

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Sheila Watt-Cloutier to give public lecture on global climate change and impacts for local communities, as the world begins UN COP-17 negotiations.

Sheila Watt-Cloutier, an Inuk climate change advocate and Nobel Peace Prize Nominee, will be giving a public lecture at Mount Allison University on the human dimensions of climate change. It will be held on November 29th at 7 PM (Atlantic Time) in Convocation Hall. Entitled "Not the Time to COP Out", the lecture will mark the second day of the international UN COP-17 climate change negotiations in Durban, South Africa.

As a former international Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), Watt-Cloutier has worked extensively at the UN level to advocate on behalf of Inuit, who are disproportionately affected by climate change. She was amongst the first to link climate change within a human rights framework and as a result was co-nominated with Al Gore for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007. As a Visiting Scholar at Mount Allison, this is Watt-Cloutier's first and only public lecture in New Brunswick, and offers Maritime communities an unparalleled opportunity to learn more about global climate change and what it means for local communities. About the event, Watt-Cloutier states:

"As Northerners, we see the dramatic impacts climate change is having on our environment and communities, indeed, it is changing the very nature of our lives. The changes we see in the Arctic are now starting to impact others globally and, in this context, it's important for the world to come together at COP-17 to find solutions. It's not the time to COP out."

The lecture will have global resonance as it comes at the beginning of COP-17 (November 28th - December 9th, 2011), the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. This is the final opportunity for global governments to agree on a binding international framework to address climate change that will replace the Kyoto Protocol, which is set to expire in 2012. The event is organized by the Department of Geography and Environment's Arctic Environmental Change course, facilitated by Watt-Cloutier and Ian Mauro, Canada Research Chair in Human Dimensions of Environmental Change. Mauro notes:

"Sheila's perspective - as an environmental, cultural, and human rights advocate - will help us all to better understand climate change, its impacts, and what's at stake if the world fails to mitigate climate change. The students in our class are working tirelessly to help organize this event and ensure that Sheila's voice reaches local and global audiences at this critical time."

In addition to the local event, Watt-Cloutier's lecture will be broadcast live over the internet on IsumaTV, an indigenous-focused multi-media website. Communities across Canada and the world are encouraged to organize screenings. These satellite events can tune into www.isuma.tv and Skype (address: [ismatvwebcaster](https://www.skype.com/join/ismatvwebcaster)) in live to Mount Allison University to ask questions. A map to Mount Allison's Convocation Hall can be found here (#1): <http://www.mta.ca/map/index.html>

For more information please contact: Patrick Forestell plforestell@mta.ca and 506-227-3632

GENV 4991 Arctic Environmental Change presents:
A PUBLIC LECTURE BY
SHEILA WATT-CLOUTIER

“Not the Time to COP Out”
Climate Change, Human Rights, and the
UN COP-17 Negotiations

Tuesday, November 29, 2011
Convocation Hall, Mount Allison University, at 7 pm

Sheila Watt-Cloutier

As former international Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, Watt-Cloutier has worked extensively at the UN level to advocate on behalf of Northern and Inuit peoples, who are disproportionately affected by climate change. She was amongst the first to link climate change within a human rights framework and, as a result, was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. This public lecture coincides with the UN international climate change negotiations, COP-17, which is the final opportunity for the world to ratify a post-Kyoto Protocol agreement. This is Watt-Cloutier's first public lecture in New Brunswick and as a Visiting Scholar at Mount Allison University.



 For more information, visit our facebook group at “Not the Time to Cop Out.”

MountAllison
UNIVERSITY



Sheila Watt-Cloutier *Silla*



Sheila Watt-Cloutier currently resides in Iqaluit, Nunavut. She was born in Kuujjuaq, Nunavik (northern Quebec), and was raised traditionally in her early years before attending school in southern Canada and in Churchill, Manitoba. She is the past Chair of Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), the organization that represents internationally the 155,000 Inuit of Canada, Greenland, Alaska, and Chukotka in the Far East of the Federation of Russia.

Dealing with youth issues holistically is important for Ms. Watt-Cloutier. She contributed significantly to "Silatunirmut: The Pathway to Wisdom," the 1992 report of the review of educational programming in Nunavik, and she co-wrote, produced and co-directed the youth awareness video "Capturing Spirit: The Inuit Journey."

Ms. Watt-Cloutier was a political spokesperson for Inuit for over a decade. From 1995 to 1998, she was Corporate Secretary of Makivik Corporation, set-up under the 1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Land Claims Agreement. Defending the rights of Inuit has been at the forefront of Ms. Watt-Cloutier's mandate since her election as President of ICC Canada in 1995 and re-election in 1998. Ms. Watt-Cloutier was instrumental as a spokesperson for a coalition of northern Indigenous Peoples in the global negotiations that led to the 2001 Stockholm Convention banning the generation and use of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) that contaminate the arctic food web. In 2002, Ms. Watt-Cloutier was elected international Chair of ICC.

