



# Statement

**Premier Aariak:**

## **Applauds Appointment of Federal Chief Negotiator for Devolution & Appoints Mr. David Akeeagok as Government of Nunavut Chief Negotiator**

**May 22, 2012  
IQALUIT, Nunavut**

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Premier Eva Aariak today released the following statement:

“I am delighted the Government of Canada appointed a federal negotiator for devolution.

I have dedicated a great deal of time to the devolution file these past several months and the appointment of a federal negotiator represents a major step forward in our government’s efforts to build the self-reliance of Nunavut.

I would like to thank Prime Minister Harper for his strong and personal commitment to strengthening governance in Canada’s North, and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. for their partnership and unwavering support for Nunavut’s devolution. I would also like to acknowledge Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Honourable John Duncan, for his role in this important step forward.

I am pleased to announce Mr. David Akeeagok as the Government of Nunavut’s Chief Negotiator for devolution. Mr. Akeeagok will continue his current role as Deputy Minister of Environment, and will take on the duties of Nunavut’s Chief Negotiator with a full complement of support from the Devolution Division in the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs.

Nunavut’s lands and natural resources rightfully belong to Nunavummiut to develop and protect according to our needs and priorities. Reclaiming the ability to make the decisions about how our lands and resources are managed is the next chapter in building a self-reliant Nunavut. This is why nangminiqsurniq – devolution – continues to be one of my government’s top priorities.

We look forward to the start of negotiations and to working constructively with the Government of Canada’s newly appointed Chief Federal Negotiator, Mr. Dale Drown.

Our economic development and our self-reliance depend on reaching an agreement to transfer land management responsibilities to Nunavut.”

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**Biography of David Akeeagok:**

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# Backgrounder

Devolution is the transfer of authority for Crown lands, and the resources they contain, from the Government of Canada to the Government of Nunavut. Currently, the federal government has final decision-making authority over more than 80 per cent of Nunavut lands, and will receive the royalties from any resource development that takes place on those lands.

In 2008, the Government of Nunavut, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and the Government of Canada came together to sign the *Lands and Resources Devolution Negotiation Protocol*, the starting point for negotiations to begin.

The experience of all three territories shows the importance of getting started with formal negotiations. The Yukon negotiations process stretched out over seven years. After nearly a decade of negotiations, the NWT reached the Agreement in Principle on January 26, 2011.

At their 2011 Annual General Meeting, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. delegates unanimously passed a resolution urging a devolution agreement of control over Crown land and resources from the federal government to the Government of Nunavut without further delay. For more information on devolution, please visit: <http://www.eia.gov.nu.ca/en/Devol.aspx>