



## News Release



**For Immediate Release**

### **Country Food and Sustainable Community Initiatives Identified as Key to Food Security**

**IQALUIT, Nunavut (January 24, 2013)** – Access to country food and sustainable community initiatives were identified by more than 100 people who gathered this week in Iqaluit to discuss food security. They left the three-day session today with hope for a brighter future for all Nunavummiut.

Symposium participants, representing Inuit organizations, government, non-governmental organizations, retailers and community groups, recognized the importance of all community initiatives that address food insecurity, such as expanding sustainable breakfast programs for children in Nunavut.

“Seeing so many people come together to solve one of the most serious issues facing Nunavut is inspiring,” said Nunavut Premier Eva Aariak. “The Government of Nunavut is proud to be part of this process and remains committed to keeping food security a priority and to working with our partners to make a difference.”

“We are eager to be a part of a strategy that is made in Nunavut, for Nunavummiut,” said NTI President, Cathy Towtongie. “NTI is in full support and will play a pivotal role in the creation of a strategy, as co-chairs of the Nunavut Food Security Coalition.”

The symposium concluded with a statement of priorities (see attached) that the Nunavut Food Security Coalition will develop into a strategy based on the input and direction set at this week’s symposium.

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#### **Attachment: Nunavut Food Security Symposium Priorities for Action**

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# **Nunavut Food Security Symposium Priorities for Action**

## **Theme 1: Country Food Access**

### ***Transferring Traditional Skills to Future Generations***

- 1) Strengthening Inuktitut language skills is essential to allow for knowledge transfer between elders and youth.
- 2) Supporting the transfer of traditional skills using formal (e.g. school-based) and informal (e.g. mentorship-based) methods.

### ***The Availability of Wildlife for Food***

1. Ensuring that the needs of Nunavummiut continue to be balanced with the principles of conservation for harvesting wildlife stocks.
2. Recognizing the potential of intercommunity sharing networks to help with local wildlife shortages or surpluses.
3. Supporting a shift toward expanding food preferences (i.e. “make the unappetizing appetizing”), consuming additional local species (e.g. whelks, harp seal, turbot), and utilizing all parts of the animal (e.g. whale meat, bones).
4. Filling knowledge gaps through culturally-appropriate wildlife research, involving both traditional and scientific knowledge, to ensure harvest levels are sustainable.

### ***Increasing Community Sharing of Foods through Informal Networks***

- 1) Promoting the continuation of informal sharing that has occurred in the past and still occurs today (e.g. through radio announcements, community feasts).
- 2) Supporting communities to effectively utilize funds targeted at country food access (e.g. Nunavut Harvester Support Program, Country Food Distribution Program)
- 3) Incorporating a sharing component into hunter support programs (e.g. recipients could be required to show they contribute food security by providing country food to elders and others in need).

## ***Sustainable Country Food Commercial Access***

1. Exploring the sustainable commercialization of country food, while also ensuring that traditional sharing is also supported, and that country food is available to those who need it most (e.g. elders, single mothers).
2. Redirecting current food exports (e.g. turbot) to local markets.
3. Exploring ways to make country food available in stores at affordable prices (clarifying inspection requirements)
4. Improving community-based infrastructure to provide hunters with places to store, prepare, share, and sell their harvests.
5. Considering food security subsidies for meat and fish plants.
6. Exploring additional ways to ensure hunters can be compensated (professional designation, with salaries and benefits).

## **Theme 2: Market Food Access**

1. Maintaining a relationship with Nunavut's retailers, who are important partners in food security, and including their initiatives in a collaborative strategy.
2. Continuing to support in-store promotion of healthy eating, such as the recipe promotion program and in-store taste testing initiatives currently underway and planned.
3. Undertaking nutritious food basket surveys and regularly compare these with income support food allowances, as an advocacy tool.
4. Further exploring the potential of making country food available in stores at affordable prices.

## **Theme 3: Policy and Legislation**

- 1) Explore legislative approaches to protecting traditional economy
- 2) Support *Nunavut Food Donations Act*
- 3) Examine equity of existing policies, regulations and subsidies across communities
- 4) Promote self-reliance among income support recipients
- 5) Consider income support reforms, pension indexing and other tools to ensure adequate incomes

## Theme 4: Life Skills

1. **Sharing and promoting existing learning resources.** Create a way to share existing learning resources between organizations, learning programs, and the public.
2. **Making core learning resources.** Make core learning resources about the key areas for skills development (food use, budgeting and food planning, infant and child feeding) to support educators in variety of programs and settings (including formal settings, such as schools and the college, and informal settings, such as in community groups).
3. **Fostering a network of educators.** Foster a network of people involved in supporting the development of life skills for food security, including content experts, formal educators and informal educators.
4. **Including food skills and knowledge in other programs.** Support educators to include food skills and knowledge development in their programs, such as by providing resources, training and encouragement.
5. **Embedding language, literacy and other foundational skills into food skills initiatives.** Integrate language, literacy and other foundational skills development into learning programs and resources related to food security to support sustainable change and self-sufficiency.
6. **Making more skills development programming available overall—for children and adults,** in such as Canadian Pre Natal Programs (CPNP)-type programs and home economics programs, in formal settings (College, schools) and informal settings (community groups).

## Theme 5: Local Food Production

1. Sharing innovative ideas with communities across Nunavut, such as community composting, and other ways of doing more with what we already have.
2. Exploring the financial viability of green-housing and other food production initiatives that may have potential in Nunavut.
3. Empower people to produce food, informing them about what is being done elsewhere.

## **Theme 6: Programs and Community Initiative**

### ***Prioritize Breakfast Programs***

1. *Establishing sustainable breakfast programs for children in all communities*
2. Engaging parents and community members in school food programs.

### ***Specific Community-Based Initiatives that Address Acute (Emergency) Food Insecurity***

1. Preparing tools for food banks, soup kitchens, food hampers and community lunch programs.

### ***Broad Community Initiative***

1. Supporting community networks and volunteerism.
2. Assessing community assets and gaps for food security.
3. Establishing community facilities including community kitchens and multi-functional, community food centres.