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UKIUMUTTUHAQTITJUT

ANNUAL REPORT

RAPPORT ANNUEL

2008/2009

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UQAUHINUT KAMISINAUP HAVAKVIA NUNAVUNMI

OFFICE OF THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER OF NUNAVUT

BUREAU DU COMMISSAIRE AUX LANGUES DU NUNAVUT

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Message from the Languages Commissioner

It gives me great pleasure to present the Annual Report of the Office of the Languages Commissioner for the year ending March 31st 2009.

I began my term as Languages Commissioner in January, following on from Eva Aariak who was Acting Languages Commissioner until assuming her duties as the new Nunavut Premier this past Fall. I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution my predecessor has made to the preservation of language rights and to the revitalization of the Inuit language over the years, in particular while serving as Nunavut's first Languages Commissioner. Her work while in office, along with the tireless efforts of many other advocates for language preservation and language rights both inside and outside of government, culminated not only with the Inuit Language Protection Act (ILPA) of 2008 but also with the Official Languages Act which we expect parliament to approve this year.

The legislation was an urgent priority for the Government of Nunavut—the results of the 2006 Census showed a 2-4% drop in the numbers claiming the Inuit language as their mother tongue, and in having the ability to speak it; even more disheartening was the 12% drop of those using the Inuit language in

the home since the census ten years earlier. We are not alone in experiencing language loss. The subject of language rights continue to haunt minority cultures around the world, which is why I have committed this office to fully meet the responsibilities of its mandate.

ILPA increases these responsibilities as of July 1, 2009. This office has, in addition to its day-to-day activities, been busy preparing for the greater role we will play in safeguarding the language rights of Nunavut's official language groups. We have submitted a business case for expansion that will require additional resources such as additional staff and office space; we have created a new logo (see below) to celebrate the new legislation, Nunavut's tenth anniversary and to honor our new mandate effective July 1, 2009; we have begun commissioning new information brochures for targeted readership groups, and we have begun looking at the development of a new website that will enable us to provide timely and interesting information as well as encourage user interaction.

In my short time in office, I have observed that while the majority of Nunavummiut are committed to the successful implementation of the Acts, there are some who may resist compliance due either to the added cost of doing



with experts expecting 90% of the world's approximately 7,000 languages to become extinct in the next 100 years, we cannot afford to be complacent. We are at the start of the journey, not its end.

I invite any input, concerns or questions anyone may have on language issues. We very much look forward to hearing from you.

In closing, I wish to say that I feel privileged to have the opportunity of advocating for and monitoring language rights in Nunavut. The new language legislation is an accomplishment of which we can all be proud; however,





Roles and Responsibilities

The Languages Commissioner (LC) is an independent Officer of the Legislative Assembly appointed to a four year term by the Legislative Assembly's Management and Services Board. The responsibilities of the Languages Commissioner are those detailed in the *Official Languages Act* (OLA), which was adopted by Nunavut from the Northwest Territories, and most recently from the *Inuit Language Protection Act* (ILPA).

The Languages Commissioner has four primary roles: Ombudsman, Advocate, Monitor, and Advisor.

Ombudsman The Languages Commissioner oversees services or communication in the official languages by territorial institutions. If a concern is voiced, the Office of the Languages Commissioner will:

- Conduct thorough, impartial and independent investigations of concerns received;
- Consider possible resolutions of concerns;
- Consult with and make recommendations to authorities to improve practices;
- Provide reports to the Legislative Assembly and the people of Nunavut about language service issues. Including suggestions on improvements where needed, and
- Respond to inquiries from the public.

Advocate The Languages Commissioner is also responsible for providing information and advise on language rights, and encouraging territorial institutions to provide services communication in the official languages.

Monitor the Government of Nunavut's progress in meeting its obligations under:

- OLA which recognizes Inuit Language, English and French as the official languages and sets minimum standards for services in these languages by territorial institutions.
- ILPA which requires that there be a Minister for Languages with the responsibility to revitalize and to protect the Inuit Language;
- *Tamapta*, the principles of which include the right to communicate in one's preferred official language;
- The *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* (NLCA) requirement to remove employment barriers for Nunavummiut who speak the Inuit language as their first language, and
- The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* which guarantees English and French speaking minorities in Nunavut have the right to have their children educated in their language.



Advise the Minister responsible for Languages as well as territorial institutions, private sector, and language authority on language issues:

- The OLC is able to provide knowledgeable advice accumulated from ten years of research activities and policy development and from its work with communities and stakeholders.
- Prior to ILPA, the Office of the Languages Commissioner (OLC) was the only institution in Nunavut dedicated entirely to language issues. There is now a cabinet minister responsible for languages, with the OLC focusing specifically on language rights.





