



News Release
For Immediate Release

Tweet: @markstrahl and NWT announce Agreement-in-Principle with Inuvialuit that paves the way for self-governance.

Facebook: Parliamentary Secretary Mark Strahl, alongside the NWT Premier and members of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, announced today the signing of an Agreement-in-Principle that paves the way for Inuvialuit self-governance. Self-government agreements and settled land claims lead to increased self-determination for Aboriginal people, achieve reconciliation and strengthen the relationship between all Canadians. Learn more:

Signing of the Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle

More decision-making powers for Inuvialuit communities

July 21, 2015 - Ottawa, ON – The Inuvialuit have reached an important step with the signing of the Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) by Mark Strahl, Parliamentary Secretary to the Honourable Bernard Valcourt, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, Ms. Nellie Cournoyea, Chair and Chief Executive Officer of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, and the Honourable Bob McLeod, Premier and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations for the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The final Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement will clarify the responsibilities of the relationship among the future Inuvialuit Government, the Government of Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada. With the signing of the Inuvialuit Self-Government AIP, the three parties will now initiate the negotiations process towards the conclusion of the final Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement.

Quick Facts

- The AIP will serve as the foundation for the negotiation of a final Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement. As such, it marks an important step on the road toward Aboriginal self-government for the Inuvialuit.
- The AIP deals with various matters such as culture and language, health, social service, education, economic development, justice and taxation.



- The Inuvialuit AIP describes the Inuvialuit Government and its roles and responsibilities, the structure of the Inuvialuit Council, and the relationship the Inuvialuit Government will have with Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories.
- In 1984, the Inuvialuit concluded the first comprehensive land claim agreement in the Northwest Territories, the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (also known as the [Western Arctic Claim](#)). It was signed in June 1984 and came into effect in July 1984.

Quotes

“A self-government agreement will provide the Inuvialuit with more flexibility and control in the development and delivery of programs and services in a manner best suited to their culture and values. Today marks an important step forward on the path to reconciliation and to healthier, more self-sufficient and prosperous Inuvialuit communities which benefits all of Canada.”

*Bernard Valcourt
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada*

“It is my pleasure to be part of such an important day for the Inuvialuit. Self-government is an important tool that will help the Inuvialuit create a more positive and stable environment for investment and growth as well as bring them greater control over their future.”

*Mark Strahl,
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development*

“Today marks an important step in ensuring that government programs and services provided to the Inuvialuit are designed and delivered in a manner that fully respects and accommodates Inuvialuit culture, lifestyle and traditions. The self-government Agreement-in-Principle signifies the intent and good faith of all parties to negotiate and work towards a final agreement for the sharing of governance powers between the federal and territorial governments and the Inuvialuit. Today we are pleased to recognize and celebrate this important milestone.”

*Nellie Cournoyea
Chair and Chief Executive Officer, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation)*

“Decisions by Northerners for Northerners have been a priority for the Government and Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories for years. Since the days of the Committee for Original People’s Entitlement and the negotiation of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, the Inuvialuit have been leaders in striving towards that goal. The signing of this self-



government Agreement-in-Principle is another important step for Inuvialuit and I am honoured to share this milestone with them.”

Bob McLeod

Premier and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations for the Government of the Northwest Territories

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS INUVALUIT SELF-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

Agreement-in-Principle

Q1. What is the Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle (AIP)?

The AIP is an agreement among the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Government of Canada (Canada) and the Government of the Northwest Territories that describes the jurisdictions and authorities of the future Inuvialuit Government and clarifies the relationship among the Inuvialuit Government, the Government of the Northwest Territories and Canada.

Self-government will allow for the establishment of a future Inuvialuit Government, bringing more decision-making powers closer to the Inuvialuit communities.

The AIP sets out areas of agreement among the Parties (Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories) on most of the subjects under negotiation. The AIP is very advanced, and in many cases contains the level of detail that one would expect to see in a final agreement.

While it is not a legally binding document, the AIP is a major milestone toward achieving a final agreement. The final Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement will be legally binding once ratified by the three Parties.

Q2. What is the significance of reaching the AIP stage?

The AIP is a major milestone toward achieving a final agreement. The AIP provides a sense of what a final agreement will look like and allows the Parties to start preparing for the changes which a final agreement will bring. It signals that the Parties have been able to make significant progress toward reaching a final agreement. It is the basis on which a final agreement will be negotiated.

The publication and distribution of the AIP provides the Inuvialuit as well as residents of the Western Arctic Region with the opportunity to review the content of the AIP.

Now that the AIP has been signed by the three Parties, they have begun to negotiate the final Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement, which is the

next and final stage of negotiations.

Q3. What is the basis for the AIP negotiations?

The federal government bases its participation in negotiations on its Inherent Right Policy, which recognizes that Aboriginal people have the right to self-government. This is based on the fact that Aboriginal peoples governed themselves before European contact and never gave up that right.

In 2007, the Parties signed a Process and Schedule Agreement, which sets out how the Parties will carry out negotiations. The Parties have agreed that the self-government agreement must be consistent with the Inuvialuit Final Agreement .

