

## **Ni'inlii Declaration**

Vashraii K'oo

July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016

*"We, as Gwich'in youth, believe that the power of our ancestors runs strong in our blood. We have to work and get together to support our development of Gwich'in skills, knowledge and values. Our growing minds need positivity and support for our growth. We need to learn how to reach out to our resources. We live between two forever-changing worlds, and we need to find our own voice and have it be heard." Statement of the Gwich'in Youth*

The Gwich'in Nation from Alaska, the Yukon and Northwest Territories at the 14<sup>th</sup> bi-annual Gwich'in Gathering, hereby declare that we will come together in unity, strength and leadership to address the issues facing our people.

The Gwich'in will honor and uphold natural laws and our natural environment.

The Gwich'in assert our inherent right to govern ourselves as a nation and to bring forward the teachings and ways of our people to secure their longevity through our youth.

The Gwich'in recognize the division that the US/Canadian border has created among our nation and will work to strengthen relations and collaboration across our nation.

The Gwich'in will honor the right of our youth to be supported positively in their growth. We recognize our youth are one of our most powerful resources and will honor their journey and mentor them into leaders.

The Gwich'in define our own standards and benchmarks of success.

The Gwich'in declare diiginjik is our first language.

We call upon all Gwich'in to exercise our inheritance: language, values, cultural practices, spirituality, and knowledge.

The Gwich'in must stand strong in our identity, the foundation of which comes from our relationships with the land, air, water, plants, and animals.

The Gwich'in shall support a global just transition from destructive fossil fuels toward sustainable energy and economy, which upholds our culture and way of life for generations to come.

The Gwich'in stand in solidarity and support of permanent protection of the Porcupine Caribou calving and post calving grounds and their migratory routes. We will ensure the restoration and conservation of the salmon in the Yukon River watershed.

We call upon our Gwich'in people to support one another in healing, to live healthy lives and bring balance to our cultural, physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing.

Gwich'in will stand together and safeguard our vision of the future and ensure its delivery into the world through our youth with guidance from our Elders and Vit'eegwigwaach'yaa this will come to pass.