



Northern Development Ministers Discuss the North's potential as a "Land of Opportunities"

Iqaluit, Nunavut (September 13, 2016) – Ministers representing Canada's northern jurisdictions gathered this week in Iqaluit, Nunavut for the Northern Development Ministers Forum (NDMF).

The 2016 NDMF was hosted by the Honourable Monica Eil-Kanayuk, Nunavut's Deputy Premier and Minister of the Department of Economic Development and Transportation. This year's theme was The North: Land of Opportunities.

"Development in the North will create many opportunities and advantages," said Minister Eil-Kanayuk. "We want responsible development of the North that benefits our residents. I look forward to continuing to work with our partners to advocate for increased infrastructure investment in the North."

Strong relationships and partnerships are essential for northern communities to address challenges and realize common goals. Experts on relationship building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments and partners shared best practices and opportunities for collaboration in the North. The forum's discussion was also guided by a best practices document outlining initiatives across Canada that focused on governance, building capacity, and economic development.

An expert panel addressed ministers on the topic of northern food security. Ministers also received a report regarding benefit agreements between northern communities and resource industries. The report provided insights into the keys to successful outcomes realized by signatories of resource benefit agreements.

Ministers' discussions on emerging northern priorities will set the stage for the 2017 NDMF in Québec. During the meeting ministers identified that senior officials will examine possible projects such as renewable energy for communities, Northern statistical data and labour force development and economic opportunities.

"We are delighted to be chairing the 2017 forum and welcoming Northern development ministers to Québec," said Luc Blanchette, Québec's Minister of Forests, Wildlife and Parks. The theme of the meeting will be "The Importance of Collaboration in Northern Development," which is the cornerstone of Plan Nord implementation.

The NDMF, established in 2001, provides federal, provincial and territorial ministers representing Canada's North with an opportunity to advance common interests and

raise awareness of northern issues and accomplishments. Information on the NDMF is available at www.focusnorth.ca.

Observations by Ministers

“This was a productive forum. We discussed ways of developing the North in a responsible fashion. Now, Nunavut looks toward moving discussion into action with the creation of roads linking our northern communities, marine facilities allowing better access to our fisheries and other resources, and improved airports to enhance our air transportation system.”

- Monica Ell-Kanayuk, Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Nunavut

“Québec has a vision of Northern development that brings together the economic, environmental and social aspects through the Plan Nord. This comprehensive, integrated and coherent approach is implemented jointly with representatives from the regions and Aboriginal nations concerned, and from the private sector. I am delighted to have attended the Forum in Iqaluit, with other Forum members, to share our respective experience and be inspired by best practices, so as to be better able to respond to Northern needs and situations.”

- Luc Blanchette, Minister of Forests, Wildlife and Parks, Québec

"It is imperative that all Canadians understand that the North is truly the Land of Opportunities. Tapping into the potential of Canada's North is essential to growing our economy. Working together with provincial, territorial and Indigenous partners, we are all committed to develop and implement the innovative ideas and policies that will benefit Northerners and all Canadians towards a sustainable and prosperous North."

- Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Canada

“The Northern Development Ministers Forum provides the opportunity to focus on northern development with a long-term collaborative plan. It is paramount that we work together on the aspirations of northern communities with a view to 20 to 25 years in the future. By looking ahead at the opportunities and challenges in our northern regions, we can help to ensure our immediate efforts will lead to successful partnerships, and improved social and economic development in the North.”

- Perry Trimper, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Newfoundland and Labrador

“The Northern Development Ministers Forum was an excellent opportunity to discuss the unique potential that exists in Canada's northern communities. The productive dialogue of our meetings is further evidence of the need for long-term, sustainable

economic opportunities for Canada's northern regions. Our government remains committed to long-term, successful northern development through strategic investments and partnerships and we will continue to pursue opportunities that bring us closer to achieving those goals."

- Eileen Clarke, Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations, Manitoba

"As highlighted in the theme of this year's forum, Canada's North is a land of opportunities. The collaboration and partnership between Canada's northern development ministers is one of our strongest assets in identifying, pursuing and capitalizing on these opportunities for the benefit of all Northerners. This forum was an excellent opportunity to focus on the governance, and to economic development approaches that will best guide our collective paths forward."

- Wally Schumann, Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Northwest Territories

"This Northern Development Ministers Forum was focused on the importance of building strategic relationships to advance Canada's northern regions. Through pro-active engagement and collaboration with rural and remote Indigenous communities, the northern regions will continue to grow and realize their full potential. Our government is committed to building lasting partnerships and working together with our northern colleagues to support sustainable economic and social development in the North."

- Richard Feehan, Minister of Indigenous Relations, Alberta

Media contact:

Matthew Illaszewicz
Manager, Communications
Department of Economic Development and Transportation
Government of Nunavut
867-975-7818
867-222-0122 (cell)
millaszewicz@gov.nu.ca