



Commissioners Speech – Sixth assembly – FINAL

OPENING

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Nunavut was created by Inuit unwilling to accept the status quo – visionaries who saw opportunity when others despaired. Trailblazers who managed to achieve agreement when the cards were unfairly stacked.

Nunavut was created by Inuit who wanted to protect and promote their way of life, language and heritage – visionaries who achieved a unique and historic agreement that secured Inuit rights and benefits

Perseverance, courage, resilience, and hope define our people.

As we embark on devolution, the next chapter in our territory, we must rely on these strengths to work towards a common good and a better Nunavut for our children.

This is who we are – this is how we prevail.

TOWARDS LIVING WITH COVID-19

Congratulations to each of you for inspiring the trust of Nunavummiut. As new and returning Members of the Legislative Assembly you stand as the living legacy of our territory's founders.

As they shaped our past, you shape our future.

Every decade has its historic landmarks – moments when the world unites to face uncertainty.

In the past month we have heard the drums of war with the invasion of Ukraine by Russia– these threats of aggression lurk at our Arctic borders.

We sympathize with Ukraine and send our support.

Over the past two years, we have endured the daunting reality of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have lived while social distancing from loved ones, we have worked remotely from home, and we have greeted each other through masks.

We mourn our losses and triumph in our recoveries.

As Members of the Legislative Assembly, you were elected a month before our territory was hit with a new wave of infections and the Omicron variant which spread through our communities at an unprecedented rate.

What COVID-19 highlighted in Nunavut was not only the equity gap of our housing, healthcare, and Elder care systems, but our resolve when united in common cause.

We have seen our healthcare providers and front-line workers rise as everyday heroes.

We commend their courage.

We have seen our communities unite to support Elders and families in need.

We rally in their resilience.

We saw our government in partnership with Nunavut's Inuit organizations meet the needs of our people through public outreach, vaccination clinics, emergency COVID-19 initiatives, and access to isolation kits.

We salute their service.

Together, we weathered the storm of this uncertain pandemic and now we see the parting of the clouds in the horizon.

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TOGETHER FOR A COMMON CAUSE

The vision of Nunavut has always been rooted in the Inuit societal values of Piliqatigiinniq/Ikajuqtigiinniq – working together for a common cause.

The government's mandate titled, Katujjiluta, is about a commitment to work in unity to manifest the courageous dream.

The Katujjiluta mandate is unique. It is the first one developed through a historic dialogue between all Members of the Legislative Assembly, the leadership of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and Nunavut's three Regional Inuit Organizations.

In the spirit of Tunnganarniq, or "fostering good spirits by being open, welcoming and inclusive," this mandate is a testament to our consensus governance model and our joint commitment towards the betterment of Nunavut.

AGING WITH DIGNITY IN NUNAVUT

Elders are the living memory of our territory – preservers of language – holders of knowledge – receptors of traditions. They are our guiding light when at crossroads, providing insights from our past to lead us into our future.

We have heard the urgent calls from Nunavummiut to act on Elder care in our territory so our parents and grandparents can age in dignity close to community and family.

We will bring them home.

The Government of Nunavut will:

- Expedite the construction of regional long-term care facilities with capabilities to meet the needs of Nunavummiut with complex care requirements.
- Expand and/or renovate existing continuing care facilities.
- Provide culturally and linguistically relevant training for staff working in continuing care facilities.
- Accelerate the development of housing units for Elders and seniors.

EXPANDING THE HOUSING CONTINUUM

From igluvigaq to modern houses - our homes are our havens – providing shelter in troubled times – warmth from the elements.

This is where we raise our children – this is how we create community.

Access to permanent, safe, reliable housing determines our quality of life – it impacts educational outcomes and graduation rates, access to employment, and health and wellbeing outcomes including suicide rates and intimate partner abuse.

For far too many in our communities stable and affordable housing is out of reach.

Nunavummiut continue to grapple with an acute housing crisis compounded by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and Tuberculosis crisis.

We will build homes in every Nunavut community.

The Government of Nunavut will:

- Develop at least 1,000 housing units of all types
- Reduced homelessness
- Create more family violence shelters, youth shelters, and transitional housing
- Assist more Nunavummiut in renting or purchasing their own homes
- Increase employment of Inuit in local housing construction and maintenance
- Develop enduring partnerships with Inuit organizations, the private sector, and other levels of government to expand the housing continuum

ENABLING HEALTH AND HEALING

This past fall, during the leadership forum, our youth marched up to these doors to ask for a solution to the mental health crisis in Nunavut.

