



Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: Linkages Project

FINAL REPORT



About Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) is the national representative organization for the 70,000 Inuit in Canada, the majority of whom live in Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit home land encompassing 51 communities across the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Québec), and Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador). Inuit Nunangat makes up 40 percent of Canada's land area and 72 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, Makivvik
- 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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Executive Summary

Introduction

As the national voice for protecting and advancing the rights and interests of Inuit in Canada, a major part of ITK's advocacy work includes drawing attention to the impacts of colonization, prejudice and the social inequalities being faced by Inuit, and marshalling available resources to work towards eliminating these inequalities and promoting sustainable development in Inuit Nunangat.

Many of the United Nation's (UN's) 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹ align with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) work and priorities and this report reflects these connections. Throughout this report it becomes clear that in order to advance the SDGs in Canada, Canada must advance efforts directed towards eliminating the inequity between Inuit Nunangat and the rest of Canada.

Linkages Project

To best illustrate how these SDG commitments relate with ITK's work, ITK has developed a *Linkages project* that outlines these connections. The first phase of this project was conducted through internal engagements at ITK in the winter of 2022. The objectives of the project were to:

- Increase awareness of the SDGs,
- Draw connections between the SDG commitments and the work done at ITK,
- Generate ideas for further collaboration.

Throughout this project, many linkages were discovered which demonstrate the overlap between ITK's files and the SDGs. Some of the strongest links were found with the following SDGs: 1) No Poverty, 2) Zero Hunger, 3) Good Health and Well-being, 4) Quality Education, 5) Gender Equality, 9) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, 10) Reduced Inequity, 11) Sustainable Cities and Communities, 13) Climate Action, 14) Life Below Water, 15) Life on Land.

¹ "Sustainable Development Goals," UNDP, n.d., <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>.

The *Linkages project* final phase aims to produce a report that provides detail on these connections and suggests areas of further collaboration. Below are three examples of some of the links found between ITK projects and their corresponding SDG priorities.

Example Projects

Development of the National Inuit Poverty Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan

- ITK's poverty reduction work relates most directly to Goal #1, No Poverty. Although the SDGs focus on poverty reduction as Goal #1, there is also overlap between poverty and other SDG priority areas. ITK recognizes this overlap and plans to develop an *Inuit Nunangat Poverty Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan* that will look at poverty through a holistic, Inuit-specific, Gender Based Analysis+ (GBA+) lens. In addition, practical strength-based approaches will be incorporated throughout the strategy.
- By investing sufficient resources in implementing this strategy, significant and lasting progress could be made towards reducing poverty across Inuit Nunangat.

School food programs

- ITK's efforts to advance the *Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy* (INFSS) (Appendix I) and to establish school food programs, link most directly with Goal #2: Zero Hunger, and Goal #3: Quality Education.
- ITK recognizes that although numerous locally run school food programs exist across Inuit Nunangat, many face challenges with sustainable funding, appropriate infrastructure and capacity.
- More work needs to be done to address this inequity, given that Inuit across Inuit Nunangat continue to experience much higher rates of food insecurity than the rest of Canada.
- The INFSS is the first road map developed for improving Inuit food security across Inuit Nunangat. To implement this strategy and boost food security initiatives across Inuit Nunangat, additional funding support is required.

Tuberculosis Action Plans

- ITK's call for eliminating Tuberculosis aligns with Goal #3: Good Health and Well-being. It is also worth mentioning that the Tuberculosis rate in Inuit Nunangat is the only Inuit-specific indicator included in the *Canadian Indicator Framework* (CIF).
- ITK, in partnership with the Tuberculosis Elimination Task Force, the Inuit TB Committee and the Inuit Public Health Task Group, developed the *Tuberculosis Elimination Framework* (Appendix I). This framework is intended to guide the development of holistic, systematic and evidence-based Inuit regional action plans to eliminate TB. It highlights strategic actions and investments that will create access to high-quality TB care and address long-standing social and economic inequities that are linked to TB transmission and to the high prevalence of TB disease among Inuit.
- Inuit Regional Action Plans that align with the framework have been developed. These plans are crucial as they provide a roadmap for what actions and resources are needed to eliminate TB within each region by 2030.
- In order to work towards eliminating TB in Inuit Nunangat, and advance SDG #3: Good Health and Well-being, sustainable funding of these regional action plans will be needed beyond the current funding envelope which expires in March 2023.

Opportunities and Challenges

While the SDGs set out ambitious goals, there are some Inuit Nunangat specific concerns regarding the implementation of the SDGs. They can be grouped into the following categories:

Challenge of accessing data

- Due, in part, to the small and isolated population of Inuit Nunangat, little data is available on the status of the SDG indicators in Inuit Nunangat.
- In addition, Inuit represent a very small percentage of the population of Canada. It can therefore be difficult to gather appropriate and adequate data.
- The lack of distinctions-based data within provinces and territories results in relatively poor data for Inuit Nunangat communities.
- As a result, it is often impossible to determine if progress is being made towards the goals or whether interventions are having the intended affect.

Lack of Inuit-specific commitments & Inuit-specific data indicators:

- ITK welcomes the inclusion of one Inuit-specific indicator (Tuberculosis Prevalence in Inuit Nunangat) in the CIF but Inuit face many more unique development challenges that could just as easily be included.
- Many global indicators are of little relevance in an Inuit Nunangat context, as many of these indicators focus on outcomes in developing countries. For example, the UN indicator: “proportion of people living on less than \$1.90 per day” is of little relevance to Inuit with minimal access to Canadian social safety net resources². In addition, Canada’s indicator “poverty measured by Canada’s official poverty line” doesn’t account for the high cost of living in Inuit Nunangat and other challenges to accessing resources faced by Inuit³.
- To properly implement the SDGs, Canada must understand the unique challenges Inuit face and take a distinctions-based approach to tracking success while supporting Inuit self-determination.

Funding Challenges:

- For Canada to meet its commitment to the SDGs, the profound inequity existing between Canada and Inuit Nunangat must be addressed through sustained and stable investment.
- Commitments to development are not always backed by the funding necessary to realize the goals being set out. Canada’s commitment to the SDGs must be realized through adequate resourcing for disparities to be eliminated and to improve the health, well-being and sustainability of our communities.
- As Inuit Nunangat is comprised of four individual Inuit land claims regions, differences in jurisdiction adds additional barriers for funding streams that target Inuit. Therefore, there is a need to include a distinctions-based, Inuit Nunangat Policy approach to federal funding in order to overcome this barrier.

Conclusion: ITK’s Priorities and the SDGs

² “Goal 1: End Poverty in All Its Forms Everywhere,” United Nations Sustainable Development, n.d., <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/poverty/>.

³ “Goal 1.”

The *Linkages project* provides an excellent opportunity to showcase how the work that ITK is doing to advance the rights of Inuit in Canada aligns with the UN's SDGs. The *Linkages project* acknowledges the global nature of the SDGs but recommends that these priorities be adapted in order to ensure their utility across marginalized sectors of Canadian society. Given that TB elimination is the sole Inuit-specific metric, additional Inuit-specific indicators should also be developed. With so many connections discovered between the needs of Inuit and the priorities of the SDGs, these targets should be revisited. Finally, in relation to implementation and action, Inuit self-determination must be a foundational principle that underpins efforts by Canada to effectively meet its commitment to the SDGs across Inuit Nunangat.

Introduction

Canada, along with UN Member States, adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which commits to leaving no one behind by taking action on the 17 SDGs, which address many social, economic and environmental challenges. Through the adoption of the SDGs, Canada has committed to advancing these goals set forth by the UN, and this report provides an excellent opportunity towards providing direction to fulfill this commitment. In this report, ITK provides a path forward with recommended strategies and collaborations, that are aimed at improving living outcomes for Inuit so that they align with the standards in the rest of Canada. These collaborative efforts will not only work towards fulfilling Canada's commitment to the SDGs, but will also work towards reducing the existing inequity in Inuit Nunangat.

Throughout this report, ITK has identified mutual priorities with the SDGs, and outlined areas that could benefit through further collaboration between the SDG division of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and ITK. This report is organized into chapters that fall in line with the list of SDGs provided by the UN. Each chapter discusses the SDG topic, in relation to Inuit within Inuit Nunangat, then highlights the connections between the goals and ends by offering suggested areas of further collaboration. It is through this report that we hope to inspire ideas on how to advance the SDGs in Inuit Nunangat, and provide pathways to guide our mutual efforts.

SDG 1: No Poverty

Profound poverty exists among Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat, compared to the rest of Canada.

Statistics indicate that around 70% of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat are food insecure vs. 8% of all households in Canada who are food insecure.⁴ When it comes to housing, around 52% of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat live in overcrowded homes vs. 9% for all Canadians.⁵ These figures illustrate how poverty is hitting Inuit communities and the discrepancy that exists between the Inuit Nunangat standard of life, compared to the rest of Canada. It is clear that more work needs to be done to address this discrepancy and to improve the living conditions for Inuit in Inuit Nunangat.

