

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **NUNATUKAVUT DELEGATION PARTICIPATES IN THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES**

**NEW YORK CITY, NY, USA, April 19, 2023** – A delegation from the NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC), led by President Todd Russell, is attending the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the United Nations (UN) Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues as an Indigenous Peoples Organization in New York City this week. It is being held at the United Nations Headquarters from April 17-28, 2023.

This forum is a high level advisory body to the UN's Economic and Social Council to deal with Indigenous issues all over the world related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights. This year's special theme is "Indigenous Peoples, human health, planetary and territorial health and climate change: a rights-based approach."

It is the fourth time that NCC has attended this important forum to represent and tell the story of the Inuit of NunatuKavut. NCC hosted its own separate event on Inuit Resistance, Resilience and Adaptation: Climate Governance in NunatuKavut, Canada. On behalf of NCC, the following statement was also presented by Dr. Amy Hudson to the Assembly entitled "Climate Governance and the Inuit of NunatuKavut in Labrador, Canada."

"I am humbled to be before you today and privileged to be present with our President Todd Russell. Please allow me to respectfully acknowledge the Indigenous lands upon which we are gathered - the traditional territory of the Lenape. And, I acknowledge the presence of diverse Indigenous nations representing their peoples around the world.

Our people are from NunatuKavut in north eastern Canada, in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. We have a deep sense of belonging to our ancestral places and our identity is tied to the lands, waters, ice. Inuit in our region have always moved with the seasons, living and providing for our families with what our natural world provided for us.

When Europeans landed on our shores, they fought for control of our resources. This led to much conflict and warfare. In an effort to procure safer trade relations, Inuit of south Labrador and British agreed to a Treaty called the British-Inuit Treaty of 1765.

This year's forum is of particular significance to our people. Travel by sea ice and ocean remains an integral way of life to ensure access to country foods and traditional places. Our coastal areas are rich in history and teach us about who we are as a people.

We are confronted with rapidly changing impacts of climate change. Our cultural heritage sites are threatened by coastal erosion and rising sea levels. Changing sea ice conditions, unpredictable weather patterns, impact our ability to travel freely and safely on our lands, waters and ice. These realities impact Inuit and Inuit must participate in developing mitigation and adaptation strategies for a sustainable future.

After many decades of rights-based advocacy with the Government of Canada, we entered into a nation-to-nation relationship in 2018 based on the recognition of our Inuit rights and self-determination.

In 2021, Canada adopted UNDRIP. However, the Government of Canada's stated commitment to UNDRIP and their actions on matters of our rights are inconsistent. Canada's approach to the implementation of UNDRIP is facilitating a new wave of colonialism. It is one based on the arbitrary recognition of Indigenous rights and, more specifically, only those who the government chooses to do agreements with. This is not how we, as Inuit, determine our connection to our lands nor how we understand our responsibilities for the future.

History will not look kindly on Canada, nor the institutions that support their actions. In a time of climate crisis, our governance matters. Our people matter. Our ancestors matter. Our future generations matter. Nakummek."

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