



## **New Years Message**

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### **Inuit Circumpolar Council – ICC Greenland wish all a Happy New Year 2017**

By Hjalmar Dahl, President of ICC Greenland

We extend our thanks for the good cooperation including the many positive moments and activities throughout 2016. ICC Greenland wishes you all a Happy New Year.

#### ***The opportunities and constraints of the climate***

It is a fact that the Arctic environment is fragile, and we see with our own eyes that it becomes more and more visible. The hunters, that just a few years ago were dependent of the prevalence of the winter ice, are telling us about the changes of the ice conditions preventing them from hunting through longer periods during the year. The climate changes and the global warming are real facts, which open opportunities and put constraints.

New and increased transport opportunities through the Arctic waters are to be expected, but we also see an easier access to the non-renewable resources, including the exploration and the potential offshore exploitation of oil and gas in the Baffin Bay.

The hunters from both sides of the Baffin Bay are deeply sceptical towards this development. Other ICC regions together with ICC Greenland are immensely worried about offshore activities.

We therefore welcome the realization of these risks by the outgoing US President Obama. As one of his last actions he therefore has introduced a permanent ban against new oil and gas exploitation in vast areas of the American Arctic Waters. Immediately following this announcement the Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau announced a similar ban in the Canadian Arctic Waters.

During these years ICC Canada and ICC Greenland are implementing a major project about the management of “*Pikialasorsorsuaq*”, which is a year-round ice-free marine area or polynya, in the northern part of the Baffin Bay between Canada and Greenland. All accessible knowledge - particularly from the hunters is being collected with the purpose to present proposals for a future sustainable management of the North Water, as this area also is called.

Regardless of which political initiatives may be taken the most fundamentally decisive to ICC Greenland is, that the decision processes are being completed under observance of democratic principles. The ICC has in 2016 had special focus on the involvement of the citizens during the decision-making processes concerning projects that will be affecting the people and the environment.

It must be emphasized that the ICC is actively supporting development initiatives in the occupational and economic areas. To that end the ICC Alaska is planning a major conference on Economic Development in the Arctic, to take place in Anchorage in March 2017.

Remember that we are human beings, but that we are all different. We must take that fact into account in all our actions throughout 2017. Happy New Year!