



For immediate release

First Three-Year \$260,000 Agreement to Assist Nunavik Artists

Montréal, February 12, 2009 – Minister of Culture, Communications and the Status of Women, Christine St-Pierre, and Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister responsible for the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region and the Nord-du-Québec region, Pierre Corbeil, today announced the signing of the first three-year \$260,000 agreement to improve the conditions of artists and writers in Nunavik. This support is made possible through a partnership between the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec (CALQ) and the Kativik Regional Government (KRG), which will contribute \$150,000 and \$110,000 respectively. The Avataq Cultural Institute, a special representative in the field of arts and literature in Nunavik, will manage these funds.

The announcement was made at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, attended by Yvan Gauthier, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the CALQ, Johnny Oovaut, member of the administrative committee of the KRG, and Charlie Arngak, President of the Avataq Cultural Institute.

"The Québec government acknowledges the commitment of all the partners who helped make this new agreement a reality," Christine St-Pierre said. This agreement will help strengthen the cultural identity of the Nord-du-Québec region by supporting exchanges between artists from the north and south and the production of quality works that all Quebecers will be able to enjoy."

"This agreement demonstrates the Québec government's determination to contribute to the overall development of the Nord-du-Québec region and shows that it believes in Nunavik's artistic potential and culture," Pierre Corbeil added. "I am proud of the government's support, which will improve the socio-economic conditions of Inuit artists and give their entire community access to their works."

"These coordinated financial resources are important for Nunavik's professional artists and writers. They will increase activities in Nunavik's art sector, provide better support for our artists, and permit a flourishing of Inuit cultural expression," stated Mr. Oovaut at the press conference.

"Avataq Cultural Institute is extremely proud of this agreement, which is the result of fruitful and positive collaboration between the signatories. The Nunavik Fund for Arts and Literature will support talented artists in a region with limited employment options by contributing to the development of their careers, bringing Nunavik communities and artists closer together, and by providing an extraordinary opportunity for artists to broaden their horizons through the residency program," Charlie Arngak said.

Under the *Entente spécifique pour l'amélioration des conditions de pratique des artistes et des écrivains de la région du Nord-du-Québec, secteur Kativik*, from 2008-2009 to 2010-2011, \$180,000 is allocated to phase I of the Nunavik fund for the arts and literature to help professional Inuit artists and writers carry out arts projects, work programs, and sponsorship and mentoring projects for emerging artists. This support will thus increase the revenue of Nunavik artists and encourage the development and recognition of their artistic careers.

An amount of \$50,000 is allocated to phase II to allow Inuit artists to do two-month research and creation residencies in Montréal, and artists from other regions in Québec to do the same in Inukjuak. Lastly, \$30,000 is ear-marked for the Avataq to hold promotion and dissemination activities, to train and mentor artists and writers, and to manage the Nunavik fund for the arts and literature. The partners invite artists to submit their applications for either of the two phases before **March 16, 2009**.

In 2007-2008, the CALQ and its regional partners, mainly Regional Conferences of Elected Officers, ratified seven agreements, bringing the number of agreements reached in 15 regions to 18. These impressive results were made possible through \$1.5 M in funding from the Minister of Culture, Communications and the Status of Women. KRG is mandated to act as the Regional Conference of Elected Officers for the Kativik region. Since 1994, CALQ has supported creation, experimentation and production in the performing, visual and media arts, architectural research, arts and crafts, and literature throughout Québec. It has increased the influence of the arts in Québec, Canada and abroad. The Conseil also supports the development of professional artists.

KRG is a non-ethnic 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 the areas of municipal affairs, transportation, the environment, policing, employment, labour training, income security, childcare services, renewable resources, land-use management, civil security and economic development.

Avataq Cultural Institute is a non-profit, charitable organization created in 1980 by the Elders of Nunavik to protect and promote the language and culture of Inuit in Northern Quebec. In over 25 years of existence, Avataq has developed numerous projects in the areas of Inuit language, traditional culture, arts, museums, archaeology, and genealogy. Avataq is also the safe-keeper of the Nunavik Inuit Art Collection.

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