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Nunavut Maligaliurvia
Legislative Assembly of Nunavut
Assemblée législative du Nunavut

RELEASE

Members of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut identify priority areas of action to implement *Tamapta* Mandate

IQALUIT, Nunavut (October 26, 2009) - The Members of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut gathered in Iqaluit from October 20-23, 2009, to review the findings of the *Qanukkanniq* Report Card and to identify priority areas of action to implement the *Tamapta/CL^{CC}: Building our future together* mandate statement, which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on April 1, 2009.

Caucus reflected on and recognized the Government of Nunavut's achievements of the past decade, including the significant increase in Inuit employment at all levels of the government, the construction of essential new infrastructure across the territory and the passage of milestone legislation in the areas of education, official languages protection and family abuse intervention.

"We asked Nunavummiut to tell us what is working well in our government and to make suggestions concerning where we need to make improvements," said Premier Eva Aariak, MLA for Iqaluit East. "Every single Member of the Legislative Assembly participated in and made valuable contributions during this priority-setting exercise, which will give strategic direction to the government for the remainder of our term of office."

Caucus reached consensus on the need to base the initiatives of the government on the core values and principles of self-reliance, open communication and service to the public. Caucus agreed that fulfilling the government's fundamental responsibility to meet the basic needs of individuals and communities must be complemented by steps to strengthen their self-reliance.

"Government programs and services play an important role in the life of our territory," said John Ningark, Chair of Full Caucus and MLA for Akulliq. "However, Members of the Legislative Assembly recognize that it is ultimately healthy families and communities that provide a truly sustainable foundation for building our children's future."

Caucus emphasized the need to ensure that the government works to fully implement Nunavut's new *Education Act*, *Official Languages Act* and *Inuit Language Protection Act*. Caucus also agreed on the need to develop comprehensive strategies to combat poverty and increase the supply of housing throughout the territory.

Caucus agreed that comprehensive reviews of the public housing rent scale and the income support program are required. Caucus noted that these reviews should focus on identifying and removing disincentives to entering the workforce. Caucus also agreed that a review of the income support program should consider ways of ensuring that recipients acquire skills and contribute to their communities.

Caucus stressed the importance of strengthening the performance of the education system at all levels, from early childhood education to adult learning. Caucus also noted the importance of increasing day care options for parents seeking to pursue educational and employment opportunities.

Caucus confirmed its support for the objectives of Article 23 of the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*. Caucus recognized that capacity and performance gaps in the government must be addressed, and confirmed its commitment to a training culture that seeks to build a service-oriented, professional and culturally respectful public service.

Caucus carefully considered the extent to which the government's decentralization initiative has achieved its goals of bringing government decision-making closer to the people and fostering employment and economic opportunities at the community level. Caucus noted both the successes and challenges of decentralization and concluded that a functional review should be undertaken.

Caucus identified the need to improve the basic tools of the public service, including its financial, human resources, business planning, informatics and communications systems. Caucus expressed its expectation that enhancements in these areas will help to address public concern regarding the difficulty in accessing core government services.

Caucus held extensive discussions concerning areas for legislative action and initiatives that will reflect Nunavut's unique culture, Inuit societal values and circumstances. Caucus agreed that a new *Child and Family Services Act* and a new *Liquor Act* will be introduced during the 3rd Legislative Assembly of Nunavut. An independent position to represent and articulate the needs of children and youth will also be established during the life of the Legislative Assembly.

Caucus acknowledged that while the government's resources are not unlimited, it noted that municipalities and other community-based organizations require adequate resources to allow them to build their own capacity. Caucus took the opportunity to pay tribute to the work performed by the Municipal Training Organization and noted the importance of mutually respectful relationships between different levels of government in the territory.

Caucus expressed its determination to ensure that government takes steps to foster an economic climate in which businesses and entrepreneurs can flourish. Key areas for action were identified as including alternative energy, transportation and telecommunications infrastructure. Caucus recognized that the participation of the private sector and the federal government in such initiatives will be essential to their success.

Kugluktuk MLA Peter Taptuna noted that, “The *Declaration of Confidence* that is expressed in the *Tamapta* mandate reflects the tone of our deliberations. We believe in Nunavut. We have hope for its vibrant future, built by our people pursuing their dreams.”

A detailed Action Plan is anticipated to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly at its next sitting.

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For further information:

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