

News Release

For Immediate Release

Nunavut Official Languages Act is now in Force

IQALUIT, Nunavut (April 2, 2013) – The Nunavut *Official Languages Act* came into force yesterday, April 1, 2013. This is a milestone in the history of our young Territory. The new Act maintains the rights and privileges of English and French, while the Inuit Language will be elevated to equal status. This level of statutory protection for an aboriginal language is unprecedented in Canada.

"I am proud that Inuit in Nunavut now have a clear statement of their inherent right to the use of the Inuit Language in full equality with English and French," said James Arreak, Minister of Languages. "The Act further recognizes the important cultural contributions of Anglophones and Francophones in our territory, and affirms our commitment to deliver programs and services to the public in all three official languages."

To the extent set out in the Act, all three official languages will enjoy equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in territorial institutions, namely in the Legislative Assembly, the courts, and the departments of the Government of Nunavut and public agencies.

The Minister of Languages tabled *Uqausivut* during the sitting of the Legislative Assembly last fall, the comprehensive implementation plan pursuant to the *Inuit Language Protection Act* and *Official Languages Act*. The comprehensive *Uqausivut* Implementation plan will help GN departments and public agencies in improving their delivery of services to the public in all official languages.

To support departments and public agencies in meeting their legal obligations, the Department of Culture and Heritage will centrally administer territorial and federal language funds established for that purpose, which is comprised of \$5 million for Inuit language initiatives, and approximately \$1.45 million for French language initiatives (*Canada-Nunavut General Agreement on the Promotion of French and Inuit Languages*).

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