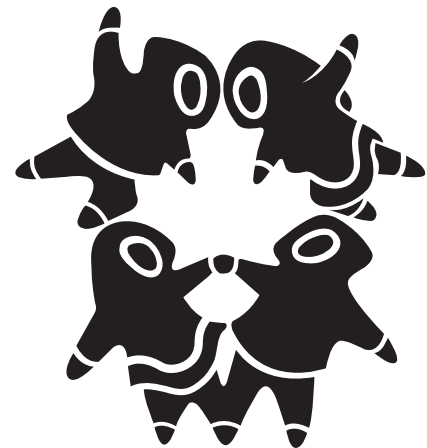


Backgrounder on Accountability

**For Discussion at the Accountability Sectoral
Session, January 25 & 26, 2005, Ottawa, Ontario**



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INUIT TAPIRIIT KANATAMI

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POINT OF DEPARTURE

As the Prime Minister observed at the First Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable held in April 2004, *“The sad and sobering fact is that we do not need economic indicators to see the difference in quality of life between the majority of Aboriginal Canadians and the rest of Canadians.”*

The point of departure for any discussion on accountability should be an understanding of the common purpose shared by Inuit and the Government of Canada. An overarching goal of these discussions should be an accountability framework that would be of equal value and benefit to each party.

Accountability is only one dimension of a much broader relationship. Accountability among partners is qualitatively different than hierarchical accountability. Inuit see accountability as a way “to build consensus, through broad participation and consultation”.

The Prime Minister has acknowledged the need to break away from Aboriginal policy under a First-Nation’s-on-Reserve umbrella: *“It is of utmost importance that we recognize the unique culture, lifestyle and environment of the Inuit peoples – and their increasing contribution to the realization of our northern dream.”*

New Inuit-specific approaches are required given the environmental, geographic and cultural realities of the Arctic regions of Canada. At the Roundtable, Inuit submitted to the Prime Minister three fundamental initiatives which could be a foundation for this new relationship: *an Inuit Partnership Accord, a new Land Claims Implementation Policy and Inuit-Specific Policies and Programs* [see below: Foundations for a New Relationship]

THE POLITICAL COMMITMENT FOR CHANGE

In March of 2004, in meeting with the leaders of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Métis National Council and the Assembly of First Nations, the Prime Minister set out a clear commitment to *“renew the relationship between Aboriginal Peoples and the Government of Canada.”* He was very blunt in his assessment of the current relationship when he stated that from his perspective, the current system of delivering programs and addressing the social economic challenges facing Aboriginal Peoples across Canada is *“broken”* and needs to be *“redefined”*.

In April 2004 at the Roundtable, the Prime Minister was more specific about developing a better accountability framework:

“If the 8 billion dollars we spend each year is not doing all that it should – let’s spend it better. If the way we’re structured as a government isn’t working, let’s change it.”

“...we must hold ourselves to account – in what we’re doing well and what we’re not doing so well. We need a manageable and transparent Aboriginal Report Card to set clear targets for achievement – and to measure our progress and success in getting there.”

For their part, Inuit organizations understand that one aspect of accountability involves reporting and accounting for public money spent, an obligation that Inuit have accepted and honoured. The National Inuit Organization, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and all other Inuit organizations operate in the public domain and Inuit themselves, who pay all taxes in Canada, accept their responsibility for full disclosure within their own organizations and to all Canadians.

However, Inuit want to explore accountability principles in a broader context involving financial and non-financial dimensions so as to better define the Government of Canada's long-promised renewed relationship with Inuit.

CURRENT STRUCTURES & PROCESSES

Funding and Reporting

There is no single window for reporting within the Government of Canada structure for Inuit issues. Many departments with clear and vital responsibilities for Inuit issues, such as the Departments of the Environment and Indian and Northern Affairs have regional north - south relationships. The Inuit of the Western Arctic are reflected through the Prairie region, in the Eastern Arctic, through the Ontario region, the Inuit of Nunavik through Quebec, while the Inuit of Labrador, come under the Atlantic region.

According to the Auditor General, four departments account for 95 percent of federal funding to Aboriginal Peoples. In order of size of spending, they are: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Health Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Currently in the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, there is not a single middle or senior level public servant with sole responsibility for Inuit affairs. While a commitment has been made to create an Inuit Secretariat within the Government of Canada, as is often the case, changes to the machinery of Government can become mired in bureaucratic processes. Tangible progress towards transformative change in the relationship with Inuit has not yet occurred.

