



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

AANO • NUMBER 013 • 2nd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Thursday, April 2, 2009

—
Chair

Mr. Bruce Stanton

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

Thursday, April 2, 2009

• (0905)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC)): Good morning, members.

We are going to commence with our thirteenth meeting this morning. We are still waiting on two of our witnesses, and I'm sure they will be along shortly, but that will allow us to begin with our continuing consideration of the topic of northern economic development.

We're delighted to have with us here this morning representatives of each of the three territories. I must thank the delegations for doing this on relatively short notice, for coming here to help our committee scope the potential study that we're considering and will be looking at in the weeks to come.

I'd like, first, to introduce our first two witnesses. We'll eventually have three presentations this morning and then we'll open it up for questions.

We have with us this morning Rosemary Keenainak, from the Government of Nunavut, along with director, Mr. Ed McKenna. We also have Mr. Peter Vician, the deputy minister for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment for the Government of the Northwest Territories. We will properly introduce the other delegations when they come. That is not to leave out Mr. Singer, who is here also, the director for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, again with the Government of the Northwest Territories.

We will begin with Ms. Keenainak. It's roughly a 10-minute presentation. We will each do that.

Do you have the text that you circulated to the members?

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak (Deputy Minister, Department of Economic Development and Transportation, Government of Nunavut): We only have it in English, so we gave copies to the translators.

The Chair: That's fine.

Okay, we'll proceed, then, Ms. Keenainak.

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: *Qujannamiik.* Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Ullaakkut. Bonjour. Good morning.

Tavvauvisi Nunavummi. Greetings from Nunavummiut.

I want to begin by thanking the committee for this invitation to the Government of Nunavut to appear before you as a witness and for the opportunity to speak briefly on the subject of northern economic development. I hope our presence here today will be helpful to the committee in the development of your study of our economies in the territories.

I am very proud to be here as an Inuk deputy minister for the Department of Economic Development and Transportation with the Government of Nunavut. With me today is Ed McKenna, director of policy, planning, and communications for the department.

Minister Peter Taptuna wanted to be here with you today. He has asked me to convey his regrets that he was not able to be here. I am sure you are aware that this is a momentous week in Nunavut and in our capital, Iqaluit. Yesterday was our birthday as a territory. It marks the achievement of a major milestone as the government celebrates its tenth anniversary. Minister Taptuna's official duties have kept him in Iqaluit, where yesterday there were celebrations, feasts, and a special sitting of the Nunavut legislative assembly.

I am sure you have noticed the many stories about Nunavut in the media over the past few days. I hope that in these stories you have noted the comments by Premier Aariak and others in Nunavut about our territory and its future in Canada. A principal theme in this commentary from home has been that the creation of Nunavut has perhaps, more than anything else, contributed to our continuing self-reliance. What was achieved in 1999 was the opportunity for Inuit and all Nunavummiut in the Nunavut Settlement Area to take control of our destiny.

We faced many challenges in 1999. We have dealt with these, and much has been accomplished, but many of these challenges persist today. No one can do for us what we must do for ourselves. The creation of Nunavut ten years ago makes it possible for us to find our own solutions.

This is no less true for the development of our economy. Despite the current downturn in the national and international economy, we expect economic performance in Nunavut to be comparatively flat but still improving, with some economic growth in the year to come.

It is true that we have seen a decline in mineral exploration activity in 2008 from the record level achieved in 2007 of \$338 million, and we anticipate a further decline in 2009. However, investments in mine development in Nunavut continue, and more than \$430 million was spent on construction last year at the Meadowbank gold project, near Baker Lake. The mine is expected to open on schedule in 2010.

Another gold project, at Hope Bay, may begin construction within three to five years. We are optimistic that the very large Mary River iron ore project on north Baffin and the Chidliak diamond project, both on Baffin Island, will begin construction within a decade. Within 15 years, there could be as many as six mines operating in the territory, providing up to 1,500 jobs, and many more during the construction phase.

Developments in the mining industry in Nunavut will be the major determinant of economic performance in the territory in the next 20 years, but other sectors will contribute as well. Our fishery is small but growing, with good markets for turbot and char. Communities on Baffin Island in particular are increasingly interested in participation in this industry. With the expansion of quota allocations in our adjacent waters in the past year and the development of small craft harbours, their involvement will grow.

Our tourism industry has greater potential than we have been able to realize in the last ten years, and the economic downturn and rising transportation costs will not allow much growth in the next few years. Nevertheless, it is a sector that we believe justifies additional investment and that has potential for rapid growth when the current recession ends.

Cultural industries in Nunavut create products as varied as stone sculptures and feature films. The outlook for the arts and cultural sectors in Nunavut over the next 10 to 15 years is very positive, as their growth will track growth in the mining sector. We also anticipate a boost in international interest in our cultural industries and in tourism as a result of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the international promotion of the iconic inukshuk logo.

● (0910)

I do not want to paint a picture of our economic performance in the next few years that simply glosses over some of the major challenges we will face. Climate change and the controversy over polar bear populations impact our sport hunting industry. Commercial harvests of caribou and muskox have been curtailed to ensure the sustainability of the herds, and our shrimp fishery has declined due to rising operating costs. Many people in our communities are feeling the impact of the anti-sealing campaign in Europe and even here in Canada, led by animal rights groups.

Mineral exploration by junior mining companies will decline significantly in 2009, as I said, and mining projects that we anticipated might be started in five years will not get under way for a decade or more. However, public investment in Nunavut through our own government and through programs for housing and other infrastructure and private investment in the Meadowbank gold mine should allow our economy to remain stable, if not experience some small growth as measured by real GDP.

I know that some of you were able to visit Nunavut in June of last year and meet with the Nunavut Economic Forum. I am pleased to note that your visit included a trip to Pangnirtung, my home community. I know you have heard about the institutional strength we bring to economic development in Nunavut through the ongoing partnership of governments, Inuit organizations, and the private sector, all of whom participate in the Nunavut Economic Forum.

I know too that the forum board members have spoken to you about the Nunavut economic development strategy and its goal for economic development in Nunavut, a high and sustainable quality of life for all Nunavummiut.

To achieve this goal, we look at indicators not only for economic performance but for our progress in social and environmental terms as well. While we are optimistic about our economic future, we are very aware, as only those of us who live in Nunavut can be, of the challenges we face in social development and in protecting our land and our wildlife.

Those media reports I referred to earlier have in some cases stressed the persistence of social problems in Nunavut—I just read one this morning—including the struggles of our young people and the enormous amount of work that needs to be done in education and training. The principal challenge for those of us who work in economic development is to link our economic performance, which is improving, to our social and environmental performance to strengthen our society and protect the environment.

This is one of the principal concerns of our new government. The importance of making social progress is a priority included in the new mandate announced by Premier Aariak just yesterday called *Tamapta*, which means all of us. Improvements in education and training outcomes is the first priority of the new government. Our goal is to have more graduates and to reduce the gap between unemployed people and job opportunities.

What role can the federal government play in supporting us in this endeavour? First, it can help us to make up the infrastructure deficit in our communities through investments in housing, water and sewer facilities, broadband, small craft harbours, roads, and airports. For some of this infrastructure, as you know, the federal government is providing significantly increased funding, but in other areas, particularly with transportation infrastructure, we have a long way to go to catch up with the rest of Canada.

The investment in the development of small craft harbours in Pangnirtung, for example, is very welcome, but it is only one among seven communities that have been identified as needing these facilities in the short term. All our communities are marine communities, but they are largely without the infrastructure they need to connect to the economic opportunities in the fishery and tourism.

I know you have heard this before, but it bears repeating. In Nunavut we are at an early stage in the development of our economy, one that has already been attained in southern Canada through investments in basic economic infrastructure.

Second, we need federal investments in sectors in addition to mineral exploration and mining. We are extremely conscious in today's economy of the need for economic diversification, and investments in our fishery, tourism, cultural industries, and our land-based economy are needed to ensure that our people continue to have options for sustainable livelihoods, for employment income, and for business development. The federal government is making some important investments in these areas, but there is a growing concern that in Nunavut we are increasingly dependent on targeted federal programs that are available only for a short term. Our young population and the rate of population growth in Nunavut will continue to place pressure on government services and the need for community infrastructure. We will not be able to keep up with the growing demand without the continuation of these federal programs.

• (0915)

We welcome the federal initiative to establish a new northern economic development agency for the territories. It is our expectation that the new agency will help to bring stable, ongoing investment in Nunavut's economy, as well as create an advocate in Ottawa to ensure the territories remain a development priority and that federal programming and investment is responsive to our distinctive economic needs.

The agency will also provide for us in Nunavut, and for each of the territories, the federal presence we need in our territorial capitals that will be the basis for the partnership with our governments in the development of our economies.

The Chair: Ms. Keenainak, could you summarize towards the end? If there's some—

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: I'm almost done. I can talk faster.

[Translation]

The Chair: Great. Thank you.

[English]

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: I can do it in both languages, but I'll just do it in English.

This presence cannot be achieved through a single federal department, although in Nunavut we enjoy a productive relationship with the regional office of Indian and Northern Affairs. But each of the territorial governments has strong bilateral relationships with a number of the federal departments whose regional and head offices are strung out across the country. A regional development agency will place senior public officials in the territories whose focus will be the territories, with whom we can work to design and deliver programming appropriate to our economies.

