

ICC meet to draw 1,000 to Kotzebue

Tundra Times staff

A review of draft principles for a major comprehensive arctic policy statement for Inuit people in Alaska, Canada and Greenland will be one of the key highlights of the fourth Inuit Circumpolar Conference July 28 through Aug. 3 in Kotzebue.

At least 800 people, including official delegations from the three areas are expected to attend the gathering, held only once every three years.

"Between the elders conference and the general assembly there should be well over 1,000 people," said Dalee Sambo, head of the ICC Alaska Office and an organizer of the meeting.

Committees have been set up in Kotzebue to coordinate housing for those attending the meeting. In addition, Sambo said an area has been set aside for a temporary tent city.

Sambo said delegates to the assembly and the Second International Inuit Elders Conference will focus much of their attention on reviewing draft principles for an arctic policy statement and an environmental strategy document, a long-term approach to arctic environmental concerns.

Also, ICC President Hans-Pavia Rosing will be stepping down after serving two terms in his post, the maximum allowable, and a new president will be elected.

The only announced candidate for the position is Mary Simon from Kuujuaq — Fort Chimo — in northern Quebec. Sambo said, however, that candidates are expected from Alaska and Greenland, although none have announced their intentions yet.

Simon is a former president of Makivik Corp., created under the James Bay-Northern Quebec agreement. She is the first woman to be considered for ICC's top post.

Sambo said cultural entertainment is planned throughout the gathering and that each nation is expected to send performers.

Consideration is expected to be given to the formation of a youth group, and Sambo said further efforts are to be made on the women's move-



Hans-Pavia Rosing

ment that gained attention during the 1983 conference at Frobisher Bay in the Canadian Arctic.

Sambo said a number of speakers will give talks at the conference, including Thomas R. Berger, who will report on the Alaska Native Review Commission's publication of his report, the book *Village Journey*.

The commission was established in 1983 to study the effects of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 from the perspective of the Eskimo, Indian and Aleut people of Alaska.

After two years of traveling to 62 Alaska Native communities and hearing from 1,450 Native witnesses, Berger's findings and recommendations were released to the public last fall. Testimony offered in the hearings indicated that many Alaska Natives fear that instead of protecting their rights, ANCSA could cost them their land, thereby destroying the subsistence hunting and fishing cultures dependent upon it.

In *Village Journey* Berger recommends that Congress seriously consider allowing village corporation lands to be returned to tribal governments, with all the protections afforded "Indian country."

He states that Natives should assume fish and game jurisdiction on all Native lands and shared jurisdiction

with the state or federal government on all other lands.

Among other speakers at the ICC conference will be Erica Irene Daes, chairperson for a United Nations working group on indigenous people. Daes, from Greece, is an international expert on human rights.

ICC is an international Inuit non-profit organization. Within the United Nations it has a non-governmental, consultative status.

The organization's aims are:

- to strengthen unity among the Inuit of the circumpolar region.
- to promote Inuit rights and interests on the international level.
- to ensure adequate Inuit participation in relevant political, economic and social institutions.
- to promote greater self-sufficiency of Inuit in the circumpolar region.
- to ensure the endurance and growth of Inuit culture and societies for both present and future generations.
- to promote long-term management and protection of arctic and sub-arctic wildlife, environmental and biological productivity.

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- to promote wise management and use on non-renewable resources in the circumpolar region and the incorporation of such resources in the present and future development of Inuit economies, taking into account other Inuit interests.

The ICC was started in June 1977. Its headquarter office is in Nuuk, Greenland, but an Alaska regional office was opened in the fall of 1982 in Anchorage, and a Canadian regional office was opened recently in Ottawa, Ontario.

According to information compiled by Maniilaq Association in Kotzebue, the members share language, culture, oral tradition, traditions of lifestyle, the arctic as habitat and race.

"We also have in common a history of efforts to improve the housing, health, economic and educational conditions of Inuit, as well as the traditions of subsistence and a common goal of protecting the arctic environment from damage," a Maniilaq brochure states.