

## INUIT REGIONS OF CANADA

In Canada, the Inuit number 59,445 people, or 4.3% of the Aboriginal population. Inuit live in 53 Arctic communities in four regions known as “Inuit Nunangat”: Nunatsiavut (Labrador), Nunavik (Quebec), Nunavut and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region of the Northwest Territories.

The *Nunatsiavut* government, created in 2006, is the only ethnic-style government to be formed among the four Inuit regions to date.

The *Nunavut* Land Claims Agreement, which covers two million square kilometres, was settled in 1993. The Nunavut government was created by the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) in April 1999. It represents all Nunavut citizens. Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) represents Inuit who are beneficiaries of the NLCA.

The *Nunavik* land claim (James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement) was settled in 1975. The Nunavik area covers 550,000 square kilometres, which is one-third of the province of Quebec. Makivik Corporation was created to administer the James Bay Agreement and represent Inuit beneficiaries. Nunavik is working to develop a regional government for the region.

The *Inuvialuit* land claim will celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 5 June 2014. The Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA) is a Constitutionally-protected Agreement covering 91,000 square kilometres in the Northwest Territories, including 13,000 square kilometres with subsurface rights to oil, gas and minerals. The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) represents collective Inuvialuit interests in dealings with governments and industry, with the goal of improving the economic, social, and cultural well-being of its beneficiaries, and protect and preserve the Arctic wildlife, environment and biological productivity. The Inuvialuit are also negotiating for self-government.

In Inuit regions of Canada, major discussions in 2013 focused on the prospect of resource development as a major force in the advancement of the four Arctic regions, balanced with measures taken to manage environmental consequences. There was a continued focus on the issue of harvesting as a sustainable cultural practice, and on the ongoing housing crisis in Arctic communities, as well as persistent health and social issues.

At the Kiruna Ministerial Meeting on 15 May 2013, Canada assumed the two-year Chairmanship of the Arctic Council from Sweden. The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, an Inuk from Nunavut, is Canada's Minister for the Arctic Council and Chair of the Council during Canada's chairmanship. The theme of Canada's chairmanship is "development for the people of the North" with a focus on responsible Arctic resource development, safe Arctic shipping and sustainable circumpolar communities. Examples of this theme include the development of a Circumpolar Business Forum, an agreement on marine oil-pollution preparedness, and increasing global awareness of the traditional ways of life of Northerners.

In March, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) President Mr. Terry Audla was in Bangkok, Thailand to successfully defend Inuit rights to harvest and trade polar bear. The Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES) considered a proposal to upgrade the polar bear to the highest level of protection, which would have resulted in a total ban on the trade of polar bear. The proposal, brought to the Convention by the USA, was defeated.

Inuit in Canada noted with great disappointment the November 25 ruling by the World Trade Organization, which failed to strike down the shameful European Union ban on Canadian seal products. ITK advised that Canada appeal, and Canada announced its intentions to do so immediately.

An Arctic Leaders Working Meeting with Inuit leaders from four regions and Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper in August discussed Inuit housing, resource development, economic development, and marine transport and search and rescue.

In early December, ITK participated in the ArcticNet Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM). President Terry Audla delivered a keynote speech advocating for true inclusion of Inuit traditional knowledge in the work of Western Scientists. At the ArcticNet ASM, ITK's Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education, chaired by Mary Simon, won a Can\$325,000 Arctic Inspiration Prize for their work in advancing Inuit education across Inuit Nunangat.

## **Inuvialuit Settlement Region**

After 25 years of negotiations, the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement was signed in June, which transfers authority over land and resources from Canada to the Government of the Northwest Territories (GN-



WT). The Devolution Agreement recognizes the legal priority of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA) and that the unique resource management organizations and processes established under the IFA will continue to play a vital role in making good decisions about resource development in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR). The Inuvialuit have a great deal of confidence in those organizations and processes and believe that they provide a firm footing upon which the Inuvialuit, Canada and the GNWT can build even stronger processes and relationships for the regulation and management of oil and gas development and other activities in the ISR. The Devolution Agreement comes into effect on 1 April 2014.

Negotiators for the GNWT, Canada and IRC also completed negotiations for an Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle and, upon approval, will begin negotiations for a final agreement.

## Nunavut

On 9 July 2013, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA).

Progress continued on NTI's historic lawsuit against the Government of Canada, launched in 2006 because of the government's failure to implement the NLCA. NTI won its fourth motion and was awaiting a ruling from the Nunavut Court of Justice regarding the federal government's recent appeal. NTI is also continuing with preparations for the case for trial. Not long ago, Inuit were on the outside of the mining industry but the signing of the NLCA changed that. Inuit own 18 per cent of the land in Nunavut, including the mineral rights to some of this land, which includes most of the known mineral deposits. Inuit reach agreements with exploration and mining companies for the mineral rights to some of the most prospective land in Nunavut and will earn millions of dollars in royalties from mining projects. There have been two royalty payments for a total of CAD\$ 2.6 million made to NTI to date.

It is therefore critical that NTI and the regional Inuit Associations develop a strategic and prudent plan for how to invest and spend these royalties. The planning process began by developing the Resource Revenue Policy and the Resource Revenue Trust, which is a solid step toward economic self-sufficiency, achieved directly because of the NLCA.

## **Nunavik**

In 2013, Makivik Corporation and other Nunavik organizations visited all communities as part of the Parnasimautik consultations to gather information on the needs of the region and the development of a vision for its future in a number of fields, including education, health, mining, harvesting and lands.

The serious lack of housing in the Nunavik region finally received national and provincial acknowledgement. At the Arctic Leaders Working Meeting with Prime Minister Harper, Makivik was able to communicate the urgent need for a "housing catch up program" for Nunavik. Makivik also gained the backing of the Quebec Premier and the National Assembly to find a solution to Nunavik's Housing Crisis. Makivik will pursue its efforts in this regard until a solution is put in place.

Finally, the high cost of living for Nunavik Inuit was one of the main priorities for Makivik and the Kativik Regional Government. Both organizations signed a new three-year agreement with the Quebec government that will substantially increase cost of living subsidies in Nunavik.

## Nunatsiavut

Lack of housing is also an important problem in Nunatsiavut and, in 2013, the Nunatsiavut government conducted a Housing Needs Assessment, in partnership with the Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. In December, it was awarded an Arctic Inspiration Prize of Can\$ 350,000 for its initiative, *Sakkijanginnatuk Nunalik: Healthy Homes in Thriving Nunatsiavut Communities*. This will be used to help build and monitor Nunatsiavut's first sustainable, multi-unit residential dwelling and establish a prototype for Northern housing development that addresses changing climate, infrastructure requirements and Inuit housing needs and preferences and that could potentially be applied across the country.

In 2013, the Nunatsiavut government also focused on the issue of harvesting and expressed great concern over the decline in the caribou herds that roam the Labrador-Ungava Peninsula, and which are central to the culture and food security of Labrador Inuit. President Sarah Leo was one of the leaders to spearhead the organization of the Ungava Peninsula Caribou Aboriginal Roundtable (UPCART) in September 2013. UPCART comprises all of the aboriginal groups that depend on the caribou on the Ungava Peninsula. It recognizes the importance of expressing and exercising aboriginal responsibility for the caribou and is building trust between the aboriginal groups who rely on caribou for their way of life. The UPCART is jointly in the process of developing a management plan for the caribou. One of the goals of the group is to overturn a five-year ban on the hunting of caribou imposed by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador in January 2013. ○

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