**Inuit Circumpolar Council**

**Intervention on Agenda Item 10:** *Future work of the Expert Mechanism, and follow up to thematic studies and advice*

*Agenda Item 10*

*Date:  July 10 2024*

*Presented by: Tina Kûitse*

*Organization: Inuit Circumpolar Council*

Qujanaq, thank you Mr./Madam Chair,

My name is Tina Kûitse, I speak on behalf of the Inuit Circumpolar Council.

We again wish to thank the EMRIP members and secretariat for your important work. Thematic studies are important contributions to the advancement of the human rights of Indigenous Peoples, and not least to providing tangible knowledge and tools to implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

While being open to support other important themes, Inuit Circumpolar Council wishes to propose a future study on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to Food Sovereignty.

Madam Chair, Inuit food sovereignty - the basic right for us to exercise our inherent right of self-determination and live from the resources our surroundings provide, harvesting and gathering, providing us with the necessary and important nutrition - based on our Indigenous knowledge, is under pressure. This results in food insecurity, and when our access to hunting and gathering is limited or prevented, it results in serious consequences for our communities, for our children and elders, and for the intergenerational knowledge production.

Our living resources, our ecosystems, and biodiversity knows no state borders, and pollution as well as overconsumption of some species is impacting the rights of our Peoples. The Arctic is warming four times faster than the rest of the planet. Climate change is severely impacting Inuit livelihoods. When the ice doesn’t settle on our waters, or is too thin to travel on, our access to foods is limited and sometimes completely cut. This affects our rights, and mental and physical wellbeing. In some areas, salmon stocks have crashed, resulting in the total loss of our peoples’ access to this important food resource. Access to traditional food is about our identity.

Furthermore, Madam Chair, regulations of the EU and other governmental entities outside of Inuit Nunaat prevent Inuit living outside of our homelands to access traditional foods, and this poses yet another threat to our health, and our individual and collective rights. We urge for non-discriminatory and indispensable access to our culturally adequate and essential foods from our lands. At the minimum recognizing a legal exemption for Inuit to import our foods, stressing our cultural rights and food sovereignty.

Madam Chair, we believe that a future EMRIP study on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to Food Sovereignty will be an important tool to ensuring, that all governments, intergovernmental organizations, businesses and others know the complex interrelations and interdependence of our access to food sovereignty and the enjoyment of our collective and individual human rights.

Qujanaq, Madam Chair.