

**Address to the Nunatsiavut Assembly**  
President Johannes Lampe  
Hopedale, Nunatsiavut  
June 4, 2024



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**PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

- Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
  - Twenty years ago, on May 26, a significant milestone was reached in the history of Labrador Inuit. On that day, Mr. Speaker, we voted overwhelmingly to ratify the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement, representing a new chapter in our goal for self-determination.
  - The Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement marked a turning point – a promise of empowerment, cultural preservation, and economic and social development for our communities.
  - We’ve come a long way, Mr. Speaker. The challenges have been many, but our determination and resilience have carried us forward.
  - Let us celebrate our achievements, and honour those that have gone before us – those who contributed and sacrificed so much so that we can stand here today.
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- While we continue to make progress on many fronts, we must remain vigilant. The Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement is not just a historical document; it’s a living commitment that requires ongoing effort to ensure its full implementation. It is our responsibility, as elected officials, Mr. Speaker, to protect our culture, our rights and our lands for future generations.

- As the Assembly is aware, the Nunatsiavut Government continues to express disagreement and opposition towards the NunatuKavut Community Council's claims of Indigenous rights and self-government.
- NCC has no legitimacy or credibility as an Inuit organization, and its attempts to claim Inuit rights and status are an insult to Labrador Inuit and other true Inuit of Canada.
- Inuit are united by our common ancestry, history, culture, and language. We have a strong sense of identity and kinship, and we know who we are and where we belong. We will not stand by and allow NCC, or any other non-Indigenous group, to appropriate our identity.
- I had the opportunity to present during the historic Indigenous Identity Fraud Summit in Winnipeg on May 14. Co-hosted by the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF), the National Government of the Red River Métis, and the Chiefs of Ontario (COO), the two-day summit brought together First Nations, Inuit and Red River Métis leaders from across Canada to discuss this serious issue.
- Indigenous leaders, as well as an expert panel of academics, highlighted the scale of identity theft from individuals looking to gain personally to contemporary groups who form organizations that steal from Indigenous peoples on a national scale.
- During the summit, a declaration was unanimously adopted to condemn any person or group falsely claiming an Indigenous identity for financial gain, academic recognition, or any other purpose – that such actions are unacceptable and contribute to the ongoing marginalization of authentic First Nation, Inuit and Red River Métis voices and experiences.

- The declaration states that First Nations, Inuit, and Red River Métis will assert their rights to protect and revitalize their cultures, languages, and traditions. It also calls on each level of government, national organizations, academic institutions, and industry proponents to cease any actions that accommodate individuals and groups.
  - A resolution, which I introduced, called for the denouncement of the illegitimate identity claims of NCC. That resolution passed unanimously.
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- Two weeks ago, First People's Group released a report of Indigenous Verification at Memorial University. This independent report, Mr. Speaker, offers insights and recommendations on ways to improve the university's approach to confirming Indigenous identity.
- The report emphasizes the need for vigorous systems based on consultation to prevent false Indigenous claims, and highlights the importance of establishing meaningful relationships with recognized Indigenous collectives.
- It also recommends MUN utilize a two-pronged approach with regard to "outlining recognized Indigenous collectives within a confirmed protocol, including federal recognition under section 35 of the Constitution Act and/or recognition as a legitimate Indigenous collective by their federally-recognized neighbours." This protocol will be applied to situations where individuals may benefit from claims related to Indigenous identity, such as targeted hiring, designated seats for Indigenous students, scholarships, and research funds.

