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INUIT TAPIRIIT KANATAMI

Arctic and Northern Policy Framework: Inuit Nunangat

www.itk.ca

About Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) is the national representative organization for the 65,000 Inuit in Canada, the majority of whom live in Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit homeland encompassing 51 communities across the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Québec), and Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador). Inuit Nunangat makes up nearly one third of Canada's landmass and 50 percent of its coastline. ITK represents the rights and interests of Inuit at the national level through a democratic governance structure that represents all Inuit regions. ITK advocates for policies, programs, and services to address the social, cultural, political, and environmental issues facing our people.

ITK's Board of Directors are as follows:

- Chair and CEO, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation
- President, Makivik Corporation
- President, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated
- President, Nunatsiavut Government

In addition to voting members, the following non-voting Permanent Participant Representatives also sit on the Board:

- President, Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada
- President, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada
- President, National Inuit Youth Council

Vision

Canadian Inuit are prospering through unity and self-determination

Mission

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami is the national voice for protecting and advancing the rights and interests of Inuit in Canada

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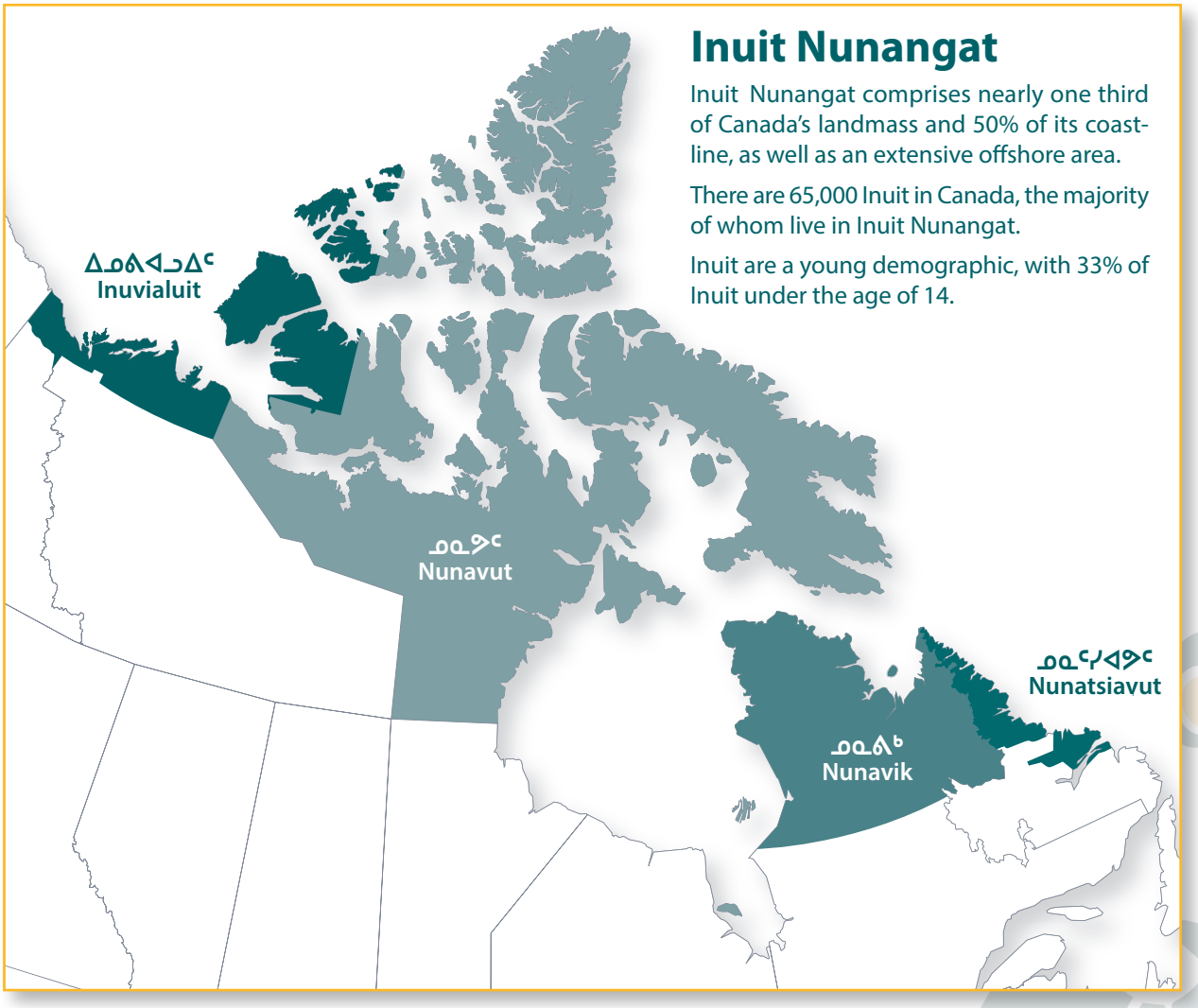
Issued in electronic format (available in English, Inuktut, and French)