Keeping people in our communities is critical to our future in Nunavut, and in terms of the contribution these communities can make toward our national sovereignty it is critical to Canada too. Our people in our coastal communities are the guardians of the Northwest Passage. Ensuring that our people continue to be self-reliant, that there is strong local participation in major resource development projects, that we have access to and control over our resources, and that investments continue to be made in our infrastructure and in social development are our tasks in Nunavut. For this we need a vigorous federal partner focused on territorial priorities. To be self-reliant, to do what must be done for ourselves,

we need the type of broadly based, independent federal partner a regional development agency can be.

The last page. It's only half a page.

We are encouraged that the new economic development agency initiative holds promise for this type of government-to-government relationship. For this reason, the territorial premiers joined together to establish principles and objectives for the agency and provided these to Minister Strahl in early February, with the recommendation that a federal-territorial working group be established.

We continue to look forward to the opportunity to meet with the federal government and to work in partnership on the creation of a new northern economic development agency.

Thank you. *Merci. Qujannamiik.*

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Keenainak.

We continue with Deputy Minister Peter Vician.

You have ten minutes.

[English]

Mr. Peter Vician (Deputy Minister, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Government of the Northwest Territories): Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and committee members, for the opportunity for the Government of the Northwest Territories to appear and present its perspectives on critical issues facing Canada's Northwest Territories.

On behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, particularly the premier, the Honourable Floyd Roland, and my minister, the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, the Honourable Bob McLeod, we're pleased to appear before you.

We have prepared a presentation deck, which I understand will be circulated upon translation. My apologies, Mr. Chair, for not having that ready this morning. I'll make reference to that.

The Northwest Territories is over 1.4 million square kilometres in area. It's the third largest jurisdiction in Canada, surpassed only by Nunavut and Quebec. Total population is a little over 43,000 people. Over 50% are aboriginal and about 49% are non-aboriginal. There are 33 communities. The majority of the population in the NWT is located in the capital city of Yellowknife, with smaller communities having a larger percentage of the aboriginal population.

Over half the communities are accessible by all-weather roads, and all mines and most communities are accessible by winter roads. I think recent stories on the Discovery Channel make you understand some of the interesting part of that. All communities have airports of varying sizes, from simple landing strips to major airports, such as in Yellowknife.

The NWT is vast. It is the third largest jurisdiction in Canada. It is also a land of rivers and lakes and many opportunities.

While the NWT economy has grown, it is less diversified in 2007 than it was in 1999. Mining and oil and gas sectors have increased, along with construction, while the share of most other industries has decreased. The change in GDP shows the significant impact of the development of the NWT diamond mine industry on the economy. At this point, our GDP rests at around \$4 billion per year.

In terms of opportunities, oil and gas and mining opportunities are a major possibility and are part of the future of the economic road map for the territory.

I've provided in the presentation a map that outlines the basic sedimentary and oil and gas basins of North America. Those maps, for your benefit, will show you that the gas fields do not stop at the Northwest Territories-Alberta border.

The Beaufort Sea is one of North America's largest undeveloped fields and has no access to market without a pipeline. Proven and likely gas reserves are in the order of 120 trillion cubic feet, and that's significant. It's almost half of what Alberta, B.C., and Saskatchewan combined have today. We've done comprehensive reporting over a number of years that shows the significant impact the development of Arctic natural gas will have on the benefits and long-term sustainability of North America's energy supply.

In terms of mining, the mineral resources and the benefits of mineral resources extend well into the territories as well. I've provided in the presentation maps that show how, in the Slave Geologic Province, which is an extension of the Canadian Shield, diamond mine potential and other base metal and other property potential will provide economic sustainability for the Northwest Territories.

Diamonds, of course, are a current NWT export priority, and the diamond mines like Diavik, Ekati, and Snap Lake will provide future jobs and opportunities for years to come, even through the tough economic conditions that exist today.

Although our economy is driven by non-renewable resources at this time, the NWT has significant renewable resources that offer opportunities for diversifying our economy, and that's a key issue today for us to speak to you about.

Our large river systems offer a number of hydro opportunities. Trapping and subsistence harvesting offer support for lifestyles that do not appear in the GDP figures. Ecotourism, aurora viewing, fishing and hunting, and general touring have significant potential. The Mackenzie and areas south of Great Slave Lake have significant forestry resources. And our relatively short growing season is countered by long hours of sunshine. Community gardens have become very popular, so our agriculture base does have a future.

In terms of economic opportunities, the Mackenzie Valley pipeline is the most immediate and significant development that will enhance and expand the NWT economy. As mentioned earlier, it will provide both direct and indirect benefits, not only to the Northwest Territories but to all provinces, other territories, and Canada overall. Oil and gas and minerals have been the economic drivers of the Northwest Territories, and they will continue to be the primary

drivers in the future. Our tourist attractions contain many opportunities, aurora borealis tourism being one of the key ones in recent years.

In terms of gaps and challenges, we need to diversify our economy. We need to deal with a limited infrastructure and what it limits in terms of development. We need to deal with economic disparities between large and small communities and between aboriginal and non-aboriginal residents.

● (0920)

In terms of additional challenges, although we have tremendous mineral potential, similar to that in Ontario and Quebec, the level of development is low. Unlike provinces, we lack access to royalty revenue required to make large-scale investments in our economy. We lack devolved powers from Ottawa to the north, which also contributes to what we believe is the regulatory complexity of the Northwest Territories.

In terms of critical success factors, we see a series of factors that will make a change for the future. Number one is devolution. That will help address the regulatory problems and provide the necessary revenues to address development needs in the NWT, and although resource development drives our economy, we are faced with increased demand for government services without the added revenues from those developments.

Partnerships are a priority with the federal government particularly and also with aboriginal claim groups.

Regarding capacity building, without revenues from resource development, the GNWT and aboriginal governments lack the necessary resources to deal with the developments that will maximize the benefit of those futures.

Other critical success factors are investments in infrastructure, economic diversification—the diversification of our economy into other areas besides the non-renewable resource areas—and improved federal coordination, a key priority in terms of how the NWT public interest can be served for both territorial and Canadian benefit.

Finally, let me conclude with our recommendations. We have three key recommendations for you today.

Number one is northern management of non-renewable resources and devolution. Northern decisions need to be made by northerners. Until devolution of province-like powers over lands and resources are assumed by the GNWT, we will not be able to realize our full potential.

On partnerships, the northern economic development agency is an opportunity to address federal coordination issues as well as to help focus NWT economic development needs. The three territories have provided their vision of principles and objectives for such an agency. We look forward to engaging with the federal government on this in the near future.

On infrastructure, major infrastructure development will likely be beyond the means of the GNWT even with resource revenue sharing. The benefits of development, however, are Canada-wide and deserve national support.

As I hope you've seen from this short overview—and I hope you will gain a better understanding when I am able to circulate the deck—the Northwest Territories has tremendous potential to be a significant part of the Canadian economy. Support of the recommendations presented would constitute an investment by Canada that will have significant benefits for the NWT and all Canadian residents.

Let me conclude by inviting the committee to visit the Northwest Territories, its people, its beauty, and its future.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

● (0925)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Minister.

Please now welcome the delegation from Yukon.

[*English*]

Thank you for your attendance here this morning. We got off a little bit late and we didn't do proper introductions.

We are delighted this morning, members, to have Harvey Brooks, deputy minister for Yukon, particularly the economic development portfolio, and also Monsieur Trudeau, who was actually able to attend on Tuesday, if I recall. We're glad to have you back here, Mr. Trudeau. We have Mr. Steve Rose, also from the department.

We will go for 10 minutes, Mr. Brooks, then we'll go to questions from members after your presentation.

Merci beaucoup.

Mr. Harvey Brooks (Deputy Minister, Yukon Department of Economic Development, Government of Yukon): Thank you.

Good morning. It's a great pleasure to have this opportunity to speak to you. I bring greetings from our premier, Dennis Fentie, and also my minister of economic development, Jim Kenyon. Good morning as well to my fellow representatives from the north.

Canada's north has entered a new era. We're experiencing massive social, political, environmental, and economic change, and with that change comes influences that reach beyond our northern borders. We are increasingly making the decisions that will shape the evolution of the territories in the years ahead and create benefits that will affect all Canadians. We are mature, responsible governments and believe that our northern institutions—federal, territorial, aboriginal and municipal—work in partnership with one another. We see a north where the governments have the fiscal capacity to govern and respond effectively to those we serve.

I'd like to begin with Yukon's economic strengths, challenges, and vision for the future. I'll follow that with Yukon's position in respect to the Government of Canada's commitment to establish a regional economic development agency for Canada's north.

Yukon has seen both its tourism and mining sectors affected by the global economic downturn. However, the economy for Yukon remains strong, with a commitment by the Yukon government to stimulate and diversify the private sector economy.

In addition to natural resource development, Yukon is focused on a number of strategic industries, including film and sound, research and development, information technology, tourism, arts and culture, agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, oil and gas, and small business development. For this fiscal year, the Yukon government has tabled a budget of \$1.003 billion. This budget responds to the current economic situation by making strategic long-term investments that accomplish short-term targets, including local employment and spinoff benefits for Yukon retailers and suppliers.

