



## News Release

### Minister encouraged by federal response to Nunavut's "digital divide"

**Iqaluit, Nunavut (August 31, 2001)** – Sustainable Development Minister Olayuk Akesuk says he's encouraged by the federal government recognition of the need to bring high-speed digital communications services to Nunavut.

Minister Akesuk met with Industry Minister Brian Tobin last week in Rankin Inlet to discuss Canada's commitment to provide high-speed Internet access to all Canadians by 2004. They discussed the key role of information technology in the development of the Nunavut economy and the potential impact of the recommendations of the National Broadband Task Force, released earlier this summer.

"Minister Tobin acknowledged Nunavut's position as the only jurisdiction in the country whose citizens depend exclusively on satellite technology for digital communications," Minister Akesuk said. "This presents Nunavummiut not only with challenges unique in Canada, but also with enormous opportunities for the development of our economy."

Minister Akesuk provided Minister Tobin with an overview of the recommendations of the Nunavut Broadband Task Force. In September, senior Industry Canada officials will travel to Iqaluit to meet with the Nunavut Task Force and review its recommendations in detail. The public release of the final report is expected in mid-October.

"It is vital that all Canadians recognize what it will take to bridge the 'digital divide' here in Nunavut," Minister Akesuk said. "High-speed Internet access is as important to residents of Taloyoak as it is to residents of Toronto. I am pleased Minister Tobin has publicly acknowledged this reality and has begun to address the issue by including it as part of a national broadband agenda."

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For more information, contact:

Louise Walker  
A/Manager, Communications  
Government of Nunavut  
☎ (867) 975-6000  
☎ (867) 975-6099  
✉ [lwalker@gov.nu.ca](mailto:lwalker@gov.nu.ca)