Introduction

Inuit Nunangat is the Inuit homeland in Canada, encompassing 51 communities in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Quebec), and Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador). Inuit Nunangat forms nearly one third of Canada's landmass and half of its coastline. Large portions are co-managed by Inuit and federal, provincial and territorial governments through land and resource management regimes established by five comprehensive Inuit-Crown land claims agreements (Inuvialuit Final Agreement; Nunavut Agreement; James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement; Nunavik Inuit Land Claim Agreement; and Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement). Inuit Nunangat includes land, inland waters, Arctic and offshore areas, and ice-covered lands and waters, as well as associated airspace.

Canada's claim to sovereignty and leadership in the Arctic is founded in its partnership with Inuit. As stated in the 2009 Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic:

> The inextricable linkages between issues of sovereignty and sovereign rights in the Arctic and Inuit self-determination and other rights require states to accept the presence and role of Inuit as partners in the conduct of international relations in the Arctic... The foundation, projection and enjoyment of Arctic sovereignty and sovereign rights all require healthy and sustainable communities in the Arctic.



The majority of the region's population are Inuit. Through the land claims agreements, Inuit own or co-manage most of the land and waters in Inuit Nunangat and have developed a variety of governance arrangements, ranging from shared jurisdiction between Inuit and public governments to self-government. These governance arrangements continue to evolve, based on the inherent right of Inuit to self-determination.

Inuit are a circumpolar Indigenous People: one people connected by culture and language, but divided by four countries. Inuit Nunaat, the circumpolar Inuit homeland, encompasses Chukotka (Russian Federation), northern Alaska and Canada, and Greenland. Canada's global standing and ability to safeguard its sovereignty in the Arctic is contingent on full implementation of constructive arrangements with Inuit, as well as the strength and well-being of Inuit society. Increasing the prosperity and well-being of Canadian Arctic communities would benefit not only Canada but the international perception of Canada as a whole.

Current Realities in Inuit Nunangat

Inuit Nunangat is the least developed geographic region in Canada. Inuit experience extreme inequality compared to other Canadians, and to other Canadians in Inuit Nunangat. Addressing social and economic inequity, both between Inuit Nunangat and within Inuit Nunangat itself, is a necessary pre-condition to the development of a healthy, resilient and secure Canadian Arctic. Economic prosperity, national security and public safety all depend on healthy communities and inclusive economies and systems of governance. In addition, 33% of Inuit are under the age of 14, meaning policy interventions which target health, education and social development will have a disproportionately beneficial impact in Inuit Nunangat compared to other regions within Canada. As a result, Canadian policy should commit to ambitious investments throughout Inuit Nunangat, conceived and evaluated with the goal of eliminating social and economic inequities.

