



Communiqué

Northern Premiers' Forum

WHITEHORSE, May 14, 2010 – The premiers of Yukon, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories held their eighth annual meeting in Yukon to discuss issues of importance to the people of Canada's North.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Renewable Energy Inventory

Premiers reviewed progress on a pan-territorial renewable energy inventory, which will outline current and future efforts to explore and optimize the development and use of renewable energy sources. The inventory will highlight interests that are shared by the territories and identify to the public and private sectors the benefits of developing renewable energy resources in the North.

Each territory has also developed its own plan to use more renewable energy in order to reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels and to control greenhouse gas emissions.

The premiers recognized the importance of a continued dialogue on the territories' renewable energy potential and look forward to participating in the upcoming Canadian School of Energy and the Environment conference this summer in Yellowknife.

Northern Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

The premiers confirmed their commitment to completing a pan-territorial climate change adaptation strategy by the end of 2010. The strategy will identify climate change issues shared by each territory such as melting permafrost, changing sea ice and invasive species so they can work together to address their priorities, in collaboration with all levels of government and stakeholders. The premiers also noted that each territory is already taking action to adapt to climate change.

Water Stewardship

The premiers recognized that northern watersheds contain ecosystems that have local, regional, national and global value. These ecosystems must remain healthy and diverse since they are fundamental to northern communities and economies, as well as being globally significant. Many northern watersheds are so vast that their upper reaches extend into southern jurisdictions. Upstream activities have downstream impacts. Therefore, northern water resources must be managed cooperatively.

The premiers directed their environment ministers to continue their efforts to ensure that regional and national initiatives address issues such as climate change and water efficiency, and help to ensure safe and secure water supplies for all Canadians.

TOURISM AND MARKETING

The premiers agreed that a series of pan-territorial marketing efforts, including the 2007 Canada Winter Games and the 2010 Olympic Games, were extremely successful and clearly demonstrated the benefits of

working together. The exposure and awareness created by the territories' collective efforts has brought the North unprecedented attention and will create long-term benefits for northerners.

With more than 215,000 visitors, extensive media coverage and the creation of remarkable assets for the North, Canada's Northern House at the 2010 Olympic Games achieved its goal of promoting the region.

The premiers committed to working with their industry associations, in partnership with the federal government, to identify further joint marketing initiatives that continue to position the North as a great place to visit, live and invest.

HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Housing

The premiers affirmed their commitment to the principles expressed in *A Northern Vision*. They agreed that in order to create healthy and sustainable communities, adequate and appropriate housing is essential.

The premiers recognized that the Northern Housing Trust investment has benefited the housing situation in their territories. However, core needs are increasing and there is a critical requirement for the federal government to provide long-term, stable and predictable funding to build and manage housing in Canada's North.

The premiers directed their housing ministers to continue work on a new approach that recognizes and supports the essential role housing plays in addressing territorial issues such as economic development, health, education and Arctic sovereignty.

Infrastructure

The North has benefited significantly from recent federal infrastructure funding programs, which have provided jobs and delivered real improvements to residents and communities. The premiers acknowledge the federal government's infrastructure contributions and noted that such investment supports economic development and diversification and helps to ensure a sustainable future for northern communities as well as sovereignty and security for all of Canada.

There are opportunities for significant partnerships with the northern economic development agency, CanNor, particularly as territorial governments are best positioned to identify northern infrastructure and economic development priorities. One area of focus is telecommunications. The premiers discussed the opportunity of identifying ways to enhance telecommunications to support services such as healthcare, justice and education and directed their governments to formalize a pan-territorial policy working group on telecommunications.

PolarSat

The premiers agreed that reliable connectivity to satellite transmission across the North is essential for the continued economic and social development of northern communities. They urged the federal government to continue to support the Canadian Space Agency and the launch and maintenance of the PolarSat project.

Health Funding

Healthy, sustainable communities will create a presence in the North that will contribute to asserting Canada's sovereign rights. The premiers agreed that working with other governments and Aboriginal partners, and investing in healthy communities will result in a stronger, more secure North.

The premiers recognized that the territories need to continue to take a pan-territorial approach to health care issues.

While the federal extension of Territorial Health System Sustainability Initiative is welcome, premiers agreed the federal government must address the unique, long-term financial challenges experienced by territorial health systems.

EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND TRAINING

A Northern University and Northern Research

The premiers recognized the work that northern colleges are undertaking to build capacity and deliver programs in the North that address the needs of northerners. These colleges are an important part of today's knowledge-based global economy.

The premiers discussed the initiatives underway to explore options for a university in the North, and encouraged continued collaborative efforts to build on existing institutions and programs to develop northern capacity and a strong knowledge sector.

CIRCUMPOLAR ISSUES

Arctic Council

The premiers met for the first time with the Canadian representatives of the Arctic Council Permanent Participants. They discussed their shared interests and ways to work together to advance such interests at the circumpolar level and agreed to meet regularly.

The territories share a common interest with Arctic Council member states and its permanent participants in building healthy, sustainable communities. This includes addressing important issues such as climate change and economic development in the circumpolar region.

Territorial governments will continue to work together to ensure that northern voices are heard in circumpolar affairs and look forward to discussing with the federal government how to best enhance their role at Arctic Council meetings.

UN DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The premiers are pleased that the federal government has decided to take steps to endorse the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and look forward to sharing their views with Canada and contributing further to this process.

The premiers remain committed to negotiating and implementing land claims as well as resource and self-government agreements that respect, promote and protect the rights and freedoms of Aboriginal peoples.

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