The Office of the Auditor General has released reports to Parliament (primarily in the context of First Nations) that estimate Aboriginal organizations are required to submit hundreds of reports annually to these four federal departments. In the past, there has been overlap and duplication among the required reports and, in many cases, limited use is being made of the reports by the federal departments.

Reporting requirements established by federal government departments are also a significant burden for the small Inuit communities and organizations.

Some of the points raised by the Auditor General which require review and attention in ongoing discussions between Inuit and the Government of Canada are the following:

- Reporting requirements are dictated, not based on consultation.
- The information reported is generally not used to set funding levels.
- The reports contain information that does not reflect community priorities.
- New reports are being introduced with little or no review of the reporting requirements for existing programs, adding to the reporting burden.
- There is little feedback to Aboriginal Peoples, except for an analysis of audited financial statements.
- Most required reports for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and Health Canada do not provide adequate information on performance or results.
- Little of the information being collected from the Aboriginal Peoples is being used by a number of the federal departments in their reports to Parliament.
- Resources used to meet reporting requirements could be better used to provide direct support to the community.
- Steps need to be taken to streamline reporting requirements.

- The program structure established by the federal departments is an obstacle to reforming reporting requirements and needs to be reviewed.

If the Government of Canada is to ever seriously address Inuit issues, it must adopt an Inuit specific or Arctic region in its reporting structures.

Policy & Legislative Initiatives Affecting Inuit

Accountability discussions between the Government of Canada and Inuit also need to address non-financial issues. For example, in recent years the Government of Canada has announced an ocean strategy, and within the past 12 months, called for two new northern strategies in the Speeches from the Throne (a Northern Economic Development Strategy and a comprehensive, integrated Northern Strategy).

These sorts of initiatives must also be considered in the context of any new accountability framework given the significant consequences they will have for Inuit.

Many of the complex issues that cross provincial and territorial boundaries are discussed through the Federal-Provincial-Territorial-Aboriginal process (FPTA).

The basic format of this “process” calls for an annual meeting of the Ministers responsible for aboriginal and/or northern affairs, as well as the leaders of the major aboriginal organizations. Ministers identify “priority” issues and working groups comprised of public servants from Provinces, Territories as well as staff from the Aboriginal organizations, are requested to develop recommendations or solutions.

At the most recent meeting of the Aboriginal Ministers and Aboriginal Leaders in Iqaluit in the fall of 2002, the Federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, Provincial Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and five aboriginal leaders advanced education and housing as priority issues and officials were instructed to develop and “recommend strategies” to address these issues. To date, senior public servants from 13 Governments and staff representing aboriginal organizations are no closer to developing one simple recommendation than they were at the beginning. If anything, in spite of efforts by aboriginal representatives to establish some clear focus, the process retreated further into jurisdictional confusion.

A fundamental flaw in the FPTA process is that it attempts to address Aboriginal issues with a one-size-fits-all approach, often with a notable bias towards First Nations on and off reserves. Eight of the provinces at the FPTA table do not have measurable Inuit populations, but they remain in a position to influence or limit Inuit specific approaches.

ITK would like to explore the possibility of an Inuit-Specific FPTA process based on a regional relationship and partnership with the Government of Canada and relevant provincial and territorial jurisdictions (Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Quebec and Newfoundland & Labrador). This would be in addition to the existing FPTA process.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's Role in National Inuit Issues

In the political development of the Inuit regions over the past thirty years, Inuit have often chosen public Government, which is clearly reflected in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, Nunavik in Quebec, and Labrador. Unlike other National Aboriginal Organizations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami does not have a “Self Government Mandate.” However, within regions of the NWT, Northern Quebec, and Labrador, there are self-government discussions designed to give Inuit at the local and regional level more control over administering and delivering some government services.

As the national voice for Inuit, ITK's mandate is to protect Inuit rights, language, culture, and the environment, and to help Inuit move closer to social and economic equity with other Canadians. ITK also has a mandate to monitor the annual spending of public governments on Inuit programs. This is an important but difficult task. For example, INAC's estimates state annual spending of more than four billion dollars per year on Indian and Inuit programs, but provide no breakdown for Inuit regions or communities.