The first goal of the SDGs is “No Poverty”, and it aligns with the poverty reduction work at ITK. Specifically, the poverty reduction file aligns with indicator 1.2.1 (poverty reduction market basket measure), 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems) and 1.b (create sound policy frameworks for poverty eradication actions). The first goal of the SDGs also greatly correlates with objective #1 in ITK’s 2020-2023 Strategic plan: “Take action to reduce poverty among Inuit”⁶. Through this objective, the ITK Board of Directors committed to addressing the symptoms of poverty, as well as advancing innovative poverty reduction interventions across Inuit Nunangat.

At ITK, steps are currently underway to guide and advance poverty reduction initiatives in Inuit Nunangat. The recent establishment of an *Ad Hoc Inuit Poverty Reduction Working Group* (AHPRWG), with ITK and the Inuit regions, is a prime example. This working group provides guidance for a number of projects, including: *The Cost of Living Project*, Phase I and II, the *National Inuit Poverty Reduction Summit*, and the upcoming *Inuit Nunangat Poverty Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan*. These projects aim to understand and mitigate the ongoing impacts of poverty on Inuit. In addition, these projects will inform ITK’s advocacy and the development and implementation of coordinated programs and initiatives in this space.

The Cost of Living Project, Phase I and II

In order to develop informed research-based advocacy, more Inuit Nunangat data was needed. In response to this, ITK developed a two-part research project titled: *The Cost of Living Project*,

⁴ “Inuit Statistical Profile 2018” (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2018), <https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Inuit-Statistical-Profile.pdf>.

⁵ “Inuit Statistical Profile 2018.”

⁶ “2020-2023 Strategy and Action Plan” (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2020), <https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020-2023-ITK-Strategy-and-Action-Plan-English-FINAL.pdf>.

Phase I and II. This research project was used to complete foundational work to capture the true depth of poverty for Inuit in Inuit Nunangat.

Phase I of this research project was completed in 2021, and it looks into existing poverty reduction programming in Inuit Nunangat and analyzes the economic deficit that exists between Inuit family income and the basic income line in Canada.

In Phase I it has been identified that there is a need for more Inuit-specific and regional-specific research to refine the cost-of-living measure that is reflective of a modest or basic life for Inuit in Inuit Nunangat.

This work led to Phase II of this project, which is currently underway. This second phase aims to develop Inuit-specific poverty reduction metrics, using the Nationally developed Market Basket Measure (MBM), and will incorporate these metrics into calculating a more refined cost of living for Inuit in Inuit Nunangat. These findings are important as they will show the true economic deficit that exists between Inuit family income and the basic income line in Canada. The findings will also provide accurate, Inuit-specific, up-to-date research that will be used to inform the Inuit Poverty Reduction Strategy.

The National Inuit Poverty Reduction Summit

ITK has also advanced work on strengthening awareness of Inuit-centered approaches to poverty reduction across Canada. These efforts were showcased in the *National Inuit Poverty Reduction Summit*, which was hosted by ITK virtually on October 13th-14th, 2021. The summit provided a space for regional partners, provincial/territorial governments and urban Indigenous organizations to share best practices and raise awareness on Inuit poverty reduction efforts in Inuit Nunangat. The summit provided some insightful takeaways:

- The need for a coordinated/holistic approach to poverty reduction within Inuit Nunangat.
- The need to take a step back from the wage economy and explore the possibility of measuring poverty in additional and complementary ways (e.g. connection to culture, social inclusion & self-determination).
- The complexity of poverty and the unique intersectional experience Inuit face when experiencing poverty.

Another *National Inuit Poverty Reduction Summit* is scheduled for the Fall 2022, that will help inform the pillars of the Inuit Nunangat Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Next Steps and Opportunities for Collaboration: The Inuit Nunangat Poverty Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan

After completion of the *Cost of Living Project- Phase II*, and the *National Inuit Poverty Reduction Summit 2022*, ITK plans to use these findings to inform the *Inuit Nunangat Poverty Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan*. Ultimately, our goal for this strategy, is to work towards filling the gap between Inuit family income and the basic income line in Canada, while promoting Inuit self-determination and sustainability. In addition, the implementation plan will offer a roadmap detailing the concrete actions needed to reach this goal presenting an opportunity for collaboration and to advance SDG #1 in Inuit Nunangat.

SDG 2: Zero Hunger

The high prevalence of food insecurity among Inuit is among the longest lasting public health crises faced by a Canadian population⁷. Moreover, Inuit face the highest documented incidence of food insecurity of any Indigenous people living in a developed country⁸.

The 2030 SDG agenda includes the goal of ending hunger which is closely aligned with the work ITK is doing on food security. Specifically, indicators **2.1.1.** (Prevalence of undernourishment), **2.1.2.** (Prevalence of moderate or severe household food insecurity), and **2.c.1.** (Food price abnormalities), resonate with ITK's *Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy* (INFSS) (Appendix I), Inuit Nunangat school food programs, and the upcoming *Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy Implementation Plan* (INFSSIP).

Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy (INFSS)

In response to the ongoing Inuit Nunangat food security crisis and advancing SDG #2: Zero Hunger, in July 2021, ITK developed the *Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy* (INFSS) (Appendix I), which is the first road map ever developed for improving Inuit food security across

⁷ "Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy" (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2021), https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ITK_Food-Security-Strategy-Report_English_PDF-Version.pdf.

⁸ "Food Insecurity among Inuit Living in Inuit Nunangat" (Government of Canada, Statistics Canada, February 1, 2017), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2017001/article/14774-eng.htm>.

Inuit Nunangat. The INFSS aims to advance Inuit-driven solutions for improving food security by creating a sustainable food system in Inuit Nunangat. Unfortunately, no corresponding federal, provincial and territorial food security or poverty reduction programs, policies, or initiatives are in place in Inuit Nunangat that are ambitious enough to end Inuit food insecurity. As a result, the unacceptably high rates of food insecurity among Inuit remain largely overlooked by governments.⁹

The INFSS identifies objectives and actions within each priority area that must be advanced by Inuit in partnership with governments, academic institutions, and other partners. The INFSS lists the following priority areas and corresponding strategy actions needed to work towards food security in Inuit Nunangat:

Table 1: Priority Chart from the INFSS

	Priority	Action
1	Food system and well-being	Integrate Inuit-led food security and poverty reduction actions.
2	Legislation and policy	Create sustained Inuit engagement on comprehensive legislated solutions.
3	Programs and services	Build evidence-based and responsive programs and services.
4	Knowledge and Skills	Support Inuit country food and sharing systems.
5	Research and Advocacy	Mobilize Inuit food security research and evaluation.

These priorities and action items in the INFSS provide the framework to guide the next steps in the INFSSIP and advance food security in Inuit Nunangat.

School Food Programs

Canada is among the few industrialized nations without a national school food program (including breakfast, lunch, and snacks), and its development and implementation are sorely needed.¹⁰ Although, numerous locally-run school food programs exist across Inuit Nunangat, none receive sustainable funding or have access to Inuit-specific nutrition standards, and are often dependent on volunteer efforts for their continued operation. Research shows that

⁹ "Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy."

¹⁰ "Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy."

comprehensive, integrated school food programs decrease child food insecurity rates, improve educational outcomes, increase nutritional literacy, and lead to overall short- and long-term health benefits.¹¹ ITK recognizes this gap in programming, and aims to address it with concrete actions in the upcoming *Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy Implementation Plan (INFSSIP)*.

Next Steps and Opportunities for Collaboration: The Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy Implementation Plan (INFSSIP)

ITK is preparing to launch an INFSSIP that will be guided by the INFSS. This implementation plan will map out concrete actions that will target the five priorities areas outlined in the strategy.

Multiple interrelated factors including poverty, high cost of living, climate change, inadequate infrastructure, intergenerational trauma, and systemic racism contribute to Inuit food insecurity. Action and investments will be needed to support the INFSSIP and this presents an excellent opportunity to collaborate further to advance SDG 2: Zero Hunger. Investments in the implementation plan will go towards: the supporting the development of effective public policy initiatives, food security programs, and interventions.

It is our shared goal to end hunger and advance Inuit food sovereignty throughout Inuit Nunangat. This can be done by helping to develop a sustainable food system that reflects Inuit societal values, supports Inuit well-being, and ensures access to affordable, nutritious, safe, and culturally preferred foods.

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

The influences of colonization and acculturation have deeply impacted the physical and mental health of many Inuit, past and present. The effects of colonization and acculturation on health can be seen through the spread of many infectious diseases, such as TB, that ravaged Inuit communities after the arrival of the early European explorers and whalers. The accounts from the late 1800s, suggest consumption (another name for TB disease) had killed more Inuit than all other diseases put together¹².

¹¹ "Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy."

