



**Nunavut Canada**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NUNAVUT**

**Nunavut Leadership Forum:  
Election of a Member of the Executive Council  
of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly**

Official Report

**Monday, January 26, 2009**

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**Members Present:**

Honourable Eva Aariak, Honourable James Arreak, Mr. James Arvaluk, Mr. Moses Aupaluktuq, Mr. Tagak Curley, Mr. Ron Elliot, Mr. Adamee Komoartok, Honourable Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Johnny Ningeongan, Mr. Paul Okalik, Mr. Eruk Pauloosie, Honourable Keith Peterson, Mr. Allan Rumbolt, Mr. Fred Schell, Honourable Daniel Shewchuk, Honourable Louis Tapardjuk, Honourable Peter Taptuna, Honourable Hunter Tootoo.

**Prayer**

**Chairman** (Mr. Arreak)(interpretation): I am pleased to call this meeting to order. Before we proceed with today's agenda, I will call upon Mr. Curley to deliver the prayer. Mr. Curley.

>>Prayer

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Curley. I am pleased to convene today's proceedings of the Nunavut Leadership Forum for the selection of one Member of the Executive Council.

In front of members are copies of today's agenda and the procedures for the leadership selection process, which were agreed to by Full Caucus. I will now open the floor for nominations for the one position on the Executive Council. I remind members that if you are nominated, you must immediately accept or decline the nomination. Mr. Tootoo.

**Hon. Hunter Tootoo:** I thought you were looking for a mover to adopt the agenda and that's what I was going to do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Adoption of Agenda**

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you. The member made a motion, so we will proceed with today's agenda. Do members agree to adopt the agenda?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Nominations for Cabinet Position**

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Members. I will now open the floor for nominations. As I stated earlier, if you are nominated, you must immediately accept or decline the nomination. The floor is now open for nominations. Mr. Aupaluktuq.

**Mr. Aupaluktuq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time, I would like to nominate the Member for Rankin Inlet North, Mr. Tagak Curley. (interpretation) Thank you.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Curley, do you accept the nomination?

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): I accept. (interpretation ends) Thank you.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you. The member has accepted the nomination. Mr. Rumbolt.

**Mr. Rumbolt**: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to nominate the Member for South Baffin, Mr. Fred Schell. Thank you.

**Chairman**: Thank you. Mr. Rumbolt, do you agree? Oh, it's not Mr. Rumbolt, it's Mr. Schell.

>>*Laughter*

**Chairman**: Mr. Schell has accepted the nomination. Are there any other nominations? Mr. Tapardjuk.

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): I would like to nominate the Member for Tununig, James Arvaluk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tapardjuk. Mr. Arvaluk, do you accept the nomination?

**Mr. Arvaluk** (interpretation): I accept. (interpretation ends) Thank you.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Arvaluk has accepted the nomination. Mr. Okalik.

**Mr. Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to move to close the nominations. Thank you.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Okalik. There is a motion on the floor to close the nominations. Do you agree?

**Some Members**: Agreed.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Wait a moment, please. Nominations are now closed. (interpretation ends) Each candidate has up to ten minutes to make remarks. We will proceed in alphabetical order by surname. Member Arvaluk, (interpretation) you may rise in your place and proceed. Mr. Arvaluk.

**Mr. Arvaluk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker... Mr. Chairman. I inadvertently made an error immediately. The reason why I accepted this nomination is that I had already agreed to a nomination at our previous sitting in November. I agreed to the previous nomination and when I wasn't selected, it didn't cause me any aggravation nor was I concerned.

(interpretation ends) And also, I believe that the leadership vote is going to be a lot more relaxing this time. I am very happy that the other candidates have accepted their nominations and they are all qualified, no doubt.

(interpretation) I wanted to state that the only reason why I accepted the nomination was to provide public service both to our government and Nunavummiut by using the Legislative Assembly as a pathway. So that's the reason why I have accepted the nomination.

