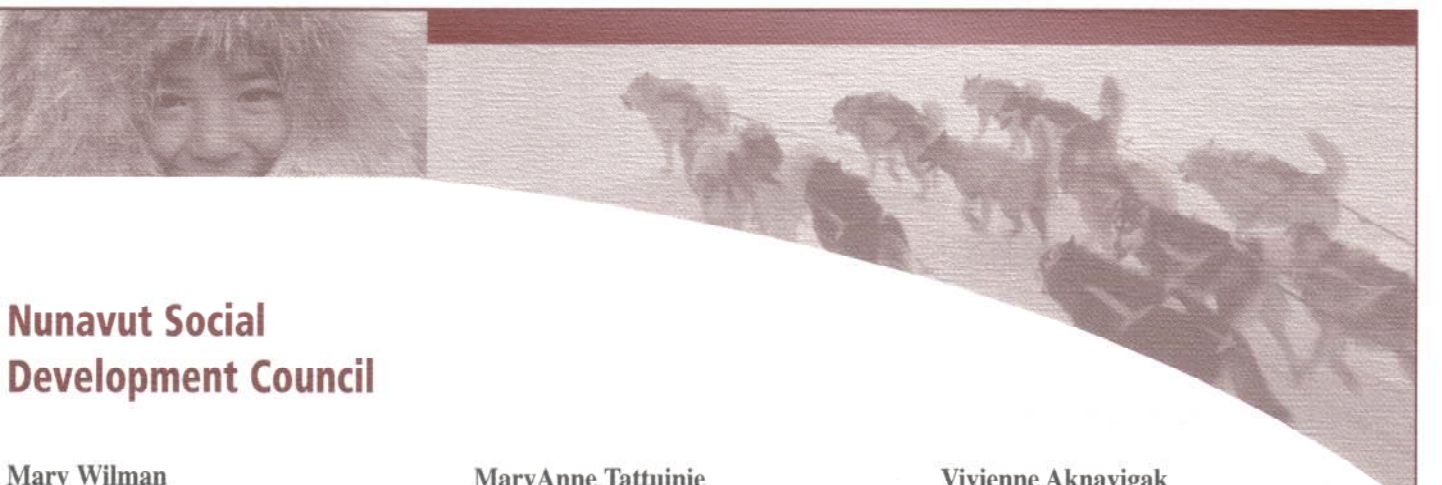


*On Our Own
Terms*

**The State of Inuit
Culture & Society**

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Since the settlement of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and the creation of the Government of Nunavut on April 1, 1999, the Inuit of Nunavut have gained great hope. Through the Nunavut Agreement and the establishment of our own Government, we have a unique opportunity to change where our society is going and how we govern ourselves, and there is a new determination amongst Inuit to make the needed changes happen.

On Our Own Terms: a report on the State of Inuit Culture and Society in Nunavut speaks to the main challenges we face. Inuit have always wanted an opportunity to describe the status of our culture and society from our own perspective. This report does that. Our approach is to provide advice and direction to government agencies and Inuit organizations that will help them to find appropriate solutions to the issues that face us, and to make the changes that are needed in ways that are in accordance with the traditions of our culture. This is of critical importance. We are at a stage where our language and culture is at stake. If we are to redress the futile and demoralizing experiences of the recent past and take full control of our own affairs, we must identify and introduce new approaches that are firmly grounded in our culture.

We do not believe that the various levels of government in Nunavut should make the changes that are needed in isolation from the people they serve. In fact, we insist that there can be no more imposed solutions. Instead, we consider the various levels of government to be resources that we can work with in determining and reaching our own solutions. We must be central participants in all facets of the process of change Nunavut must face. We have been given a unique and historic opportunity to do things differently. We are determined to do so in ways that are in tune with Inuit desires, values and principles, and that will direct and assure our future.

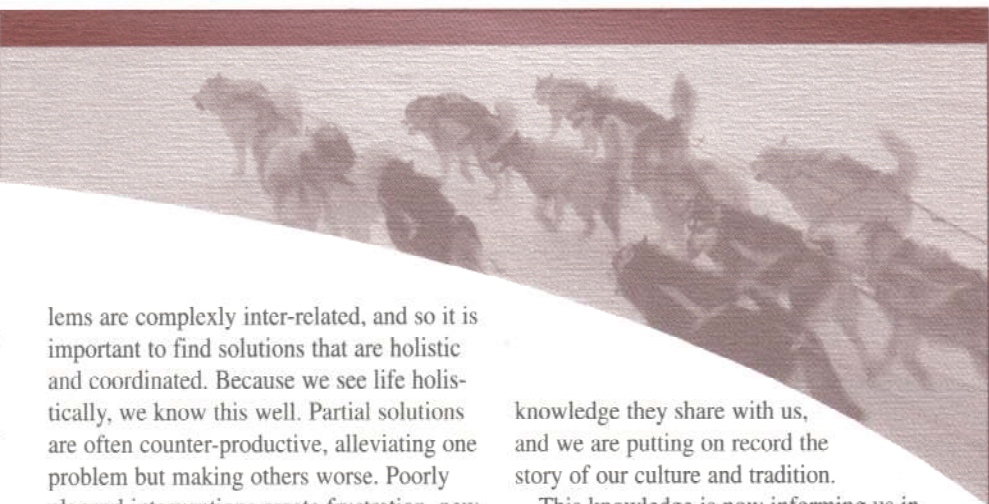
This report is more than a description of the current state of Inuit culture and society. It is both an invitation and a call to the Federal Government and the Government of Nunavut to join Inuit in creating a culture and society in Nunavut that honours our tradition as we adapt and move into the future. When we can do so with confidence, our integrity as Inuit will be intact. But, if we are to succeed in regaining our independence and self-esteem, we can only do so On Our Own Terms.

Respectfully,

Mr. Korman

Mary Wilman
President
Nunavut Social Development Council





Executive Summary

Over the past three decades, the Inuit of Nunavut have negotiated a Land Claims Agreement with the Canadian Government based on our determination to survive as a people. The establishment of Nunavut on April 1, 1999 gives Inuit a unique opportunity to address our future On Our Own Terms.

Today, we Inuit face many problems. Our population is growing rapidly. We have high levels of unemployment. Too many of our young people have low levels of education. With our high birthrate, the number of young people coming of school age is taxing our education system. Our health system is inadequate. There is a severe shortage of adequate housing across Nunavut, particularly for people with low income. Our economy is growing, but it is not growing sufficiently enough to provide employment for our young people. Alcoholism and suicide are endemic.

These problems are compounded by two factors. First, they are interlocking parts of a dysfunctional social system in which many of us are trapped. Individuals with low levels of education find it difficult to get a job with a reasonable wage. If unemployed, these individuals must depend on welfare. But the welfare system, which is supposed to promote independence, is not well coordinated with the counselling services and the education and training programs that could help these individuals improve their employment skills, and so does not work effectively. If these individuals have families, as many do, they may well have difficulty getting suitable housing. Very often, they must live with relatives, causing the overcrowded homes that are common across Nunavut. In turn, this overcrowding affects the ability of young members of the household to get their schoolwork done and, for many, means that they are unable to get proper rest. This results in poor performance in school or, for those who are employed, in the work place. This cycle can eventually lead to depression or addiction. These prob-

lems are complexly inter-related, and so it is important to find solutions that are holistic and coordinated. Because we see life holistically, we know this well. Partial solutions are often counter-productive, alleviating one problem but making others worse. Poorly planned interventions create frustration, new problems and, naturally, resentment.

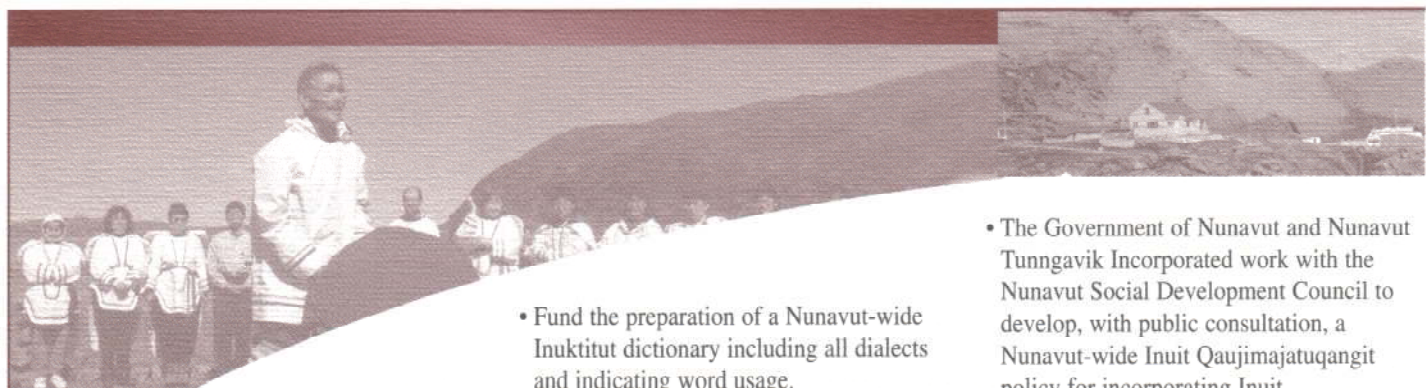
Second, the social malaise we are experiencing in Nunavut today has a history dating back to the time almost half a century ago when the Government of Canada, no doubt with the best of intentions, brought the Inuit of Nunavut from their traditional nomadic camps into settlements. At one stroke, the Federal Government unwittingly overturned all of our central cultural values and the natural order of our lives, resulting in social havoc. Inuit elders, who were the traditional leaders of our society, were made irrelevant in the new settlement society. Our system of education was taken over by the schools. Our ways of learning, which were characterized by observation, practice and imitation, were replaced by book learning. We lost a sense of the purpose of learning; because we did not at first understand the nature and demands of the new culture and imposed economy, so different was it to our traditional ways. Gradually, the language of the new government structures, English, became prevalent so that today our own language, Inuktitut, while spoken by many, is endangered.

We have always been an adaptable people; otherwise, we could not have survived the rigours of the Arctic for thousands of years. We recognize that we can develop our future only as we adapt to the greater global environment around us. We are working to adapt to the world around us on our own terms: knowing who we are, proud of our language, our traditions and our values. Our elders are now the only ones who remember fully all aspects of Inuit life before the settlements were established. We are learning from their stories and the

knowledge they share with us, and we are putting on record the story of our culture and tradition.