Yukon's infrastructure investments create immediate stimulus and long-term economic growth. Some of these investments include building sustainable infrastructure in Yukon communities, including water and sewer systems; enhancing our major highways to support the economic future of Yukon's natural resources; major upgrades to the Whitehorse airport terminal building to maintain its status as an international airport; expanding the existing cell phone service to additional areas; and expanding hydro-generated power to support Yukon communities and the mining industry, while reducing our carbon footprint. These priorities are determined locally and are supported by the federal stimulus package.

To support Yukon's natural resource development, the Yukon government supports a number of incentive programs. These programs, combined with current geoscience databases and a single regulatory process—Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act, or YESAA, as you heard on Tuesday—have made Yukon a worldwide competitor for investment in the mining sector.

Members may recall information about the McCrank report presented to you on Tuesday by Indian and Northern Affairs. You'll note that Yukon's regulatory process, YESAA, was only marginally included in the report, essentially because it is effective. It has drawn praise from the industry. Project proposals are submitted to YESAA and coordinated through first nations, territorial, and federal regulatory processes. The brief discussion about YESAA serves to illustrate another important point. Each territory has unique issues to deal with. Thus, it's important for a new body like the northern agency to remember that one size does not fit all.

Yukon understands that financing and equity investments for major private sector initiatives will come from outside partners, whether from B.C., Alberta, the U.S., Europe, or Asia. Yukon has a strategy for improving the investment climate for responsible development and pursuing investment attraction from a variety of areas. We've already seen some substantial capital investment from Chinese companies and we continue to build our relationship with the Asian region. Yukon's reputation is growing internationally and we have spread the message that Yukon is open for business.

The Yukon government places great importance on partnerships with first nations. The Yukon government is committed to strengthening and sustaining positive relationships with all Yukon first nations governments and the citizens and communities they represent. We believe it's vital to engage first nations in the development of the north. To date, 11 of Yukon's 14 first nations have self-governing agreements in place, and some have already taken advantage of investment opportunities in various industry sectors across Yukon. Community participation is critical to ensure that sustainable development can occur with supportive local involvement.

Capacity development is a priority for first nations, and the Yukon government continues to work with all Yukon first nations and their respective agents in key areas of capacity development to further their participation in the Yukon economy.

Yukon government is assisting with initiatives through the northern strategy trust and also with the creation of an office with the executive council of Yukon government to promote first nation capacity development.

• (0930)

The Department of Economic Development has been working with several Yukon first nations and first nation development corporations to establish regional economic development plans. The creation of a northern economic development agency has come at an opportune time.

Yukon was pleased when the Government of Canada announced its intention to create a northern economic development agency. This means that Canada sees and understands the enormous economic potential in Canada's north and is ready to strategically invest in the resources and the people of the north.

Yukon believes that while the economic development needs of Canada's northern regions have similarities, the geographic, political, and economic realities in the territories make for very unique and specific situations that should not be ignored. Yukon differs from our territorial neighbours because since the 2003 devolution of authorities, the Yukon government has been solely responsible for public lands and resource management over water, forestry, and mineral resources.

Yukon also is unique in being the only territory to have year-round highway access. The Alaska Highway connects us to Alberta and B. C., and our highway connection to Alaska gives us year-round deepwater port access.

We have a single regulatory regime, YESAA, that processes development applications in a streamlined and timely manner. It is Yukon's position that the new agency should be a stand-alone

organization with a decentralized decision-making process unique to each territory and responsive to the unique economic development needs of the Yukon. It is also our position that the new agency should complement existing territorial economic development programs and support a partnership approach.

Yukon, along with the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, has developed principles and objectives for initiating discussions with the Government of Canada. These principles and objectives address the importance of efficiency, flexibility, cooperation, partnerships, responsiveness, and progression in the design and operation of the new agency.

The Yukon supports a mandate that promotes the development and diversification of the unique economies within Yukon, the NWT, and Nunavut. We would also like to see a mandate that will advance the interests of the three territories in national economic policy, program and project development, and implementation. To do this, the new agency must work in cooperation with the economic development programs and initiatives developed by the governments of the territories.

I would like to begin by exploring some of the principles we put forth.

We believe the agency should be based in the territories and staffed by resident employees who have familiarity with the operations and economies of the territories. We would love the agency to be structured and resourced as a multi-faceted, stand-alone business unit within a federal department—as are other regional development agencies in Canada—developing policy, delivering programs, and coordinating other federal programs that support territorial economic development.

Our position is that the decision-making authority regarding projects or programs should be collaborative within each territory and in Yukon should include first nations governments. Federal funding should be coordinated with territorial investment and development, avoiding duplication between levels of government and minimizing administrative overhead.

We would like to see a program that is flexible and invests in a wide range of initiatives, including people, enterprises, infrastructure, research, promotion, and planning. We support a partnership approach at the strategic planning level, as it would be effective in ensuring a collaborative approach in achieving mutual objectives.

The programs should complement existing territorial economic development programs and support a partnership approach. We believe that the territorial share of federal programming related to other initiatives should not be diminished by the creation of a regional development agency.

The programs should add to the current level of investment. The programs should in no way limit the obligations of the federal government to provide access and allow the participation of the residents of the territories in existing federal programs.

Finally, Yukon would like to see programs that respond to the unique needs and strategic priorities of each territory.

We look forward to continued collaboration and the start of discussions on the new structure, principles, and implementation of the agency, and we are eager to hear the ideas and concerns of our partners on this tremendous economic initiative in Canada's north. To this end, it is Yukon's recommendation that a federal-territorial working group be established to jointly develop the concept and structure of the agency.

In conclusion, Yukon sees the future benefits of moving forward on this initiative in partnership with the northern territories and the Government of Canada. We look forward to providing more detailed input on the structure and operations of the new agency shortly. I look forward to the establishment of the federal territorial working group that will provide us with a structured forum in which to move forward.

Thank you for your attention. I believe there has been time allocated for questions.

● (0935)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Brooks.

We have representatives from the three territories here this morning. We will have three five-minute rounds of questioning. That will allow more members to ask questions. We will start with Mr. Bagnell.

Mr. Albrecht, do you have a question?

[English]

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): I have a point of order. I recognize that we don't have translation for the other two submissions, but the Northwest Territories has maps available. It would be helpful for me to see those maps, if the committee members would agree to have those decks circulated.

I beg the indulgence of the committee to see those maps.

The Chair: Is there consent to circulate documents that are not in both official languages, the maps?

[Translation]

Mr. Lemay.

Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): The maps, okay, but I am not willing to have the other documents circulated until they are available in both languages.

[English]

The Chair: I could maybe check with Deputy Minister Vician. Are the maps integral to the document—or are the maps separate, so we could have them circulated? Are they part and parcel of the documents you have with you?

Mr. Peter Vician: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The maps have text integrated into them, so my apologies, as they would have English text on them.

The Chair: Does the committee agree these can be circulated? *Oui ou non?*

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Lemay: Not if they are not translated, no.

[English]

The Chair: All right, we will continue, beginning with Monsieur Bagnell, for five minutes.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Thank you all for coming.

As the official opposition critic for the north and the Arctic, it's very helpful for me to hear how the federal government can help you.

I just have one question for all three territories. Basically, how can the federal government help you better in your aspirations to develop oil and gas? I will just put that into a bit of context, because as you said, you're each different.

In the Yukon, Harvey, what are you expecting from the Beaufort?

Second, the federal government, at times, has not paid enough attention to the Alaska Highway pipeline. What can we do there?

I know that Peter said the only way out for the gas was a pipeline, but I think the wording should have been "the way we would like it in our territories is to have a pipeline". But there are significant projects under way for LNG. If it goes out that way, it would escape us and we'd lose a lot of revenues.

Also, Peter, could you comment what more we could do to help with the Mackenzie Valley pipeline? Do you agree with the streamlining of the local regulatory environmental processes?

And in Nunavut, Rosemary, I know that historically you had a country food base. I'm curious to know how strong that is. The reason I ask is that the witnesses I called before the transport committee in the last two weeks explained that we don't yet have the technology to clean up an oil spill under ice. So if a spill were to occur, it could have a somewhat devastating effect for some time on the marine life, and country foods, in particular, for Nunavummiut.

So I'm wondering to what extent country foods are still part of the economy and about your aspirations in oil and gas development.

Harvey, do you want to start?

● (0940)

Mr. Harvey Brooks: Thanks very much for the question.

The members may not be aware that Yukon actually has substantial oil and gas reserves that have been indicated, and measured, in some instances. Because the gas fields—essentially the newer ones—are stranded without access to a pipeline, their development remains delayed. Those are essentially in the Eagle Plains area of Yukon, but also in and around Whitehorse itself. We do have a functioning gas field in the southeast part of Yukon, which is connected with a pipeline into British Columbia. We also have indications that some of the offshore gas activity that may be possible in North Yukon would be of interest to us as well.

The potential development of the Alaska Highway pipeline project would fundamentally change the nature of Yukon's economy, as perhaps the single largest project that could impact the future of Yukon. Not only would it provide the promise of available natural gas for power production and allow the responsible development of our mining activity and other activities that need power generation, but it would also unleash the oil and gas sector in Yukon for the development of our own oil and gas reserves. This would allow the private sector to really explore that.

There is a fair amount of exploration that's going on now, but it's limited, because the principals understand that it'll be some time before they can economically ship that product into the southern regions.

