



## **Food Security across the Arctic**

**Background paper of the Steering Committee of the  
Circumpolar Inuit Health Strategy**

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# Food Security across the Arctic

*Food security is a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life*

**Definition of Food Security  
The State of Food Insecurity in the World,  
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) 2001**

## **Introduction**

After 30 years of stable and at times falling food prices, the world was confronted in the second half of the 2000s with record-breaking food prices. Soaring food costs causing widespread hardship and scarcity were so severe in 2007 that riots and protests broke out in 30 countries around the world: in Mexico, demonstrators protested against the four-fold increase in the price of flat corn; Italy went on a one-day strike in September because of the price of pasta; and in West Bengal, food riots broke out in response to food rationing.

At its peak, the international community was confronted with a confluence of global trends and events which were driving the prices ever upward. A High Level Conference on World Food Security convened by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in June 2008 focused on the causes, consequences and solutions to this latest major threat to global food security. Was the world entering a new phase of food supply uncertainty? If so what were the contributing factors? How should the world respond? How were climate change and the demand for bioenergy crops affecting food supplies?

Four years on, food price volatility persists. In their latest report on global food insecurity, FAO attempts to ask the question whether this volatility in food prices will continue into the future. Its conclusion is that as populations continue to rise and economic prospects improve, there will be a pressure on demand leading to increased prices. In addition, FAO warns that a range of other factors will combine to create a complex situation contributing to the volatility. For example, if the frequency of extreme weather events increases, interruptions to food production in key producing countries will be more frequent. Oil price increases can also increase the attractiveness of biofuel alternatives which in turn will also contribute to raising food prices.

Overall, while the extent of future increases and their underlying causes cannot be forecast with great reliability, what is known is that the risks of volatility are serious enough to ensure that food insecurity remains a high profile priority on the international community's agenda.

From the circumpolar perspective, this persistent volatility in global food prices is significant because it serves to highlight a range of developments and trends which are impacting on Inuit access to affordable and nutritious foods – both traditional foods as well as store bought goods. Food security in the Arctic has been a longstanding issue and has its genesis in a range of driving factors – not just cost. These include geography, pollution of country foods by contaminants, the impact of climate change and economic vulnerability.

This paper provides a summary of the issues which contribute to food insecurity for Inuit living in Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Russia (Chukotka). It also looks at food security from the perspective of the human right for Inuit to access adequate food – whether traditionally harvested or obtained commercially. It has been written by the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) Canada to support the work of the ICC's Circumpolar Inuit Health steering committee in its advising and advocacy role to advance the health and wellbeing of Inuit living across the Arctic.

The Inuit<sup>1</sup> are an indigenous people totaling about 160,000 and living in four countries across the Arctic – Canada, Greenland, USA (Alaska) and Russia (Chukotka). The ICC was founded by Inuit leaders in 1977 to strengthen unity among Inuit living across the Arctic and to promote Inuit rights and interests on an international level.

## **Global factors affecting food security**

Since 2005, a number of factors have combined to bring about a sharp increase in prices across a range of food and feed staples. While steep and often short-lived price increases had occurred in previous decades, the situation has been marked by substantial and simultaneous hikes across a broad range of commodities. By 2008, the international prices of all major food commodities had reached in real terms the highest they have been in 30 years. By 2010, the volatility varied between the commodities with world prices for wheat and maize doubling in the second half of 2010 and the first half of 2011 while rice prices were relatively stable after a tumultuous period of price rises in 2007.

No one factor is responsible for this development. Instead, a range of drivers has evolved to produce these results. According to FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO), these factors are:

***Rapidly increasing fuel prices*** with a dual impact: increasing the cost of production and increasing the cost of distribution.

***Extreme weather*** in major cereal producing countries including extended droughts in Australia and Canada in the second half of the 2000s led to a fall in wheat yield by about a fifth driving up wheat prices by nearly 100 per cent; wheat crop damage in the Russian Federation at the start of the next decade and poor conditions for maize in the USA .

***Reduction in the global level of cereal stocks*** as the increase in demand has been gradually outstripping supply particularly since 2005.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this paper, the term “Inuit” will be used when referring to the different Inuit populations in Canada, Greenland, Alaska and Chukotka although locally, they may be described as Inuit, Kalallit (Greenland), Eskimo (Alaska and Chukotka). Iñupiat (Alaska), and Yupik (Alaska and Chukotka).