This knowledge is now informing us in all that we do as we adapt to the present and deal with the many problems of our society. We have many Inuit teachers in our schools and our children are encouraged to use their own language in many aspects of their learning. Schools have books written in Inuktitut by Inuit authors, and our children can now read books that describe life in Nunavut as it was and is. We are taking steps to preserve our language and make it part of everyday life, both public and private. We are looking at the values of Inuit justice and trying to incorporate these into a justice system unique to Nunavut. We want to configure our health system so that it promotes wellness and all Inuit feel at home in it. Increasingly, we are supporting one another and counselling those who need help in our own language, utilizing our own resources rather than depending on support from non-Inuit who can not speak our language and have little understanding of our traditions and values. We are working from a holistic perspective, no longer dividing issues into discrete parts that somehow elude or even confound comprehensive and wholesome solutions.

We have been doing much of this systematically by working with elders and other knowledgeable and skilled individuals at conferences and workshops, carrying out interviews and community consultations, and by meeting with government leaders to discuss the way ahead. We are examining the many social and cultural problems that face us as Inuit today, determining how they affect us and what we need to do to resolve them in ways which reflect our beliefs, traditions and values. We are examining all aspects of our socio-cultural environment:



justice, education, health, mental health, the economy, children, young people, elders, housing, language, and cultural history. How does it, how should it, how can it all hold together for us? How can we bring about the essential paradigm shift from dependency to responsibility?

In this report we review these issues from a historical perspective and describe how the events of the past fifty years have been crucial in determining the state of our society and culture today. We also describe the steps we are taking to maintain our culture and how we are using the knowledge and experience of our culture, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, to revitalize our institutions for today's world and to address the major issues currently facing Inuit in Nunavut. In accordance with our mandate, we make recommendations to federal and territorial governments regarding the use of our language, the role our elders must play, the centrality of Inuit traditional knowledge, health and well-being, employment, child care, housing, and the effects of our growing population. These recommendations are summarized below:

The Inuit Language

The NSDC recommends that the Government of Nunavut:

- Establish Inuktitut as the working language of Government by 2003.
- Create Inuktitut-only primary and secondary schools by 2005.
- Establish a centre for Inuktitut curriculum and materials development, at arm's length from the Department of Education, to systematically and equitably address to urgent need for a sound Inuktitut curriculum in all subject areas, and for high quality, effective teaching and learning materials in each of the dialects of the Inuit language.

- Fund the preparation of a Nunavut-wide Inuktitut dictionary including all dialects and indicating word usage.
- Require that all public signs in Nunavut be written at least in Inuktitut.
- Direct all government departments and agencies to use Inuktitut in all communication with the public.

The Role of Inuit Elders

The NSDC believes that elders must:

- Be given a clearly defined, formal role
 - i. as advisors in all municipal and territorial governments.
 - ii. in counselling families in communities and in the justice system, and in training others in traditional methods of social control, the upbringing of young people and resolving family conflict.
 - iii. in working with and training young people to help them regain first hand knowledge of Inuit skills in living on the land, hunting, preparing skins and survival.
- Be recognized as professionals and appropriately compensated for the important contributions that they make to the maintenance and development of society in Nunavut.

Inuit Cultural Knowledge

The NSDC recommends that:

- The Government of Nunavut and the Federal Government fund a Research Centre devoted to the study and application of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit.
- The Government of Nunavut, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and Regional Inuit Associations, with the Nunavut Social Development Council, supports further recording of oral histories from elders and brings elders together to rediscover their own knowledge and traditions.

- The Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated work with the Nunavut Social Development Council to develop, with public consultation, a Nunavut-wide Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit policy for incorporating Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit into the fabric of government and society.

Health and Social Well-being

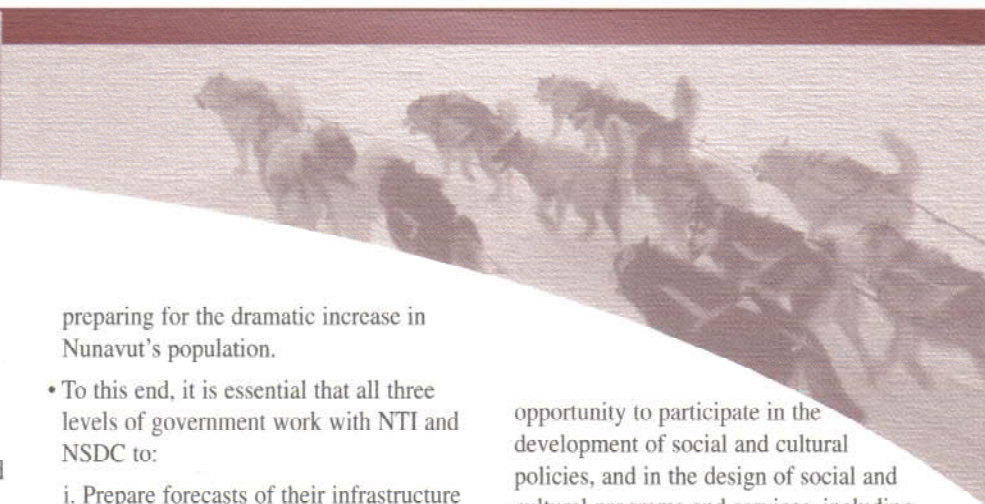
The NSDC recommends that:

- A conference of elders, Inuit leaders, government health and welfare officials and Inuit and non-Inuit field workers be convened to review Inuit traditions in health. This will lay the groundwork for development of appropriate programs for the promotion of the health and social well-being of Nunavut residents. Among other topics, this conference will consider specific matters of concern to Inuit such as traditional counselling, midwifery and mental health programs.
- Current health care legislation, policies and programs be reviewed and revised to reflect Inuit culture and concerns.

Employment

The NSDC urges the Government of Nunavut to:

- Convene a conference to deal with unemployment in Nunavut, involving elders, leaders of the business community and organizations that successfully train and employ Inuit, Inuit leaders and representatives of government. Their purpose will be to develop a framework for employment and employment training. This framework will provide young Inuit with employment opportunities or the training they need to gain meaningful employment. It will also focus the Government's attention on the employment training opportunities most needed in Nunavut, highlighting where adequate, long-term resources must be committed to address the training deficit.
- Reform the Income Support program so that it effectively encourages indepen-



preparing for the dramatic increase in Nunavut's population.

- To this end, it is essential that all three levels of government work with NTI and NSDC to:

- i. Prepare forecasts of their infrastructure and services needs over the next twenty years.

- ii. Set overall social goals for Nunavut and regularly inform the people of Nunavut of their plans and their progress towards these goals.
- iii. Develop and implement a strategy to meet these demands.

opportunity to participate in the development of social and cultural policies, and in the design of social and cultural programs and services, including their method of delivery in the Nunavut Settlement Area” and “to reflect Inuit goals and objectives where it puts in place such social and cultural policies, programs and services in the Nunavut Settlement Area.”

The Nunavut Social Development Council's (NSDC) mandate is to promote these goals. It is doing so by working with government to call attention to urgent social and cultural needs of Inuit in those cases where government may not be addressing these needs adequately. The role of the NSDC is to make sure the programs of government are appropriate, reflecting Inuit

The NSDC recommends that:

- # On Our Own Terms A Report on the State of Inuit Culture and Society in Nunavut

This report speaks to the current state of Inuit culture and society in Nunavut. Under Article 32 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, the Nunavut Social Development Council has the responsibility to “prepare and submit an annual report on the state of Inuit culture and society in the Nunavut Settlement Area to the Leader of the Territorial Government for tabling in the Legislative Assembly, as well as to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for tabling in the House of Commons.”

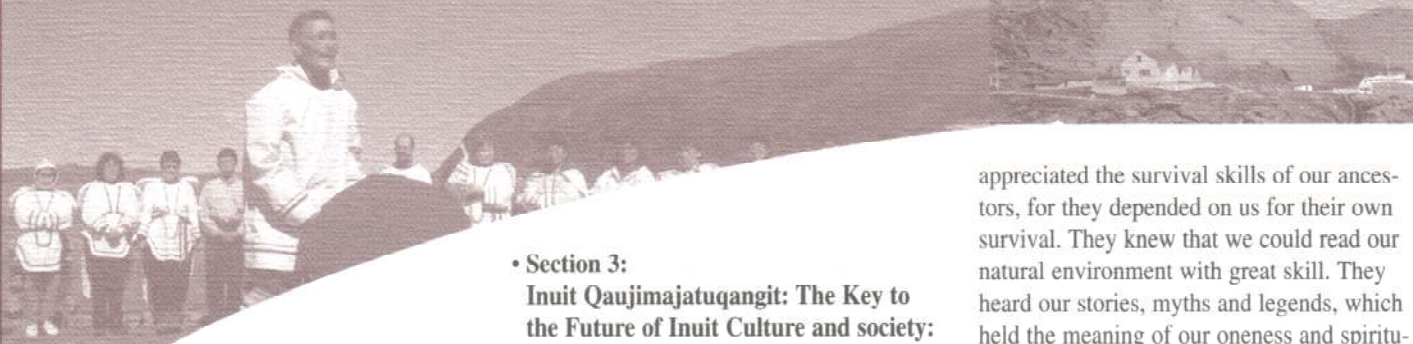
values and culture, and by researching our traditions and their application to the present day.

Inuit in Nunavut are going through a period of intense change. Since the establishment of Nunavut on April 1, 1999, we have focussed our energies on creating a society in Nunavut that we can truly call our own. We want to see our culture thrive, to honour our heritage, to speak our language, to enable our children grow up proud of their traditions and, with integrity intact, adapt as we must to the changing environment and circumstances around us.



The NSDC recommends that:

- The Federal Government, the Government of Nunavut and Municipal Governments plan realistically to meet the demands for infrastructure and services in the future by



We see our culture as central to our future. We cannot continue as we are, alienated from our tradition, having to submit to well-intentioned but misguided programs and social formations that have devastated us since the days when government introduced its settlement policy and herded us into artificial communities. Of course, this policy brought some benefits, but it almost annihilated our life-style and our culture. Although it was all done with the best intentions, we now see it as the beginning of a process of societal disintegration, the symptoms of which are suicide, addiction, and abysmal levels of education. This is a national disgrace. It is a scandal that Canada hardly acknowledges and that, finally, we are confronting on our own terms.

