

## NEWS RELEASE



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### **NTI Applauds New Book Connecting Arctic Sovereignty and Implementation of Nunavut Agreement**

(September 29, 2009 -- Iqaluit, Nunavut) Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President James Eetoolook congratulates Professor Michael Byers on the occasion of the launch of his book *Who Owns the Arctic? Understanding Sovereignty Disputes in the North*. In his book, the international scholar urges the Government of Canada to fully implement the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement as one means of asserting Canada's full jurisdiction over the Northwest Passage.

"We see this analysis as fully supporting and bolstering our multi-year and ongoing efforts to persuade the Government of Canada to live up to its obligations under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, including the lawsuit we filed against the Government in 2006 for failing to implement the Agreement," said Eetoolook.

NTI President Paul Kaludjak was quoted in the book as saying, "We are now in court because the Government of Canada has failed to implement an agreement which, given full force and effect, would strengthen Canada's Arctic sovereignty."

As noted by Prof. Byers, one important unfulfilled commitment is Article 23, which provides for Inuit employment in government at a level that matches their share of the population of Inuit in Nunavut – 85%. Professor Byers draws on the March 2006 conciliation report of former jurist Thomas Berger. The Berger report concluded that Nunavut is in crisis, and that the main impediment to equitable employment in Nunavut is the low Inuit high school graduation rate, the root cause of which is the lack of a fully bilingual Inuktitut-English education system from kindergarten through grade 12.

Although costly, Prof. Byers notes that the financial investment in bi-lingual education now would save tens of millions of dollars per year in recruiting, hiring and training of non-Inuit from the south, and would prevent untold social costs, which also have their own economic costs. As Byers observed, the human potential of the Arctic is the most important element of Canadian sovereignty.

Eetoolook concluded, “Canada’s Arctic sovereignty owes a huge debt to the people who call it home. To strengthen its sovereignty, Canada needs to implement the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and invest in the Inuit communities so that the North can develop into an equally strong and prosperous part of Canada.”

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