



OFFICE OF THE CHAIRPERSON

Plan Nord – A Tool to Improve Our Living Conditions

On Monday, May 9, 2011, Québec released the Plan Nord. The Kativik Regional Government (KRG) played an active role in the process leading up to the announcement, participating in the Québec working-group consultations and reporting on developments at every KRG Council sitting over the past year and a half.

The KRG works very closely with the Northern villages and exercises municipal powers on category III lands in accordance with the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA)* and with the *Act respecting Northern Villages and the Kativik Regional Government*. It is the organization's responsibility to take part in all discussions about the development of our region, as well as to take every opportunity to try to improve the living conditions of Nunavimmiut. The KRG has in fact made a point of participating in all the consultations put forward by Québec since the mid-1990s as a way to have the region's priorities addressed. The Plan Nord represents the most recent opportunity to speak up on behalf of Nunavimmiut.

I want to acknowledge the key roles played in the Plan Nord consultations by Nunavik organizations, and thank in particular the regional representatives who worked so tirelessly. The Makivik Corporation was present to protect Inuit rights and to contribute to discussions on economic development for the benefit of our communities. The Kativik School Board (KSB) was involved in the working groups on education, culture and language protection. The Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) contributed to health care discussions. And the Avataq Cultural Institute was involved in talks on culture, and the Nunavik Landholding Corporations Association in talks on community development, the Nunavik Mineral Exploration Fund in talks on mining, and the Nunavik Tourism Association in talks on tourism.

Throughout the consultations, we did our homework and expressed Nunavik's real community and economic needs.

Most importantly perhaps, the Plan Nord consultations led Nunavik organizations to comprehensively document regional needs and reflect seriously on priorities in a range of sectors from community well-being and transportation to communications, environmental protection and sustainable economic development. The result is what we've begun to call *Plan Nunavik*.

On May 9, the Plan Nord partners –Inuit, Cree, Naskapi, Innu, municipal organizations, as well as industry and some environmental stakeholders– signed a declaration to recognize the work they had accomplished so far and to agree to continue their efforts. The Plan Nord is the beginning of a partnership in which Québec has committed:

- to support development that fosters the preservation of the environment, as well as safeguarding biodiversity;
- to respect Inuit culture, language, identity and way of life;

- to maintain a Nation-to-Nation relationship with Inuit, so that we are consulted, take part in decision-making and participate fully in development;
- to abide by the JBNQA and other already-signed treaties and agreements.

I want to emphasize that the declaration is not an agreement. It is instead a commitment by the Plan Nord partners to continue working together. It is interesting to point out that the Cree and Naskapi have also come to the conclusion that the Plan Nord respects their treaty rights and that it is in their best community and economic interests to enter into this partnership with Québec.

A very important debate has been taking place in Nunavik over the last few months. That debate is about the rights, language and culture of Nunavik Inuit. At this time, I want to again urge our leaders who are responsible for our rights and the protection of our land to keep up their hard work. We're all counting on you to create political cohesion and reinforce our influence with Canada and Québec.

In the meantime, the KRG and Nunavik organizations must continue to work to improve essential municipal, education and health services for Nunavimmiut, and our living conditions. Plan Nord is the best tool to this end. Québec's commitment to fund the construction of new housing over the next five years is a good example of how this tool may be used. Clearly, 500 dwellings do not meet the target of 1000 identified by the Kativik Municipal Housing Bureau, and it means that our work is not complete. In cooperation with Québec, Nunavimmiut may now however pursue talks with Canada for the construction of 500 additional dwellings.

On May 9 along with all Québécois, the KRG received its first complete overview of the final Plan Nord. The KRG has begun a detailed analysis of the document in order to fully understand how it relates to Nunavik's priorities. In this process, the KRG will continue to work with its regional partners, like Makivik, the KSB, the NRBHSS, Avataq, the Nunavik Landholding Corporations Association, the Nunavik Tourism Association and the Nunavik Mineral Exploration Fund.

Nunavik organizations must continue to press Québec to meet the challenges identified in the Plan Nord. And we must draw inspiration from the regional vision developed jointly by us over the last year and a half. Our *Plan Nunavik*.

With Nunavik at the beginning of a new stage in its evolution, I intend to continue reporting over the coming months and years to the KRG Council, the communities and Nunavimmiut on developments.

Maggie Emudluk

Chairperson
Kativik Regional Government

The KRG is a non-ethnic public organization created in 1978, under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. The organization has jurisdiction over nearly the entire territory of Québec north of the 55th parallel in areas such as municipal matters, transportation, the environment, policing, employment, labour training, income security, childcare services, renewable resources, land-use planning, civil security and economic development.