

Arctic Indigenous Language Symposium (SDWG)  
Develop an Arctic Language Declaration  
Tromso, Norway  
October 19-20, 2008

**Travelers:**

William Firth; William Greenland; Brandon Kyikavichik; Hishinlai Sidorski

**Funding:**

ICC Canada through INAC

**Purpose of Trip:** To Attend Arctic Indigenous Language Symposium

**Background:**

**General Summary of Symposium October 17-20, 2008**

- The Arctic Indigenous Language Symposium was a great beginning to the many issues that our languages are facing in the light of the many related issues that have brought it to its' present state. If we do nothing with what we have within our Elders, we will surely lose the battle to carry on the vast amount of knowledge and appreciation for our rich culture. For the many people that relayed to the Symposium the status of their languages, we'll be forever grateful as this gives us the strength and courage to proclaim to the world that we are not alone in our struggles. We believe that we can convince our people and others that we are not done when it comes to reviving our Gwich'in language for the mere fact that we have not gone through this 'tunnel of shame' on our own. There are others that carry the burden and have proven that we can reverse this trend. We will need more people to view the issue from the other end of the lens and persuade to carry the torch with us to bring our languages back into the home and into the community.

**Upcoming Meetings**

- We encourage the development of a similar type symposium to address and further develop the ideas and plans that were brought forward from this symposium. We must continue to expose the issue and push the envelope into the mindsets of many of our people and our neighbors, then the issue will only show signs of promise in the future. We have started with awareness; now we need to continue into reality. Something of this magnitude can only bring good things to our people throughout the circumpolar world.

**Thoughts and Opinions**

- We are thankful that we were given the opportunity to be involved in this worldwide gathering. We can go far if we continue work in unison. We have so much in common and collectively we can address this issue. If we are to survive in the future, we must work together and believe that we are on the right track in working together and share our experiences, learn from each other and move forward united.

**Future work for GCI:**

- GCI must continue to stay engaged in issues that relate to our language and culture. At times, our communities and people struggle to address these issues on

their own. We need our leaders to be aware of the situation and be on side when we meeting with dignitaries and officials about our challenges and ensure that our resources are adequate and compliment our learning styles.

**Future work for the Executive Director of GCI:**

- The Executive Director continues to keep our people informed of what we are doing at the GCI level. We want to thank ICC and INAC for all their assistance leading up to the symposium and for the opportunity to share our story with the Indigenous Peoples of the Circumpolar World.