

(Nain, NL) August 11, 2006 –Nunatsiavut President calls for issue-based discussion and a return to negotiation.

William Andersen III, president of the Nunatsiavut Government, asks that individuals and organizations discussing the current Voisey’s Bay Nickel Company (VBNC)-United Steelworkers strike take responsibility for ensuring that the discussions – particularly those taking place in the media – are based on fact and relevant labour issues. Additionally, President Andersen urged the two sides to return to negotiations to resolve outstanding issues and move the project forward in a responsible manner.

“Our first concern is for the people affected by this labour action,” said President Andersen. “The Nunatsiavut Government’s responsibility is to our beneficiaries, and we are watching this situation very closely. However, we have not become involved, and will not, because this is a labour dispute between a company and a labour union. The Nunatsiavut Government will not take sides in such a dispute.”

President Andersen has been concerned with some of the comments being made by some union members in public through the media. His main concern is that they do not accurately portray the Impact and Benefits Agreement (IBA) signed between the Inuit and VBNC. The IBA is separate from provincial labour laws which allow Inuit, as well as any other employee, to freely organize or join a union and take labour action as they deem appropriate.

“We fully support the right of Inuit to choose to be part of the labour movement, to choose their representation, and to choose the labour actions they take under the law. It is important that labour issues are not confused with other issues individuals or organizations might have with the Nunatsiavut Government in general. While it is not involved directly in the labour dispute, the Nunatsiavut Government is compelled to ensure there are no misrepresentations so as to confuse the negotiation process. In this case, our government notes that issues such as compensation for beneficiaries or aboriginal governance are not part of this labour dispute.”

The Nunatsiavut Government continues to be uninvolved in this labour dispute, but asks that both sides begin negotiations again. President Andersen stated that he hopes this situation can be resolved quickly and fairly for the benefit of both sides, and for Labrador communities.

“As the Nunatsiavut Government president, I am sensitive to and concerned for the well-being of employees, particularly Inuit. I hope that they can return to work with a negotiated agreement shortly for their own benefit. That is why I urge both sides to return to negotiations.”

Nunatsiavut Government came into effect on December 1, 2005, assuming authority from the former Labrador Inuit Association. It represents approximately 5,300 Inuit and Kablunângajuit of Labrador. **Contact:** Karen Prentice, Director of Communications, Tel: 709-922-2942, or 709-922-1511 email: kprentice@nunatsiavut.com