

Nunavut Arctic Sovereignty and Security Strategy

A Partnership between
NTI and GN



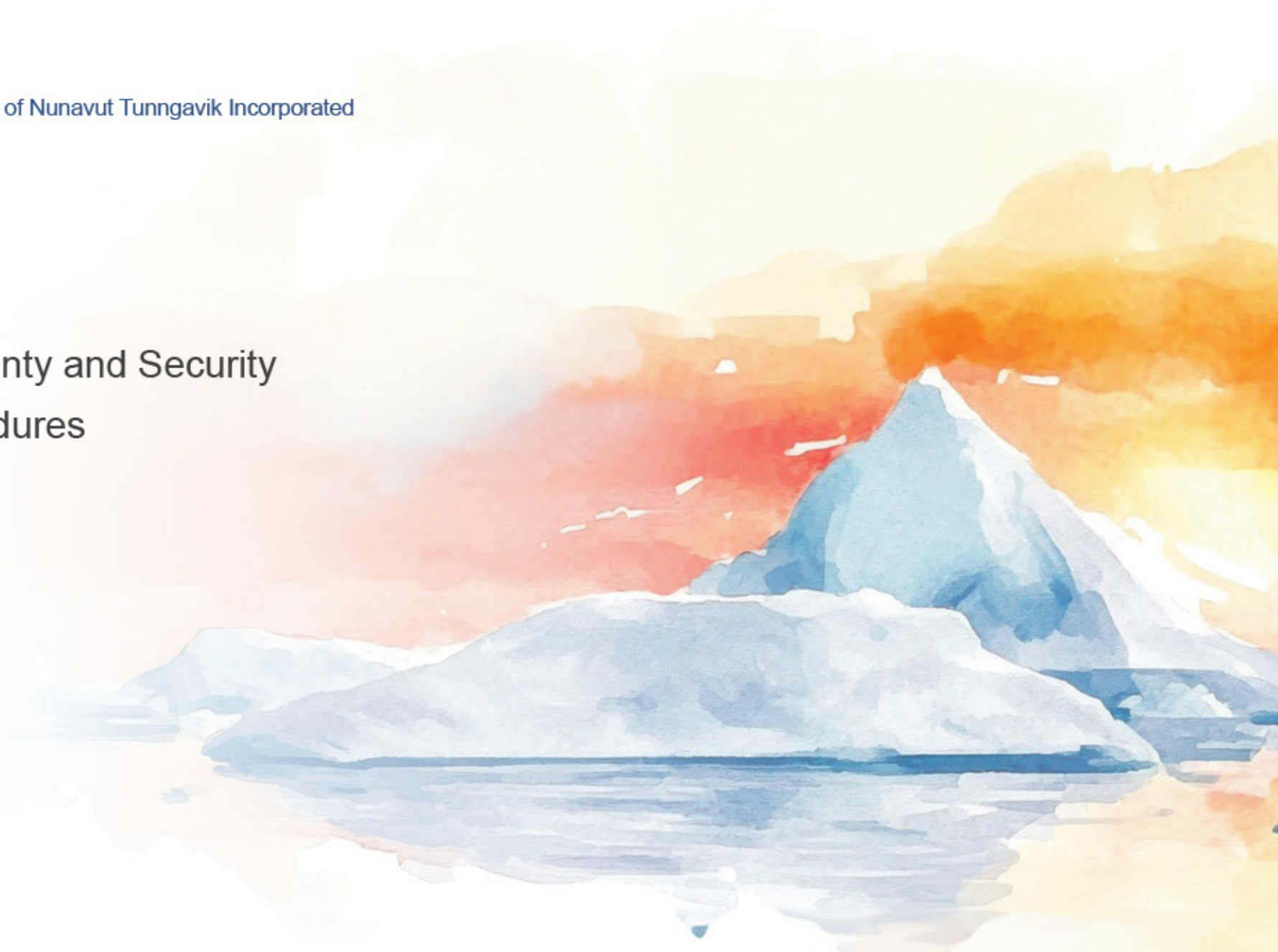
AUGUST 2025



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Ullukkut,

The Arctic is not a frontier to be claimed—it is a homeland.

It is a place of memory, meaning, and movement, where generations of Inuit have lived in harmony with the land, guided by values that continue to shape who we are and how we lead.

