

IQALUIT FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

AUGUST 23-24, 2010

Introduction:

There were 8 participants over the 2 day session. The participants were primarily from the economic development field, although 2 (one each day) were from the education department of the Government of Nunavut. The session was designed in the same manner as the previous focus groups.

In general the participants suggested that they were not aware of the department's fourth Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS), although several mentioned being aware of Sustainable Development (SD) issues given that they had come up in their jobs or within their organizations (i.e. mentions of climate change and other staff in the housing, social and environmental areas).

The participants were provided a presentation highlighting the:

- ❖ Purpose of the focus groups;
- ❖ Evolution of sustainable development within the federal government;
- ❖ Content of the current Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) Sustainable Development Strategy;
- ❖ Content of the *Federal Sustainable Development Act* (FSDA) and the related Environment Canada consultation paper; and
- ❖ Findings of both the INAC evaluations and reviews of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development.

The participants were informed of how the Sustainable Development Division (SDD) fits within INAC's structure and programs, and of the planned move to INAC's Regional Operations in order to focus on community development. The participants were also informed about the time frame (now to June 2011) during which the next strategy will be developed and the SDD's plans to review both the report on the Aboriginal focus groups and a first draft of SDS 5 at the October 6, 2010 meeting of National Sustainable Development Strategy Working Group (NSDSWG). This will be followed by distribution of the draft to the informal reference network of focus group participants and subsequent INAC adoption of the SDS5 in conjunction with the overall federal sustainable development strategy.

Issues Identified:

"For Sustainable Development to really work you need a fundamental shift about how people think about sustainable development in everything they do... To get to that, you have to educate people about sustainable development as a way of living and not as an initiative.

Throughout the discussions the participants stressed the need for the department's approach to sustainable development to be built upon:

- ❖ A specific focus on Inuit needs and priorities in both the broad statements and specific targets of the strategy;
- ❖ Awareness and adaptation to reflect the realities of northern/high arctic living (e.g. cost of living, no roads, climate, etc.);
- ❖ Understanding the linkages between the federal, territorial and Inuit governance systems;
- ❖ The importance of using the Nunavut land claims agreement as the framework for sustainable development, policy design, consultation, contracting, etc. (rather than trying to make the agreement fit within the sustainable development strategy);
- ❖ The need for ongoing 'true and honest' consultations; and
- ❖ The direct involvement of Inuit in the development and implementation of the sustainable development strategy (e.g. beyond participating in an occasional focus group).

The discussions highlighted a number of issues that are important from an Inuit, Nunavut, and northern perspective and to which the Sustainable Development Strategy would need to consider:

- ❖ Improving Infrastructure (roads, sea ports, airports);
- ❖ Addressing the shortage of Bookkeepers and Accountants;
- ❖ Accessing additional resources for Education and public education/communications – both of which are seen as essential to sustainable development work;
- ❖ Working to alleviate the high cost of living in arctic;
 - Need for more education, training and Human Resource development;
 - High cost of commercial space;
- ❖ Recognizing Climate Change and resource development as the leading edge of sustainable development in Nunavut
- ❖ Developing sources of alternative energy (e.g. Tidal)
- ❖ Reducing Poverty at the individual, family and community level, as well as at the 'have not' territorial level;
- ❖ Given the number of implementation problems and disagreements it may be more important to focus on implementing the land claims agreement and SD strategy first, before trying to harmonize approaches;
- ❖ Given the similarity in goals and principles of the sustainable development strategy and a number of territorial strategies (e.g. anti-poverty, adult education, etc) consider an intergovernmental collaborative approach;
- ❖ An approach needs to be found to address the lack of data collection capacity and data analysis and application;
- ❖ The importance of being clear about the distinction in federal responsibilities for on-reserve First Nations, Inuit, and 'Northern Development'; and
- ❖ Knowing and meeting the obligations contained within the land claim agreement (and addressing obstacles/differences of position on the interpretation and implementation of those clauses/provisions).

Suggestions/recommendations to consider:

When asked if there were any 'Inuit specific' or 'made in Nunavut' best practices, uncertainty was expressed about whether there is any certainty that SD initiatives are working. Nevertheless, there was a request that positive approaches such as the following be continued:

- ❖ Funding community clean up activities;
- ❖ Continuing with contaminated sites clean up (i.e. DEW Line); and
- ❖ Requiring or having a preference for local hiring in each of the above initiatives.

