



Introduction to UNPFII Side Event : “Youth Perspectives on Self-Determination: Inuit Drum Dancing”

President Todd Russell

New York City, Wednesday, April 17, 2024

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Ullukut (ul/lou/kut) and atelihai (ot/tea/lee/hi)

Todd-y-uvunga

Good day and welcome. My name is Todd Russell.

I am President of the NunatuKavut Community Council and I represent the Inuit of NunatuKavut in south and central Labrador in north eastern Canada.

I am joined here today by members of our delegation to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

This morning you will hear about residential schools and its impact on NunatuKavut Inuit.

You will hear about those who were removed from our families, communities and culture and were placed into a system that sought to deny them their home, their place, their identity.

Our people carry these stories out on the ice when they hunt, on the land as they harvest and in their homes as they sit with family at the table. These truths are a part of who we are and how we will live into the future.

Keeping these stories alive is an important part of healing and reconciliation.

And you will also hear about the healing work that is also taking place throughout our communities through the drum.

You will hear about those in our communities who have been engaged in their own journey of intergenerational storytelling and healing through drumming. One of them – Priscilla - is here with us today. She will be drumming with our youth, Chloe.

She, along with many others, are a testament to the strength and resilience of NunatuKavut Inuit. The strength of residential school students. The strength of our families.

I'd now like to give our team an opportunity to introduce themselves and then Kristy will get started on her presentation.

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