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Article Title

Revitalizing and Strengthening Inuktitut in Nunavut

Teaser

Working together to support the preservation and strengthening of Inuktitut in Nunavut

Tweet

#GoC, @GOVofNUNAVUT and @NTunngavik are working together to preserve and strengthen #Inuktitut

Minister Name(s)

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez

Departments/Organizations

Canadian Heritage

Geographic Region

Canada

Article Body

Nunavut, September 8, 2019

The Government of Canada, the Government of Nunavut, and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated are collaborating toward an agreement that will support, revitalize and strengthen Inuktitut in Nunavut.

In accordance with section 9 of the *Indigenous Languages Act*, the pathfinder agreement seeks to support:

- increasing access to Inuktitut-language instruction in Nunavut;
- increasing and maintaining the number of proficient Inuktitut-speaking Inuit educators;
- increasing the number of fluent Inuktitut speakers in Nunavut; and
- establishing the Nunavut Partnership Table on Language and Education.

Subject to the details of an agreement to be finalized by the Nunavut Partnership Table on Language and Education, the Government of Canada is pleased to announce it would commit up to \$42 million dollars over a five-year period to support this work.

Over the same period, the Government of Nunavut will invest a total of \$25 million to introduce a new laddered approach to the Nunavut Teacher Education Program where students can work towards various levels of certification: a Nunavummi Inuktitut Uqariuqsatittijunirmut Ilinniarniq certificate, a language specialist diploma or a bachelor of education degree.

This collaboration is one of the first implementation actions of the *Indigenous Languages Act*, which was granted Royal Assent in June 2019. The Act aims to support the efforts of Indigenous Peoples to reclaim, revitalize, maintain and strengthen their languages.

Quotes

“Language is core to Indigenous Peoples’ identity and culture. Our government has committed to supporting the reclamation, revitalization, strengthening and maintenance of Indigenous languages. We are proud to be taking concrete action so soon after the *Indigenous Languages Act* received Royal Assent. The Act provides the flexibility to develop these agreements and to make targeted investments in Indigenous languages. Together with our partners, the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, we are ensuring that Inuktitut continues to be strengthened in Nunavut for this generation and those to come.”

—The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism

“The Government of Nunavut is pleased to be a part of an important partnership that focuses on the development of Inuktitut. This is a topic close to the heart of Nunavummiut. Under the Turaaqtavut Mandate, and in keeping with the guiding principles of Ikajuqtigiinniq—working together for a common cause—Nunavut Arctic College is working with the GN departments of Culture and Heritage, Human Resources and Education to further language training in our Community Learning Centres and campuses throughout Nunavut.”

—The Honourable Patterk Netser, Minister Responsible for the Nunavut Arctic College

“Nunavut has been leading efforts to protect and promote the quality and prevalent use of Inuktitut through its language and education laws. With this collaboration, we will continue our journey to strengthen the delivery of bilingual education in Nunavut. I am pleased that as a government, we will be creating a new generation of language champions for our schools and communities, while increasing our capacity to educate our children in Inuktitut. I also look forward to developing a long-term plan with our partners to ensure that adequate and sustained resources will be provided to the territory to enable a more complete implementation of our language and education obligations.”

—The Honourable David Joanase, Minister of Education, Culture and Heritage, and Languages

“I am pleased with the investment commitment to teacher training in Nunavut, particularly as we embark on the path to reconciliation. Inuktitut must become the first language in Nunavut schools according to the *Education Act* and the *Inuit Language Protection Act*, and I believe this is a good concrete step towards realizing that. We can achieve our goals when we work together; as such, I am equally pleased with the creation of the Nunavut Partnership Table on Language and Education. We are committed to ensure teacher training will be scaled up to more Nunavut communities following ongoing research, development, planning and implementation, monitoring and evaluation by the Nunavut Partnership Table on Language and Education.”

—Aluki Kotierk, President, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated

Quick Facts

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has declared 2019 the International Year of Indigenous Languages. According to UNESCO, three out of four of the 90 Indigenous languages in Canada are considered endangered.

In 2016, only about 15.6 percent of Indigenous people in Canada could converse in an Indigenous language, down from 17 percent in 2011 and 21 percent in 2006.

In 2016, 23,225 Nunavut residents (65.3 percent of the population) reported Inuktitut as their mother tongue.

This proportion is down from 71.7 percent in 2001.
Just over three-quarters of Nunavut Inuit (76.6 percent) reported Inuktitut as their mother tongue in 2016, which means that Inuktitut was not transmitted as a mother tongue to 23.4 percent of Inuit, or 7,075 people.
In 2016, 76.8 percent of the Nunavut population reported being able to conduct a conversation in Inuktitut. This proportion was down from 79.0 percent in 2001.
On June 21, 2019, the Governor General of Canada granted Royal Assent to the <i>Indigenous Languages Act</i> . Since 2017, Canadian Heritage has worked with national Indigenous organizations to develop this historic legislation.
Budget 2019 committed \$333.7 million over five years, starting in 2019–2020, and \$115.7 million per year ongoing to support the implementation of the <i>Indigenous Languages Act</i> .

Associated Links

Government of Nunavut	www.gov.nu.ca
Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated	https://www.tunngavik.com/
Let's celebrate Indigenous languages in Canada	https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/celebrate-indigenous-languages.html
<i>Indigenous Languages Act</i>	https://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/bill/C-91/royal-assent
UNESCO International Year of Indigenous Languages	https://en.unesco.org/IY2019

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