So this is critical to the long-term future. Some capacity to connect to the southern markets is essential before people will spend money to explore and develop. As was mentioned in regards to the other territories, the Yukon is relatively unexplored. It's almost a case that, dollar for dollar, the money you put into exploration will unearth greater and richer natural resources under the ground. We saw that in Alaska following several years of increased exploration. So as markets become more available, we will be able to deliver and have industries that will develop along those lines.

We also support the Mackenzie Valley pipeline project and see benefits from that to the Yukon; but it won't have the same impact in terms of providing us with access to available and well-priced natural gas, nor will it allow us a capacity to access southern markets with our gas production.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Brooks.

Now Mr. Lemay has the floor for five minutes.

[English]

A voice: I think he's expecting a response from all three.

The Chair: Oh, sorry, but we're out of time. We could have a very brief response from the other territories, but we're trying to keep our rounds to five minutes. If you can give a brief 30-second response, then we'll go to Mr. Lemay.

Mr. Peter Vician: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In terms of supporting the oil and gas development in the Northwest Territories, number one, you could help us with a transportation system, the Mackenzie gas project being one of the primary ones. And improving the regulatory system is the other part of that.

In terms of the MGP itself, completing the federal proponent arrangements and maintaining a fulsome review of the project overall will lead, hopefully, to a certificate of public convenience so that this project proceeds.

Thank you.

● (0945)

The Chair: Madam Keenainak.

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There are a lot of oil and gas opportunities in the High Arctic as well, and I think Nunavut and the Yukon are connected to that.

There hasn't been a lot of activity since the eighties on that one. There was a particular study that we did on the LNG opportunity. And this is going to be an issue of access, and things like that. We are trying to take a look at all the opportunities and are working with the federal government. INAC has called for nominations for the High Arctic for a number of years, and there hasn't been any on that one, but there are opportunities there as well.

On regulatory issues, it's the same thing for the north, as has been identified by industry in that area.

Your other question was about a country food base. It is still very much part of the traditional lifestyle of the north, and there will be a big impact if there are incidents, as you said, such as oil spills and things like that. It's integral. We've also identified it as an opportunity in terms of inter-settlement trade, rather than having the Inuit in Nunavut just rely on food from the south. We want to look at opportunities like that.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Now over to you for five minutes, Mr. Lemay.

Mr. Marc Lemay: Thank you for being here. I was very interested by what I heard. I only have five minutes. I will try to be brief.

Mr. Vician, I have a question for you. Who monitors the operation of the diamond mines? If it is your government, what does the federal government do to help you? That is my first question. You can answer them all, one after the other.

Here is my opinion: the federal government should stop getting in the way of your development. I do not know if you want to tell me I am wrong there, but I feel that sometimes the federal government hinders more than it helps, going by what I heard in your presentations.

Ms. Keenainak, I have a question for you as well. I have been to Pangnirtung. I remember visiting the fish plant. I was told that a problem you face is that you have a fish plant, but you are short of workers. So you came up with a new way of operating, in that a large number of women work in the fish plant, but they have no one to look after their children. This was pointed out to us as a problem, and furthermore, one that required a change in thinking in Pangnirtung. Are there other changes in thinking in the works? Is this something of an evolution for you?

I would like to ask the Yukon representatives about their relations with Alaska. Do you get along with your big neighbour? Are there any problems? Do you have agreements with Alaska? Are Yukon and Alaska working on joint development projects?

There are my three questions; I will let you answer them. You have two minutes.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Vician.

[English]

Mr. Peter Vician: Thank you, Mr. Chair and Monsieur Lemay.

Who controls development of the mines? For all mines, it is the federal government. The legislation or authority for the development of resources in the Northwest Territories and the control of lands is federal. It has been at the heart of a long-standing challenge for the Northwest Territories to have devolution of those powers. Our government essentially acts as an intervenor. We do have some authorities in the areas of wildlife and forestry, as the ministry responsible, but it is the federal government that controls that development.

So in terms of how to help us, we believe the simple answer is the devolution and delegation of control to the people of the Northwest Territories, so that decisions can be made there and so the resources that are taken from the land can be reinvested into the land. That is the most critical issue.

To answer what's harmful, I guess time is the greatest harm right now. We need to have action and movement on this change.

Thank you.

The Chair: Madame Keenainak.

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I wasn't aware of that issue, but I do know that day care is an issue in the community. I know there are day care facilities.

However, in terms of the fish plant, one of the main issues is getting product into Pangnirtung. The building of the harbour is going to help as well, as will getting additional quota in areas adjacent to Nunavut, and making sure some of that product is going to the fish plant as well.

However, day care is an issue across the north, and that might have been an issue for that one.

Thank you.

● (0950)

The Chair: Very good.

Now Mr. Brooks.

Mr. Harvey Brooks: Thank you.

We have very good relations with Alaska. We have an MOU, a memorandum of understanding, established with them and have regular meetings. I would say that we have an extremely good relationship with the Port of Skagway. It's a 12-month, open-water, deepwater port. It is 180 kilometres from Whitehorse—it's very close. It advertises itself as Yukon Port of Skagway. We work on joint port development planning with them to establish long-term infrastructure investment in that port to ensure that our minerals have access to the world market.

Thank you.

The Chair: Very good.

In fact, we even have a few seconds left, Mr. Lemay. It's wonderful.

Mr. Marc Lemay: Watch out for my next turn!

The Chair: We're pleased to welcome the member for the Western Arctic, who is here to join us this morning.

Mr. Bevington, you have five minutes.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's my pleasure to be here with the three territories. This is something we need to see a little more in Parliament as we discuss the importance of these territories in Canada and also the relationship the federal government has with them. This is the area of Canada where the federal government still has so many of the responsibilities, and that's been outlined pretty well by the witnesses.

I'll start my questioning by asking each participant a question. I'm going to take a slightly different direction, because of course economic development is all about people, and developing the territories is ensuring that the territories can provide a living and a direction for the people who are there. In the Northwest Territories over the past number of years, although there has been a rapidly expanding economy, we've seen a decline in our population because of the cost of living. Part of what we need to accomplish in the north is to have sustainable lifestyles.

I'd like to hear what each of the territories feels is the direction the federal government should take in encouraging reductions in energy costs, establishing taxation systems that will encourage the population of the north, and promoting a stable workforce.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Peter Vician: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Bevington.

In terms of encouraging sustainable lifestyles, I would agree that we've seen a modest decrease in population in recent times. We would attribute that to the variance in the resource economy; there has been some change and downturn in the resource side of the economy.

As far as the pillars of a northern workforce and a northern society are concerned, number one is quality of life. I think the territories, all three, provide some of the best quality of life in this country. Those of you who have spent time there know that.

The other piece is providing an economy that provides an opportunity to bring jobs to the communities, and that's happening. Our governments are working on issues with regard to energy conservation and energy costs. We recognize that cost of living is a primary issue. We have spoken before various committees of this Parliament about northern cost adjustments to our taxation model, and we've seen some recent movement by the federal government on those adjustments and under the Income Tax Act. We continue to encourage that type of help. But mostly it's to bring control and decision-making to northerners so that they can set out what it is they want to do for the future.

Thank you.

The Acting Chair (Hon. Larry Bagnell): Rosemary.

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: Thank you.

I think Premier Aariak has indicated that self-reliance is a big issue for the third government and her cabinet, so that's one of the things we're trying to deal with.

I just read in the paper that there was a witness recently who noted that a jug of cranberry juice that would cost maybe \$5 here costs about \$65 in one of our most northern communities. The reality is that there is a high cost to living up in the north. But one of the arguments we've always used is that northern residents need to expect the same quality of life as southern Canadians, and it's not there right now.

I agree with Peter that there has been some movement. There need to be additional incentives in terms of taxation and cost of living, and there is a lot of work to be done.

Quality of life for the north has to be balanced, especially for Nunavummiut and Inuit, in terms of the lifestyle in the north as well.

Those are the kinds of things we're dealing with.

Thank you.

• (0955)

The Acting Chair (Hon. Larry Bagnell): Harvey.

Mr. Harvey Brooks: To demonstrate the uniqueness of the north again, the Yukon is in a slightly different situation because of our all-road access into the Yukon. We have Wal-Mart, Canadian Tire, and Superstore, and the prices are roughly similar to what you'd find in Edmonton. In some of our outlying communities, things would be a little bit different, but cost is an issue more around housing, I would say. Housing development has been increasingly a difficult situation in the Yukon and is being addressed.

As well, our population has been increasing. We have seen successive years of increased population, to a recent historical record in 2008.

I think the issues that are important to people are cost of living, but also connectedness, whether that's being two hours away from Vancouver on regular scheduled and affordable flights or being connected in an IT sense. We are among the most connected in Canada; 99% of our households have access to high-speed Internet. It's a question of making that system more dependable, and perhaps a little more bandwidth would help as well. It leads to a very sustainable and good lifestyle for people, and I think that's what's attracting them there. Obviously, the economic capacity to live and work is essential to that population growth.

The Acting Chair (Hon. Larry Bagnell): Thank you, Harvey.

Harold, for five minutes.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks to each of the witnesses for being here today.

I did have the privilege of visiting Nunavut—Iqaluit and Pangnirtung—so I have the other two territories on my wish list. I also want to wish Nunavut all the best on its 10th anniversary.