¹² Chantelle A. M. Richmond, "The Social Determinants of Inuit Health: A Focus on Social Support in the Canadian Arctic," *International Journal of Circumpolar Health* 68, no. 5 (December 2009): 471–87, <https://doi.org/10.3402/ijch.v68i5.17383>.

With the rise of infectious diseases, such as TB in Inuit Nunangat, many Inuit were sent to sanatoriums in the south, which separated them from their families and communities. In the end, many families did not know which sanatorium their loved ones were sent to or even if they were alive. Such instances of historical trauma have deeply affected Inuit physically and mentally.

The historical oppression of Inuit also has contributed to a rise of suicide rates. It has been estimated that the suicide rates of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat range from 5 to 25 times the rate of suicide for Canada as a whole¹³. It is clear that the suicide rate of Inuit is a public health crisis and action needs to be taken to address the mental and physical wellness of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat.

Improving good health and well-being for Inuit is an important topic, and requires deep consideration. ITK has been working with regions to address this health urgency, and has released a series of strategies related to health and wellness. With regards to the SDGs, the work done to date at ITK relating to health and wellness has the strongest correlation with SDG 4, specially the following indicators: 3.3 (end epidemics, i.e.. tuberculosis), 3.4 (reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases, ex. Suicide), 3.5 (Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, ex. Tobacco), 3.8 (Achieve universal health coverage, access to quality essential health-care services), 3.a (Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries).

Efforts to advance these SDGs can be seen through the following ITK efforts: the publishing of a *National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy* (Appendix I), supporting regional efforts in the prevention/promotion/treatment activities related to tobacco control/cessation, the release of the *Inuit Tuberculosis Elimination Framework* (Appendix I), and supporting Inuit regions in the development of their TB elimination action plans. All this work aims to guide existing efforts and provide additional programming to improve the health and well-being outcomes of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat. This work has been summarized below.

National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy (NISPS)

As previously mentioned, the rates of deaths by suicide across Inuit Nunangat are five to 25

¹³ “National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy” (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2016), <https://www.itk.ca/national-inuit-suicide-prevention-strategy/>.

times higher than the national Canadian average¹⁴. The elevated rates of deaths by suicide are adverse symptoms of the social and economic inequities that have existed between Inuit Nunangat and most Canadian regions. Intergenerational trauma has been actively experienced by Inuit through the impact of colonialization and intentional displacement. The stress Inuit experienced during settlement relocation, coupled with the prejudice and social inequities faced by families in settlements, led to impactful social challenges and risk for suicide across Inuit communities.

The work that ITK is doing related to suicide closely aligns with SDG indicator 3.4 In order to advance indicator 3.4 and to coordinate evidenced-based, Inuit-specific approaches to suicide prevention within Inuit Nunangat, ITK developed the *National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy* (NISPS) (Appendix I). The NISPS provides overarching guidance and support to existing regional suicide prevention initiatives and strategies, in addition to informing the development of new Inuit-led initiatives. The strategy provides a unified approach to suicide prevention across Inuit Nunangat, that transforms our collective knowledge, experience and research on suicide prevention into action. The NISPS also serves as reference for service providers and policy makers towards the reduction of suicide in Inuit communities and to increase evidence-based measures at a national, regional and community level.¹⁵

Listed within the NISPS are specific objectives and actions ITK will take to prevent suicide among Inuit within six priority areas:

Table 2: Priority Chart from the NISPS

NISPS- Six Priority Areas	
1.	Creating social equity
2.	Creating cultural continuity
3.	Nurturing healthy Inuit children from birth
4.	Ensuring access to a continuum of mental wellness services for Inuit
5.	Healing unresolved trauma and grief
6.	Mobilizing Inuit knowledge for resilience and suicide prevention

The strategy continues to support region-specific activities that emphasize strengthening

¹⁴ “National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy.”

¹⁵ “National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy.”

families through the six priority areas. The components have been effective in building resilience amongst Inuit and also in promoting healing to overcome decades of intergenerational trauma and discrimination. The NISPS will be followed by the development implementation and evaluation plans, that will continue to put the strategy actions into practice¹⁶.

Inuit Tobacco Control

According to data collected by Statistics Canada in 2012, it has been reported that 75% of Inuit men and 74% of Inuit women aged 18 or older in Inuit Nunangat smoked¹⁷. In an effort to best support Inuit Regional tobacco control activities, and advance SDG 3.5, 3.a, ITK provides Inuit regions with policy support, funding guidance and coordination as part of its community of practice model. In addition, ITK continues to underline the need for the inclusion of an Inuit-specific approach in the future development and implementation plan of the World Health Organization's (WHO) framework convention on tobacco control.

Improving Access to Health Care Services under The Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program

Given the state of Inuit health and the challenges of health care access and delivery across Inuit Nunangat, ITK is also advancing SDG indicator 3.8 More specifically, ITK's work on the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program file focuses on key areas including advocating for changes to improve national NIHB program policies for Inuit beneficiaries and supporting Inuit Regional NIHB administration and health systems navigation. ITK also advocates on all matters related to the federal government's approach, development and implementation of NIHB program policies and administration which directly impact the provisioning and equitable access to health care products and services for Inuit. Collaborative efforts with the SDGs would support ITK's work by providing for Inuit-specific resource allocations directed at addressing ongoing barriers to care and timely access to care under the NIHB program as well as improving provisions to better support Inuit Regional health systems navigation and Inuit regional capacity building efforts.

Inuit Tuberculosis Elimination Framework

¹⁶ "National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy."

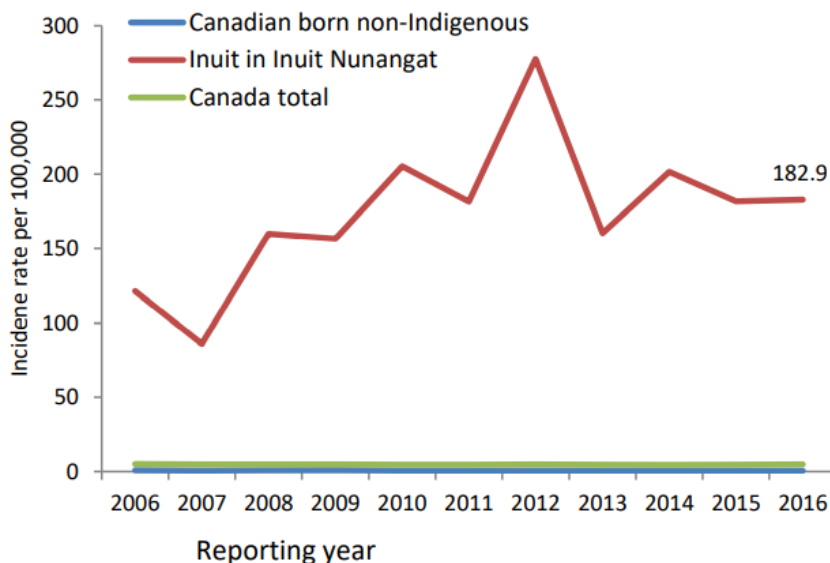
¹⁷ Evelyne Bougie and Dafna E Kohen, "Smoking Correlates among Inuit Men and Women in Inuit Nunangat," *Health Reports* 29, no. 82 (2018).

Inuit carry a strikingly disproportionate burden of TB disease in Canada. In 2011, the reported incidence rate of TB disease for Inuit was almost 254 times the rate reported for Canadian-born non-Indigenous peoples and roughly 38 times the rate reported for Canada overall. This disparity is believed to be the result of a number of influences that are unique to Inuit Nunangat and the Inuit experience of TB¹⁸.

Figure 1 depicts the disparity between the cases of TB experienced by Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat, compared to TB cases with non-Indigenous born Canadians living all over Canada.

Figure 1: Graph of Incidence rate of TB disease among Inuit in Inuit Nunangat¹⁹

Incidence rate of TB disease among Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat compared with Canadian-born non-Indigenous populations and all of Canada, 2006-2016¹²



Recognizing the severity of TB in Inuit Nunangat, in March 2018, ITK and the Government of Canada committed to reduce the rate of TB across Inuit Nunangat by 50 percent by 2025, and to eliminate TB by 2030. This will require a drop in the rate from 182.9 cases per 100,000 population (2016) to no more than 91.5 cases per 100,000²⁰.

The same year that the government of Canada made their TB elimination commitment, ITK

¹⁸ “Inuit Tuberculosis Elimination Framework” (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, n.d.), <https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/FINAL-ElectronicEN-Inuit-TB-Elimination-Framework.pdf>.

¹⁹ “Inuit Tuberculosis Elimination Framework.”

²⁰ “Inuit Tuberculosis Elimination Framework.”

released the *Inuit Tuberculosis Elimination Framework* (Appendix I) which is a document intended to guide the development of Inuit regional action plans to eliminate TB which are holistic, systematic and evidence-based. It highlights strategic actions and investments that we know would create access to high-quality TB care and address long-standing social and economic inequities that are linked to TB transmission and to the high prevalence of TB disease among Inuit.