The Official languages of Nunavut

The new Official Languages Act for Nunavut recognizes the Inuit (Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun), English and French languages as the official languages within the territory.

Statistics Canada reported in 2006 that the Inuit Language was the mother tongue of approximately 83% of the population, with English speakers representing approximately 26.5%, and French first language speakers representing less than 1% of the population.

The Inuit language

The Inuit language includes Inuinnaqtun and Inuktitut.

There are two different ways people in Nunavut write the Inuit language: *Qaliujaaq-pait* (or Roman orthography) and *Qaniujaaq-pait* (syllabics). Most Inuktitut speakers in Nunavut use syllabics to write their language. This writing system is made up of about 60 characters, most of them representing complete syllables. Thus “**NU**” in Roman orthography is written with one character in syllabics: “**ᓃ**”. The Roman orthography writing system uses the same letters that are used to write English or French. Many people who normally use syllabics will also use Roman orthography, especially for writing e-mails or when doing other tasks on computers. The Government of Nunavut’s computers now have the capacity to work in syllabics. Inuinnaqtun speakers almost always use Roman orthography.

In the 2006 census, 64% of respondents reported using the Inuit Language in the home, even though it is the mother tongue of 83% percent of the population. This represents a 12% decline in ten years. This is partly due to a very large youth population, with a median age in 2006 of 23.1 years, compared to Canada’s media age of 39.5 years.

French

The 2006 Census reported 420 individuals with French as their mother tongue and 1200 claiming to speak it. Nunavut’s capital of Iqaluit is home to a thriving Francophone community. Although close to 800 in Iqaluit reported the ability to speak French, there are many Franco-Inuit families in the city. The French speaking population is served by a school, a daycare, a community radio station, and a cultural centre that is open daily and stages various events throughout the year.

English

English is very prevalent in regional centres and larger communities and is the de-facto language of government and industry.



The Inuit Language Protection Act

The Inuit Language Protection Act (ILPA) became in effect on September 18, 2008. The act has expanded language “rights” for Inuit which until then meant receiving services and communication only from territorial institutions. ILPA mandates the government to take measures to revitalize and protect the Inuit language. This has implications for education, municipalities and the private sector.

Important dates under ILPA:

1. Responsibilities of the Minister of Languages – upon assent
2. Role of the Languages Commissioner – July 2009
3. Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit – September 2009 or earlier
4. Education: Right to instruction in the Inuit Language:
 - a. For kindergarten to grade three by July 2009
 - b. All grades by July 2019
5. GN: Right to work in the Inuit language in the public service – September 2011
6. Municipal services – September 2012
7. Private sector: Inuit Language services to the public – over time

Minister of Languages—Responsibilities

On September 19th, 2009, the Minister responsible for official languages was appointed. This was a stipulation within ILPA, and the immediacy of the appointment emphasized the

priority the Government of Nunavut has for action on language rights. The Minister must take specific actions to protect and revitalize the Inuit language as well as ensuring services are provided in all official languages in territorial institutions.

The Minister must develop an implementation strategy by March 31, 2010. This will involve consultation of Inuit as required by Article 32 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. The strategy will include:

- Measures for monitoring and evaluating performance by public service;
- Raising public awareness of the history, use, status and importance of Inuit language;
- Identifying and developing technology for Inuit language media distribution and access;
- Increasing public access to Inuit language resources;
- Improving public awareness of the language laws, and
- Ensuring consistency of other laws with ILPA and OLA objectives.

The Minister will also make recommendations to Cabinet for the appointment of members of Taiguusiliuqtiit, the language authority.



Languages Commissioner—Expanded Role

From July 1, 2009 the LC will have greater investigative powers and enable the LC to:

- Implement a mediation process between two parties;
- Start an investigations upon notification of a concern on violation of language rights or on the Languages Commissioners own initiative;
- Compel the release of information;
- Summons and enforce a person to either appear before a court or to provide evidence by way of an affidavit;
- Provide Inuit language plan guidelines to the private sector;
- Approve language plans submitted by members of the private sector or make suggestions or recommendations on plan amendments; and
- Investigate concerns over a perceived failure of the use, promotion and protection requirements of Act or the spirit and intent of the Act

In addition, the LC can request information from members of the Legislative Assembly and Nunavut courts—for which protocols must be established. The Languages Commissioner will also be able to take legal recourse over any violation of language rights.

Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit

The Act calls for the creation of an Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit (language authority) to establish standard terminology, competency standards and publish their work. The language authority must be in place by September, 2009.



The Official Languages Act

The Official Languages Act (OLA) is waiting to receive Parliamentary concurrence. The Nunavut cabinet can then order the act effective at a date it considers appropriate.

This Act gives official and equal status in Nunavut to the Inuit, English and French languages. The following territorial institutions must comply with the service requirements of the Act.

- The Legislative Assembly
- The Government of Nunavut, its boards and agencies
- Nunavut courts.

- Proportion of the population served;
- Volume of “language of choice” used by the public;
- Importance, scope or impact of services in question, and
- Relevance of the service to public health, safety and security.

OLA & Municipalities

By September 2012, a municipality must, if there is significant demand, have the ability to communicate and provide services in the required official language. Significant demand is based on:



Please talk with us

We rely greatly on public feedback in order to help us effectively perform our responsibilities under the Acts. We therefore:

- Encourage you to contact our office with any concerns you might have on language rights;
- Invite questions about language legislation or language related initiative or issue, and
- Request that you advise our office if you believe that the GN, the legislative assembly or Nunavut courts are violating any part of the Acts, or going against any of its own language-related policies.

Feel free to drop by in person or contact us by telephone or email.

Office location: Building 1088E, Iqaluit

Toll-Free: 1-877-836-2280

Email: langcom@assembly.nu.ca



About Complaints

We rely greatly on the public to inform us if a GN organization is not living up to its obligations under the *Official Languages Act* or the *Inuit Language Protection Act*. Any violation of language rights not reported could continue.

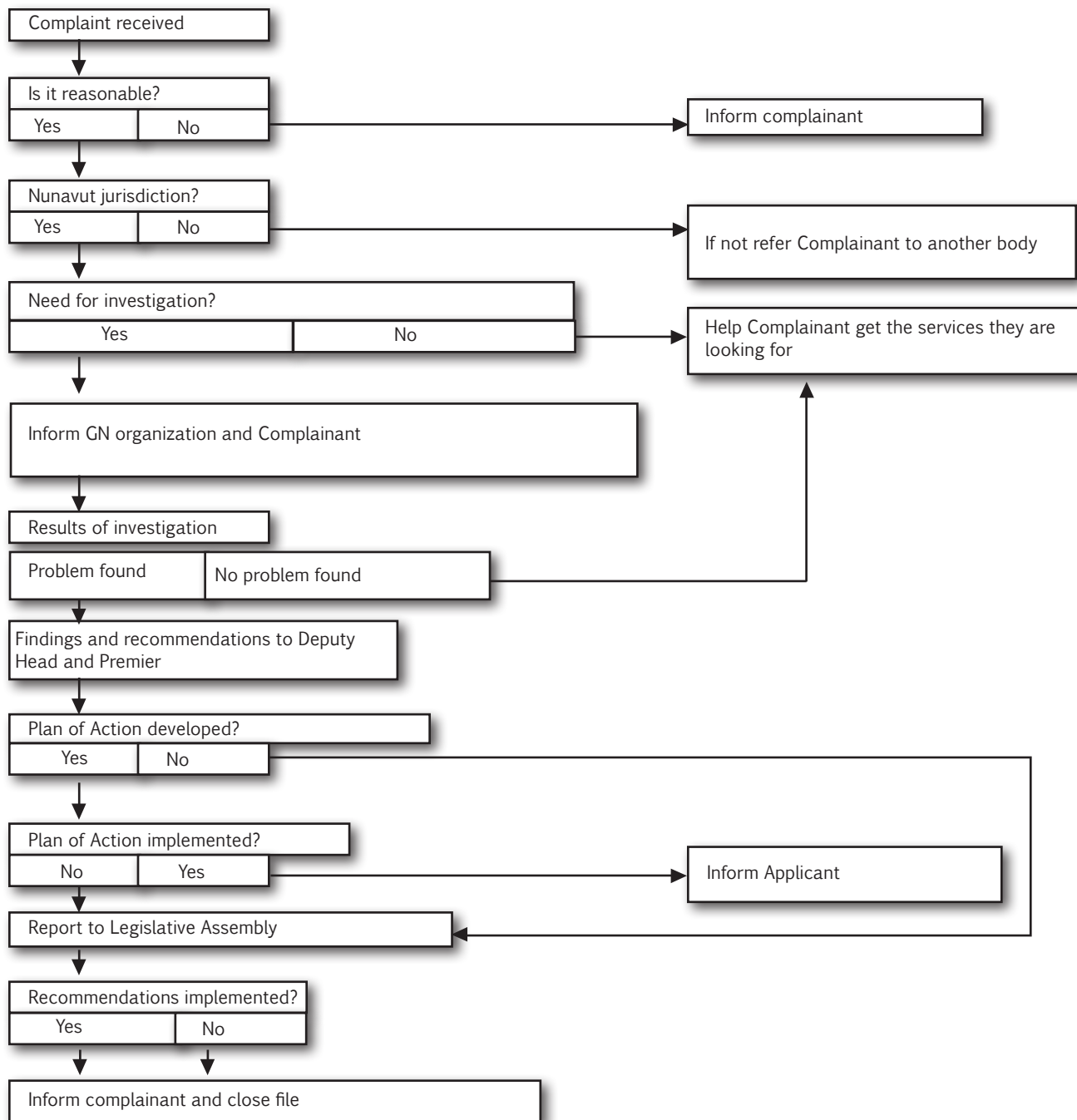
We conduct our inquiries and make recommendations in the spirit of respect and cooperation with the complainant and the agencies involved. Each complaint we receive, therefore, helps us to identify problems and work with departments to improve government services in all of our official languages.