These inequities create a responsibility for the government of Canada because they represent a clear, measurable baseline which Inuit, the federal government and other partners can track and assess over time to measure progress on outcomes. They provide the focus for designing interventions that create social and economic equity. Canada's Arctic Policy Framework (APF) should align federal fiscal, program, policy and legal interventions to address these identified inequities.

In order to properly track the progress of the APF, in terms of the success of government policy to address the social and economic inequities in Inuit Nunangat, the government of Canada should work with Inuit, provinces and territories on a data strategy for key indicators of social and economic well-being and life cycle infrastructure inventories. The federal government should then use indicators and data to direct investments on the basis of the need and avoid exacerbating the inequalities which already exist in Inuit Nunangat and in Canada.

Social and Economic Inequity in Inuit Nunangat

Many Inuit face social and economic inequities that impact our health and wellbeing

Inuit Nunangat		All Canadians
52% of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat live in crowded homes*[1]		9% of all Canadians live in crowded homes*[1]
34% of Inuit aged 25 to 64 in Inuit Nunangat have earned a high school diploma[1]		86% of all Canadians aged 25 to 64 have earned a high school diploma[1]
70% of Inuit households in Nunavut are food insecure[2]		8% of all households in Canada are food insecure[3]
$23,485 The median before tax individual income for Inuit in Inuit Nunangat[1]		$92,011 The median before tax individual income for non-Indigenous people in Inuit Nunangat[1]
30 The number of physicians per 100,000 population in Nunavut[4]		119 The number of physicians per 100,000 population in Urban Health Authorities[4]
47.5% of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat are employed[1]		60.2% of all Canadians are employed[1]
72.4 years The projected life expectancy for Inuit in Canada†[5]		82.9 years The projected life expectancy for non-Indigenous people in Canada[5]
12.3 The infant mortality rate per 1,000 for Inuit infants in Canada.[6]	IMR	4.4 The non-indigenous infant mortality rate per 1,000 for Canada.[6]

* Should not be compared with crowding data for previous years. Based on the suitability definition (whether the dwelling has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the household). The previous figure was based on the number of persons per room definition.

† Should not be compared with previous life expectancy data. The figure is a national 2017 projection of life expectancy for Inuit. Previous figures were for 2004-2008 for all residents of Inuit Nunangat, including non-Inuit.

1 Statistics Canada, 2016 Census. (crowded homes: 98-400-X2016163; high school diploma 98-400-X2016265; income: unpublished custom table provided to ITK; employment: 98-400-X2016266)

2 Grace M. Egeland, Inuit Health Survey 2007-2008: Nunavut (Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, QC: Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment, May 2010), 12.

3 Shirin Roshanafshar and Emma Hawkins. Health at a Glance: Food Insecurity in Canada (Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada, March 25, 2015).

4 Canadian Institute for Health Information, Supply, Distribution and Migration of Physicians in Canada, 2014 (Ottawa, ON: Canadian Institute for Health Information, September 2015).

5 Custom table based on Statistics Canada's Projections of the Aboriginal Population and Households in Canada, 2011 to 2036.

6 Sheppard et al 2017. "Birth outcomes among First Nations, Inuit and Metis populations." Health Reports Vol. 28. No. 11

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its accompanying 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should be considered as a framework for new investments in Inuit- identified priorities, and based on acceptance of Inuit Nunangat as a policy, geographic and social space. Based on identified Inuit needs, one need only look at the first six 2030 Sustainable Development Goals to identify the most pressing needs for Inuit in Canada: poverty, hunger, infrastructure, health and wellness, education, gender and housing, including clean water. In all these Inuit rank well below Canadian standards and our communities find themselves statistically within those of the poorest countries in the world. We wonder how this can be? The purpose of the Sustainable Development Goals is to eliminate inequities between developing countries and regions in wealthy countries. In short, they are guidelines to be used to close the gap between Inuit Nunangat and the rest of Canada. The success of the Arctic Policy Framework should be assessed against indicators to assess each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in Inuit Nunangat. Indicators should be developed jointly with Inuit and should be disaggregated to demonstrate outcomes among Inuit versus the total population of Inuit Nunangat, rather than reported only by provincial or territorial jurisdiction.