One of the things that became very apparent to those of us who travelled to Nunavut was the dependency on fossil fuels and the high cost of those fuels, especially at the time we visited. Now, I understand fuel prices have dropped, but you don't have the luxury

of buying them on a very short cycle. You have to buy them long-term or you end up with very high costs.

I'll start with Nunavut, but this question is for the other territories as well. What alternative energy sources have you investigated? Are there studies being done to possibly reduce your reliance on fossil fuels? It seems counterintuitive, since you have oil and gas right there. But we know that has to be refined somewhere and brought back, so I think it's important that we try to minimize reliance on those. Are there studies that have gone on? Are there pilot projects under way?

Perhaps you could answer some of those questions.

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Yes, it is kind of ironic. Prices have been going down, but our cost of fuel is still high. The government did make a decision to reduce it by 10¢ just last week. We purchase this time of the year until October, and then the price is fixed.

They have been looking, for example, in Iqaluit at hydro projects around the city, because Iqaluit is a main user in the territories, being the biggest community there. They are also looking at wind energy. I know there's been some discussion about the use of tidal power. Also, they're starting to do residual heating projects in some of the communities. So we are looking at alternative energy. A long-term goal is to stop depending on fossil fuels.

We're also looking down the road in terms of oil and gas potential. The resource is there. It's something the government is looking at. There's an energy strategy that was recently released. So we're always looking at ways of trying to reduce costs. Trying to do major projects like hydro is not within the capacity of the territories, so there will have to be some partnership in that.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Thank you.

The Chair: Peter.

Mr. Peter Vician: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Energy is a priority for the GNWT. The Government of the Northwest Territories recently announced a \$60 million multi-year investment in a whole spectrum of energy initiatives. We are reliant on fossil fuels for the majority of the smaller communities that depend on diesel, particularly, for electricity generation. But we are blessed with a wonderful hydro system in the southern region of the territory, and we are making investments toward the development of the Taltson project, which is a very significant hydroelectric project for the territories. We see a large potential for that to be there for the future, even supplying industrial users, whether it's the Mackenzie gas project or additional diamond mining.

Through you, Mr. Chairman, I will leave documentation for the benefit of the committee on our energy investments, our priorities. It's a lot of work done by the government.

Thank you.

•(1000)

Mr. Harvey Brooks: From the Yukon's perspective, it is also an extremely important issue. In any major development in mining or any other manufacturing development that would take place, the very first question that comes is, where is the power source, and is it dependable? For most remote mining activities right now, that would likely be diesel-generated power, which isn't ideal.

The government has recently put out an energy strategy that defines a number of alternative energy sources it's investigating. The Yukon is looking at the geothermal opportunities within the Yukon. It has some operating wind power demonstration sites. It is also looking at biomass, potential for wood pellets, and things of that nature.

But its number one focus is on the expansion and the shoring up of the hydro system. Almost all of the power in the Yukon now is hydro-developed, but it needs additional infrastructure in terms of connectedness of transmission lines. It also needs some shoring up of resources to expand the power base to ensure that it is reliable. There are some issues of reliability around the base.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Do I have some time left?

The Chair: No, not really, I'm sorry. We're just about out.

[*Translation*]

Now we move to Mr. Bagnell. You have five minutes.

[*English*]

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Thank you once again.

I only have one question, but it's for all three of you, so try to share. You only have about four minutes. The one question is, if you could get only one thing from the federal government to help your economic development, what would that one item be that the federal government could provide?

While you're thinking of that, I just wanted to ask Harvey a question. The Yukon government wanted me to ask on Tuesday, when we had INAC officials here, what the status is of the joint working group that they've asked for on the new economic development agency. I wonder if Harvey wanted to comment. You can see their answer in the minutes, but I just wonder if Harvey wanted to comment on that at all.

Each of you can answer that one question that I had.

Mr. Harvey Brooks: I think we're very encouraged from what we hear from senior politicians on the federal side, that there's willingness to work together towards the establishment of the organization. We have a meeting this afternoon in which we hope to learn more about how we might move forward on that. We really think it's vitally important to establishing how the agency is going to run and operate in the initial stages. The territories are involved in the working group to set that up.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Rosemary, your one wish?

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: That's one wish, but we're doing it jointly, so I get to add on to it. One of the things I emphasized in my opening comments was that education and training are going to be critical for Nunavummiut to be involved in the opportunities that are going to be coming in all the sectors. Assistance and partnership

with Nunavut in terms of training and education of Nunavummiut would be my one wish.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Peter.

Mr. Peter Vician: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I've spoken about devolution. I think that's the overarching statement. However, let me say that in the short term, investment in critical infrastructure in the territory is the priority for our government. It's why we're pleased to hear about these investments recently by the federal government. It's one of the key recommendations. It's a myriad of types of infrastructure, but transportation, energy, even environmental infrastructure that comes with the plan.

Thank you.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Rosemary, in response to your answer, has the government responded sufficiently to the Berger report in contributing to education, as was requested by that report?

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: The federal government? I don't think so. Thank you.

•(1005)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: You have two minutes left, Mr. Bagnell.

[*English*]

Hon. Larry Bagnell: We still have two minutes? I don't want to let that go by.

Mr. Harvey Brooks: Can I speak to infrastructure as a key request?

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Yes.

Mr. Harvey Brooks: Our number one ask at this point is along the critical infrastructure line as well. It's energy related and deals with the last question. It's along the ability to connect our two main transmission corridors, and also the extension of one of our hydro projects, called the Mayo B project, which would substantively increase and shore up our hydroelectric capacity within the territory.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Is there any quick comment on what the federal government could do to help in mining?

Mr. Peter Vician: The regulatory system. Act on the recommendations that Mr. McCrank, the environmental audit, the GNWT, and other parties have brought forward to the federal government. I believe you heard from the assistant deputy just a few days ago that this is the objective. We want to see execution and implementation of those changes in a timely manner.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Are there any other comments?

[English]

Mr. Harvey Brooks: I'd like to say that we're in a different situation. We are managing our own affairs with regard to mining—with federal government departments, of course. However, we are good. We seem to be one of the models across Canada for mining regulation and sustainable development.

[Translation]

The Chair: Right. Thank you.

Mr. Rickford, you have the floor for five minutes.

[English]

Mr. Greg Rickford (Kenora, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Welcome to all the witnesses.

I have two remarks on the territories. First, I had the opportunity to live there and work as a registered nurse in Arviat and then Cambridge Bay and have some great memories and appreciation for the challenges. My memories of being out on the land: hunting was extraordinary. I'm also from the Kenora riding, and we share a significant portion of the Hudson Bay coastline with some parts of your territory, and also have an appreciation for vast territory that has some various needs. Those needs, and the ones I want to review here within this five minutes, are as follows. When I was elected, we identified that infrastructure, economic diversification, and education and training were probably the three places where we really needed to drill down and explore.

Like your territories, we have some small towns and cities with certain degrees of better infrastructure and access to training, and then the more remote communities of course are without some of those. We tend to specialize in certain things. Again to the territories' credit, in areas of nursing you were right out there on the cutting edge of developing advance practice nursing for understanding and appreciating what challenges the more remote communities faced. So I want to review some of these areas here.

With respect to infrastructure, I know you talked broadly about some of the key territorial infrastructure needs. Rosemary, could you comment on the absolute key infrastructure projects in the remote community? What are the top three or four that must be done to support a broad economic diversification strategy that includes a number of the items that were identified here and also contemplates health? What are some of the key infrastructures?

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think one of the things I've been talking about is putting in very basic infrastructure that a lot of southern communities take for an advantage. One of the issues we also have is that all our communities are not connected by road, so we need to make sure our airstrips are upgraded. In some communities there are limitations on the types of planes that come in. There are new, more advanced planes and more efficient planes that have certain criteria, and they're not able to land in communities. I'm sure the committee members that went to Pangnirtung will appreciate that landing in Pangnirtung for some can be a little bit scary, because you're landing in the middle of the town. So it's basic infrastructure like that.

One other thing we've also been asking and advocating for in all our communities is small craft harbours. On the east and west coasts

a lot of the communities have these facilities, and those will help in terms of other sectors like mining and fisheries, and it will also be safer for our harvesters. Those are the kinds of things we need in terms of infrastructure.

In terms of health centres, right now a lot of our citizens still have to go to different parts of southern Canada: Edmonton, Yellowknife, Winnipeg, or here in Ottawa. So we need better facilities in the north. We do have a bigger hospital in Iqaluit, and we also have health centres in Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay now, but there are also issues of staffing them. So that's why I identified education and training as an issue.

In terms of nurses, I don't know when you were in the north, but there has been some success in training some nurses in the north now, and that needs to continue. Infrastructure related to mining activities is also going to be very important. We had a Nunavut mining symposium this week. There were issues of giving power to some of the potential mines that are going to be coming down the pipe as well.

Those are a couple of items.

•(1010)

Mr. Greg Rickford: One of the reasons I'm asking this, Rosemary, is the cause that I often champion in my own riding: when we talk about infrastructure development in the isolated or more remote communities, can the better part of the work be done there by the people living in those communities? That continues to be a challenge. I wonder how confident you feel that you can meet that specific challenge.

I can put this out to the broader panel of witnesses. Have you identified specific training priorities to support diversification and infrastructure, the fact that some kinds of training that may be highly specialized may need to go to your bigger city centres in the region, or outside of it? Have you identified specific priorities around education and training? The innovation and knowledge fund—is it helpful?