Sovereignty in Nunavut is more than borders on a map. It is about the people whose lives, history, and future are intertwined with the land, water and ice.

For Inuit, sovereignty is lived: it is the warmth of a *qulliq* lit in the early morning.

It is knowledge about our lands and waters passed from Elders to youth.

It is a safe home, opportunities for growth, a shared language, culture, and the right to make decisions for our communities, in our homeland, on our terms.

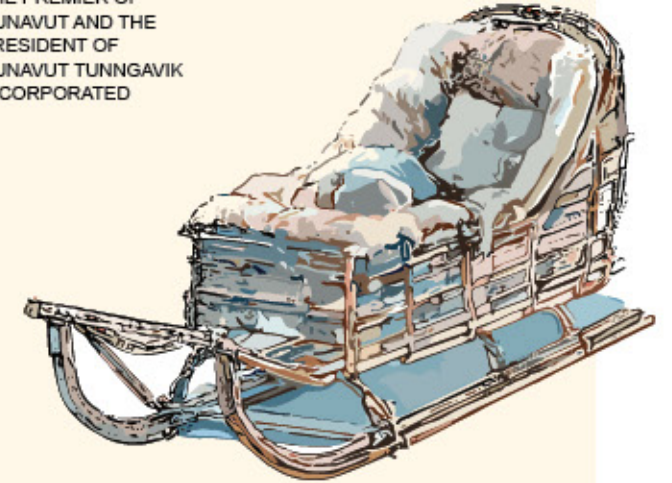
This document—the Nunavut Arctic Sovereignty and Security Strategy—is born of this legacy.

It is built on *Piliriqatigiinni*: the power of working together for a common purpose. It reflects the deep partnership between the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, and the shared commitment we hold to our people, our future, and our place in the world.

This strategy is written for Inuit, the people of Nunavut and all those who share responsibility for the Arctic—governments, partners across the circumpolar world, and industry.

Our message is simple and clear: there can be no Arctic sovereignty without Inuit security.

THE PREMIER OF
NUNAVUT AND THE
PRESIDENT OF
NUNAVUT TUNNGAVIK
INCORPORATED



Today, the Arctic is increasingly on the global stage—not only as a region of opportunity, but also as a zone of competition and risk. Canada's sovereignty is being tested by accelerating climate change, increased shipping, foreign military activity, and growing geopolitical interest from state and non-state actors.

The North is no longer on the periphery of global affairs—it is the front line and centre ground. And Nunavut, with its vast land, waters, and Inuit majority, must be at the heart of Canada's understanding of the Arctic. In this time of growing geopolitical interest in the Arctic, we must ensure that sovereignty is not only asserted—but lived, secured, and shared in full partnership with those who call this land home.

As global demand for critical minerals accelerates, Nunavut's role in Canada's energy security and northern sovereignty becomes more pronounced. Our territory holds many of the key resources needed for clean technology, defense systems, and the green energy transition. But how we develop those resources must reflect who we are. Our approach to critical minerals will be rooted in *Aajiiqatigiinni*—seeking consensus, ensuring Inuit governance, and delivering clear benefits to communities.

For Nunavut, nation-building is not defined only by ports, roads, and fiber-optic links. It is about building strong communities, fostering resilience, and ensuring that every project delivers lasting benefits to our people. For Inuit, security reaches beyond borders – it is found in the protection of our environment, cultural integrity, and food sovereignty. That is why every investment must answer two questions: does it make life better for Inuit and Nunavummiut, and does it strengthen the security and future of our territory for generations to come?

Across the circumpolar world, countries are reimagining their Arctic and sub-Arctic regions—not just as remote outposts, but as drivers of economic innovation. Nunavut is ready to lead in this space—not as a passive corridor for outside interests, but as a proactive partner with the knowledge, youth, and potential to shape what innovation looks like in the Arctic, on our terms.

As Inuit, our connections extend beyond borders—through shared language, culture, and kinship. As geopolitical tensions rise, Nunavut offers a model of peaceful, people-driven Arctic leadership grounded in *Tunnganarniq*—the principle of fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming, and inclusive.

In a time of growing geopolitical interest in the Arctic, we must ensure that sovereignty is not only asserted—but lived, secured, and shared in full partnership with those who call this land home.