Nation building

Inuit are one people and have settled modern treaties across five provinces and three territories. Inuit Nunangat is characterized by opportunity and potential as well as striking gaps in prosperity and well-being of Inuit compared to most other regions of Canada. Inuktut, the Inuit language, is the most resilient Indigenous language in Canada. Harvesting of wild foods remains a centrepiece of the Inuit way of life, and Inuit-owned corporations and businesses play a dynamic role in the region's economy. Inuit seek to participate fully in the national and global economies.

However, the region suffers from a social and physical infrastructure deficit that contributes to distressing social and economic indicators, inhibits the ability of Inuit to contribute fully to and benefit from Canada's economy and undermines safety and security. The APF is an opportunity to engage in nation building by recognizing the right of Inuit to self-determination. It is also an opportunity to invest in infrastructure for Inuit Nunangat on a scale that is comparable to the development of the trans-Canadian highway or the trans-national railway connected Western and Eastern Canada.

Surging international activity and interest in the Arctic, combined with unacceptable social and economic inequities such as hunger, crowded housing and violence must be met with long-term strategic investments – in physical infrastructure and the Inuit of the region. Investing in infrastructure in Inuit Nunangat achieves a variety of common goals: improving livelihood and economic capacity, health and wellness of Inuit, while creating secure infrastructure for economic development, defence, search and rescue, and emergency preparedness and response. This investment will be revenue neutral, if not saving the government as increased activities in the Arctic rely on dependable dual purpose infrastructure that serves the community and Canada.

There is now clear evidence that climate change impacts are experienced more profoundly in Inuit Nunangat than in the rest of Canada. Indeed, warming temperature have had rapid and stark impacts on the Arctic environment, communities, and Inuit for decades. The impacts of climate change exacerbate social and economic inequities by placing additional strain on existing infrastructure, introducing complications to deployment of new infrastructure, changing the population dynamics and behaviours of wildlife on which Inuit livelihoods, health, and food security depend, and causing increased risk of travel on sea ice to name a few. At the same time, climate change impacts are also providing potential new opportunities across Inuit Nunangat. The challenge for Canada's policy will be to minimize vulnerabilities to some climate impacts, while at the same time being well-positioned to take advantage of other changes.

Implementing an Inuit Nunangat policy

Canada currently lacks a policy which recognizes Inuit Nunangat. Implementing an Inuit Nunangat policy is the means to ensure respect and support for the right of Inuit self-determination. Doing so requires the recognition of Inuit as one people, with constitutional partnerships with Canada, and Inuit Nunangat as a distinct geographic, political, and cultural region within Canada. Applying an Inuit Nunangat policy within the APF will be achieved by allocating federal funding directly to Inuit where they have an interest, need or jurisdiction over service or program delivery. At the same time, Inuit jurisdiction and capacity to exert greater control over federal funding for Inuit. Federal budgets which have implemented an Inuit Nunangat policy have allocated targeted federal funding directly to Inuit representative organizations and governments, creating efficiency, cost savings, and more immediate positive impacts and benefits for Inuit that in turn benefit all Canadians. Implementing an Inuit Nunangat policy within the APF is premised on the fact that Inuit are the most knowledgeable about the issues affecting their communities and society, possess the greatest incentive to address those issues, and are therefore best positioned to develop and advance innovative solutions for Inuit.

Recognition of Inuit Nunangat in policy and program development

Considerations relating specifically to Inuit Nunangat need to be reflected in the development of federal policies and programs of general application. The failure to recognize the unique situation of Inuit Nunangat frequently means that Inuit are excluded by criteria which appear neutral.

Even when Inuit are included in policy and program criteria, the federal government rarely recognizes Inuit Nunangat as a definable region, rather it is treated merely as a space which is intersected by other political or administrative subdivisions. This creates differences in funding — investments and implementation of policy within Inuit Nunangat and often results in policy and program applications which leads to discriminatory treatment among and between Inuit regions.

