

# ARCTIC ENVIRONMENT

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# INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES



The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) is an independent, international organisation which supports indigenous peoples in their struggle against oppression. IWGIA publishes the IWGIA Documents Series in English or Spanish and occasionally some titles are published in both. The IWGIA Newsletter (English) and the IWGIA Boletín (Spanish) are published four times annually. The Documentation and Research Department welcomes suggestions as well as contributions to the aforementioned publications.

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Indigenous Perspectives**

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The frontcover is an etching by the Greenlandic artist Miki Jacobsen. The artist says that the myth of the Sea Woman gave him the inspiration to this etching. In the old days when the people were starving, a shaman travelled to see the Sea Woman at the bottom of the sea. When the shaman combed her hair, it made her so glad that she released the sea mammals.

(Miki Jacobsen, Roskildevej 150, lejl. 51, DK-2500 Valby, Denmark)

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## Preface

This document has its background in two hearings on the environmental strategy for the Arctic which was held in Copenhagen in the Autumn of 1988. The hearings were organised by IWGIA, Denmark and the Greenlandic Society. The aim was to set the stage for a dialogue between environmentalists and the indigenous people of the Arctic.

This Document presents the basis of the conflict which is a clash between different views of man's relationship to nature. The current issue of the 1988 hearings was a planned EEC-campaign against trapping with the leghold trap. This debate is still raging in the European Economic Community, EEC.

This Document is co-published with the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the ICC, which was one of the participants at both the aforementioned hearings of which one was organised by the Danish Society for the Protection of Animals (*Dyrenes Beskyttelse*, a member of WSPA).

The participants in the hearing of 27 September 1988 were Arqaluk Lyngé (ICC), Hans Pavia Rosing (ISI, IUCN), Finn Lyngé (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark), Michael Gylling (Greenpeace), Arne Schiøtz (WWF) and Lone Dybkjær (Minister of Environment, Denmark). The participants in the hearing of 29 November were Uffe Kornerup, Klaus Vestergaard and Kaj Robert Svendsen (*Dyrenes Beskyttelse*), Finn Lyngé and Kaj Egede (Minister of Fisheries, Greenland).

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# Chapter 1: The Current Debate

## The Environmental and Animal Protection Movements

Increasing public interest in problems related to wildlife and protection of the environment has resulted in the establishment of a number of organisations. These organisations each hold different attitudes towards nature and wildlife and human interaction. Through their international campaigning and lobbying activities they have had a great impact on future development in the Arctic.

The environmental and animal protection movements encompass different organisations. In order to further their specific goals, some of these organisations have allied themselves with indigenous peoples. Other organisations have been a steady threat to the indigenous peoples and to their cultural survival.

### *The Animal Protection Movement*

The animal protection movement consists of several organisations which deal with problems related to the human utilisation of, and interaction with, animals. The concept of 'animal protection' originally referred to the human treatment of domesticated animals but now considerations for wild animals have been added to the concept.

Animal protection organisations differ between themselves in their attitudes towards animals, nature and human beings. These range from an acceptance of human utilisation of animals under certain circumstances (animal welfare) to the more radical attitudes opposed to any form of animal utilisation (animal rights). Recently, developments in the various organisations concerned with animal protection have been moving towards the radical approach, or at least towards adopting some of the radical animal rights views and ways of thinking. But what they have in common is their interest in the protection of the 'individual animal' and its welfare.

The animal protection movement has fostered two different types of organisations working in different directions: the animal welfare organisations and animal rights organisations.

### *Animal Welfare Organisations.*

Animal welfare organisations, such as the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), are concerned with prevention of suffering of both domesticated and wild animals. This can be done either by improving the living conditions of animals or by introducing humane methods of killing. As these organisations accept animal utilisation under certain conditions, they invest some of their resources in research programmes which focus on these matters.

### *Animal Rights Organisations.*

The animal rights organisations, such as the Animal Liberation Front and the Animal Aid Society, are more radical in their efforts to protect animals against human utilisation and ensure their basic rights as living beings. They believe that all animals are valuable in themselves and not only in relation to human beings. According to these organisations, animals ought to be treated in the same manner as human beings and accorded the same rights. Consequently, animals cannot be regarded as a 'renewable resource' to be disposed of by people. Any killing of an animal is a violation of its rights as a living creature and thus, hunting activities cannot be tolerated. Special consideration cannot be given to cultures where hunting is important as this would give the hunter supreme rights over animals.

### *Anti-trapping, anti-fur and anti-harvest.*

The concepts of anti-trapping, anti-fur and anti-harvest differentiate the approaches towards utilisation of wild animals by different organisations within the animal protection movement. However, these approaches, and the restrictions on indigenous harvesting activities implicit in them, particularly affect indigenous peoples. Accordingly, the anti-trapping argument is that harvesting wild animals cannot be tolerated because of the hunting methods used. This is an animal welfare point of view. The anti-fur argument represents an animal rights point of view. They see fur-bearing animals as having inviolable rights and a special status and priority over other animals. The concept of anti-harvest is an extension of the concept of anti-fur and it is against elimination of any harvest and any use of animals which results in their death.

### *The Environmental Movement.*

The environmental movement differs from the animal protection movement in three central respects. First, environmental organisations focus on the maintenance of essential ecological processes and life-support systems. Secondly, they stress the significance of preserving



genetic diversity and, finally, they support sustainable utilisation of species and ecosystems.

The environmental movement consists of organisations, such as the World Wide Fund for Nature (previously the World Wildlife Fund - WWF), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and Greenpeace, all of which, from an ecological point of view, are working towards solving problems related to human interaction with nature and wildlife. The environmental organisations understand the environment as consisting of systems and thus their focus is on maintaining the balance within the systems and not on the question of the welfare and rights of individual animals.

The environmental organisations as such do not have the animal protection perspective incorporated into their agendas. But these organisations often use an animal protection perspective in their campaigns. There are some species, such as whales, which environmental organisations consider 'sacred' and believe ought not to be hunted even by indigenous peoples, even though they are not in fact endangered. Consequently, they have demanded that limitations be imposed on indigenous hunting activities, even when carried out on a sustainable basis. As a result, animal welfare and animal rights attitudes have increasingly been incorporated in the politics of environmental organisations.

A consequence of this situation is that indigenous peoples' harvest will only be allowed if they continue to live a life which corresponds to an idealised Western concept of an indigenous lifestyle.

Cooperation between indigenous peoples and the environmental organisations has, up until now, been very rational. In some cases they have been working towards common goals. However, their motivations may be very different. Indigenous organisations work for cultural survival and cultural integrity while the environmental movement is concerned with the damaging effects to the environment caused by enforced development. The latter perspective often neglects the human perspective and the positive effects of sustainable resource harvesting. The latent conflict between indigenous peoples and the environmental movement lies in these different concepts.

### **The Trapping Issue in Europe.**

From the outset, the trapping issue in Europe was instigated by the development of the anti-hunting campaign. The environmental organisation, Greenpeace, and the animal welfare organisation, the International Fund for Animal Welfare, started their anti-seal campaigns in 1977 in order to stop the hunting of whitecoats and bluebacks being carried out along the coast of Newfoundland, Canada, and other regions

of the North Atlantic. The campaigns gained enormous attention and raised public emotion to the extent that some five million people signed petitions calling for an end to seal hunting. All these signatures, combined with persistent lobbying among European parliamentarians, resulted in the European Economic Community (EEC) sealskin ban in 1983.

The EEC adopted the Seal-Directive (which bans the importation of skin from seal pups into the EEC) knowing that the Canadian Government had already made alterations in order to conform with the regulations of the International Council for Exploration of the Sea, ICES, and the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation. As it stood, the EEC-Directive did not include Inuit seal-hunting. Nevertheless, its mere adoption by the EEC Council of Ministers had a catastrophic effect on many Inuit communities. The whole market for sealskin was destroyed by the widespread and effective campaign. In 1985 the enforcement of the seal-directive was postponed to 1989 and then postponed again for an indefinite period.

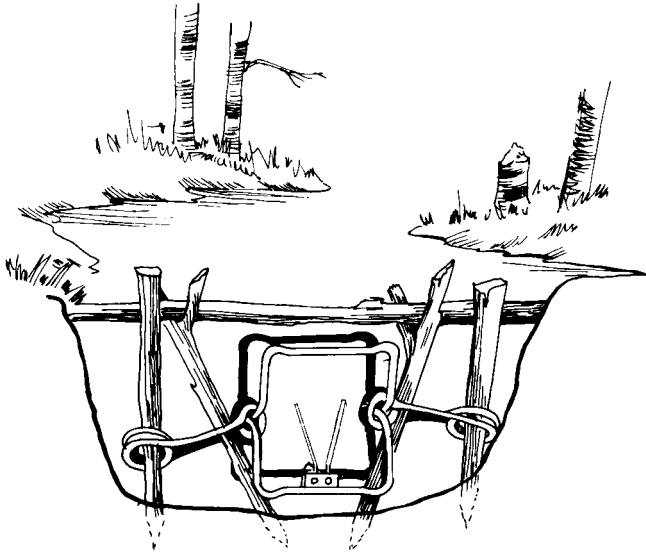
The subsequent anti-trapping campaign was planned in France in the late 1980s by the International Fund for Animal Welfare and the World Society for the Protection of Animals, a worldwide umbrella organisation. This campaign was officially directed against the use of the leghold trap but has developed into a "no fur" campaign.