This is the subject matter of this report. Our findings are presented in the following sections:

• Section 3:

Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: The Key to the Future of Inuit Culture and society:

a discussion of why and how our traditional knowledge is our principal asset in reversing the devastating trends of our recent past and creating a society that reflects our Inuit culture in its laws, structure and services. This section also outlines the inadequacies of some key government programs and services.

• Section 4:

Tradition in the Future of Nunavut: an assessment of the state and effectiveness of current social, cultural and economic programs as means to promote a truly healthy Inuit society.

• Section 5:

What Must Be Done: recommendations that address the root problems that are still devastating our culture.

Each of these recommendations must be considered a matter of urgent priority.

appreciated the survival skills of our ancestors, for they depended on us for their own survival. They knew that we could read our natural environment with great skill. They heard our stories, myths and legends, which held the meaning of our oneness and spiritual affinity with the natural world. They joined us willingly on our hunts and learned from us.

Whalers, Traders and Missionaries

When whalers first came to the Arctic our ancestors did not object to them because our way was to share. We believed that the wildlife did not belong to us but that it existed for our benefit. It was there for the taking of those who pursued it for sustenance. Some of our elders have described the Inuit attitude to wildlife as a moral relationship. As one elder has said, they "let themselves be killed." We shared our wildlife willingly with these visitors and welcomed them because they brought trade, excitement, and more security. But along with the benefits, there were terrible consequences. They brought diseases for which we had no resistance or remedy. Many Inuit died. As more whaling fleets arrived, the whalers hunted the animals we depended on for clothing and shelter until they were on the verge of extinction. Consequently, many Inuit starved.

When the whalers left the traders and missionaries quickly established themselves in our land. The traders promoted a barter system using tokens which Inuit hunters could exchange for food supplies. This system was foreign to us as our economy traditionally depended on sharing and exchanging meat, skins and other necessities. Inuit did not know how to manage the new token system and quickly fell foul of it, incurring debts, making up late payments and leaving themselves short of tokens to buy food and new equipment. So, while Inuit enjoyed new goods they had never had before, they became indebted to a system that eventually controlled them.

Section 1: Contact and the Loss of Inuit Independence

For millennia we Inuit lived independently in the northern polar regions of the world, successfully creating a culture rich in spiritual belief and social life, and sustained by a sophisticated knowledge of our environment. We passed on our culture from generation to generation with methods perfectly attuned to our home, the northern wilderness, its wildlife and capricious elements, giving young people the skills to live in harmony with the land and one another.

Peoples from beyond the polar regions have romanticized us since the first explorers visited us more than four hundred years ago. At least those early visitors to our land

• Section 1:

Contact and the Loss of Independence: a brief review of recent Inuit history.

• Section 2:

Nunavut Today: a brief description of the geography and current demographics of Nunavut.





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The RCMP and Canadian Ownership of the Land

believing that they were doing good. In so doing, they destroyed the very means of travel and hunting we

beginning of the greatest crisis we had faced since we first learned to live and prosper in the Arctic many generations ago.

The interest of Government in Inuit lands was shown first with the arrival of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police (later the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)) who built their first post in 1903 on the Arctic Coast. The Government was not so much interested in the rule of law in the Arctic as in establishing Canada's ownership of the land, and in doing so turning Inuit into Canadians, subject to Canadian law. Through the early 1900s the RCMP established new posts across the Arctic and were the main government agents in our homeland. Crime was rare in the Arctic then and the RCMP were as much explorers, game officers, nurses, and census-takers as law officers. Consequently, they had a very high standing across the Arctic and were feared by the Inuit, especially whenever they called on communities during their patrols.

believing that they were doing good. In so doing, they destroyed the very means of travel and hunting we depended on for survival.

These incidents are bitterly ironic as they illustrate clearly what happens when representatives of an all-controlling culture cannot see life from the perspective of the



minority culture. It is an irony we Inuit have become used to, and it is soul destroying. Our homeland had, in effect, become a police-run state. The white man called the tune and we Inuit danced to the music. We had no choice but to submit; and this attitude still lingers in our sensibilities today.

The decisive blow to the Inuit culture was the decision, however well intentioned, to move Inuit from their traditional camps on the land into settlements in the late 1950s and 1960s. It is this, and the related attempts by government to develop us, that is the root cause of the cultural loss we are experiencing today. The attempt to establish permanent communities on the pattern of European agricultural villages, which for Euro-Canadians might seem an exemplary and unselfish policy of government, in fact came close to being the death knell of the



Despite all this adversity, we Inuit retained among ourselves a sense of our identity, which to this day informs and sustains us. But the sheer social and political force of the dominant Canadian culture swamped our society, and very quickly, our culture became in danger of extinction. The consequences were, and are to this day, enormous.

Elders Take Stock

This review of recent Inuit history is not an abstract construction that we have created ourselves. It is a record of the events from their own lives and from memories passed on to them by their parents which Inuit elders and community representatives described when they met in 1998 to talk about the importance of Inuit traditional knowledge for Inuit today, its demise, and what must be done to restore it in the future. The report of this conference sums up the devastating impact on Inuit people and their way of life of the events of the last 50 years and more (i).

Many Inuit, especially our elders, look back on the days before the establishment of Nunavut's settlements with a sense of loss. In spite of hardships, it was a time when we still had independent control of our lives, a time when we lived and thrived by our own knowledge and skills, a time of self-sufficiency when our culture and language were not under threat. We now see the move into the settlements and the subsequent processes of community development as the root causes of the cultural loss we are experiencing today. The alienation from our previous way of life is responsible for the social malaise evident in many of our communities today.

Section 2: Nunavut Today

Nunavut came into being on April 1, 1999, creating a new Territory that is as large as Europe, covering almost one quarter of

Canada's land mass, in all 2.1 million square kilometres. Nunavut is entirely above the tree line, extending from north of 60° latitude to the North Pole. East to west it stretches from the boundary between Canada and Greenland, around 60° west longitude, to just beyond 120° west, where northern B.C. and Alberta meet.

Nunavut, Our Land, is an intoxicating mixture of barren lands, precipitous mountains, innumerable lakes, glaciated rock, interminable coast lines and huge expanses of ocean. Its climate can change in moments making land travel hazardous for all but those who can survive in extreme conditions. In winter, days are short in southern Nunavut while in the north there is no daylight at all. Winters are long and cold but, contrary to popular belief, there is comparatively little snowfall. When daylight returns, Inuit celebrate the return of the sun. The endless days of our short summers are brilliant as the tiny plants and lichen bloom in gorgeous colours. In winter, the ocean becomes our frozen highway; in summer, our shipping lanes.

Population and Demography

When Nunavut came into being on April 1, 1999 it had a population of approximately 27,000 people, making it the largest province or territory in Canada in size and the smallest in population. The approximate populations of three regions of Nunavut, Kitikmeot, Kivalliq and Qikiqtaaluk, are respectively 5000, 7500 and 14,500 people. Iqaluit, the capital of Nunavut is the largest community in Nunavut. Situated in the Qikiqtaaluk Region, Iqaluit has a population of approximately 5000 people. Rankin Inlet in the Kivalliq Region is next in size with a population of just over 2000. Grise Fiord, the most northerly community, is also the smallest with just under 200 people. Only 10 of the 27 communities in Nunavut have a population over 1000 (ii).

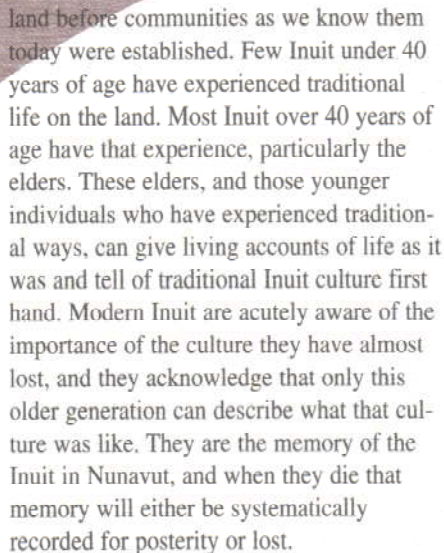
Inuit comprise 83% of Nunavut's population. There is a very small Dene-Metis population (1%), and the remaining 16% of the population are non-aboriginal (iii). Some in this group call Nunavut home, but mostly non-Inuit are here to work and someday will leave to work elsewhere or retire. Clearly, the responsibility of building a renewed and vital culture in Nunavut is most poignant for the Inuit majority.

There are slightly more females than males in Nunavut, 52% to 48%. Nunavut's population is young with 27% under 10 years of age, 37% under 20 years of age, 54% under 30 years of age, and 70% under 40 (iv). One third of the population is



of school age. This has serious implications for education, housing and employment in the future in Nunavut.

Slightly more than 4% of the population of Nunavut is over 60 years of age. Most of these people are Inuit and it is this group who are the elders who knew of life on the



The birth rate in Nunavut is high but is decreasing. In 1994, there were 774 births, a live birth rate of 31.6 per thousand. By 1998, this had fallen to 663 births, or a birth rate of 25.3 per thousand (v). This is now below the Canadian birth rate of the 1950s, but it is still three times the national average. This huge birth rate is causing a dramatic increase in the Inuit population of Nunavut.

The number of deaths in Nunavut increased from 99 in 1994 to 123 in 1998. This is because the Inuit elders who have been living longer because of improved health care services are now dying. Overall, the number of births so far exceeds the number of deaths that the small increase in the death rate barely affects the overall population growth. In Canada, three babies are born for every two people who die. By comparison, in Nunavut there are twelve births for each two people who die.

Because of the high number of births, the effects of population increase in Nunavut are three times greater than elsewhere in Canada. This will affect the society of Nunavut in several ways:

- An increasing number of young people will need education. This means that the education system: early childhood programs, the schools, Nunavut Arctic College, adult learning and skill development programs, will have to grow to prepare an ever-increasing number of young people to be independent, employable adults.
- An increasing number of young people will need jobs. This means that the economy of Nunavut will have to grow rapidly to provide them with opportunities to work.
- There will be increasing pressure on government and other organizations to hire young Inuit employees.
- The increasing population of Nunavut will increase the demand for individual and family housing.
- There will be increased use of hospitals, medical, dental services, and public health services.
- The need for municipal infrastructure such as roads, water supply, and garbage disposal will increase in all communities.