Additional suggestions made during the focus group were that:

- ❖ SDD to develop a greater understanding of Nunavut/northern realities by conducting site visits to a sampling of communities outside the territorial capitals. This could be seen as part of the study of SD issues in remote northern communities similar to the one identified in SDS 4.
- ❖ A study be done to identify the distinct federal/territorial program connections relative to funding, program delivery and sustainable development.
- ❖ Consideration be given to the adaptations that are necessary in order for 'southern' or 'generally accepted' sustainable development initiatives to fit with northern realities (e.g. recycling, composting, climate, lack of roads, shipping costs).
- ❖ Consideration be given to changing the name of the department to Indian, Inuit and Northern Development.
- ❖ SDD and/or the SDS seek ways to bridge the shocking level of disconnect (e.g. lack of awareness and communication) between southern and northern governments, associations, researchers, etc., involved in sustainable development activities.
- ❖ Conduct a 'strategy harmonization' exercise to assess the common elements/approaches in the various sectors (e.g. social, economic, environmental) as well as across and between government departments and levels.
- ❖ Ensure that the capital/infrastructure planning and budgeting processes are more properly aligned.
- ❖ Consider adding a 'governance/Institutions of public government' pillar within the strategy (see recently released Canadian Arctic Foreign Policy statement that refers to 4 pillars of the northern strategy – one of which is northern governance and devolution).
- ❖ SDD/INAC to adopt a 'lead by example' approach and apply it to how it conducts its meetings (e.g. healthy foods, recycling, etc.).

Review of the SDS 4

In general, the comments suggest the need to be more inclusive and precise in the language used to describe the Aboriginal people to whom the commitments and targets are directed. During the discussion the participants also had a chance to examine the specific content of the current sustainable development strategy. More involvement in developing programs and strategies is needed.

Principles:

There was considerable discussion to clarify the intent/meaning of the statements as drafted, and a few edits (e.g. reconsider use of the term 'full consideration in #1, add informed to #2, include 'and knowledge' to #5). While the principles sound good and are similar to what is written elsewhere it is important that the Inuit have room to provide and interpret their value systems into the discussion. It will also be important that INAC focus more on demonstrating how these principles are incorporated into the specific content of the strategy's commitments, objectives, targets, and monitoring. It was also noted that in implementing #4 (engagement) that there be recognition that online/internet based engagement is not necessarily effective in the north.

Vision:

While the vision 'sounds pretty good' there was considerable discussion to clarify the intent and context for the statements in it. Comments on the 2 generations time frame related to that being a long time to wait and that given that time frame the content/objectives seemed quite modest. Also there was concern about how the vision could be measured in order to demonstrate that it had been addressed/achieved within the strategy. The reference to land claims agreements could speak more to how they are the overarching framework and address concerns about their lack of implementation. One participant suggested that in the last 30 years not as much had been accomplished as they would have thought possible. Another suggested it was equally important to highlight the high risk young males experience in terms of suicide, education, unemployment, etc.

Strategic Directions

- ❖ There is a continued interest in seeing the department structure the strategy around an external/outward looking strategic direction of 'supporting sustainable communities'; and
- ❖ It is hoped that the internal/inward strategic direction of 'building a culture of sustainability' will in some respects become the de facto operating norm of the department.

Targets/Logic models

- ❖ Long Term Planning:

- CCP – while there was an interest in supporting long range planning it was noted that the strategy would need to be made relevant to the community planning process in place in Nunavut (e.g. communities with a tax base seem to have community plans in place); and
- Remote Community Sustainability – this target needs to be more fully applied to the north by getting a better understanding of the realities; building relationships with remote communities; designing a research project; and conducting the study. This could lead to the inclusion of Nunavut/northern community participants at a future National Sustainable Development Strategy Working Group session.
- ❖ Socio-Economic Development
 - Graduation Rates – this is applicable in Nunavut region but is not currently drafted as a northern/Inuit issue. Given the unique education arrangements/agreements that exist between the federal and territorial governments Nunavut may be a good place to develop this.
 - Education – High School students lack opportunities for after school jobs, but could provide mentoring services to Elementary School students as an alternative.
 - Family Violence Prevention – There is a need for this in Nunavut and, at present, only one shelter in Iqaluit that has experienced funding shortages is available. Implementation of this type of target that calls for 4-5 new shelters seems clearly focused on First Nations without consideration of the needs and costs of providing support in Nunavut.
 - There is a need for more dieticians and nutritionists.
 - Climate change
 - There is a need to educate the Elders about the new ‘environmental knowledge’ resulting from the impacts of climate change.
 - Contaminated sites
 - The type of agreement with INAC is seen as not being as strong (e.g. MOU vs IBA) as the agreement with National Defence.
 - Is there a way to ensure that there is a ‘legacy’ component of direct benefit to the local community once the clean up process is complete?
 - Need to clarify which standards for remediation and clean up are to be applied.
 - Advocate for communities to have access to funds to conduct their own clean up of areas outside of the defined contaminated area that have been impacted by the contamination.
 - Strategy harmonization between the federal and territorial governments is needed. There also needs to be clear lines of communication on infrastructure projects and planning.
 - Need inclusive (Inuit) language in objectives and targets and follow through with checks to ensure delivery of target as intended.

- Make a stronger link between SD and the good governance approach to consultation.
- Federal responsibilities on reserves is very different from federal responsibilities in the North.

When asked to describe what success would look like in 2014/15 the participants suggested the following 'indicators':

- A better monitoring system for what has been done within the strategy.
- 'Achievables' within the strategy have been met.
- There are clear impacts between the strategy and the department's program and policy design (for example federal contract requirements are made consistent with the content of the strategy).
- INAC is 'leading by example'.
- Resources, especially multi-year resources, have been attached to the components of the strategy.

FOLLOW UP/NEXT STEPS

August

- Send participants an email containing:
 - Group summary report;
 - Group FSDS paper;
 - Names of Nunavut members of the Federal Sustainable Development Advisory Committee; and
 - Request group submit FSDS worksheet.

September

- Conduct Yukon Aboriginal Focus Group;
- Prepare overall summary report of all Aboriginal focus groups;
- Prepare SDD's first draft of SDS5; and
- Conduct/complete Federal strategy development processes.

October

- NSDSWG meeting to examine Focus Group Report and Draft SDS 5.
- Modify Draft SDS 5.

November/December

- Distribute draft SDS 5 to email network of focus group participants (including, as necessary, invitees who were not able to attend focus groups) for comment.

January/February

- Redraft SDS 5.

Facilitator Recommendations

- SDD to be encouraged to use its current community engagement activities (e.g. community visits, attending conferences, etc.) and any other opportunities that arise to continually promote the existence, content and application of the SDS. This also contributes to preparing communities for participation in the 2014 review and revision process.
- SDD be encouraged to utilize a portion of the agenda for the October NSDSWG meeting as an opportunity to engage the NSDSWG members in an exploration/brainstorming on how SDS 5 and the SDD could contribute to addressing a number of 'big ticket' items such as intergovernmental (federal, territorial, aboriginal) collaboration, etc.
- SDD encouraged to work with the regionally appointed representatives (e.g. NTI representative) of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) to ensure a link to the distinct regional concerns and specific land claim implementation processes.

Participants:

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DOCUMENTS PROVIDED BY PARTICIPANTS:

- ❖ Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and her majesty the Queen in right of Canada, INAC.
- ❖ The Implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Annual Report 2004-2006.
- ❖ Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy.
- ❖ Nunavut Economic Outlook: Our Future To Choose, Nunavut Economic Forum, August 2008.
- ❖ Nunavut Economic Development Strategy: Building a Foundation for the Future, June 2003, The Sivummut Economic Development Strategy Group.
- ❖ Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated Information Kit.
 - 2009 Annual Report, Ukimut Unipkaagit, Nunavut Tunngavik Timingat.
 - Naniiliqpita, Fall 2008, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.
 - Inuit and Land Claim Organizations wall chart/poster.
 - *"Eat Seal, Wear Seal"* bumper sticker.
 - Tukisittiarniqsaujumiit? A Plain Language Guide to the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.