When the ministers from the eight Arctic states and the leaders of Arctic Indigenous Peoples Organizations met in Iqaluit, Nunavut in April it marked the conclusion of Canada’s Chairmanship and the beginning of the United States’ Chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

The theme of the US Chairmanship is “One Arctic: Shared Opportunities, Challenges, and Responsibilities”, and during the next two years the Chairmanship has put up three focus areas:

- Improving Economic & Living Conditions for Arctic Communities
- Arctic Ocean Safety, Security & Stewardship
- Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change

All three focus areas are important, but in an ICC perspective, especially the first focus area is of the utmost importance to us, the peoples of the Arctic.

The Arctic is a socially vibrant and biologically diverse region, which requires resources for sustainable development and environmental protection.

The rapid warming of the Arctic is threatening our communities through coastal erosion, thawing permafrost and changing ecosystems. ICC welcomes that the US Chairmanship will strengthen the work of the Arctic Council on energy and water security that will improve economic and living conditions by pursuing innovative technologies to mitigate the significant challenges faced by our communities.

Even if the ICC find the focus areas relevant and important, we miss some facts on how the US Chairmanship wants to further the partnership with the indigenous peoples by including wordings and action plans on Indigenous Traditional Knowledge.

The Arctic Council will also continue to improve mental wellness research in order to prevent the high suicide rates that affect our communities.

Finally we welcome that the US Chairmanship wants to raise the awareness of the Arctic and want to educate the public worldwide about the importance of the Arctic.

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EU-P PUISIT AMIINIT TUNISASSIANUT POLITIKKIA SAMMILLUGU

ICC Kalaallit Nunaanni Siulittaasup Hjalmur Dahl stresses out in two important meetings where he took up the issue on the EU and the proposed regulation on trade in seal products.

The first meeting took place in Brussels in March 2015. The second meeting was one month later in April at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York.

ICC has tried to focus on the seal restrictions many times before those two meetings, but no matter what we do, EU again tightens the restrictions, and again and again we must make the EU aware that one can not deprive a people their right to hunt non-endangered species on a sustainable basis.

Behind the EU’s weird seal legislation are big animal rights groups in Europe and North America. They believe that seal hunting is associated with cruelty, because the seals bleed when they are shot, and it looks so violently when the red blood flows into the white snow. We are not talking about the millions of animals around the world being killed, because it happens indoors so it cannot be seen.

At both meetings Hjalmur Dahl stressed out the consequences it has had in the Arctic, by:

- EU corrects the failed legislation and the consequences it has had in the Arctic, by:
  - Abolishing the ban, which in its essence is discriminatory.
  - Re-establishing consumer trust in Inuit seal products by financing an awareness campaign based on the exemption.
  - Compensating for the losses the Inuit societies have endured since the ban was introduced, for instance by investing in new income opportunities for the hunters.

A third meeting in the EU in June finally seemed to come opportunities for the hunters.
BRUXELLESIMI ICC TAPERSORSONEQARLUARTOQ

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GREAT SUPPORT FOR THE ICC IN BRUSSELS

During the large-scale European Union confer-
ence "What next for EU Arctic policy?" in Brus-
els on 1 and 2 June 2015, ICC Greenland
president Hjalmar Dahl made it clear that the EU
must change its existing sealskin policy if the EU
wants observer status in the Arctic Council.

- The EU simply must recognize that their pol-
icy has damaged our hunters, and will need to
restore the European consumers’ confidence in
our sealskin products as well as compensate for
our hunters economic loss - Hjalmar Dahl said
at the conference in Brussels.