The case was taken to the British Parliament by the British Minister of Trade, Mr. Alan Clark, who, at the beginning of 1988, forwarded a motion for a resolution. It suggested a cruelty mark put on fur products which "may have been taken with a steel-jawed leghold trap".

Indigenous Survival International (ISI) protested against the proposal and there was a meeting between ISI, the Fur Institute of Canada and Mr. Alan Clark in February 1988. At the same time the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources held an international conference in Gland, Switzerland, where an anti-trapping proposal was turned down.

The case did not get any further in England, but it was soon put forward in the European Parliament (EP). In July 1988 a written declaration was tabled by two members of Parliament, Mr. Seligman and Mrs. Castle, which called on the EEC-Commission to initiate an EEC-wide ban on the manufacture, sale and use of the leghold trap. Furthermore, it introduced proposals for labelling of fur products imported to the Community. This was to indicate whether or not the produce derived from animals caught in leghold traps. The Declaration was subsequently signed by 272 members of the European Parliament and was passed on to the EEC-Commission.

The Parliamentarian Intergroup on Animal Welfare had a strong voice in this case and was supported by the Eurogroup on Animal



*Beaver trap.*

Welfare, which is a lobbying group working in the EEC. The Intergroup on Animal Welfare has relied to a great extent on material provided by the Eurogroup on Animal Welfare. It has taken less notice of information forwarded by indigenous peoples and trappers' organisations.

In April 1989 the EEC-Commission produced a report on the subject. The Commission counterposed a scheme which would give the trapping-countries involved a reasonable amount of time to carry out additional research and to introduce improved traps in accordance with standards elaborated by the International Organisation for Standardization (a UN agency). The time limit for alternatives was then set for 1996 with a possible extension to 1998. After this date the fur-ban is to take effect.

In July 1989 the President of the European Parliament referred this proposal for a further opinion to the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection as well as to the Committee on External Economic Relations. In the latter report from the Committee on External Economic Relations a call was made for an immediate settlement of the case. They suggested the time limit given to the EEC-Commission be reduced to 1991.

The review of the trapping case in Europe shows that the discussions have mainly been carried out at the parliamentary level, whereas the issue in Canada as well as in the United States has been more a matter of public interest.

The initiatives taken by the European Parliament and the animal protection movement have been met with great concern by indigenous peoples and their organisations. Stephen Kakfwi, a former President of the Dene Nation in Canada, stated: "This force (the anti-harvest movement) is potentially far more dangerous than the threat to our lands posed by resource developers and far more oppressive than colonial governments" (ISI 1985).

Although unintentional, the last big campaign, the anti-seal campaign, has had a devastating effect on the small Arctic communities. The Government of the Northwest Territories in Canada estimates that 18 out of 20 Inuit communities within The Northwest Territories lost 60 per cent of their yearly income as a result of the EEC-Seal Directive. Unfortunately, it does not seem as if the experience of the anti-seal campaign has influenced the animal protection movement to take the indigenous point of view into consideration.

The hunters and trappers are still in fear of losing their rights to trapping and the possibilities for maintaining their trapping economy. One of their main supporters is Indigenous Survival International, which was founded in 1984 to counter the colonialism of Western countries. The initiatives taken by the EEC have been called 'colonialist' by Indigenous Survival International because they attempt to destroy indigenous culture, economy and social organisation. They are also a violation of fundamental human rights to self-determination and economic self-reliance. At the same time the EEC is seen as a foreign power, whose policies are based on ethnocentric ideas about the relationship between people and animals.

"Its proponents assume that their view of animals is right and everyone else's is wrong...Because our outlook finds the harvesting of animals acceptable, the animal rights movement would presume us to be primitive and uncivilised" (ISI 1985:166).

ISI considers that indigenous peoples have fought hard and long to get the right to choose. They have developed a culture and an economy which go beyond the bifurcation between a modern and a traditional way of life. The indigenous peoples have chosen to modify the natural/economic life style by combining old and new ways which maintain and reinforce their identity while permitting their society and economy to develop. The fact that indigenous communities are taking part in the market economy has been strongly criticised as being non-indigenous. Thus, the Euro-american assumptions about the choice of indigenous peoples to be either/or may have its root in the idea of the 'primitive' being at the bottom of the evolutionary ladder.

According to indigenous peoples, trapping of fur-bearing animals is a way of life defined as aboriginal and attached to harvesting of renewable resources. Thus, these activities are not considered

antagonistic to integration into the global society. ICC, ISI and other indigenous organisations are fighting for the right to maintain this lifestyle.

The ethics of, and values attached to, hunting, fishing and gathering activities and to sharing and manufacturing their products are of great concern to indigenous peoples. The conservation of the environment and respect for animals has always been part of indigenous peoples' survival in the Arctic. The symbiotic relationship to the land and its resources "governs all aspects of aboriginal life, including the social, cultural and economic spheres. In short it is our total way of life" (ISI in IWGIA Newsletter 43/44, 1985:170).

### **Indigenous Perspectives**

There seems to be only one issue on which indigenous peoples and the environmental organisations can agree: the protection and preservation of wildlife habitats in all areas of the world, including the Arctic. The strategies they adopt to ensure this, however, are very different.

A marked difference exists between the ways the two parties conceive of human beings and their role within nature - their relationship with their fellow creatures. Generally, the environmental movement seems to accept indigenous peoples' killing of non-endangered wild animals but only when it is done to satisfy subsistence needs. This attitude is a complicated one. It raises the question of what 'subsistence' means and who is a 'real' indigenous person.

However, the indigenous peoples' relationship with the animal protection movement is more strained because it is based on two very different cultural attitudes on the relationship between human beings and nature. The general attitude within the animal protection movement excludes the use of the leghold trap and defines it as an 'inhumane' way of treating animals. Indigenous communities, as well as White hunters and trappers, are considered a threat to the welfare of animals.

Indigenous peoples' own perspective of their position within the natural environment is, of course, very different. According to their traditions, they do not see themselves as superior to animals. Their relationships are characterised by exchange, reciprocity, mutual respect and friendship. They believe that animals give themselves to human beings out of pity or desire. In exchange, people have to obey certain rules and regulations about how to treat animals properly and to show them respect.

It is still the case today that the well-being and prosperity of an indigenous community is closely linked to that of wildlife and nature. To ensure this, indigenous peoples throughout the Arctic are combining their traditional knowledge with modern quota-systems; in some places



*The trappers are able to check many traps when using snow-mobiles.  
(Photo: Frank Sejersen)*

they use advanced computer programmes to work out fluctuations and capabilities of different wildlife populations.

The Inuit Circumpolar Conference and Indigenous Survival International have contributed to the conservation of Arctic nature by preparing an "Inuit Regional Conservation Strategy" (IRCS) and a "Folio on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation" respectively, to be parts of the "World Conservation Strategy" (Appendix 1 and 2). The ICC began its preparation of the IRCS in 1986. The strategy is both a process and a framework for the development of an environmental strategy by and for Inuit in order to promote sustainable development, sound management and environmental protection of the Inuit homelands in Greenland, Canada and Alaska. It is also a mechanism for promoting the co-operation of governments in the Circumpolar Region. The IRCS is a framework linking Arctic environmental issues with Inuit goals. It draws on the wisdom of traditional knowledge as well as the most recent scientific information. It offers the tools necessary to achieve the goal of sustainable development in a culturally appropriate manner. It is a strategy for gaining broader recognition of, and support for, Inuit rights to protect the environment and for the right to continue using both living and non-living resources in a sustainable manner. The IRCS has been developed in cooperation with local, regional and national Inuit institutions as well as with national and international governmental agencies and non-governmental organisations.

The goals of the ICC conservation policy have been summarised as follows:

1. a) to provide for Inuit subsistence needs,  
b) to maintain the productivity and biological diversity of the Inuit homeland, and  
c) to provide the basis for sustainable development.
2. Inuit subsistence harvesting should have priority over all other uses of the environment and natural resources of the Inuit homeland.
3. Inuit harvesting (whether subsistence oriented or commercial) should be kept at sustainable levels and conducted in a responsible manner, showing respect for the animals and minimising waste and losses.
4. Development in the Inuit homeland should be sustainable subsistence-based development.

In order to implement this policy framework, the IRCS process is intended to develop through a number of interrelated sub-projects and elements, including: a database; a register of Inuit experts, a manual of Inuit renewable resource management; a protected areas network; sustainable development demonstration projects; support for management strategies for shared resources; international cooperation; and education and communication (based on the Inuit Regional Conservation Strategy, Status Report, 1989).

The ISI Folio on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation stresses the strong attachment of indigenous people to their lands: how their cultures, economies and identities are inextricably linked to their land and its resources. Subsistence activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering provide food, raw materials and income for indigenous people, as well as providing their communities with a perception of themselves as distinct peoples, confirming continuity with the past and unity with the natural world.

Aboriginal subsistence is defined in the Folio as a way of life that is closely tied to the harvesting of renewable resources. It is not characterised by the technologies employed or by whether the resources obtained are consumed directly or sold for income generating purposes but by its roots in tradition and its crucial role in expressing and strengthening cultural identity. Furthermore, the Folio stresses that conservation has always been integral to the survival of indigenous peoples. Indigenous communities have everything to gain from conservation and much to offer: a profound and detailed knowledge of species and ecosystems; ways of sharing and managing resources that have stood the test of time; and an ethical code that reconciles subsistence with co-existence, recognising that people are an integral part of nature and express spiritual bonds with other species including those they harvest.

