



Throne Speech

*At the Opening of the
Second Session of the Second Legislative Assembly of Nunavut*

Delivered by:

**THE HONOURABLE PETER IRNIQ
COMMISSIONER OF NUNAVUT**

November 16, 2004

Introduction

Good afternoon and welcome Elders, Mr. Speaker, Sivuliuqti, Maligaliutiit ammalu Nunavummiut.

I am honoured to serve Nunavummiut and it is with great pride that I deliver the first Throne Speech of this new Assembly and of our new government.

Since taking office I have travelled throughout our territory. I have had the opportunity to meet wonderful people and bestow honours for bravery, youth achievement, volunteer service and skills acquisition to well deserving residents.

I have seen the best of our territory. I am heartened by the passion Nunavummiut have shown to create a positive, healthy environment to live and to raise their families. I also deeply appreciate the kindness and warmth shared with me.

As Members of this Assembly you share a commitment to creating a territory where our citizens are truly equal members of the Canadian federation. Your decision to participate so publicly in the development of Nunavut is an honourable and challenging undertaking. Your debates and your decisions in this Assembly in the coming years will affect the whole territory.

I encourage you to always be guided by Aajiiqatigiinniq (decision-making through discussion and consensus) and I wish for you, as MLAs, insight, patience and the spirit of consensus in your deliberations in this House.

Building Nunavut's Future

The work in this House during the first five years of our territory resulted in significant steps being taken to set up a new government.

To guide its work, the first Government prepared a long-term plan. This plan envisioned what life in Nunavut will be like in the year 2020. It outlined four major goals and guiding principles. These were set out in the Bathurst Mandate.

You are all familiar with the goals:

- Inuuqatigiittiarniq: Healthy Communities
- Pijarnirniqsat Katujjiqatigiittiarnirlu: Simplicity and Unity
- Namminiq Makitajunnarniq: Self-Reliance
- Ilippallianguinnarniq: Continuing Learning.

The new government has reviewed the goals and evaluated the results achieved between 1999 and 2004. Overall, much has been achieved and the people of Nunavut have made important progress. While we have every reason to be proud about what has been accomplished, there is much more to do.

This government will remain committed to the four goals during its Second Mandate. It will again be guided by the principles adopted by the first government, and increasingly by Inuit

societal values applied through Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, which is essential to the way your government conducts its affairs.

What the government hopes to accomplish is set out in its mandate document for the Second Term. The document, *Pinasuaqtavut 2004-2009*, will be tabled during the current sitting of the Legislature.

The priorities in the mandate document are derived directly from the February general election and subsequent meetings of this Legislature, Full Caucus and Cabinet.

At the Caucus meeting in Arviat, in September, each of you put forward a vision for the territory's future.

You agreed to give a new and greater emphasis to economic development, and building a stronger cultural foundation based on Inuit societal values.

As we advance through the Second Mandate the government will continue to be guided by its full commitment to the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* and its partnerships with land claims organizations.

We need to do much more before we have a government and a societal structure that better reflects the 85 percent of Nunavummiut who are Inuit. During its Second Mandate your government will make every effort to achieve this goal.

Language and Culture

Language is at the very heart of cultural strength. Nunavummiut know this and that is why they want their government to focus on protecting and promoting Inuktitut.

Inuktitut is the language of the majority in this territory. The Government of Nunavut will continue to increase the number of services provided in Inuktitut. The government will also be a workplace where more Inuktitut is spoken.

Your government is working on new language legislation that will recognize Inuktitut as the majority language, while protecting the rights of English and French speaking Nunavummiut. With your support, it is the government's expectation that such legislation will be passed within the term of this legislature.

To support its commitment to language promotion, the government is working to make laws, government policies, documents and forms available in Inuktitut.

Four out of five people in Nunavut are Inuit. The *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* has as an objective a representative level of government employment. The Government of Nunavut is committed to reaching this goal as soon as possible.

Presently, about 46 percent of Government of Nunavut employees are Inuit. The total number of Inuit working in the government is steadily increasing, but the percentage hasn't changed significantly because the overall number of employees is also increasing as a result of the government being able to fill more of its vacancies.

For many Inuit pre-employment training is a pre-requisite for government employment. Under Article 23 of the land claims agreement, government is required to have a plan to train and hire more Inuit.

The territorial government program to achieve representative employment is the Inuit Employment Plan. This plan includes initiatives related to internship, training, mentoring, staff cultural orientation and staff retention components.