While the rapid increase in population puts very heavy demands on all government programs in Nunavut, particularly education, social and health institutions, both now and in the future, it also promises a strong population base to support a renewal of a vibrant, independent Inuit culture. It implies the challenge: if we renew and revitalize our culture, we will have a growing population to ensure its survival through its practice and its incorporation into our institutions of governance. If we do not renew it, we will stay mired in dependence on financial support from government, we will further lose our pride and abandon our hopes for self-determination.

Will the Inuit disappear from the face of the earth? Will we become extinct? Will our culture, language and our attachment to nature be remembered only in history books? ... If we are to survive as a race, we must have the understanding and patience of the dominant cultures of this country. We must teach our children their mother tongue. We must teach them the values which have guided our society over thousands of years. It is this spirit we must keep alive so that it will guide us again in a new life in a changed world.

*Dr. John Amagoalik, Chair,
Nunavut Implementation Commission*

Inuit values, beliefs and teaching methods were a way of living, interconnected with each other. Camp life, based on close family ties and mutual help, promoted our well-being and survival. Our unity was the strongest element in ensuring that survival. We grew up learning from our elders to work together to maintain our camps. Men and women enjoyed equal status and clearly differentiated roles. Women knew the patterns of family life and told its history in many stories as they made clothes from designs they knew intimately. Men knew the patterns of the environment, the movement of wildlife and the intricacies of the land, the water and the seasons. Young and old lived together as an extended family. Youth looked to the elders for guidance. The elders led the young into the way of skills and knowledge. This intense interaction of fami-



ly life in camps was critical to survival. As young people matured, they learned how to live and to care for others. The cycle of learning never ended. The matrix of mutual caring was constant. Living and learning were the same. Young people learned by living with their elders and copying them: imitation and experience.

At the heart and soul of Inuit culture are our values, language and spirit. These made up our identity and enabled us to survive and flourish in the harsh Arctic environment. In the past, we did not put a word to this; it was within us and we knew it instinctively. Then we were alone in the Arctic but now, in two generations, we have become part of the greater Canadian and world society. We now call the values, language and spirit of the past, *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*.

Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit is a comprehensive term, encompassing all aspects of our culture. A precise but superficial translation would be "the ancient knowledge of the Inuit." But it is more than that. It includes not only our values and language but also our world-view, social organization, practical knowledge and life skills, our perceptions and expectations. The English term *Inuit traditional knowledge* conveys to many people a narrow impression of folk art, aboriginal hunting skills or quaint homemaking skills. This is a caricature. The Inuit term Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit more accurately signifies the profound individuality of our culture in all its aspects.

Defining Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit

The term Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit encompasses all aspects of traditional Inuit culture including values, world-view, language, social organization, knowledge, life skills, perceptions and expectations. The acronym IQ gained vogue after October 1998 when the Nunavut Social Development Council adopted the term *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* to replace and broaden the limited connotations typically attached to the term *Inuit traditional knowledge*. This term had been rec-

ommended at a meeting of a Working Group established by the NSDC to focus on ways to which record and preserve traditional Inuit knowledge and to incorporate them into the fabric of the new society of Nunavut.

Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit includes:

- practical common sense based on teachings and experience passed on from generation to generation.
- knowing the country, the land and the environment, including, for example, snow, ice, weather and resources, and the relationship between things.
- a holistic understanding of life as a whole, inter-related and inter-active, where human society is symbiotically related to the surrounding environment.
- the spiritual health, culture, and language of the Inuit.
- the Inuit way of life, what gives our life meaning and credibility. It is a wisdom, a truth, knowledge linked to belief and ethical values.
- the Inuit system of authority: recognizing rightful leadership, ordering social life, defining mutual obligations, and setting out the rules governing the use of resources.
- the spirit by which Inuit adapt, control their environment and survive.

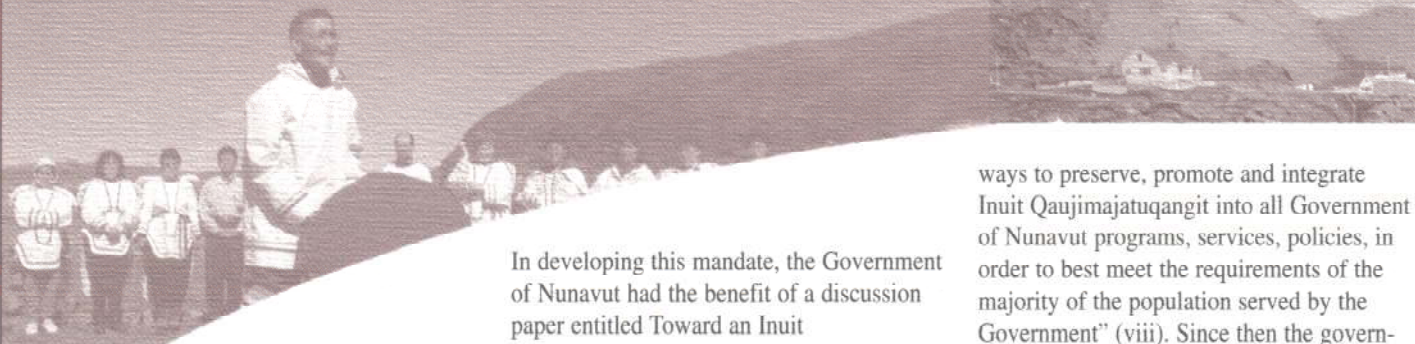
Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit comes from a wide diversity of experience in nature, ranging from teaching and apprenticeship, to hunting and gathering, to absorbing the feel of wild animals and plants, and listening to legends and stories. It emerged in Inuit experience as small Inuit communities dealt with nature and one another to survive and support their communal life. As they did so, our ancestors developed adequate and satisfying ways of dealing with one another and with their natural environment.

Every society has its own characteristics based on its traditional knowledge. Most westerners experience only one society and so they take their traditional knowledge for granted. Inuit today can not do so. We face the challenge of coming to grips with a new environment, a larger Canadian and global society, that in many ways is alien to the one that nourished us in the past. The only way we can deal with this challenge is to understand who we are: Inuit with a particular heritage that has made us the Inuit of today. This defines the importance of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit for Inuit today. It is the priceless asset and tool that we can use to adapt to the new world around us on our own terms, and so control it.

Adaptation and Control

The value and importance of indigenous traditional knowledge generally is finally being recognized beyond the aboriginal communities in Canada and elsewhere. There is a growing acceptance of the validity of traditional knowledge and increasingly urgent calls for its application in ways which will make the programs and services provided for aboriginal peoples more relevant and, thus, more effective.

Today, we are at a major turning point in Inuit history. We have a unique opportunity to reverse the unacceptable changes imposed on Inuit society during the last fifty years, to address the social malaise prevalent in our society on our own terms, and to establish a form of governance which is beneficial to all the people of Nunavut. We believe that we will be successful in this only if the decisions our leaders make and the actions they take are firmly based in our traditional values, beliefs and practices: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit. Just as Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit has guided us in the past, so it must guide us in the future.



A New Beginning: Beneficial Governance

Over the past three decades, Inuit political leaders negotiated a Land Claims Agreement for Nunavut with the Canadian Government based on our determination to survive as a people. This has given us hope that we can keep our Inuit spirit alive so that it will, as John Amagoalik says, "guide us again in a new life in a changed world."

The establishment of Nunavut on April 1, 1999 gives Inuit a unique opportunity to address questions of our cultural survival. To this end, we have chosen a public government that we intend will reflect Inuit values and respond to Inuit needs. The new Government of Nunavut, which came into being on April 1, 1999, took action in its first year to align its policies and programs according to Inuit values. In a document finalized at Bathurst Inlet in August 1999, the Government of Nunavut set out its priorities: Healthy Communities, Simplicity and Unity, Self-Reliance and Continuing Learning (vi). The importance of Inuit tradition for the future of governing and developing health community life in Nunavut permeates *Pinasuaqtavut: The Bathurst Mandate*. This major position statement identifies three key concepts as the Government's primary guiding principles:

- Inuuqatigiittiarniq, the healthy interconnection of mind, body, spirit and environment;
- Inuuqatigiinniq, community kinship; and
- Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, the term recommended by the NSDC in October 1988 to reflect all aspects of Inuit tradition and worldview.

In developing this mandate, the Government of Nunavut had the benefit of a discussion paper entitled *Toward an Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Policy for Nunavut*, which the Chair of the NSDC Board presented to the Premier of Nunavut in April 1999. This document sees Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit as the "very foundation of governance our new Territory" (vii).

As the Government looked to 2020 in its Bathurst Mandate, it envisaged Nunavut as a place where the "accumulated wisdom of the elders" is respected and "the best of modern knowledge and traditional ways" underlie its activities. By the year 2020 Inuktitut will be the "working language of the Government of Nunavut", Inuktitut and English will be the primary languages of a "fully functional bilingual society" which will also be respectful of the "needs and rights of French speakers." The people of Nunavut will adapt to the world around them while "preserving its culture, values and language of origin." In the intervening



years the Government of Nunavut will "support training and learning for a Nunavut based workforce as one of the two primary commitments of the government's mandate."

After announcing The Bathurst Mandate, the Government convened an Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Workshop in September 1999 "to seek counsel from the elders on

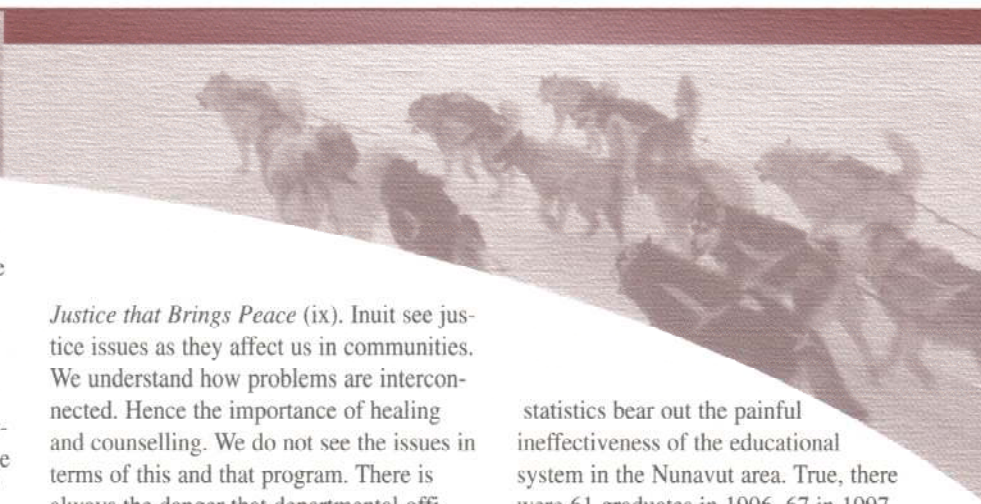
ways to preserve, promote and integrate Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit into all Government of Nunavut programs, services, policies, in order to best meet the requirements of the majority of the population served by the Government" (viii). Since then the government has set up a Working Group to co-ordinate and oversee the integration of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit into its policies and programs. Elders, the Nunavut Social Development Council and senior government staff are equally represented in this Working Group.

