

Aqqaluk Lynge, Chair, Inuit Circumpolar Council
Eighth Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council
14-15 May 2013, Kiruna, Sweden

Qujanaq siulittaasoq, maani ataqqinartut akornanni oqaaseqatsiarsinnagatta.
Thank you Mr. Chair, for giving me the floor for a few comments.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the Government of Sweden and her Chairmanship during the last two years. On behalf of the Inuit Circumpolar Council I also thank the Saami people for their hospitality.

The Eighth Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council here in Kiruna takes place in a time where the global climate change has reached another milestone. On May 9, the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced that the level of the concentration of carbon dioxide has reached levels that haven't been seen for about three and a half million years.

We who live in the Arctic are impacted in our daily life by the effects of climate change. We commend the Arctic States' willingness to work together with other countries under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to conclude an agreed outcome with legal force no later than 2015 to limit the increase of the global average temperature.

Mr. Chair, the Inuit Circumpolar Council note the Kiruna Declaration acknowledgement of the importance of Indigenous Peoples' traditional ways of life, the dynamics of culture, our adaptability to new developments, our economic well-being and our health. We fully agree with the declaration's instructions to the Senior Arctic Officials to recommend ways and means to support and showcase the value of Indigenous Peoples' ways of life - And to present a report on this work at the next Ministerial Meeting in 2015.

The cooperation of the Arctic States and the Indigenous Peoples in our coordinated action to address a long list of issues, that not only affect the Arctic but the whole world, is a testament to the fact of this Council's importance.

Other issues include the work to reduce contamination in the Arctic, including the new Convention on Mercury. Also, important issues are the studies of the Arctic Ocean Acidification effects, the Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response Agreement, our ongoing work in the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment to document the changes Inuit are experiencing; the Languages Project, and other actions that the Kiruna Declaration is announcing.

Mr. Chair, the Inuit Circumpolar Council has noted the new US National Strategy for the Arctic Region, particularly the notion in the guiding principles to consult and coordinate with Alaska Natives. We welcome this development from the US and are looking forward to see it implemented.

Mr. Chair, ICC supports the Danish Foreign minister's remarks on the Greenland's role in the work of the Arctic Council. My sincere thanks to the other Permanent Participants and my colleagues from the ICC, Jim Stotts, Alaska and Duane Smith, Canada for their hard work on behalf of all Inuit, and Carl Christian Olsen, Greenland for the work at the Board of the Arctic Council's Indigenous Peoples Secretariat.

We look forward to work with the Canadian Chairmanship, for the next two years, under the leadership of Honorable Leona Aglukkaq. With your close relationship to Inuit and the people of the North, we are sure that you will fulfill your country's aspirations.

Qujanaq - Thank you.