FOREWARD

For too long, the Arctic has been seen through southern eyes—as remote, as empty, as vulnerable. For Nunavummiut: the Arctic is teeming with life, with knowledge, with leadership, and Inuit have always been its stewards. Our strategy affirms this. It honours *Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq*—our deep respect for the environment—and calls for action that protects both sovereignty and sustainability.

To our youth: this strategy is for you. It is inspired by the *Nunavut Agreement* and stands beside the Devolution Agreement and the *Nunavut Agreement* Implementation Plan as one in a set of tools, carved from the hard work of those who came before you. Use them well. Shape the future with confidence. You are not only the inheritors of this land—you are its next leaders.

And to all who walk this path with us: let this be more than words preserved on paper. Let it be a living promise, carried in our choices and our actions. Let it be an expression of *Pijitsirniq*—our duty to serve, protect, and provide for our people and our communities.

Let us move forward with unity, with strength, and with humility.

Let us speak with one voice—from Nunavut, for Nunavut.

Let us build not only a strategy, but a future:

For Inuit. By Inuit. In Nunavut. For all time.

Premier **P.J. Akeeagok**
President **Jeremy Tunraluk**

01

INTRODUCTION



The Nunavut Arctic Sovereignty and Security Strategy presented here is the product and expression of the partnership between Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) and the Government of Nunavut (GN), a relationship of mutual recognition, collaboration, and shared responsibility to foster prosperity and the well-being of Nunavut Inuit and all Nunavummiut.

Through consultation and dialogue, the GN and NTI developed five inextricably connected and mutually dependent pillars that support the *Nunavut Arctic Sovereignty and Security Strategy*. These Five Pillars are:

1. **Strong and resilient communities**
2. **Nunavut perspectives on Arctic sovereignty and security**
3. **Nunavut in the circumpolar world**
4. **Unlocking Nunavut's economic potential**
5. **Climate change adaptation and environmental impacts**

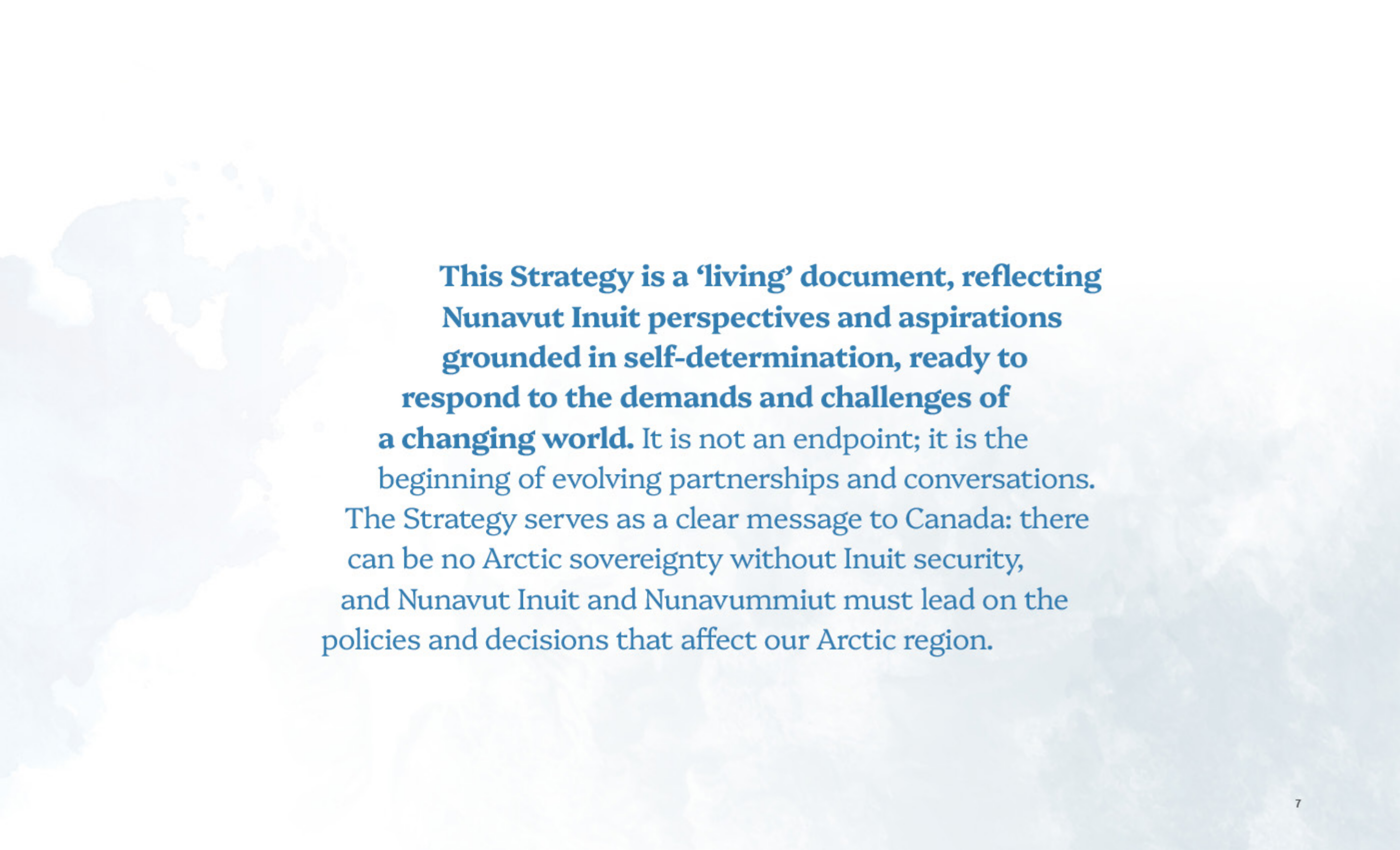
The Five Pillars reflect a foundational understanding of Arctic sovereignty and security. They help identify and prioritize our needs and aspirations. They inform and help shape of our vision for a strong, united and thriving Nunavut in a sovereign and secure Canada.

