, Inuit have been living in and dependent on the rich marine and terrestrial plants and animals of the Arctic world. Inuit Nunatsi, stretches from Greenland to Canada, Alaska and the coastal regions of Chukotka, Russia. Our use and recognition of Arctic lands and waters pre-date recorded history. Our unique knowledge, experience and relationship with the environment in the Arctic are a foundation for discussions in a manner comparable to Arctic Council deliberations. These states, in their discussions of Arctic sovereignty, have not referenced international law to resolve sovereignty disputes (see 2008 Ottawa Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council).

1.2.2 Inuit are a people. Though Inuit live across a far reaching circum-polar region, we are united as a single people. Our sense of unity is fostered and celebrated by the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), which represents the Inuit of the Arctic regions of Greenland, Canada, USA and Russia. As a people, we enjoy the rights of all peoples. These include the rights to self-determination, our own institutions and governments, and the right to own, use, develop and control our lands, territories and resources and the results of their use. These rights are set out in the 1945 United Nations Charter and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and others.

1.3 Inuit are an indigenous people. Inuit are an indigenous people with the rights and responsibilities of all indigenous peoples. These include the rights recognized in state by international law and relevant international instruments, such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and others.

1.3.1 Inuit are an indigenous people. Our rights and responsibilities as an indigenous people are addressed in the following relevant documents and processes:

- The Arctic Charter;
- The Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the 2007 UNDRIP;
- The Evolving Nature of Sovereignty in the Arctic;
- The Arctic Council;
- The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Inuit are an indigenous people and have the rights and responsibilities of all indigenous peoples. These include the rights recognized in state by international law and relevant international instruments, such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and others.

1.4 We, the Inuit of Inuit Nunaat, declare as follows:

2. The Evolving Nature of Sovereignty in the Arctic

2.1 Sovereignty is a term that has been used to refer to the absolute and independent authority of a community to sustain both internally and externally. Sovereignty is a contested concept, however, and does not have a fixed meaning. Old ideas of sovereignty are breaking down as different governance models, such as the European Union, become more common, and ideas of sovereignty are being redefined within new constitutional frameworks in creative ways to recognize the right of people to self-determination. For Inuit living within the states of Russia, Canada, the USA and Greenland, issues of sovereignty and self-determination state are required to accept the presence and rule of Inuit as partners in the conduct of international relations in the Arctic.

2.2 Inuit as active partners

The inextricable linkages between issues of sovereignty and sovereignty on the Arctic and Inuit self-determination and other rights require states to accept the presence and rule of Inuit as partners in the conduct of international relations in the Arctic.

2.3 A variety of other factors, ranging from unique Inuit knowledge of Arctic ecosystems to the need for appropriate emphasis on sustainability in the weight of resource development proposals, provide practical advantages to conducting international relations in the Arctic in partnership with Inuit.

3. Inuit, the Arctic and Sovereignty: Looking Forward

3.1 As the Inuit Leaders’ Summit, 6-7 November 2008, in Kuujjuaq, Nunavik, Canada, Inuit leaders from Greenland, Canada and Alaska gathered to address Arctic sovereignty. On November 6th, International Inuit Day, we express our commitment to continue to work together closely and constructively to chart the future of the Arctic.

3.2 The actions of Arctic peoples and states, the interactions between them, and the conduct of international relations must give primary respect to the need for global environmental security, the need for peaceful resolution of disputes, and this inextricable linkages between issues of sovereignty and sovereignty in the Arctic and the issues of self-determination.

3.3 Inuit as active partners

3.4 Inuit consent, expertise and perspectives are critical to progress on Inuit sovereignty and related questions, such as who owns the Arctic, who has the right to traverse the Arctic, who has the right to develop the Arctic, and who will be responsible for its social and environmental impacts. The Inuit of Alaska are active participants in all future deliberations on Arctic sovereignty. Inuit will build both the Inuit community and the international community.

3.5 The international instrument of Inuit in global, trans-national and indigenous politics requires the building of new partnerships with states for the protection and promotion of indigenous economies, cultures and traditions. Partnerships must acknowledge that industrial development of the natural resource wealth of the Arctic can proceed only if it advances Inuit sovereignty and related questions, such as who owns the Arctic, who has the right to traverse the Arctic, who has the right to develop the Arctic, and who will be responsible for its social and environmental impacts. Inuit inclusion as active partners is critical to progress on Inuit sovereignty and related questions.

3.6 Issues of sovereignty and sovereignty in the Arctic have become inextricably linked to the concept of self-determination in the Arctic. Inuit states must, therefore, work together closely and constructively to chart the future of the Arctic.

4. A Circum-polar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic

4.1 At the first Inuit Leaders’ Summit, 6-7 November 2008, in Kuujjuaq, Nunavik, Canada, Inuit leaders from Greenland, Canada and Alaska gathered to address Arctic sovereignty. On November 6th, International Inuit Day, we express our commitment to continue to work together closely and constructively to chart the future of the Arctic.

4.2 The actions of Arctic peoples and states, the interactions between them, and the conduct of international relations must give primary respect to the need for global environmental security, the need for peaceful resolution of disputes, and this inextricable linkages between issues of sovereignty and sovereignty in the Arctic and the issues of self-determination.

Inuit as active partners

Inuit consent, expertise and perspectives are critical to progress on Inuit sovereignty and related questions, such as who owns the Arctic, who has the right to traverse the Arctic, who has the right to develop the Arctic, and who will be responsible for its social and environmental impacts. The Inuit of Alaska are active participants in all future deliberations on Arctic sovereignty. Inuit will build both the Inuit community and the international community.

The inextricable linkages between issues of sovereignty and sovereignty in the Arctic are required to accept the presence and rule of Inuit as partners in the conduct of international relations in the Arctic.