



Northern Development Ministers Discuss Challenges and Opportunities for Building Canada's North

Whitehorse, Yukon (June 25, 2015) – Ministers representing Canada's northern jurisdictions met in Whitehorse this week for the Northern Development Ministers Forum (NDMF) to discuss priority initiatives for growth across Canada's North.

The Yukon NDMF was hosted by the Honourable Stacey Hassard, Government of Yukon's Minister of Economic Development. "This year's theme of 'Build North' is particularly relevant for Yukon as we look to focus on infrastructure development, fostering partnerships and growing the North through innovation," said Minister Hassard. "This forum provides a tremendous opportunity for us to learn from one another. Over the last two days we discussed innovative programs and initiatives that have successfully worked in similar northern jurisdictions, allowing us to find solutions created by the North for the North."

The Forum also heard from a panel discussion "Managing Change" that addressed the issue of how Canada's northern communities maximize opportunities and mitigate negative impacts of major resource developments. Panelists shared their viewpoint from a community, aboriginal, and industry perspective.

At the conclusion of the 2015 Forum, Ministers agreed that for 2016, the Forum should explore the priority projects, "Northern Food Security" and "Strengthening Working Relationships between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Governments when considering northern development", the results of which will be tabled at the 2016 Forum. Also, scheduled to be tabled at the 2016 Forum will be the results from the ongoing project on benefit agreements between northern communities and the resource industry. These agreements are signed in the context large investment projects and aim to achieve positive outcomes for their communities (jobs, training, contracts between industry and small business, and protection of the environment).

The 2016 forum, chaired by the Government of Nunavut, will be held in Iqaluit. "I look forward to chairing the forum in 2016 and hosting northern development ministers in Iqaluit, Nunavut," said Nunavut's Economic Development and Transportation Minister Monica Eil. "We are committed to advancing the economic viability of the north and working together to address common issues that build on our strengths."

The Northern Development Ministers Forum, 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. Reports on NDMF projects are available at www.focusnorth.ca.

Observations by Ministers

Northwest Territories

“The economic and political role of Canada’s North is changing and we are evolving and positioning to take the lead on a range of initiatives, ranging from Aboriginal government relations, to northern infrastructure development, to the realization of getting remote and stranded resources to market. Beginning with sound planning and preparation, our shared commitment to the North is working to advance opportunities and benefits in our respective northern regions.”

- The Honourable Dave Ramsay, Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Government of the Northwest Territories.

Nunavut

“Over the past two years Nunavut led Canada in economic growth. The territory has two world-class mines and several major construction projects. The opportunity to connect with ministers responsible for northern development from across Canada is always valuable. Northern regions share similar challenges and opportunities, and discussing our commonalities allows us to find shared solutions.”

- The Honourable Monica Ell, Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Government of Nunavut.

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