- Mr. Speaker, this report not only serves as a testament to MUN's dedication to fostering an inclusive and culturally-diverse environment, but also underscores its commitment to reconciliation with the legitimate Indigenous peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador. We encourage MUN to accept and implement the recommendations contained in this report, and urge other educational institutions in the province and across Canada to prioritize truth, reconciliation, and Indigenous representation within their establishments.
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- On May 9, Mr. Speaker, I joined other Inuit leaders in Ottawa for a meeting of the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee.
- During the meeting, which was co-chaired by ITK President Natan Obed and Prime Minister Trudeau, we discussed a collective vision for joint implementation activities for the Inuit Nunangat Policy, endorsed by ICPC leaders in 2022. We committed to work vigorously to advance the Policy, which would result in transformative changes by directing how federal departments and agencies design and deliver policies, programs, and services that apply to Inuit and across Inuit Nunangat.
- In my address to the ICPC, and in particular to the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, I raised a number of pressing and continuing issues facing Labrador Inuit, including housing, food insecurity, the high cost of living, mental health struggles, and our disappointment in the absence of new funding in this year's federal budget for TB elimination.
- I also noted that false claims to Indigeneity not only challenge our territorial integrity, but also erode the trust built over years of dialogue and collaboration, and that the Government of Canada must recognize that

further discussions with the NCC would legitimize baseless assertions and compromise our true and inherent rights as Inuit.

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- Last week I attended ITK's Board meeting in Ottawa, where we voted to establish a new sub-committee to better incorporate the positions of Inuit living outside of Inuit Nunangat into the work of ITK. Membership of the sub-committee would reflect ITK Board membership, with each Inuit Treaty Organization and permanent participant appointing a representative.
- We also approved the creation of a national Inuit labour market committee, an Inuit-focused space for developing recommendations to the ITK Board on issues relevant to Inuit employment, labour, and skills development.
- The Board also approved federal funding allocations for a number of initiatives, including:
  - \$285 million in funding over 10 years from the Indigenous Health Equity Fund announced in Budget 2023 to address equitable access to health care services;
  - \$197.5 million over seven years from the Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy; and
  - \$1.3 million from Employment and Social Development Canada to build human resources capacity in Inuit regions to facilitate Inuit-led research and develop Inuit-specific training program to foster future generations of Inuit researchers.
- We received an interim report highlighting the success of the Indigenous Community Infrastructure Fund, which allocated \$517.8 million to Inuit Treaty Organizations in 2021 to support immediate infrastructure needs.

- In April of this year, with one year of the funding cycle remaining, 75 per cent of the Inuit-specific funding has been committed to projects in Inuit communities, and the fund itself has been administered and managed in a way that supports Inuit self-determination of major infrastructure projects. More than 120 projects across Inuit Nunangat have been funded or partially funded through this investment, including street lighting, broadband internet upgrades, playgrounds, child-care centres, solar and wind energy, youth centres, arenas, and multi-use facilities.
  - We also renewed our support for efforts to affirm the rights of Inuit against the alarming and increasing threats posed by false claims to Inuit identity. In a resolution approving housing funding through the Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy, Board members noted their opposition to the allocation of any of those funds to NCC and any other fraudulent individuals and organizations falsely claiming Inuit identity or status.
  - Following our board meeting, I had the pleasure – along with some members of the NEC, to attend Tapiirit, where we had the opportunity to enjoy Inuit country food, hunted and harvested across the four regions of Inuit Nunangat. It was a great networking event, providing opportunities to talk to Inuit from across the country, as well as a number of Senators and federal Ministers.
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- This is the first sitting of this Assembly since I was acclaimed as President in early April. It is indeed a great honour and a privilege to hold this position, one that comes with immense responsibility. I am grateful for the

support of the Assembly as we continue to advance issues and concerns on behalf of our people.

- As I noted earlier, Mr. Speaker, our journey ahead will not be without challenges, but we, as Labrador Inuit, are used to adversity. We have persevered for millennia, and we will continue to do so.
- Let us move forward with hope, resilience, and unity. May the spirit of our ancestors guide us, and may we leave a legacy that future generations will be proud of.
- As this will be the last sitting before the fall, I want to extend my best wishes to all members for a safe and enjoyable summer.
- Thank you, Mr. Speaker.