Some of the complaints we receive concern services offered by municipalities and private organizations. Not having had the jurisdiction to investigate, we have simply informed the municipality or organization of the complaint and offered suggestions on how to improve their services. The expanded mandate provided under provisions in the new *Official languages Act* and *Inuit Language Protection Act* will enable us to conduct investigations when required





Flow chart Language Rights Concerns



Activities 2008-09

Operational

This fiscal year we hired a Policy Analyst and Public Affairs Officer, developed a business case for increasing our capacity, updated the website and developed a work plan.

We held an open house in February to introduce Languages Commissioner Alexina Kublu to deputy ministers, other government agency heads, the leaders of Nunavut Tunngavik, and representatives of the Association des Francophonie du Nunavut.

To celebrate ILPA, and to increase public awareness of this office, we commissioned the design of a new logo design. At the same time, we started creating a series of informational publications.

Language Week

We held contests for various age groups during February's Language Week. These events were covered by both CBC radio and television. We arranged and participated in a televised phone-in show on language rights, along with the Minister of Languages and the President of *Nunavut Tunngavik*.

Schools

The Commissioner made a presentation to the *Nunavut Sivuniksavut* students in February 2009 on language rights and on the implications of the new language Acts.

Media

In April 2008 the acting Languages Commissioner was interviewed by APTN about her thoughts on the Senate plans for providing Inuit language interpretation for the two Inuit senators.

In March 2009, we began a series of ads on the language legislation and on our mandate.

Speaking events

The Acting Languages Commissioner Eva Ariak did a presentation to the Learning Tour for Senior Leaders from Canada School of Public Services in May 2008. This was on language issues in Nunavut and on the pending language legislation. She also made a presentation on the harmonization of culture and language in the context of tourism at the *Conference on Culture and Learning Tourism*, sponsored by Association des francophone du Nunavut (AFN).



Meetings and Events

In June 2008 the Acting Languages Commissioner participated in a meeting with the Translation Bureau (Terminology Standardization Directorate) and with the Department of Culture Language Elders and Youth in Ottawa.

In February 2009, the Languages Commissioner made a presentation on language legislation to the *Yukon First Nation Language Conference*. The conference concerned various approaches to preserving Aboriginal languages. They were specifically interested in the Nunavut model.

In March 2009, the Public Affairs Officer attended the Kitikmeot trade show in Cambridge Bay. In the same month, the Languages Commissioner attended a meeting organized by Association des Francophonie du Nunavut on their expectations for implementation of the new *Official Languages Act*.

Inquiries

The Office received daily inquiries by phone, e-mails and in person. Most questions were either about Nunavut's language legislation and



policies or on how to find translation services. In addition, information was also sought on where to find Inuit language learning resources and clarification of proper spelling, wording and grammar. We received and answered inquiries in English, the Inuit language, and French.

Complaints

We received one formal complaint in the reporting year. The complaint is being handled in a confidential manner.

We continued to receive concerns from people regarding language services offered by organizations that our present mandate prevented us investigating. In these cases, the Languages Commissioner followed up informally to discuss ways to improve services in the official languages. We look forward to being able to more effectively protect language rights in all sectors of the territory once the new *Official Languages Act* and the *Inuit Language Protection Act* come into force.