Q4. How is the Inuvialuit Final Agreement different from the final Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement?

The Inuvialuit Final Agreement was signed June 5, 1984 and was given Royal Assent on July 25, 1984.

The Inuvialuit Final Agreement is a comprehensive land claim settlement agreement and deals with land and harvesting rights, participation in the management of land and wildlife, and financial compensation. The final Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement will not conflict with the Inuvialuit Final Agreement. The Inuvialuit Final Agreement institutions (for example Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and Inuvialuit Game Council) will continue to be responsible for the implementation of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement.

The final Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement will include law-making authorities of the Inuvialuit Government and clarify the relationship among the Inuvialuit Government, the Government of the Northwest Territories and Canada. The final Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement would enable the Inuvialuit Government to pass laws and to deliver programs and services established by those laws.

Inuvialuit Government

Q5. What will the Inuvialuit Government look like?

The Inuvialuit will develop and approve their own constitution, which will set out the structure for government. There will be at least one representative from each Inuvialuit community in the Western Arctic Region to sit on the Inuvialuit Council and one leader (*Ataniq*) who will be elected at-large by all Inuvialuit who are eligible to vote.

The constitution will recognize the traditional roles and responsibilities of elders and youth within the Inuvialuit Government.



Q6. What will the Inuvialuit Government be able to do?

The future Inuvialuit Government will create laws and will have other powers and responsibilities regarding Inuvialuit. The Inuvialuit Government will have power to make and enforce Inuvialuit laws, design policies and programs, and deliver programs and services to the Inuvialuit. Inuvialuit laws will apply to those Inuvialuit who live in the Western Arctic Region, which includes the communities of Aklavik, Inuvik, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tuktoyaktuk, and Ulukhaktok.

The Inuvialuit Government would have powers over matters such as language and culture, health, social services, social assistance, education, economic development, and justice.

Q7. What is the difference between an Aboriginal government and public government?

A public government represents and serves all residents in an area, and is elected by eligible voters in that area. The Government of the Northwest Territories and the town or hamlet councils are examples of public governments. The Parties attempted to negotiate a public government for the Beaufort-Delta Region but these negotiations did not result in a final agreement.

The Inuvialuit focused their negotiations on the establishment of an Aboriginal government, meaning it is a government for the Inuvialuit, and will serve the Inuvialuit of the Western Arctic Region. The Inuvialuit Government will have authority under the final Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement to provide programs and services to Inuvialuit. Only Inuvialuit will get to vote for representatives of the Inuvialuit Government.

The final Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement will clarify the responsibilities of and the relationship between the Inuvialuit Government, the Government of the Northwest Territories and Canada. As community and NWT residents, the Inuvialuit will still be able to vote for their town or hamlet councils, their Member of the Legislative Assembly and their Member of Parliament.

Benefits and Impact

Q8. What benefits are expected for Inuvialuit as a result of the final Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement?

The Inuvialuit Government will have authority over matters of importance

to the Inuvialuit people. Some of these matters include: Inuvialuit culture and language, social programs, and educational programs for the training and development of Inuvialuit children and adults.

Self-government will allow the Inuvialuit to set their own priorities, and to make decisions regarding their future. By bringing decision-making closer to the community, the programs and services developed and delivered can be better suited to the needs of the Inuvialuit. There are self-government agreements in place all across Canada.

The ISGA will set out a practical means to implement the inherent right to self-government.

Q9. What will happen to my current benefits as an Inuvialuk from the federal and territorial governments after self-government?

There are federal and territorial programs and services for which the Inuvialuit Government will not assume responsibility and these will continue to be provided to the Inuvialuit as for all Canadians or territorial residents. These include programs such as the Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, Employment Insurance and the Territorial Health Insurance Program.

Q10. How will non-Inuvialuit be affected by the final Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement?

In general, the Inuvialuit Government's law making powers under the agreement will not apply to non-Inuvialuit. All non-Inuvialuit in the Western Arctic Region will continue to have access to all federal and territorial government programs and services for which they are eligible.

If non-Inuvialuit are directly affected by Inuvialuit Government decisions, the AIP recognizes the principle that persons directly affected by government decisions should have the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process for the management and delivery of those programs and services.

Q11. Are other parties being consulted about the AIP?

The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation has communicated broadly within their communities and within the Western Arctic Region. The Gwich'in Tribal Council and the Gwich'in Indian Act bands have also been consulted about the AIP.

The public release of the AIP is intended to provide members of the public the opportunity to learn about and comment on the AIP. The Parties will welcome comments from the public.



Q12. Will Inuvialuit residents in the Western Arctic Region receive the same level of programs and services as other residents in the Northwest Territories?

Yes. The Government of the Northwest Territories and Canada will continue to deliver their programs and services. In the event that the Inuvialuit Government passes a law and creates a program or service, the Government of the Northwest Territories and/or Canada might no longer deliver that program or service to Inuvialuit. The Inuvialuit Government will be able to design and deliver comparable programs and services in ways that better suit the needs of Inuvialuit in their communities.

