



ICC POSITION PAPER

FROM THE ARCTIC TO THE AMAZON:
INUIT CALL ON STATES TO ACCELERATE CLIMATE
COMMITMENTS AT UNFCCC COP30

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The Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) is an Indigenous Peoples' organization founded in 1977 to promote and celebrate the unity of 185,000 Inuit from Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka in the Russian far east. As the international voice of Inuit, ICC is calling upon global leaders at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP30) to listen, support, and act upon climate issues identified by Inuit and other Indigenous Peoples globally.

The recommendations in this statement are based on commitments in the ICC 2022 Ilulissat Declaration, the Indigenous Peoples Principles and Protocols for Just Transition, and the Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Resource Development Principles in Inuit Nunaat.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The recent Global Stocktake (GST) revealed mixed progress in climate action, with varying degrees of failure and success across regions and sectors. Nevertheless, the GST provided a warning heard around the world: global climate action is far off track. The Arctic is warming almost four times faster than the global average, causing extreme and irreversible changes to Inuit lands, waters, and ice. It is essential to address the root causes of the climate crisis to ensure Inuit safety and survival on our lands and territories, with our lives and livelihoods on the line. At the 30th Conference of Parties, Inuit call on States, governmental authorities, private corporations, research institutions, and civil society to advance the following recommendations:

Action Item 1: Inuit need direct, equitable and ongoing access to the workstreams and negotiations under the UNFCCC climate finance portfolio and special consideration in setting finance targets to effectively mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change; thus

- a. Create dedicated funding windows for Indigenous Peoples within each UNFCCC fund.
- b. Ensure climate finance is equally available to Indigenous Peoples from all seven UN Indigenous sociocultural regions, without restrictions in the 'developed' world.
- c. Push for substantial funding for Indigenous Peoples, not only micro-finance or -grants.

Action Item 2: Inuit must have full and effective participation and meaningful engagement in all decisions that impact us, through processes that uphold the right to self-determination; thus

- a. Respect the voice and carry forward the positions of the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC) as the self-organized, self-determined, and political voice of Indigenous Peoples within the UNFCCC and the convener of the Indigenous Peoples' Organizations (IPO) constituency.

- b. Uphold the work of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples' Platform (LCIPP) in building mutual capacity between States and Indigenous Peoples and its support for directing the use of Indigenous Knowledge in the work of the Convention.
- c. Commit to increasing participation within the Facilitative Working Group (FWG) meetings and LCIPP mandated events so that States and Observers can meaningfully incorporate the guidance from LCIPP meetings and its workplans into their own work.

Action Item 3: Recognize that Inuit hold a unique role as an Indigenous People of the cryosphere and that all climate change work must be based on a strong human rights foundation, including the human rights affirmed through the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; thus

- a. Continue to affirm the distinct rights and status of Indigenous Peoples and include human rights language within UNFCCC text decisions.
- b. Affirm support for the IIPFCC General Principles which assert that the human rights of Indigenous Peoples are essential to fulfilling the fundamental goals of the Paris Agreement and central to the outcome text of UNFCCC negotiations.
- c. Reject the conflation of Indigenous Peoples and people from local communities.
- d. Reject the false dichotomy between developing and developed states in the context of Indigenous Peoples' realities and participation in the work of the UNFCCC, as Inuit must not be excluded from discussions regarding the most climate-exposed Peoples.

Action Item 4: Ensure that all decision-making that impacts Inuit includes the ethical and equitable engagement of our People and the utilization of Indigenous Knowledge¹;

- a. Uphold Indigenous self-determination in research and center Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous climate leadership within all UNFCCC workstreams, in recognition of the particular vulnerability of many Indigenous Peoples to the impacts of climate change, due to historical and present day patterns of inequality, as affirmed by the IPCC [\(AR6\)](#).
- b. Recognize Inuit, our culture and way of life, including hunters, fishers, harvesters, seamsters, and craftspeople, and Indigenous Knowledge as climate change prevention, mitigation, and adaptation.
- c. Create spaces for the direct participation of Inuit technical experts to illustrate Inuit climate expertise and uphold Indigenous self-determination in research, including in defining and implementing climate solutions.