The Framework identifies six priority areas for action and investment to guide TB elimination efforts that build upon the core TB action plan components proposed in the *Inuit-specific TB Strategy* (2013)²¹. These are:

Priority Actions:

- 1) Enhance TB Care and prevention Programming

Recommendation: *Strengthen regional health service delivery systems and build capacity for robust, consistent, evidence-based, Inuit informed and sustainable TB prevention and care interventions with an emphasis on public health.*

- 2) Reduce poverty, improve social determinants of Inuit health and create health equity

Recommendation: *Initiate system-wide and cross-government commitment, partnerships and action toward improving social determinants of Inuit health and health equity with particular focus on reducing poverty and the effects of social determinants of Inuit health and health inequities known or expected to contribute to TB.*

- 3) Empower and mobilize communities

Recommendation: *Implement community ownership and competency building initiatives to engage, educate and empower local people and structures.*

- 4) Strengthen TB care and prevention capacity

Recommendation: *Fortify health human resourcing and implement health care provider awareness and competency strengthening initiatives to ensure culturally and equity-sensitive care and facilitate timely detection and treatment of active TB and latent TB infection (LTBI).*

- 5) Develop and implement Inuit-specific solutions

Recommendation: *Facilitate Inuit-specific TB surveillance and research to inform development of evidence-based, equity-oriented and Inuit-informed approaches to achieving and sustaining TB elimination.*

²¹ "Inuit-Specific Tuberculosis (TB) Strategy" (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2013), <https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/20130503-EN-FINAL-Inuit-TB-Strategy.pdf>.

6) Ensure accountability for TB elimination

Recommendation: *Implement monitoring and evaluation strategies and systems.*

In order to advance these priority areas, coordinated approaches are needed within each Inuit regional TB action plan, that are founded on partnership and collaboration, given the interrelated, interdependent nature of the priority areas and the number of stakeholders and partners involved⁹.

Next steps for collaboration: The Development of TB Regional Action Plans

Through the guidance of the *Inuit Tuberculosis Elimination Framework*, each Inuit region has developed and begun implementing a TB elimination action plan specific to the epidemiology of disease and needs of their region. These plans are crucial as they provide a roadmap for what actions and resources are needed to eliminate TB within each region.

The next steps towards advancing SDG #4 at ITK, would be to ensure access to funding for ITK and Inuit regions beyond 2023, specifically for the tuberculosis file. This secured funding will allow ITK to continue to coordinate the implementation of each of the four regional action plans to meet the 2030 TB elimination goal.

SDG 4: Quality of Education

The impacts of colonization on the educational systems in Canada, have led many Inuit to distrust educational institutions. In addition, Canada's efforts in imposing residential schools has resulted in many negative social and health outcomes for Inuit such as loss of culture, intergenerational trauma, lower levels of standardized education attainment and literacy²².

ITK has been advocating for many years on the effects of these inequalities and the barriers Inuit face in accessing quality education and post-secondary opportunities. This is why the education file at ITK greatly correlates with SDG 4: Quality of Education. Specifically, the education file at ITK touches on SDG indicators: 4.3 (ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including University), 4.5 (ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable,

²² "Inuit Post-Secondary Education Strategy: Raising Education Attainment Rates" (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, June 2020), https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ipse-strategy_draft_english.pdf.

including persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations), 4.6 (ensure all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy) and 4.c (substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers).

ITK is aware of these struggles within our Inuit communities and so far, ITK has released two education-related strategies: *The National Strategy on Inuit Education* (Appendix I) and the *Inuit Nunangat Post-Secondary Education Strategy* (Appendix I). These strategies are aimed to help guide change in approaches to contemporary education and to highlight the importance of language, culture and additional supports, in order to break down the barriers and improve educational outcomes for Inuit.

The National Strategy on Inuit Education (NSIE)

In 2011, ITK released the *National Strategy on Inuit Education*, which was the first-ever national strategy focused on improving outcomes in Inuit education (Appendix I). Within the strategy there are 10 core investments that have been identified. The investments listed in the following table are needed in order to improve Inuit educational attainment.

Table 3: NSIE Recommended Investments

10 Core Investments to Improve Outcomes in Inuit Education	
1	Mobilizing parents
2	Developing leaders in Inuit education
3	Increasing the number of bilingual educators and programs
4	Investing in the early years
5	Strengthening Kindergarten to Grade 12 by investing in Inuit-centered curriculum and language resources
6	Improving services to students who require additional support
7	Increasing success in post-secondary education
8	Establishing a University in Inuit Nunangat
9	Establishing a standardized Inuit language writing system
10	Measuring and assessing success

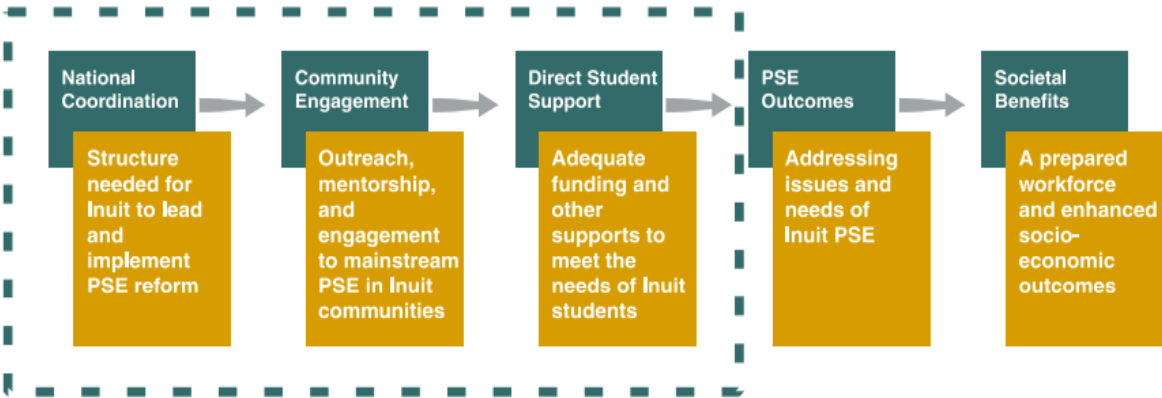
This strategy provides practical actions that need to be taken in order to reshape the educational system so that more Inuit are inspired to stay in school longer and advance the process of restoring confidence lost during the residential school experience.

The Inuit Nunangat Post-Secondary Education Strategy (INPES)

In June 2020, ITK released the *Inuit Nunangat Post-Secondary Education Strategy* (Appendix I). This strategy focuses on one of the core investments identified in *National Strategy on Inuit Education*, (core investment 7: Increasing success in post-secondary education.)

The strategy highlights the need to increase Inuit post-secondary education attainment and overcome the many intersectional barriers that Inuit face when trying to pursue further education. The strategy offers concrete actions and objectives to attain this goal which can be seen in the table below.

Figure 2 - Raising Education Attainment Rates for Inuit PSE – Strategy Overview



In essence, if we work towards closing the gap between Inuit post-secondary educational attainment and their non-Indigenous counterparts, not only would we be helping fight inequity and the negative effects of colonialism, in the long run, we would also advance Canada’s socio-economic outcomes.

Next Steps and Opportunities for Collaboration: Development of an Inuit Nunangat University

Through the recommendation of the *National Strategy on Inuit Education* (Core Investment 8), ITK is undergoing the strategic planning for a new Inuit Nunangat University (INU). The vision for this institution of higher learning, located in Inuit Nunangat, is that it will foster a more robust civil society and space for critical development and inquiry, expand post-secondary opportunities relevant to Inuit, and become an economic and cultural engine for Inuit communities currently facing a variety of pressures. As the ITK Inuit Nunangat University

Advisory Group currently designs the governance and funding models for the university, INU will require sustainable financing to realize its strategic mission and goals.

SDG 5 and 10: Gender Equality and Reducing Inequity

Historic and ongoing systemic discrimination, has resulted in many Inuit communities facing significantly greater challenges than other Canadians in many areas of social and economic life, including education, health, poverty, and housing²³. These challenges faced by Inuit communities have also significantly contributed to the rise of many missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls (MMIWG) and non-binary people.

ITK recognizes the ongoing crisis with MMIWG and non-binary people, and the inequity gaps that exist within Inuit Nunangat. ITK has responded to this crisis, by collaborating with Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada on the co-developing of the *National Inuit Action Plan on Missing and Murdered Inuit Women and Girls (MMIWG) and 2SLGBTQIA+ people* (Appendix I). This Action Plan falls in line with the SDG 5, specifically, SDG indicator: 5.2 (Eliminating gender-based violence), 5.5 (increasing gender equality in leadership roles), and 5.c (adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality).