During the development process, all federal policies and programs should explicitly detail considerations related to potential application within Inuit Nunangat. For example, when developing new funding streams for infrastructure spending, Canada should identify: whether and how such funding streams would apply in Inuit Nunangat; how Inuit will develop programs and how such funding streams would address Inuit priorities and needs; and what delivery mechanisms will ensure Inuit benefit from funding streams.

The federal government should develop an annual report on the state of federal operations in Inuit Nunangat which details available funding programs, criteria for applying for funding, available federal programs and services and measures taken during the past year to improve access to federal programs and service for Inuit. This report should be make public and should be available in Inuktut, to facilitate accessibility for Inuit.

Recognition of Inuit Nunangat in federal organizations

Consistent with the spirit of the Inuit Nunangat Declaration and the work of the Inuit Crown Partnership Committee, Inuit Nunangat should be recognized as a distinct region within Canada with common demographic, economic and environmental challenges and opportunities. The Inuit Crown Partnership Committee Joint Terms of Reference states that "an Inuit Nunangat (the Inuit homeland) approach to policy development and implementation is necessary to advance shared priorities."

To bring about this policy transformation, Inuit recommend the following:

- Canada should commit to developing one regional definition of Inuit Nunangat for all federal operations, particularly in cases where departmental operations are relevant to Inuit. Further, federal policy should be to realign all federal policies, programs and funding streams to ensure equal access for all Inuit across Inuit Nunangat
- Canada should recognize that supporting Inuit outside of Inuit Nunangat is good for all Inuit, good for Inuit Nunangat and good for Canada.
- Canada should create a Cabinet Directive to ensure all new policy and programs are developed to have application across Inuit Nunangat and to ensure federal departments and programs both evaluate and report on the impacts of policies and programs on Inuit.
- Federal policy should encourage federal departments to reorganize to ensure that all departments with regional operations include an Inuit Nunangat region. Such departmental realignments increase the interests of Inuit in the implementation of federal policies and programs. This is particularly important because across a range of departments, the interests of Inuit, and the challenges of service delivery in Inuit Nunangat is often poorly understood by decision-makers.

Flexibility of Program criteria and fiscal instruments so that Inuit can self-determine how programs and services are developed, delivered and evaluated within their regions

A prosperous future for Inuit Nunangat includes Inuit self-determination and intergovernmental cooperation and arrangements between Inuit, the federal government and provincial and territorial governments. Inuit self-determination over how federal investments focussed on improving social, economic and cultural outcomes for Inuit may be expressed by providing Inuit the option to receive federal investments through cooperative mechanisms with federal, provincial or territorial governments, through financing arrangements negotiated directly with the federal government or through other arrangements, jointly determined by Inuit and the Crown. Similarly, the evaluation of the effectiveness of programs and services financed by the federal government, whether delivered by Inuit, by the federal government or by other levels of government, would be jointly evaluated by Inuit and the federal government.

Supporting bilateral relations between Inuit Regions and Canada

Each Inuit land claim defines the contours of a distinct relationship between Inuit and the Crown. An Inuit Nunangat approach to policy development would situate the development, delivery and evaluation of all federal programs within a relationship which is informed by the principles, the legal obligations and the intent of each land claims agreement. This implies the need to build on, expand and strengthen the bilateral relationship between Crown and Inuit land claims agreements, organizations and governments. Bilateral relationships should be focused on ensuring the Honour of the Crown not just on specific implementation issues, but also on the broader relationship.

Inuit Nunangat priorities for action and investment

Over the past ten years, Inuit have articulated priorities and have developed a number of national, international and regional action plans on a range of issues. Canada's policy with respect to Inuit should be driven, at the outset, by the existing strategies which Inuit have developed. To advance these strategies the federal government should work with Inuit to co-develop federal action plans. In addition, particularly where Inuit strategies are focused regionally or internationally, the federal government should use its convening power to encourage the co-development of action plans and offer support to provincial, territorial or foreign governments and international organizations to achieve the outcomes of such strategies.

