We, the Inuit of Inuit Naanuat, declare as follows:

1. Inuit and the Arctic

1.1 Inuit live in the Arctic. Inuit live in the vast, circum-polar region of land, sea and ice known as the Arctic. We depend on the marine and terrestrial plant and animal life that resides on, and is influenced by, the coastal zones of the Arctic Ocean, the tundra and the sea ice. The Arctic is our home.

1.2 Inuit have been living in the Arctic for time immemorial. From time immemorial, Inuit have been living in the Arctic. Our home in the circum-polar world, Inuit Naanuat, stretches from Greenland to Canada, Alaska and Russia. We enjoy the rights of all peoples. These include the rights recognized in and by various international instruments and institutions, such as the Charter of the United Nations; The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action; the Human Rights Committee; the Arctic Council; and the Organization of American States.

1.3 Inuit are an indigenous people. Inuit are an indigenous people with the rights and responsibilities that all indigenous peoples have. These rights are recognized in and by international law and political instruments and bodies, such as the recommendations of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNIDIRP), and others.

Central to our rights as a people is the right to self-determination. It is our right to freely determine our political status, freely pursue our economic, social, cultural and linguistic development, and to determine our own political, economic, social and cultural life. Our rights are recognized by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Art. 1.

Our rights as an indigenous people include the following rights recognized in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNIDIRP), all of which are relevant to the Inuit in the Arctic:

1.4 The right to determine our political status, to freely determine our political status, to freely pursue our economic, social, cultural and linguistic development and to determine our own political, economic, social and cultural life. These rights and responsibilities do not diminish the rights and responsibilities of states, provinces, territories or regions.

2. The Evolving Nature of Sovereignty in the Arctic

2.1 Sovereignty is a term that has often been used to refer to the absolute and independent authority of a community or nation both internally and externally. Sovereignty is a contested concept, however, and does not have a fixed meaning.

2.2 Recognition and respect for our right to self-determination is developing at varying paces and in various forms in the Arctic states in which we live. Following a referendum in November 2008, the area of self-government in Greenland will expand gradually and, among other things, Greenlandic (Kalaallisut) will become Greenland's sole official language. In Canada, four land claims agreements are some of the key building blocks of Inuit rights; while there are conflicts over the implementation of these agreements, they remain of vital importance as matters of self-determination and of sovereignty and sovereign rights. In Alaska, much work is needed to clarify and implement the rights recognized in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) and the Alaska Native Lands Conservation Act (ANLCA). In particular, substance hunting and self-government rights recognized in ANCSA are not used to act on the areas where hunting entitlements will proceed without our free and informed consent (Art. 25-32), the right to peace and security (Art. 7).

2.3 Inuit are an indigenous people of the Arctic. Our status, rights and responsibilities as a people among the peoples of the world, and as an indigenous people, are enshrined in the rights of self-determination, cultural, and political context of the Arctic. This has been acknowledged in the eight-nation Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council (1996). This has been acknowledged in the eight-nation Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council (1996). The conduct of international relations in the Arctic and the resolution of sovereignty and sovereign rights in the Arctic is central to all national and international deliberations on Arctic sovereignty. On 7 November, International Inuit Day, we expressed our commitment to continue to work so as to: (1) put economic activity on a sustainable footing; (2) avoid harmful pollution; (3) address the need for Inuit to have full participation and cooperation in the Arctic Council deliberations on such matters as climate change, the need for global cooperation and the need for international mechanisms and bodies to give primary respect to the Arctic peoples and states. Inuit have also noted that the 2008 Ottawa Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council.

3. Inuit, the Arctic and Sovereignty: Looking Forward

The foundations of action

3.1 The actions of Arctic peoples and states, the interactions between them, and the conduct of international relations must be anchored in the rule of law.

3.2 The actions of Arctic peoples and states, the interactions between them, and the conduct of international relations must give primary respect to the rule for global environmental security, the rule for peaceful resolution of disputes, and the inextricable linkages between issues of sovereignty and self-determination in the Arctic and the Arctic-specific features of international instruments, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (the UNCLOS) and the Law of the Sea.

3.3 Inuit are sovereign peoples. Inuit are sovereign peoples. They have also neglected to include Inuit in Arctic sovereignty discussions in a manner comparable to Arctic Council deliberations. Inuit have a unique knowledge and experience to bring to these deliberations. The inclusion of Inuit as active partners and sovereign rights in the Arctic and issues of self-determination.

4. The need for global cooperation

4.1 Inuit are sovereign states. Inuit are sovereign states. As an indigenous people, Inuit are sovereign states. Without the full participation and cooperation of indigenous peoples in the Arctic, the need for global cooperation and the need for international mechanisms and bodies to give primary respect to the Arctic peoples and states. We also noted that the 2008 Ottawa Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council.

4.2 The actions of Arctic peoples and states, the interactions between them, and the conduct of international relations must give primary respect to the rule for global environmental security, the rule for peaceful resolution of disputes, and the inextricable linkages between issues of sovereignty and self-determination in the Arctic and the Arctic-specific features of international instruments, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (the UNCLOS) and the Law of the Sea (1982).

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5. Inuit and the Arctic

5.1 Inuit are permanent participants at the Arctic Council with a direct and meaningful seat at decision-making and negotiating tables. (See 1997 Ottawa Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council).

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6. Building on today’s mechanisms for the future

6.1 Inuit will exercise our rights of self-determination in the Arctic by building on institutions such as the Inuit Circumpolar Council and the Arctic Council, the Arctic-specific features of international instruments, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (the UNCLOS). Inuit Association of Canada, and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. These mechanisms and bodies provide practical advantages to Inuit as active partners in all future deliberations on Arctic sovereignty. The pursuit of global environmental security requires a coordinated global approach to the challenges of climate change, a rigorous plan to arrest the growth in human-generated carbon emissions, and a far-reaching program of adaptation to climate change in Arctic regions and communities.

6.2 Inuit have an important role to play in the Arctic and the Arctic-specific features of international instruments, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (the UNCLOS). Inuit Association of Canada, and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. These mechanisms and bodies provide practical advantages to Inuit as active partners in all future deliberations on Arctic sovereignty. The pursuit of global environmental security requires a coordinated global approach to the challenges of climate change, a rigorous plan to arrest the growth in human-generated carbon emissions, and a far-reaching program of adaptation to climate change in Arctic regions and communities.

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