Unfortunately funding negotiations between the federal government and the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik for the implementation of the land claim agreement have reached an impasse. The federal government is unwilling to provide the funding required for accomplishing the objective for Inuit participation in government under Article 23.

The territorial government, working with Nunavut Tunngavik, will continue to press the federal government to meet its responsibilities so that it can put in place the necessary training to enable Inuit to hold positions within the territorial government and the Nunavut operations of the federal government.

Meanwhile, your government will continue to advance the employment of more Inuit using existing budgets.

The government will continue to support nursing scholarships for beneficiaries. They are awarded annually to two full-time students at Nunavut Arctic College in each year of the four year program.

Two Inuit nurses graduated from the Nunavut Arctic College program last year. Currently there are 26 students in the program, with the vast majority being Inuit.

The Government will also establish a new scholarship to enable a beneficiary to pursue doctoral studies in medicine at a southern university.

And since 1999, ninety-one Inuit have graduated from the Nunavut Teacher Education Program – 38 with certificates and 53 with Bachelor of Education degrees.

The government will expand the number of these programs particularly in the health and education fields.

Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit

Inuit societal values need to be incorporated into how the government conducts its affairs and delivers its programs and services.

I would like to briefly outline some processes created by the government to integrate Inuit societal values and implement culturally-relevant activities into its operations in a coordinated manner.

The key components are two different bodies - an internal interdepartmental group, and, an external advisory body. The interdepartmental committee is called Tuttarviit.

The external advisory body, the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajiit, has a membership of 11 Nunavummiut from different communities. Their role is to provide advice to the Government on Inuit cultural issues and knowledge. Advice may be provided on efforts to reflect Inuit societal values in the delivery of day-to-day programs and services.

Cabinet ministers will meet annually with the Katimajiit to discuss Inuit cultural issues and how to improve programs and services. Katimajiit's first meeting with ministers was held yesterday and I am pleased to report to members that it was a very constructive session with a positive outlook for future meetings.

Strong language and employment policies will help keep Inuit culture strong for future generations.

As important for a strong future is the cultural legacy of the past. That is why the government, with its key partners, will begin the detailed planning for the construction of a territorial Heritage Centre and for the return of Nunavut's cultural treasures from other jurisdictions.

Without the legacy of a proud and unique past, there cannot be a strong and confident future.

Economic Development

One of the greatest challenges of your government is to support and stimulate economic development and to increase the role of the private sector.

One of the characteristics of Nunavut is the high ratio of government jobs in the economy. The government does not wish to remain the largest employer of Nunavummiut. In fact, it will welcome the day when the private sector can take over this role.

Nunavut is about to embark on a new economic path. Now more than ever the territory needs to focus on developing strategies that direct investments and efforts to wealth and job generation.

We will need to address several key areas if we are to realize our economic potential.

Infrastructure and housing remain critical issues that stand in the way of economic development. For example, the lack of ports and small craft harbours and tourist facilities hinder economic development.

Life long learning will grow increasingly important if Nunavummiut are to access the employment opportunities that will arise during the coming years.

We need to improve coordination between the government, Inuit organizations and the private sector to take advantage of opportunities.

The government will continue to work with its advisory body, the Nunavut Economic Forum, to create opportunities for Nunavummiut particularly through the implementation of the Nunavut Economic Development Strategy.

Let there be no doubt about Nunavut moving forward on several fronts.

Mining will feature much more prominently in our economy. Over the period 2006 to 2010 as many as four new mines may open. Related construction and service activity will send the economy into a period of growth never seen before. This year Nunavut will see more than \$120 million being spent on exploration work.

New mining operations will open under tighter guidelines for local hiring practices, service contracts and environmental protection. We will have more opportunities to increase Inuit representation with a focus on cultural preservation.

The approval of Tahera's Jericho Diamond Project by the Nunavut Impact Review Board, the signing of the Inuit Impact Benefit Agreement with the Kitikmeot Inuit Association and the involvement of the world-renowned Tiffany and Company are excellent examples of the positive developments in Nunavut's mining sector. I am pleased to note that construction of the Jericho mine, Nunavut's first diamond mine, is scheduled to begin next year.

Fishing is another sector that is on the threshold of expansion. The overall outlook is strong, provided we are able increase Nunavut's allocation of the offshore fishery in Davis Strait and Baffin Bay to bring it into line with allocations in all other jurisdictions with adjacent fisheries. The government will continue to urge the federal Minister and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to address this outstanding concern.