We are moved by their resolve.

Young Nunavummiut continue to shoulder the burdens of the past – intergenerational trauma, the legacy of residential schools, forced relocation and other colonial policies and practices imposed on Inuit.

We need to act on urgent mental health supports to help our youth achieve as leaders of tomorrow.

Through Qanuqtuurniq, being innovative and resourceful we will tackle the mental health crisis in our territory.

The Government of Nunavut will:

- Implement trauma-informed practices in healthcare and education
- Support models of wellness and well-being that are grounded in Inuit identity
- Expand education and training programs that provide Nunavummiut with the necessary qualifications for professional and paraprofessional work in healthcare, mental health, and addictions treatment
- Expand opportunities, training, and formal recognition for Inuit to provide culturally- and linguistically relevant mental health and wellbeing programs and services
- Engage more Elders and other community members as advisors and local counsellors
- Promote and provide long-term core funding for community-led programs and services
- Reinvest in suicide prevention and postvention programs with our partners, with an emphasis on those that address root causes such as child sexual abuse, trauma, bullying, and discrimination
- Reinvigorate health and mental health promotions programs

REINVESTING IN EDUCATION

Teaching and learning are core values for Inuit - Pilimmaksarniq/Pijariuqsarniq, development of skills through observation, mentoring, practice, and effort.

What we model in our teachings for our children in the foundation years determine who they become as adults.

We will invest in early learning and childcare programs.

The Government of Nunavut will:

- Invest in high quality, affordable, and inclusive early learning and childcare programs
- Provide more financial, administrative, training, and Inuktut learning resources to support early learning
- Begin a phased rollout of full-day kindergarten programs
- Accelerate work on a K-12 Inuit language curriculum and Nunavut-specific learning resources

This winter, our Government secured \$66.1 million in partnership with the Federal Government to address Nunavut's early learning and childcare needs.

The work on affordable and accessible childcare in our territory has already begun.

These investments will mean \$10/day childcare in Nunavut and 238 more childcare spaces across the territory.

Learning is a lifelong venture.

Supporting students at all levels of learning continues to be a priority.

Our children need fuel for their bodies so they can focus their minds and our students need reliable financial supports to pursue higher education.

Our government will:

- Enhance and support school meal programs with community-based partners
- Increase opportunities for pre-employment work experiences for high school and post-secondary students
- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of FANS and other direct financial aid for post-secondary learners
- Enhance indirect supports for post-secondary learners
- Prepare and implement a multi-year training strategy with Inuit organizations and other partners to enable development of Nunavut's labour force and economy
- Develop and implement a strategic plan for Inuit language training in the public service

DIVERSIFYING OUR LOCAL ECONOMIES

Our territory is growing – and so are our needs for economic opportunities.

While we continue to be invested in mining and mining-related services and the creation of training and employment opportunities for Nunavummiut in resource extraction – we also look to new avenues for economic growth.

Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq, the Inuit Societal Value of respect and care for the land, animals and the environment can guide us towards new possibilities in sustainable industries, renewable resources, and the blue economy.

The Government of Nunavut will:

- Refresh strategic plans for sustainable economic development and diversification in all sectors
- Increase training for employment in sectors such as mining, arts and crafts, tourism, and small business in partnership with Inuit organizations and the private sector
- Identify and promote opportunities for new local businesses and services
- Investigate the potential for alternative building technologies to be used and manufactured in Nunavut, with an emphasis on energy-efficient and climate-friendly construction
- Repatriate fisheries licences and purchase more fishing quota
- Enhance supports for harvesters
- Create an online marketplace for Nunavut arts and crafts

CONCLUSION

The leaders of Nunavut's past envisioned this territory as a place of opportunity.

You must rise to realize their dream.

Members of the Legislature, you will be asked to carry out the priorities identified in the Katujjiluta mandate.

The priorities for this sixth assembly are clear: work in partnership with all stakeholders including Inuit Organizations to tackle our territory's long-standing issues such as Elder care, housing, and mental health. Look for new solutions and partnerships to ensure affordable education and a diverse economy.

I am confident that you will honour the trust that has been placed in you.