



## News release

### Climate change, water quality key issues discussed at national meeting of environment ministers

**IQALUIT, Nunavut (September 28, 2001)** – Sustainable Development Minister Olayuk Akesuk is optimistic about the outcome of last weekend's meeting of federal-provincial-territorial environment ministers at The Pas, Manitoba.

“I was particularly encouraged by discussions on key environmental issues facing northerners,” Minister Akesuk said. “I was pleased to see the support by environment ministers to reaffirm commitments to clean, safe and secure water for all Canadians. We must ensure that our drinking water remains safe from its source to our taps.”

Ministers also discussed Canada's agenda for several upcoming international meetings. The seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties on Climate Change and the Earth Summit on Sustainable Development were of specific interest to Nunavut.

“In the north, impacts of climate change are being witnessed first hand, particularly by our elders who have had the benefit of closely watching land and weather patterns over many years,” Minister Akesuk said. “It is imperative these issues be addressed on a global scale since Nunavut bears the effects of causes that originate outside our territory.”

It was noted that the amount of hazardous waste imported into Canada decreased in 2000. Nonetheless, ministers agreed that the management of hazardous waste remains a critical issue for Canada. It was agreed that work would continue towards improving waste management practices throughout the country and developing a management regime for hazardous waste acceptable to all jurisdictions.

Minister Akesuk also tabled his concerns regarding open burning of waste in Canada and requested support from his colleagues for assistance in developing alternatives.

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