Former Finnish Prime Minister Paavo Lippon-
en was one of Hjalmar Dahl’s strong supporters
when he expressed that the EU perform a stupid
policy on sealskins. Now Greenpeace also sup-
ports Inuit seal hunting, a representative of the
organization announced.
Overall there was a positive response on the
ICC statements, which were also included in the
summary of the conference proceedings.
Hjalmar Dahl also proposed that the EU
should include indigenous peoples in shaping
the EU’s Arctic policy, for example by establish-
ing a high-level forum for indigenous peoples
and referred to the UN Permanent Forum as a
possible model.
Just two days after Hjalmar Dahl’s speech,
the EU gave up the proposed tightening of the
so-called Sealskin Directive and will start an
information campaign on Inuit hunting and seal-
skin products, as earlier proposed by the ICC.


- Kitigaaryunntit Nunalaarut sulissaanik assigini-qitutqiisumi pinnasaafilliiqovq ICC-mi nunut ilaasut akissusaaffimmiittut agguaatqaganaanik, sulliassalu- lu aallarintinnearregrepurt. 


- Kalaallit Nunaniin kattuffiit kommunuli sule- qatigifflutt aallauviunnumata taakkuq peqatigalugit suliiasaap pisriinnerusutut isikkoqarpoq. 


THE ICC BEING MORE VISIBLE, ALSO WITHIN GREENLAND

During the General Assembly 2014 in Inuvik, Canada, Martha Abelsen was elected vice president of ICC Greenland. The Kitigaaryunntit Declaration adopted at the General Assembly provided a clear mandate for the work until 2018, and Martha is stressing the importance of obtaining a feeling of ownership toward fulfilling this task.

- ICC Greenland is comprised of 18 organizations and associations, and based upon the membership the Kitigaaryunntit Declaration is presently being clarified among the 18 delegates with the aim of reaching the goals set. 

- In my opinion the delegates representing a wide variety of interests are really useful in the process and they should be involved. Furthermore I would like to emphasize the importance of a closer interaction with our membership groups - adding closer contacts within our parts of the Arctic – Greenland – in order to create a feeling of ownership to the task ahead of us.

- For instance the Declaration deals with social issues, employment issues, environmental issues etc., and the various interest groups involved are free to adopt the recommendations to their own situation and feel free to discuss and elaborate the intendions based on their own priorities. In my thinking we might have the opportunity to include our 18 delegates even more – after all the goals within the ICC have to be visible. Exactly at this point I, as the vice president, view this as imperative to handle, as the goals we have set all together are extremely attractive and they must be fulfilled.

- The Kitigaaryunntit Declaration poses a number of commitments now divided to be finalized among the member countries of the ICC, and the preparations have already been initiated.

- For instance we agreed to organize and host 3 different seminars during the period until 2018.

- At the first seminar Alaska will undertake the responsibility to organize discussions on issues related to hunting and the environment, based on the principles of sustainability and issues related to distribution of our native food as an economic income factor. At the second seminar organized and held by Canada issues related to economic development among the ICC membership will be the object of discussions and debates.

- Finally at the third seminar with Greenland as the host responsible of organizing the issues of developments within the education sector will be discussed at the seminar planned to be held in 2018.

- With the organizations and the municipalities in Greenland as our cooperation partners my expectations are that the organizing of the seminar will end up being flexible and manageable. In conclusion the vice president of ICC Greenland Martha Abelsen states that we - in Greenland - are more widespread and the positive outcome looks more evident, as the cooperation and efforts among the organizations and the municipalities makes it look probably easier to achieve a flexible cooperation.

Martha Abelsen, born 1957, started her career within the ICC as the chairwoman of The Association of Municipalities (KANUKOKA), and she became the vice president of ICC Greenland in 2014. Martha represents Greenland together with the President Hjalmar Dahl in the ICC Executive Council.

During the General Assemblies of the ICC we make an effort to reach agreements delegating various commitments to the different member countries. My hope is that at the end of our term in 2018 we in Greenland will have gained a stronger feeling of ownership to our common endeavor: The ICC being more visible, also within Greenland.

