



14th Meeting of the Arctic Council
Romsa (Tromsø), Sápmi, Norway
May 12th, 2025
Statement by Inuit Circumpolar Council
Delivered by ICC Chair Sara Olsvig

Check against delivery

Qujanaq - Giitu, Mr. Chair

Excellences, colleagues – ikinngutit, friends.

It is a pleasure to be here in Romsa for the 14th Arctic Council Meeting.

Despite the hybrid-format, we are pleased to join all delegates from near and far in witnessing the commitment we share to *continue* our cooperation. The Arctic Council is indeed the pre-eminent body for cooperation in our region.

Having all eight States and six Indigenous Peoples' Organizations serving as Permanent Participants as members is a strong testament to the perseverance, deliberateness, and dedication of us as nations and Peoples, to maintaining peace, stability and cooperation in the Arctic.

As a founding member of the Arctic Council, Inuit Circumpolar Council welcomes the progress made during the Norwegian Chairship to resume work and keep the Council on track. We thank Norway's Arctic Ambassador and Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials, Morten Høglund, for your successful efforts to include *all* in this work. Skillfully, you have navigated this difficult diplomatic process. You have listened and positively responded to our advice on how to strategize to resume and continue the work. For that we thank you – qujanaq.

We commend all States and Indigenous Peoples' Organizations for our shared and successful efforts to recognize and emphasize the role of the Arctic Council for all Arctic inhabitants. Qujanaq to Russia and Norway for ensuring successful transition of chairships in 2023 and 2025.



Human lives across our region are deeply affected by *how* we choose to conduct our work. We must continue addressing the social, cultural, economic, climatic and environmental issues facing our Peoples and communities. The spiritual and physical health and wellbeing of Arctic Indigenous Peoples is intertwined with the health and well-being of the environment around us.

Permafrost thaw and coastal erosion results in relocations of communities, lack of sea-ice and other changes to the cryosphere is preventing stability in livelihoods, and people are forced to adapt faster than we have done before. The realities and lives in each community across the Arctic are diverse, but we share our connectedness and intimate relationship with our surrounding nature, on which we depend.

Having faced many changes over the past centuries, our full and effective participation and meaningful engagement in all policy making is minimum standard. We have said it many times - nothing about us without us.

As Indigenous Peoples we hold collective rights. Our individual and collective rights are inalienable. These rights are affirmed in the UN Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples. And we have exercised our collective rights as Peoples equal to all other Peoples for time immemorial.

Recognizing us as equal partners, and our human rights as Indigenous Peoples, also means to seek common understanding of the past, the challenges of the present, and of the way ahead. The fulfillment of our rights on all levels of governance is imperative.

For that we depend on action, and we depend on cooperation. And we achieve that through the multilateralism our Peoples have exercised for millennia.

Ikinngutit – we reject to be devalued, or to be divided.

That is why Inuit Circumpolar Council applauds the progress made over the past two years. The Arctic Council provides an important platform for Inuit to influence the international development of our region.

We welcome the incoming Chairship of the Kingdom of Denmark – and we wish to express our pride in also welcoming the first Inuk Arctic Ambassador of the Kingdom in his role as Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials.

We recognize the strong emphasis on strengthening the participation of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Knowledge as cross-cutting to all themes of the Chairship programme.



Yes, our expectations are high, and we would not have expected anything less from the Kingdom. We are ready to continue contributing to the work and we call on all Arctic States, Permanent Participants and Observers to support the new Chairship in conducting a successful term.

Inuit have assumed important leading roles before, and we want to take this opportunity to honor the Inuit and all other Arctic leaders who laid the foundation for the Arctic Council. From the first Arctic Peoples' Conference in 1973, to the efforts in developing the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, the perseverance by Indigenous Peoples insisting to be included in the work, all resulted in the Arctic Council we know today.

Further progress must be made – we can have no stagnation.

With this, we express our full support for the Romssa – Tromsø Statement and we look forward to continuing to strengthen and safeguard the Arctic Council.

Qujanaq.