She contributed markedly to ICC Canada's Institution-Building for Northern Russian Indigenous Peoples' Project, which focused on economic development and training in remote northern communities.

During the past several years, Ms. Watt-Cloutier has alerted the world that Inuit will not become a footnote to the onslaught of globalization by working through the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to defend Inuit human rights against the impacts of climate change. On December 7, 2005, she filed a climate change-related petition with to the Commission as an urgent message from the Inuit "sentinels" to the rest of the world on global warming's already dangerous impacts.¹ Most recently, on March 1, 2007, she testified before the Commission during their extraordinary first hearing on the links between climate change and human rights.²

¹ See <http://www.inuitcircumpolar.com/index.php?ID=316&Lang=En>.

² See <http://www.earthjustice.org/news/press/007/inter-american-commission-on-human-rights-Hearing-on-Global-Warming.html>.

Ms. Watt-Cloutier received the inaugural Global Environment Award from the World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations in recognition for her POPs work. She is the recipient of the 2004 Aboriginal Achievement Award for Environment. In 2005, she was honored with the United Nations Champion of the Earth Award and the Sophie prize in Norway. Later in the year, she was presented with the inaugural Northern Medal by the outgoing Governor General of Canada, Adrienne Clarkson.

In early 2006, Global Green, USA, the American Branch of Mikhail Gorbachev's Green Cross International, selected Sheila for its International Environmental Leadership Award, and in June she received both the Citation of Lifetime Achievement from the Canadian Environment Awards and the Earth Day Canada International Environment Award. Also in June, the University of Winnipeg conferred Ms. Watt-Cloutier with an Honorary Doctorate of Law. Sheila was made an Officer in the Order of Canada in December 2006.

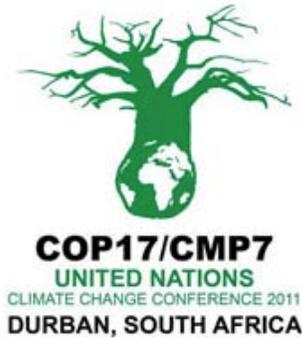
In February, 2007, she was publicly nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by members of the Norwegian parliament, including the former Minister of the Environment. Also in Norway, she received the Rachel Carson Prize in June, 2007. Later that month at the U.N. Human Development Awards in New York, Secretary General Ban Ki Moon presented Sheila with the 2007 Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Award. In April 2008, the Public Policy Forum honored her with a Testimonial Award at its 21st Annual Testimonial Award Dinner in Toronto, Canada.

In 2008, she has been recognized with honorary doctorates from the Universities of Guelph, Windsor, Ottawa along with Royal Roads University, Wilfred Laurier University, La Institute Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique, and McMaster University. She received three additional honorary degrees in 2009 from the Universities of Western Ontario, the University of Alberta and Bowdoin College in Maine, USA. In 2010 she received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Victoria as well as being named one of 25 Transformational Canadians by the Globe and Mail and CTV.

She has served as a mentor for two Trudeau Foundation Scholars pursuing their Ph.D.'s. She remains connected to her life's work through activism and advocacy work which includes membership as Commissioner on the civil society Commission on Arctic Climate Change led by the Aspen Institute. She remains very busy with speaking engagements, is currently a Visiting Scholar at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick and is also writing a book to further share her message to the world: "The Right to be Cold."

Ms. Watt-Cloutier sums up her work by saying: "I do nothing more than remind the world that the Arctic is not a barren land devoid of life but a rich and majestic land that has supported our resilient culture for millennia. Even though small in number and living far from the corridors of power, it appears that the wisdom of the land strikes a universal chord on a planet where many are searching for sustainability."

Backgrounder on COP 17 and the UNFCCC



The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is the international body, which serves to address the most contentious issues surrounding climate change. These include the struggle to create binding emissions targets, how states will finance adaptation and mitigation, the transfer of technology, and the controversy surrounding “common but differentiated responsibility,” meaning that states that have contributed less to climate change are not beholden to the same emissions targets as industrialized nations.

The 17th Conference of Parties of the UNFCCC will take place in Durban, South Africa from November 28 – December 9, 2011. The theme of the negotiations is “Working Together: Saving Tomorrow Today.” COP 17 is expected to build upon the gains made in Cancun at COP 16 last year. In Cancun, states most notably agreed to create a \$100 million “Green Fund” for climate change adaptation and mitigation activities in the developing world and committed to protecting the world’s most vulnerable forests.

The first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol is set to end in 2012. In order for states to have an international, binding, emissions framework in which to act on climate change, a new framework will need to be developed in Durban. In many ways, the outcomes of Durban will determine the potential for states to collectively act on climate change.