As original conservationists, indigenous people have goals of development and conservation and put into practice the concept of equitable and culturally appropriate sustainable development. This is also the goal of the World Conservation Strategy. But a condition for achieving this goal is the recognition of aboriginal rights and treaties. This includes the right to harvest the animals and plants on which their ways of life depend, to manage their resources according to the conservation requirements outlined in the World Conservation Strategy and to participate effectively in decision-making that concerns their lands and resources.

In the report *Our Common Future* (also known as the Brundtland Report) by the United Nations Commission on Environment and Development, these rights as well as indigenous ecological knowledge are recognised. This international recognition is important because it raises public awareness and level of understanding, which in turn can assert pressure on the various governments to which indigenous peoples are subordinate.

It was mentioned above that sophisticated computer equipment was used to make calculations about the wildlife populations. Indigenous hunters also use other modern equipment as well, for example, skidoos, radios, walkie-talkies, TVs etc. The indigenous peoples were introduced to these facilities a long time ago and subsequently cash became an indispensable part of their economy. However, many animal rights advocates deny indigenous peoples the right to use and possess these commodities on the grounds that they are either a luxury or not part of an aboriginal way of life.

Another argument sometimes used against indigenous hunting and trapping is that furs from these animals are for luxury use only, and the hunting is therefore not strictly 'necessary'. But indigenous peoples of the Arctic, to whom hunting and trapping of fur animals is far from a luxurious activity, are incredibly vulnerable to a boycott.

The Euro-american ability to define acceptable and non-acceptable types of activities, production and consumption is the choice of those who have the power to define a global culture and to determine the ecological future of the globe.

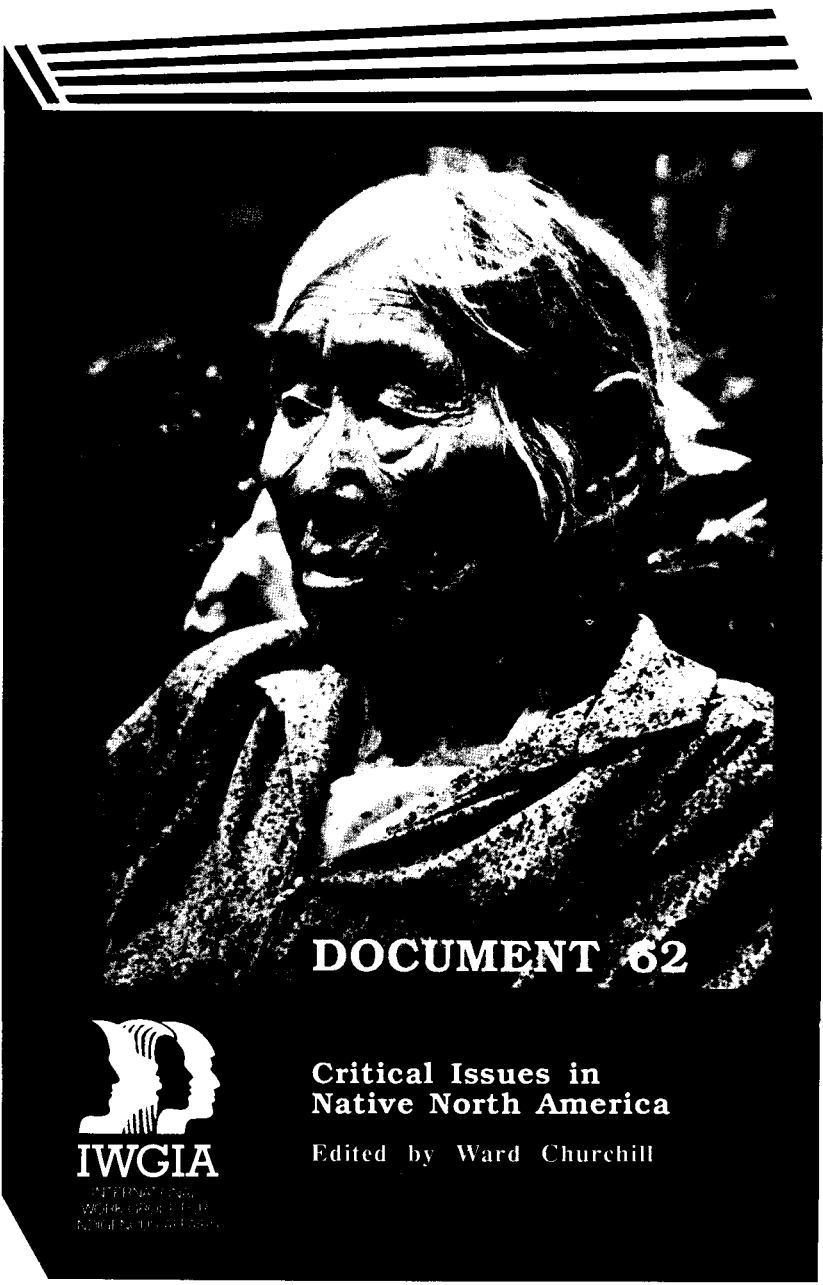
Consequently, the market-oriented activities cannot be accepted. The indigenous peoples seem to be trapped between a wish to improve their daily life and security, and the European stereotyping, that produces the primitive (and poor) native. Paradoxically, it is the industrialised countries, whose consumption exceeds many times that of the indigenous people, who in these discussions, go to the extent of defining the Arctic people's consumption as unnecessary luxury, thereby preventing them from rising above the poverty line, as well as improving their general standards of living. The conspicuous consumption of the Western world





*Indigenous trapper shows a delegation from the European Economic Community how to set a beavertrap. (Photo: Frank Sejersen)*

is justified by claiming that most of these goods are a necessity in a modern society - the very same goods that readily are redefined as extravagant in the Arctic world. On these grounds, the indigenous peoples are denied a justification for acknowledging their wish to improve their economic status and livelihood, as well as the activities leading to this goal.



**DOCUMENT 62**



**IWGIA**

INTERNATIONAL  
WORKING GROUP ON  
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Critical Issues in  
Native North America**

Edited by Ward Churchill

## Chapter 2: Wildlands, Frontiers or Homelands

### background

This chapter is based on discussions which took place at the two hearings in Copenhagen in the Autumn of 1988. Though each of the hearings had a different starting point (the trapping issue and environmental strategies in the Arctic), the main focus was on the future of the Arctic Region and the role of indigenous peoples. The debate centred around the rights of indigenous peoples of the Arctic Region and a development based on their own terms.

To the peoples of the industrialised world, the Arctic Region consists mainly of large areas of marginal or underdeveloped 'frontiers' with a certain development potential for the economic growth of the industrialised societies themselves. Fur production, mineral extraction and other non-renewable resources have been at the forefront of interest to date.

The Arctic Region has been characterised as comprising 'untouched' lands called 'wildlands' by the environmental and animal protection movements. These movements are concerned with the human utilisation of the wildlife in these relatively undisturbed 'natural' surroundings. Their main interest is to develop and enforce conservation and preservation strategies and to highlight issues which they consider a threat to animal welfare.

But to the indigenous peoples of the Arctic Region these lands are their 'homelands'. The indigenous people have inhabited the Arctic for thousands of years. They have lived from the land, but due to their methods of subsistence and exploitation they have only very slightly influenced or modified the eco-system. Their utilisation includes the hunting, fishing and gathering of renewable natural resources for their own consumption and, over the last centuries, for trade too. These harvesting activities have been maintained without altering the basic composition of the eco-system. However, the indigenous peoples' impact on the region and its eco-systems has been and is fundamentally different from that of technologically highly-developed industrialised societies even though it is no longer virgin land.

The Arctic is ecologically fragile and industrial activities even on a limited scale can change the physical character of the environment. There

are many cases where the exploitation and extraction of non-renewable resources have modified wildlife habitats and even in some cases have affected conditions which has produced dramatic changes in the ecosystem. The cumulative effect of these and other activities has been a decimation of several animal species, a situation unheard of with indigenous harvesting practices.

For generations, the indigenous peoples of the Arctic have been harvesting renewable resources such as seal, whale, fish and fur-bearing animals. They have utilised wild animals and plants for their subsistence and for income-generating purposes. Many small indigenous communities today still rely on these economic activities as their main source for sustenance and for a cash income.

The anti-fur campaigns and the proposal for an EEC-ban on the importation of certain fur products from animals caught in leghold traps have highlighted the question of the development of the Arctic Region. There are different interpretations of development which relate to perspectives of the Arctic as 'wildland' with relatively undisturbed ecosystems; as 'frontier land' for the economic benefit of industrialised societies; and as 'homeland' for the indigenous people living there.

The hearings pointed to the difficult situation which the indigenous peoples face. On the one hand, they have to bring their strategies for conservation and sustainable development to the attention of the environmental lobbies. The ICC and the ISI have been working on strategies for conservation and sustainable development which they have presented at international environment conservation and protection fora. On the other hand, they have to fight against the anti-harvest campaigns run primarily by organisations from the animal protection movement (and to a lesser extent organisations from the environmental movement) and fight against the emotional arguments with which these legitimate their campaigns for the protection of the animals.

The hearings demonstrated the importance of establishing fora where indigenous peoples can argue for their Arctic conservation strategies and policy of sustainable development. They illustrated the great need to inform the public about the cultural and economic reasons for indigenous peoples' dependence on the maintenance of their harvesting rights. Through the elaboration of a concrete strategy for nature conservation, the indigenous peoples can work towards a change in response from the environmental and animal protection movements, in particular the latter, with respect to a development based on the harvest of renewable resources.

