

## NEWS RELEASE



### **NTI Intervenes with Systemic Discrimination in Education at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

(April 29, 2022, Iqaluit, Nunavut) Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) President Aluki Kotierk has urged the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) to intervene in Canada's failure to address systemic discrimination in education.

President Kotierk intervened during the UNPFII's discussion on education and human rights. She reported that systemic destruction and discrimination of Indigenous languages in Canada is on-going through both Canadian federal and Nunavut territorial legislation, policy, and practice.

The Government of Nunavut's amendments to the *Education Act* and *Inuit Language Protection Act* in 2019-20 drastically reduced Inuit right to Inuktitut-education. Government perpetuates systemic discrimination by providing Inuit students – which make up 94% of the student population in Nunavut – an education system comprised predominantly of English or French. Inuit are denied equal opportunity to education in our own language and culture.

This violates constitutionally protected equality rights of Nunavut Inuit guaranteed under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (the *Charter*). But the Government of Nunavut, by filing a motion to dismiss NTI's Statement of Claim, alleges that the only language education rights in Canada belong to English and French.

"Government must truly believe in the capacity of Inuit and work to empower them. The reduction of Inuktitut language of instruction to a language arts class and delaying that to the year 2039 based on the view that there are not enough qualified Inuit is discriminatory. With commitment and innovative action, Inuit children can receive education in Inuktitut, by Inuit in Nunavut's education system," said NTI President Aluki Kotierk.

The twenty-first session of UNPFII is being held from April 25 to May 6, 2022 at the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York, New York. The UN adopted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007, which provides the right for Indigenous Peoples:

- To revitalize, use, develop, and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures; and
- To establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

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Canada adopted the UNDRIP in 2016 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act received Royal Assent on June 21, 2021.

***For further information:***

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