



NEWS RELEASE

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Territorial Premiers Release Shared Vision for Canada's North

WHITEHORSE, YUKON May 26, 2007 – Canada's three territorial Premiers jointly released a broad collaborative vision for the North at the Northern Premiers' Forum.

In the document, entitled *A Northern Vision: A Stronger North and a Better Canada (Northern Vision)*, the governments of Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut outline a future vision of the North with priorities focusing on sovereignty and sustainable communities, adapting to climate change, and circumpolar relations. It is an invitation for other governments, as well as non-governmental organizations and the private sector to partner with the territories, both jointly and bilaterally, to build a more prosperous, sustainable and secure North.

"Canada's North continues to undergo unprecedented economic, environmental and political transformation, and these profound changes impact all Canadians," said Yukon Premier Dennis Fentie. "The *Northern Vision* was developed to navigate today's changing environment, overcome challenges and pursue exciting opportunities for the North and for Canada."

"We agree with the Prime Minister in that – 'the North's time has come' – and with the release of this document we are inviting all governments, the private sector and non-government organizations to partner with our governments, seize the moment and realize our full potential," said Northwest Territories Premier Joseph Handley. "For the North, any effective, sustainable plan must be based on the transfer of responsibility for northern resources and associated revenues from the federal government to northern governments."

"To be clear, the release of the *Northern Vision* is not the end of a strategic collaboration, but the beginning of a long-term process of sustained cooperation and partnership," said Nunavut Premier Paul Okalik. "The *Northern Vision* represents an invitation to federal, provincial, Aboriginal and community governments, the private sector and non-governmental organizations to partner with the territories to achieve our shared goals and objectives."

In highlighting the human dimension of Canada's Arctic sovereignty, the *Northern Vision* acknowledges that the most powerful expression of sovereignty is the existence of strong and healthy northern communities. It states that for Canada to effectively assert its sovereignty in the North, prosperous and sustainable communities must be fostered through ongoing investments in infrastructure, economic diversification, healthcare and education.

The *Northern Vision* also underscores the urgency of developing climate change adaptation strategies in the North to help reduce the risks and costs of the changing climate. To that end, territorial governments will cooperate with governments and the private sector on a wide range of actions to address the impacts of climate change including research, monitoring and data collection; vulnerability assessments on community infrastructure; developing new engineering practices, codes and standards; and working with the circumpolar community to share best practices.

With a view to addressing those pressing issues that require broad international collaboration, such as trans-boundary pollutants and climate change, the *Northern Vision* recognizes the importance of building strong bilateral relations with Canada's circumpolar neighbours and ensuring the views of northerners are accurately reflected in the circumpolar agenda. More specifically, the *Northern Vision* states that territorial governments should be consulted on the selection of a Circumpolar Ambassador, who must be a Northerner with a firm understanding of the North and northern issues.

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