Among the problems outlined by the Prime Minister in his discussions with the Aboriginal Leadership, two are noteworthy in this context:

- 1.) too many federal programs operate in isolation, with a serious lack of contact and co-ordination across the government agencies, and
- 2.) there is an absence of reporting and accounting back to the aboriginal peoples themselves.

Complicating the work of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami is the fact that currently there is no long-term financial or core funding arrangement between ITK and the Government of Canada. This means ITK (and other Inuit organizations) must spend an inordinate amount of time and energy chasing resources in order to remain in operation and carry out their responsibilities.

The consolidated financial statement for ITK for the year ending March 31, 2004 totalled just over four million dollars, most of which come from agreements with a range of Government of Canada departments. Only eight percent is committed funding. The remaining 92 % is the result of negotiating as many as 40 service contracts in any given year. Through these initiatives, ITK has been able to provide federal departments and agencies with insights, technical information, advice and policy analysis on a variety of complex legal, environmental, health and socio-economic issues that include:

- Environmental matters, including vital input on climate change; assessments of the impact and effectiveness of programs to address transboundary pollution in the arctic regions; managing the complex issues related to food safety and human health resulting from industrial contaminants in food sources which are part of the daily diet of Inuit.
- Health issues, including classifying Inuit health priorities; evaluating health care delivery in Arctic regions; working with Health Canada to develop policies and programs relating to the determinants of healthy communities, health human resources and the Aboriginal Health Blueprint.

ITK and INAC have been able to negotiate and consolidate several funding agreements into a single annual contribution agreements. In respect of all other departments ITK negotiates as many as thirty separate agreements each year. Some of these agreements are designed to deliver a department's own mandate to Inuit.

The current funding processes mean that the capacity and ongoing existence of ITK and other Inuit organizations depend of their ability to identify and qualify for federal program money. This uncertain financial system seriously restricts community-generated program development that reflects Inuit culture, environment and geography. This system is counter-productive and does not allow Inuit themselves to assess or determine their needs and priorities, nor to provide initiatives in health, environment, socio-economic or research matters.

THE EVOLVING CONTEXT

Inuit communities and organizations now deliver programs and services and in some cases administer multi-million dollar annual budgets. There are reporting relationships within communities and between the communities/organizations and the federal government.

As a result of recommendations of the Office of Auditor General in the 1990s, the federal government expressed an intention to reduce the reporting burden on Aboriginal peoples and to bring these reporting requirements in line with the various types of funding arrangements which are now being used. However, current concerns about the adequacy of controls over public expenditures are likely to put pressure on the federal departments and organizations to again increase controls and reporting requirements.

To date most of the studies of accountability and reporting processes affecting Aboriginal peoples have involved the First Nations. Consideration needs to be given to obtaining better data and information on the situation affecting the Inuit who primarily live in two provinces and two territories.

THE FOUNDATION FOR A NEW RELATIONSHIP

An Inuit Partnership Accord

When the Prime Minister spoke about the need to renew the relationship between Inuit and the Government of Canada, Inuit were on one hand encouraged, and on the other, sceptical. Inuit have been calling for this kind of transformative change for some time.

Among many of the positive and yet unfulfilled recommendations of the Royal Commission Report on Aboriginal Peoples in 1996 was the need for a new partnership between Inuit and the Government of Canada. The partnership context was also the theme of *Gathering Strength*, the Government's response to the RCAP report.

Inuit, anxious to define a clear and productive relationship with the Government of Canada, embraced the idea and in 2002 developed and submitted to the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, a Draft Partnership Accord. The draft accord was re-submitted by ITK at the April 2004 Aboriginal Roundtable as a remaining priority and the foundation for the new relationship promised by the Prime Minister.

Four years after this Partnership Accord was initially submitted to the Government, and nine months after it was re-submitted at the Aboriginal Roundtable, the Department has still not formally responded to the draft accord.

Land Claims Implementation

The Government of Canada, over a thirty-year period, has negotiated and settled four comprehensive land claims in Inuit regions. The land claim agreements are complex and comprehensive, and they contain constitutionally enshrined provisions for implementation. They are modern day treaties that recognize Inuit ownership and rights over land and resources, and provide financial compensation for land.

Eleven years after the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement (NLCA) was signed, there are several substantive outstanding obligations to Inuit that have yet to be implemented. While interpretations might vary, it is the Inuit view that failure to implement some of these obligations could amount to a fundamental breach of the Agreement. There needs to be careful examination

of a range of mechanisms by which Inuit can hold Canada accountable for its fulfilment (or lack of fulfilment) of treaties and land claims.

