Statement

Premier marks National Forgiveness Summit

June 11, 2010
IQALUIT, Nunavut

Premier Eva Aariak today released the following statement:

"This weekend thousands of Aboriginal people will gather in Ottawa to mark the anniversary of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's 2008 apology to those affected by the legacy of residential school. I would like to mark this special day by supporting all Nunavummiut who have decided to move towards forgiveness and healing.

Moving forward gives us the opportunity to look through our lives and experiences, and choose to keep those experiences that have helped us. Moving forward also gives us the chance to set down those experiences that we do not want in our future. Like our ancestors before us we can strive to stop carrying the burdens of our past, and move forward with self-determination.

A few weeks ago, I was privileged to share these words with the community of Chesterfield Inlet as they celebrated their hamlet anniversary with the theme of "Stepping Forward." This event was a great example of our territory's willingness to embrace our culture, language, and past, in order to build a stronger future.

Our government recently passed *Bill 15 Legal Treatment of Apologies Act*. The purpose of this bill is to facilitate apologies and the more respectful resolution of disputes, and will help to remove several risks that impede efforts to resolve a dispute through respectful dialogue and cooperation.

While the federal apology was crucial, it is only the beginning. As we move towards forgiveness, we ask the federal government to actively participate in the process of reconciliation, and support our efforts with the programs and services to ensure continued healing in all of our communities."

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Emily Woods
Press Secretary, Office of the Premier
Government of Nunavut
☎(867) 975-5059
Email: ewoods@gov.nu.ca

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