Before European fur-traders came to the Arctic Region the indigenous peoples practised an economy characterised as 'self-sufficient'. Their utilisation of the land and the wildlife provided them



*In some areas of Greenland kayaks are still used for specific types of hunting.  
(Photo: Søren Forchhammer)*

with all the necessities for their subsistence and for the maintenance of their traditional trade and exchange relations.

Later, through contact with whalers and fur traders, the indigenous peoples became involved in the world economy by trapping animals for the fur-trade and other market-oriented hunting activities. This economy is characterised as 'self-reliant'. Harvesting activities for subsistence were still of great importance but trading with European fur-traders and whalers contributed considerably to the local economy. The introduction of trade commodities, such as tea and tobacco, and new technology, such as repeater rifles, steeltraps and snowscooters, created new needs for the indigenous peoples and the need to have products with which to trade. The self-reliant economy was a combination of subsistence production (a harvest for household consumption) and market-oriented production (a harvest for trade).

The harvest of renewable resources is very important in both a self-sufficient and in a self-reliant economy. Today, this harvest still forms an important part of indigenous peoples' economic structures. But an economic development for indigenous peoples in which the utilisation of wildlife plays an important role demands that indigenous peoples maintain their close relationship to nature and the land. Moreover, indigenous people depend on the land and nature for their cultural identity and survival as distinct peoples.

Today, the indigenous peoples of the Arctic are working strenuously to strengthen their rights to determine their own future and the economic and political development of their traditional homelands. The maintenance of the harvest of renewable resources is vital for an enforced local economy based on the demands of the small communities. The recognition of their rights to harvest renewable resources for commercial markets is of crucial economic importance if the economic growth of the Arctic on its own terms can be a reality. In the long term indigenous people's participation in development will raise their commitment and involvement in the international movement for the conservation of nature and wildlife in the Arctic.

### **Sustainable Development.**

Recently, the concept of sustainable development has become central to discussions of development and strategies for environmental protection, primarily in developing countries. The concept has become extremely important for development in ecologically vulnerable areas, such as the Arctic Region. The concept of sustainable development has therefore become important for the elaboration of development and environmental conservation strategies for the Arctic, as the concept implies a focus on a development based on the maintenance of the ecological balance of an area, and that the present day utilisation of renewable resources does not inhibit their future use.

Sustainable development was clearly both of importance and relevance at the Copenhagen hearings in 1988 for discussions of the future of the Arctic by representatives of indigenous peoples' organisations and the environmental and animal protection movements. The discussions revealed two very different strategies for sustainable development in the Arctic: the indigenous strategy in which indigenous peoples play an integral role; and the environmental and animal protection movements' strategies which focus first and foremost on nature and wildlife.

### **The Indigenous Perspective**

The indigenous perspective focuses on the indigenous society and on how small communities in the Arctic can maintain renewable resource harvesting as the basis of their economy. The strategy chosen by indigenous peoples is one which enables them to maintain their close relationship with nature while at the same time reinforcing their cultural integrity and securing their future as distinct peoples. Their strategy involves a mutual dependence between indigenous society and the natural environment and wildlife.

Sustainable development and strategies for its implementation are being increasingly incorporated into the discussions of economic development and growth around the world. The Arctic region is no exception. Indigenous people's use of the concept of sustainable development is similar to that of the World Conservation Strategy as elaborated by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), United Nation's Environmental Program (UNEP) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and that proposed in *Our Common Future*

To implement sustainable development there are various elements which are necessary for its success. The hearings stressed three elements which were considered important for the future of the Arctic: economic growth, the maintenance of sustainability and management-systems must be worked out.

### *1. Economic growth.*

The indigenous peoples of the Arctic are working on having the concept of sustainable development as the main tool in their efforts to have an economic growth which is self-reliant. Products from the harvest of the renewable resources and the exploitation of other resources shall be the economic basis for development in local communities. In this type of economic system wage-employment and commercial harvesting are added to the harvesting for sustenance, which remains the necessary core of the economy.

The development of the Inuit Regional Conservation Strategy has not just been a question of a strategy for conservation of the Arctic Region. It has also been a strategy which the Inuit people could use in their efforts to get a development in the area, which follows the lines and intentions of the concept of sustainable development as it has been elaborated in *Our Common Future* and in *The World Conservation Strategy*. The self-reliant economic growth requires the maintenance of their right to a sustainable harvest. Furthermore the market for local community produced goods must be strengthened, linked with a local manufacture and the development of new products. Besides this, improvements in the infrastructure of local administration, local political determination and physical planning are necessary.

An economic development based on the extraction of the region's resources, if it is defined by the majority society in the industrialised south, cannot enable the self-development of the local communities. The right of indigenous people to choose a development on self-defined terms is considered a basic human right.

## *2. Maintainance of sustainability.*

This means to preserve and expand the resources as a basis for economic growth and to increase the constant supply of resources from the biosphere through conservation and preservation efforts.

The creation of IRCS is a reaction to the pressure from the industrialised societies in the South, which have become more and more interested in the exploitation of the non-renewable resources of the Arctic Region. But it has also become an important tool which they can use against other sorts of pressure from the dominant society and its environmental and animal protection movements.

The indigenous peoples of the Arctic are attacked on their rights to harvest the renewable resources in their traditional homelands. The attacks on these rights have been based on two differently oriented arguments. The environmental organisations have argued that harvest, especially when commercialised can become a threat to sustainable harvesting. However, the animal protection movement has solely focused on the technology used and on the pain and stress which the hunter causes the animals. These arguments against indigenous peoples' right to harvest have, for various reasons, questioned the acceptability of the indiginous killing of animals at all.

Development of new strategies to increase and widen the foundation of the renewable resources harvested, is important for the sustainability of the harvest and of future economic growth based on the utilisation of wildlife. This implies that the harvest must include more species and that development of new products from the harvested resources take place. It will be crucial to the indigenous people that they take the question of sustainability seriously if they want to build a future on these resources.

## *3. Elaboration of management-systems.*

This is decisive in order to preserve and increase the basis on which the harvesting or resources rest. The development and application of new technologies is part of elaborating and improving management systems.

A sustainable development in the Arctic Region requires the indigenous peoples' control over the utilisation of resources. A sound wildlife management contains control over hunting and trapping licenses, quotas, open seasons etc. Furthermore the introduction of new technology, to make the loss and waste rate of the harvested lower and to reduce the sufferings of the animals caught, is important to management-systems as well. The elaboration of new technology can in the end also be a way to ensure the sustainability of the harvest as it becomes more selective and reduces the rate of loss in the animals harvested. Thus, the pressure on specific species can be controlled and minimised.



### *Political issues.*

But all this cannot be obtained without the political will from the side of the national government's. To achieve sustainable development anticipates the solution of various kinds of political and economic problems, like the issues of aboriginal rights and over land and resources. The sustainable development depends on the cultural continuity in the communities, as a collapse of the cultural identity might destroy the foundation for sustainability in the harvest. It is thus, first of all a political decision whether the basis for a sustainable development will be present or not.

A way to overcome the problems of establishing a sustainable development in the region is to recognise the aboriginal rights of the indigenous peoples in the Arctic and to recognise their right to self-determination. Without these fundamental rights, they are denied control over land, water and extraction of resources, renewable as well as non-renewable. Without these they cannot control whether the development in their traditional homelands will be sustainable or not.

The establishment of political self-determination requires an economic base. This base could be developed by strengthening the harvest of renewable resources in order to maintain and to extend the market for products, produced locally. Therefore, the indigenous peoples' rights to harvest must be secured and not denied by the animal protection movement.

The importance of harvesting to the future development of the Arctic Region can not be underestimated. As an alternative to the destructive short-term resource exploitation, the harvesting of wild animals and fish can provide the indigenous communities with lower, but sustainable revenues. Combined with other economic activities, it can constitute the basis for a sustainable development in the region.

### **The environmental and Animal Protection Movements' View.**

The environmental and the animal protection movements have much in common concerning their view of the future development in the Arctic. Nature, and especially its wildlife, is in focus, instead of society. To the environmental movement, sustainable development means a development in which the indigenous peoples are regulated or even excluded from their rights to utilise the renewable resources of their lands. The animal protection movement does not have a strategy for conservation or preservation similar to the environmental movement. When it focuses on the animal dimension detached from environmental and human issues it will in the long run result in a divorce between nature and man.

The environmental and animal protection movements' view of sustainable development are quite different from the indigenous peoples'. These movements try to enforce a sustainable development strategy upon the indigenous peoples and their homelands solely based on the environmental orientation of the industrialised societies, without any references to the Arctic peoples.

These organisations understand the concept of sustainable development as a development in which the hunting, fishing and gathering activities of the indigenous peoples have to be reduced to a level of sustenance or be totally banned. They see human interaction with nature as a threat to nature and to wildlife.

These organisations see it as their right to determine whether other cultures and nations have a right to be developed or not. Besides this, they want to determine the standards of sustainable development in the Arctic Region and in other ecologically vulnerable areas. The two hearings in Copenhagen showed a distinct need for the establishment of a dialogue between the two parties and their differing views of sustainable development.

To the indigenous peoples of the Arctic the question has been how to protect their rights to harvest the renewable resources of their lands, and how to maintain and elaborate the market for their products. They have had to meet the challenges from the animal protection movement and bring them to respond to the indigenous peoples' arguments as the animal protection movement is much weaker on defending their arguments than when implementing their own agenda. A sustainable development depends on these factors.

## Chapter 3: The Right To Harvest

The indigenous peoples' utilisation of wildlife has been criticised by the animal protection movement. The criticism has been both over the technology used and the indigenous peoples' right to harvest the renewable resources on their lands.