Addressing Inuit Concerns

The efforts of this Working Group will be critical to the eventual success or failure of the Government's objectives as laid out in the Bathurst Mandate. In their deliberations and in reaching their decisions, the Working Group will have to address the serious issues and concerns that Inuit have in regard to many government programs and services. Several of these concerns are elaborated below.

Justice

The Inuit have been concerned about the ineffectiveness of the justice system in the NWT and Nunavut virtually since its inception. The RCMP have always been seen as alien authority figures and the justice system they represent in the communities is at odds with Inuit ideas of justice. This puts Inuit in a double bind. The new ways of life we had to deal with in our communities alienates us from our tradition and leads to social disruption. As outsiders took over the control of community life, education, health and commerce, young Inuit could not look to their families for guidance. Discontent and frustration simmered in many people's feelings. True, we Inuit were able to go on the land, socialize with one another, and use our language among ourselves, but the seeds of discontent were deeply planted and became evident in the increasing misuse of alcohol, abuse in families, robbery, delinquency, suicide, violent crime and dangerous behaviours.



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language courses to the hundreds of individuals who need them. Further, no GN department has a policy requiring non-Inuit to take courses that will help them learn Inuktitut so that they can use it, at least a little, as they go about their duties.

Inuktitut in Education and Health

Of equal importance to the use of language in the workplace is the use of Inuktitut in schools. Over the past twenty-five years, there have been many advances in the use of Inuktitut in schools but there is still far to go. There are happily many Inuit teachers in the school system and these Inuit teachers and their Inuktitut-speaking assistants conduct many classes in the junior years. But the ethos of most schools is still English and no one doubts the lead role English plays in the education system. Inuktitut has the role of an interesting and important cultural activity, but certainly not as the leading language of instruction and communication.

Another important area of government programs and services where the need to use more Inuktitut is particularly evident is in the helping professions and in services such as health and healing. Too often Inuit have to speak to health professionals and counsellors in English. Too often Inuit cannot properly understand what their medical condition is, or the remedy. Many older Inuit cannot understand the writing on their prescription drugs. And those who speak primarily Inuktitut but have to talk English to a counsellor face an almost impossible situation. Counselling cures by the use of language, and those who are counselled in a language other than their own are getting second class treatment, if any.

Wellness

Nunavut shares with the other territories and provinces the problem of financing its health care system. The problem is the more acute in Nunavut where the majority of funding for health comes from the Federal Government. This is an issue of funding and, as such, the Government of Nunavut

must deal with the Federal Government to resolve it, but it is clear that a funding formula designed to suit the situation in typical Canadian provinces does not meet Nunavut's needs. Inuit in Nunavut, however, view the matter of health broadly, as wellness, or what health experts now call population health. This concept, which is gaining favour in Canada and abroad, is one that Inuit have always held. When Inuit meet to talk about the quality of life in any one of its aspects, such as justice, soon they are talking about mental health, suicide prevention, housing, employment, the use of Inuktitut and taking pride in being Inuit.

Life Expectancy and Mortality

The indices of wellness in Nunavut are shocking. Residents of Nunavut have a lower life expectancy than the average Canadian. Females born in Nunavut in 1996 can expect to live to 72 compared to 81 for Canada as a whole. Males in Nunavut can expect to live to 67, while for Canada as a whole life expectancy is 76.

Infant mortality rates are three times greater than for Canada as a whole. In the three year period 1994-96, an average of 17 infants died for every 1000 people, compared to 6 per 1000 over the same period for Canada as a whole.

Deaths from cancer are half again higher than in Canada as a whole; from respiratory causes almost five times higher; and from injury and poison three times higher. Nunavut residents are three times more likely to die of a preventable disease than are Canadians generally (xv).

Suicide

Suicide is an epidemic in Nunavut. The rate of suicide in Nunavut is five times higher than in Canada as a whole. In the period January 1, 1999 to September 11, 2000 there were 23 suicides in the Qikiqtaaluk Region of Nunavut, 9 in the Kivalliq Region and 9 in the Kitikmeot; in all

41 deaths by suicide. All except one of those who died were Inuit. All but two suicides were by hanging. The other two shot themselves (xvi).

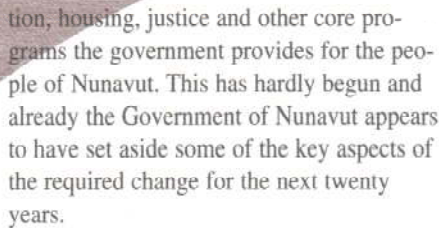
Statistics Canada has estimated that in Nunavut between 1995 and 1999 468 people died prematurely before the age of 65, and that each of them lost on average 34 years of life (xvii).

Alcohol

A survey of drinking habits in 1996 suggests that one quarter of the people of Nunavut imbibe five or more drinks at a time, compared with one tenth for Canada as a whole. Almost one in five pregnant women in Nunavut drink alcohol during pregnancy, putting them at risk of giving birth to babies suffering from Fetal Alcohol Syndrome or Fetal Alcohol Effect (xviii).

These core issues of health, addiction and suicide are so serious in Nunavut that if they were replicated elsewhere in Canada, there would be a public outcry of national proportions, serious enough to topple a government. In the past, government has given money for suicide prevention programs, programs to treat alcoholism, and the training of counsellors in these fields. But these major wellness-related problems have not been seen in its relation to other issues: inadequate housing, alienating education, high levels of unemployment, lack of recreation facilities, ad infinitum. Not surprisingly, scraping at the top of these major problems as government has done, has had no affect on their root causes.

The Government of Nunavut has committed itself to improve the well-being of Nunavut residents. That will take funding, the refurbishing and the refocusing of the health system so Inuit are employed in it and feel at home in it. And this must go hand in hand with major reforms in educa-



tion, housing, justice and other core programs the government provides for the people of Nunavut. This has hardly begun and already the Government of Nunavut appears to have set aside some of the key aspects of the required change for the next twenty years.

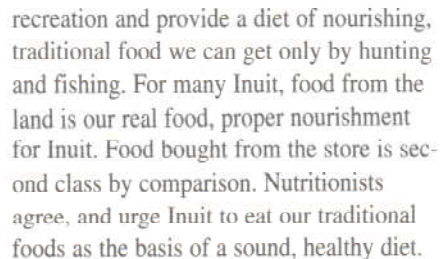
The economy of Nunavut is partly traditional, partly modern. The traditional sector is made up of wildlife harvesting and crafts based on soapstone, skins, ivory and metal. The modern sector is a principally a combination of mining, construction, government and public administration, tourism, retailing and services sectors.

Much of the income this economy generates goes south and so is not available for investment in Nunavut. On average, non-Inuit earn more than Inuit and they typically invest their money in southern Canada, take their holidays there and make many of their purchases there. In recent years, Inuit have formed or acquired companies such as First Air in Northern Quebec, the Nunasi Corporation, and the Qikiqtaaluk Corporation. These companies reinvest their money in the North and encourage local employment.

The harvesting economy is a mere blip on the economic chart, but its value is vastly underrated. It is still a source of food and skins for many Inuit families. Successful hunters share their food with others. The equivalent food value of the traditional harvesting economy is variously estimated, but a figure of \$6000 per family: or \$30 to \$35 million per year, is reasonable (xix). It has

benefits beyond the mere provision of food, of course, as it is an activity close to the heart of Inuit and is culturally and spiritually satisfying. There is probably no single activity today that has more actual and symbolic benefit to Inuit than travelling on the land and harvesting.

Many hunters work in the wage economy, combining the new with the traditional. The wage economy provides the money we need for the high cost of store food, clothes, travel and rent. Traditional activities give us



With its rapidly increasing Inuit population, low levels of educational achievement, and high dependence on public administration for wage employment, it is not surprising that unemployment in Nunavut is high. But,

in reality, it is much higher than national unemployment statistics indicate. These figures are based on the number of people looking for work, and in Nunavut unemployed Inuit rarely register their job searches because everyone knows where work is available in the small communities of Nunavut, and Government and other job opportunities are well advertised.

The 1999 Nunavut Community Labour Force Survey more accurately captured the proportion of people unemployed, whether they are looking for work or not. This, in itself, is an example of how a procedure as technical as a statistical survey can and should be made culturally appropriate. The survey shows that 28% of the Inuit labour force in Nunavut is unemployed, while unemployment among non-Inuit is just under 3%. Slightly more Inuit men are unemployed than Inuit women, 29% to 27%. Igloolik has the highest rate of unemployment at 41% and Nanisivik has the lowest with 0.5%. Nanisivik is a mining town and people only go there to work. The next lowest rate of unemployment is found in Resolute Bay where the rate is 10% (xx).

Employment levels have increased gradually over the years. In 1989, there was employment for 5,440 people; in 1999, there was employment for 8,646 people. So over ten years the number of working people has increased by 3,206. However, the adult working population has increased from 11,747 in 1989 to 16,366 in 1999, an overall increase of 4,619 or 28.3% (xxi). So, although there are more jobs, there are even more people without jobs.

The issue of employment in Nunavut is one of educating and training of the working population for the available jobs, as well as the creation of new jobs. Most of the effort of government has gone into training. But some attention has also been given to redesigning jobs and reviewing job qualifications in ways to avoid an over-emphasis



on formal qualifications at the expense of cultural and life experience. Some companies, notably those owned by Inuit, have provided training and support for young Inuit to train on the job. The experience of these Inuit companies has shown that with the right support and a commitment to hire and train young Inuit, young people will succeed. Given the capital investment in new buildings in Nunavut, such an approach promises long-term employment benefits for Inuit. It is a creative melding of business and social development.

Unfortunately, as one walks past the many construction sites in Nunavut one all too often sees southern Canadians busy earning good wages with seldom an Inuit worker among them. Not only does this promote the unemployment of Inuit; it denies them an opportunity to train for construction work. Once trained, Inuit would have skills they can apply on the next construction site or to engage in their own local building service. Given the great potential for the employment of skilled Inuit tradespersons that exists year round in every community in Nunavut, it is a travesty that the Government of Nunavut provides no permanent funding for trades training through Nunavut Arctic College, and that nowhere in Nunavut do we have a trades training facility equal to that long-established in Fort Smith, NWT.