In the meantime, our Department of Environment, in partnership with NTI and the federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs will complete and implement the Nunavut Fisheries and Sealing Strategies.

Nunavut's small manufacturing sector is dominated by two industries – the commercial processing of northern foods and the production of arts and crafts for sale or trade.

The outlook for food processing is optimistic and increased processing will come once we gain greater control over our fish stocks.

Trade in caribou and muskox goods has room to grow as there is an increasing demand for country food products in Canadian and international markets.

It is clear that there is significant demand for Nunavut cultural products. And support for investment in the arts sector and cultural industries is high.

Tourism is another important area for growth. It provides Nunavut with a valuable source of external capital and fosters the promotion of Inuit culture and the region's natural resources.

Investments and training will be needed in order to utilize the opportunities presented by our advantages and attractions. The government will work with industry partners to train tour operators, interpreters and hospitality staff.

In major centres there is a need for attractions and activities to provide visitors with things to do before and after their hiking, camping, hunting or fishing trip. Getting tourists to stay even one extra day can have a positive impact on local economies.

Gaining control and decision-making responsibility over our natural resources through the devolution of northern resource program responsibilities from the federal government will help develop a self-reliant territory. Your government continues to press the federal government for a firm commitment to begin negotiations to conclude an agreement during the term of the Second Assembly.

The recent federal announcement of \$90 million over five years demonstrates a willingness on the part of Canada to support economic development in the territories. However, northern premiers and the ministers of economic development of the territories are negotiating with Canada the administrative and allocation arrangements in order to set territorial priorities and make strategic economic investment decisions.

At the same time, the three territorial Premiers and the Prime Minister are developing a Northern Vision and strategy. An announcement is expected during this sitting of the Legislature.

Education

Education is the key to strengthening our culture, expanding our economy and creating a self-reliant and confident society.

If we are to have a vibrant and strong culture then we have to make sure that we teach our children our language and our culture.

If we are to enjoy the benefits of an expanding economy we need to ensure that Nunavummiut receive the education and training they will need to be able to take the jobs that will be created in Nunavut.

That is why we are developing a culture of lifelong learning. With this approach, Nunavut will be able to reach its full potential.

That is also why your government has made it a priority to expand future skilled employment opportunities by opening a Nunavut trades school by the end of the Second Legislative Assembly.

We need a public education system that focuses on graduating bilingual youth who are equipped with the skills and knowledge to succeed in post-secondary studies.

The foundation of such an education system will be a made-for-Nunavut Education Act.

The development of a new Education Act is a priority for the government during this mandate. It is committed to including Nunavummiut in that process in a meaningful and substantial way.

Consultation on education initiatives will continue through a number of public forums to determine what Nunavummiut want to see within the education system. These consultations will begin early next year.

In addition, the government is pursuing a revamped school funding formula that is more relevant to our territory and will result in a pupil/teacher ratio and staff levels that

promote positive learning environments. The government will create a formula that is clear and transparent.

Within the classrooms, our children need a culturally-relevant curriculum. Our youth need to be taught not only in the majority language of the territory, but also with curriculum and text books that reflect their culture and are relevant to Nunavut. In developing a Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum with adequate resources, we hope to see bilingual youth graduate with the education, skills and confidence to pursue post-secondary education in the field of their choice.

To increase participation within the workforce, the government is undertaking a review of several post-secondary program initiatives. It will continue to develop an Adult Learning Strategy to increase academic levels within the territory, making residents more qualified to pursue skills-related training and employment opportunities. It will also pursue programs at the community level, including basic literacy, pre-employment, certificate, diploma and degree programs.

The departments of Education and CLEY will begin planning for a Nunavut Cultural School, which will strengthen Inuit culture for future generations. This school will combine academic and traditional skills with a focus on early adults making the transition from high school to the workforce.

Health Care Closer to Home

The health of Nunavut depends on the health of each of its physical, social, economic and cultural components.

The Government of Nunavut is encouraged by the recent success at the First Ministers' Meeting of concentrated efforts to bring this message to Ottawa. We welcome the 10-year Plan to Strengthen Health Care in Canada.

The new funding from the federal government will assist the Department of Health and Social Services with implementation of its Closer to Home strategy.

Over the next five to 10 years, Closer to Home is expected to bring these results:

- More care and services will be delivered to Nunavummiut in their own communities, using their own language and in the proper cultural setting.
- More care and services will be delivered by Inuit to Inuit.

