

The Honourable Peter Taptuna Premier of Nunavut

Speaking notes
2016 Nunavut Trade Show

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Nunavut Kavamat
Government of Nunavut
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Good afternoon.

It's a pleasure to be to take part in the 2016 Nunavut Trade Show. I am delighted to welcome to our capital city. Thank you for inviting me here today to discuss the bright future ahead for Nunavut.

This year we celebrate 25 years of the Nunavut Trade Show. I'd like to thank the Baffin Regional Chamber of Commerce and its partners for keeping this important event going. It's a unique forum for us to re-establish partnerships, and create discussion about growth in Nunavut.

I firmly believe that our great territory has the potential of economic prosperity. As you know, most of Nunavut remains vastly unexplored. It has some of the richest potential in Canada in terms of high-grade metals, and oil and gas. I am always pleased to know that we have a growing industry in fishing, construction and tourism.

Our economic growth is outpacing the rest of Canada. In 2017 alone, the Conference Board of Canada projects that our GDP will grow by almost five percent.

However, there are steps that need to be taken if Nunavut is to fully realize its potential.

First, we must move forward on infrastructure development. We may have some of the richest potential in Canada, but we are hindered by the lack of infrastructure in our territory.

It is for this reason that I have made infrastructure development a major priority for our government. I am encouraged by the progress that we have already made.

In July, the Government of Nunavut signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Kitkmeot Inuit Association to co-operate on the Grays Bay Road and Port project. We are working together to advocate this project and further convince Canada of its national significance to the country and its benefits to Nunavut.

A project like this has the potential to create a 227 kilometre all-season road providing access to a deep-water port at Grays Bay on the Northwest Passage. This would result in more jobs and business opportunities for Nunavummiut, and ultimately a more prosperous territory.

In March, Nunavut MLAs also passed Bill 12, a bill that approves over \$6 million in funding to start the Iqaluit deep-sea port and the pond inlet small craft harbor. While still in their early stages, projects like these help expand our economy and move our resources to markets in Canada and across the globe.

We are also nearing the completion of the Iqaluit International Airport, which will certainly make our territory more business-friendly.

Second, Nunavut needs to move forward on devolution. Canada has named a chief negotiator and we look forward their renewed mandate and reengagement in meaningful negotiations in the near future. We are still hopeful that an agreement in principal be reached by March 31, 2017.

Devolution would be a significant step for our territory as it would allow Nunavut to have control of its own public lands, waters, and resources. It would also allow us to generate royalty revenues that would go towards our investments.

Third, we must remember the importance of environmental stewardship. Economic growth is vital, but we cannot place it above the protection of our environment. We must carefully balance the two so that we may expand our worth, while maintaining our beautiful land.

Nunavut's future looks prosperous. There is much hard work ahead and your support and partnership is needed to achieve our goals.

Thank you and Koana