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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
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Item 5 on the theme: "Indigenous Peoples: Conflict, Peace and Resolution"

Statement by the Inuit Circumpolar Council, Greenland

Thank you Mr. Chairperson

Inuit Circumpolar Council has a comprehensive Inuit Arctic Policy which has been developed in accordance with the conditions we in the Arctic are living under. The Inuit Arctic Policy include among others questions regarding peace and security issues.

Defence and foreign policy issues are traditionally the domain of state governments. However, policy-making concerning Arctic and global security is too crucial to exclude northern communities and should not be left solely to experts within the military and government.

Mr. Chair;

The Inuit Arctic Policy emphasizes that;

For true Arctic security to be achieved, there must be greater global security. New concepts of common security are urgently needed that incorporate environmental, health, social, cultural, and economic aspects. Security shall not only be defined in military terms. In this context, respect for the rights, values, and perspectives of the Arctic's indigenous peoples is vital.

Even if defence and foreign policy issues traditionally are state government affairs, we think new concepts have to be developed, because security not only has to be seen from a military angle.

Furthermore;

In a global context, peace is much more than an absence of war. It is considered to entail a fair and democratic system of international relations, based on principles of mutual and respectable co-operation as well as equitable development.

Seen from an indigenous perspective security includes environmental, health, social, cultural, and economic aspects. And hereto comes respect for the rights, values, and perspectives of the Arctic indigenous peoples.

It is essential that the concept of an Arctic zone of peace be formally accepted by Arctic states and others as an explicit and political objective.

With the climate change and global warming, we notice a growing interest for the Arctic. The melting away of the sea ice opens opportunities for new transportation routes, and the melting down of the ice caps are opening up for new industrial activities. We say that the indigenous homelands of the Arctic, including its land and marine areas, air space, sea-bed and subsoil, only must be used for purposes that are peaceful and safe.

Thank you Mr. Chair allowing me to inform you about parts of the Inuit Arctic Policy on Peace and Security. Qujanaq!