



# Arctic Athabaskan Council

2166-2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada, Y1A 4P1

Telephone: (867) 393-9214 or 393-9200

Facsimile: (867) 668-6577

[www.arcticathabaskancouncil.com](http://www.arcticathabaskancouncil.com)

## Arctic Athabaskan Council Press Release

Arctic Athabaskan Council Calls Upon the Minister of Foreign Affairs to include Arctic Indigenous Peoples in Arctic Summit.

February 12, 2010 Whitehorse, Yukon

Mr. Bill Erasmus, International Chair of the Arctic Athabaskan Council, today called upon Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to invite representatives of Arctic Indigenous Peoples to the March 29 meeting in Chelsea Quebec of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the five Arctic Ocean littoral states.

Noting that AAC and five other Arctic Indigenous Peoples organizations are “permanent participants” to the eight-nation Arctic Council Mr. Erasmus said “It makes no sense for us to be included in the Arctic Council but excluded in meetings of the five Arctic Ocean states”.

Minister Cannon issued a press release on February 3 saying the purpose of the Chelsea meeting is to “encourage new thinking on responsible development in the region.” Mr. Erasmus responded, “We don’t see how the minister can discuss ‘responsible development’ in the Arctic with his counterparts from the United States, Russia, Denmark/Greenland and Norway without representatives of northern Canada, particularly Arctic Indigenous Peoples, attending and contributing.”

Mr. Erasmus added, “It is important to maintain the integrity and status of the Arctic Council as the key ‘high level forum’ in the circumpolar world. In his press release, Minister Cannon said that the Chelsea meeting will ‘reinforce ongoing collaboration in the region, including in the Arctic Council.’ We invite the minister to tell us how this will be achieved when we are not even in the room”.

For further information, contact:

Mr. Bill Erasmus, AAC International Chair, 613 859-5063; or  
Ms. Cindy Dickson, AAC Executive Director, 867-393-9214.