



## News Release

### **Premier Aariak Speaks at the Symons Lecture on the State of Canadian Confederation**

**IQALUIT, Nunavut (November 4, 2009)** Premier Eva Aariak addressed a full house yesterday in Charlottetown, P.E.I., highlighting the needs, issues and objectives of Nunavut at the Symons Lecture on the State of Canadian Confederation. The Premier's address was entitled, "Completing the Map of Canada", and was made in response to a lecture by keynote speaker, ITK President Mary Simon.

"The Symons Lecture provided an opportunity for both Mary and I to give Inuit and Nunavummiut a strong voice at a national forum," said Premier Aariak. "For most Canadians, the Arctic is a place they have not visited, and therefore can only imagine or learn about second-hand. For that reason, it is understandably difficult for them to appreciate the issues that we face on the ground," said Premier Aariak.

Premier Aariak went on to say that although the map of Canada was redrawn in 1999 to include Nunavut, this historic event marked only the beginning of a much greater effort to complete the map of Canada. "If we are to succeed," said Premier Aariak, "Inuit must reclaim the power to shape our communities, the land and sea around us, and our future within this country."

In her address, Premier Aariak told the audience that Nunavut was off to a strong start and has much to offer the world: for instance, arts and music, language and culture, and perspectives on the changing environment. However, she also asked that expectations be managed. "Canada has had 142 years to work out its kinks," said Premier Aariak. "At times, it seems perfection is sought from Nunavut after merely 10 years. Certainly we have a lot of work to do, but it is important to keep our accomplishments in perspective and continue to move forward," said Premier Aariak.

Premier Aariak encouraged the audience to visit Nunavut to learn first hand about the issues that affect Nunavummiut, for only by visiting can they move beyond the Arctic that they imagine, and see and understand our reality.

The annual Symons Lecture provides a national platform for Canadians distinguished in public life and public discourse to comment upon the state of the Canadian confederation, as well as an occasion for Canadians to consider major questions that may confront us.

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For more information, or to request a copy of Premier Aariak's address, please contact:

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