Article 37 of the NLCA states:

“ – to promote timely and effective implementation of the Agreement, Inuit and Government shall identify, for multi-year planning periods, the implementation activities and the level of government implementation funding which will be provided during any planning period,”

Since the beginning of the implementation funding negotiations in 2001, NTI has consistently requested that INAC comply with Art. 37. However, INAC (formerly DIAND) has been equally consistent in refusing to disclose the level of implementation funding of the Government of Canada arguing that they “interpret that Article differently.”

However, neglect or mismanagement of implementation obligations in relation to these and other claims has also attracted the attention of the Auditor General. The 2003 Auditor General's Report was critical of INAC's management of the implementation of the Nunavut and Gwich'in Agreements. In particular, because of INAC's insistence on consensus, the Annual Reports of the Implementation Panel are effectively sanitized of all substantive content and they paint a picture of implementation being free of dispute. This point is acknowledged by INAC. Consequently, the Annual Report of the Panel does not inform Parliament, or the Canadian public, about the progress of implementation.

In addition, INAC's insistence that they will not permit any issue involving money to go to an Arbitration Board further insulates the department from being accountable to the only recognized claims dispute resolution body.

There has been within the Federal Government the misconception that through the settlement of land claims and the creation of Nunavut, Inuit issues have been dealt with. The land claims agreements are comprehensive and historic, but they did not absolve the Government of its fiduciary responsibilities in relation to Inuit.

At the end of 2003, Inuit and other Aboriginal Peoples who are parties to modern land claims agreements formed a Land Claim Agreement Coalition to press the Government of Canada to adopt a formal, constructive policy on the implementation of modern land claims agreements. The Coalition demonstrated a number of central problems with the federal government's current approach to the implementation of modern land claims agreements. One key problem is the lack of federal government commitment to achieve the broad objectives of land claims agreements and self-government agreements within the context of new relationships, as opposed to mere technical compliance with narrowly defined obligations.

The importance of this problem has been highlighted by the Auditor General of Canada in her most recent annual report to Parliament. The practical consequences of the problem for Inuit are enormous. To recite just one example, a study done jointly for Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Government of Nunavut by Price Waterhouse Coopers has identified alarming and unnecessary costs --- some \$65 million to the taxpayers of Canada annually for the recruitment and relocation of non-Inuit personnel from the South --- flowing from the failure to make progress against the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement objective of a public sector work force in Nunavut that reflects the population make-up of Nunavut.

Fundamentally, the claims are vehicles for Inuit to utilize their lands, financial resources and the terms negotiated in their comprehensive land claim settlements to realize their full potential as Canadians, both collectively and as individuals. In terms of developing the resources of the north,

the claims organizations are well placed within their respective regions to play a vital role in the future development of the arctic's resources.

From the point of view of Inuit in Canada, the Partnership Accord and Land Claim Implementation are fundamental relationship issues that cut to the very core of addressing the "shameful social economic" conditions that the Prime Minister spoke about. The Inuit expect the Government of Canada to address these proposals, and are prepared to engage with the Government in seeking workable solutions.

The Case for an Inuit-Specific Approach

During their initial meeting with the Prime Minister, the three National Aboriginal Leaders strongly recommended to Mr. Martin that his Cabinet Committee should be structured in a manner to create "specific sub-committees" under the appropriate Minister to set priorities and objectives.

For Inuit, this recommendation was in response to the political reality that within the Federal Government, Inuit issues receive far less weight than those of First Nations and Métis. It has been noted, and remains an inequity in the political structure, that there is no single Minister or Department with clear responsibilities for Inuit.

The commitment for six policy sessions, each with an Inuit-specific focus, is a positive and important step in moving towards Inuit-specific policy initiatives, but this approach must also be accountable through an Inuit-Specific subcommittee of the Cabinet Committee on Aboriginal Affairs. In addition, consideration needs to be given to developing an overall Inuit Social Economic Development strategy that addresses the critical socio-economic factors discussed during the various policy sessions. The recommendations from the policy sessions should form the basis of the agenda for the Cabinet Retreat in the spring of 2005.