Examples of national strategies and priorities include the National Inuit Strategy on Education, the National Inuit Strategy on Research, the Tubercolosis Elimination Framework, the National Inuit Climate Change Strategy and the National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy.

At the end of each fiscal year, as part of an annual reporting commitment on the Arctic Policy Framework, the government of Canada and Inuit could jointly report on federal responses to regional, national or international Inuit initiatives.

Inuit Nunangat priorities for action and investment reflect the goals of creating social and economic equity in Inuit Nunangat, enhancing the region's infrastructure and security, politically and economically integrating the region into Canada and advancing Inuit governance. The following priorities will guide federal action and investment in Inuit Nunangat:

1. Infrastructure and economic self-reliance

Overall objective: Eliminate the infrastructure deficit in Inuit Nunangat

The infrastructure gap between Inuit Nunangat and the rest of Canada is a notorious impediment to the prosperity of Inuit Nunangat residents and contributes to a tremendous lost opportunity cost for the national economy. The APF will seek to eliminate the infrastructure deficit in Inuit Nunangat by 2030 through investments in social infrastructure, marine and air infrastructure, and telecommunications. Investments in social infrastructure are needed in particular to support the environmental conditions that we know are necessary for children and families to thrive. Social infrastructure includes early learning and child care centres, kindergarten to grade 12 and postsecondary education, family violence shelters and transitional housing, addictions treatment centres, social and transitional housing and facilities for programming/service provision.

The APF must emphasize the essential role of Inuit as central players in Canadian Arctic diplomacy and support Inuit infrastructure to support timely and effective mobilization for Search and Rescue, Emergency Preparedness and Response and defense operations. In doing so, it must also recognize the rights, interests, and decision-making role of Inuit. All governments must understand that Inuit use and occupy Inuit Nunangat – our homeland 12 months of the year, that Inuit are the stewards of the land, and given appropriate infrastructure, will continue as the principal players and first responders in Canada's Arctic sovereignty and security.

The National Aboriginal Economic Development Board (NAEDB) studied infrastructure project in Inuit Nunangat and estimated, "that about $11 in economic benefit and about $11 in fiscal benefit can be generated for every one dollar invested in transportation and energy infrastructure." Moreover, the NAEDB and others have identified a number of barriers and challenges to accelerating investment in infrastructure in Inuit Nunangat, barriers and challenges which can be addressed through federal policy and programming reform.

A. Marine and air infrastructure

Strategic objective: Eliminate the infrastructure deficit in Inuit Nunangat

Inuit Nunangat includes 50 percent of Canada's coastline and represents a geopolitically strategic region, including the Northwest Passage. Yet marine infrastructure throughout the region is impoverished or does not exist compared to other coastal regions of Canada, despite surging international interest and activity in the region that includes increased shipping traffic. These gaps extend to air transportation infrastructure and to training to effectively operate aviation and marine infrastructure. Most airport runways in Inuit Nunangat date from the 1950s and 1960s and are made of compacted gravel. This has a significant impact on emergency travel and the delivery and cost of goods and services not to mention the everyday air travel that so many other Canadians take for granted. In addition, the absence of marine infrastructure results in economic leakage, particularly in the renewable resource sector because fishing vessels operating in Inuit Nunangat must leave the region to offload and to refuel. Finally, the existing marine and air infrastructure gaps impede search and rescue operations, resulting in unacceptably long response times which endanger the health and safety of Inuit and others.

B. Telecommunications

Strategic objective: Invest in fibre optic connectivity for all Inuit Nunangat communities

Access to telephone and internet service is essential for accessing government programs and services, commercial opportunities, economic development and employment. The extreme digital divide between Inuit Nunangat and most other parts of Canada will be remedied through deployment of broadband in Inuit Nunangat that meets the telecommunications regulatory policy established by the Canada Radio Telecommunications Commission and is not prohibitive in costs.

