



CREE AND INNU LEADERS IN DIALOGUE WITH SAMI COUNTERPARTS AT UNITED NATIONS

New York, April 20, 2023 – During their visit of the United Nations, representatives of the Cree Nation Government and the Innu Nation are pleased to have discussed environmental issues with their Sami counterparts.

On Wednesday, Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty of the Cree Nation Government and Chief Mike McKenzie of the Innu Nation participated in the event *Indigenous Driven Solutions to Conservation and Climate Change: Focus on Reindeer/Caribou*. This international panel included:

- President Tuomas Aslak Juuso, The Sámi Parliament in Finland
- President Silje Karine Muotka, The Sámi Parliament in Norway
- Grand Chief Mandy Gull-Masty, Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government
- Chief Mike McKenzie, Innu TakuaiKAN Uashat mak Mani-utenam, representing the Innu Nation
- Melissa Saganash, Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Nation Government

The event was held as part of the current session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Although thousands of kilometers separate their territories, Innu, Cree and Sami leaders shared similar observations and fears about the state of the reindeer and caribou herds.

"Protecting Nitassinan goes hand in hand with protecting our age-old relationship with atik^u (caribou), protecting our culture and the well-being of our communities. Sharing with the Cree and Sami our common concerns and aspirations was a rewarding exercise. Building Nation-to-Nation relationships with indigenous governments in other parts of the world is a demonstration of Innu sovereignty and autonomy. We are very proud to build relationships and share our traditional and contemporary knowledge with the Sami governments," said Chief McKenzie.

Chief Gull-Masty and Chief McKenzie presented to their European counterparts the collaboration that exists between the Cree and Innu for the preservation and hunting of caribou.

"This very special day, recognizing the importance of earth, it is essential that Indigenous voices are not only heard bringing solutions to the table for climate, but are given a rightful place to teach them. Sharing our experience of offering an Indigenous lead conservation approach is so important, and I believe that we have so much more to learn from one another.", Grand Chief Gull-Masty said.

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