

United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
Item 3: Draft Study and Advice on the Rights of the Indigenous Child under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Joint Statement
Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) & Human Rights Council of Greenland
Tuesday 13 July 2020
To be delivered by Sara Olsvig

Thank you, Mdm./Mr. Chair

In Greenland it is estimated by a 2015 survey, that 12 percent of the children always or often went hungry to bed or to school.

Greenland has about 40 suicides a year, the numbers of young people who commit suicide before the age of 20 has increased in recent years.¹

Domestic violence against children and sexual abuse in childhood is a substantial problem. According to reports, 28 percent of young children in Greenland have been exposed to domestic violence.

24 percent of 15-29-year-olds have experienced 'forced or attempted forced sexual activity before they turned 18. Among children exposed to sexual violence and abuse, we see an over representation of girls. A survey shows that among youth under the age of 15, 22 percent of girls and 5 percent of boys did not themselves decide their first sexual experience.

One in three girls and one in ten boys in Greenland have experienced sexual abuse.¹

Mdm/Mr. Chair, it is clear that we are facing serious violations of rights of the Indigenous child in Greenland and we worry, that similar conditions exist for children in the rest of the Arctic and Inuit Nunaat.

We observe a general lack and therefore need to collect more data on conditions and developments in human rights issues in general, which we need in our work to act on the issues.

We call for diversified data collection and for the UN agencies, including UNICEF, to ensure data diversification that reflect the conditions for Indigenous children. Too often, data is only broken down according to states.

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In 2018, the Inuit Circumpolar Council held the Inuit Education Summit, with participation from all four countries across Inuit Nunaat.

Each Inuit region in Chukotka, Alaska, Canada, and Greenland have different colonial histories resulting in different educational challenges across the circumpolar Arctic. With that said, there are numerous similarities in what Inuit are facing. Educational institutions, grounded in Inuit shared culture, history, and world views, are essential to share best educational practices, develop enhanced culturally appropriate curricula and learning resources, and jointly implement successful Inuit-focused educational policies.

ICC's Inuit Education Committee understands that there are ways to improve graduation rates, for example, through addressing cultural and linguistic disparities.

Education in Inuit languages supports Inuit culture and traditions, and the Indigenous child's right to enjoy his or her own cultural identity, also within education.

ICC acknowledge that Inuit-children are the ones that know their own lives best, thus we as adults recommend programs and activities are initiated locally, with the involvement of the children themselves. We can and should define what teacher credentialing processes and post-secondary requirements in teacher preservice programs should consist of, to ensure our worldview and perspectives is an integral part of Inuit education; and by doing that we can ensure the survival of our distinct identity as Inuit, prevent assimilation, and the destruction of our unique culture.

Much work lies ahead of us in RESPECTING, PROTECTING, and PROMOTING human rights across Inuit Nunaat, and we call for Governments to establish and strengthen Human Rights Institutions across Inuit Nunaat.

Honorable EMRIP members, honorable delegates. This summer, our hearts have been aching with the findings of the remains of hundreds of Indigenous Children in Canada. From the Human Rights Council of Greenland and the Inuit Circumpolar Council, we want to take this opportunity to commemorate and honor all those lost lives. Let us all be reminded, that the right to life - a life in dignity - to cultural identity and to live free of discrimination are fundamental human rights we all enjoy. The path to equality is long, and we walk side by side with all Indigenous Peoples around

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the world in the continued struggle to prevent colonial and imperialistic powers from depriving anyone of their rights.

Qujanaq / Thank you