In recent years, young Inuit have shown they have a natural aptitude for computers, which requires an intuitive approach as well as technical know-how. Given the pervasive use and development of computers in our economy, the area of computerized communications and information technology is one which, with appropriate training, could also open up considerable employment opportunities for our young people.

Income Support

Income support makes up the shortfall in or lack of income for many Inuit families in Nunavut. Between April 1999 and March 2000, monthly payments by the Income Support Program ranged from \$1.7 to \$1.9

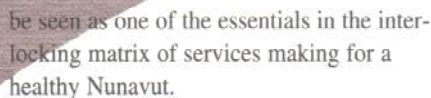
million, and totaled almost \$22 million for the year (xxii). As of December 1999, the number of families or single people who applied for income support was 2,822. The average number of people in the families receiving income support is 2.61, so the total number of people who benefited from income support was 7,371 (xxiii). Most of the people who received income support are Inuit. Given that the Inuit population of Nunavut is approximately 22,000, about one third of Inuit depend on income support. The average length of time on income support is 47 months. Clearly, income support is an important source of income for Inuit in Nunavut.

The Income Support program was redesigned in the mid-1990s to encourage independence by providing opportunities for income support recipients to get the education and training they needed, and counselling to help with personal and family problems. Unfortunately, the Income Support program still has a reputation for undermining initiative and being in effect an alternative to employment. The redesign of the program was supposed to put in place opportunities for training, counselling and other appropriate supports for young people, who may need help on more than one front to succeed in becoming employable. Unfortunately, there is no record of the choices recipients of income support made to work toward independence, nor is there a record of their success. The program depends on good co-operation between educators, trainers, counsellors, income support workers, and the recipients themselves. But no protocol was developed to make such an interactive system work, nor was it properly funded, and some of the training programs recipients may have needed were not available. Recently the program was thoroughly reviewed by Inuit with the hope of making it work.

Child Care

The provision of child care in Nunavut is critical as it touches on several important issues. Educationally it helps young children take their first steps successfully into the school system. Economically it is also crucial. By providing both all-day care for pre-school children and post-school care for school-age children, it enables parents of these children to work. In addition, child care centres themselves are places of employment particularly for local people, including elders. With their emphasis on Inuit family values, day care centres can be places where young parents get support in bringing up their children.

Unfortunately child care in Nunavut suffers on a number of fronts. There are only thirty-seven child care centres in Nunavut, of which thirty-one are in the Qikiqtaaluk Region, three in Kivalliq, and three in Kitikmeot. Given that there are somewhere in the range of two thousand eligible, pre-school children in Nunavut, the number of spaces is very low. Funding of child care centres is not consistent. Child care workers are poorly paid, and seven out of every ten have not graduated from recognized Early Childhood Education Programs. Unanimously, child care workers have declared that they want proper training. A recently completed report on Licensed Day Care in Nunavut prepared for the Government of Nunavut Department of Education, entitled *Looking Towards The Future*, highlights this need for stable funding and adequate training (xxiv). This excellent report demonstrates the importance of elders in the child care system and the importance of Inuit values in developing child care programs. It seems that the child care system need strong advocacy and must



There is a shortage of housing in Nunavut in general and a particularly severe shortage of public housing for lower income families. This is one of the most severe problems in Nunavut as a shortage of housing leads to over-crowding and can become an issue of public health. It is also well known that overcrowded homes cause students to drop out of school and other training programs, and lateness and absenteeism in employees who can not get adequate rest. The average number of people in public housing in Nunavut for all sizes of units, from bachelor to 5 bedroom ranges from 5.5 in Clyde River and Pond Inlet to just under 3 in Iqaluit, Chesterfield Inlet, Resolute Bay and Whale Cove. The overall average number of people in a home is 3.8. These figures do not include relatives or friends sharing the accommodation because they have none of their own (xxv).

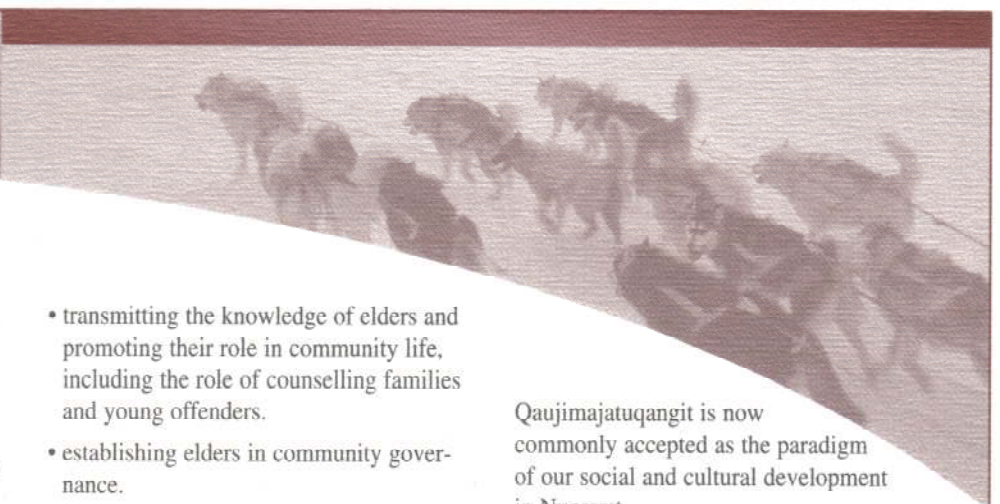
Public Housing is a major expense for government. The average cost of operating and maintaining a housing unit in Nunavut is \$1667 per month. There are currently 3,556 units of public housing. The minimum rent,

The shortage of affordable housing is so severe and crucial to the life of Inuit that the Government of Nunavut has established the Nunavut Housing Corporation. The Corporation will develop a vision and a policy for housing in Nunavut that reflects the interests and values of Inuit. It is clear the problems of the new Nunavut Housing Corporation will not be dealt as a stand alone housing issue, so interwoven is it with education, employment, health and self-esteem in the context of Inuit culture.

Each of the issues outlined above must be addressed soon if we are to ever realize the promise of Nunavut, and each level of government, federal, territorial and municipal, is already under intense pressure to take action. In developing strategies and plans to address these issues, government must recognize that the old ways of top-down decision making are no longer acceptable and will not work for Nunavut. Responsibility for the future of Nunavut lies not only with government, but also with the Inuit organizations designated under the Nunavut Agreement, and with the communities and people of Nunavut. All must work together in a consultative partnership of equals to ensure that those responsible for developing and implementing the programs and services we need fully understand the position, the values and the will of the people of Nunavut.

In the past decade, many elders have talked of Inuit traditions and there is now a substantial record of their testimony. More recently, there have been focussed initiatives to explore the Inuit tradition in matters of health and justice and the bearing of this on contemporary health and justice systems. In its vision statement for the year 2020, *Pinasuaqtavut: The Bathurst Mandate*, in which it sets out its guiding principles and priorities, the Government of Nunavut has formally acknowledged that this important body of Inuit knowledge will be used in developing policies and programs for the future. Government of Nunavut departments have begun to study how traditional values, knowledge, technology and skills can, or should be, integrated into their programs.

- reviewing the state of Inuit culture and society and reporting annually to Government;
- assisting Inuit to define their social and cultural future;
- encouraging government to provide programs that reflect the values of Inuit.



To this end, the Nunavut Social Development Council is:

- conducting research in the area of Inuit tradition and its application to contemporary Nunavut society
- bringing community elders, leaders and others together with government policy and program makers to consider what can and should be done to implement Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit in government policy and programs
- working individually with government departmental officials; and
- gathering information from communities about their hopes and priorities for appropriate programming.

The NSDC carried out an extensive consultation with communities early in 2000 regarding the importance of tradition and how it should affect the programs and policies of the future, and to seek advice about the “factors conducive to the preservation and promotion of Inuit culture and language” (xxvii). Through this Nunavut-wide consultation process, Inuit were able to express their concerns, recommend ways to improve various government programs and services, and comment on the role and potential of IQ in determining the form and direction of government policies and programs. It is clear that the people of Nunavut are looking for, and expect, significant change. They live daily with the consequences of programs that are not appropriate to their way of life. Accordingly, the requirement to develop new, more appropriate programs and to bring existing programs in line with the realities of life in Nunavut is both urgent and crucial. The most important issues for Inuit were:

- teaching survival skills to young people.
- giving and using Inuktitut names for places.
- reintroducing traditional child-naming practices and affinity terms.

- transmitting the knowledge of elders and promoting their role in community life, including the role of counselling families and young offenders.
- establishing elders in community governance.
- understanding and applying traditional ways of dealing with misbehaviour.
- strengthening bonds between family members.
- promoting the use of Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun.
- use of the syllabic writing system and roman orthography.
- signage in Inuktitut.
- using traditional health practices, including midwifery.
- healing and wellness.
- supporting community projects that teach Inuit culture, language and values.
- creating an Inuktitut-only school.
- repatriation of cultural artifacts.
- publication of information about IQ for government and public use.
- encouraging young Inuit to survive in the modern world through education and to the development of more programs that enable Inuit to achieve professional status.

Summary

Much needs to be done. This first annual report on the State of Inuit Culture and Society in Nunavut assesses what is currently being done, and what can and should be done in the future. The leaders in both Government and the communities recognize that Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit is the key to bringing about the future of Inuit society as we ourselves hope for it. It is not a blue print; it is a set of values and ideas on which a blue print can be designed and then changed again in the future. Inuit

Qaujimajatuqangit is now commonly accepted as the paradigm of our social and cultural development in Nunavut.

Section 4: Tradition in the Future of Nunavut

As Inuit work towards the promise of Nunavut and continue to adapt to the larger contemporary society around us, we are intent on recovering our sense of the past and who we are. This is what will guide us into the future. Our traditional knowledge, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, is crucial to us as we adapt to change and develop our new society in Nunavut.

The Discussion Paper on an Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Policy for Nunavut

In May 1999, immediately after the establishment of the Government of Nunavut, the NSDC presented a discussion paper entitled *Toward an Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Policy* for Nunavut the Premier of Nunavut (xxviii). The discussion paper spoke of the Council's concerns about the status of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit in Nunavut and recommended the establishment of a task force that would “develop IQ policy options and initiatives applicable to all departments, boards and agencies of the Nunavut Government.”

