**Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.
President, Ms. Aluki Kotierk**

*Item 4: Discussion on the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum (economic and social development, culture, environment, education, health and human rights)*

As 2022 marks the start of the United Nation’s International Decade of Indigenous Languages, I call upon the Government of Canada to recognize Inuktut as an official and founding language of Canada in Nunavut, so that our language, Inuktut, is afforded equitable supports and resources of that provided to English and French languages in Nunavut.

Allow me to remind you that Nunavut is the only jurisdiction in Canada, where homogenously the public majority mother-tongue language is neither of Canada’s official languages of French or English.

In 2020, the Government of Nunavut passed legislation that drastically reduced the legal provision of Inuktut language of instruction within our schools. It reduced its commitment to full Inuktut education in all subject areas and grade levels, to one elective Inuktut language course.

The legislation violates constitutionally protected equality rights of Nunavut Inuit guaranteed under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

In October 2021, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated launched a case asserting the right of Inuit students to receive equal treatment in education in Inuktut. Earlier this month, the Government of Nunavut filed a motion to dismiss our case, alleging that the only language education rights in Canada belong to English and French speaking people under the Charter, and that Inuit do not have a right to language within education.

In 1976, when Inuit negotiators tabled a proposal for the creation of a Nunavut Territory, the most important strategic objective was political self-determination. As one of our leaders, John Amagoalik explained, “our intent was simple: the survival of our people, our language, our heritage, our philosophy—our whole way of life.”

With the signing of the *Nunavut Agreement* in 1993, which resulted in the creation of Nunavut, Inuit expected that government would deliver Inuktut-language education, as a foundation for achieving Inuit economic, social, and cultural well-being, including producing an Inuktut-speaking workforce.

To date, over 70% of Inuit youth are dropping out of school, or rather, being pushed out, due to a formal education system that is based on a foreign language and culture. Inuit students, who make up 94% of the student population, are denied equal opportunity to education in our own language and culture.

This is linguicide. Inuit expect and deserve better.