



**Response to the Standing Committee on  
Oversight of Government Operations  
and Public Accounts' October 29, 2014  
Report on the Review of the 2012-2013  
Annual Report of the Languages  
Commissioner of Nunavut**

George Hickes, MLA  
Chair, Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public  
Accounts  
Legislative Assembly of Nunavut  
P.O. Box 1200  
Iqaluit, Nunavut  
X0A 0H0

February 26, 2015

Dear Mr. Hickes,

Pursuant to Rule 91(5) of the *Rules of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut*, I am pleased to respond on behalf of the Government of Nunavut to the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts' October 29, 2014 *Report on the Review of the 2012-2013 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut* (Standing Committee Report).

The Government commends the members of the Standing Committee for their valuable study examining the *2012-2013 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut* (Languages Commissioner Report). The Government has thoroughly reviewed and given careful consideration to the Standing Committee Report as a whole and to the Standing Committee's recommendations pertaining to the work of the Government contained therein. The Government finds that these recommendations are consistent with the work of advancing our Government's mandate to protect, promote and revitalize Nunavut's Official Languages.

The Government welcomes the two recommendations directed at our work. The following sections provide information on the Government's responses to these recommendations.

**Standing Committee Recommendation #5:**

*The Standing Committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report account, in detail, for its progress to date in developing policies, procedures and guidelines that provide direction on how its departments and agencies are expected meet their statutory obligations under Nunavut's official languages legislation.*

*The Standing Committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report include a detailed timeframe in which these necessary policies, procedures and guidelines are to be implemented.*

## **Response:**

The Government has made the preparation of policies to support the implementation of the Official Languages Act and the Inuit Language Protection Act a top priority. The Government adopted *Uqausivut: The Comprehensive Plan pursuant to the Official Languages Act and the Inuit Language Protection Act, 2012-2016* in 2012 and has been operating within this overarching implementation plan since that time. It is clear, however, that our territorial institutions require a more detailed framework, which includes examples, templates and resources, in order to rise to the level of our language legislation. While the provisions themselves may be brief, the obligations are extensive and reach from the most granular to the broadest level of operations.

Having acknowledged this, the Government endeavored to prepare a document that provides this kind of essential guidance. The Department of Culture and Heritage is pleased to report that after a year of research and drafting, it has now completed a first draft of a Communications and Services document for the Government of Nunavut. This draft document includes best practices from other jurisdictions in Canada and around the world but is specifically tailored for the linguistic priorities of Nunavummiut.

The draft document covers many areas relating to the delivery of communications and services including: Active Offer, Publication Format, Correspondence, Public Signs and Notices, Public Engagement through Consultations and Campaigns, Forms, Permits, Licenses, Warning labels, Instructions, Invoices, Emergency and Essential Services, Third Party Contracts, Use of Translation Services, working with the Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit and the Languages Commissioner, Planning to meet legislative obligations, Monitoring progress and Reporting. The draft document is designed to achieve results through the Government's current resources.

The draft document has been internally reviewed in order to ensure alignment with both *Sivumut Abluqta* and *Uqausivut: The Comprehensive Plan pursuant to the Official Languages Act and the Inuit Language Protection Act, 2012-2016*, and to address specific concerns of departments of the Languages Commissioner and of the Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit. The department presented the draft document to the Deputy Ministers Committee.

Departments have submitted their comments, the Department of Culture and Heritage is now incorporate comments and preparing a final draft for internal review. The Department of Culture and Heritage anticipates to have the final document completed by March 31, 2015.

Culture and Heritage is also in the process of preparing a draft Language of Work Policy. An initial draft has been developed and must now undergo a review by Culture and Heritage Official Languages staff. Once complete, this Policy will provide structure and guidance to departments regarding their obligations to ensure employees can work in the Inuit Language. Resources will be directed to this second essential policy once the Communications and Services document is in place.