The Government of the Northwest Territories will continue to provide services such as highways, airports, municipal services and Government of the Northwest Territories health care services.

Canada will continue to provide services such as the Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, Employment Insurance, National Defence (for example Canadian Rangers), Coast Guard, etc.

Funding and Support

Q13 How will Inuvialuit self-government be funded?

The Parties will periodically negotiate fiscal transfers in a manner that is consistent with the final Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement. Canada will be guided by the prevailing fiscal policy for financing Aboriginal governments.

Q14 Are there any plans to assist Inuvialuit residents in preparing for new responsibilities under self-government?

The Inuvialuit Government will have strategies in place to address appropriate skills training and capacity development before exercising law-making authority, and this may be reflected in an Implementation Plan. . Some existing federal program funding is available to the Inuvialuit for training and capacity building activities to support the skills required for new self-government responsibilities.

Final Agreement

Q15. What are the next steps?

Negotiations towards a final agreement have begun now that

representatives of the Parties have signed the AIP. These negotiations will address matters that are not covered by the AIP and are necessary to complete and approve a self-government agreement.

Q16. How is a final agreement approved or ratified?

Now that the AIP has been signed, the Parties have begun to negotiate the final agreement. Once those negotiations are complete, the Parties will carry out an approval process for the final Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement. First, the Board of Directors of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation will decide whether to recommend the final Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement for approval. The Inuvialuit would then hold a vote of all eligible Inuvialuit to approve the final Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement. If the Inuvialuit approve the final Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement, the Government of the Northwest Territories and Canada would need to approve the final Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement according to their processes and then introduce legislation in to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories and the Parliament of Canada.



Chronology of Significant Events

Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle

October 31, 1978

The Government of Canada (Canada) and the Committee for Original Peoples' Entitlement (COPE), on behalf of the Inuvialuit, reach a land claim Agreement-in-Principle which included provisions on land, economic benefits, and wildlife resource management for Inuvialuit.

June 5, 1984

Canada and COPE officially sign the Western Arctic Land Claims Agreement – Inuvialuit Final Agreement, which also provides for Inuvialuit interests to be taken into account if public government institutions in the Western Arctic Region are restructured.

1993

Gwich'in Tribal Council and Inuvialuit Regional Corporation develop and submit a joint proposal to Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories for self-government negotiations.

1995

Canada approves the Inherent Right of Self-Government Policy.

1996

The Gwich'in Tribal Council, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Canada, and the Government of the Northwest Territories agree and approve a Process and Schedule Agreement to negotiate a joint Gwich'in and Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement.

April 16, 2003

Gwich'in and Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle is signed by all parties.

March 4, 2005

The Gwich'in Tribal Council seeks separate self-government negotiations. Canada and the territorial government accept the Gwich'in request and separate self-government negotiations are opened with both groups.



May 4, 2007

Inuvialuit Process and Schedule Agreement is signed by Canada, the territorial government and the Inuvialuit, setting up the negotiations for the parties.



Inuvialuit Regional Corporation

Canada

May 2007 – November 2013

The Parties negotiate a comprehensive Agreement-in-Principle.

June 10, 2014

The Chief Negotiators initial the legal text of the Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle.

July 21, 2015

The Parties sign the Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle and begin negotiation of the final Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement.

Backgrounder

(DATE)

Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle

The Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) builds upon the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (Western Arctic Claim). When signed in 1984 the Inuvialuit Final Agreement was the first comprehensive land claim agreement signed north of the 60th parallel and only the second in Canada.

There are six (6) Inuvialuit communities in the Western Arctic Region of the NWT. These communities consist of Aklavik, Inuvik, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tuktoyaktuk and Ulukhaktok with current population estimates of 3,300 in the Western Arctic Region.

In May 2007, the Parties (Inuvialuit, the Government of the Northwest Territories and Canada) signed a Process and Schedule Agreement. This agreement set out the approach and process for the Inuvialuit self-government negotiations. It also identified what was being negotiated and established an agenda and timetable.

In June 2014, the chief negotiators for the Parties initialled the agreement-in-principle and recommended it for approval by the Parties they represent.

The Agreement-in-Principle forms the basis for negotiating and concluding a final self-government agreement for the Inuvialuit. The powers and structure of the future Inuvialuit Government will be further defined in the final self-government agreement and in the Inuvialuit Constitution.

The basic model of the Inuvialuit Government will consist of:

- an Inuvialuit Council governing at the Regional level;
- an Inuvialuit Council to be comprised of an Ataniq (Leader) elected by all eligible Inuvialuit and at least one(1) Councillor elected from each Inuvialuit Community; and,
- law-making authority (jurisdiction) reserved for the Inuvialuit Council.

The Inuvialuit Government will have authority and decision making powers in a variety of areas such as:

- adoption
- child and family services
- culture and language
- early childhood care and education
- health (traditional healing)
- income assistance
- Kindergarten to Grade 12 education
- out of school care and education
- student support services
- trespass on Inuvialuit Lands
- wills and estates

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* applies to all matters within the authority of the Inuvialuit Government.