



NUNATSIAVUT
Senani jarini kajusimanik pivallianimmut
10 Years of Continued Progress

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NEWS RELEASE

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President lays out priorities in first address to the Nunatsiavut Assembly

Nunatsiavut President Johannes Lampe says he intends to set a new direction for the Nunatsiavut Government, one aimed at preserving, protecting Labrador Inuit culture, identity and language.

In his first address today to the Nunatsiavut Assembly since being sworn-in as President on May 4, Mr. Lampe outlined a number of priority areas he plans to focus on during his tenure, namely housing, mental health and addictions, and revitalizing Labrador Inuktitut. Following are excerpts from the President's address:

Housing

Our communities, particularly Nain and Hopedale, have been trying to deal with a housing crisis for many years. We have made a lot of progress in trying to address this issue and raising it at the provincial and national levels.

*This year's federal budget allocated \$15 million over two years for affordable housing in Nunatsiavut. We learned last month that Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has developed the objectives of the funding as well as the intended outcomes and indicators of the program. Essentially they intend to flow the money to Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation to administer. This concerns us because, once again, the Government of Canada has failed to **Consult** with us as required under the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement.*

Part 2.6.2 of LILCA states: "Prior to any transfer to the Province of any federal program for Inuit, Canada shall Consult the Nunatsiavut Government." Consult is defined term in our Agreement.

The Nunatsiavut Government is better positioned to administer this money. We know the issues, we understand where the needs are and we know which segments of our population are currently unable to access housing programs.



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Mental Health/Addictions/Suicide

All of us have witnessed first-hand the devastating impact that mental health and addiction issues can have on our families and our communities.

While the Nunatsiavut Government, through DHSD (Department of Health and Social Development), has done a lot of work in suicide prevention I believe that we could be doing more. We need to work more closely with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) and other Inuit regions. We need to work more with the Government of Canada, the (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Inuit Community Governments and all of the various agencies and organizations throughout Nunatsiavut. If we all take a collaborative approach, we can make a difference and reduce the devastating effects suicide has on all of us. Too many lives are lost and the impact on our families, friends and our communities is overwhelming.

Mental health awareness and promotion is a key to changing attitudes about mental health. The stigma associated with mental health can deter people from seeking help. I think we need to find a way to change this so that people who need help will get help.

Language

As President I will strive to do whatever I can to ensure our language not only survives, but flourishes. The continued marginalization over the past 200 years or so shamed many of our people into not speaking our language, as they associated it with poverty and low social status. Those who were relocated from Hebron and Nutak, for instance, all spoke fluently. As they settled in other communities, they felt isolated, were treated differently and eventually began to speak more and more English and less Inuktitut. Many of those who attended residential schools were often disciplined and, in some cases, beaten because they spoke Inuktitut.

We can't change the past, but we can influence the future.

We owe it to our ancestors and to our youth, while there is still time, to find a way to preserve and promote our language. It will take many years and a lot of hard work on the part of all Labrador Inuit, but I believe it can be done.

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