The Five Pillars are rooted in *Inuuqatigiitsiarniq*—the principle that we must care for one another, respect each voice, and ensure that no one is left behind. The pillars recognize that sovereignty means very little if Nunavummiut lack access to safe and secure housing, healthy communities, and thriving local economies that are connected to the rest of Canada and to the world.

To foster understanding and guided by our partnership, NTI and GN organized and co-hosted the inaugural Arctic Sovereignty and Security Summit in Iqaluit in June 2025. The purpose of this Summit was to bring together Elders, leaders, experts, community members, and youth to explore and define a unified vision for Nunavut Arctic sovereignty rooted in the values, priorities, and lived realities of Nunavummiut.

The Summit was more than a policy forum; it was a collaborative space for conversations to inform the development of a Nunavut-specific strategy on Arctic sovereignty and security. The Summit was the first opportunity to come together as Inuit, as Nunavummiut, as Canadians, and as members of the circumpolar community, to continue the dialogue.





This Strategy is a ‘living’ document, reflecting Nunavut Inuit perspectives and aspirations grounded in self-determination, ready to respond to the demands and challenges of a changing world. It is not an endpoint; it is the beginning of evolving partnerships and conversations. The Strategy serves as a clear message to Canada: there can be no Arctic sovereignty without Inuit security, and Nunavut Inuit and Nunavummiut must lead on the policies and decisions that affect our Arctic region.

02

NUNAVUT IN CONTEXT



This Nunavut Arctic Sovereignty and Security Strategy charts a course for Inuit and Nunavummiut leadership in the Arctic through a new project of Canadian nation-building that will:

1. Establish and safeguard sustainable health, well-being, prosperity and security for Inuit and Nunavummiut
2. Strengthen Canada's claim to full national jurisdiction and sovereignty over our land, waterways, sea, ice and air in Nunavut
3. Guarantee that our Inuit and Nunavummiut voice and perspective lead the growing dialogue on the future of the circumpolar region

Learning from the Past to Shape the Future

Canada's Arctic sovereignty is fundamentally rooted in Inuit land use and occupancy. True Arctic sovereignty requires more than presence. It requires Inuit leadership, self-determination, and decision-making by Inuit, for Inuit.

The forced relocations of Inuit families in the 1940s and 1950s are a glaring reminder of the devastating consequences that result when Canadian Arctic sovereignty is narrowly defined. Inuit families were torn from our traditional territories and used as human 'flagpoles' to assert Canada's claims in the High Arctic—enduring decades of hardship in unfamiliar lands and broken promises.

