

NEWS RELEASE



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NTI Representatives Meet with Attawapiskat Chief Spence

(January 10, 2013--Ottawa) Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. President Cathy Towtongie, Vice-President Jack Anawak and Chief Executive Officer James T. Arreak met last night with Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence at her camp on Victoria Island near Ottawa.

Towtongie said the NTI delegation felt it was important to meet with Chief Spence to express support and discuss the commonalities Inuit and other Aboriginal Canadians share in respect to the failure of the Government of Canada to live up to its obligations under land claims agreements and modern treaties. Chief Spence has been on a hunger strike since Dec. 11 in a bid to meet with Prime Minister Stephen Harper about treaty issues. That meeting is scheduled to take place Jan. 11 between First Nations leaders and federal representatives. Chief Spence has since decided not to attend that meeting.

“In Nunavut, and across Canada, Inuit and other Aboriginal Peoples face similar struggles with inadequate education, housing, health care, food security and poverty, despite the fact that many of us have signed land claims agreements with the federal government in an attempt to reclaim and advance our economic and cultural self-sufficiency,” said Towtongie. “The intention of these agreements is to close the gaps in fundamental well-being between Aboriginal Peoples and non-Aboriginal Canadians. The Government of Canada has failed to implement and respect these agreements in many respects, which is a major factor in the perpetuation of poverty and other disadvantages facing Aboriginal Canadians.”

Towtongie said the Government of Canada breached the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and forced NTI to launch a lawsuit in 2006 against the Crown for its failure to live up to the obligations they promised to fulfill in that agreement. Towtongie said NTI recognizes the importance of the upcoming meeting with the prime minister on Jan. 11, and urged the Government of Canada to take advantage of that meeting to commit to a thorough and overdue review of federal policies that impair the full and fair implementation of land claims agreements and modern treaties across Canada.

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