

NEWS RELEASE



NR 09-14 PMO ENG – For Immediate Release

President of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated meets with Prime Minister of Canada

(August 20, 2009 -- Iqaluit, Nunavut) Paul Kaludjak, President of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, stated that he was glad to have met with Prime Minister Harper in Iqaluit last night.

President Kaludjak and Mary Simon, the President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami met with Prime Minister Harper and Ministers Aglukaaq and Strahl during the Prime Minister's Arctic tour.

Kaludjak added that there was agreement at the meeting that more steps had to be taken to improve Inuit economic and social conditions. In Kaludjak's view, this requires the federal government to meet its obligations under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. "We signed our agreement with the Crown in 1993, it is the law of the land, and it is meant to be the basis of a long term, productive relationship between Inuit and government," he said. "But we have had to face years of delay in implementing it. We are 16 years down the road, and there are still unfulfilled articles. Implementation cannot be left idle by any government."

Kaludjak added that full implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement would be consistent with the Prime Minister's emphasis on Arctic sovereignty. The Preamble to the Land Claims Agreement recognizes "the contributions of Inuit to Canada's history, identity and sovereignty in the Arctic." He added that Canada's presence in the Arctic stems from the Inuit presence. "The RCMP, teachers, traders and civil servants came north because Inuit were living there," he said. He added that the communities of Resolute and Grise Fiord were even established, in part, because of the need to bolster the Canadian presence in the region.

Kaludjak said that If Canada invests in the communities of the Arctic, to build healthy, prosperous communities this will be a long-term investment in Canada's future. "An investment in people and our communities is long-term, because we have been in the Arctic longer than anyone and will always live in our home and native land," he concluded.

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