



# A Human Rights Framework for Climate Change

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*Chair, Inuit Circumpolar Council*

# 1973 Arctic Peoples' Conference



Photo: Jens Brøsted, 1973

# 1973 Arctic Peoples' Conference

*“We are autochthonous peoples, that is we are an **integral part of the very lands and waters** we have traditionally used and occupied. Our identity and culture is firmly rooted in these lands and waters. It is this relationship which constitutes the very unique features of our cultural identity in contrast to the cultures of other peoples within each of the countries from which we come”.*

*“The states from which we come should recognize and respect the unique features of our identity. It is only thereby that we will gain a place of equality with the dominant culture in each country. Also, it is only thereby that **each country can fully benefit from the contribution** which our culture can make to the greater well being of the whole society”.*

*“We request the obvious: that the governments of each state from which we come **recognize our rights as peoples** entitled to the dignity of self-fulfilment and realization”.*

*“In any negotiations of the crucial issues we expect **participation in a position of full equality**”.*

- 1973 Arctic Peoples' Conference resolution



# 2023 Arctic Peoples' Conference



Photo: Carson Tagooa/ICC, 2023

# 2023 Arctic Peoples' Conference

“We celebrate our original foresight, unity, and above all, our **inherent right to self-determination** as distinct Peoples”.

*“We reaffirm our **interdependent, interrelated, interconnected, and indivisible rights** as affirmed by the United Nations (UN) in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), including our right to self-determination, which is the prerequisite for the exercise and enjoyment of all of our human rights as Arctic Indigenous Peoples”.*

*“We urge continuing work and commit to contributing within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Arctic Council, and related intergovernmental fora to address Arctic Indigenous Peoples concerns and the cumulative effects of climate change. We call upon States and governmental authorities to recognize **our contributions, including Indigenous Knowledge**, as well as **our innovations and solutions**, which must be shared, communicated, and manifested to prevent, mitigate, and adapt to climate change impacts across the Arctic”.*

*“We unequivocally call for **climate justice**, recognizing that we, as Arctic Indigenous Peoples, have not been the main contributors to human-induced climate change, yet our livelihoods and ways of life are directly and dramatically impacted by its effects. We urge States, governmental authorities, corporations, research institutions and civil society to **empower Arctic Indigenous Peoples to lead** efforts to address climate change that are in line with our rights, Indigenous Knowledge, and ways of life”.*

- Statement of the Arctic Peoples' Conference 2023

# 2023 Arctic Peoples' Conference

*“In unity, we acknowledge the varied, **cumulative impacts of colonialism** and climate change on our Peoples. Climate change **cannot be an excuse to infringe on our distinct rights** as Indigenous Peoples. We assert the urgent need to overcome the land encroachment, resource extraction, renewable energy production, and protectionist conservation that is undertaken at the expense of Indigenous Peoples’ reality, which is a process known in some contexts as **green colonialism**. This includes the development of renewable energies and rare earth mineral mining on our lands without our consent, and the proliferation of marine protected areas that are not Indigenous-led”.*

*“We affirm that the green transition cannot be bought with Indigenous lands, resources, or lives...”*

*- Statement of the Arctic Peoples' Conference 2023*





# “A Human Rights-Based Approach” - Whose Human Rights?

UN General Assembly, July 2022:

1. *Recognizes* the **right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right**;
2. *Notes* that the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is related to other rights and existing international law;
3. *Affirms* that the promotion of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment requires the full implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements under the principles of international environmental law;
4. *Calls upon* States, international organizations, business enterprises and other relevant stakeholders to adopt policies, to enhance international cooperation, strengthen capacity-building and continue to share good practices in order to scale up efforts to ensure a clean, healthy and sustainable environment for all.



# “A Human Rights-Based Approach” - Whose Human Rights?

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007:

*Article 2* Indigenous peoples and individuals are **free and equal to all other peoples** and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their indigenous origin or identity.

*Article 3* **Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination.** By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

*Article 26* Indigenous peoples **have the right to the lands, territories and resources** which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.

# “A Human Rights-Based Approach” - Whose Human Rights?

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007:

*Article 43* The rights recognized herein **constitute the minimum standards** for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world.

# “A Human Rights-Based Approach” - Whose Human Rights?

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007:

*Article 43* The rights recognized herein **constitute the minimum standards** for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world.

