



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and Gwich'in Tribal Council in Talks on an Economic Development Cooperation MOU

INUVIK, NT, October 30, 2026. Leaders of the Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC) and Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) announced today they are working on an Economic Development Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This includes joint pursuit of defence and dual-use infrastructure opportunities, such as the proposed expansion of the Inuvik Forward Operating Location (FOL).

These leaders view this work as demonstrating how:

- Indigenous rights holders and public governments can work together to support and strengthen Canadian Arctic sovereignty and national defence in the North;
- Respect for the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA) and the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (GCLCA), including their economic measures, can help advance the Inuvik FOL and other projects in a timely and durable manner; and,
- Investment in Inuvik's infrastructure through this project can improve the well-being of Inuvialuit and Gwich'in communities through long-term economic, employment, and training opportunities.
- Rights holders such as the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in are well positioned to move beyond being "Indigenous partners" and be active contributors to Canada's defence industrial base.

GTC Grand Chief Frederick Blake Jr. IRC Chair and CEO Erwin Elias announced that their senior officials are working towards an MOU on Economic Development Cooperation. This work will also aim to protect the land, water, wildlife, culture and ways of life, and to secure lasting benefits for Inuvialuit and Gwich'in. It reflects the shared commitment of Inuvialuit and Gwich'in to work together for the benefit of present and future generations.



QUOTES

“Canada needs partners that can deliver in the Arctic, and Inuvialuit are ready. Our board, our community corporations and our businesses are prepared to turn this investment into jobs, training and infrastructure that last for generations.” —Erwin Elias, Chair, IRC

“Canada’s planned defence expenditures in the North present a tremendous opportunity to achieve significant economic development to benefit all Gwich’in and Inuvialuit, especially our youth. In pursuing the Memorandum of Understanding on Economic Development Cooperation with the Inuvialuit we are building on the Gwich’in tradition of working in partnership to achieve our Nation’s goals. Taking this course will benefit future generations of Gwich’in and Inuvialuit and demonstrate the strength of our respective treaties as the basis for this collaborative effort.” — Frederick Blake Jr., Grand Chief, Gwich’in Tribal Council

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About Inuvialuit Regional Corporation

Inuvialuit Regional Corporation represents the collective interests of Inuvialuit under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA). IRC works to improve the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of Inuvialuit and supports responsible development across the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

About Gwich’in Tribal Council

Gwich’in Tribal Council represents Gwich’in Participants under the Gwich’in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (GCLCA) and works to protect Gwich’in rights, lands, culture and economic interests for present and future generations.