## **Standing Committee Recommendation #6:**

*The Standing Committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report provide a detailed timeline for the coming into force of subsection 12(7)(c) of the Official Languages Act and sections 3-5 and 9-10 of the Inuit Language Protection Act.*

## **Response:**

The Government of Nunavut is committed to preparing for the coming into force of subsection 12(7)(c) of the *Official Languages Act* and sections 3-5 and 9-10 of the *Inuit Language Protection Act*. While many Departments and public agencies have already made the necessary modifications to their operations in order to fulfill their obligations under these provisions, work is underway to ensure all Departments and public agencies are operating in accordance with these sections.

*Inuit Language Protection Act* sections 3 to 5 address Inuit Language Services and Use Significantly, the *Uqausivut Plan* committed that these provisions will come into force within three years of the adoption of the *Uqausivut Plan*, or in other words, no later than the end of 2015-16. With this timeline as its guide, the Department of Culture and Heritage has prepared the a draft document on Communications and Services and is currently engaging in discussions with Government of Nunavut Departments that have key roles to play in the implementation of Nunavut's language legislation, namely, the Departments of Education, Community and Government Services, Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs and Economic Development and Transportation. As stated, the aim is to have the document in place by March 31, 2015. Once this document is active, the Government will be in a position to recommend that these provisions come into force on April 1, 2016.

*Inuit Language Protection Act* sections 9 and 10 address *Early Childhood Education and Adult Language Acquisition*. The Department of Culture and Heritage has been engaging in discussions with the Department of Education and with Nunavut Arctic College to determine what work needs to be done before these provisions can come into force. Education has begun to take steps towards meeting the requirements set-out in section 9 (a). Such steps include;

- Providing funding to DEAs to provide an ECE program which promotes Inuit language and Culture. This program is required under section 17 of the Education Act. \$100,000 is available to support these programs.
- Teaching resources have also been purchased and will be sent to all licensed childcare facilities in the winter of 2015. These include games, sealskins, books, toys and flash cards. These resources will encourage the use of the Inuit language and knowledge of the Inuit culture.

- Books were also purchased that will be given to families of newborns and children under the age of two as part of the “Tell Me A Story” campaign.
- In 2013-14, the Department spent a total of \$597,331.50 on resources for licensed childhood facilities (and families). Some of that funding came from the Department of Culture & Heritage.
- The department has included \$300,000 in its 2015-16 budgets (for the next 6 years) to develop early childhood education resources and materials.

It is understood that the Department of Education will be completing a review of the *Child Day Care Act* during the current mandate and that Nunavut Arctic College is further taking steps this year to expand its language training programs to all career programs in the three regions. It has been determined that these steps are required before these provisions may come into force. It is expected that the Government will be prepared to recommend that these provisions come into force April 1, 2017.

Official Languages Act subsection 12(7)(c) addresses *Communications and services delivered through a contract with a third party*. In collaboration with the Department of Community and Government Services, the Department of Justice and with the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, current contracting practices will be reviewed to ensure contract provisions requiring communications and services to be delivered in the Official Languages are in place before this section can come into force. Provisions within CGS indicate that procurement documents can be made available, upon request, in any of the 4 official languages (Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun, English, and French). If a request for a document in another language other than English, CGS has the document translated accordingly, and issues a new document in the required language and continues the procurement process. It is expected that the Government will be prepared to recommend that these provisions come into force April 1, 2016.

The work required to ensure the policies and procedures are in place to support the Governments language obligations is significant. The Government is committed to ensuring our governing institutions, and, most importantly, Nunavummiut, are aware of the work currently underway with respect to its language implementation activities. For this reason, I tabled the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 annual reports under the *Inuit Language Protection Act* on June 12, 2014 and will further table the 2012-2013 and 2013-14 annual reports respectively in the winter and spring sittings of the Assembly. These reports will continue to highlight the implementation milestones and timelines relevant to these remaining sections.

I would like to thank the Standing Committee for their time in dedicating to review the Languages Commissioner Report. Official Languages matter in Nunavut.

Sincere regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Hon. George Kuksuk  
Minister of Languages