

## **UNITED NATIONS**

## **NATIONS UNIES**

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
Division for Social Policy and Development
Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

# INTERNATIONAL EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

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Implementing the Dream: Our Made-in-Nunavut Language Legislation

Government of Nunavut

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# **Implementing the Dream:**

# Our Made-in-Nunavut Language Legislation

#### What is the language legislation all about?

The survival of the Inuit language is crucial to Nunavummiut's unique identity and a key part of our way of life.

Elders and others are frustrated at the loss of language they see as more and more youth are losing the ability to speak and write in their own language.

Government is committed to taking action to preserve and enhance the Inuit Language and ensure that it is at the centre of work, education and daily life in Nunavut while protecting the language rights of those who use English and French.

The two bills now before the Nunavut Legislative Assembly are key elements in the plan to preserve, protect, and enhance the use of the Inuit Language.

#### What will Bill 6, the Official Languages Act do?

When the Official Languages Act is brought into force, it will establish the Inuit Language as an official language of Nunavut along with English and French.

For the first time, Inuit in Nunavut will have a legal statement of their inherent right to use the Inuit Language in full equality with English and French. This exceeds any other legal protection in place for Inuit or an Aboriginal people in Canada.

#### Bill 6 will:

establish the Inuit Language as an official language and protect existing aboriginal rights under Section 35 of the Constitution

protect existing rights of English and French speakers

require implementation plans be established to support the use of all official languages

require that the discussions, records and journals of the Legislative Assembly are published in the Inuit Language in addition to English and French and have equal authority

give Cabinet authority to designate the Inuit Language translations of laws as legally authoritative, and over time, provide for legally authoritative versions of Acts and regulations in the Inuit Language

ensure that legal proceedings in the courts and other legally mandated tribunals can be conducted in the language of choice

require that signs and written documents for the public from public bodies are provided in the Inuit Language along with the other official languages.

ensure that sufficient government staff positions are designated to serve the public in all the official languages

require a review of the success in implementing both pieces of legislation every five years.

#### What will Bill 7 the Inuit Languages Protection Act do?

The Inuit Language Protection Act will provide the most important elements to ensure that the Inuit Language is at the centre of work, education, and daily life in Nunavut.

#### Bill 7 will:

ensure that services to the public such as signs, posters, advertising, reception and customer services are offered in the Inuit Language throughout Nunavut

ensure that communication with the public regarding essential, household, residential, and hospitality services are in the Inuit Language including bills, notices, warnings, and instructions

require that municipal services be offered in the Inuit Language

protect the existing rights of English and French speakers

sets the standard for the proposed new Education Act by ensuring the right to an education in the Inuit Language for any student and emphasize that students should graduate with proficiency in the Inuit Language

emphasize the importance of early childhood education in the Inuit Language and support the development of materials and standards

support adult education in the Inuit Language and the development of related materials place a priority on language revitalization in the Inuinnagtun speaking communities

ensure the right to work in the Inuit Language in the GN public service and support language instruction to ensure proficiency

establish *Taiguusiliuqtit*, which will become a fully independent body that will be the authority on Inuit Language use with responsibility to develop and standardize Inuit language terms and provide assistance to organizations on proper language use

increase the key responsibility of the Languages Commissioner to investigate complaints about language practices and order remedies while retaining the role to raise awareness of language rights

for the first time, give a Minister legislated responsibility to promote the Inuit Language and mandate support through policies and programs.

To get copies or more information on Bill 6, the Official Languages Act, and Bill 7, the Inuit Language Protection Act, please contact:

Director of Official Languages Culture, Language, Elders & Youth Government of Nunavut Box 1000, Station 800 Iqaluit (Nunavut) CANADA X0A 0H0

Phone: 867.975.5507 Fax: 867.975-5504 Email: scloutier1@gov.nu.ca

http://www.gov.nu.ca/cley