



## **Press Release**

***For immediate release***

### **The Kativik Regional Government takes stock of a challenging year caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and looks to next year with hope and optimism**

**Kuujuaq, Québec, November 27, 2020** - As the year 2020 draws to a close, the Kativik Regional Government councillors recognized the numerous setbacks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic but are confident Nunavik will recover in the New Year and set its sights on fulfilling several ambitious objectives.

One of the goals discussed by the KRG councillors during a four-day meeting in Kuujuaq by videoconference was to become an aggressive advocate for more adequate housing for elders in all 14 communities. Nunivaat, the statistics program for Nunavik, released a study showing that the elders' population had more than doubled over 20 years from 1996 to 2016. The trend shows that Inuit elders face unsuitable housing and inadequate revenues putting them in a vulnerable position in comparison to the elderly in the rest of Quebec and Canada.

During their deliberations, councillors also assessed Tamaani Internet's challenges in offering adequate customer services to their subscribers. They urged Tamaani to better inform residents of recent improvements and on the deployment of the fibre optic project that will begin next year.

The KRG continues to play an important role in helping contain the spread of the coronavirus in Nunavik while supporting the Mayors in maintaining emergency response teams in place in all communities. While there have been few active cases of Covid-19 in the region, the pandemic has nonetheless had a major impact on several economic sectors. For instance it seriously undermined the Nunavik workforce by creating obstacles to the holding of training programs in construction, mining, health and education. The pandemic underscored the vulnerability of the Nunavik workforce. The region needs to gain more autonomy with respect to its manpower needs according to a study, which emphasized the importance of preparing for the economic recovery that will come after the pandemic.

A multi-year strategic human resources development plan was presented to the Councillors, which emphasized the growing need to eliminate the educational disparities

of Nunavik from those in the South. The number of secondary school graduates increased from 10.6 per cent of the total number of students to 16.3-per cent from 2006 to 2016. However, the number of post-secondary graduate students dropped from 21.1-per cent to 18.2-per cent over the same ten-year period according to a recent study. It calls for the creation of a vocational training centre on the Ungava Coast.

Several municipal projects had to be postponed due to the pandemic. KRG councillors were anxious to resume construction of urgent infrastructure projects. The five-year \$100-million Isurruutiit Program signed in 2016 is drawing to a close. There are still some projects to be completed before the program can be finalized. The KRG is anxious to begin negotiations with the Quebec government on a new agreement that will help shape future development in the region.

The next council meeting will be held in Kuujuaq from February 22 to 25, 2021.

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**Contact:**

Communications Department  
Kativik Regional Government  
Tel: (819) 964-2961 ext. 2358  
[media@krq.ca](mailto:media@krq.ca)

*The Kativik Regional Government is a non-ethnic public organization created in 1978, under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. The organization has jurisdiction over nearly the entire territory of Québec north of the 55th parallel in areas such as municipal matters, transportation, the environment, policing, employment, labour training, income security, childcare services, renewable resources, land-use planning, civil security and economic development.*