Martha Abelsen


- Martha Abelsen 1957-imi inunnorgortoq, KANU


**EMRIP-IP PIGINNAATITAANERMIGUT ANNERTUSAAVIGINEQAR-NISSAA ALLANGGUUTEQARNISSAALU PIUMASARINEQARTUT**


- Pisanut aalajangersimasunut Isamaaqtigiis-simmulutu pisinaattaatlaaffinniit apegutinut tunngatillugu naalagaaffinniit nunallu inooq-qaaviniiit saaffiginnissiutut amerlisarinsaanniinut, tigusamisaanniinut sullarsamisaanniinullu;
- Naalagaaffilt nunallu inooqaavisa simmiisaasaa qaninut oqalaagaeqginnsiinnuninut aqquis-situt;
- Aporfiit anigornisaaat eqqarsaattigalgulu UNDRIP-ip pivusungortinniisaanniinut naala-gaaffit, nunat inooqaviavavnitarpersortulu

**IMPLOYED AND AMENDED EMRIP MANDATE REQUIRED**

On 20 April to 1 May 2015, Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues had its 14th session, and on behalf of Arctic Indigenous Caucus, consisted of the Inuit Circumpolar Council and the Sami Council, Hjalmar Dahl, President of ICC Greenland recommended in his presentation to review and improve the mandate of Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP). The recommendations to review and improve the mandate of EMRIP is based on the World Conference outcome document article 28 among others inviting the UN Human Rights Council to take into account the views of Indigenous Peoples, to review the mandates of its ex-isiting mechanisms, in particular the EMRIP so that it can more effectively promote respect for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

- Accordingly, the mandate should include the opportunity for EMRIP, inter alia, to:
  - Seek, receive and consider communications and other information from States and Indigenous Peoples on specific cases and matters of concern for the rights in the Declaration,
  - Facilitate face to face dialogue between States and Indigenous peoples’ representatives;
  - Provide technical assistance and advice to States, Indigenous peoples and the private sector to overcome obstacles to implementing the UNDRIP; provide practical and technical Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
  - Advice to states and indigenous peoples including assistance with national implementation plans and legislative, policy and administrative measures;
  - Provide advice for implementation of UN human rights bodies for which there is substantial consensus between States and Indigenous peoples;
  - Build the capacity of Indigenous peoples to engage effectively with the States and the UN, including technical assistance and facilitating issues and complaints being channeled more effectively into existing UN human rights mechanisms;
  - Contribute to the Universal Periodic Review Process and the work of Treaty Bodies, which have an existing role in ensuring States meet their obligations; and
  - Make proposals to the Human Rights Council regarding gaps in existing standards and norms for the protection of Indigenous peoples’ human rights.

The Arctic Indigenous Caucus further recommends full and effective participation in all United Nations bodies by indigenous peoples’ representative institutions, including indigenous governments and parliaments, based on their own determination of which issues under discussion in those bodies and processes could affect their rights.
EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

INTRODUCTION
The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) was established by the Human Rights Council, the UN’s main human rights body, in 2007 under Resolution 6/36 as a subsidiary body of the Council.

Mandate
The Expert Mechanism provides the Human Rights Council with thematic advice, in the form of studies and research, on the rights of Indigenous peoples as directed by the Council. The Expert Mechanism may also suggest proposals to the Council for its consideration and approval.

EXPERT MECHANISM STUDIES
The Expert Mechanism completed its first study on indigenous peoples’ right to education in 2009, along with Advice – including recommendations – about how an indigenous peoples’ right to education might be realised. Its second study on indigenous peoples and the right to participate in decision making was completed in September 2011, which consists of a progress report and a final report, including Advice. In September 2012, the Expert Mechanism submitted the following studies and reports to the Human Rights Council:

- A study on the role of languages and culture in the promotion and protection of the rights and identity of indigenous peoples
- A report on indigenous peoples and the right to participate in decision making with a focus on extractive industries; and
- A report on its questionnaire for states on best practices regarding possible appropriate measures and implementation strategies in order to attain the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Human Rights Council requested the Expert Mechanism to study access to justice in the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples in 2012.