I'm not going to be getting into too much detail of what I have done over the past years as most people are aware of what I have been involved with. For 40 years, I have been dealing only with Inuit issues. I have never tried to establish a business, nor have I just been an employee but rather, I have been involved with organizations, such as the hamlets and other organizations that have elected leadership or boards, are places where I have worked in the past, whether it's the Co-op or any other organization.

I firmly believe in majority rule. If the majority agrees with the initiative, then that's all we require as it has been agreed to. It is due to their knowledge that the issues that they wish to address are best dealt with when the majority approves of them.

(interpretation ends) As I stated, I'm not going to elaborate so much on what you already know of my history as a public servant in the past 40 years. Instead, I want to express my reason for accepting the nomination.

I believe in a consensus government because I know that elders and Nunavut leaders, in the past, historically have come to a solution by their consensus. They didn't actually elect someone to be their leader in the camp, instead, they had consensus. I also believe that consensus is not just within the Cabinet but with the whole Legislative Assembly members, not necessarily 100 percent but majority votes. I don't believe in the political ideology, instead, I believe in cooperation.

I have my agendas, too, I have a dream for Nunavummiut, too, and that's why I worked very hard on the *Education Act* and on the two Language Bills in the committee. But when I don't get everything I want for myself and for my community, I don't have grudges. I accept the majority rule. (interpretation) That's the only reason why I have put my name forward, but I can't see a clock from where I am, so please let me know when my time is up.

What I want to say is that I am seeking only to serve my fellow Nunavummiut. After the creation of Nunavut in 1999, I was elected to Cabinet and our former Premier knows that I work hard. I'm also methodical and whenever I come across difficulty, I consult with my staff and my Cabinet colleagues, sometimes individually and sometimes with all of them.

The most important thing is to work for the best possible solutions for Nunavummiut and this approach requires hard work. Secondly, the Cabinet works with a small annual

budget of perhaps \$1 billion. Yet, our responsibilities are considerable and we always have to turn to the federal government for assistance.

I want to make a contribution and so I accept the opportunity to serve on Cabinet. I have experience as a Cabinet Member. I also promise to be open and transparent with members and ensure that they are fully informed, particularly when it comes to difficulties that arise when dealing with the federal government.

I want all of you to feel free in making your decisions. Don't feel obliged or compelled in making your choices. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>Applause

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. You managed to complete your speech before your time was up. We will proceed to the next candidate. You may rise in your place and proceed with your remarks for ten minutes, Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Premier. I also thank my wife who is watching on TV as I spoke with her earlier.

I wanted to make a brief presentation and I'm sure all of you are familiar with my opinions. I have known the previous speaker, James, for a long time. I have worked with him on numerous occasions in pushing for Inuit issues in the early days. I enjoyed listening to his comments. First of all, I wanted to talk to my colleagues about a certain issue which I cannot fail to overlook. I will talk about why I accepted my nomination and I thank my nominator, Moses.

In Nunavut, we have felt the loss of Helen Magsagak and we will formally acknowledge her during our session later today. I had known Mrs. Helen Magsagak for a long time. She served as Commissioner of Nunavut and I also knew her husband, John. They were like parents to me and they treated me like one of their own. I wish to extend my sincerest condolences to her family and I know other members will also pass on their condolences.

Mr. Chairman and my colleagues, we are dealing with an issue that is very important and close to heart to Nunavummiut because we will be selecting a Cabinet Minister today. All of you know quite well what I have done in the past and just as Mr. James Arvaluk mentioned earlier, I could probably talk all day about my accomplishments.

I spoke with a number of my constituents in Rankin Inlet earlier today and I was asked why I have not been elected to Cabinet before. With respect to my previous bid for Premier, I harbour no regrets in view of the fact that Nunavut is changing and becoming stronger. I can say that I needed to do further consultations with my family and constituents before seeking office on Cabinet.

I was extremely gratified to see my colleague, Mr. Lorne Kusugak, whom I supported wholeheartedly prior to the leadership forum. Even if I was not selected, I advised him to try immediately to get on the Executive Council. That was our strategy prior to the meeting and I am quite proud that he is on the Executive Council.

