

Indigenous communities are represented on a working group created by the Government of Canada to provide input with respect to the domestic implementation of article 8(j) of the convention and the development of Canadian positions at international fora.

Canada and the European Union: The Issue of Trapping Standards

In 1983, international animal rights activists succeeded in having a European ban imposed on the importation of products from two nonendangered seal species. This was followed by a ban in the mid-1990s on the importation of products from the major wild fur species. Such trade bans have had dramatic and disruptive effects on many northerners, particularly in Indigenous communities where their livelihoods have traditionally depended heavily on sealing and fur trapping.

The Government of Canada, working with Indigenous peoples, took the trapping issue to Europe, lobbying for and achieving a Canada-European Union Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards in 1998. This is the first international agreement to establish scientific measurements for humane wildlife harvesting. It sets in place a process for introducing more humane trapping equipment in both Canada and all 15 member states of the European Union. The Government of Canada continues to seek the removal of trade restrictions that discourage the sustainable use of wildlife products from nonendangered species.

"Effects of global warming are already evident in the Canadian North. The average air temperature in the Mackenzie Basin is warmer (a 1.55°C rise since 1860) and the ice canopy covering the Arctic Ocean is thinner than in previous years."

—Commissioner of the Environment
and Sustainable Development,
1999 Report, para. 6.9

"Each Contracting Party shall, as far as possible and appropriate:...Subject to its national legislation, respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of Indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application..."

—Convention on Biological
Diversity, Article 8(j)

Circumpolar Relations

Indigenous Organizations

Indigenous communities have long recognized the benefits of circumpolar cooperation. In 1977, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) was formed uniting some 125 000 Inuit from Greenland, Canada, Alaska, and, more recently, Chukotka, Russia. The ICC has promoted sustainable development since 1986 with its adoption of a framework document, *Towards an Inuit Regional Conservation Strategy*. In 1992, the ICC published *Principles and Elements for a Comprehensive Arctic Policy*, a document to guide its policy making in the Arctic. It is a critical document for ensuring that ICC decisions affecting the Arctic lead to sustainable development.

Other examples of Indigenous peoples' cooperation include the Polar Bear Management in the Southern Beaufort Sea Agreement (1988)