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## NEWS RELEASE

### LABRADOR INUIT LAND CLAIMS AGREEMENT SIGNED

**NAIN, NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (January 21, 2005)** - Today, at a signing ceremony in Nain, Newfoundland and Labrador, representatives from the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA), Government of Canada, and Government of Newfoundland and Labrador signed the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement (Agreement). Representing the LIA was President William Andersen III. Representing the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador were the Premier, the Honourable Danny Williams and the Honourable Tom Rideout, Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs. Representing the Government of Canada was the Honourable Andy Scott, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians.

The occasion represents the successful conclusion of 28 years of work by the parties, which began in 1977 with the filing of a statement of claim by the LIA. This Agreement provides the Labrador Inuit with defined rights in and to territory in northern Labrador.

The Agreement, a modern-day treaty, is the first of its kind in Atlantic Canada.

President of the Labrador Inuit Association, William Andersen III, said, "The Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement will bring real and meaningful benefits to all of us – Labrador Inuit, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and all Canadians. It provides for certainty and rights and creates clarity for the future. It will allow us to build on the partnerships we have begun to work toward sustainable development, economic growth and social justice."

Minister Scott said, "The first modern day treaty in Atlantic Canada marks the opening of a new era of partnership between the Inuit of Labrador, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Canada. Not only will this Agreement provide certainty over land use and title, it will offer a host of opportunities for economic development for Inuit and non-Inuit alike. The Inuit of Labrador now have the tools to build their own government and take greater control of decisions affecting their communities, forging a brighter future for themselves."



Premier Williams said, “The signing of this agreement, the first land claims agreement to be finalized in Newfoundland and Labrador is an historic occasion for Labrador Inuit, the province and the entire nation. This agreement will bring clarity to land ownership and the management of resources, allowing Labrador Inuit to further pursue economic development opportunities consistent with their cultural values. Settling this land claims agreement will create a stable environment for investment benefitting Labrador Inuit and all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is proud to enter into this new relationship with Labrador Inuit and the Government of Canada.”

Minister Rideout said, “This government was proud to pass the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement Act in last fall’s sitting of the House of Assembly, and today marks another important milestone in bringing life to the treaty. The self-government provisions of this agreement will enable Labrador Inuit to build healthier communities by setting their own priorities and designing their own programs and services to better meet the needs of their people. They will be able to set their own path to the future and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is proud to support Labrador Inuit as they move to this new part of their history.”

The Labrador Inuit Association represents approximately 5,300 Inuit and Kabloonangajuit (individuals of partial Inuit ancestry) who live primarily in five coastal communities (Nain, Hopedale, Makkovik, Postville and Rigolet) and the Upper Lake Melville area of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Agreement sets out details of land ownership, resource sharing and self-government. The Agreement provides for the establishment of the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area (Settlement Area) totalling approximately 72,500 square kilometres (28,000 square miles) of land in northern Labrador, including 15,800 square kilometres (6,100 square miles) of Inuit-owned lands, known as Labrador Inuit Lands. The Settlement Area also includes an adjacent Ocean Zone of 48,690 square kilometres (18,800 square miles). The Agreement also provides for the establishment of the Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve, consisting of approximately 9,600 square kilometres (3,700 square miles) of land within the Settlement Area.

Under the Agreement, the Government of Canada will transfer \$140 million to the Labrador Inuit, as well as \$156 million for implementation of the Agreement.

The self-government provisions of the Agreement provide for the creation of the Nunatsiavut Government, five Inuit community governments and Inuit community corporations to represent Inuit living outside the Settlement Area. All levels of government will be democratically elected and financially accountable to the electorate. The Nunatsiavut Government will be able to make laws applicable to Inuit in Labrador Inuit Lands and Inuit communities with respect to culture and language, education, health and social services. The Nunatsiavut Government may also make laws for the administration of Inuit law and to establish necessary enforcement structures, including an Inuit law enforcement agency and an Inuit court.

Additional agreements among the Labrador Inuit, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Canada will provide for key programs and services such as health care, education and other social programs and services to be delivered by the Nunatsiavut Government to all residents in each of the five Inuit communities.

On May 26, 2004, 76 per cent of the Inuit voted in favour of the Agreement, with a voter turnout of 86 percent.

The Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly passed ratification legislation enacting the Agreement on December 6, 2004. *The Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement Act* received Royal Assent the same day.

Federal ratification legislation for the Agreement is being prepared for introduction to Parliament.

This news release, backgrounder, milestones and highlights of the Agreement and the Agreement are available on the Internet at:

[www.nunatsiavut.com](http://www.nunatsiavut.com)

[www.inac.gc.ca](http://www.inac.gc.ca)

[www.gov.nl.ca/releases/2005/laa\\_n2005.htm](http://www.gov.nl.ca/releases/2005/laa_n2005.htm)

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