



News Release

Pinasuaqtavut Planning Retreat

RESOLUTE BAY, Nunavut (June 4, 2005) – The Government of Nunavut cabinet has completed a three day retreat focused on the implementation of the priorities of the second legislative assembly.

The government's consensus agenda is outlined in the *Pinasuaqtavut Mandate* document, which identifies strengthening Inuit societal values and encouraging private sector economic development with special attention to non-decentralized communities.

“This retreat is an opportunity to review progress we have made in the first 16 months of this government's plan to strengthen our culture and build our economy,” said Premier Paul Okalik.

In order to fund the government's priority initiatives cabinet reviewed a fiscal update which, assuming the passage of the federal budget and promised transfers to the Government of Nunavut, reveals a modest improvements to the territory's budget surplus.

A stable and predictable fiscal environment will allow the Government of Nunavut to meet some of the major capital projects that are currently in planning.

“First amongst the cabinet's priorities is the development of a trades school. A thorough review of Nunavut wide priorities, including significant cultural projects, will be conducted with all Members of the Legislative Assembly at a fiscal planning retreat scheduled for September,” said Okalik.

During its retreat and in a joint session with the Board of Directors of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated cabinet reviewed its relations with the federal government. Both organizations agreed to continue building on the success of the recent tri-partite decision with Ottawa to appoint a conciliator to review stalled negotiations over the implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA). The GN and NTI have also agreed to challenge the federal government over its practice of offering its aboriginal entitlement programs to First Nations and Inuit outside of Nunavut but excluding beneficiaries of the NLCA.

Cabinet also reviewed progress achieved to date in negotiations with the federal government on the Northern Strategy. The GN will continue to work towards full devolution of federal authority over natural resources stewardship and will create a devolution secretariat in order to conclude negotiations by the 2008 completion date. Potential uses of the \$40 million the federal government has already committed through the strategy were also reviewed.

The GN intends to continue pushing Ottawa to recognize the linguistic reality of Nunavut, where 85% of the population speaks Inuktitut as a first language. To this end Nunavut calls on the federal government to meet its constitutional obligations to fund access for minority language services, which in Nunavut is both French and English.

Further legislative and policy initiatives will be announced in the coming months.

The retreat also included an opportunity to meet with hamlet councilors and elders in the communities of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay. “I appreciate that the Premier and cabinet have taken the time to learn first hand about the issues that are important in the high arctic. Understanding the needs of small communities will help ensure that the Government of Nunavut remains committed to improving the lives of Nunavummiut,” said Member of the Legislative Assembly for Quttiktuq Levi Barnabas.

-30-

Media contact:
Bill Clay
Premier’s Office
(867) 975-5059