Closer to Home will encourage traditional Inuit practices in health care, such as expanded midwifery programs so that mothers can have their children in or closer to their communities.

The opening of three new regional health centres in Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay will result in more services being delivered in Nunavut, reducing the need for out-of-territory care.

Planning is underway to ensure that training and education opportunities are available so that the centres will be able to hire as many Nunavummiut as possible.

Investments are also being made elsewhere to modernize services in communities, with new facilities in Arviat, Pond Inlet, and Igloolik, and more to follow. There will also be a new long-term care facility in Chesterfield Inlet and Nunavut's first psychiatric facility, in Iqaluit.

In partnership with communities, the government is committed to opening one new 24-hour Elder Care facility in each year of its mandate, beginning next year.

In an effort to reduce the disruption medical travel causes within families when patients are required to leave their communities for treatment, the government is committed to providing more care closer to home through programs such as telehealth.

Advances in technology will make it possible to bring telehealth to every community in Nunavut by the end of this year.

The excellence of our telehealth system is recognized beyond this territory. It is with great pleasure that I am able to inform members that the Nunavut telehealth system recently received two prestigious awards.

To develop healthy communities we must provide options and opportunities that enable individuals, families and communities to become stronger.

Working together is a key to this, and it is especially so in the case of another serious issue - the high rate of suicide in our territory.

Far too many Nunavummiut have been personally affected by the devastating results of suicide.

Your government will continue to assist efforts to reduce and prevent suicides. It supports the continued partnership with Nunavut Tunngavik, the RCMP, the Nunavut Help Line, Qikiqtani Inuit Association and others on the Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit, also known as the Embrace Life Council. This council's mandate is to gather information, develop and coordinate training material and increase awareness of individuals at risk.

We will continue to support the work of the council to ensure its success.

Housing

Families and individuals in Nunavut need to have fair access to a range of affordable housing that is comparable to the housing in other parts of Canada. We have made some progress, but providing adequate housing for our residents remains a significant challenge.

Public housing has increased by more than 330 units since 1999 – through an investment of \$50 million – yet despite this progress, at least 3,000 public housing units are needed immediately to relieve chronic overcrowding and bring housing up to Canadian standards. Nunavummiut who have been living in these overcrowded conditions are suffering related negative health effects.

Your government is committed to improving these statistics, but it cannot be done alone. The reality is that territorial housing needs far exceed the government's resources.

In September, the government partnered with Nunavut Tunngavik to present the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada with Nunavut's 10-year Inuit Housing Action Plan. It urges the federal government to fulfill its financial responsibility for aboriginal housing in Nunavut.

More than 54 percent of Nunavut Inuit live in overcrowded conditions. Over the past 10 years, the federal government has invested more than \$3.8 billion in on-reserve housing in the rest of Canada. The territorial government and NTI want a partnership now with Ottawa to implement a housing plan for Inuit in Nunavut.

Last year's \$40 million cost-matching agreement with Infrastructure Canada will enable the Nunavut Housing Corporation to build about 160 additional public housing units during the next several years. However, one-time investments such as this, though welcome, are not enough to deal with Nunavut's growing population and the resulting pressure on housing.

A housing action plan would complement work already underway on a long-term housing strategy for Nunavut. The housing corporation is completing consultations throughout Nunavut and will complete a draft strategy this winter. This strategy will be brought forward in the spring of 2005 through a "Building Connections in Nunavut" public forum.

The government has directed the housing corporation to expand its home improvement programs and bring forward options for increasing private sector housing development and ownership.

Justice

A home is where a family should feel safe, yet domestic violence continues to be a serious problem in our territory. To address this issue, the Government of Nunavut will introduce legislation in this Assembly to protect and assist victims of domestic violence and reduce the devastating effects that family violence has on entire communities.

Through such initiatives the government is working to find a balance between supporting victims of violence and reducing the rates of violence and the rate at which people re-offend.

The government will continue to develop youth programs and alternatives to the criminal court and jail systems.

At the end of the year this work will result in the opening of the Kugluktuk Ilavut Centre. Instead of going to Yellowknife or Iqaluit, some offenders from the Kugluktuk area will soon be able to serve their sentences at this healing facility in a more traditional setting near their community and families.

The government is committed to opening another similar facility in Nunavut during the term of this Assembly.

