Intervention at the second intergovernmental negotiating committee meeting (INC-2)

Inuit Circumpolar Council – Agenda item 4

HoD Lisa Kopperqualuk, President of ICC Canada, vice-Chair of ICC

Thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC). I am the vice-Chair of ICC, and we represent the Inuit living across the Arctic, from Greenland, Canada, Alaska, and Chukotka.

Inuit are already highly impacted from contaminants that enter the Arctic from all around the globe via long-range transport, including persistent organic pollutants, mercury, and now plastics.

Given the comprehensive impact of plastics on human rights, there must be a human rights focus, including the recognition and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) throughout the instrument.

Meaningful and effective participation of observers, in particular rights holders such as Indigenous Peoples such as ourselves, must be ensured in all aspects of the treaty. We are not only stakeholders, but rights holders.

Core obligations must address the full life cycle of plastics and focus on the elimination of plastics and the switch to non-plastic alternatives. Toxic additives must be eliminated, and control measures must also address nano- and microplastics.

The monitoring of plastics in the environment must also be included, and be based on the best available knowledge, that includes science and Indigenous Knowledge both of which are equally valid and important knowledge systems.

For the implementation of the treaty, extended producer responsibility must be used to implement the polluter-pays principle as part of mandatory requirements.

There are existing plastics and contaminant monitoring activities and programs that work in a partnership approach with Indigenous Peoples. These should be recognized, supported, and utilized in the implementation of the treaty. These include national (such as the Northern Contaminants Program in Canada), as well as regional programs (such as the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Arctic Council).

ICC is looking forward to providing further input as the negotiations unfold.