The Government of Nunavut responded to this request in two ways. First it sponsored an Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Workshop in September 1999 to “seek counsel from the elders on ways to preserve, promote and integrate Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit into all



the current efforts for making Inuktitut a working language of government, warning that territorial government and education officials must go to work immediately to protect the Inuit language. The Language Commissioner commented that she believes that "the goals are attainable if the efforts are made immediately" (xxx). In her presentation, the Language Commissioner was critical of the quality of Inuktitut programs in schools, and commented that any efforts to maintain our language will "demand a comprehensive education program" and that at present "we are a long way from having a strong Inuktitut education system."

Cultural Research

There are a number of projects underway to interview elders and gather their knowledge. These include the Qikiqtani Inuit Association's project to record Inuit legends from each community in the Qikiqtaaluk Region; the Nunavut Research Institute's continuing project to interview elders in partnership with the Inullariit Elders' Society in Igloodik (xxxii), and the on-going efforts of the Inuit Studies Program at Nunavut Arctic College to record and publish texts on traditional Inuit practices and beliefs. But, overall, it is difficult to assess just how much cultural research is happening as there is no overview of what different organizations are doing and no coordinated plan to carry it out. Thorough cultural research involves more than interviewing elders, of course, but as the only surviving people who knew the culture before Inuit were moved into settlements, the elders must take top priority in cultural research for several years to come.

A logical solution to the current, ad hoc approach to the recording and dissemination of information gathered from elders, would be to have each project coordinated through a central agency responsible for research in Nunavut. Such an agency already exists in the form of the Nunavut Research Institute, which is already a partner in many of the projects reported here.

The Cultural Education of Young People

Schools in Nunavut are engaged in a variety of activities to give young people an education reflective of Inuit culture through its incorporation into the curricula. Social studies programs have northern modules. Science camps bring in elders as informants and teachers. Biology classes dissect Arctic animals. Elders visit classrooms to talk about Inuit family life and history. Many books used in school curricula have a northern perspective. Almost all books written in Inuktitut now have an orientation to Inuit culture. There are thematic kits for teachers giving accurate information about dog teams and polar bears and other aspects of Inuit knowledge. Inuit educators have developed these.

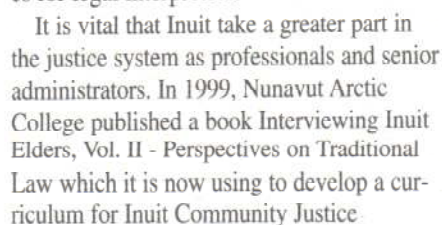
The school system has been involved in this kind of retooling of the school curricula since the early 1980s. The Inuuqatigiit curriculum, which was developed by a group of Inuit teachers and elders, began to incorporate Inuit cultural knowledge on lifestyles, animals and the land, and Inuit social relationships into school programs. In turn, this led to elders beginning to demonstrate in real life what were merely words in the curriculum. The Regional Inuit Associations and many communities also offer land programs and other cultural activities for young people. For years, curricula from Alberta had been used in the northern system without modification. Now IQ is incorporated into many aspects of the curricula used in Nunavut's schools, but much more needs to be done. In particular, there is a need for an well-funded and well-staffed Inuktitut curriculum and materials development, preferably at arm's length from the Department of Education to allow it the autonomy it needs to systematically and equitably address to urgent need for a sound Inuktitut curriculum in all subject areas, and for high quality, effective teaching and learning materials in each of the dialects of the Inuit language.

Justice and Social Order

With the exception of Nunavut's school system which has trained and employs more Inuit professionals than any other government program, and the possible exception of the sustainable development economy, there has been a greater attempt to reform the justice system in ways that are consistent with Inuit values in Nunavut than in most other program areas. The Conference on Justice held in Rankin Inlet in September 1999 developed a clear framework for change to the benefit and motivation of all stakeholders.

The GN Department of Justice has started to implement the recommendations of this conference. The Department is also sponsoring the Nunavut Law Review Commission whose mandate is to identify laws in Nunavut not consistent with community needs, to stimulate public input on how the laws of Nunavut can best support the people of Nunavut, and to recommend to the Government of Nunavut how the laws can be changed to better serve the people of Nunavut. The Department of Justice intends to develop a Nunavut Human Rights Act, revise family law, and initiate a court mediation project. Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit is the basic principle guiding these initiatives.

These are broad policy initiatives, but their success will be judged when changes happen locally and we Inuit feel comfortable with the system of justice when we encounter it. There are some positive indicators. Communities now have Justices of the Peace who are locally respected people. Community Justice Committees increasingly handle cases which formerly would have gone to court. To date there is no diversion protocol to guide the RCMP and the Community Justice Committees but the RCMP, the Crown, the Nunavut branch of the Legal Services Board of the NWT,



Now we live in a very different economy. Hunting still provides many Inuit with food but usually it supplements what we buy at local stores. We live in housing constructed with imported materials. We need jobs in the new wage economy that surrounds us, but we are not qualified for the many employment opportunities that occur. With an unemployment rate close to one quarter of the work force, and the number of people of working age increasing by about 3 % annually, the economy and unemployment situation are very serious issues.

Inuit have been fishing commercially in the Davis Strait since 1986 but they have been given only a small allocation in comparison with the quotas assigned to the rest of Canada. The Government of Nunavut is trying to address this issue in the interest of developing a sustainable marine fishery in Davis Strait that benefits Inuit equitably. The Government is urging the Federal



Government to invest in research to identify new fish resources accessible to Inuit harvesters.

The Government's Department of Sustainable Development is also trying to expand markets in Canada and abroad for fur products. The United States Marine Mammal Protection Act prohibits countries, including Canada, from international trade in seal skin products and ivory. The Government is working to make changes to this Act as it has badly damaged our traditional economy since it was introduced in 1972. The goal is to have the act amended so that Canada can promote the sale of seal skins and seal skin products around the world.

Employment Initiatives

Government, at all levels, is the largest employer in Nunavut. The Government of Nunavut wants to hire more Inuit by improving the education and training opportunities available to them and by reviewing job qualifications to allow Inuit into jobs they are capable of handling but for which they may not have the formal qualifications. The Income Support program, which replaced the former welfare program, Social Assistance, and has recently been reviewed, and now aims to help Inuit by providing the education, training and counselling we needed to help us find meaningful employment (xxxv). It is essential that government planners make sure that these currently uncoordinated initiatives operate in tandem with one another or be integrated; otherwise the resources of these programs will continue to be fragmented and unfocused and Inuit will continue to fall through the cracks. In contrast, Inuit corporations have shown the way by hiring and training Inuit young people on the job. They have focussed their resources, including substantial financial support, on the outcome: the guarantee of meaningful employment when they complete their training.

The Government has transferred its tourism funding to Nunavut Tourism to

good effect. The local people who operate in the tourism sector now administer the funds: outfitters, hoteliers, and fishing camp operators, who in the main part are Inuit. Nunavut Tourism has also been able to attract funding from outside Nunavut for the tourism sector. Similarly, the Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association has received funding to the support arts and crafts previously administered by the Government. The Association has also been able to garner support from other sources, more than doubling its grant from the Government. The national Inuit women's organization, Pauktuutit, is working with government and international organizations to protect by copyright unique Inuit artifacts and designs, such as the amauti, the traditional outer garment worn by women.

The number of businesses in Nunavut is increasing. In 2000, there were around four hundred individually listed companies in Nunavut in thirty-two categories of business activity. The number of firms registered as Inuit-owned under Article 24 of the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement is approaching two hundred. The territorial and federal governments encourage the development of northern business through programs such as the Business Incentive Program, the Business Credit Corporation and the Community Futures Program. Recently, the federal government introduced its aboriginal Gathering Strength Program. This program is designed to develop new business and managerial competence, and is delivered in partnership with the three Regional Inuit Associations.

It is too early to tell how successful these initiatives are. There is no information yet and ways of monitoring are not yet fully in place. But the focus is clearly on Inuit participation in the growing economy, support for communities to develop their economic plans, opportunities and encouragement for young people to prepare themselves for the

job market, and support for those wider initiatives in investment and trade that will help to open opportunities for the people of Nunavut.

Housing

Housing is a major priority of the Government of Nunavut. In October 1999, the Minister responsible for Housing established the Nunavut Housing Task Force to deal with the housing crisis in Nunavut in the short and long terms. In an interim report, the Task Force recommended the immediate construction of 100 public housing units to ease the shortage of housing across Nunavut. The final report focuses on a wide series of issues, including a number that directly incorporate Inuit values (xxxvi). Inuit stand to benefit by all of the recommendations, notably:

- establishing a Nunavut Housing Corporation.
- updating the Nunavut Housing Corporation Act and ensuring it reflects current circumstances in Nunavut, particularly in relation to the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement.
- consulting with the communities regularly to understand and act on their concerns.
- integrating Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit into Corporation policies and guidelines so that housing programs are tailored to the needs of the people of Nunavut.
- collecting information about housing needs directly from community housing organizations.
- promoting housing as a valuable economic asset for the community as well as shelter.
- implementing the rent scale so that it is understandable and is not a disincentive to work.



In August 1999, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) held an Inuit Mental Health Strategy Workshop in Iqaluit to "identify the major issues challenging the delivery of mental health services in Inuit communities . . . gaps in service and (to) suggest ways and means of improving mental health services" (xxxviii). Delegates included representatives of Regional Inuit Associations, the Nunavut Social Development Council, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, and Health and Social Service Boards. Issues raised included:

- the lack of mental health services in communities
- mental illness
- housing
- youth
- education
- sexual abuse
- elders
- addiction - alcohol, drugs, gambling
- children's services
- women's issues
- residential schools
- unemployment
- cultural insensitivities, and
- training

The workshop developed important principles for mental health services, including the need for services to be based in Inuit culture and involve Inuit in their design. Since the workshop was held, ITC is preparing a framework for a strategy to deal with mental health.

There is so much to be done and progress is slow. So it is encouraging to find there are attempts by community social service and mental health workers who are actively involving elders as counsellors and advisors. These efforts are salutary, but they are not part of a larger plan or strategy and so lessons learned in one place are not readily shared elsewhere. Health and social service officials must focus on consultation with

communities and the redesign of their core programs and services, and must identify the resources they need to break out of the dysfunctional system that currently exists. In this, the people of Nunavut's communities are the most valuable resource the health system has: a resource which health department officials have yet to fully tap.