The legitimation for nation states and the international society to put into effect conservation strategies can be split into three levels. The discussions on indigenous peoples and their rights to harvest have to be related to these levels: a society/economic based level, an emotional/ethical level and in-between, a scientific based level.

The economic justification and societal motivation for conservation and preservation strategies are related to the needs of the society (social and cultural value) and to the chosen economic development for the area. The problem for indigenous peoples is that governments, conservationists and the animal protection movement might not have the same ideas regarding development and future economic thrusts in the Arctic Region. The indigenous peoples' economic justifications for developing certain strategies for conservation are quite different from the aforementioned sectors and are based on a desire to develop the local economy and their communities. Kaj Egede from the government of Greenland expressed at one of the hearings the importance of a strategy for conservation which would enable people living in isolated and economically underdeveloped areas such as Avanersuaq (Thule district), to maintain their local harvest as it is a very important economic source to their constantly vulnerable economy. These arguments find no support in environmental organisations and the animal protection movement as these put nature and its wildlife at a premium, while setting aside societal considerations. Neither is the question of cultural survival and diversity in the sphere of interest of these organisations and movements either.

It is in the emotional/ethical justification and motivation for conservation that the animal protection movement has its foundation. Basically, it says that human beings have no right to obliterate other species. The environmental organisations have used the emotion-based arguments in their conservation efforts. They have used the symbolic value which lies, for example, in the myths of the whale and its close

relationship to man, as well as the appeal of baby-seals to enforce their goals. At this level of argumentation for conservation strategies, there is no room for aspects relating to the needs of society, and as a consequence, it divorces man from nature.

The scientific justification and motivation for conservation concentrates on the environment and the importance of areas set aside for scientific research undisturbed by human activities. It claims to be neutral to both the economic and emotional justifications/motivation but are, on the contrary, a product of it. The scientific justification contains two dimensions. One relates to the same emotional justifications as the environmental organisations have used to legitimise their claims for conservation and preservation, the argument based on the necessity of isolating certain areas from human activities, if special species and ecosystems are to survive. But there is also a scientific argument which says that scientific observations and investigations require that certain areas be kept free from human interference. The industrialised world has been dependent on the development of the natural sciences for its further economic expansion and this is still the case. An increased knowledge of the environment has become more and more important.

### **Harvesting for Subsistence**

Over the years, different concepts have been developed to describe the harvest of renewable resources as an activity for sustenance, or as an economic activity oriented towards a market.

Concepts describing the harvest for sustenance have been: aboriginal-, subsistence- and non-commercial harvest. Other concepts have been used to describe the harvest for a market and for income generating purposes: commercial-, local small-scale- and industrial harvest.

These different concepts have been used in the discussions of sustainable development and of the relevance of maintaining the indigenous peoples' subsistence based economy. At the hearings, these themes were discussed very intensively and emotionally on both sides. The EEC proposal to make a fur-import ban constitutes only one of many threats against the very right of indigenous peoples to harvest and utilize the wildlife of their homelands.

The environmental and animal protection movements do not fully accept commercialised hunting. But the indigenous peoples and their organisations see it as their right to harvest renewable resources and maintain a market for these products.

As pointed out by Finn Lynge from Greenland at the hearings, indigenous peoples look upon themselves as being distinct nations which should enjoy the same rights as other nations as covered by the



*Greenland. Sharing beluga "mattak" (whale skin) from collective whaling.  
(Photo: Jens Dahl)*

International Convention of 16 December 1966 on Civil and Political Rights, Article 1, Para.2:

"All people may for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence".

The indigenous peoples see it as their right to utilise the renewable resources of their lands - a right, when denied, together with the denial of their rights to maintain a market for their products and to commercialise the products from their harvest, can be seen as a threat to their cultural identity and can thus be compared with cultural genocide.

But at the hearings, Finn Lynge also expressed the following:

"...The indigenous peoples want acceptance of their rights to harvest and to eat, seal and whale in the same way as it is legal to eat cow and pig ... and we want to eat it because we like the taste..."

In the concept of aboriginal harvest there is a recognition of the indigenous peoples rights, but it is a right with limitations. These rights are special rights given only to indigenous peoples in some specific areas as a means of sustenance and because of its cultural importance. But it is not these limited rights, the indigenous peoples are defending. It is their right to harvest the renewable resources which have great cultural and economic importance to them aside from forming an economic basis for the development of their lands and communities.

The animal protection movement tries to limit the issues for discussion in the future development of the Arctic Region. They argue that the indigenous peoples have no inherent or obvious rights to go hunting or fishing. These are activities they can be allowed to maintain only for subsistence and only when it is necessary for their existence.

Even the representative of the environmental organisation, Greenpeace International, Michael Gylling Nielsen expressed his organisation's opinion in this way at the hearings:

"... that the only reasonable argument on which we can support the indigenous peoples claims to harvest the resources of nature, is if it is necessary to sustain life...".

This implies that indigenous peoples may only harvest for their own vital consumption and not for the market.

However, the harvest has retained its economic importance in the households in small communities in the Arctic both for the satisfaction of subsistence needs and for cash incomes. The maintenance of hunting and other harvest practices is not just a question of economy, it also involves cultural values and is a manifestation of the inter-relationship which links humans and nature (animals and environment) to each other. It is their total way of life.

The way the environmental and animal protection movements use the concept of subsistence to define their idea of an acceptable harvest, limit the possibilities of indigenous peoples to develop their economy and their culture on their own terms.

The different opinions on harvesting activities as expressed by the animal protection movement and the indigenous peoples are very important for many reasons. Each one has its own implications for the future of the Arctic Region and for the indigenous peoples inhabiting it.

### **Harvesting for the Market**

The animal protection movement, as well as the environmental movement will only accept and enter a dialogue on the issue of indigenous peoples' harvest of renewable resources, when it is for the satisfaction of pure subsistence needs. As pointed out above, this denial

of the indigenous peoples' right to harvest and build a development on this basis, will neither ensure a sustainable development nor an effective conservation effort for the existing wildlife.

The indigenous peoples of the region want to take part in the future development of the Arctic where they can work towards self-reliance. The indigenous peoples of the Arctic do not want to see their homelands being used as an economic frontier for the industrialised societies in the south. They want a self-reliant economy which will strengthen their cultural and political integrity. In this kind of development, the harvest of the renewable resources will be economically important for the small isolated communities of the region, and not only as a subsistence activity. The harvesting of renewable resources for the market could, among other things, constitute the economic base for these small communities.

For this to be possible, there has to be a market for their products. For the indigenous peoples of the Arctic who want to make a living from producing fur and other commodities for trading, it is of great importance that they can sell their products on the international market. If wildlife utilisation is to be enhanced in this respect, it will be necessary to ensure transport and marketing opportunities. The development of new products for trading on the international market will widen the economic foundation of development in the region. But the cultivation of new markets may also be very important as the European market is sensitive to the campaigns of the animal protection movement which has already shown its power. For example the European ban on the import of sealskin resulted in a near collapse of the sealing industry in the Arctic.

Among other things, the Brundtland report also stresses is that: "...earnings from traditional activities can be increased through the introduction of marketing arrangements that ensure a fair price for produce..."(p.116).

One of the ways in which the animal protection movement tries to control which renewable resources the indigenous peoples may utilise, is through the regulation of the market. This strategy has already been tried and has proven its value. Until now, this has been an effective way to regulate and even nearly stop, the indigenous peoples' economic activities which have their basis in the utilisation of renewable resources.

This strategy does not imply however that the harvest will become more sustainable. In some cases even the opposite can be the result. Cash income possibilities are very few in these remote areas and as such, even small incomes from these activities can be of great importance for the household economy. Without these small incomes an even greater pressure will be exerted on the wildlife. It is known from cases around the world where the indigenous peoples have been forced off their lands or denied their harvesting rights that a much more uncontrolled situation

can arise, e.g. with poaching etc.. The harvest of products from nature for the international market most often results in by-products that can be used in the household economy.

The argument that commercial trade endangers the animal populations has often been used in discussions of the rights of indigenous peoples to maintain a market for their products. Examples from industrialised whaling nations such as the Soviet Union, Norway and Japan, have been used to accentuate the consequences of a commercialised harvest steered by greed. But Aqqaluk Lyngø, vicepresident of ICC, explained during the hearings that these problems can be solved through international trade and market agreements - it can be solved through political solutions and by the fact that sustainability in the harvest are necessary for the indigenous peoples, if they are to build a future on the utilisation of the wildlife. Commercialised harvesting does not logically result in the destruction of wildlife. The trapping of fur-bearing animals shows this clearly. It is always a question of sound wildlife management.

At the hearings, Aqqaluk Lyngø also explained that the destruction of the market for products produced in the small Arctic communities is a result of the campaigns carried out by the environmental and animal protection movements in recent years. It has been felt intensely hard by the indigenous peoples:

"... the reality is that there is an economic sanction against the indigenous peoples of the Arctic. An economic sanction which is much stronger than the one South Africa has to live with..."

### **Sustainability and Technology.**

The discussion of subsistence hunting mentioned above contains some other aspects. The discussions on the right to harvest have been lumped together with that on the technology used. In this connection, discussion on the harvest of the fur-bearing animals has focused mostly on the use of leghold traps which in fact were introduced by the Europeans.

Research on new technologies to make trapping more selective, to lower loss rates and lessen the suffering of the animals, has been taking place for the last two decades. The continued research on traps/trapping methods is necessary to develop trapping systems which correspond to national and international standards. Furthermore, the development of new technologies is important for the sustainability of the harvest in the future even as pressure on the wildlife and nature will increase as industrialised society expands its activities which have negative effects on the environment.