I, too, can state unequivocally, Mr. Chairman, that I have spent more than 30 years advocating for Inuit, perhaps around the same time that many of these present day organizations were getting started. That's when I was involved and I held many discussions with people when there weren't many organizations around.

Also, I feel so proud of the numerous people I held discussions with when I happen to run into them from time to time as we became a committee when there were hardly any political organizations around. Some of them are still around. ITK is a progeny of an organization we created, along with Nunasi Corporation. We also helped to create all of the regional Inuit organizations.

However, this one matter has been the biggest source of happiness when I recall those days and that's the whole process of creating our territorial governance through the division of the NWT. In 1975, I initiated this idea to divide the territory and then in 1976, we passed the first resolution during an AGM at Tuktoyaktuk. James Arvaluk was present and he was elected as the president.

That first resolution was moved and I will give you several guesses as to who moved that resolution. Yes, it was I who moved it. I am quite proud of that as it relates to the public governance process that could not proceed without a resolution. The process was initiated after the passage of the resolution to divide the territory.

I was also a minister during my tenure as an MLA in the NWT legislature. I was first elected in 1979 and I sat until 1987 in the NWT government. There was a lot of history being made then and it was quite a dynamic process since we needed partners to ensure that we could divide the NWT into two territories. The federal government has strident conditions we had to meet. They stated that the Nunavut government would have to be a consensus style government. That's where we initiated the process of creating Nunavut and it was quite gratifying to be involved in this.

As I stated earlier, I was elected in 1979 and many leaders were elected during that time who were involved in the process. Some names that come to mind are Nellie Cournoyea, Nick Sibbeston, Dennis Patterson, James Wahshee, and numerous others. When we were the government, it was as if we were cutting up the colonial system and it's also when we passed the Nunavut government resolution that was passed in the 1980s. That was another resolution that I moved and that was a very good process as we became partners and friends with many of those people.

(interpretation ends) For the first time in the history of the evolution of the Nunavut political development, the 1979 Legislative Assembly, for the first time ever, was able to invite native leaders to appear before the Committee of the Whole. It never happened

before. So these were the kind of breakthrough movements that we were experiencing at that time.

I believe I have the experience economically. When I was selected finally in my second term during the Legislative Assembly of the NWT, I was appointed by Nick Sibbeston, who was then the Premier, as the Minister of Economic Development and also as the Minister responsible for Energy. We had very many challenging times because the Beaufort Sea development was very active and the first Norman Wells pipeline was being built to eventually begin their production in the following years.

So Mr. Chairman, I believe I am ready. I know my family is ready. We had made a commitment that I will do whatever I need to do to advance the interest of Nunavutmiut. Nunavutmiut need a person who is able to communicate in both languages. I would not be qualified to be a Cabinet Member if I was unilingual. To be honest with you, I would not accept it because I believe we need to be able to communicate. It's not a slight, it's not suggested, but personally, I would not.

I congratulate all of you who are able to do that job even without being able to speak both languages. I think we need to support each other. Therefore, our teamwork has to improve here so that we both communicate in both languages. Eventually, I think that certain laws that were created will help to assure that, that we have the staff as well as the resources available to those people who need them.

Mr. Chairman, my family is ready to help me with this new challenge if I am accepted. I personally want to thank Moses once again for giving me the opportunity.

I know that with the more isolated communities, we need some experience of the people who know the land as well as the wildlife. It's not enough really to be able to just depend on the wildlife groups that are so active throughout the southern and international fields. We need to offer our experience from the North and present the proper state of the wildlife, including the polar bears, to the world.

(interpretation) For those reasons, I will do everything to the best of my ability to work on these issues if I'm elected. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>Applause

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Schell, you may rise in your place and proceed with your remarks for ten minutes. Mr. Schell.

