

Inuit Youth & Elders mark progress at ICC meet

International organizations of Inuit Elders and youth made significant gains in representation within the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) during the ICC General Assembly held July 24-28 in Nome. The organizations represent the interests of Inuit Elders and youth in Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Russia.

The ICC Inuit Elders' conference delegates met independently of the ICC General Assembly for three days to develop and adopt a char-

ter, articles, and by-laws for a new organization and to discuss health care for Elders, subsistence, and closer cooperation between Elders and youth.

The delegates created a new organization, the Inuit Elders International Conference (IEIC), and elected Rachel Craig of Kotzebue as President. She succeeds Samuel Simmonds of Barrow, who declined to seek reelection.

The Elders also defined their concerns and made recommenda-

tions on health care for Elders and on subsistence issues in a report presented to the ICC General Assembly by Craig.

Under the IEIC charter, each member country is to contribute equally to the president's home office, which is to be staffed by at least one full-time person.

The IEIC vision statement reads:

"We the Inuit Elders of the Circumpolar regions, having a common bond in our heritage, culture, and language which has been handed down to us since time immemorial, strive to contribute to the preservation of our culture, language, and traditions for the betterment of our Inuit society."

The purposes of the IEIC are

(1) to strengthen the cooperation, equality, involvement and participation of the Elders in the circumpolar regions; (2) to cooperate with the authorities of the ICC General Assembly to ensure that the interests of the Elders will be heard; (3) to ensure that the interests of the Elders in cooperation with the youth

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are being addressed; (4) to ensure the importance of the Elders working to improve the quality of life for local, national, and international societies; and (5) to protect and promote the subsistence rights of the Inuit.

A new organization of Inuit youth, the Inuit Circumpolar Youth Council (ICYC), was welcomed by the ICC General Assembly, which established a seat for a youth delegate on the ICC. Jorgen Waever Johansen, ICYC President, was elected to the seat.

The ICYC was formed by Inuit youth from the four regions represented by ICC at a meeting held November 19-22, 1994, in Kuujuaq, Nunavik, Canada. The objectives of the ICYC include:

- To further the involvement of youth in the decision-making process within ICC;
- to help strengthen the use of the Inuit language in the educational system and to include active participation by Elders in the curriculum;
- to help develop and encourage the formation of Inuit youth organizations in all the circumpolar regions;
- to demand that development and use of Arctic areas are done in ways that preserve the environment, and to demand that existing pollution be removed or eliminated to the greatest possible extent;
- to encourage the establishment of youth groups throughout the Inuit region for the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse and related crimes;

- to promote the rights of and respect for victims of crimes and to support efforts to devise more effective sentences for repeat offenders;

- to demand that leaders and

politicians understand that initiatives and opportunities to prevent and solve social problems transcend the question of financing them; and

- to work to stop suicide, a meaningless waste of human lives.