



Governments of Nunavut and Greenland, and Inuit Circumpolar Council issue joint statement on climate change

PARIS, France (December 8, 2015) – The governments of Nunavut (Canada) and Greenland (Denmark) and the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) released a joint statement on climate change at the twenty-first Conference of the Parties for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) meeting in Paris today.

The Arctic is experiencing acute impacts related to climate change, including permafrost thaw, extreme increases in temperatures, loss of glacier and sea ice, extreme weather events and disruptions to Arctic wildlife. Even slight changes in the temperature cause major disruptions in the way that northern communities live and work.

Recognizing that current greenhouse gas emissions are caused by industrialized nations from activities that have taken place outside the Arctic, Nunavut Premier Peter Taptuna, Greenland Minister of Finance, Mineral Resources and Foreign Affairs, Vittus Qujaukitsoq, and ICC Chair Okalik Eegeesiak called for all nations attending COP21 to deliver a Paris agreement that:

- Strongly reconfirms the principle of a common but differentiated responsibility in tackling climate change.
- Takes enhanced measures to stabilize global greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations below ~450 parts per million by volume to make certain global temperature increases will remain between 1.5°C and 2°C.
- Recognizes and protects the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the values, interests, culture and traditions of the Peoples of the Arctic.
- Ensures equal access to the right to development, also for the Peoples of the Arctic.
- Acknowledges the extremely high cost of living in the Arctic and does not impose further financial burden to Arctic regions.
- Advocates the development and expansion of energy solutions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, also for areas like the Arctic.
- Ensures that Inuit food security is protected.
- Promotes the need for adaptation action in areas that are disproportionately affected by climate change, such as the Arctic, and for sustainable funding to support such initiatives.



- Recognizes the importance of Indigenous knowledge, its significant contribution to our understanding of climate change, and acknowledges its value being on par with scientific data.

The three parties also pledged to work together in order to ensure that Inuit from across the Arctic have a strong and unified voice on the topic of climate change.

Quotes

“We are here to deliver an urgent message on behalf of the people of the North. When it comes to climate change, Nunavut is one of the most vulnerable areas on earth. We are deeply concerned about the impacts of climate change on sea ice and our way of life. We therefore stand before you today, with the Government of Greenland and the Inuit Circumpolar Council, asking the United Nations to reach an agreement that accounts for the impacts of climate change on the Arctic.”

- Nunavut Premier, Peter Taptuna

"Greenland has an important responsibility in promoting international climate research. Greenlandic climate research combines international cutting-edge research with an Arctic human dimension. Our joint Inuit voice and our traditional know-how from across the Arctic should be heard and included in international policy-making. Most importantly, Arctic Indigenous Peoples have to be ensured an equal access to the right to development. Indigenous Peoples' rights and interests must be included in the COP21 outcome document."

- Greenland Minister, Vittus Qujaukitsoq

“As the representative of Inuit throughout the Arctic, I have seen and heard of the effects of climate change across several countries from Alaska to Greenland, Canada and Chukotka. Efforts to mitigate and adapt should consider the experiences of Inuit and other Indigenous Peoples as we are most directly impacted by climate change. The Paris agreement and its implementation must therefore respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples for the betterment of our planet.”

- Inuit Circumpolar Council Chair, Okalik Egeesiak

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