But the question of new technology raises other sorts of problems. In other areas around the world, indigenous peoples have been allowed to remain in their traditional homelands even when these have been





*"Bardot". Coat made from skin of the ringed seal. (Design: Lars Hillingsø)*

declared 'protected areas' - but only as long as the indigenous peoples use technology which is compatible with the efforts of Western wildlife conservation.

The strategies for wildlife conservation in these cases are worked out by western biologists, representatives from the animal protection

movement and the national governments, but the indigenous peoples themselves have in most cases been without influence.

The indigenous peoples have in these cases been forced to use traditional technology and only to produce for their own subsistence needs. The use of new technologies removes the argument for their right to harvest, as these do not correspond to the industrialised world's romanticised picture of indigenous peoples as primitives, living in close relationship to nature. The indigenous peoples are a part of the wildlife in the protected areas. When the indigenous peoples disturb this romantic view by adopting new and better technologies, they are moving away from their primitive state which is considered the only legitimate reason for them maintaining their harvest rights.

This situation underlines the difficult position faced by the indigenous peoples. Their dilemma is that, on the one hand they know that their very right to harvest can come under attack, if they use new technology; on the other hand, this right to harvest collides with the animal protection movement's demand which makes it necessary for them to come up with new technologies.

History has shown that the Arctic Region can sustain a significant harvest of wildlife and fur-bearing animals as shown by the indigenous peoples having practiced such without significantly endangering the species living there. Arne Schiøtz from WWF-International pointed out at the hearings that the indigenous peoples' harvest of the renewable resources does not endanger species as such. Furthermore he pointed out that the threats from the industrialised world are much greater, destroying habitats and eco-systems in the Arctic.

As such, the harvesting of the renewable resources of the Arctic region might be one of the most appropriate ways to maintain the area's 'environmental services' -beneficial functions that are performed naturally by wildlands- and the biological diversity, when the harvest is maintained at a sustainable level.

## **Chapter 4: Strategies for Ensuring the Future of the Arctic Regions**

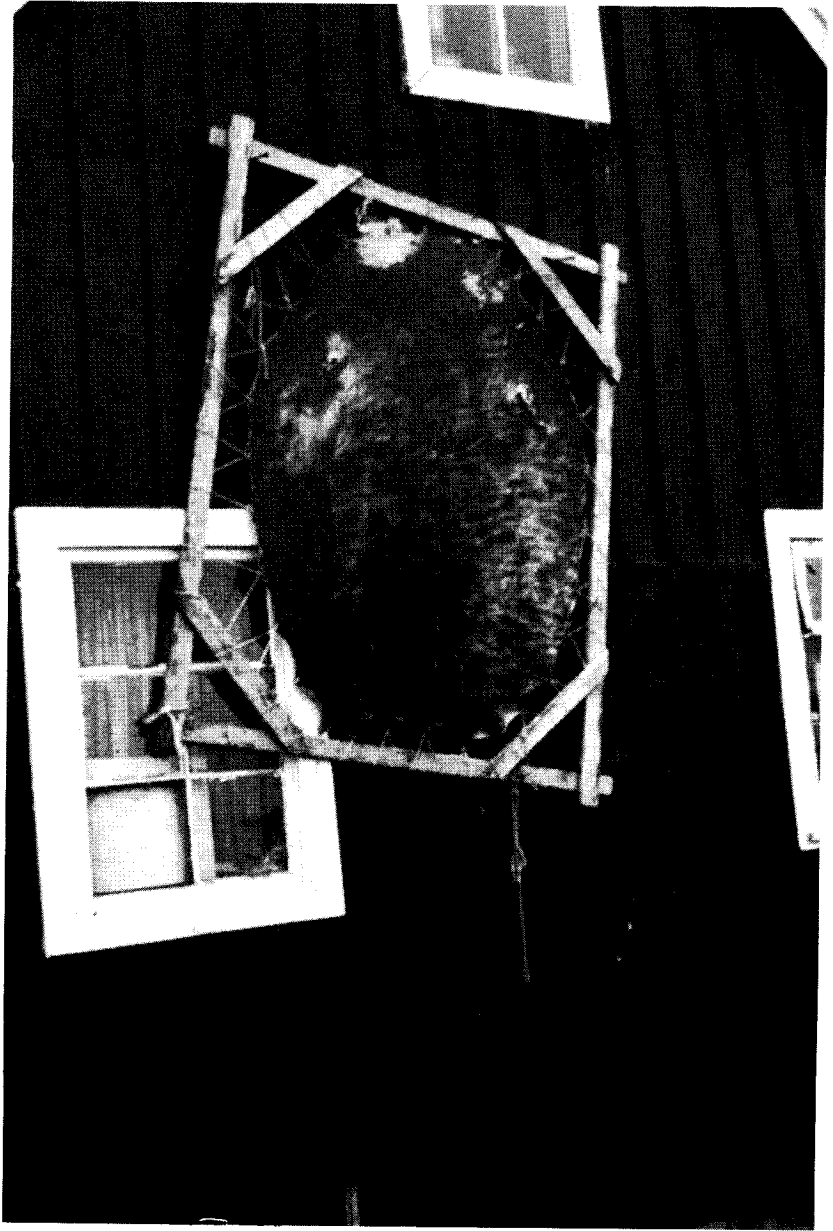
### **The Pressure Groups' Campaigns**

In the campaigns run by the animal protection movement, they have also changed their main goals from controlling animal exploitation to eliminating it all together. There is a strong possibility that the new campaigns against fur harvesting will follow this line also. Endangerment of the species or animal welfare aspects are not the main issues any more. To stop the harvesting totally on the grounds of animal rights has now taken over the whole issue. The earlier campaigns against whaling and sealing have been quite successful and this gave the animal protection movement the necessary encouragement to initiate the anti-fur campaign.

The campaigns against the trade in furs from wild animals is a concrete expression of a general trend. In the international environmental and animal protection movements much energy is directed at excluding human activities such as hunting, fishing and gathering from the remaining wildlands of the world. This strategy to divorce nature and man will affect the indigenous peoples in these areas very much as this will have result in their exclusion from their traditional lands and the extermination of their cultures.

The environmental and animal protection movements use public opinion to enforce their goals through campaigns and by lobbying at the European Parliament. But they are also pragmatic and realistic and they know their limitations. They choose areas where the possibilities for success are good and they use emotionally based arguments to manipulate public opinion. The information they give to the public and to the politicians from whom they want support, is one-sided, with a great lack of actual knowledge of the way of life of indigenous peoples, the technology they use and their harvest practices in general. A discussion of the social and biological value of the anti-fur campaigns seen as a conservation or preservation strategy has not yet taken place.

Under the hearings it became absolutely clear that the proposal for a ban on the fur-trade has nothing to do with the development of conservation strategies or other initiatives to improve environmental



*After being scraped and washed, the seal skins are stretched in racks and left to dry in the sun. (Photo: Jens Dahl)*

management. Focusing on animal welfare and animal rights issues and isolating them from issues related to conservation, sustainable development and the use of nature's resources, is to take just one aspect in a very much needed general discussion. A discussion of the welfare of the animals is not out of date as such, but it is a part of a much more complex discussion. In this case: the future of the Arctic.

Human activities in the Arctic are not exclusively run by the indigenous peoples, but other and much more complex activities are run by the big companies for mineral exploitation. These activities can destroy or change the habitats of animals and extinguish the species and their habitats, inflicting much greater pain and suffering to the animals than does the harvest that the indigenous peoples are practising. The Exxon Valdez oil spill, at Prince William Sound in Alaska, exemplifies the damage that the industrialised use of nature is capable of inflicting.

### **The Indigenous Strategies**

The indigenous peoples have, during the last two decades, worked for a recognition of their aboriginal rights, self-determination and the settlement of their land claims. They have been working for the recognition of their status as nations, meaning that they can benefit from the same rights as all other nations covered by international conventions of human rights and international laws on human rights.

The indigenous peoples of the Arctic find it difficult to understand what legitimises the campaigns against the indigenous harvest and their living in their traditional homelands. The only reasonable explanation is that anti-harvest campaigns are a concrete expression of the continuation and maintenance of the paternalistic view that indigenous peoples are incapable of deciding for themselves and their traditional lands.

The animal protection movement has developed a strong political weapon - public opinion - through these campaigns. The indigenous peoples have not, until now, developed a similarly strong weapon and have, as such, been politically weak and without political influence. But this is changing as their organisations become stronger and challenge the animal protection movement to respond to the indigenous peoples' agenda, instead of merely their own. The more links the indigenous peoples can establish to governments, legal authorities and the public opinion, the international law of human rights and other parts of the international system concerned with sustainable development and environment protection, the more they will be able to challenge the animal rights movement and their emotionally based arguments and campaigns against indigenous harvesting and utilisation of traditional lands.

The indigenous peoples work for a sustainable development in the Arctic. They are doing this on different levels. They are working for the settlements of their land claims and recognition of their aboriginal rights. By having these rights they can control land and resources and elaborate a development based on a self-reliant economic structure. To underpin this, they have framed a regional strategy for the conservation of the environment, IRCS (see appendix 1).

The attacks on the indigenous way of dealing with nature are attacks on their very existence, their cultural heritage and their existence as distinct nations. Finn Lynge expressed that, as the indigenous peoples of the Arctic look upon themselves as constituting distinct nations, they should hold the same rights as other nations have which are ensured under the conventions of the United Nations. In these, the economic, the political and the cultural rights of a nation must not be denied them. This implies that the resources on which a nation's existence is built, must not be taken away from them.