Section 5: What Must Be Done

The Inuit of Nunavut face a situation of extreme gravity. This report details many aspects of this grave situation, and the Community Survey conducted by the Nunavut Social Development Council early in 2000 confirms this. There is deep unease in Nunavut, but there is also hope. People know that change takes time, but many are wondering just how long it will take before there is some discernible movement on several key issues.

The Nunavut Social Development Council sees the need to act on these issues to improve the health of our culture and the welfare of our society. These issues and the actions we believe government must take are outlined below.

The Inuit Language

The Inuit language in its various dialects is central to Inuit culture. If we lose our language, we lose everything. Language is more than a means of communication, vital as that is. It is the living symbol of our culture and carries our entire way of life. We must act immediately to honour our language and assert its status as the primary language of Nunavut.

Accordingly, the NSDC recommends that the Government of Nunavut:

- Establish Inuktitut as the working language of Government by 2003.

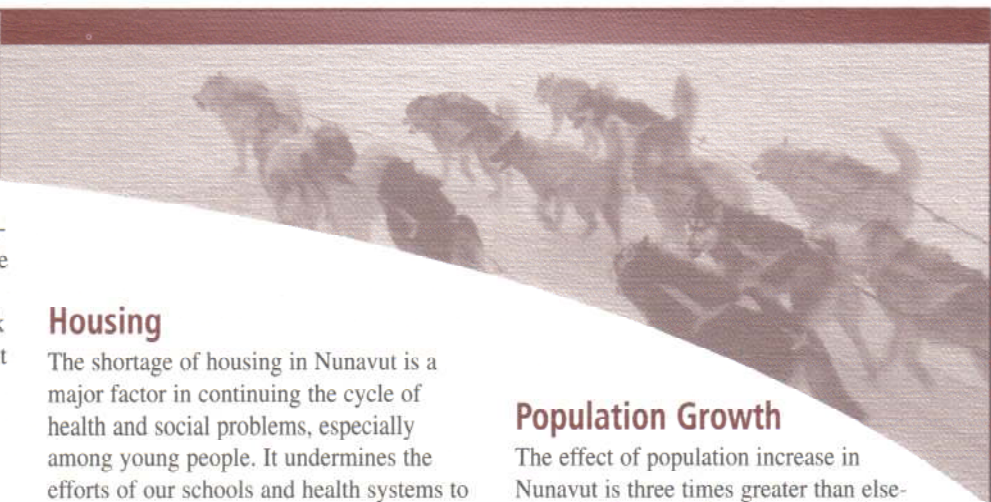
- Create Inuktitut-only primary and secondary schools by 2005.
- Establish a centre for Inuktitut curriculum and materials development, at arm's length from the Department of Education, to systematically and equitably address to urgent need for a sound Inuktitut curriculum in all subject areas, and for high quality, effective teaching and learning materials in each of the dialects of the Inuit language.
- Fund the preparation of a Nunavut-wide Inuktitut dictionary including all dialects and indicating word usage.
- Require that all public signs in Nunavut be written at least in Inuktitut.
- Direct all government departments and agencies to use Inuktitut in all communication with the public.

Elders in Inuit Culture

Inuit culture has been badly damaged by foreign social structures such as settlement living and the pervasive influence of an alien bureaucracy at all levels. Social control in our society has passed to the police, social workers, and others. Formerly elders in our communities were our leaders and we looked to them with respect. We must regain social control over our lives in ways that allow us to live in the contemporary world according to our cultural values, and one of those ways is to make full use of the knowledge of our elders.

Accordingly, the NSDC believes that elders must:

- Be given a clearly defined, formal role
 - i. as advisors in all municipal and territorial governments.
 - ii. in counselling families in communities and in the justice system, and in training



Reform the Income Support program so that it effectively encourages independence and provides adequate and coordinated support to young people to prepare themselves for employment.

Child care is one of the key building blocks of a healthy Nunavut, preparing children for school, supporting young parents who are working or in training, providing meaningful employment for local people, including elders. It is essential that child care be given the attention and high priority its importance for the future of Nunavut warrants.

- As a matter of highest priority, review and act upon the recommendations of the report, *Looking Toward the Future*, in coordination with NSDC, providers of child care, elders, and communities in order to:

- Provide adequate child care in Nunavut to support the education and employment of young people and to prepare young children for success in school.

The shortage of housing in Nunavut is a major factor in continuing the cycle of health and social problems, especially among young people. It undermines the efforts of our schools and health systems to improve the quality of our lives, and will continue to do so unless more adequate housing is made available to all who need it in Nunavut.

- As a matter of the highest priority, the Government of Nunavut and the Nunavut Housing Corporation work with the Federal Government and Canada Mortgage and Housing to provide funding for public housing in Nunavut so that there are enough houses in the near future to meet our needs.

- The Government of Nunavut and the Nunavut Housing Corporation consult with the private sector about ways the housing situation in Nunavut can be improved, including ways to enable people on low incomes become home owners.

- The Government of Nunavut carefully study the successful innovations in the provision of public housing that were presented at the November 2000 National Inuit Housing Consultation Meeting, and develop strategies to implement suitable innovations in Nunavut.

The effect of population increase in Nunavut is three times greater than elsewhere in Canada. There is a great danger that effects of the massive population growth in Nunavut will get out of hand if government does not prepare to meet the demands well in advance.

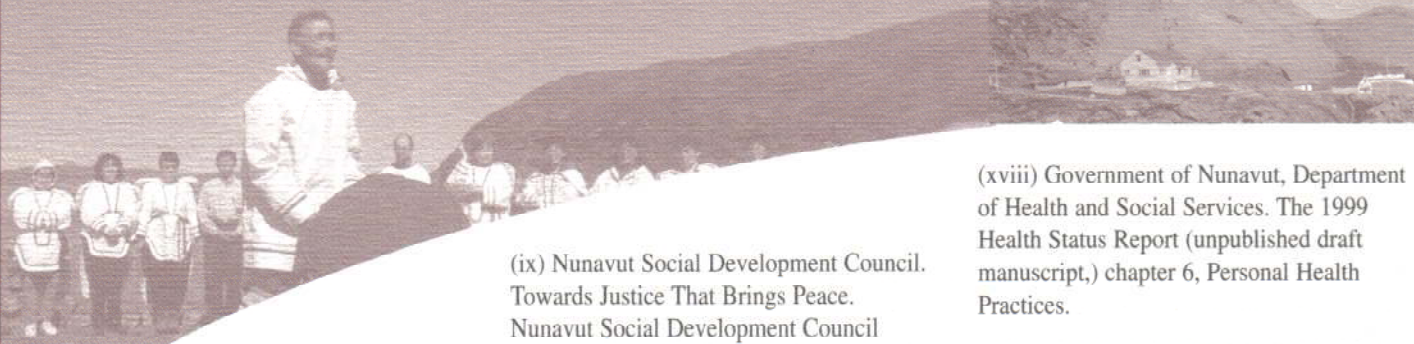
- The Federal Government, the Government of Nunavut and Municipal Governments plan realistically to meet the demands for infrastructure and services in the future by preparing for the dramatic increase in Nunavut's population.

- To this end, It is essential that all three levels of government work with NTI and NSDC to:

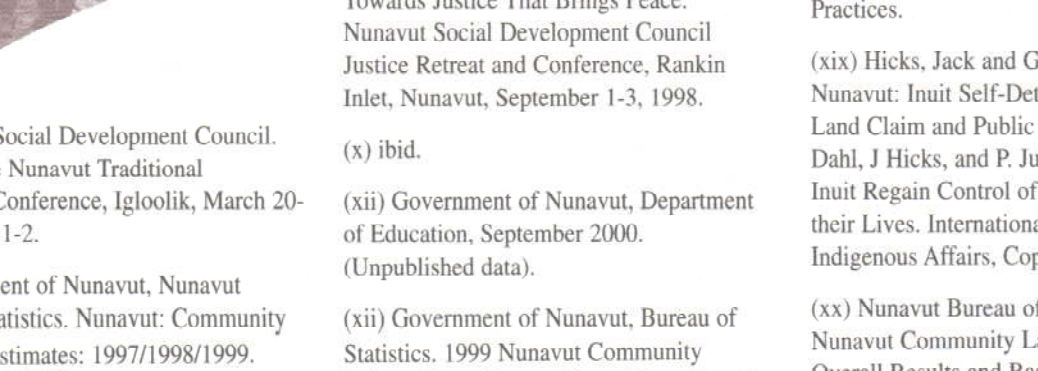
i. Prepare forecasts of their infrastructure and services needs over the next twenty years.

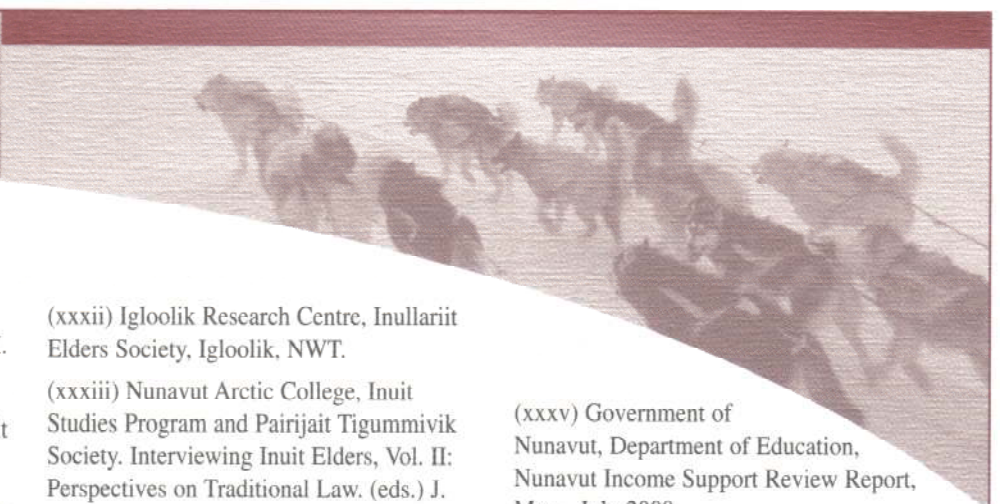
ii. Set overall social goals for Nunavut and regularly inform the people of Nunavut of their plans and their progress towards these goals.

- iii. Develop and implement a strategy to meet these demands.



Notes

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- ## Notes
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