

Nunatsiavut
kavamanga



Nunatsiavut
Government

BACKGROUND

Backgrounder Nunatsiavut Government Operations

Historic ceremonies took place today in Nain and other Labrador Inuit communities for the official commencement of Nunatsiavut Transitional Government. During the day's program, the First Session of the Nunatsiavut Transitional Assembly formalized the Labrador Inuit Constitution and the Nunatsiavut Civil Service.

Nunatsiavut Government is in two levels: firstly the regional Nunatsiavut Government. The regional Nunatsiavut Government will ultimately have its Legislative Assembly in Hopedale and its administrative centre in Nain.

The second level of Nunatsiavut Government will be the five Inuit Community Governments representing the Inuit communities of Nain, Hopedale, Rigolet, Makkovik and Postville. Although these two governmental levels are distinct, they are also connected. The AngajukKâk, or Mayor, of each Inuit Community Government will act as representative of his or her constituency in the Nunatsiavut Assembly.

A similar arrangement will be in place for Inuit community corporations. Inuit community corporations are non-profit corporations that will be established for Labrador Inuit living outside the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area. For example the Upper Lake Melville Inuit Community Corporation will represent the Inuit living in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, North West River and Mud Lake. The chairperson of each Inuit community corporation will also represent his or her constituents in the Nunatsiavut Assembly.

Today the Labrador Inuit Constitution became law as the Nunatsiavut Constitution. In keeping with the Constitution, and with the full support of the Assembly, the President appointed former LIA Vice President Tony Andersen as Nunatsiavut Government's First Minister. The First Minister then appointed other Members of the Assembly to the Executive Council.

Based on consensus rather than an adversarial or partisan parliamentary system, the Assembly will be a forum for policy and debate. The Assembly will oversee the actions of the Executive Council which will in turn implement Inuit laws, develop policy, initiate and prepare legislation and oversee government administration.

The Government Departments of the regional Nunatsiavut Government will reflect the unique principles of the Labrador Inuit Constitution. There will be five key Departments: the Nunatsiavut Secretariat; Nunatsiavut Affairs; Finance and Human Resources; Health, Education, Social and Economic Development; and Environment, Lands and Natural Resources.

Working under the directorship of President William Andersen, the Nunatsiavut Secretariat is specially designed to serve the needs of the Labrador Inuit. The Clerk of the Nunatsiavut Executive Council will oversee the Director of Planning and Intergovernmental Affairs, the Director of Communications and the Director of Torngâsok. This latter section will have an Inuit Language Program Coordinator and one of the two Translator/Interpreters who will work in the Department.

Working with the Clerk of the Executive Council there will also be a Community Healing Coordinator. This Nunatsiavut Secretariat demonstrates that Inuit language and culture are central goals of the Labrador Inuit Constitution and the Nunatsiavut Government.

The Department of Nunatsiavut Affairs working under the direction of the First Minister Tony Andersen, will be involved in community justice, Labrador Inuit membership, and matters pertaining to Labrador Inuit Elders and Youth. Among its 10-person administration, three positions—a Youth Administrator, a Youth Coordinator and a Youth Assistant—will be dedicated to services directed at young people. As stated in the Labrador Inuit Constitution, the future of Labrador Inuit Youth is of vital importance to the Nunatsiavut Government.

Working under the directorship of the Nunatsiavut Treasurer Gary Baikie, the Department of Finance and Human Resources has an administration reflecting the need for budget analysis and IT support. This Department also demonstrates the Labrador Inuit need for services in areas outside the settlement area; two of the Human Resources positions will be based in Goose Bay.

The Department of Health, Education, Social and Economic Development which will be under Minister Ben Ponniuk, reflects a holistic approach to health, social policy and education, showing how, for the Labrador Inuit, these facets of government are naturally interrelated.

One of the larger administrations can be found in the Department of Environment, Lands and Natural Resources which, under Minister Zippie Nochasak, will incorporate issues of mineral resource development and conservation for renewable resources of wildlife and the fishery.

Community Governments will be elected at the same time as the first elected Nunatsiavut Government. They will not be a part of the Transitioning Assembly and will continue under the jurisdiction of Municipal Affairs until the first election is held. The Transitioning Nunatsiavut Assembly will be responsible for preparing the communities and councils for the first election. One of the main tasks of the Transitional Nunatsiavut Government during its first year will be to prepare for elections through which President and Ministers will be elected for four-year terms.

Nunatsiavut Government represents 5,300 Inuit and Kablunângajuit of Labrador, and is responsible for advancing the aboriginal, constitutional, democratic, social and human rights of Labrador Inuit. For more information, visit www.nunatsiavut.com

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