In addition, ITK works towards reducing inequities experienced by Inuit children and families by collaborating with the Government of Canada to develop and implement the *Inuit Child First Initiative*, which aligns with SDG 10, specifically, SDG indicator: 10.3 (Ensure equal opportunities and reduce inequalities). This initiative ensures that “Inuit children have access to the essential government- funded health, social and educational products, services and supports they need, when they need them.”²⁴

In order for the government to advance SDG 5 & 10, it is essential to work with Inuit and follow through on the recommendations set forth in the *National Inuit Action Plan on MMIWG and 2SLGBTQIAA+* and the *Inuit CFI*. These recommendations and initiatives are summarized in

²³ “National Inuit Action Plan on Missing and Murdered Inuit Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ People” (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, n.d.), <https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/20210602-mmiwg-inuit-action-plan-full-EN.pdf>.

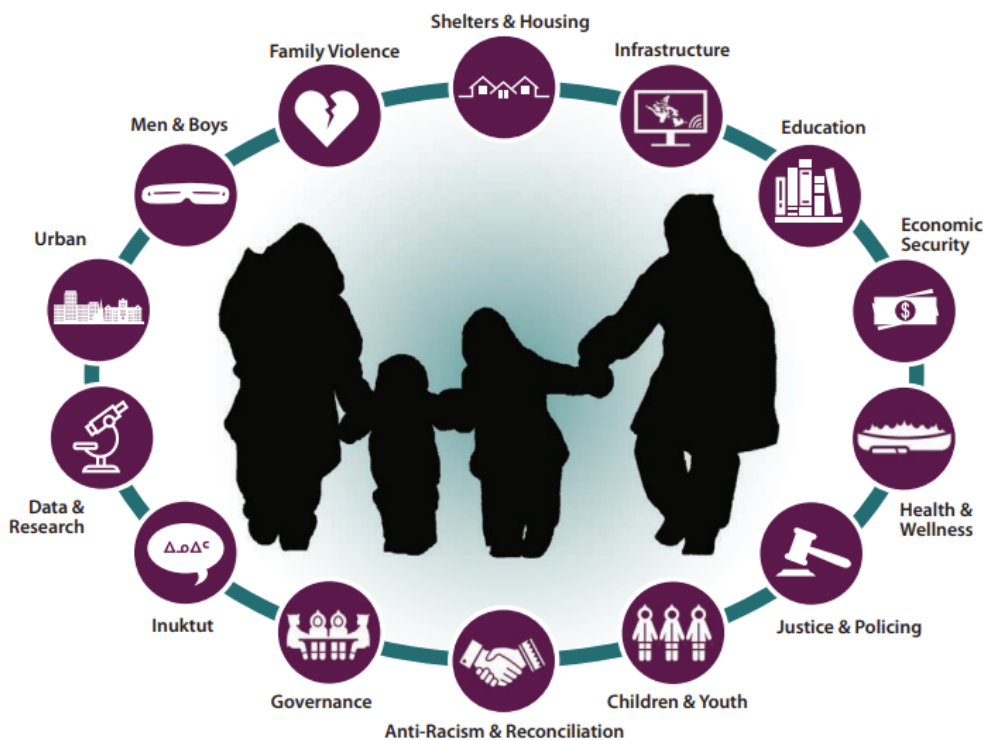
²⁴ Government of Canada; Indigenous Services, “Supporting Inuit Children,” organizational description, September 7, 2018, <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1536348095773/1536348148664>.

the sections below.

The National Inuit Action Plan on Missing and Murdered Inuit Women, Girls (MMIWG), and 2SLGBTQIA+ People

In July 2021, in collaboration with Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, *the National Inuit Action Plan on Missing and Murdered Inuit Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ People* (Appendix I) was released. This action plan takes a holistic approach to addressing the ways historical and continuing systemic, economic, and social discrimination have contributed to the high prevalence of violence experience by many Inuit women, girls and gender diverse people. This Action Plan also provides guidance on how to address these inequalities through concrete, timely and measurable positive changes that ensure Inuit women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people achieve substantive equality.

Figure 3: The 14 themes identified by the Inuit working group to guide the development of the National Inuit Action Plan



The action plan items are summarized below:

Table 4: Key Action Items from the National Inuit Action Plan on MMIWG & 2SLGBTQQIA+

	Themes	How these items will guide the development of the Inuit Action Plan
1	Shelters & Housing	Securing adequate shelters and housing for Inuit are pivotal for preventing violence against Inuit women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.
2	Infrastructure	Closing the profound infrastructure gap between Inuit Nunangat and the rest of Canada is necessary to address underlying factors contributing to violence against Inuit women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, as well as to enable Inuit women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people to access all public services irrespective of where we live.
3	Education	Improving access to Inuit early learning and child care programs as well as improving educational attainment among Inuit are necessary for more families to achieve health and prosperity.
4	Economic Security	Too often, Inuit women, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and their children who are experiencing violence are unable to flee dangerous situations because they lack financial security and have nowhere safe to go.
5	Health & Wellness	The limited availability of basic health and wellness services in Inuit Nunangat makes it difficult to address the root causes of violent behaviour and break cycles of violence.
6	Justice & policing	Many Inuit women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people face insurmountable barriers to getting the help they need (for example, unavailability of Inuktitut interpretation, systemic racism and discrimination).
7	Children & Youth	Protecting and supporting Inuit children and youth are the most effective means for breaking intergenerational cycles of violence.
8	Anti-Racism & Reconciliation	Racist attitudes and beliefs continue to influence government policies and priorities in relation to Inuit and impact the availability and quality of community infrastructure and service delivery.

9	Governance	Existing governance structures and mechanisms in some cases have contributed to conditions that create risk for violence while others are not utilized effectively and do not serve their intended purpose.
10	Inuktitut	Despite these linguistic realities, police services are provided almost exclusively in either English or French, foreclosing access to justice for many Inuit women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.
11	Data & Research	The limited availability of data and information about factors linked to violence and its prevention is a barrier to supporting more effective solutions for preventing violence as well as monitoring the effectiveness of prevention measures.
12	Urban	Inuit women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people who relocate from Inuit communities to urban communities can face distinct challenges, including navigating unfamiliar services or systems.
13	Men & Boys	Colonization is oppressive and paternalistic to all Inuit; it interferes with, disrupts and fragments families and communities, and has had a particularly destructive impact on gender roles.
14	Family Violence	Too often legislation, policies and procedures intended to guide frontline interventions and responses to family violence and abuse as well as help protect Inuit women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people fail to do so.

By working with regions towards implementing the actions called for in the *National Inuit Action Plan on MMIWG and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People*, the Government of Canada can work towards achieving its commitment under SDG 5, in Inuit Nunangat.

The Inuit Child First Initiative (Inuit CFI)

Supporting children plays a significant role in implementing many of the SDGs. In particular, achieving the goal of gender equality requires strong support and protection for children. When these supports are lacking, women can be restricted from fully participating in civic and economic life. The young median age of Inuit in Canada means support and protection for children can have an even greater impact.

The *Inuit Child First Initiative* (CFI) was created as an interim measure, introduced by the government of Canada in 2018, to ensure that Inuit children would have access to the same products and services under Jordan's Principle²⁵. Jordan's Principle was named in memory of Jordan River Anderson, a First Nations child from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba. This Principle is a legal rule that comes with a legal requirement for the Government of Canada to provide access to services for First Nations children in need. Since 2018, ITK and the Government of Canada have been working closely together to co-develop the Inuit CFI which is a long-term, Inuit-specific equivalent to Jordan's Principle that applies substantive equality to requests in order to ensure that Inuit children receive culturally appropriate support and care without administrative delay.

In order to meet its commitments under SDG 5 and 10, the Government of Canada must ensure that Inuit children are protected and supported by Inuit-specific programs and services in ways that are long-term and sustainable.

Next Steps and Opportunities for Collaboration: Implementing the National Inuit Action Plan on MMIWG and 2SLGBTQIA+ People

Inuit are subject to lower standards on almost every metric of sustainable development compared to non-Indigenous counterparts. In particular, Inuit women are subject to some of the harshest systemic inequalities. Improving gender equality and reducing inequity under SDGs 5 and 10 will require a major shift in how Inuit women's issues are being addressed by governments within Canada.

ITK, through research, programming, and advocacy, is working to implement the calls to actions detailed in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report, MMIWG Calls to Justice, and ITK's and Pauktuutit's *National Action Plan on MMIWG and 2SLGBTQIAA+ People*. These documents have thoroughly outlined the work that needs to be done through collaboration between ITK and Canadian governments in order to achieve Canada's commitments under the SDGs.

²⁵ Government of Canada; Indigenous Services.

SDG 8 and 12: Economic Growth and Responsible Consumption and Production

Inuit experience major economic inequity when compared to other Canadians. For example, the median income for Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat in 2018 was \$23,485 (before tax) while for non-Indigenous people living in Inuit Nunangat that number was \$92,0111 (before tax)²⁶. Working to meet SDG 8 means closing this huge gap in income.