The final study will be presented to the Human Rights Council in September 2013.
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

On March 23 and 24, 2015, the Inuit Circumpolar Council Greenland is participating in a meeting to deal with a revision of the EU-goals concerning indigenous peoples. The meeting will take place in Brussels. The president of ICC Greenland Hjalmar Dahl together with other representatives of indigenous peoples will be present at the meeting.

- It will be an exciting meeting to attend, especially considering that it is not an everyday occurrence that the EU invites us to their meetings on indigenous peoples issues, Hjalmar Dahl states.

Hjalmar Dahl says further that he of course intends to advance his request towards the EU to support the rights of indigenous peoples, and furthermore launch its efforts for the implementation of these rights.

- Our rights include the rights of indigenous peoples of utilization of their own resources and the use of the economic profit in order to be able to develop their own societies. We can under no circumstances accept the indications that we have listened to regarding the efforts to introduce a total ban on import of sealskin originating from the Inuit societies to the EU. This issue and question will be a part of my contribution to this meeting, Hjalmar Dahl is expressing shortly before his departure, and continues:

• As long as the year-long, consistent and dissatisfactory position and permanent initiatives towards the Inuit in a totally unacceptable way obstructing and limiting us in developing our own economies are ruling, the EU policy towards the indigenous peoples will in no way find ways to improve, Hjalmar Dahl concludes.

In conclusion Hjalmar Dahl further states that the goal of the EU in the question regarding a total import ban of sealskin products has to be regarded as an attack towards the hunters living in the Arctic societies and generally towards all Inuit, and that this situation must be regarded as colliding severely with our basic rights to develop and protect our own societies.

The meeting is organized by the EU Section for Human Rights Strategy and Policy Implementation.
PRESS RELEASE, JUNE 3, 2015

SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT TO THE ICC IN BRUSSELS

During the significant EU conference “What next for the EU Arctic Policy?” in Brussels on June 1 and 2, 2015, the President of ICC Greenland Hjalmar Dahl clarified, that the EU must change its existing sealskin policy, if the EU wishes to obtain an observer status in the Arctic Council. 

• The EU simply must acknowledge that the policy being exercised and ceaseless attacks have hurt our hunters, and the EU has to correct the trust of the European consumers towards our sealskin products and also compensate the economic losses suffered by our hunters, Hjalmar Dahl says from Brussels. The former Prime Minister of Finland Paavo Lipponen was one of the strong supporters of Hjalmar Dahl, as he expressed that the EU is performing a stupid policy regarding the issue of sealskin. Greenpeace also expressed its support to the Inuit catch of seals.

Furthermore Hjalmar Dahl proposed that the EU should include the indigenous peoples of the Arctic in the development of the EU Arctic Policy by establishing a high level forum for indigenous peoples, and he also referred to the UN Permanent Forum as a potential model.

Generally much responsiveness to the expressions from the ICC was noticed, and the remarks were included in the summary of the results of the conference.

2015-IP UKIAANERANI PEQATAAFFISSAT
2015 FALL CALENDER

- July 20-24 UN Expert Mechanism on Indigenous peoples Rights session
- August 18-19 Berthel Alaska: ICC Executive Council meeting
- September 13-17 Tromsø Norway: Arctic Council working groups; AMAP, CAFF, PAME meetings
- September 16 Tromsø Norway: Arctic Council Working Groups joint meeting
- September 14-18 Maniltsq Greenland: IWC Expert Workshop on Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling
- October 1-2 Chena Hot Springs Resort, Alaska: Arctic Council Sustainable Dev. Working Group meeting
- October 8-9 Copenhagen Denmark: Roundtable conf. On Indigenous Peoples and the new Post 2015 Development agenda
- October 20-22 Anchorage Alaska: Arctic Council Senior Arctic Officials meeting
INUIT ISSITTORMIUT SIUNNERSUISOISOQATIGIIFFIAT
INUIT CIRCUMPOLAR COUNCIL (ICC)
2014-2018

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