**Mr. Schell:** Thank you. Welcome and good morning to all my colleagues on both sides of this Legislative Assembly. I brought an *Inuksuk* over here today to represent the feelings of the Inuit people. The *Inuksuk* was a collection of stones assembled by the northern Inuit to serve as navigation beacons and take many shapes. It has also become a symbol that signifies safety, hope, and friendship.



The *Inuksuk* I brought to the legislature today was carved in Cape Dorset by a young Inuit carver, whose work along with similar carvings from across Nunavut are being shipped to the 2010 Olympics.

I hope that sharing this with all of you today would help to provide us with direction as to speak for the challenging times we face ahead, both of us, as leaders in the government and as representatives of our constituents, and of course, to highlight the role that our community, which I represent, is playing in a very high profile and prestigious event, the 2010 Olympics.

I give you a quote from the 1999 Bathurst Mandate, “We acknowledge and will respond to the challenges of substance abuse, violence and loss as individuals, families and communities.” In October of 1999, the Cabinet of the newly-formed Government of Nunavut assembled in Bathurst Inlet for the purpose of blueprinting and outlining the leaders’ vision for the future of Nunavut.

The resulting document, the Bathurst Mandate, was presented and implemented as a living mandate of the newly-formed government. Then in 2004, this vision for the direction for the future of our territory was reaffirmed when the government of the day met again and put out *Pinasuaqtavut 2004-2009*. This report also documents the progress of the previous government and acknowledges the challenges facing the government for the upcoming term.

The first two terms of our government were largely spent on developing relationships with the various levels of government, as well as coming to terms with the challenges with governing an area of approximately one-fifth the size of the entire country. Some advances were made in the area of health and infrastructure, but many of these challenges facing the communities continue to exist given the complexity of these challenges and the limited resources available to our government.

Now that we established the basis for governing and have some experience in setting protocols and policies, we need to revisit these founding principles to help us use those limited resources more effectively. We need to focus on the challenges that we are facing so that we may be able to change at the grassroots level.

The foundation of our territorial government system rests upon the premise of strong, healthy, and unified communities, of communities that are resilient and self-sufficient, and of communities that continue to learn and are self-governing.

After two terms of government, our communities continue to struggle with the very ideas that the original Cabinet put forth as goals and a blueprint for the future. We have made some progress in these two terms, but some serious challenges remain. Of these challenges, the ones affecting our communities directly should be our government’s primary focus.

In the first round of nominations in December for the current executive, many of my colleagues touched upon some of the challenges that their communities are facing. An underlining theme emerged from these speeches: social issues, such as instances of violence and substance abuse, are widespread in our communities. And the lack of housing and infrastructure deficiencies were also brought up as very serious concerns as well.

As a government, as communities, and as people, we have been hesitant about dealing with the issues of violence and abuse. Traditionally, we have kept our feelings inside ourselves and our elders speak to us about tolerance and forgiveness. While these teachings are the key to the healing process, they do very little to bring about controlling the cause of these very serious problems. I believe we can remain true to our teachings and still address these challenges by coming up with solutions and alternates to eliminate the root causes of the problems. The root causes are illegal drugs and illegal alcohol that are flowing into our communities.

As a government, I feel that we have lost sight of the real issues. We are so busy restoring the damage being caused by all the violence and abuse that we have very little time, energy, or resources left to deal with the root causes. Each community has to learn to combat this issue of illegal drugs and alcohol. They do not have the resources or the legal backing to be able to stop the flow of these substances into our communities.

We, as lawmakers, need to take the first step in this war of illegal substances and provide the communities with legislation that would allow them and the RCMP in their communities to be able to act upon information and be able to put a stop to the flow of these illegal substances.

**An Hon. Member:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Schell:** If we stop the flow, we can then start to help our communities to heal and to become healthy. By providing our communities with the tools required to control their destiny and deal with their challenges, we are ensuring that communities can become self-reliant. There are also other deficiencies affecting our communities' abilities to become self-reliant. In particular, there's a huge deficit of housing and key community infrastructure. In the past few years, we have seen some progress in these two critical areas.