Recommendation

Recommendation 1:

Measurable Data

The success of the new language legislation will require that all language stakeholders cooperate on key initiatives as well as collaborate on specific projects. It is critical that all of the activity is measured and analyzed for its effectiveness. *We recommend that the Government of Nunavut collect data on language use every two years.* This data should be aggregated by age and community and include:

- Ethnicity and mother tongue;
- The Ability to speak any or all official languages;
- Language(s) use at home;
- Language(s) use in a social setting;
- Language(s) use in the community, including school, and;
- Attitudes about language.

The data will provide regular performance measurements and enable programs and activities to be changed or adjusted where and when needed.

Recommendation 2:

Inuit language content

An examination of language revitalization policies shows the need for a large and expanding amount of material to be available

in that language. People are unlikely to develop language competency or ease of use if they cannot use their language when reading books at home, listening to songs or watching television or movies. *I recommend that the Government of Nunavut make it a priority to create a strategy for increasing Inuit content exponentially for all age levels.*

Recommendation 3:

Language tools at work

With Inuit having the right to work with the Government of Nunavut in their language it is critical that they have the opportunity to do so. *I recommend the need for territorial institution to make available to their employees tools such as Microsoft's Inuit Language Interface at every workstation.* I also suggest that the GN provide assistance to freelance translators to have access to these tools.

Recommendation 4:

Producing Multilingual Content

The new language legislation requirements for Governments, municipalities and private sector organizations will mean the production of greater multilingual content to meet service requirements. *I recommend the creation of a strategy for reducing the costs of producing, translating and publishing printed and electronic documents.* The GN can set a positive example to the rest of Nunavut by undertaking this project.



The strategy will require developing a system for integrating a variety of processes into the content production workflow. It will cover:

- Writing source content for translation;
- Writing in structured format to enable leveraging of content;
- Translating and editing content;
- Managing and publishing content, and
- Training writers, translators and Web network managers.

Organizations and or governments in other jurisdictions have had positive results from integrating simple software writing tools, terminology, and translation memory databases into their multilingual workflows. Studies show it is possible to achieve:

- 15% to 25% reduction in time to write and produce content;
- 25% improvements in consistency and/or quality of content, and
- 30% to 40% reduction in translation costs.





Work Plan 2009-2010

We will continue those projects begun during the 2008-09 fiscal year. To summarize:

- Obtain approval for the business case for increased business capacity;
- Finalize the logo and produce several information brochures;
- Educate the government, municipalities and the private sector of their responsibilities under the Acts, and
- Provide Nunavummiut with information on their language rights.

The business case argues that this office needs to expand in order to meet its additional responsibilities under the new mandate. Assuming the business case is approved, the organizational changes will require that we:

- Eliminate the position of general policy analyst;
- Replace with a director of policy;
- Hire three analysts to cover the Inuit language, the French language, and the private business sector, and
- Locate and move into larger office space to accommodate the additional staff.

Key initiatives in the next fiscal year include offering seminars and personal consultations to the private sector and creating materials

such as Language Plan Guidelines for this sector; developing protocols for dealing with the Nunavut courts and the Legislative Assembly, and working closely with the Minister of Languages to assist in the successful implementation of the Acts.

Cooperation with the Ministers office on public awareness is critical. It is important that messages to the public on the new laws, and the changes to the roles of our office and that of territorial government's are clear, consistent and understandable.

The OLA will require that mediation procedures are built into the investigation process. A mediation process will identify when mediation is appropriate. We will develop new procedures that implement new powers for the OLC to initiate an investigation.

Additional tasks: update the existing website and eventually replacing it with a user-friendly site.



BUDGET REPORT FOR THE PERIOD

ending March 31, 2009

Summary	Budget	Spent	Committed	Balance
Permanant Salaries	447000	219,250.19		227,749.81
Casual Wages	-	41,038.82	-	(41,038.82)
	447,000.00	260,289.01	-	186,710.99
Travel	40,000.00	15,159.04		24,840.96
Materials & Supplies	40,000.00	7,718.77		32,281.23
Purchased Services	25,000.00	21,104.13		3,895.87
Utilities	5,000.00	2,625.32		2,374.68
Contract Services	60,000.00	48,119.88		11,880.12
Fees and Payments	5,000.00	3,138.05		1,861.95
Other Expenses	5,000.00	5,213.81		(213.81)
Tangible Assets	5,000.00	831.95		4,168.05
Computer hardware & Software	5,000.00	1,684.46		3,315.54
	190,000.00	105,595.41	-	84,404.59
Total	637,000.00	365,884.42	-	271,115.58