It is also important to point out that the best way to protect and conserve their nature and wildlife of an area, is to support the indigenous peoples in their efforts to obtain recognition of their aboriginal rights and the establishment of self-determination. At the hearings therefore, the representatives of the Arctic peoples wanted to discuss how to work out a sustainable development in their homelands and establish the criteria for such. They wanted a debate on how to define the sustainable level for the harvest of renewable resources, and how this could be controlled. The representatives asked for a political acceptance and support for their continued rights to harvest the renewable resources.

# Appendix 1

## Towards an Inuit Regional Conservation Strategy

*Framework for an Inuit Regional Conservation Strategy*

### Summary

Since the World Conservation Strategy (1) was launched in 1980, national and sub-national (provincial, state or territorial) conservation strategies have been started in 40 countries. This framework document proposes an Inuit Regional Conservation Strategy (IRCS), which would be the world's first regional conservation strategy and the first conservation strategy by an indigenous people. The document describes the main features of conservation strategies and the advantages to the Inuit of preparing an IRCS. It provides a framework for the proposed IRCS, explaining its scope and approach, and discussing the main issues. Finally, it sets out a project proposal for preparation of the IRCS by the Inuit Circumpolar Conference in cooperation with Inuit organizations in Alaska, Canada and Greenland.

A conservation strategy is a process of identifying, achieving consensus on, and implementing the priority strategic actions needed to maintain the harvest resources, ecological processes and biological diversity on which human well-being and development depend. Priority strategic actions are those actions that have the highest probability of dealing successfully with the most important problems.

### **Inuit need a regional conservation strategy because:**

1. Inuit depend completely on maintenance of the harvested resources, ecological processes and biological diversity of the Arctic for subsistence, cultural and economical survival, and sustainable development.
2. Conservation and sustainable development of these natural resources are seriously threatened by:
  - denial of Inuit aboriginal rights to traditional lands and waters, to harvested resources required for subsistence, and to self-governance;
  - pressure on Inuit systems of conserving harvested resources, due to the impact of international, national and subnational (e.g.state) harvesting regulations, to centralization and growth of Inuit

settlements, and to competition from the non-Inuit commercial and recreational resource users;

- damage to the habitats of harvested species and increasing risk to other ecological processes, due to pollution and nonrenewable resource development;
  - closure of markets for seal skins, and the threatened closure of markets for all wildlife products, as a result of campaigns by the animal protection movement.
3. Development prospects are limited, because resources are few, costs are high, markets are far away, and great care is needed to develop nonrenewable resources without damaging subsistence resources.
  4. Inuit are vastly outnumbered by the majority societies of the nations in which they live, who tend to think of the Arctic as a source of wealth, a military arena, a scientific laboratory, or a wilderness to be preserved, rather as the homeland of the Inuit and other indigenous peoples. Inuit have very little money and few trained people. Inuit leaders are heavily overburdened by the demands placed on them by the multitude of agencies that run the affairs of the majority societies.
  5. Despite these difficulties, Inuit have reasonably good prospects of conserving and developing their natural resources sustainably. They have many potential allies and large reservoir of potential support among people of good will. These prospects can be achieved, provided the energies and talents of Inuit are concentrated and coordinated through a strategy of agreed priorities.
  6. Many of the obstacles, and the actions required to overcome them, are common to much or all of the entire Inuit region. A regional strategy would provide the means of using limited amount of political influence, money, trained people, and time, to the maximum effect.

Inuit aspirations are to: maintain their culture and identity as a distinct people; continue to harvest wildlife as the basis of their culture; conserve the wildlife they harvest and the ecosystem on which they depend; develop socially and economically, in a manner consistent with the other aspirations; and look after themselves and control their own lives. The aim of the IRSC is to enable Inuit to achieve these aspirations, by identifying through a process of document preparation and consensus building the actions that would make the most effective use of Inuit human and financial resources, and by getting the priority action started.

**The main features of the IRCS would be:**

1. Preparation of a document that would analyze the main issues, identify strategic actions, and design a programme for the implementation of the priority strategic actions. Parallel actions are needed at three levels:



- actions to secure Inuit aboriginal rights to traditional lands and waters, subsistence, and selfgovernment;
  - actions to improve Inuit management of lands, waters and harvested resources under Inuit jurisdiction, and environmental protection in the Inuit homeland;
  - actions to conserve migratory and other shared resources, protect the Inuit homeland and harvested resources from harmful environment impacts, from external sources and develop and protect export markets.
2. Consultation with Inuit communities to build a consensus on the priority actions.
  3. Development of projects to accelerate the implementation programme, demonstrate key aspects of the strategy, and initiate and undertake priority strategic actions of regional scope.
  4. Monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the strategy gets the desired results.
  5. Providing Inuit with experience and training in strategic planning and programming.

**The framework document proposes several strategic issues and actions of regional scope that would be taken up by the IRCS:**

1. A campaign to build support for the Inuit cause in Europe and North America. The purpose of the campaign would be to:
  - establish an international organization of Inuit supporters, who could be mobilized to write letters and lobby on behalf of Inuit;
  - secure and expand markets for Inuit wildlife products;
  - increase public awareness of Inuit aspirations and concerns;
  - generate wider political support for Inuit aboriginal rights.
  - The IRCS would identify allies among other native peoples, conservative organizations, recreational hunting and fishing groups, commercial harvesters and users of living resources, and others. It would enlist the cooperation of these organizations (policy backing, appeals to members, use of mailing lists), and lay the groundwork for the campaign. Development of the campaign would be a separate project.
2. Formulation and promotion of guidelines on institutions of Inuit selfgovernment. The World Conservation Strategy identifies the division of resource and environmental management responsibilities among many separate agencies as a major obstacle to conservation and sustainable development. It also imposes a tremendous burden on Inuit leaders. Inuit institutions should reflect Inuit needs and a more integrated approach to environmental management; and governments should organize themselves so that Inuit do not have to deal with a multitude of agencies.

3. Intervention on interjurisdictional issues. The IRCS should identify and promote the action required to resolve interjurisdictional, particularly international, problems concerning Inuit aboriginal rights. It should also identify priority migratory species (for example, anadromous fishes, waterfowl, polar bear, whales) requiring interjurisdictional conservation agreements, and explore the kinds of agreements that would be most useful.
4. Development of a community-based management system. To promote the restoration of Inuit control of resource management, the IRCS would analyze traditional and modern Inuit conservation practices throughout the Inuit homeland. On the basis of the analysis, it would develop one or more models of a management system, in which the prime responsibility for management would rest with the community.
5. Inuit Regional Conservation Seminar. An annual travelling seminar is proposed to meet the need for an immediate and continuing exchange of management experience among Inuit community leaders in Alaska, Canada and Greenland. Management systems currently being developed by Inuit in the three countries should also be the focus of a diploma training course for young people.
6. Coordinated research programme. To provide clear guidance to scientific research agencies, the IRCS should formulate a statement of Arctic research priorities, as identified by Inuit, together with a code of practice for Inuit participation in research.
7. Regional policies on protected areas. The IRCS would prepare a policy and proposals for a network of protected areas that would maintain the ecological processes and biological diversity of the Inuit homeland, while providing for Inuit subsistence needs.
8. Increasing the productivity of renewable resources. The IRCS would conduct a regional assessment of domestication (e.g. of reindeer and muskox), habitat enhancement, and other activities to increase the productive capacities of renewable resources for Inuit economic development.
9. Integrated conservation and development projects. IRCS would devise and promote one or more model projects combining conservation and development.

Elaborated by Inuit Circumpolar Conference.

# Appendix 2

## Outline of a Proposed Folio on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation

### Preamble

*The Earth is the foundation of Indigenous peoples. It is the well of their spirituality, knowledge, languages and cultures. It is not a commodity to be bartered to maximize profit; nor should it be damaged by scientific experimentation.*

*The Earth is their historian, the cradle of their ancestors' bones. It provides them with nourishment, medicine and comfort. It is the source of their independence; it is their Mother. They do not dominate Her; but harmonize with her.*

1. Indigenous peoples as referred to herein include the terms indigenous, aboriginal, native, tribal, traditional, and nations, and are used interchangeably, but are distinct cultural communities with unique land and other rights based on original and historical use and occupancy. These are peoples whose cultures, economies and identities are inextricably tied to their traditional lands and resources. They may be the original surviving inhabitants of lands that now are part of nation states established and controlled by peoples who arrived after them. Within many nation states of the world, aboriginal rights to those lands and resources have been frequently undermined and/or threatened by the effects of colonization and resource exploitation.
2. Aboriginal subsistence is defined here as a way of life that is closely tied to the harvest of renewable resources. Activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering continue to make a substantial contribution to the economies of indigenous peoples, providing them with food, raw materials and income. Moreover, subsistence activities provide native communities with a perception of themselves as distinct peoples, confirming continuity with their past and unity with the natural world. They reinforce spiritual values, not necessarily shared with the larger societies. Subsistence emphasizes an ethic of sharing and mutual support, community cohesion, and a

commitment to stewardship of the land and its resources, based on a perspective of many generations, both past and future. Adoption of modern technologies does not change their status as indigenous peoples, and does not diminish the economic and cultural importance of hunting, trapping or fishing. Aboriginal subsistence is characterized neither by the technologies employed, nor by whether the resources obtained are consumed directly or sold for income, but by its roots in tradition and its crucial role in expressing and strengthening cultural identity.