In the past 2 years, efforts made by the government during the COVID-19 pandemic, helped temporarily shrink this economic gap. During the pandemic, COVID relief programs were issued to Inuit organizations and affiliated organizations to support Inuit communities in the form of food hamper distribution, bonus payments to Elders and additional support for communities, families and hunters to harvest from the land, among others. The Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) has also helped level the economic gap between Inuit Nunangat and the rest of Canada. However, due to the short-term duration of such programs and economic support, it was not possible to measure the socio-economic long-term outcomes of such programming.

Another important piece to note, related to Inuit economic development opportunities, is the recognition that wage labour is not the only form of valuable work. Traditional harvesting activities frequently do not include a financial component while still providing significant benefits to people and communities. Strategies that address economic development and poverty reduction in Inuit Nunangat need to include the traditional economy as it is an important part of the lives of many Inuit. An example of government support with the traditional economy is in the *Nunavut Harvester Support Program (2020)*, or the *Arctic Cooperatives Hunters sponsorship*. Programs like this are a step in the right direction as they help support the traditional economy, and provide opportunities for Inuit to prosper.

Currently, the primary opportunity Inuit have had to engage with the global economic system in recent decades has been either through the public service or through extractive industries. In particular, many economic development strategies for Inuit Nunangat focus on mining and resource extraction through investment from major multinational corporations. While mining has significant potential to build economies in Inuit Nunangat, it is crucial that this process be led by and benefit community members. Today, these projects are often led by southern workers, with

²⁶ "Inuit Statistical Profile 2018."

Inuit undertaking lower-paid supporting roles. This needs to change as money generated from such projects often leaves communities. In addition, more than half of Inuit women who are working in the extraction industry experience sexual harassment on the job²⁷. This demonstrates that the economic benefits of such extraction operations, even among Inuit workers, are not shared equally.

Another issue with extraction operations is the concern of environmental protection and protection of traditional land-based activities. Addressing these concerns is crucial to the success of any development project.

Economic Development and Climate Change

In recent decades, patterns of consumption and production across the globe have impacted Inuit Nunangat directly through climate change, and through the spread of pollutants that make their way to the Arctic. Despite the relative lack of a local industrial economy, Inuit Nunangat is still suffering major environmental consequences of industrial capitalism. Traditional harvesting activities, tourism, and fishing industries are all already being impacted by the changing climate. Meeting SDG 12 will mean reducing the negative externalities of the global economy on Inuit Nunangat.

The Northern Contaminants Program

To promote responsible production and consumption, SDG 12, *the Northern Contaminants Program* (NCP) was established in 1991. This program aims to track pollutants originating outside of the Arctic. These chemicals have, as a result of the consumption and production patterns of industrial capitalism, impacted the health of Inuit and the ecosystems of Inuit Nunangat. The NCP advocates for stronger regulations to promote responsible consumption and production patterns globally and in the rest of Canada. Strengthening the partnership between Inuit and the Government of Canada through the NCP aligns with Canada's obligations under Sustainable Development Goal 12.

Next Steps and Opportunities for Collaboration: Advancing Inuit Economic Opportunities in

²⁷ "Addressing Inuit Women's Economic Security and Prosperity in the Resource Extraction Industry" (Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, March 30, 2021), https://pauktuutit.ca/wp-content/uploads/Addressing-Inuit-Womens-Economic-Security-Prosperity_Mar302021.pdf.

Inuit Nunangat

SDG 8 is deeply connected to many other aspects of sustainable development explored in this report. Lack of access to economic opportunities impacts poverty and food insecurity, which in turn impacts health and wellbeing. An example noted during this process is that Inuit have struggled to access employment opportunities due to a lack of formal western education, which in turn is challenging to access due to the impacts of poverty, food insecurity, internet access, and other vulnerabilities.

In order to implement SDG 8 and 12, the Government of Canada must recognize the holistic nature of sustainable development. Increasing access to jobs, at multiple levels, in the resource industry may make a difference in terms of income inequity, but major sustained investment in education, poverty reduction, health, food security, and other social determinants of health will be needed to achieve lasting and sustainable development for Inuit in Inuit Nunangat.

SDG 9 and 11: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, and Sustainable Cities and Communities

For over the last 60 years, the lack of access to appropriate and affordable housing in Inuit Nunangat has been and still continues to be a national crisis. In 2016, it has been estimated that over half (51.7%) of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat lived in crowded housing compared to 8.5% percent of non-Indigenous Canadians.²⁸ In addition, more than 70 per cent of the communities in Inuit Nunangat do not have a safe shelter for women and children experiencing family violence and where they do exist, they are over-burdened.²⁹ This lack of appropriate and affordable housing in Inuit Nunangat, negatively impacts physical and mental health, safety, educational attainment and employment.

In response to this crisis, in 2019, ITK released an *Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy* (INHS) (Appendix I), and in late 2022 to early 2023, ITK will release an *Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy Implementation plan* (INHSIP). These documents provide a framework for federal, provincial and territorial governments, and Inuit regions, to work together to tackle the Inuit

²⁸ “Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy” (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2019), <https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/2019-Inuit-Nunangat-Housing-Strategy-English.pdf>.

²⁹ “Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy.”

Nunangat housing crisis.

On a global scale, the work done at ITK related to housing strongly correlates with the numerous targets in SDG9, Industry, Innovation and infrastructure, and SDG 11, Sustainable Cities and Communities. These connections to advance SDG 9 and 11 can be further seen in the strategy actions that are embedded in the *Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy and Implementation Plan*.

Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy (INHS)

The Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy (INHS) (Appendix I), was co-developed with Inuit partners, including ITK, and endorsed by Inuit leaders and Government of Canada (GoC) Ministers at the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee on April 2019. The strategy sets out a common vision and direction to improve housing outcomes in Inuit Nunangat to be in line with rest of Canada. The strategy builds on recent, direct federal investments which recognize the need for significant recourses in the short to medium term and the direct role of Inuit in managing housing in Inuit communities.

Embedded in this strategy are six key strategy actions (Table 5) that guide the work that is needed to improve housing outcomes in Inuit Nunangat.

Table 5: Strategy Actions from INHS

	Strategy Actions
1.	Assess the effectiveness of recent investments in housing in Inuit Nunangat
2.	Develop a long-term plan for direct federal housing investments in Inuit Nunangat
3.	Enhance capacity
4.	Reduce overcrowding & reliance on social housing while increasing affordable housing options & Improving housing quality
5.	Enhance research, innovation, and statistics
6.	Enhance intergovernmental collaboration

This Strategy sets out a common vision and direction to improve housing on a long-term and

enduring basis in Inuit Nunangat. To actualize this vision and deliver results for Inuit, an Inuit Nunangat implementation plan was developed.

Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy Implementation Plan (INHSIP)

The *Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy Implementation Plan* (INHSIP) is a document that was co-developed by Inuit and federal partners through the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee. It highlights key steps, outputs, roles and responsibilities, costs and timeframes required to achieve the desired outputs for the Strategy actions set forth in the INHS. The Implementation Plan is still under development, and it is anticipated to be released in late 2022 or early 2023.

The Implementation plan will provide a framework responding to the six actions identified in the INHS. The Implementation plan will include such tasks as: plans for the Inuit regions and federal government to co-develop existing and new programs across the housing continuum, a plan to establish a funding mechanism to allow Inuit land claims organizations direct funding to housing dollars within their respective regions, and a series of regional needs assessments. The progress of these actions will be monitored using a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework.

Next Steps and Opportunities for Collaboration: Advancing the Inuit Nunangat Housing Implementation Plan

While federal Inuit-specific housing investments have been made totaling over \$1.3 billion since 2016, and these investments have played a major role in advancing Inuit self-determination, these investments are just over one third of what Inuit believe would be required to achieve regionally-determined housing objectives to reduce core housing need over the next ten years. Therefore, if we want to continue to advance SDG 9 and 11, and promote sustainable communities, there needs to be an increased investment directed at improving the quality and availability of housing in Inuit Nunangat. Inuit also require new and improved programs aimed at expanding housing options in Inuit communities to increase opportunities for affordable rentals and homeownership and to improve access to emergency shelters and transitional housing.

While ITK recognizes the success of federal investments that were committed towards housing in Inuit Nunangat, there is still an urgent need to continue to advance the actions outlined in the INHS and INHSIP to close the gap and to align Inuit housing outcomes with the rest of Canada.

More funding will be needed to support the advancement of the implementation plan and for further Inuit housing advocacy as outlined in the upcoming Implementation plan.

SDG 6, 7, 13, 14 and 15: Climate Action and Environmental Issues

Inuit have been living in relationship with the land for thousands of years, and have learned to harvest and thrive in the Inuit Nunangat ecosystem. The environmental damage caused by climate change mirrors other major changes Inuit have experienced over the last century, from access to new science and technologies to the impacts of colonialism and residential schools.