The Nunavut Housing Corporation has been able to deliver many of the housing units promised, but the challenges that they faced and will continue to face without strong leadership have resulted in a less than perfect performance. Our goals have not been met in this area and we have some work to do to make sure that not only do we provide the number of housing units that we originally set out to build from the initial trust funds but that we show our federal counterparts that we are willing and able to take a second and an even more ambitious housing building plan.

On the major infrastructure side, the federal gas tax, the Building Canada Fund, the Canada Infrastructure Fund, the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund have been a true windfall for our territory. Between these three federal programs, by allotting some of our own resources, we have addressed some of the infrastructure deficiencies in many of our communities.

Unfortunately, new infrastructure development has fallen completely behind and due to the age and state of the current infrastructure, a large and increasing amount of our resources are now being spent to address an ever growing number of infrastructure emergencies. This means that the replacement infrastructure that we do succeed in building is costing us more than it could or should.

In other words, we cannot continue to be reactive indefinitely at the expense of the very goals we seek to attain. We must become proactive in our efforts and more productive with our resources so our children and their children have a place they can proudly call their home and not just their land.

I believe I have the will, the energy, and the experience of many of our challenging areas, such as housing and infrastructure, to work as a team player with the current executive. As a member who understands the vital importance that consensus plays in our government system, I bring with me over 35 years of operating at the private sector as a business man focused on infrastructure building and planning.

I am prepared to make the kind of personal sacrifices required to be an effective member of the new Cabinet and to bring a fresh prospect on how this government can successfully make this third term the most productive and most effective term of our government.

I want to take one last moment to thank all of my supporters and constituents, and to thank Allan for nominating me for this very honourable position. I also want to thank all of you, my colleagues, who are considering voting for me to take up the challenging roles. (interpretation) Thank you.

>>Applause

### **Election for Cabinet Position**

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you. Thank you, Members. We will now proceed to balloting. The Table Officers will distribute the ballots. I ask all members to proceed to the Voting Table in an orderly fashion. Voting has now begun.

(interpretation ends) Thank you. The ballots will now be taken to a secure area in the Precinct for counting. Members may wish to wait in the Lounge while we take a brief recess. (interpretation) We will take a short recess at this time.

>>Meeting recessed at 11:37 and resumed at 11:45

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you for coming back. (interpretation ends) The Nunavut Leadership Forum has reconvened. I wish to advise members that there is a requirement for another round of balloting. The following candidates will be on the ballot: Members Mr. Curley and Mr. Schell.

As the ballots will take a few minutes to prepare, I will ring the bells when we are ready to proceed. Members may wish to wait in the Lounge while we take a brief recess. We will take a few minutes recess.

*>>Meeting recessed at 11:46 and resumed at 11:50*

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you for coming back. We will now proceed to balloting. The Table Officers will distribute the ballots. I ask all members to proceed to the Voting Table in an orderly fashion. The floor is now open for voting.

Thank you. The ballots will now be taken to a secure area in the Precinct. Members may wish to wait in the Lounge while we take a brief recess and I will ring the bell when they are ready.

*>>Meeting recessed at 11:52 and resumed at 11:57*

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Members. The forum has reconvened. I wish to advise members that Member Curley has been chosen to serve on the Executive Council of Nunavut. (interpretation ends) Congratulations, Mr. Curley.

*>>Applause*

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you. The appropriate motion will be moved in the House this afternoon to confirm the selection. I will now ask for a motion to destroy the ballots. Mr. Tapardjuk.

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): I move to have the ballots destroyed, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tapardjuk. Do members agree to destroy the ballots?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you. The ballots will be destroyed. I remind all members that our sitting of the legislature convenes at 1:30 p.m.

(interpretation ends) I would also like to remind that the Regular Caucus will meet at noon after this forum in the Tuktu Room.

These proceedings are concluded. Thank you, Members.

>>*Meeting adjourned at 11:58*