

March 23, 2016

**Mr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias**

Executive Secretary

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

413, Saint Jacques Street, suite 800

Montreal QC H2Y 1N9

**RE: CBD Notification 2016-018**

Dear Mr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias:

Canada would like to provide the following information, in response to CBD Notification 2016-018 regarding the theme of the International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB): “Mainstreaming Biodiversity; Sustaining People and their Livelihoods”.

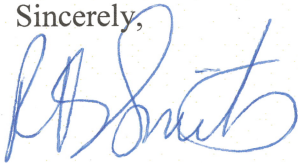
The Canadian management system for polar bear was first put in place in the 1960s in recognition of the Indigenous right to harvest wildlife, and to ensure that populations of polar bear across the Canadian Arctic remained viable. This system enables the continuance of traditional harvesting practices for Inuit and Cree of Canada’s North while maintaining a viable population of polar bears. Harvesting rights are protected under the various land claim agreements between the Cree and Inuit of Canada and the Canadian governments. Protecting the values and traditions of Arctic and northern communities and protecting and improving their socio-economic conditions is a cornerstone to the management system that Canada has had in place for over 40 years.

In a region where the cost of living is extremely high and economic prospects are scarce, polar bear hunting is a source of nutritious food and an opportunity to generate income and undertake traditional cultural practices. As a result of Canada’s robust and responsive polar bear management system, the rights and cultural traditions of Indigenous people in Canada are maintained; communities continue to engage in sustainable harvest of polar bears and hunters pass along traditions and practices to younger generations. The co-management system has also enabled an overall improvement in the status of polar bears within Canada; the majority of polar bear subpopulations in the Canadian Arctic are stable or increasing.

The primary reason for the success of the co-management system for wildlife in the Canadian North is the direct involvement of hunters and communities, which comprises the inclusion of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge, in addition to science, for decision-making. Accordingly, the Wildlife Management Boards, established under the various Land Claim Agreements, integrate multiple sources of information into their decision making. It is well-established that the engagement of communities traditionally dependent on wildlife resources leads to more effective decision-making.

Also in response to this notification, Canada would like to share the Arctic Council's video about traditional ways of life in the Arctic: <https://vimeo.com/125676295>.

Sincerely,



Risa Smith  
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Manager, International Biodiversity Policy  
on behalf of

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Executive Director, Canadian Wildlife Service  
Environment and Climate Change Canada  
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