

News Release

Premier Aariak attends Western Premiers' Conference

IQALUIT, Nunavut (June 16, 2010) – The Honourable Eva Aariak, Premier of Nunavut, today wrapped up the final day of the 2010 Western Premiers' Conference in Vancouver with her provincial and territorial colleagues.

The conference addressed a number of issues, including a conversation on water resources and management strategy, the economy, and healthy living (see separate joint news releases on these items).

The Premiers signed an Open Skies Declaration asking the federal government to expand the roster of countries with whom it has an agreement. "Nunavut's interest in the Open Skies Declaration is whether a federal agreement with Denmark might support an air link between Iqaluit and Greenland. I look forward to further exploring this exciting opportunity," said Premier Aariak.

On the issue of the labour market, the Premiers share a focus on enhancing aboriginal participation in the workforce. "The key for Nunavut is that Inuit prepare for jobs and economic development through education and skills training. Competencies and skills are essential for building self-reliance, serving our communities, and seizing the opportunities that were the vision of our land claim negotiators," said Premier Aariak.

On environmental assessment, Nunavut already has a coordinated environmental assessment process and is already moving one project through the Nunavut Impact Review Board process (NIRB), which highlights the importance of capacity for a comprehensive, thorough, and environmentallysound process.

On the issue of energy, Nunavut differs from other jurisdictions. "At the moment Nunavut is an energy consumer, not yet an energy powerhouse. Our territory is off any network or grid, and our focus is on community-specific micro-generation. Our need is to reduce dependence on diesel and to develop alternate energy resources and technology, as outlined in *Ikummatiit: Nunavut's Energy Strategy*," said Premier Aariak.

"I would like to thank Premier Campbell for hosting this very productive meeting, and I look forward to working with my colleagues at the Council of the Federation meeting in August 2010," said Premier Aariak.

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