The Chair: We're actually out of time there, Mr. Rickford.

Mr. Greg Rickford: What?

The Chair: It's a five-minute round. You can make a brief response, though, Madame Keenainak.

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: I'd like to give the NWT and Yukon an opportunity to respond to your first question. I don't know if you want to ask that later.

The Chair: There will probably be time, if you want to fit it in later. Sure.

Would you like to respond?

Mr. Harvey Brooks: Absolutely. In terms of the critical infrastructure, I'll just go down the road.

Water and sewer for communities is high on our priority list, and we'll be addressing a lot of that with the federal infrastructure money that's coming out now.

Housing is critical for most communities.

For economic diversification, I agree there are a number of aspects there. It's transportation—local transportation, transportation to ports, port loading and unloading facilities. For the potential long term, if some of the world-class deposits get developed, a rail system will be needed there at some point in the future.

For communications, it is fibre optics. We expect to have a full fibre optic link this summer, but then bandwidth becomes a problem. We absolutely have a burgeoning IT industry in Yukon, and it will grow.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you.

[*English*]

A brief response.

Mr. Peter Vician: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll just respond to the infrastructure portion.

I've said this before. Transport issues are the Mackenzie highway, some airport improvements, and some marine improvements in the system.

From the energy side, the Mackenzie gas project is at the top of the list followed by some hydroelectric development projects, currently the Taltson initiative.

Third, the communications infrastructure system involves the broadband and the last mile service to communicate us. There is a direct relation. I worked in the region more than 30 years ago. I know the connection and link to education when you bring broadband and Internet last mile to all the people up north.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we move to Mr. Lemay, from the Bloc Québécois.

Mr. Marc Lemay: We have finished the first round already. I told you that we would have a second round and that it would not be so easy.

I had the opportunity to travel to where you live on several occasions, because, when I was a lawyer, I used to go to the far north of Quebec, that is, to all the villages along on the coast of Hudson Bay and Ungava Bay. I have also seen what is happening in Nunavut. You live in a place where the balance is very fragile.

I have to say that I am very concerned about the pipeline to be built in the Mackenzie Valley. I am very worried by mining development in your areas and by the environment in general, given global warming.

What have you done? What are you preparing to do? Do you have a handle on that kind of development? You have not seen anything yet, because the north is going to get very busy, especially as the Government of Canada seeks to establish its sovereignty in the Arctic. Things are going to take off to an extent that you would not even believe, as someone from Quebec would say. There will be so many people on your doorstep! Are you ready for that? What steps have you taken? Mark my words, it will be a tidal wave. Are your

territorial governments ready for development that may sometimes be a little too close to anarchy for comfort?

I will let all three of you answer my questions. Take the time that you need. How about if we start with Ms. Rosemary?

•(1015)

[*English*]

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Yes, there are lots of concerns and fears, I guess, among some folks in terms of all the social issues that may arise from the mining activity. But I think there's also recognition from the government that we want to try to get our citizens involved and be part of the development. That's why I talked about training and education and giving our citizens more opportunities to participate in the economy, especially in the mining sector. There has been consideration on that.

As a government, we're trying to work with the communities, and we also work very closely with the Inuit organizations. Those concerns do come up. That's why, as a government, we have socio-economic monitor committees as part of the land claims process. They bring in the Inuit organizations, the hamlets, as well as industry to talk about some of these opportunities, training, business opportunities, and also some of the effects that may arise.

We had a meeting with one of the mining companies yesterday. Baker Lake is one community where there's the Meadowbank project and that's the closest community. Apparently the mayor has said there haven't been as many issues as they thought there would be, because they're working very closely with the government as well as the mining company on that.

I'll just leave it at that for now, because I want to give the other two territories an opportunity. Thank you.

Mr. Peter Vician: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I sound like a broken record, but I think the first thing is that decision-making needs to be made in the north, by the people of the north. As I said earlier, northerners do not believe they have that entitlement. The decisions are made by the federal government. Until devolution takes place, that is the first way of managing that potential....

We also have one of the most unique, and probably one of the most interesting, co-management environments to deal with the pace and impacts of development. If northerners have that control and they have the good processes in place to deal with that, we believe that will make the difference. We've made a recommendation, as a result of the federal regulatory improvement review process, that impact processes and systems need to be in place to deal with all types of development and that robust and solid feedback needs to be done throughout the process of a project.

The way projects are done today in the Northwest Territories is quite different from 30 years ago. We're still cleaning up projects from 30 years ago. Today, mining and oil and gas are being done differently because the people in the north are asserting their interests and their concerns and making sure things are done right.

My view on this is devolution first, and a solid process to deal with environmental review.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Brooks.

Mr. Harvey Brooks: I agree with the comment from the other territories. Again, it's about local control. We have a process in place, the YESAA process, which includes first nations, the Yukon government, and federal government departments, that establishes a review of the environmental and socio-economic impacts at a single setting. That is very important. It allows first nations to get a view of the developments that are coming and how they might be impacted.

We welcome responsible development that understands the linkages to environment and to climate. There has been a climate change action plan released at the same time as an energy strategy. So it is on everyone's minds. There is planning in place. If it's driven locally...it's most important that people do have their concerns heard during the process.

Thank you.

• (1020)

The Chair: Thank you all.

In the future, when a question is directed to one of the territories or witnesses today, if others wish to add a comment, please raise your hand or signify that and we'll make sure we get you on the record as well. Thank you.

Now we'll go to Mr. Clarke, for five minutes.

Mr. Rob Clarke (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank the witnesses for taking their time to travel some great distances to testify today.

My question is for Mr. Brooks, from the Yukon.

Today, you mentioned, on page 6, that 11 of the 14 first nations have self-governing agreements in place and how some have already taken advantage of investment opportunities in various industry sectors across the Yukon. What are some industries the first nations are taking part in?

Mr. Harvey Brooks: It covers the whole gamut of the Yukon economy.

I was at the Minto mine site the other day, where Selkirk First Nation—this takes place on their category A land—actually owns the land the development is on. They participate in the mining operation, and they are benefiting locally from the jobs that take place. It's everything: office supply companies, bottling plants, window manufacturing, hotels, construction companies. The list is fairly extensive. They have companies that service remote tower sites. It's anything imaginable.

We've seen a tremendous involvement of the first nations in economic activity. The only thing holding them back, I think, is a longer-term capacity development. They're fully stretched at this point with the busy economy they've had over the last year.

Mr. Rob Clarke: You also mentioned that the Yukon government was very pleased when the Government of Canada announced its intention to create a northern regional economic development

agency. How much money was allocated by the federal government for that?

Mr. Harvey Brooks: We understand that the allocation is \$50 million over five years for the administration. I think you heard from the officials the other day that they will be managing a number of programs through the agency, which would include the community adjustment fund, the RInC program—the recreational program—and they would be looking at a SINED extension as well, the targeted investment program. The targeted investment program is \$30 million, so that's \$90 million in total over the three years. It's a fair amount of activity to be addressed.

Mr. Rob Clarke: Now, in your testimony you mentioned that the Yukon has environmental regulation based solely on your own government. Could I get some clarification on that? Has the Northwest Territories looked at the model the Yukon is using?

Mr. Harvey Brooks: The YESAA—Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act—process is set up with first nations and the federal government. Since devolution in 2003, the ultimate authority rests with the Yukon government to proceed on land and water issues. So it's extremely important.

It is a single-window approach. All interested parties come in through this approach to make comment on any development that is proposed. It is going through a five-year review at this point in time, so there are a lot of people coming forward with comments on how the process might be improved.

I think the comment of note is that it's local control, there's local input, and the development is driven by local authority, which is important.

The Chair: Mr. Vician.

Mr. Peter Vician: The Northwest Territories is different from the Yukon. It is primarily associated with the federal government's comprehensive claims process with the aboriginal peoples of the territory, a number of different arrangements across the territory, not all settled at this point. However, the federal government's Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act is the comprehensive process piece that oversees resource development and oversight and environmental review. The CEAA does play a role in the northern region as well, in the Inuvialuit region; however, that's the overarching process.

Yes, we have looked at YESAA, and we've looked at other provincial models as well. We aren't happy with the MVRMA; we think there are some things that need to be done. But it does respect aboriginal interests and their rights in the territorial realm.

Thank you.

• (1025)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

[English]

Madam Keenainak.

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I haven't really mentioned Nunavut, but we do have one land claim for the whole territory, and I think that's quite unique. We have our own regulatory system as well. I think it's working. We have a process for reviewing it to make improvements on it, but I think it's working in Nunavut.

Thank you.

The Chair: Very good. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Now we move to Mr. Bevington. Then Mr. Payne, followed by Mr. Bélanger.

[*English*]

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Further on the topic of devolution, I'd like to make a comment. I think the Yukon is pretty well established in moving in this direction, but in terms of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, can you characterize the movement in the last three years on devolution issues with the federal government? Has there been any movement? Have you seen any increased effort to provide responsibility to the people of the north?

Mr. Peter Vician: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

That's a very sensitive topic. While the dialogue seems to appear to be continuing, progress has not been made. Across the table, I don't believe the parties are moving at any rate that northerners expect. It's been through a number of governments in this legislature, and in fact in our own legislature, that we've seen this discussion go on for over 20 years. Are we any closer? I'd have to say no today. I'd have to defer, obviously, to the premier's response to that, but that's really where we're at here today.

