



Media Release

Official Vancouver 2010 Inuksuk Unveiled

IQALUIT, Nunavut (July 9, 2008) – Nunavut Premier Paul Okalik today unveiled the first inuksuk sculpture to be sold as officially-licensed merchandise of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

“The sale of this inuksuk marks a historic day for Inuit,” said Premier Paul Okalik. “We are proud that the inuksuk, *Illanaaq*, is the official emblem for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games, and very pleased that Inuit will benefit from creating an authentic piece of art that represents our culture and way of life.”

A *Merchandise License Agreement* between the Nunavut Development Corporation and the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (VANOC) was signed March 5, 2008, and permits Nunavut inuksuit (the plural of inuksuk) to carry “a tag identifying the inuksuit as official merchandise for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.”

“Vancouver 2010 is committed to achieving unprecedented Aboriginal participation in the planning and hosting of the 2010 Winter Games,” said John Furlong, Chief Executive Officer for VANOC. “We are honoured to offer authentic, hand-carved pieces such as this inuksuk as unique, memorable and distinctively Canadian keepsakes of our games.”

The 2010 Inuksuk Project is managed in Nunavut by the Nunavut Development Corporation, which will purchase up to 40,000 inuksuit from communities across the territory. It is anticipated that the project will have a \$1 million impact on the Nunavut economy.

“We are very happy to be involved in this project” said Louie Kamookak, chairman of the Nunavut Development Corporation. “The sale of inuksuit will help us introduce all of our Inuit art – fine art prints, sculptures, textiles, and more – to a world-wide market.”

Each inuksuk made for the project is handmade and unique. The small sculptures are packaged individually, and include a story about the origin and significance of the inuksuk, as well as the carver’s name, a short biography, and the official marks of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

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