*Article 46*

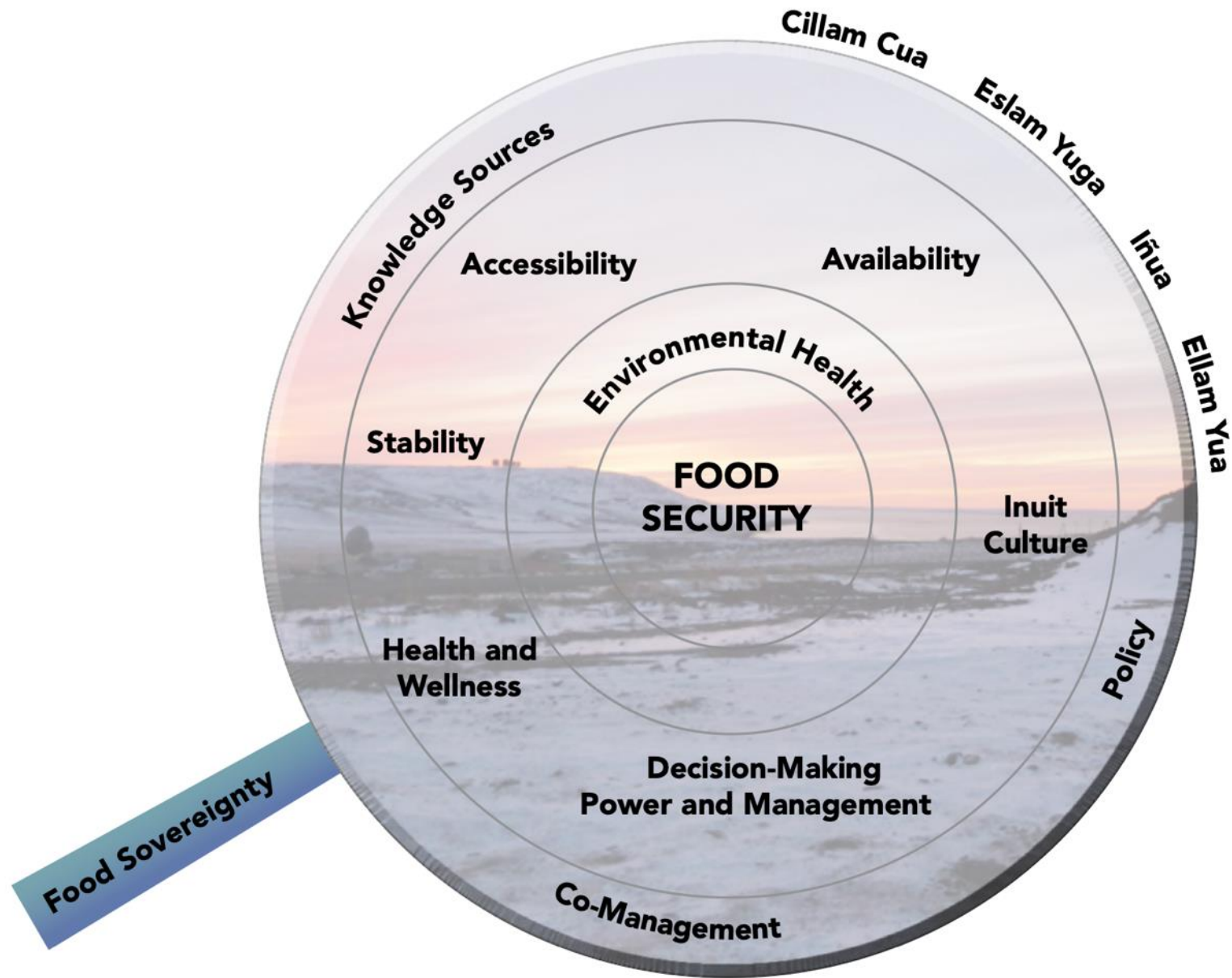
1. Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, people, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act contrary to the Charter of the United Nations or construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States.
2. In the exercise of the rights enunciated in the present Declaration, human rights and fundamental freedoms of all shall be respected. The exercise of the rights set forth in this Declaration shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law and in accordance with international human rights obligations. Any such limitations shall be non-discriminatory and strictly necessary solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for meeting the just and most compelling requirements of a democratic society.
3. The provisions set forth in this Declaration shall be interpreted in accordance **with the principles of justice, democracy, respect for human rights, equality, non-discrimination, good governance and good faith.**



# “A Human Rights-Based Approach” - Whose Human Rights?

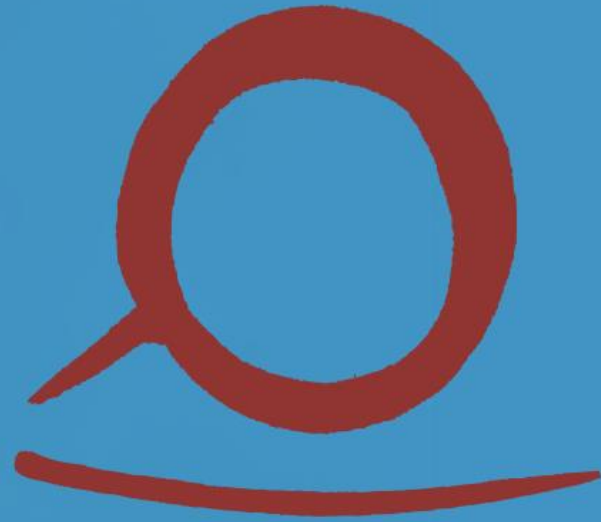
ALL other human rights instruments apply to us – of course

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
  - **(Articles specific to Indigenous children)**
- Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
  - **(General Recommendation no. 39)**
- Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
  
- AND SO FORTH...









INUIT

**Inuit Circumpolar Council**

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