



FOR RELEASE #13-127
May 10, 2013

Territorial premiers drive Canadian future with northern vision

WHITEHORSE—Canada's three northern premiers have renewed their commitment to work together to build a strong vibrant North for the benefit of all northerners and Canadians.

Yukon Premier Darrell Pasloski held discussions with Northwest Territories Premier Bob McLeod and Nunavut Premier Eva Aariak at the 11th annual Northern Premiers' Forum in Whitehorse on May 9 and 10.

Premiers agreed to renew the 2007 pan-territorial document, A Northern Vision: A Stronger North and a Better Canada to help set strategic direction and reflect increasing national and international interests in the North.

"Our joint goal as premiers is to continue to work together to create healthy, sustainable communities," Pasloski said. "We had positive and productive discussions under this year's theme of Driving the Canadian Future with a Northern Vision. We made progress on topics that have a direct impact on northerners – infrastructure, including roads, energy and telecommunications; housing; access to the Arctic coast; and training and skills development."

Premier McLeod said: "A strong North is good for Canada. The prime minister has often talked about the importance of the North to the economic future of the country. As northern premiers we are working together to ensure that the North's economic and energy potential is realized."

Participating in the forum by telephone because weather conditions prevented her from travelling, Nunavut Premier Eva Aariak said: "Economic development for the North is still the top priority among northern premiers. My colleagues and I discussed developing our northern Aboriginal workforce through skills and job training, as well as sustainable sources of energy for our growing economies."

Pasloski added: "Development for the people of the North is a theme for us, as Canada becomes chair of the Arctic Council. We discussed how the territories can contribute our northern perspectives and expertise to Canada's efforts at this important international forum and look forward to playing a key role in helping the federal government achieve concrete results for northerners."

The federal government commences its two-year term as chair of the Arctic Council on May 15.

To see the communiqué summarizing the outcomes of the forum and view A Northern Vision: A Stronger North and a Better Canada, visit www.anorthernvision.ca.

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