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**Nunavut Maligaliurvia**  
**Legislative Assembly of Nunavut**  
**Assemblée législative du Nunavut**

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## **MLAs Agree to Key Priorities for the Second Mandate**

**IQALUIT, Nunavut (September 27, 2004)** – Nunavut’s MLAs concluded the first Caucus Retreat of the Second Legislative Assembly with a commitment to ensuring that the pursuit of economic development and the building of stronger cultural foundations join ongoing efforts to improve education, housing and health care as the fundamental priorities for the Government’s term of office.

The three-day Retreat in the community of Arviat provided an opportunity for each MLA to articulate a vision for the territory’s future in advance of the upcoming Throne Speech in November, when the Legislative Assembly’s Second Session convenes.

“This gathering provided a valuable opportunity for all Cabinet Ministers to listen carefully to the views of our colleagues,” said Premier Paul Okalik. “I was pleased that our initial thoughts on the Government’s direction for the next several years were received so well.”

The Retreat also included an opportunity for Members to be briefed on the Government’s fiscal situation. Finance Minister Leona Aglukkaq said, “Although Nunavut was successful in negotiating much-needed additional federal funding at this month’s First Ministers’ Meeting, we must continue to be vigilant and live within our means. There are many serious pressures facing us, and every dollar counts.”

Minister Aglukkaq will deliver the Government’s Mid-Year Fiscal Update in November, in conjunction with the introduction of the 2005-06 capital estimates.

MLAs discussed in detail options for where to focus the Government’s resources during its term of office. Consensus emerged that a new emphasis on community and sectoral economic development, and cultural strength based on Inuit societal values, will complement ongoing initiatives to improve education, bring health care closer to home and address the territory’s housing crisis.

Cambridge Bay MLA Keith Peterson said, “Nunavummiut want and are entitled to the same quality of life as other Canadian citizens. We must ensure that the Government acts on their aspirations and brings their concerns to the table.”

Arviat MLA and Retreat Host David Alagalak said, “One of my campaign priorities was to work for a healthy private sector in Nunavut. This goal was well-reflected in our deliberations this week.”

A number of specific goals for the second mandate were agreed to by MLAs. These include:

- Developing Nunavut’s economy, private sector and job market by aggressively implementing the *Nunavut Economic Development Strategy’s* focus on mining and other key sectoral areas, including arts & crafts and tourism;
- Expanding future skilled employment opportunities for youth by opening a Nunavut trades school by the end of the Second Legislative Assembly;
- Working for a public education system that focuses on graduating bilingual youth who are equipped with the skills and knowledge to succeed in post-secondary studies;
- Strengthening Inuit culture for future generations by finalizing plans for a Nunavut Cultural School;
- Ensuring the security of Nunavut’s cultural legacy by implementing plans for a territorial Heritage Centre and the repatriation of Nunavut’s cultural treasures from other jurisdictions;
- Reflecting Inuit societal values and fostering a sense of Inuit ownership in their own government by clearly identifying and implementing practical ways to incorporate *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* into government delivery of public services;
- Confirming the support of MLAs for health care reform that includes expanded access to 24-hour care facilities for Elders;
- Addressing the ongoing housing crisis by actively supporting home ownership and improvement programs, in addition to partnering with NTI in lobbying the federal government to join in implementing the Ten-Year Inuit Housing Action Plan;
- Managing Nunavut’s financial resources responsibly by acting decisively on the recommendations of the Auditor General and Legislative Assembly Standing Committees with respect to strengthened financial management across Government departments and Crown corporations;
- Exploring overarching legislation to govern the accountability of public bodies across the territory; and
- Creating a Nunavut Electoral Boundaries Commission by early 2006 in advance of the next general election.

In addition to their Caucus deliberations, MLAs met with a number of community leaders and youth representatives during the Retreat. Caucus Chair Levi Barnabas said, "Meeting outside of the capital from time to time helps us as elected legislators to gain a better perspective on the needs of all Nunavummiut."

Building on the Caucus Retreat, Nunavut's Cabinet will finalize the *Pinasuaqtavut* vision statement later this fall. The document will be tabled in the Legislative Assembly when the House reconvenes in November.

- 30 -

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