News Release

Inuktitut Uqauttin Language Week set for January 14-20, 2001

ARVIAT, Nunavut (November 20, 2000) – On behalf of the Government of Nunavut, Culture, Language, Elders and Youth Minister Peter Kattuk officially declared January 14-20, 2001 as Inuktitut Uqauttin Language Week.

The Department of CLEY has joined the Nunavut Social Development Council (NSDC), Nunavut Tunngavik Inc (NTI) and the Nunavut Language Commissioner to create the first official Inuktitut Uqauttin Language Week in Nunavut. Funding for the event has been provided by Heritage Canada through the Canada-Nunavut Cooperation Agreement for French and Inuit Languages.

January 14 will mark the beginning of a new year of celebration for Nunavut's Inuit languages. While the week official concludes January 20, coordinators of the event hope that celebrations of Inuit languages will extend beyond that date. Focusing on the role elders play in the preservation and promotion of Inuit languages, Minister Kattuk announced this year's theme, ᑭᖑᓪᓚᓄᐊᓕᖕᒐᕐᓂᐱᖃᕈᓐᓃᑦᑐᖃᐃᑦ (*Generations of Voices*).

"It is time to recognize the journey of our language," Minister Kattuk said. "It is time to remember the generations of voices that have strengthened our words. And it is time to celebrate our elders, for it is this group of storytellers who lend their voices to the next generation."

NSDC President Mary Wilman added the week is an opportunity for people to become involved.

"Inuit must take pride in their language and instill the pride of our ancestors in our youth. If Inuit are to survive as a strong nation, we must continue to develop our ways by utilizing our language."

Louis Tapardjuk, an NSDC representative, expressed the Council's excitement over the Government's participation.

"We have all come together to celebrate our language. It's not about politics, but about communicating as Inuit."

Feasts, dances, writing contests, story times and awards are expected to be part of this year's theme.

"To date, many Inuit have expressed great concern for the ability of present and future generations to speak and understand the Inuktitut language," Nunavut Tunngavik Acting President, James Eetoolook said. "I believe this event is a reminder to us about how important the Inuktitut language is. The declaration of Inuktitut Language Week re-enforces one of NTI's goals to promote Inuit culture, language and values. All of these are essential to give Inuit control of their destiny and strengthen their unity."

-30-

For more information, contact

Wende Halonen
Manager, Communications and Planning
Iqaluit, Nunavut
☎(867) 979-5822
(867) 979-5833

Monica Ittusardjuat
Nunavut Social Development Council
Igloolik, Nunavut
☎ (867) 934-8060
(867) 934 8073