Thank you.

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think we're in the same boat. We're even further behind than the NWT in this process. The federal government finally announced an individual to work on the file, but it has been very slow.

No, there hasn't been a lot of progress.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: The federal government has announced a number of initiatives in the last while. One of them is, of course, the proposed northern economic development agency. There's some sense that maybe the major projects management office is part of this. The new northern development agency suggested it could include a northern project management office.

Do you see that this type of move will actually lead to more responsible control in the Northwest Territories and in Nunavut over resources, over land, or do you see that this may actually impede the development of responsible government?

Mr. Peter Vician: I've been in contact with the federal government over the last few years on the MPMO. It's our view that better federal coordination is necessary in the north. That's evident. Departments need a vehicle so they can work better together and deal with major project development.

We're not convinced at this point that an extension of the MPMO is necessarily the right thing to do. The MPMO has a large challenge

in Canada overall. It's already trying to coordinate many large projects across Canada. We believe you need to use the existing systems and have federal departments coordinate effectively to work with those systems. If the MPMO is the only way to do that, we'll accept that, but we're not convinced at this point.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

At this point there hasn't been a lot of discussion with the federal government on how that is going to be working for the north, so it's kind of unknown at this point. I agree with Peter, let's use the existing systems, and maybe the regional development agency will help in terms of better coordination. I don't know if it's going to work to just set up another office, another level of government. I guess it's a concern for us as well.

• (1030)

The Chair: Did you want to give a brief response, Mr. Brooks?

Mr. Harvey Brooks: Yes. Just echoing the necessity for coordinating the efforts, we would like to see all of these initiatives that come forward coordinated through YESAA. If the federal government can help in that, we would appreciate that.

The Chair: You still have a minute, Mr. Bevington.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: I'll just go to the Mackenzie gas project for a minute.

You've described the project as having the potential for more than 100 trillion cubic feet of gas in the Mackenzie Valley. That's an area that is significantly smaller than the Western Canada Sedimentary Basin, which you've characterized as extremely sensitive. Has there been a sense that there's an industrial strategy taking sustainability of the resource into account, taking the environment into account, taking the needed infrastructure to develop the whole Mackenzie gas resource into account, rather than simply the development of a pipeline that will allow the extraction of that resource?

Mr. Peter Vician: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

If I had to turn to one document, no, there's no one document that says that, but there is a series of efforts and strategies that culminate in the way the north sees the development happening. The GNWT has played a role in that and the federal government has played a role in that. There needs to be more work done. The cumulative impact side of the coin still needs to be done.

We're all anxiously waiting for the results of the review panel that is looking at the Mackenzie gas project. We respect the review panel's mandate in terms of what its job is. It's a very challenging job. We anticipate this will be a cornerstone of their response, that they'll be asking those tough questions about how you look at the overall strategy. So our view on this is that yes, there are elements of that, more needs to be done, and northerners need to play a large role in that.

The Chair: Now we'll go to Mr. Payne for five minutes.

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to welcome the witnesses. I appreciate their distance in travel here today to give their comments and ideas to our committee.

In terms of the northern economic development, I think I basically heard everyone seeing this as quite a positive move in terms of the territories. Since that announcement has taken place, I'm wondering if the three territories have gotten together at all to discuss the new agency and how they could see that they could work together on this.

Rosemary.

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Yes, the three premiers did do an initial response to Minister Strahl—I think it was in December—in terms of some of the guiding principles that Harvey has spoken about. I know at a working group level we have been having discussions, and we will be having further discussions in the coming days. INAC had sent out a questionnaire to stakeholders, and we are preparing a response to that.

The one thing that I think the three territories are in agreement on is that we've indicated to INAC that we're not just stakeholders. We need to be partners as the regional development agency is being developed.

Peter or Harvey, do you want to add?

Mr. Peter Vician: I'll be very brief, because I can't add anything better to what Rosemary and Harvey have said already. We totally subscribe to a pan-northern approach to the solution, and everything you've heard us say today is consistent across the three territories.

Mr. Harvey Brooks: No comment. It's very good.

Mr. LaVar Payne: In terms of the regulations, I know each of the territories apparently have their own, and as I understand it, there are numerous individual regulations based on the various treaties that might be out there. I understand that the Yukon certainly has developed quite a set of regulations. I'm wondering, have the other territories looked at the Yukon, or is there a way to have the regulations become one best practice?

Mr. Peter Vician: Perhaps I'll start.

Mr. Chair, in the Northwest Territories it is different, as I've said, with the nature of our comprehensive claim process and the multitude of claims that respect the peoples of the territory and the different peoples of the territory.

The Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act is the governing legislation that deals with the overall development agenda. That is a piece of federal legislation. If we had to do one thing that Yukon has done, we'd like to see that legislation being owned by the Legislature of the Northwest Territories rather than by the House of Commons. We believe the people of the territories should decide on the statutes necessary to govern the development and control the review of the project.

So that is the one that we would want to see, quickly, with what YESAA does today.

Thank you.

• (1035)

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As I indicated earlier, in Nunavut we do have one comprehensive land claim, only one. We do have institutes of public government that do help in terms of reviewing major projects. Again, as Peter said, one of the things is that a lot of the legislation and regulations are at the federal level. Hopefully, with devolution those will then become the responsibility of Nunavut as well.

I'll just leave it at that. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Brooks, do you have anything to add?

Okay. We still have a minute.

Mr. LaVar Payne: Going back to the development agency, do you feel that this development agency is the right direction to go? Do we have it right, or is there something else we need to do with that?

All three of you, please.

Mr. Peter Vician: Quickly, number one—and Rosemary said it well—we need to approach the establishment of this agency in the north on a partnership model, not with the territories being treated as a stakeholder. By partnership I mean we're part of the development of the organization, how it runs, its principles, its guiding priorities and overall goals, and how it operates in the future. That would be the key point for us.

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: I'll just add that we all think it's an extremely positive step, as I indicated in my opening comments. Some of the funding the territories have been getting for the last several years has been very short term. We're hoping that the regional development agency will ensure consistent and stable funding for the north so that we can diversify the economy.

Thank you.

Mr. Harvey Brooks: I think it is very positive. We see that it can be done in an extremely good fashion if it develops properly. I think we've heard the themes here. It needs to be a partnership. It needs to be flexible enough to address the different needs of the three territories at the same time. And it needs to be inclusive.

So we really hope we get to an operating model that has input from our first nations and from our territorial governments to establish the priorities as we move forward.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Bélanger, you have five minutes.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, madam; good morning, gentlemen.

[*English*]

first, I apologize for arriving late. I was called to appear as a witness in front of a Senate committee, and one does not deny the other chamber. I will also apologize ahead of time if this has been brought up, and if it has, then I'll go and read the transcript.

The question I bring up would probably necessitate a series of meetings by itself. It's related to climate change. There's a fairly commonly accepted view that climate change will have a greater impact in certain areas of the world, the north being that area in particular.

My question is related to economic development, forecasting investments, and so forth. Do you factor in the climate change impact on water levels, permafrost, utility corridors, flora, fauna, buildings, forests, you name it? Do you factor in the necessity for remedial or even adaptive work? If it's factored in, how big a factor is it?

Mr. Peter Vician: Thank you for the question. It is a critical issue for the north. I think we share this with all our northern territories. We have identified climate change as one of the most critical factors to deal with in the coming decades. We do believe Canadians need to take a strong role in terms of understanding the science of climate change in the Arctic.

We welcome and encourage a continued investment in the science R and D side. We heard announcements from the federal government recently about doing that and about its presence in the north increasing. We think that's critical, because none of us really understands exactly what's happening. We see what's happening in terms of the day to day. We've all experienced that, and it's not nice in some areas.

Let me say that the environmental processes in the north are slowly moving to an understanding of how to accommodate climate change in the development and monitoring and, as you indicated quite clearly, an adaptive management process throughout the life of any project and how it affects things. But it's not just those development projects. It's transportation systems, it's housing, it's the people. It's the lifestyle of the people that has been affected. Our traditional peoples are telling us on a daily basis how things are changing in the wildlife elements, in the habitats, in the traditional areas, in our forest fire impacts on an annual basis, and so on. These are all things we don't understand.

If I had to say one thing that has to be done collectively by Canadians, it is to get that better understanding. Invest in science, invest in research, invest in the kind of understanding we need for the long term to deal with this correctly.

Thank you.

• (1040)

The Chair: Other comments?

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: I won't repeat what Peter indicated. Some things have occurred. There are some birds that we don't normally see in Iqaluit, like blue jays. Those are odd things that are coming up. There are weird kinds of insects coming up. People do see them. My family, originally from Pangnirtung, is very traditional in terms of harvesting something like that. The seasons and the ice in Cumberland Sound are examples. Turbot fishing was occurring quite a bit, but the ice conditions in Cumberland Sound have not permitted that for a number of years, so there are immediate impacts on that.

Peter is right that we are starting to make modifications in terms of permafrost impacts on buildings. I know for our office, which was built a couple of years ago, they have taken that into consideration.

It's something that we need to deal with. The Government of Nunavut does have a climate change strategy as well that we are trying to implement, but we also need to take a look at the opportunities that will occur.

