

NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

Nunavut Inuit Left Out of the Canadian Middle Class

(March 20, 2019– Salliq, Nunavut) Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) expects fair and proportional allocations from the 2019 federal budget envelope.

“Bold nation-building investments are urgently needed in Nunavut to improve Inuit lives and narrow the equity gap between Nunavut Inuit and other Canadians,” says Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. President Aluki Kotierk.

Specific infrastructure investments are required. Nunavut Inuit leaders anticipated direct investments in projects such as the Grays Bay Port and Road, the Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Link, critical marine infrastructure associated with Tallurutiup Imanga National Marine Conservation Area and a Nunavut Heritage Centre.

Nationally, budget 2019 makes major investments in housing. However, the Inuit housing crisis in Nunavut remains largely unaddressed. Housing is a social determinant of health and linked to the on-going tuberculosis epidemic, mental illness, educational outcomes and violence.

With this budget, the Government of Canada has strengthened funding for minority language service for English and French, yet, failed to invest equitably in Indigenous languages. NTI seeks recognition that Inuktitut is the majority language in Nunavut and must be the language of public services, including education, justice and health services.

Increasing access to high-speed internet is a critical need in Nunavut where all 25 communities have less than 10 mbps download speed. High-speed internet would enable online learning, telehealth and economic development.

NTI is pleased with the commitment to address addictions and trauma treatment in Nunavut through the establishment of a long-awaited treatment facility.

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NTI is also encouraged by the initial investment in an Inuit-led post-secondary education strategy. This investment is in line with commitments towards Inuit employment and the full implementation of Article 23 in the Nunavut Agreement.

“I applaud the continued Inuit-specific investments,” said Kotierk. “For twenty-five years since the Nunavut Agreement’s signing, we see growing disparity between Inuit and non-Inuit, an indication that the Government of Nunavut’s failure in Inuit employment is directly resulting in policies that largely benefit the non-Inuit minority. Inuit-specific investments enable program delivery through Inuit organizations and our partners.”

The budget announcement was attended by Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. President Aluki Kotierk, Kitikmeot Inuit Association President Stanley Anablak, Kivalliq Inuit Association David Ningeongan and Qikiqtani Inuit Association President P.J. Akeeagok.

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