***Growth in demand for biofuel commodities:*** A major impact on global markets as producers switch to commodities suitable for the emerging biofuel markets (sugar, palm oil, maize, cassava) resulting in decreased production of other food commodities. This has also been encouraged by legislation in some of the world's biggest farming nations e.g. five per cent of vehicle fuel in the USA must be ethanol.

***Growing demand for food by emerging economies:*** Income growth, particularly in India and China, is leading to changing demands for different food commodities away from starchy foods towards meat and dairy products. However, some observers believe that while this is an important trend, it is not the main cause for the current price hikes.

***Climate change impact*** on agriculture, fisheries and wildlife harvesting. It is recognized that the anticipated extreme weather events resulting from climate change will have increasingly negative consequences for agriculture and fisheries in all regions. This includes the movement of plant pests, animal diseases and invasive alien aquatic organisms.

Separately, the World Economic Forum has recognized food security as a major area for international concern and response. In its 2012 Global Risks Report, a potential global food shortage crisis as well as a water supply crisis stand out as the two most important risks likely to threaten “the stability of modern civilization and the continued well-being of populations” and having “relatively high likelihood and potential impact in the next 10 years”<sup>2</sup> In its earlier 2008 report, WEF had identified food security as “the nexus of a number of issues from energy security to climate change and water scarcity, may be emerging as one of the major risks of the 21st century. Long- and short-term drivers – population growth, changing lifestyles, climate change and the growing use of food crops for biofuels – may be shifting the world into a period of more volatile and sustained high prices. The consequences, particularly for the most vulnerable communities, may be harsh.”<sup>3</sup>

## **Food security for the Inuit**

Against this backdrop of global trends in food security are the specific issues which have particular resonance for Inuit across the Arctic, although in varying degrees. The variations are due in part to the different economic and policy positions in each of the four countries that make up the Arctic Inuit homeland. Also settlement patterns vary across the Arctic. Results from the Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic (SLiCA)<sup>4</sup> showed that in Greenland, most indigenous people live in cities (places with populations over 10,000) or towns (populations between 1,000 and 7,000). In Chukotka and northern Alaska, most live in villages with populations less than 1,000. In Canada, most indigenous people live in towns.

Political and economic contexts aside, the impacts of climate change and the consequential effects on

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<sup>2</sup> 2012 *Global Risks Report*, World Economic Forum, Geneva, 2012

<sup>3</sup> 2008 *Global Risks Report*, World Economic Forum, Geneva, 2008

<sup>4</sup> Survey of Living Conditions in the Arctic: SLiCA is a Sustainable Development initiative of the Arctic Council and is supported by the Inuit Circumpolar Council, the Saami Council, and the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North. Indigenous peoples and researchers from the United States, Canada, Greenland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and the indigenous peoples of the Kola Peninsula and Chukotka in Russia have contributed to SLiCA.

snow and ice are already being felt in small communities throughout the circumpolar north. Among the most significant of these impacts are “health and nutritional concerns (related to the availability of country food) associated with changes in the abundance and migratory patterns of subsistence resources.”<sup>5</sup> In other words, the food situation across the Arctic is increasingly affected by a range of extraneous factors whose effects are being felt very strongly at the local level.

A paper by the Ajunnginiq Centre<sup>6</sup> in 2004, *Hunger in Inuit Communities*, identified significant challenges facing Inuit families across Canada in accessing adequate nutritional food. Four years later, Canada's national Inuit organization, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), hosted a workshop as part of its work in developing a national strategy on Inuit food security. Many of the issues identified at the workshop were similar to those set out in the earlier paper. And the issues impacting on Canadian Inuit are similar to those impacting on Inuit in other parts of the Arctic. The principal challenges to food security across the Arctic are:

- high cost often coupled with economic vulnerability;
- decreasing consumption of country foods.

