



INUIT

## **Inuit Circumpolar Council**

### **UNFCCC COP 21 Position Paper**

**Inuit Call for Action from Global Leaders  
at UNFCCC COP 21 in Paris, France**

The Arctic is the barometer of the world's environmental health. The health and well-being of Inuit are inextricably tied to the Arctic environment and in particular the marine environment.

The important role that the Arctic environment plays in sustaining global climate systems and the unpredictable nature of the changes occurring heightens the urgency to act. Inuit are a global indigenous peoples who depend on the land and sea to sustain our culture and the wildlife on which we depend for food security, daily nutrition and overall cultural integrity.

The Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), representing Inuit in Alaska (US), Canada (CA), Greenland (DK), and Chukotka (RU) remains concerned about the impacts of climate change on our people and our homelands. ICC appreciates that the international community acknowledges and recognizes that climate change is dramatically altering the Arctic environment and impacting Inuit as well as the entire world. The *rate* of change in the Arctic environment continues to be an increasing challenge for Inuit around the circumpolar Arctic.

Inuit are witnessing the global impact first hand and we take note of what islanders, agrarians, fishers and others who understand through personal observations are saying about how our climate and conditions are changing. The impacts of shoreline erosion, flooding, salt water intrusion of fresh water supplies and the resulting damage to infrastructure and impacts on community health are observed in coastal communities and cities globally.

Inuit are deeply concerned about the actual and potential impacts of climate change on our cultural, spiritual, social and economic health and corresponding human rights. We recognize that even a limitation of global climate change to 2°C above historic levels, as many countries have sought, will lead to dramatic, irreversible effects on Arctic communities. And, yet, there is a sense of optimism that the high level talks in Paris will have a positive result and impact in the Arctic and around the world.

Inuit recognize that collective action must now shift to identifying and developing an integrated strategy for long-term mitigation of carbon pollution to the atmosphere. Leaders must also turn

their attention to developing, implementing, and evaluating short-term actions to prepare for and adapt to the inevitable impacts for addressing climate change more effectively. Inuit urge the international community and governments in particular, at UNFCCC COP 21, to take enhanced measures to stabilize greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations below ~450 parts per million by volume, in order to ensure that increases in global temperatures will remain below 1.5°C.

**The Inuit Circumpolar Council urges global leaders to support Inuit in sustaining our livelihoods by taking the following actions:**

1. **Recognize the role of the Arctic in sustaining global climate systems.** *ICC calls on global leaders commit to take concrete action to mitigate further climate change impacts on the Arctic by working to keep the increase in global temperatures below 1.5°C and support research and monitoring on the relationship between the melting Arctic and changing global processes to inform policy direction and decisions.*
2. **Support with sustainable funding the integration of Inuit and Indigenous knowledge and local monitoring into regional and global environmental assessment processes by:**
  - a. *Integrating Inuit knowledge into IPCC reports and other major climate related reports and support Inuit knowledge holders so that they may serve as substantive authors and contributors.*
  - b. *Supporting community-based monitoring of environmental change and developing global databases to integrate local observations and monitoring systems into regional and global scale models.*
3. **Commit to support the participation of Inuit in climate change-related processes and programs at local, national, regional and international levels by:**
  - a. *Providing sustainable funding for the full and effective participation of Inuit and Indigenous peoples in forums such as the National Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPAs), the Disaster Risk Reduction and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), the Local Adaptation Plans of Action (LAPAs), and the National Designation Authorities (NDAs).*
  - b. *Ensuring that Inuit and Indigenous peoples have a voice in the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage and fully and effectively participate in and through the Adaptation Fund Board*
4. **Support Inuit and Indigenous peoples with mitigation, adaption and sustainable technology development by:**
  - a. *Contributing to a Global Indigenous Peoples Fund that is governed and managed by Indigenous peoples and that provides equal funding to Indigenous peoples from all seven United Nations recognized Indigenous Peoples regions, including those from so-called developed countries.*
  - b. *Investing in Arctic, Indigenous, and remote communities and developing renewable energy options that will increase our economic viability and decrease dependence on energy imports and outside resources.*

5. **Recognize the fundamental human right of Inuit to a safe and healthy environment, and respect Inuit sovereignty and the right of Indigenous peoples to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) as custodians of our homelands.**

*ICC calls on the international community, in the operative provisions of the Paris Agreement and in the CoP 21 decisions, to include guidance for the implementations of the deliberations adopted at CoP 21 that recognizes, respects and fulfills the rights of Inuit and other Indigenous peoples as affirmed in the UNDRIP, ILO Convention NO. 169, the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the General Recommendation 23 of CERD and all other international human rights instruments. The ICC calls on the international community to respect Inuit sovereignty and our inherent right to self-determination over all decision-making processes in and for the Arctic.*

6. **Acknowledge the important role of the Arctic Council as a model for cooperation and collaboration between states and Indigenous peoples and encourage states to develop similar forums for addressing environmental challenges in each respective region.** *ICC calls on global leaders to develop decision-making forums that include Indigenous peoples as full participants through which to tackle the issues raised by global environmental change and intersecting, trans-boundary environmental issues.*

7. **Acknowledge short-lived climate forcers (black carbon, methane and hydrofluorocarbons) and support efforts to reduce the impact of these pollutants.** *ICC calls on global leaders to commit to measures to reduce the impact of short-lived climate forcers and take initiatives to reduce the amount of black carbon, methane and hydrofluorocarbons entering the Arctic.*

*Inuit Circumpolar Council: Working to Reduce Human-Induced Climate Change*

*ICC recognizes the ongoing need for Inuit to engage with the circumpolar and international processes including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), and the Arctic Council to ensure the Inuit knowledge and perspectives are considered and reflected in these processes. **ICC thanks the UNFCCC COP 21 delegates for recognizing the unique issues faced by Indigenous peoples worldwide and those of Arctic Indigenous peoples who depend on the land and sea.***

The Inuit Circumpolar Council is an indigenous peoples' organization, founded in 1977 to promote and celebrate the unity of 160,000 Inuit from Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka. ICC works to promote Inuit rights, safeguard the Arctic environment, and protect and promote the Inuit way of life. In regard to climate change, we believe that it is crucial for world leaders and governments to recognize, respect and fully implement the human rights of Inuit and all other Indigenous peoples across the globe.

Therefore, the ICC, as the international voice of Inuit, we respectfully call upon global leaders at the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (CoP 21) in Paris, France to listen to, commit to support and act upon the climate issues and requests identified by the Inuit of the Arctic and other Indigenous peoples.

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