3. Conservation has always been integral to survival of indigenous peoples. Without renewable resources to harvest, they lose both livelihood and way of life. Aboriginal communities have everything to gain from conservation - and much to offer: a profound and detailed knowledge of species and ecosystems; ways of sharing and managing resources that have stood the test of time; and ethics that reconcile subsistence and coexistence; recognizing that people are an integral part of nature, and express spiritual bonds with other species, including those they harvest.
4. Conservation and development policy making and planning often seem to assume that native peoples have only two options for the future: either to return to their ancient way of life; or to abandon subsistence altogether and become assimilated into the dominant society. Neither option is reasonable. Indigenous peoples should have a third option: to modify their subsistence way of life, combining the old and the new in ways that maintain and enhance their identity while allowing their society and economy to evolve. As original conservationists, they now aim to combine development and conservation, and put into practice the concept of equitable, culturally appropriate, sustainable development. As such, the goal of the World Conservation Strategy is their goal too.
5. To achieve this goal, Inuit peoples must have recognition of their aboriginal rights, treaties, and agreements to their lands and resources, including the right to harvest the animals and plants on which their ways of life depend, to manage their resources according to the conservation requirements outlined in the Strategy, and to participate effectively in decision making that concerns their lands and resources. This requires the cooperation of conservation scientists, managers, policy-makers, and development planners in a common approach to resource management, research, international conservation agreements, development planning, and development and protection of traditional economies.

## Resource management

6. *Aboriginal societies* developed management systems to assure sustainable yields of renewable resources from their environment. These systems controlled access to the resources and levels of harvest and disturbance; and there is ample evidence that they were effective. Many continue to be effective.
7. Indigenous peoples are entitled to manage their traditional lands and resources on a sustainable basis. Management of traditional lands and resources should be in accordance with conservation principles as stated in the World Conservation Strategy, and that equitable arrangements are made for the joint management of resources shared with others. They must have full and meaningful participation in all decision-making concerning their traditional lands and resources, setting the objectives of management, deciding the means of achieving those objectives, and undertaking the tasks required to carry them out. Conservation agencies should recruit, train and employ native people to lead research activities and operations.
8. Indigenous management systems should be maintained, strengthened, and adapted to cope with new problems; and combined with non-indigenous systems where necessary, as in the case of joint management arrangements. Information on indigenous management systems should be compiled and exchanged, to assist native communities in further developing their own systems and to foster wider appreciation of aboriginal management.
9. Resources that are shared with non-aboriginal user groups should be allocated on a priority user basis, with highest priority given to subsistence uses. A guaranteed level of harvest should be established by and for *native* subsistence groups, sufficient to meet basic needs as long as permitted by the size and recruitment rate of the harvested population. Allocation among native users should be left to the indigenous community. If the sustainable harvest is high enough to provide a surplus above the fixed allocation to aboriginal subsistence users, the surplus can be shared among the native groups and other users for commercial recreational purposes. If the population is so depleted that no sustainable harvest is possible, then, of course there should be no harvest at all. The primary objective of management of a depleted population should be to return it to a level at which a culturally desirable harvest rate can be sustained. Governments participating in joint management schemes should ensure that there are adequate mechanisms and funding for indigenous participation, and control of, the resources of staff, operations and information to implement them fully and with a

- minimum of conflict, and respect indigenous institutions and their means of operating; and to provide free money for legal consultation.
10. Environmental knowledge possessed by indigenous peoples is substantial and detailed. Aboriginal perceptions of ecosystems, species, and ecological linkages and processes, have great value for conservation and sustainable development. The large body of literature on ethnobotany and smaller bodies on ethnezoology and ethnoecology testify to the complementarity of indigenous knowledge and western scientific knowledge. This complementarity has only occasionally been recognized in the arena of resource management, despite the evidence that management could be much improved if indigenous knowledge were used. When species "new to western science" are derived from indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge, the Linnaeus system nomenclature applied should reflect the indigenous name, at least at the species level.
  11. An exchange of knowledge and methodologies is needed to develop greater mutual understanding between indigenous peoples and conservation scientists and managers. Scientists and managers should be more open to the practical value of aboriginal systems of knowledge. Indigenous peoples need training in the approach and techniques of conservation science. Scientific investigators and researchers should include indigenous co-investigators in all phases of their research design and implementation with the objectives of establishing networks for the long term exchange of information and learning in both directions. The impacts of native population growth, concentration of settlements, development of renewable resources, and externally induced environmental change, all call for better knowledge of the terrestrial and marine ecosystems on which native communities depend. Research is needed, but it should be cooperative research that:
    - addresses the priorities of indigenous peoples, as determined by them;
    - involves indigenous peoples as equal partners;
    - trains indigenous peoples in scientific method, and transfers scientific skills and expertise;
    - assembles and presents information in forms accessible to indigenous peoples.
  12. Financial and technical resources should be made accessible to indigenous peoples to conduct their own research. The aim should be recognition of an indigenous scientific community that includes traditional expertise and acquired scientific skills and procedures.

## **National and International Agreements**

13. National and international laws and regulations concerning resource management, conservation, public health, commerce and border controls, and trans-national military agreements can cause hardship for indigenous communities. Some exception must be made by legislators in consideration of peoples for whom harvesting of natural resources is an activity essential to survival. The imposition of restrictions on the harvest of species and trade in their products, periodic migrations of their own cultural groups, contamination and war have caused undue problems for indigenous peoples. International agreements pose a special problem because they are difficult to change and, being global instruments, they are poorly equipped to deal sensitively with local concerns; this in spite of the fact that indigenous commitment to conservation has been internationally demonstrated.
14. International resource management and conservation agreements should always give special consideration to aboriginal people engaged in subsistence, taking into account their unique circumstances, conditions and subsistence methods. Representatives of indigenous peoples should participate in foreign policy making that has an impact on aboriginal rights and economies, including the formulation and implementation of international agreements that affect their environment, resources and way of life.

## **Development Planning**

15. The economic opportunities available to indigenous communities have been generally rather limited. Sustainable development requires increasing the economic benefit to indigenous communities from the living resources of land. Development planning that directly or indirectly affects aboriginal peoples and their traditional lands must therefore give priority to maintenance and sustainable development of both renewable and non-renewable resources. The critical habitats such as breeding, resting and feeding areas of species important for subsistence must be protected, and the ecological processes that support them must be maintained. Indigenous communities should participate effectively in all development decisions affecting their traditional lands and resources; and should have an equitable share in the proceeds from nonrenewable resource development.
16. The timing, pace and manner of development should minimize harmful environmental, social, and cultural impacts. Nonrenewable resource development such as hydroelectric and other water diversion projects, industrial development, mineral exploration and exploitation, oil and gas activities, transportation, and military

activities should be subject to full and proper impact assessment. They must be located, designed and managed to high environmental standards. Infrastructure and service industries must be operated to high environmental standards.

### **Development of Traditional Economies**

17. The development and protection of traditional aboriginal economies based on their harvested resources is crucial for the economic self-reliance of indigenous peoples. Some aboriginal peoples have taken steps to protect and promote their subsistence-based economies. This effort should be expanded into a cooperative relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, to undertake an extended campaign to promote sustainable use of natural resources, and in particular the use of products traded by indigenous peoples. Use of these products should be seen as a way of expressing solidarity with aboriginal peoples, contributing to their future, and supporting sustainable relationships between all people and natural resources.

*Convened by Indigenous Survival International*



## List of Abbreviations

ECOSOC:	Economic and Social Council (of the United Nations)
EEC:	European Economic Community
EP:	European Parliament
ICC:	Inuit Circumpolar Conference
IFAV:	International Fund for Animal Welfare
IRCS:	Inuit Regional Conservation Strategy
ISI:	Indigenous Survival International
IUCN:	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
IWGIA:	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
UNEP:	United Nations Environmental Program
WCS:	World Conservation Strategy
WSPA:	World Society for the Protection of Animals
WWF:	World Wildlife Fund

**DOCUMENT 68**



**IWGIA**

INTERNATIONAL  
WORKING GROUP  
ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

**Critical Issues in Native  
North America - Volume II**

**Edited by Ward Churchill**

The ICC was founded in 1977 on the initiative by Eben Hopson, the mayor of Barrow, Alaska. It represents the Inuit of Canada, Alaska and Greenland and from 1989 also of the Soviet Union. The ICC was granted NGO status in 1983 of ECOSOC and has been a voting member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, IUCN, since 1988.

The main objectives of the ICC 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 political, economical and social institutions which Inuit deem relevant;
- to promote greater self-sufficiency of the Inuit;
- to ensure the endurance and the growth of the Inuit culture and societies for both present and future generations;
- to promote long-term management and protection of Arctic and Sub-arctic wildlife, environment and biological productivity;
- to promote wise management and use of non-renewable resources and incorporate such resources in the present and future development of Inuit economies, taking into account other Inuit interests.

To carry out the goal of preserving the environment as well as the Inuit culture and society, the ICC has developed an environmental policy strategy called the Inuit Regional Conservation Strategy, IRCS. The work on this project started in 1985. It is the first attempt by an indigenous organisation to develop an overall strategy that considers both the needs of modern development and of traditional values.

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Price 7.50 US\$

This document is a presentation and an analysis of the present conflicts of interests between the anti-hunting movement and the indigenous peoples of the Arctic.

The right of indigenous peoples to subsistence and economic development based on renewable resources in their homelands will be the focal issue.

The anti-hunting movement is an ongoing threat to the survival of indigenous peoples.

A solution which integrates indigenous perspectives is urgently needed.

