

News Release

Nunavut Legislative Assembly Approves the *Inuit Language Protection Act*

Iqaluit, Nunavut (September 19, 2008) – The Nunavut Legislative Assembly has passed the *Inuit Language Protection Act*, the second of two pieces of legislation designed to respond to official language concerns in Nunavut. This second statute will provide the tools needed to respond particularly to the rights and unique needs of the Inuit Language.

"The Inuit Language is at the heart of our culture and identity," said Louis Tapardjuk, Minister of Culture Language Elders & Youth. "With the *Inuit Language Protection Act* we have taken strong action to ensure that the Inuit Language is and will remain at the centre of work, education, and daily life in Nunavut."

"This legislation responds directly to government's responsibility under Article 32 of the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* and affirms that Inuit have the inherent right to the use of the Inuit Language in Nunavut," said Tapardjuk. "It provides for the positive action required to respect unilingual Inuit and improve their access to services, to reverse the language shift among our young people, and to strengthen the use of the Inuit Language by all Nunavummiut."

Unlike the new *Official Languages Act*, the *Inuit Language Protection Act* will not require approval from Federal Parliament. Certain parts of the Act take effect immediately. Other sections, including the right to instruction and services to the public, will undergo public consultations and planning before implementation begins.

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For more Information:

Napatchie Kolola
Department of Culture, Language, Elders & Youth
Government of Nunavut

Phone: (867) 975-5526 Email: nkolola@gov.nu.ca

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