Exacerbating these challenges are major issues linked to:

- contaminants and
- climate change

#### *High costs and economic vulnerability*

Remoteness, limited transport infrastructure, difficult climatic conditions, high global prices for food commodities and oil all combine to make the cost of food and its distribution a significant driver of food insecurity for many Inuit communities. A price survey conducted by the Canadian department of Indian and Northern Affairs in 2006 and 2007 in 49 isolated northern communities showed that a food basket which would provide a nutritious diet for a family of four for one week costs between C\$350 and C\$450. The same basket cost between C\$195 and C\$225 in southern Canada. Subsequent surveys by the department in 2009 showed similar disparities between southern centres and the north.<sup>7</sup>

At the same time, families living in these remote communities also have to deal with the high cost of other essential commodities including oil, fuel and transportation essential for hunting activities. Confounding the position further are the low income levels, limited access to economic activities and the consequential dependence on social welfare which is often insufficient to cover basic living costs.

While research and anecdotal evidence suggest that the high cost of living in the Arctic is a reality for many Inuit families, it is also true that the mixed economy based on both wage employment and harvesting is still important for circumpolar Inuit as demonstrated by the results of the SLiCA in Alaska and Greenland:

“In Alaska, most products of hunting, fishing, and gathering do not enter the market economy. Rather, subsistence products are directly consumed by the harvesting household,

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<sup>5</sup> The Global Report on Snow and Ice, UNEP, 2007; p. 223

<sup>6</sup> The Ajunnginiq Centre is the Inuit-specific centre within Canada's National Aboriginal Health Organization.

<sup>7</sup> Regional Results of Price Surveys, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100035986> accessed April 2012.

given away, or exchanged. Cash plays an important role in the Alaska mixed economy however. Money buys snow machines, gas, and ammunition. The time spent in wage work may conflict with time that otherwise would be spending harvesting subsistence resources. In Greenland, in contrast, licensed professional hunters account for a large portion of the harvest of traditional foods. Households purchase these products in local open-air markets or processed in supermarkets. Greenlandic households are, with some restrictions, also allowed to hunt and fish for the consumption of their own household. Despite differences in the structure of the mixed economy, these are measures of the extent to which the components of a mixed economy are present in the Arctic.”<sup>8</sup>

In a survey conducted in the Greenlandic community of Qeqertarsuaq in 2008, the community was found to have a mixed-subsistence, cash-based economy with residents undertaking both paid employment as well as traditional harvesting. Traditional foods were widely consumed and were a highly valued component of the diet.<sup>9</sup> But the survey also showed that economic constraints limited access to traditional foods because of the high cost of fuel and other hunting expenses. Further to the high cost of fuel, “the cost of Greenlandic [traditional] food is influenced by supply, as determined by quota restrictions, environmental conditions and animal accessibility”<sup>10</sup> which increase the market value and reduce affordability.

#### *Decreased consumption of country foods*

While the findings on mixed economies operating across the Arctic point to the ongoing importance of country food consumption, data gathered in 2001 by the Kugaaruk Pilot Project under Canada's Food Mail program<sup>11</sup> pointed to a general drop in the amount of country food included in the diet of those taking part in the survey although country food was available.<sup>12</sup>

It has also been suggested that this trend away from country food is evident in Greenland. “Social pressures from outside, such as increased exposure to western lifestyles as a result of television and development of Arctic mineral resources, etc., and the associated increased availability of western foods and its promotion through advertising are all factors that contribute to a non-directed dietary change, moving away from nutritious traditional food towards a non-balanced westernized diet.”<sup>13</sup>

A study in Alaska also pointed to a shift in Inuit diets towards an increased reliance on a western diet, although country foods were still regularly consumed with consumption varied with age, geographic location and season.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> SLiCA Results, March 2007; pp 4-5.

<sup>9</sup> *Prevalence of food insecurity in a Greenlandic community and the importance of social, economic and environmental stressors*, C. Goldhar, J.D. Ford, L. Berrang-Ford, *International Journal of Circumpolar Health*, 69:3 2010

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 297

<sup>11</sup> The Nutrition North Canada program replaced the Food Mail program in April 2011.

<sup>12</sup> *Hunger in the Arctic: Food (in)Security in Inuit Communities*, David Boulton, Ajunnginiq Centre, 2004

<sup>13</sup> *Dietary transition and contaminants in the Arctic: emphasis on Greenland*, Jens C. Hansen, Bente Deutch, Jon Øyvind Odland, *Circumpolar Health supplement* 2008-2; p. 12

<sup>14</sup> *The legal protection of subsistence: a prerequisite of food security for the Inuit of Alaska*; Sophie Thériault, Chislain Otis, Gérard Duhaime and Christopher Furgal; *Alaska Law Review*, 2007.

