

TEXT FOR RECORDED STATEMENT

Inuit Circumpolar Council - Dalee Sambo Dorough, International Chair – UNEA@50 - 14 Feb 2022

The Inuit Circumpolar Council appreciates UNEP's embrace of the 2014 'World Conference on Indigenous Peoples' resolution, the establishment of Major Group specifically for Indigenous Peoples, and the proactive work taken to date to acknowledge the world's Indigenous peoples. However, more must be done to advance the status, rights and role of Indigenous peoples within UNEP and the UNEA consistent with the significant international human rights instruments noted in the 2014 resolution.

Inuit traditional territory includes nearly half the circumpolar Arctic, including parts of Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka (Russia). Our work is anchored in the right of self determination as the pre-requisite for the exercise and enjoyment of all other Inuit collective rights. Such rights include the right to use our knowledge, and to protect our environment and resources, including the traditional foods that we depend upon.

Numerous UN conventions and treaties recognize the importance of Indigenous Knowledge and our right to own, control and maintain such knowledge and knowledge systems. For example, the UNFCCC and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). This distinct right, affirmed in seven provisions of Resolution 69/2 specifically highlights the utilization of Indigenous Knowledge in biodiversity and climate change.

However, UNEP conventions and actions, particularly those in relation to contaminants, such as the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, and the Minamata Convention on Mercury, only recognize the *vulnerabilities* of Indigenous Peoples in the Arctic. In this way, they fail to recognize the importance of our knowledge in their work.

Similarly, in the resolutions before UNEA 5.2 – specifically those related to plastics, or the effort to establish a Science-Policy Panel to inform the work of the UN – there is no specific reference to or recognition of Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Knowledge and the need to engage us consistent with our right to participate.

Therefore, we call upon member states and all others engaged in the work of UNEP and UNEA to comprehensively recognize and respect our interrelated rights, and specifically the importance of Indigenous Knowledge, which should be utilized in ALL of UNEP's work. The ICC looks forward to this result and is willing to substantively contribute to such work.

Thank you