

Statement

Premier welcomes MSR Mary Simon's report

April 27, 2017 Igaluit, NU

Premier Peter Taptuna released the following statement:

"I welcome today's release of Ministerial Special Representative (MSR) for Arctic Leadership Mary Simon's report on A New Shared Arctic Leadership Model. The MSR recognizes that sustainable and healthy northern communities need to be at the forefront of any new Shared Arctic Leadership Model.

Canada's proposed Arctic policy framework has to be created and supported by Northerners. The Arctic, as the Government of Nunavut (GN) has repeatedly articulated and emphasized "is the area and jurisdictions north of the sixtieth parallel." We also agree it must include Inuit Nunangat, which encompasses Nunavik and Nunatsiavut, as recommended in the report.

The report endorses the issue of a standalone Arctic University. The GN continues to deliver accredited university degree programs through Nunavut Arctic College, including the Nunavut Teachers Education program, the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (Arctic Nursing) program, and starting in fall 2017, the Law Degree program. The GN values post-secondary education as an important driver to assist Nunavummiut into the permanent workforce and lower our dependence on income support assistance. The MSR's advocacy in this area is appreciated.

The report also addresses and recommends new conservation goals, especially within maritime jurisdictions. The GN supports the creation of the area as proposed by the Inuit North Water Polynya (*Pikialasorsuaq*) Commission as an area that has international significance, as well as the on-going work on the Lancaster Sound conservation area.

Nunavut has a robust regulatory framework when it comes to resource development, wildlife protection, and conservation. Under the Nunavut Agreement, federal and territorial regulators already balance development and conservation in our territory. In Nunavut, the concept behind the creation of Indigenous Protected Areas is already in place, and this recommendation may be redundant within the territory.

I appreciated Ms. Simon's acknowledgment throughout the report of the basic social, infrastructure and technological gaps between what exists in the Arctic and what other Canadians take for granted.

An overarching theme of the MSR's report is that the Arctic infrastructure deficit - the shortage of housing, lack of roads and commercial ports, antiquated internet and cell services - hinders development and the prosperity of northerners. Basic services that the rest of Canadian's take for granted are nearly non-existent in many northern and Nunavut communities.

I commend Ms. Simon on her work. Overall, I believe the report contains good direction and insight into some of the issues we face in the Arctic. I hope many of her recommendations shape strong policy development and expedite addressing our basic infrastructure and social needs."

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