In Russia, a different trend has emerged. During the Soviet era, Chukotka's Inuit were compelled to eat the ubiquitous and often mass produced Soviet food. The pressure was such that traditional foods were often only eaten in secret. Hunting rifles were discouraged in this Cold War region while collective enterprises such as fur farms and dairies were encouraged. Whales were no longer hunted by the locals but rather large government boats would catch gray whales and deliver them from village to village. A local hunter economy was replaced in a matter of two decades by a centrally-planned economy.

The massive upheaval in the post Soviet era of the 1990s brought about widespread social pressures to include more Western European-style food in the Russian diet. But rather than move even further away from traditional foods during this post-Soviet period, there was a resurgence in popularity of traditional foods among the Inuit and lost skills were regained. But this resurgence was due largely to economic hardship.

The increasingly difficult economic circumstances that the Chukotkans faced is summed up as follows: "According to official statistics, during the 1990s the real income in Chukotka was continually reduced and by 1999 it amounted to no more than 25% of the 1993 income value....By 2000, the indigenous population's purchasing power regarding foodstuffs was one-twelfth of what it was in 1985."<sup>15</sup> Or as the report describes later, it was the food crisis in Chukotka that became one of the prime reasons for the resumption of hunting.

### *Contaminants*

A complicating factor in the consumption of country food has been the presence of contaminants. Because of the remote location of the Arctic, it had previously been regarded as pristine. When Rachel Carson first described the detrimental impact of organochlorine pesticides on the environment in her book *Silent Spring* in 1962, she noted that "when scientists investigated the native diet of the Eskimos living [along the Arctic shores of Alaska] it was found to be free from insecticides. The fresh and dried fish; the fat, oil, or meat from beaver, beluga, caribou, moose, oogruk, polar bear, and walrus [...] all had so far escaped contamination."<sup>16</sup>

Twenty years later, researchers were surprised to find elevated levels of chemicals in blood and lipid tissues of indigenous populations in northern Canada, although possible emission sources were far away. It was found that the chemicals that were produced and used in the industrial regions of Europe, Russia, Canada and the USA had found their way into the Arctic food web, with the result that the formerly pristine diet of Inuit had become among the most contaminated.

Of particular concern was the way in which a wide spectrum of substances – persistent organic pollutants (POPs), heavy metals, and radionuclides - were reaching unexpectedly high levels in the Arctic ecosystem. The reason for these very high levels is linked to the special characteristics of the Arctic ecosystem. Marine mammals, which are a substantial part of the Inuit traditional diet, rely on fat reserves for energy and insulation against the cold. It is also a fact that the contaminants biomagnify up the food-chain. Most marine mammals are predators, and with each step up the food chain, the chemicals are more concentrated, until they reach the very high levels. Conversely, marine fish and

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<sup>15</sup> Indigenous Peoples of Northern Russia: Anthropology and Health; Andrew Kozlov, Galina Vershubsky, Maria Kozlova; Circumpolar Health Supplements, 2001, no. 1; p 116

<sup>16</sup> *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson, Mariner Books, Boston, New York, 1962

animals which are lower down the food chain will have lower contaminant levels. POPs, because of their chemical properties, concentrate in fatty tissues and when consumed, the high levels of contaminants stored in these tissues are transferred to humans. The result is that in some parts of the Arctic, levels of contaminants in blood and breast milk are higher than those found anywhere else in the world.

In weighing up the very tangible health and cultural benefits of maintaining a traditional diet along side the negative consequences of moving away from traditional diets, health authorities throughout the Arctic support the continued consumption of traditional foods but also recommend an increased consumption of traditional products sourced from animals lower down the food chain and therefore less contaminated such as Arctic char.

In the meantime, the international community has been working to reduce, and if possible eliminate, contaminant emissions. The European Community created the first international legally binding instrument aimed at reducing air pollution in 1979 in Geneva. The resulting Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP) entered into force in 1983. It has been extended by eight specific protocols, among them the Protocol on POPs and the Protocol on Heavy Metals, both of which entered into force in 2003. In 2001, with a strong role of the Canadian Government and aboriginal organizations (led by ICC), 114 countries signed the Stockholm Convention on POPs.