Finally, there needs to be full and frank consultation with Inuit on the establishment of an Inuit Secretariat within the Government of Canada, in particular on questions of its mandate and capacity to work towards the develop of a new relationship with Inuit so as to achieve the sort of mutual accountability framework discussed in this paper.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Inuit believe that before the Prime Minister's "*clear and measurable targets*" can be set, it will be necessary to determine how much each Department is spending on Inuit programs. Determining program cost levels and allocations, cannot be based on per capita spending, but rather must reflect the actual costs of doing business in Arctic Canada, given the distances and high costs involved.

There are three critical financial accountability issues that are critical to the rebuilding of a new relationship between the Government of Canada and the Inuit. All of these issues center on establishing and maintaining equitable and accountable funding relationships, beginning with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

The annual spending estimates from INAC do not identify actual amounts of money spent on Inuit programs, but rather present departmental spending under the term "First Nations and Inuit Programs". This suggests Inuit spending is equitable with First Nations which is at best, inaccurate and at worst, misleading.

The Department's estimates state annual spending of more than four billion dollars per year in Indian and Inuit programs, but provides no breakdown for Inuit regions or communities. Indeed many of the programs in the departmental appropriations specify spending for "First Nations on Reserves."

The Government of Canada currently provides core funding to First Nations organizations at both community (Band Support funding) and regional levels (Regional & Tribal Council funding – TB authority, November 27, 1986). Funding is provided through INAC on an annual basis in a manner that affords maximum flexibility in the delivery of specified services. These services include:

Band Councils - Chief and council allowances, travel expenses, administration overhead costs. No deliverables are specified.

Regional & Tribal Councils – Advisory services (band government, financial management, community planning, technical services, economic development), management and general administration costs including audit fees.

Both Band Support funding and Regional & Tribal Council funding are provided via formula. For example purposes, the Bands and Tribal Council within the Gwich'in Settlement Area of the Northwest Territories were provided with the following core funding from these two programs during the 1999/2000 fiscal year:

Band Councils (four).....	\$912,527 (total)
Gwich'in Tribal Council.....	\$694,652
Total.....	\$1,607,179

Note:

- i) In 2000 the total eligible Gwich'in population (all ages) was approximately 2700.
- ii) This funding was not affected by the signing of the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement in 1992.
- iii) INAC also provides core funding to eligible regional/national First Nations organizations (PTO's) holding political advocacy as one of their primary functions. As an example the NWT Dene Nation was provided with an initial core allocation of \$212,100 in 2002/2003. (Inuit and First Nations with settled claims are ineligible for this funding).

The Government of Canada currently provides core funding to Inuit organizations at the regional (IRC/NTI/Makivik/LIA) and national level (ITK) through Heritage Canada's (HC) Aboriginal Representative Organization Program (AROP). Funding is provided annually through a contribution agreement that requires a detailed application, provides little flexibility and demands extensive reporting. For example purposes, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) receives an annual core funding AROP contribution of \$118,256. In recent years this has been supplemented by Gathering Strength Capacity Building funding of \$67,955 per year that must be directed at community level activities.

Note:

- i) The total Inuvialuit population (all ages) as of December 2004 was approximately 5,500.
- ii) IRC is not provided with any additional core support funding from other federal or territorial government departments.

Since 1999 IRC has communicated with successive Ministers of INAC on this topic. In all cases, the Minister has provided general recognition of IRC's core funding concerns while failing to provide a definitive course of action to rectify the concern. His comments have included:

- *"this is an issue that can be addressed through continuing dialogue between our respective officials"* (Nault, September 1999);
- *"I have asked my departmental officials to explore those [funding options outlined in your letter] further with IRC "* (Nault, September 1999);
- *"I have asked my officials to fully examine the funding issues you have raised"* (Nault, October 2000); and
- *"I want to assure you that your continued efforts to bring attention to the concerns you have regarding the level of ongoing administrative and program support capacity for Inuvialuit organizations are not going unheard"* (Nault, August 2001).

Despite these encouraging words, subsequent actions by the Government of Canada have proven to be without substance or tangible result. It is noteworthy that nowhere in the correspondence between the Minister of INAC and IRC does the Minister respond directly to the very clear question as to whether the Government of Canada supports the provision of core funding to Inuit organizations in Canada at a level comparable to that provided to First Nations.

