



PRESS RELEASE

KATIMAJIIT CONFERENCE

NUNAVIK TO BENEFIT FROM ANNOUNCEMENTS AT THE FIRST DAY OF THE KATIMAJIIT CONFERENCE

Kuujuuaq, August 23, 2007 – The Katimajit Conference, the major intergovernmental meeting between the Inuit of Nunavik and the Governments of Quebec and Canada, concluded its first day with important announcements affecting regional economic development and measures to address the high cost of living in this territory north of the 55th parallel in Quebec.

An amount of \$27.5 M earmarked for economic and community development was announced by Benoit Pelletier, Quebec minister responsible for Native Affairs, as the Nunavik component of the Aboriginal Initiatives Fund. This 5-year fund will have two aspects: \$13.5 M targeted towards economic development fund and \$14 M for local community infrastructure projects. Both components will be administered by the Kativik Regional Government. “Access to capital has been a continuing problem for Nunavik’s businesses and local organizations”, states Kativik Regional Government chairman and Katimajit Conference co-chair Maggie Emudluk. “This fund not only provides some funding for these employment creating initiatives, but will lever further investment from other governmental programs”.

Nunavik’s elders are the recipient of funding announced by Quebec’s Minister Responsible for Seniors, Marguerite Blais. Over a five-year period, an amount of \$595,000 will be provided to the Kativik Regional Government for adapting services and infrastructure for the region’s elderly.

Having no road or rail links to the south of Canada, Nunavik relies solely on expensive air and sea transportation. As a consequence, the cost of living in Nunavik is substantially higher than elsewhere in Canada, with food costs averaging 57% more than in the south of Quebec due to the cost of shipping goods north. To help address this situation, a 3-year \$9 M fund was announced by Quebec Transport Minister Julie Boulet to help lower the high cost of transportation. The fund, beginning this year, will be administered by the Region with the exact method of implementation to be determined later this fall. As well, the \$500,000 envelope contained in the 2007-08 Quebec budget to help offset the high cost of living and mainly the high cost of gasoline in the region has been increased to \$1.2 M for the next two years.

Again addressing transportation issues, Mme. Boulet announced a major investment into a project to expand the logistically important airstrip at Puvirnituq in the form of an \$8 M contribution. This represents 40% of the total project costs with the balance to come from Canada. “In the future one of our regionally-owned carriers, Air Inuit, will be able to

offer jet service to the Hudson Coast through this community”, informs Makivik Corporation President and Katimajit co-chair Pita Aatami. “Medical evacuations will be more efficient and will provide a safer environment to the population of Hudson Coast Inuit”.

The marine infrastructure in each of Nunavik’s 14 communities will benefit from a \$200,000 annual contribution earmarked for maintenance from Transport Quebec for the years 2007 through 2009. It should be remembered that these facilities are not only essential for the annual sealift of goods and materials, but are used by local community members in their subsistence hunting activities, and thereby an important element in the food supply system.

Fiscal measures have also been announced by Quebec which will provide some relief to Nunavik residents who are subject, in the most part, to the same tax regimes as southern residents while at the same time facing much higher prices for the necessities of life. Quebec Minister of Municipal Affairs and Regions Nathalie Normandeau will sign a memorandum of understanding with the Kativik Regional Government stipulating a \$500,000 grant aiming at the implementation of measures to reduce the cost of living for the residents of Nunavik.

Katimajit delegates were informed by Quebec that the one fiscal measure tailored just for Nunavimmiut and residents of remote regions, the refundable tax credit for Northern Residents, will be increased by 50 % retroactively to 2006. Through this means, lower income earners will be able to derive the full benefit from this measure to which they were hitherto prevented.

“There has also been commitments made during this day, both from Quebec and Canada, to work with Nunavik on a number of outstanding issues in the area of regional development”, notes Ms. Emudluk. “In particular, we sense a strong will on the part of all levels of government to address issues affecting elders, job development among youth, land transportation and climate change after the Katimajit Conference has concluded.”

The meeting continues tomorrow and is being broadcast live on Taqramiut Nipingat Incorporated, Nunavik’s regional radio network.

Kativik Regional Government (KRG) is a non-ethnic public organization created in 1978, under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, whose jurisdiction covers nearly the entire territory of Quebec north of the 55th parallel. KRG administers the affairs of Nunavik in the areas of municipal affairs, transportation, environment, police, employment, manpower training, income security, childcare services, renewable resources, land-use management, civil security and economic development.

Makivik Corporation is the Inuit owned economic development company created following the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) in 1975. It has the mandate to represent the 9,800 Inuit of Nunavik at the political level, and to administer the funds of the Agreement accorded to the Inuit (\$90-million has been received over a 20 year period). Makivik owns subsidiary companies such as Air Inuit, First Air, Nunavik Arctic Foods, Nunavik Creations, Halutik Fuels, Cruise North, and jointly owns with other Inuit regional corporations Pan Arctic Inuit Logistics (PAIL).

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