

BACKGROUND

On October 30, 2012, the Honourable James Arreak, Minister of Languages, tabled the Uqausivut Plan for the implementation of the *Official Languages Act* and the *Inuit Language Protection Act*. The language legislation is expected to have a profound and long-term impact on the territory.

The Legislation

The new *Official Languages Act* establishes the Inuit Language, English and French as the official languages of the territory, and commits territorial government institutions to communicate with and serve members of the public in the official language of their choice. Following the tabling of the Uqausivut Plan, the Government of Nunavut will take steps to bring the new Act into force.

The *Inuit Language Protection Act* is now law in Nunavut. The Act was specifically designed to respond to the pressures confronting the Inuit language today. The Act sets out positive measures by which government and private sectors can protect, revitalize and promote the use of the Inuit language in education, work and daily life throughout the territory.

The Plan

The *Official Languages Act* and the *Inuit Language Protection Act* call for the development of a comprehensive plan to coordinate the implementation of the language legislation by departments of the Government of Nunavut and public agencies.

In 2011, the Minister of Languages tabled the first draft of the Uqausivut Plan, and invited Nunavummiut to review and comment on its content. Working with Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and the Languages Commissioner, the Department of Culture and Heritage received and reviewed thirty-five formal submissions from individuals and stakeholders. This input and collaboration helped shape the final version of the Plan.

The Plan is in three parts. Sections One and Two provide a detailed view of the obligations, current status, strategic objectives and priorities of all parties associated with implementation of the *Official Languages Act* and the *Inuit Language Protection Act*, respectively; Section Three sets out the Plan's management and accountability framework.

Subject to monies appropriated by the Legislature, the GN will establish a Language Implementation Fund to assist departments and public agencies in meeting their language obligations. The GN will also advocate to renew a Nunavut-specific language funding agreement between Canada-Nunavut for the continued protection and promotion of French and Inuit language in the territory.

In the next stage, the GN will develop detailed, strategic work plans, defining specific objectives, activities, outcomes and timelines to guide the implementation process.

The Government of Nunavut will continue to consult with territorial institutions, municipalities, Francophones, Anglophones and other interested parties regarding their specific concerns during the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the results of the Plan.

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