Our justice system is being revamped in another way. Just a few weeks ago the Justice Minister unveiled architectural drawings of Nunavut's first justice centre and the home of Canada's first single-level trial court.

The building was designed in consultation with various Inuit groups and will make justice more accessible in a state-of-the-art environment that is more secure for victims, court officers, the public and the accused.

Justice is more than buildings. It is also the rule of law and fairness. This is exemplified by the *Nunavut Human Rights Act*, which came into effect Nov. 5, 2004. The Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal is being established in Coral Harbour to administer the legislation in a manner that considers Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and allows Nunavummiut to seek human rights protection in their own language and without having to leave Nunavut.

This also fulfills the government's commitment to locating new government boards and agencies, where possible, in smaller communities.

Environment

The government wants to place a higher emphasis on the environment during this mandate. Consistent with our concerns with global warming and on-going support for the Kyoto Protocol, it has directed all departments and the Qulliq Energy Corporation to initiate energy saving measures throughout the government and to launch a public energy conservation campaign as soon as possible.

As we move to conserve and reduce the use of energy we will find alternatives to diesel fuel for electricity generation.

The Kyoto accord is vital in dealing with climate change. We have first-hand knowledge of environmental conditions and we have all witnessed the negative impacts brought about by global warming. These changes are making it more difficult to travel and to access our resources and country foods.

We are all familiar with the problem of what to do with old vehicles when they have outlived their usefulness. They are often abandoned or taken to overflowing municipal dump sites. As population and incomes grow, more vehicles are being imported from the south for personal and commercial use.

The government will work with municipalities to explore alternatives including the "repatriation" of old vehicles.

The harvesting of wildlife has long been a key to the survival of Inuit. The food and economic value of wildlife will continue to be important.

To ensure the long term sustainability of these resources, a priority of the government, in partnership with NTI, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board and hunters and trappers organizations will be the implementation of the *Wildlife Act* and its regulations. It is the government's intention to bring this new Act into force on July 9, 2005.

This statute, updated, modernized, and consistent with the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*, will provide the tools for us to effectively manage our wildlife resources long into the future. A series of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit principles, for the first time fully incorporated into legislation, will ensure our wildlife management system is reflective of Nunavut. The co-management regime to be implemented by the Act will ensure that resource users have input into decision making.

Nunavut's Parks now cover more than six percent of Nunavut, making up 130,000 square kilometres of mountains, tundra, historic sites, coastline, and important wildlife habitat. Combined with other protected areas, almost 14 percent of Nunavut is either protected or proposed for protection.

The government is proud of this and will continue to emphasize the importance of conserving and protecting our natural and cultural history. Plans for new parks and conservation areas are currently underway and will continue in all regions of Nunavut, with studies for a new coastal park north of Clyde River nearing completion.

Working Together

The government looks forward to continuing to work with Nunavut Tunngavik to implement the objectives of the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*.

In reconfirming this relationship, the government and NTI recently developed and signed a protocol called Iqqanaijaqatigiit (Working Together). It provides a framework for working effectively on areas of mutual interest. This agreement reflects lessons learned over the past several years and helps the organizations better deal with issues.

By working with Nunavut Tunngavik, the government reviewed and amended its contracting policy – commonly known as NNI. The amendments will increase participation of Inuit within the Nunavut economy. This was done by adjusting preferences in favour of Inuit-owned, local and Nunavut-based businesses.

Fiscal Situation

Tomorrow the government will outline the current fiscal situation and present the Capital Budget

This government has not and will not stand still in the face of the many challenges that we face in Nunavut. As I have outlined, it is addressing many urgent issues and needs.

At the same time the government must deliver its programs and services within its financial means. There are many serious pressures and every dollar counts.

Even with the additional federal funding from the recent First Ministers' meetings, the government cannot afford to address all the urgent needs immediately.

To ensure careful on-going prudence and accountability the government is implementing the recommendations of the Auditor General and of Legislative Assembly Standing Committees. The government will also explore overarching legislation to govern the accountability of public bodies in the territory.

Conclusion

As it moves forward to secure economic development and strengthen our culture, the government will engage in open consultations with Nunavummiut.

Your government will continue to work for your support as MLAs and the support of Nunavummiut so that it can proceed with confidence and strength with the implementation of its priorities during this mandate.

This is your government and only by working together, listening and acting appropriately, can we create a Nunavut that we envision for ourselves and for our children.

The path is clear and I wish you every success.

Nakurmiik.