Action Item 5: A *just transition* for Inuit must respect the inherent right of self-determination in decision-making processes in the Arctic. Inuit should not in any way bear the cost of transitioning to safe alternative fuel or energy sources and will determine their own political, social, and economic priorities.

- a. Recommit to the fundamental legal commitments made by states to all global peoples under the Paris Agreement to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels.
- b. Pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.

- c. Fulfil ambitious targets with high integrity within updated Nationally Determined Contributions, without placing the burden on the most climate vulnerable communities, including Inuit, to bear the costs of the transition.
- d. Implement state commitments for 2025 and 2030 targets without withdrawing from these obligations, while upholding the rights of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination, including to free, prior, and informed consent.
- e. Affirm and implement Indigenous-led and -supported protocols that have been developed to guide the pursuit of these targets such as the guidelines developed by the [*UN Secretary General's Panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals*](#) and the [*Indigenous Peoples' Principles and Protocols for Just Transition*](#).

THE ARCTIC AND INUIT CONTEXT

The Inuit Circumpolar Council attended the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, the origin of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and has been bringing Inuit Knowledge and perspectives on climate change to the annual Conference of the Parties meetings ever since.

The Arctic is experiencing unprecedented warming with profound implications, including exacerbating significant financial and infrastructure gaps which constrain our abilities to adapt to these rapid changes. We need innovative solutions to face these challenges, including a drastic increase in direct, equitable, and stable funding for Inuit-led climate solutions.

ICC maintains an essential role in guiding the Arctic's future, despite the uncertainty in current global politics. The urgent challenges of climate change persist for Inuit, even when State attentions shift to other political issues. The outcome from the Global Stocktake emphasized the need for greater alignment between national policies and international climate goals, which ICC expects to see in this next round of Nationally Determined Contribution reports at COP30. The integration of these elements — Indigenous-led climate action, political stability, and robust international frameworks — highlights the multifaceted approach required to effectively combat climate change, which has disproportionate impacts on regions like the Arctic.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR COP30 NEGOTIATION ITEMS

UNFCCC Broadly

The work of the UNFCCC must be based on a strong foundation in human rights, including in the individual and collective rights of Indigenous Peoples. This enables the UNFCCC to make high integrity decisions that maintain progress towards the commitments of the Paris Agreement. The full, meaningful, and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples, as legally distinct Peoples, is essential to ensure that Indigenous Knowledge is also ethically and equitably reflected in the resulting climate policies.

All decision-making at the UNFCCC must take into account ongoing discussions on enhanced participation at the Human Rights Council, which underscore the need for recognition of the status of Indigenous Peoples as rights holders, distinct from civil society and not to be conflated with other groups such as “local communities”. This includes ensuring that Indigenous Peoples’

free, prior, and informed consent is the precursor to climate decision-making processes.

Climate Finance

Indigenous climate leadership must be empowered and enabled through mechanisms for direct access to climate finance. The Green Climate Fund is the only multilateral climate fund without a direct access window for Indigenous Peoples - we therefore urge the Green Climate Fund to establish such a direct access window. Parties' recommitment to ongoing financial support to United Nations institutions, including the UNFCCC Secretariat, the LCIPP Secretariat, and the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples, is critical to securing the participation and contributions of Indigenous Peoples in multilateral climate change forums.

Loss and Damage

We urge Parties to uphold the conclusions of the recent International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on the legal obligations of States in the context of climate change within the structure of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD). These conclusions affirm that States have a duty to provide resources at the scale of loss and damage needs, that all those harmed by the climate crisis have a right to remedy rather than charitable assistance, and that international human rights law must guide loss and damage responses as a legal requirement.

