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What Was Said
PUVIRNITUQ
May 14 to 16, 2013

The Parnasimautik workshop in Puvirnituk brought together the representatives of local organizations, residents and regional leaders to discuss multiple sectors of community life and the foundations of a comprehensive vision for regional development.

Who We Are

(Culture and Identity • Harvesting • Lands • Environmental and Regional Planning)

In the past, Inuit were treated as if they didn't exist. We can no longer let ourselves be pushed around.

In 1975, some were in favour of the JBNQA and some were against it. Since the signing of the JBNQA, we do not understand what has happened to our culture and way of life.

We are mistreating the traditional Inuit ways of doing things. Instead of waiting to be given what we want, we must begin really working for what we need. Our capacity to survive and our tradition of sharing will be our inspirations.

Language is being brushed aside in our organizations and in our homes. We have to teach Inuktitut everywhere, not just in schools.

Our ancestors would sometimes go hungry and even starve. Today, we have fishing contests and even sell fish and wildlife. Sharing is an important part of our culture.

The way we distribute benefits from Raglan and other agreements does not match the Inuit way.

In 1975, the mining companies got exactly what they wanted: the land. The people of Puvirnituk did not agree. How can Inuit reclaim their ownership of the land? We must know what we want for the future.

Some Puvirnitumiut believe that individuals should be able to own their land, and not have to rent it.

Our Communities

(Elders, Women and Youth • Education • Health • Housing • Justice and Social Regulation • Community development • Biofood • Employment)

Not that long ago when I was young, there were rules in our homes. The leadership role played by parents has diminished.

We must consider the family, parents, children, grand-parents, cousins and so on as the foundation of our communities, of our future.

Inuit history must be included in the school curriculum to teach who we are.

We must teach youth the Inuit ways, and make sure they are concerned about the future. In the past, parents used to teach their children traditional ways at home.

Before the JBNQA, federal schools delivered vocational training. If it was good then, it should be good now.

Of 35 students, we were only two to graduate. Parents don't seem to push enough for their children to go to school.



It is not because we get a southern education that we will lose our culture. Education will help us to advance.

Those with mental-health issues grow up without being able to talk about it. There should be a psychiatrist to work with local social workers.

Women must be informed about the risks posed by alcohol during pregnancy and encouraged not to drink when pregnant.

Many blame youth protection services for sending our children south. We have to try to understand why kids are taken from their homes. Inuit must figure out a way to fix this problem, to stop pointing fingers at each other.

Loss of Inuit identity can lead to alcohol and drug abuse, and dropping out of school. How can we

ourselves start to solve our problems related to alcohol, to drugs and to mental illness?

Since the start of Nutrition North Canada, prices for many foods have gone up, except for vegetables. Inuit are now eating like rabbits. The Kuujuaq char hatchery project is a good example of a better way to increase the availability of nutritious food.

We were told that with jet service to Puvirnituk, food prices would go down. But prices haven't changed.

The coop is helping Inuit. I really want to thank the co-op for the discounts it offers and everything it has done.

English or French seem to have become a prerequisite for many jobs. I want this requirement to be changed so that unilingual Inuktitut speakers can hope for a job other than wastewater truck driver.



We need to improve attendance at work in the health sector. There are many health services that are not being delivered because the employees are not coming to work.

We must aim to train and educate as many workers as we can, including doctors. In Greenland, Inuit are working in their own language. Let's not just look at our problems. Let's look at our future.

With reference to a medevac that took place last year where all the people in the plane were Inuit (the patient, the two pilots and the nurse), it was pointed out that Inuit have progressed a lot.

Homeownership is one way to contribute to solving the region's housing shortage.

On July 1, 2013, my house rent will increase to \$700 per month. Rent has become an additional financial burden.

Puvirnituk needs another childcare centre. Many people want to work, but have no one to look after their children.

The Sailivik elders' residence is doing a good job. Elders are being helped. I would also like to see a women's shelter in Puvirnituk, where women can get help when we're not treated well.

Court cases can be delayed for months, causing the suffering of those involved to carry on. And then, when the cases are finally heard by the court, the proceedings feel rushed. This way of delivering justice is abusive.

The Sungirtuijuit Justice Committee sits with the court in Puvirnituk. More and more, the court is recognizing our work and services. Alcohol is the main reason people go to jail. If we had a way to heal people, it would help.

One of my family members is at a detention centre. Only once in a while do detainees get visits from councillors and healers.

We need our justice system, our courts and our judges to take into account our culture.

Our Region

(Tourism • Mining • Energy • Transportation • Telecommunications)

When I visited Kangiqsujuaq, I could understand the benefit of the park. It was nice to be welcomed and the workers were all Inuit. We should prepare to welcome those people from other countries who also want to come to our snow festival.

Mining will have impacts on the water we drink and the animals we eat. It creates pollution.

The mining companies are going here and there to look for minerals. We have to get the best out of it. We have to work together. Right now, we're only getting a little money from the minerals extracted from our land.

We would like to use the energy from our rivers for electricity.



Long ago, people’s dogs were slaughtered. Now we’re forced to use vehicles to hunt.

The Cree already have a highway to the south. We have to find out about the impacts this link has had on their communities and on their lives.

There is a lot of confusion about who is in charge of the local FM radio stations. We also need better cell phone technology. Funding for these is very poor.

Our Vision of Development

The JBNQA gave away our lands for services that the governments should have been providing anyways. Now the government wants to develop the land. We must use this opportunity to fix the JBNQA.

It is for us to define the kind of partnership we want to have with those who want to develop our territory’s potentials.

We have missed many opportunities to get our own government. I think we missed out. Let’s get our own government and make our own laws.

We should create a chamber of commerce in Nunavik for businesses to voice their opinions and

improve their capacity to generate benefits for the region.

In the old days, in the igloo, we were able to organize how we lived and decide what would be on our left and what would be on our right. We want to share our ideas concerning mining and make sure we get a fair share of the revenue.

When there are federal and provincial elections, Inuit are asked to go vote for people they don’t even know and have never seen. We should receive more information from candidates.

If a museum or cultural centre were to be constructed in Puvirnitug, it would be a place to organize cultural activities and learn about our culture. We should also have a program similar to Nunavut Sivunitsavut.

Working together, we were able to have the Nastapoka River included in the Tursujuq park. The Nastapoka is now protected from industrial development. United, we can make sure that development respects what is important to us.

Youth are not just our future leaders; they must be involved in laying the foundations of Nunavik’s development now.



Regional leaders ended the Parnasimautik workshop by thanking local representatives and residents for speaking up on the development issues facing Puvirnitug and the entire region. Puvirnitummiut were encouraged to continue this important reflection process. Parnasimautik workshop information, including a community workshop schedule, may be found at: www.parnasimautik.com.