Today, all aspects of life in Inuit Nunangat remain connected to the environment. It is impossible to address the SDGs without addressing the ways that the environment impacts Inuit health, culture, livelihoods, and economies.

Environmental sustainability is a major focus of the SDGs, especially in contrast with their predecessor, the *Millennium Development Goals*. The environment is the primary focus of five SDGs, specifically, goal 6 (Clear water and sanitation), 7 (Affordable and clean energy), 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life below water), and 15 (Life on Land). To address these important goals, ITK developed the *National Inuit Climate Change Strategy* (NICCS) (Appendix I), which guides our efforts to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change through policy actions and initiatives. ITK also works to address issues related to clean water and sanitation in Inuit Nunangat, as well as affordable and clean energy. ITK's efforts to address climate change are addressed in further detail in the sections below.

The National Inuit Climate Change Strategy (NICCS)

Climate change is a pressing issue and it has already brought marked changes to the Inuit way of life and the ecosystems that sustain communities.³⁰ In response to the growing concerns of climate change in Inuit Nunangat, ITK released the *National Inuit Climate Change Strategy* (NICCS) (Appendix I) in 2019 which outlines the needs of Inuit relating to the climate impacts and offers ways to actively shape climate policies and actions so that they are inclusive and effective for Inuit.

³⁰ "National Inuit Climate Change Strategy" (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2019), https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/ITK_Climate-Change-Strategy_English.pdf.

Embedded within the NICCS are five priority areas which aim to address the impacts of climate change in Inuit Nunangat. These priority areas are listed in Table 6.

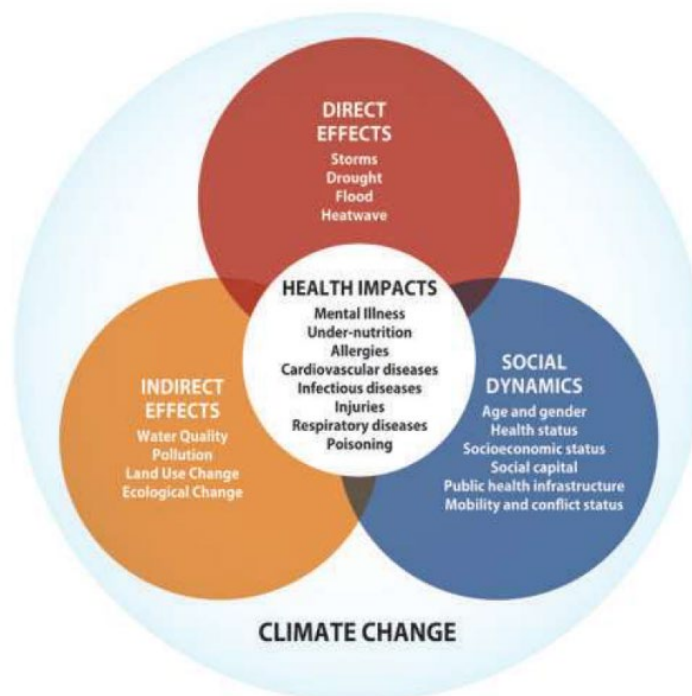
Table 6: Strategy Actions from NICCS

	Strategy Actions
1.	Advance Inuit capacity and knowledge in climate decision-making
2.	Improve Inuit and environmental health and wellness outcomes through integrated Inuit health, education and climate policies and initiatives
3.	Reduce the climate vulnerability of Inuit and market food systems
4.	Close the infrastructure gap in Inuit Nunangat
5.	Support regional and community-driven energy solutions leading to Inuit energy independence

Many of these strategy actions are interconnected with a series of topics, specifically between the climate, the environment, health and food security. The interconnectedness of these strategy actions demonstrate why it is important to view the NICCS holistically, for our policies to be effective. The multiple factors that impact climate change can be seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Factors Impacting Climate Change from NICCS

The NICCS recognizes the urgency of taking action to ensure Inuit communities can adapt and strengthen their resilience to current and emerging impacts of climate change. The NICCS action plan, provides a path forward to slow down climate change, promote resiliency and ultimately, secure a better future for our communities.



Clean Water and Sanitation

In addition to the growing impacts of climate change, access to water and sanitation services in Inuit Nunangat is relatively lacking in comparison to the rest of Canada, as

outlined in ITK's Autumn 2020 Research Briefing: *Access to Drinking Water in Inuit Nunangat*.³¹

Aging infrastructure and lack of investment in water systems has resulted in frequent boil water advisories across Inuit Nunangat. Lack of access to clean water and sanitation increases negative risks for health impacts of waterborne disease or otherwise contaminated water. Climate change is contributing to the issue as Inuit Nunangat grows warmer and weather patterns shift, traditional sources of fresh water will be put at risk of contamination or overuse.

In 2021, ITK and *Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada* (ICC) made a joint submission to the UN highlighting the poor state of water infrastructure in Inuit Nunangat and calling for major new investments in water infrastructure. Only by following the recommendations laid out in the joint submission will Canada be able to achieve its obligations under the SDGs.

Affordable and Clean Energy

Within the NICCS, Priority Area 5 addresses the need for regional and community-driven energy solutions leading to Inuit energy independence. Currently, the vast majority of energy production in Inuit Nunangat is generated with diesel powerplants. These powerplants are not only expensive to operate and reliant on imported diesel, but also contribute to local pollution and global climate change.³²

For Canada to meet its commitment under the SDGs 7, we need to address the NICCS priority area 5, by implementing strategic investment in renewal energy sources for Inuit Nunangat to transition to a low carbon and energy independent future.

Next Steps and Opportunities for Collaboration: Development of Coastal and Marine Management Policies

Inuit communities are bound by the inextricable links between our culture, way of life and the environment. Our rich culture, values and language have thrived because we have embraced our interconnectedness with the land, sea and ice that is our home.

Inuit know that the environment is interconnected with many spheres of daily life. As a result, the NICCS requires the need for a coordinated approach to tackle climate change. The *Inuit*

³¹ "Access to Drinking Water in Inuit Nunangat," ITK Quarterly Research Briefings (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, November 2020), https://itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ITK_Water_English_07.pdf.

³² "National Inuit Climate Change Strategy."

Nunangat Policy (Appendix I), released in the spring of 2022, provides the space to coordinate our efforts within Inuit Nunangat. Within the *Inuit Nunangat Policy*, the Government of Canada commits to effective partnership and collaboration with Inuit in the development and implementation of policies and programs that impact Inuit Nunangat.³³

One priority area where this could significantly enhance the commitments made under the SDGs involves coastal and marine management (SDG#14). Objective 7 of ITK's 2020-2023 Strategy and Action Plan calls for Inuit to be at the forefront of managing the waters and shipping lanes within Inuit Nunangat. Currently, there is limited collaboration between Inuit and the Federal Government on shipping and coastal management. Therefore, in order for Canada to meet its commitments under the SDGs, the NICCS action items must be advanced, and the economic uses of the marine and coastal areas of Inuit Nunangat must be balanced with environmental concerns in collaboration with Inuit.

Data Gaps and Challenges

It is clear that much remains to be done in order for Canada to achieve its commitments under the UN's SDGs. Three specific data gaps/challenges have been identified as follows:

- 1- Challenge of accessing data,
- 2- Lack of Inuit-specific commitments & Inuit-specific data indicators,
- 3- Funding challenges.

The following challenges are presented in the sections below and are followed by recommendations from *the National Inuit Strategy on Research* (Appendix I) and *Qanuippitaa? National Inuit Health Survey*. These data gaps/challenges clearly demonstrate the stark inequalities that exist between Inuit and the rest of Canada.

Challenge of Accessing Data

A common concern during discussions within ITK on implementing the SDGs is the inequity in the quantity and quality of data available on Inuit. Due to decades of research underfunding, as well as challenges relating to remoteness and low populations and the incongruence with

³³ Government of Canada; Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, "Inuit Nunangat Policy," policy, April 21, 2022, <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1650556354784/1650556491509>.

research and Inuit priorities, the data available on the SDG indicators for Inuit is often unavailable, outdated, or incomplete. In addition, the lack of distinctions-based data for provinces and territories results in relatively poor data for Inuit Nunangat communities. Therefore, in order to make effective progress on the SDGs, the mechanisms for tracking development indicators in Inuit Nunangat will need to be improved.

Lack of Inuit-Specific Commitments & Inuit-specific data indicators

In addition to the challenge of accessing Inuit-specific data, the SDGs lack Inuit-specific indicators and Inuit-specific commitments. While ITK recognizes and welcomes the inclusion of one Inuit-specific indicator (Tuberculosis Prevalence in Inuit Nunangat) in the Canadian Indicator Framework (CFI)³⁴, it has been noted throughout our consultations, that Inuit face many more challenges that could just as easily be included, for example, the identification of Inuit in need of housing in Inuit Nunangat, or the number of Inuit living below the poverty line.