Adaptation

Indicators chosen for the Global Goal on Adaptation must reflect adequate metrics for tangible adaptation outcomes for Indigenous Peoples and include disaggregated data that can be broken down by population sector to ensure Indigenous realities are reflected. Indicators must uplift Indigenous Peoples practicing our cultures and ways of life as climate change adaptation solutions, especially within Target 9(g) Cultural heritage and knowledge. Indigenous Peoples should be directly consulted on indicator selection and framing to uphold equitable and ethical data collection that respects Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous data sovereignty.

Global Stocktake

The results of the last Global Stocktake demonstrated that state parties are not on track to meet their targets to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C of warming, as stipulated under the Paris Agreement. We urge Parties to reflect increased ambition to reach these targets in the third round of Nationally Determined Contributions. We call on states who have submitted insufficient NDCs to increase their ambition at COP30 and those who have not submitted updated NDCs to do so urgently, so that the NDC synthesis report can provide an accurate depiction of the projections for planetary change due to climate change.

Just Transition/Mitigation

We urge Parties to uphold the guidelines developed by the UN Secretary General's Panel on [Critical Energy Transition Minerals](#) and the [Indigenous Peoples' Principles and Protocols for Just Transition](#) in the adoption and implementation of a workplan for the UAE Just Transition Workplan. A truly just transition will not succeed without a systematic shift in thinking, consumption patterns, and approaches to development, and without upholding the rights of Indigenous Peoples, as outlined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Article 6: Market and Non-Market Mechanisms

We urge Parties to uphold the highest integrity within carbon market mechanisms, ensuring that sources of climate finance from private industries are derived from activities that uphold the rights and self-determination of Indigenous Peoples and cause no harm to Indigenous Peoples. If market mechanisms are to be used, then they must uphold Paris Agreement commitments, rather than detracting from the just transition or perpetuating infringement on Indigenous Peoples' self-determination on our own lands and territories. Indigenous Peoples retain the right to be full participants in international societies, economies, and political bodies under our own self-determination.

Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples' Platform

We urge states to uphold the work of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples' Platform (LCIPP) to facilitate the direct participation of Indigenous Peoples within the UNFCCC's formal processes, including by providing fulsome funding support for Knowledge Holders to participate as technical experts within the LCIPP and other constituted bodies of the UNFCCC. We uphold the fundamental role of Indigenous Peoples' representatives in the Facilitative Working Group in directing the work of the LCIPP.

CONCLUSION

Inuit have been involved in the UNFCCC since its inception, and we recognize that vital change is still greatly needed to address the growing challenges posed by climate change. We hereby reaffirm our commitment to advocate at every level for global policy and action to cap global temperature rise at 1.5°C and continue efforts to secure equitable participation of Inuit in climate change-related processes.

As the UNFCCC shifts into an implementation phase of the Paris Agreement, Parties must promptly advance their climate policies into actions. The NDC synthesis and the next GST will assess progress towards the Paris Agreement goals to secure a livable future for generations to come. The next five years of the implementation phase are critical and COP30 provides an opportunity to make bold decisions and implement changes that reflect a shared commitment to climate justice and sustainability. We urge Parties to maintain persistent and stable climate policies and actions, even as political landscapes and the work of the UNFCCC shift. We will continue to work with Parties on their ambitions to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement.

In solidarity with other disproportionately impacted global Indigenous Peoples, from the Arctic to the Amazon, we emphasize the importance of both the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change, as the constituency representing a unified political voice for Indigenous Peoples at the UNFCCC, and of the Facilitative Working Group of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples' Platform as a space for Knowledge exchange and mobilization for Parties and Indigenous Peoples.

The Inuit Circumpolar Council will continue to advocate for Inuit self-determination, safety, and survival in the midst of the climate crisis, building partnerships in these forums to fight for the rights and futures of generations to come, as we implement our calls to action together.