As a result of these efforts, it has been recently reported that levels of some contaminants in the Arctic environment have been declining. But it has also been found by several studies that a number of contaminants (e.g. mercury and some newly emerging POPs) are not decreasing in the environment and need immediate international action. With the emergence of the new POPs, it is increasingly difficult to keep up with the changing threat of contamination. Difficulties include the development of new methods to reliably measure the new chemicals and to evaluate which chemicals need to be scanned for. Several thousand different chemicals are being continuously released into the environment and determining which ones are of particular concern and need to be monitored is a difficult task.

One of the major issues confronting Inuit in Chukotka is the limited monitoring and response by authorities to the address the extent of contamination in traditional foods. According to ICC Chukotka, there is a strong concentration of heavy metals and mercury in the fat of marine animals. Deer and water fowl have also been found to contain high levels of cadmium and mercury. The impact is particularly felt among families on lower incomes as they rely more on traditional foods for their diet.

### *Climate change*

Eating country foods is important not only because of their nutritional benefits but also because of the broader importance of harvesting in supporting traditional knowledge and skills. But climate change is having an increasing and significant impact on hunting. As the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) was reminded at its seventh session 2008 when special rapporteurs, Aqqaluk Lyngé, then President of ICC Greenland and now Chair of ICC, and Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, then chair of UNPFII, presented their report, *Climate change, biocultural diversity and livelihoods: the stewardship role of indigenous peoples and new challenges:*

For more than 20 years, indigenous hunters and elders in the Arctic have reported changes in their environment. Hunters speak of thinning sea ice that makes

hunting much more dangerous, changes to permafrost that alter spring run-off patterns, a northward shift in seal and fish species, and rising sea levels with more extreme tidal fluctuations. They report that species they rely on are disappearing and that hunting routes near shorelines have disappeared due to erosion brought on by the thawing of permafrost. Villages have experienced increased flooding in winter due to lessened or disappearing pack ice that normally protects shorelines.

Traditional hunters interviewed for ICC's report, *The Sea Ice is Our Highway*<sup>17</sup> reported that they had to travel further to access wildlife. Formerly safe travel routes had become insecure due to a warming climate and melting ice. Wildlife habits and migration routes were changing.

In a 2009 UNEP/Grid-Arendal report, the authors note that climate change “poses a threat to country [traditional] food security in northern regions because it influences animal availability, human ability to access wildlife and the safety and quality of wildlife for consumption”. They cite examples of higher winds making tavel and hunting more difficult and dangerous by boat in summer; the increased length of the ice-free season and decreased ice thickness making it more difficult and dangerous to access ice-dependent wildlife.<sup>18</sup>

The 2008 survey conducted in Qeqertarsuaq, Greenland, also reported on the changes observed by local residents and the way in which animal availability and the ability to hunt and fish were closely linked with environmental conditions.<sup>19</sup>

## **The Inuit right to food security**

Food security is inextricably linked to a person's ability to exercise his or her right to food. That right is included in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family (sic) including food” (Article 25). It is also enshrined in the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has recognized the importance of food security for indigenous peoples – not just from a calorific perspective but also from the broader socio-cultural perspective. In its paper on *The Right to Adequate Food*, the significance of food and its accessibility is acknowledged as being “inextricably grounded in ... socio-cultural traditions and [the] special relationship to ancestral territories and resources. Food and its procurement and consumption are often an important part of their culture, as well as of social, economic and political organization.”<sup>20</sup> For Inuit, this linkage between food and culture is inextricable.

Also important in the context of the right to food is the States obligation to protect the right to food. For Inuit across the Arctic, this is particularly relevant in terms of the level of chemically contaminated

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<sup>17</sup> *The Sea Ice is Our Highway: an Inuit perspective on transportation in the Arctic*, a contribution by ICC to the Arctic Council's Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment, March 2008

<sup>18</sup> *Assessing the impacts of climate change on food security in the Canadian Arctic*, prepared by Grid-Arendal, Stephanie Meakin and Tiina Kurvits, Canada, March 2009

<sup>19</sup> *Prevalence of food insecurity in a Greenlandic community and the importance of social, economic and environmental stressors*, C. Goldhar, J.D. Ford, L. Berrang-Ford, *International Journal of Circumpolar Health*, 69:3 2010

<sup>20</sup> The Right to Adequate Food, UNHCHR, Fact Sheet No. 34

traditional foods. In this, OHCHR points out that States have to protect the right to food against violations by third parties. “For example, States should prevent third parties from destroying sources of food by, for instance, polluting land, water and air with hazardous industrial or agricultural products or destroying the ancestral lands of indigenous peoples”. As noted earlier, this area of contaminants is one in which ICC has taken a leading role internationally to bring about changes to international regulations and governance surrounding the production of contaminants which threaten the Arctic and its wildlife.