C. Renewable energy and climate

Strategic objective: Reduce community diesel reliance by 50 percent by 2030

Inuit are determined to actively shape inclusive and effective climate policies and actions. They seek energy independence as well as ownership and governance of energy systems in Inuit Nunangat communities. The APF will include targeted investments in Inuit Nunangat that remedy barriers to the deployment of renewable energy technologies and reduction of diesel and support ownership and governance of energy systems by Inuit.

D. Mental health and suicide prevention

Strategic objective: Provide mental health services and significantly enhance mental health indicators across Inuit Nunangat

Improving mental health of Inuit is a shared objective of Canada and Inuit. Developing and improving social infrastructure such as addictions treatment centers, as well as developing infrastructure to ensure universal accessibility to mental health services for Inuit in Inuit Nunangat will serve to improve health status and economic outcomes across Inuit Nunangat. This includes the importance of infrastructure focused on children, including expanded facilities for children in care. For example, the 2016 National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy (NISPS) provides a holistic blueprint for action and investment that requires ongoing support by the federal government, including action plans to create social equity, to create cultural continuity, to nurture healthy Inuit children from birth, to ensure access to a continuum of mental wellness services for Inuit, to healing unresolved trauma and grief and to mobilize Inuit knowledge for resilience and suicide prevention.

2. Inuit self-determination in research

Strategic objective: Advance Inuit self-determination in research by developing and implementing a national Inuit Nunangat research policy

Inuit self-determination in research is imperative for enhancing the usefulness of research for Inuit. Moreover, the development of a national Inuit Nunangat research policy by the Government of Canada is necessary to coordinate research initiatives among the more than 10 federal departments and agencies that carry out research in Inuit Nunangat and to formalize guidelines for advancing Inuit governance in research. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami released the National Inuit Strategy on Research (NISR) in March 2018 and its companion Implementation Plan in August 2018 that put forward solutions to remedy barriers to achieving this Strategic Objective. The APF will advance implementation of the NISR by facilitating the co-development of a national Inuit Nunangat research policy by federal departments and Inuit, while facilitating increased capacity for Inuit regions to develop research capacity, policies and initiatives.

3. Education

Strategic objective: Close the gap in educational outcomes between Inuit and non-Inuit

The federal government will assume a greater role in early learning and child care, in primary, secondary and post-secondary education. As noted by the 2011 National Inuit Education Strategy, "Inuit need a school system whose objective is the mastery of core subjects, including language and math, as well as 21st century subjects, such as global awareness and civic literacy. Curriculum, standards and support systems must all work to produce learning environments and outcomes for Inuit students that equip them to become successful citizens in diverse and multicultural settings."

Federal policy should build on existing Early Learning and Childcare (ELCC) investments to ensure safe spaces for children, all children are well fed and that parents have affordable child care. It should include an enhanced federal role in Inuit K-12 education to ensure Inuit students have the prerequisite courses to enter into post-secondary programs and including data on outcomes and regular Inuit/federal/provincial/territorial meetings, should ensure all Inuit children can learn in Inuktut, from early learning and childcare through secondary education. Finally, it should result in the establishment of a University of Inuit Nunangat.

4. Wildlife and Food Security

Strategic objective: Inuit will be able to exercise harvesting and wildlife management rights into the foreseeable future

The federal government will support measures to protect and enhance Arctic biodiversity within Inuit Nunangat, with the specific conservation objective of supporting Inuit harvesting. Inuit rights to harvesting and wildlife management are constitutionally protected rights and must be respected and fully supported. Federal policy should recognize the interconnected nature of harvesting activities, climate change and food security for Inuit households when developing policies and programs which address any of these three related issues, and should prioritize innovative approaches for supporting Inuit harvesting in such policies and programs

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