Let's say, for example, that the Northwest Passage was to open up a little bit more. We need to take advantage of some of those opportunities. Sovereignty is going to be a big issue for the north. I think it was yesterday or this morning that Russia said in the media that Canada is not doing enough to protect the north. It's too weak. Northerners need to be involved in that process. It cannot just be people from southern Canada dictating how we're going to deal with climate change in the north. We need to be involved.

The Chair: Mr. Brooks.

Mr. Harvey Brooks: I echo those comments. Climate change is likely to be a significant issue for us in the future. We are taking steps to address our own carbon footprint in Yukon, but also to understand that there will not be a solution to this problem without a significant southern strategy. We just recently established the Yukon Climate Change Research Centre of Excellence at Yukon College, as well as the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre, to try to get an understanding of what is taking place, get the research questions answered, and also look for opportunities in the future that may present themselves as a result of changes as well as the adaptive costs that we might be facing.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bélanger.

[*English*]

Now we'll go to Mr. Duncan for five minutes.

Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, CPC): Thank you very much. My question is for Mr. Vician.

You stated that you felt the NWT was not convinced that MPMO, the major project management office, was the way to go. I'm just wondering, number one, whether that is a government position. Number two, was that position taken in consultation with industry? Do they share that view as well?

Mr. Peter Vician: At this point the recommendation, the way we understand it, is that some form of satellite MPMO exists in the north. At this point, the answer I previously gave is what the government's position is. We believe the existing systems of review of our development projects is the right pattern to take. If there is a potential for improvement by a different form of coordination at the federal level, and if you want to call it a satellite MPMO, we will accept that. However, we think there are existing systems in place already that could satisfy that requirement.

Mr. John Duncan: I can tell you that this has been very welcome by industry in the areas where we have set them up, so I was actually kind of struck by your comments.

It's fairly clear from the discussion that the two questions, regulatory regimes and devolution, are closely tied together. You can't get to where you want to go on regulatory regime without devolution. At least I think that's what I'm hearing, quite clearly.

We are also hearing that it's important that decisions be made in the north as much as that the drivers of decisions be in the north. We have the example of the Yukon. So I guess my question for the NWT and Nunavut would be this: What can be driven locally in the north to get us closer to devolution? And what absolutely has to happen federally? Where is the biggest stumbling block? Is this not once again shared? I mean, there have to be a lot of responsible parties to get it where it needs to go, and so far, it's a little bit unclear to the committee how to get where we need to get.

• (1045)

Mr. Peter Vician: Let me take the second part. I agree with you fully that the responsibilities are divested, with all the governments—territorial, federal, and aboriginal governments—having to come to a conclusion on devolution for the territories. That has to happen on a willing basis by all parties. We're willing. We're ready to sit down seriously to complete a devolution agreement. We need the federal government to demonstrate that same willingness and to find ourselves in a final forum for an agreement in principle in the short term, going to a final agreement, hopefully, very soon thereafter.

I think it's important to understand that we don't necessarily see regulatory improvement following a devolution arrangement. I may have misspoken earlier. We believe that improvements are possible, and we reported on them to Minister Strahl recently. That can happen immediately on the whole regulatory environment, and that should proceed regardless of whether devolution is happening tomorrow or next year or the year after.

Thank you.

[Translation]

The Chair: Ms. Keenainak.

[English]

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: I don't know about others, but I can add to what Peter has commented on.

We know that devolution in Nunavut is probably going to be a little bit later than in NWT, but we would like to at least start the discussions on how that's going to work. We also need to make sure we discuss the experience the Yukon has had in terms of that process. We'll also be discussing with the NWT how they do their devolution.

So it's just a matter of getting to the table and actually starting to write things down, as Peter indicated, like an agreement in principle and an official signing. So it's just getting to the table and starting to negotiate.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Duncan.

Now we move to Mr. Asselin, from the Bloc Québécois.

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Manicouagan, BQ): My question goes to the Yukon representatives as well.

In your conclusion, you say: "We look forward to getting more detailed input on the structure and operations of the new agency." What are the details you look forward to getting? That is a significant line. You put it in your conclusion, so it must be very important to you.

You go on to say, and I quote: "I look forward to the establishment of the federal-territorial working group that will provide us with a structured forum in which to move forward." Can you tell us more about the ideal structure that would allow you to operate within the working group with your expectations harmonized?

[English]

Mr. Harvey Brooks: Thank you very much for the question.

We'd very much like to sit down with INAC officials and work together to get a good understanding of what the regional economic development agency would like to do, the funding it has available, the coordination it can provide, and how it will interact with each territory on an ongoing basis to establish the priorities that are there for each of us, and how the interaction of the first nations comes into that. We have been using a process with our SINED program funding whereby we have an annual meeting where we work with first nations and territories and the federal government to establish joint priorities. We think something along that line is important to discuss and work toward.

Again, we don't see ourselves as stakeholders in the same sense as other stakeholders have been consulted. We would very much like to work in partnership on this. I think if we do, we can achieve the maximum benefits of this initiative.

• (1050)

[Translation]

The Chair: Do you want to answer as well?

[English]

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: I think Harvey has summed it up. There have not been a lot of discussions with us in terms of the nuts and bolts of an RDA yet. There have been little bits of meetings with us individually. One of the things we've been asking for as three jurisdictions is that we meet with INAC officials in one room rather than one-off. That's one of the things I hope we're going to be doing this afternoon on this particular project.

For Nunavut, we do have a process as well, similar to Yukon's, where we work with the Nunavut Economic Forum, which is an organization of our Inuit organizations, the business sector, the different sectors, and government. The federal government is involved in that forum. We do have a process in place whereby we determine the priorities, let's say, for the investment plan for the SINED program.

Mr. Peter Vician: I share those views and have nothing more to add. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mr. Asselin.

Mr. Gérard Asselin: Mr. Chair, forming a working group can be an empty gesture. If the government intends to form a working group, are Yukon and the Northwest Territories ready? Have they given it any thought? What are their expectations and priorities? What recommendations are they ready to make in the working group so that it is productive and so that it produces results on the ground relatively quickly? We know that anything the working group comes up with will have financial implications. Is the government ready to respond to those implications in its current budget or in subsequent budgets?

With regard to infrastructure, you always have to have assessments in the Northwest Territories and perhaps in Yukon. Do you have the machinery, the workforce and the materials you need to build small craft harbours, and to provide your communities with infrastructure for health and education? The North has to be developed, but it has to be done by considering the needs of the people.

[*English*]

Mr. Harvey Brooks: I think we're looking for more of a joint working committee with INAC. We're fully prepared. We've put forward our names—each territory has put forward names to establish the committee. We're ready to work together.

I think the meetings will substantially reduce any uncertainty that might be out there as to how the regional economic development agency may form and how it would operate, and that's very important for us as well. We have good models of partnership that have developed over the years, and we'd like to see those incorporated into the agency as it moves forward. I think it's important that we sit down, especially in the initial phases of establishing the agency, to make sure we have a good grounding and a good solid common understanding of what the operational practices will be and how territorial input will be achieved by those processes.

The Chair: Are there any other comments on that?

Briefly, on that, if you could.

Mr. Peter Vician: Very briefly, you've heard from the federal government with regard to its northern strategy. Those tenets are solid. We'll be building on those types of tenets to see where we can add value through this northern agency to deliver on all those goals in the coming years. We believe the capacity is there, as you asked, with regard to how to get it done. The issue is having common views that this is what we want to achieve.

Thank you.

• (1055)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Asselin.

Mr. Albrecht, you have three minutes.

[*English*]

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have just a very short question.

I agree that you folks have all done good work on trying to develop some kind of cooperative effort here. Certainly you've submitted ideas already to the minister. Can I just confirm that you are in fact having a meeting with Mr. Borbey at the department this afternoon to discuss some of your issues? I know that was one of the proposals at least.

Mr. Peter Vician: Yes, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Mr. Brooks, on page 8 of your document, I happened to notice that you omitted the last bullet there. Was that intentional or...?

Mr. Harvey Brooks: I was trying to meet the chairman's need for time.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: So there have been some discussions related to four offices, one in each territory and one satellite office.

Mr. Harvey Brooks: Yes.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay, that's it. There were just a couple of follow-up items, if I could, that came up in the discussion here this morning.

First of all, I can't recall which witness mentioned this, but there's a joint territorial recommendation regarding new energy. I think it was related to the question of Mr. Albrecht. If something like that could be provided, I think that would be helpful.

Secondly, at least Nunavut and Yukon referenced the climate change energy plan or document you have in place. If any of you could provide that, that would be terrific. I think we had several questions on the climate change and energy issue. That would be very good.

Finally, to the Northwest Territories, and I know we didn't have the complete document in both languages today, but you referenced some statistical data. If you have that available once it's translated, or if there's anything else you can give us in that regard, Monsieur Vician, that would be helpful. Thank you very much.

Ms. Keenainak.

Mrs. Rosemary Keenainak: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think what I might do is leave you a copy of the 2008 Nunavut economic outlook that was recently done, with funding from the government, by the Nunavut Economic Forum. It does provide you with a bit of a snapshot on how things are happening in Nunavut. I think probably the NWT and Yukon would have a similar document as well.

Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: On behalf of the members of the committee, I thank you for your presentations. I am sure that they will stimulate our future discussions. Thank you very much.

[*English*]

The meeting is adjourned.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

**Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:
Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante :
<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.