During the same period, discussions with INAC employees have provided little clear response – either positive or negative – on this topic. Internal INAC briefing notes have indicated that the Department has been unable to rationalize why existing program authorities preclude Inuit eligibility on policy driven programs like Tribal Council funding. The root cause of this collective inaction appears to lie in the simple fact that the appropriate policy direction within the Government of Canada that clearly defines the governments responsibilities for Canada's Inuit does not exist. There do not appear to be any Treasury Board approved "authorities" that provide the defined level of support. Support to "Indians" is provided for through such authorities but the Inuit have been ignored.

In order to give substance to the commitments of Prime Minister Martin in relation to advancing the social and economic well-being of Canada's aboriginal peoples, there must be immediate and vigorous effort by the Government of Canada to address this key element of Inuit financial capacity, without which Canada's Inuit will be unable to participate in the initiatives that will advance their collective well-being.

The Government of Canada must recognize the necessity of this preliminary step in the collaborative review of Canada's relationship with the Inuit. The creation of an Inuit Secretariat provides an entry point where this issue can receive immediate and focused attention, as does the current Roundtable Sectoral Sessions on Accountability and Negotiations.

TOWARDS AN ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

There are a number of factors that are critical to bring about the positive social, economic and health changes for Inuit. All of these factors point to the need for a renewed relationship and a two way process of accountability.

Below is a draft outline that could assist in framing the discussions on developing an accountability framework:

The Goal of Accountability

- Statement of mutual accountability goals shared by Inuit and the Government of Canada

Analysis of the Accountability Issue

- What are the parties' objectives for an accountability framework?
- What are the shared accountability principles?
- What are the shared priority issues?
- What are the targets or desired results?
- How will Inuit capacity be developed and maintained?

The Accountability Machinery and Processes

- Types of Accountability
 - Financial
 - Non-financial
- Accountability for what Matters
 - Accountability for Results
- Accountable to Whom
 - Internal Federal accountability
 - Federal government accountability to Inuit
 - Inuit accountability to federal organizations & departments
 - Internal Inuit accountability
- Institutional Infrastructure
 - Data collection/methodology
 - Consultative mechanisms
 - Reporting procedures and formats
 - Information flows
 - Benefits and Applications of information
 - Monitoring and auditing
- Timelines
- Adjustment mechanisms

Outputs

- The Federal - Inuit Report Card
- An Inuit Report Card

CONCLUSIONS

There are likely to be differing perceptions and expectations as to what a mutual accountability framework might look like. However, the work and recommendations of the Auditor General indicate that it is possible to redesign program objectives and mechanisms to ensure that they meet the needs and obligations of each party. Indeed INAC has responded by indicating that it welcomes dialogue with Aboriginal peoples on practical approaches to strengthen respective accountability regimes to our mutual benefit.

In moving forward the Inuit call for a process that is:

- Mutually transparent
- Appropriately aligns responsibility and capacity

In order to be accountable for an activity, the Inuit must have the capacity to conduct the activity.

- Equitable

The process of devolving responsibility must not leave Inuit with fewer financial, human and physical resources than the government had used to administer these same programs. The transfer of responsibilities needs to be accompanied by resources for training.

- Stable

In order to make progress on a new relationship and an accountability framework there will need to be a stable system for addressing ongoing Inuit issues. This includes permanent structures in the Government of Canada dedicated specifically to Inuit, as well as resources for the Inuit to maintain their own institutional mechanism to engage the Government of Canada.

- Results-oriented

Inuit subscribe to the Prime Minister's view that the only way to change the system is to set clear targets and measure results in an Aboriginal Report Card. However, it is not reasonable to believe there can be any meaningful accounting for results, until the relationship between Inuit and the Government of Canada has been redefined to include Inuit-specific approaches with clear political and financial commitments. In addition, *both* the Government and Inuit must be responsible for seeking, measuring and achieving these results. Currently Inuit see themselves as accountable to their membership, while being accountable to Government for process.

The Prime Minister said transformative change in the relationship with Aboriginal Peoples will require more than changes to the machinery of Government. It will require a clear plan and it must begin by addressing priority issues including health, lifelong learning, housing, economic opportunities, negotiations (land claim and self government agreements) and mutual accountability.

Inuit have argued throughout the Roundtable sessions, and in particular in discussions leading to the accountability sessions, for the need to set priorities, identify "Inuit Specific" solutions, and develop and recommend realistic policy initiatives. Policy commitments are an essential precondition for development of a clear work plan, with specific targets and result indicators.