Furthermore, during our internal ITK consultations, it has been highlighted, that many global indicators are of little relevance in an Inuit Nunangat context, as many of these indicators focus on outcomes in developing countries. For example, the UN indicator: “proportion of people living on less than \$1.90 per day” is of little relevance to Inuit with minimal access to Canadian social safety net resources.³⁵ In addition, Canada’s indicator “poverty measured by Canada’s official poverty line” doesn’t account for the high cost of living in Inuit Nunangat and other challenges to accessing resources faced by Inuit.

In order to properly implement the SDGs, Canada must understand the unique challenges Inuit face and take a distinctions-based approach to tracking success while supporting Inuit self-determination.

Funding Challenges

The unique political landscape of Inuit Nunangat poses some challenges for funding initiatives. As Inuit Nunangat is comprised of four individual Inuit land claims regions, the resulting differences in jurisdiction add barriers for funding streams that target Inuit. Therefore, there is a

³⁴ Statistics Canada Government of Canada, “The Canadian Indicator Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals,” June 22, 2021, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-26-0004/112600042021001-eng.htm>.

³⁵ “Sustainable Development Goals.”

need to include a distinctions-based, Inuit Nunangat Policy approach to federal funding in order to overcome this barrier.

On top of jurisdictional challenges, commitments to regions are not always backed by the funding necessary to realize the goals being set out. It is strongly recommended that Canada's commitment to the SDGs must be realized through stable and sustained investment, aimed at addressing disparities between Inuit Nunangat and the rest of Canada, and targeted to improving the health, well-being and sustainability of our communities.

Recommendations from the National Inuit Strategy on Research (NISR)

The *National Inuit Strategy on Research* (NISR) (Appendix I), published in 2018, highlighted two priority areas particularly relevant to the SDGs: to align funding with Inuit research priorities, and to ensure Inuit access, ownership, and control over data and information. When these two NISR priority areas are achieved, Inuit will have access and control of the information necessary to make the best decisions and create the best programs for addressing the SDGs.

Some improvements have been made with regards to Inuit-led research initiatives. In the 2021 federal budget, the Government of Canada allocated \$4 million over three years for the creation of a distinctions-based *Inuit Data Strategy* and to support Inuit baseline data capacity. This strategy will improve data access and usage at the regional level, leading to better decisions and policies for sustainable development.

Currently, ITK and regional Inuit organizations are conducting a data needs assessment, and doing consultations on building the *Inuit Data Strategy*. This strategy will require collaboration and support from all levels of government within Canada, as well as collaboration between Inuit organizations and the research community.

Recommendations from the Qanuippitaa? National Inuit Health Survey (QNIHS)

A significant example of Inuit-led research can be seen in the work of *The Qanuippitaa? National Inuit Health Survey* (QNIHS). The QNIHS is an ongoing Inuit-owned and Inuit-determined survey of Inuit health and well-being. This project is intended to provide Inuit-specific data relating to health and well-being of Inuit in all regions.

The goal of the QNIHS is to gather data, share findings, and raise awareness of the issues impacting Inuit health. This project will be a crucial resource for any project working to implement SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being, as well as many of the other related goals.

Moving forward, ITK will continue to support projects like QNIHS that are Inuit-led in gathering data about Inuit. Support from the Government of Canada in the form of longer term or permanent funding would enable ITK and regional governments to gather more and better data around the SDGs.

Next Steps and Opportunities for Collaboration: Advancing the NISR

In order to address these data gaps and challenges in the SDGs, more Inuit-specific data must be collected and Inuit-specific commitments need to be provided with adequate and stable funding. To move forward, Inuit will need to have access to the best data for tracking and implementing the SDGs and the Government of Canada will have to make a stronger effort towards implementing the NISR.³⁶

ITK has submitted a budget request a number of times in recent years requesting funding to implement the NISR priorities but as of 2022, NISR implementation remains unfunded. ITK recommends that the NISR implementation plan funding be revisited in order to overcome the barriers identified and to continue to advance the SDGs.

Conclusion: Partnering for the Goals

The UN's SDGs set out global ambitions to achieve a more sustainable future. However, to ensure successful implementation of these goals, it is important to adapt these goals to ensure their effective utility across marginalized sectors of Canadian society.

This report provides a path forward on ways to advance the SDGs, by demonstrating links with current existing files/projects, and by recommending select areas of further collaboration. To further demonstrate these links, Table 7 illustrates how interconnected the SDGs are with Inuit

³⁶ "National Inuit Strategy on Research" (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, n.d.), <https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ITK-National-Inuit-Strategy-on-Research.pdf>.

values and ITK’s vision for the future.

Table 7: Connections between ITK’s 2020-2023 Strategy and the SDGs

ITK’s 2020-2023 Strategy and Action Plan	United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals:
Objective 1: Take action to reduce poverty among Inuit.	#1: No Poverty #2: Zero Hunger #4: Quality Education #8: Decent Work and Economic Growth #10: Reduced Inequity #12: Responsible Consumption and Production
Objective 2: Work to close the Inuit Nunangat infrastructure gap	#3: Good Health and Well-being #4: Quality Education #6: Clean Water and Sanitation #7: Affordable and Clean Energy #9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure #11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
Objective 3: Advance Inuit-specific health and social development policies, programs, and initiatives	#3: Good Health and Well-being #5: Gender Equality #8: Decent Work and Economic Growth #10: Reduced Inequity
Objective 4: Support Inuktitut protection, revitalization, maintenance, and promotion	#4: Quality Education #10: Reduced Inequity #16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
Objective 5: Facilitate climate response and adaptation measures	#6: Clean Water and Sanitation #7: Affordable and Clean Energy #13: Climate Action #14: Life Below Water #15: Life on Land
Objective 6: Empower Inuit through research and data and information access, ownership and dissemination.	#9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure #17: Partnerships for the Goals

<p>Objective 7: Support Inuit Nunangat coastal management and marine infrastructure development.</p>	<p>#9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure #13: Climate Action #14: Life Below Water</p>
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As demonstrated above, every sustainable development goal contributes to at least one of ITK’s 7 objective for the 2020-2023 period. By meeting the commitments under ITK’s objectives, and following the path set forward in our strategies/action plans, the Government of Canada will be able to make significant progress on the SDGs.

Next Steps and Opportunities for Collaboration: Moving Forward

Inuit Nunangat remains one of the most underdeveloped regions in Canada, and Inuit as a group continue to score poorly on most measures of sustainable development. For this reason, it is important to be more inclusive in the development and implementation of the SDGs, and to include more than one Inuit-specific indicator (TB elimination), to measure SDG progress in Canada.

Though certain improvements have been made in recent years, many policy decisions impacting Inuit are still made without collaboration and cooperation with Inuit governance structures. This report provides an opportunity for ITK and the Canadian government to collaborate on aligning priorities and address these inequities. By following the strategy recommendations proposed throughout this paper, advancing the implementation plans mentioned, and aligning program funding with Inuit priorities, we can address these inequities and pave a path forward for a more sustainable future.

All things considered, Inuit are a strong and resilient population, and we are entitled to the same standards of safety, health, education, social and cultural security enjoyed by all Canadians. Meeting the commitments made under the SDGs means supporting Inuit in achieving development standards equal to the rest of Canadians. Therefore, any programs, strategies, or funding designed to implement the SDGs within Canada must be developed and implemented in collaboration with Inuit in order to be successful.

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Appendix I: ITK Strategies

Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy (2021)

https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ITK_Inuit-Nunangat-Food-Security-Strategy_English.pdf

Inuit Tuberculosis Elimination Framework (2018)

<https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/FINAL-ElectronicEN-Inuit-TB-Elimination-Framework.pdf>

National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy (2016)

<https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/ITK-National-Inuit-Suicide-Prevention-Strategy-2016.pdf>

First Canadians, Canadians First: National Strategy on Inuit Education (2011)

<https://itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/National-Strategy-on-Inuit-Education-2011.pdf>

Inuit Post-Secondary Education Strategy (2020)

https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ipse-strategy_draft_english.pdf

National Inuit Action Plan on Missing and Murdered Inuit Women, Girls, and @SLGBTQQIA+ People (2021)

<https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/20210602-mmiwg-inuit-action-plan-full-EN.pdf>

Inuit Nunangat Housing Strategy (2019)

<https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/2019-Inuit-Nunangat-Housing-Strategy-English.pdf>

National Inuit Climate Change Strategy (2019)

https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/ITK_Climate-Change-Strategy_English.pdf

Inuit Nunangat Policy (2022)

<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1650556354784/1650556491509>

National Inuit Strategy on Research (2018)

https://www.itk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ITK_NISR-Report_English_low_res.pdf



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