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What Was Said
IVUJIVIK
April 2 to 4, 2013

In early April, the Northern Village of Ivujivik followed the example of Kangiqsualujjuaq and Akulivik and conducted a community workshop with regional organizations to discuss their vision of development of the north. Participants included the mayor, landholding corporation and cooperative association representatives, as well as representatives of many other community committees, along with the local representatives of Makivik, the KRG, the NRBHSS and the KSB.

Who We Are

(Culture and Identity • Harvesting • Lands • Environmental and Regional Planning)

There have been many losses for Inuit throughout our history. One of the traumatic losses for parents was when their children were taken away to residential schools.

Little by little, parts of our identity are being lost: our competency on the land, our culture and our traditions. The old ways are slowly being eroded by globalization. Inuit used to be competent hunters and skilful seamstresses, and the way people lived was according to the seasons.

The governments do not seem to understand we depend on the land and wildlife and that traditional culture is supported through activities on the land.

There is less emphasis put on Inuktitut curriculum, making it much weaker than English curriculum. Our language must be strengthened through Parnasimautik. Also, support for Inuktitut is not visible in the major organizations; that would help preserve the language.

I am proud to be sitting at this table with Inuit from all our organizations. And I am proud of Inuit working at Hydro-Québec, in housing, with the Rangers and at the municipality. Inuit are good workers. We have to be more positive.

All my life, I have harvested on Category II and III lands and understood that mining could not take place on Category II lands. Now, I am learning that we have no subsurface rights on these lands.

The size of Category I and II lands must take into account population growth.

Our community needs more support funding and more assistance for those who go hunting.

Some wonder if self-government is on hold or moving forward. Working together is a concrete way to reach self-government. But we will also need the power to make decisions and changes.



Our Communities

(Elders, Women and Youth • Education • Health • Housing • Justice and Social Regulation • Community development • Biofood • Employment)

We need more collaboration between youth, elders and women. The gap between youth and elders is widening. In the past, it seems like we supported each other more.

When I try to find youth to come hunting, no one wants to follow. What should we do? Elders are doing what they can.

Elders should stop putting youth down; they should encourage them instead.

We need to resume our role in dealing with family issues, instead of relying on social services.

Many children suffer because their parents have made mistakes. And those children are hurt and confused. Parents need support and access to parental-skill courses.

In terms of education, we are way behind. Our school needs to be improved.

Even if we have the best schools, if the students are not ready to learn, it is a waste. The importance of schooling is taught first at home.

We need to educate ourselves so that we can then help in our community. Knowledge is power.

Many who drop out of school are competent and should not be put aside; they should be helped.

Because of drug, alcohol and sexual abuse, Inuit are ending up in jail. We have to do something about those incarcerated. We need healing. Too many people cannot get jobs because of their criminal records.

The justice system needs to adapt to our traditional ways. But every time we propose adaptations in health, education or justice, we hit a wall of government policies.

It is painful to see Inuit being evicted from homes. What can we do to help them? Can mining companies be asked to provide assistance too?

Even though I have a job and am able to pay rent, I'm not getting a home to live in. I have been on the housing waiting list for 10 years.

Everyone should be registered in the Pivallianiq dwelling maintenance improvement program, but our dwellings are already in such poor condition, they need renovations not maintenance.

The policing system needs improvements.

Our knowledge of the land and sea has to be recognized during search and rescue operations.

Biofood initiatives need to start small. Mussel production could be explored in Ivujivik and more greenhouses are needed around the region.

Our Region

(Tourism • Mining • Energy • Transportation • Telecommunications)

Five communities practise wildlife harvesting on the Kovic River. But nearby mineral exploration is already changing the water. Research is needed to know how these changes are impacting on the fish and nearby wildlife.

In Salluit, infrastructure is growing rapidly, built with money from the Raglan mine. But mining will have irreversible effects on wildlife and their habitats. We want to protect our culture, but need money for development.

Fewer royalties should be paid to individuals, so more money can be channelled to community needs and improvements.

Inuit must be trained to hold jobs at mines in Nunavik. Long working hours and discrimination discourage many Inuit from working at mine sites.

Our community has great tourism potential. Our own companies are needed to take advantage of the attractions.

Ivujivik is on the route of major shipping in northern waters. What do we know about this?

Our Vision of Development

Looking at the maps, I understand that our future is at stake. I want to preserve our culture, our hunting areas, our food and our water.

I wonder if the governments will listen to our concerns expressed at this workshop. And I worry that, while we take time to prepare, mining companies are already going all over the land.

Partners should get 50% each; that's not the kind of partnership we have now.

It has been good to see the organizations sitting at this round table talking together. Ivujivimmiut will want to be informed of the results of these community workshops.

After my election as the mayor of Ivujivik, I almost gave up hope. Some days, it felt like I was working alone. After this workshop and listening to the ideas of my fellow Inuit, I know that we have what it takes to work together.

By the end of the first six months of 2013, Parnasimautik workshops will have been carried out in seven communities. Interested Nunavimmiut are invited to visit www.parnasimautik.com to view workshop and other related documentation, including Inuktitut audio recordings on sectors ranging from culture and identity, to education, health, housing, mining development, energy and transportation, to name but a few.