## **Responding to the challenge of food security and ICC's role**

The food security situation for Inuit across the Arctic varies from community to community and is influenced by various factors. The development of effective strategies to address Inuit food security requires the close involvement of the communities affected as well as local and other authorities to ensure that the issues specific to the different locations are taken into account.

In considering food security in Inuit communities as a broader issue, it is important to remember that access to food isn't simply a technical issue. As spelled out clearly in the Rome Declaration which came out of the 1996 World Food Summit, there are integral links between food security and human rights. “Democracy, promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, and the full and equal participation of men and women are essential for achieving sustainable food security for all.”

Realization of this right to food is a responsibility shared by all, from families and communities through to national governments and international organizations. Existing national and regional responses to support that right include programs such as Canada's Northern Contaminants Program. National and state legislation which ensures Inuit with the appropriate rights to traditional hunting, fishing and gathering activities is another appropriate way to protect Inuit food security for nutritional, cultural and economic reasons.<sup>21</sup> Similarly the international community has a responsibility to ensure indigenous rights are not nullified as a consequence of international agreements.

It is in this area of promoting the Inuit right to food that ICC is in a position to play a particular role through its ongoing international advocacy work including in the UNPFII, UN Human Rights Council, Arctic Council, the International Whaling Commission and if feasible, appropriate FAO meetings. ICC already makes significant contributions in representing Inuit interests in international organizations tackling challenges including climate change and other environmental issues of pressing importance such as Arctic marine pollution and contaminants all of which are impacting on the Inuit right to food.

Another important contribution by ICC is the work undertaken to ensure that Inuit traditional knowledge is considered in the international efforts to underpin biodiversity particularly in the Arctic. The link between biodiversity and food security is well recognized and was reconfirmed in the 1996 Rome Declaration. ICC's work in the UN Convention for Biological Diversity (CBD) processes offers a valuable opportunity to contribute the Inuit knowledge and skills to the ongoing effort to conserve and protect biodiversity. A fundamental consideration in all of this work is that hunting is vital for Inuit

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<sup>21</sup> *The legal protection of subsistence: a prerequisite of food security for the Inuit of Alaska*, Sophie Thériault, Chislain Otis, Gérard Duhaime and Christopher Furgal; *Alaska Law Review*, 2007.

not just for health and dietary reasons but also for the health of Inuit culture.

An important ICC activity linked to this is ICC Alaska's work with Alaskan Inuit communities. ICC Alaska has recently launched a new project "Building a Framework on How to Assess Food Security From an Inuit Perspective". Throughout this project ICC Alaska will work with Alaskan Inuit communities to identify the multi-faceted dimensions involved in food in/security. The finished framework will provide an overarching guidance on how to assess food security from an Inuit perspective, utilizing both Traditional Knowledge and Science. The finished product will be submitted to the Arctic Council with encouragement for the assessment to be conducted across the entire Arctic. Additionally, ICC Alaska and its membership have begun the process of approaching the US federal government to address food security co-management issues at this time.

## **Conclusion**

Food security or rather food insecurity continues to be a major priority for ICC's consideration and action. That action is undertaken on several fronts – through United Nations forums to push for frameworks and international legislation that regulate the production and distribution of contaminants; through international human rights bodies to ensure that the Inuit right to adequate food is protected; through regional and international environmental organizations to highlight the impact of climate change on the Arctic and its consequences for Inuit food security; and through national as well as international bodies to protect Arctic biodiversity which underpins Inuit health and wellbeing. As the international community's concerns about the future of global food security persist, so too does ICC's concerns about how this translates into the food security situation for Inuit across the Arctic. As a result, food security will remain a top priority for ICC action.

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