That Inuit not only survived these injustices but sustained our cultural identity and deep connection to the land, is a profound testament to our extraordinary strength and resilience. Choosing to be Canadian despite these profound injustices, powerfully demonstrates Inuit determination for a renewed relationship with Canada and a commitment to building a better future for Inuit communities.

Lessons of the past make clear the need for "Presence with Purpose"—the understanding that real Arctic sovereignty cannot be imposed externally but must be rooted in the lived experiences, knowledge, and leadership of Inuit who have called the Arctic home from time immemorial. Sustainable Arctic governance and stewardship mean placing Inuit voices and authority at its very centre—honouring generational wisdom and ensuring that Arctic priorities and policies reflect Inuit needs and aspirations.

It is time to bring nation-building investments to the Canadian Arctic with the same scale and vision as seen in the rest of Canada. Investing in Nunavut is not only a strategic response to the territory's economic potential and geopolitical importance but, more importantly, creates meaningful opportunities for Inuit and Nunavummiut prosperity and security.



Such investment can generate stable local employment, economic security, skills development, and lasting community integrity—all strengthening the legitimacy of Canadian claims to its sovereignty in the Arctic.

Redefining Arctic Sovereignty and Security

True Canadian Arctic sovereignty moves beyond southern concepts focused on borders and military strength to a vision where the security and individual and community wellbeing of Inuit and Nunavummiut are paramount.

For all Nunavummiut, sovereignty is not an abstract state interest—it is lived reality. It means having safe homes, food security, clean water, healthcare, economic security through local employment, education in Inuktitut, language protection, cultural connection, and the freedom to harvest, travel, and live well on the land.

As President Tunraluk powerfully stated, “there can be no Arctic sovereignty without Inuit security, and there can be no Inuit security without self-determination.”

Inuit and Nunavummiut must serve as the key architects and authors of Arctic policy frameworks. This is not merely an aspiration but a necessity. The Nunavut Agreement stands as the only Canadian treaty explicitly referencing sovereignty, formally recognizing that Inuit are essential to establishing Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.

Canada’s legal position on internal waters and sovereignty over the Northwest Passage is based on Inuit stewardship of these lands and waters—a relationship that is not merely historical but represents the ongoing foundation for Canadian sovereignty claims. As international shipping expands and foreign interest intensifies, this Inuit stewardship becomes increasingly vital to defending Canada’s Arctic sovereignty, making Inuit-led policy development and infrastructure planning critical to both community wellbeing and national security objectives.

Rising to Geopolitical Challenges

The geopolitical landscape is being fundamentally reshaped amid volatility and unpredictability, putting pressure on circumpolar cooperation and diplomacy. Our response today will have profound implications for the security of Inuit, whose presence and purpose on the Arctic land, sea and ice underpins Canada’s Arctic sovereignty and will reverberate for generations.



Melting ice is opening the Northwest Passage for longer shipping seasons, increasing access to natural resource and critical mineral wealth, and making the Arctic a focus of intensifying strategic competition. Foreign actors are asserting greater influence through unilateral actions in the Arctic that threaten cooperative, multilateral Arctic governance and the shared commitment to peace, security, Inuit self-determination and environmental stewardship that has guided circumpolar governance and diplomacy for decades.

A fragmented Arctic order seeking domination over collaboration and Inuit self-determination must be resisted. Nunavut has a vital role to play in the circumpolar world: as part of Canada covering 1/5th of the country's landmass, and approximately 40 percent of Canada's coastline, Inuit have inhabited, monitored and protected the land, sea, ice and the eco-system pre-dating recorded history and have human rights recognized by international instruments such as the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and international forums such as the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Collaborative Partnership of NTI and GN

Inuit and Nunavummiut leadership in Canada's Arctic is anchored in the active collaboration of NTI and the GN, a strong partnership defined by the *Nunavut Agreement* signed on May 25, 1993, by representatives of NTI, the Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

In this partnership NTI represents Nunavut Inuit, ensures implementation of the *Nunavut Agreement* and the fulfillment of obligations by the federal and territorial government, and protects Inuit rights and interests including the cultural and social well-being of Inuit while managing responsibilities for land, water, and wildlife.

The GN was created by the *Nunavut Agreement* to provide public government and services to all Nunavummiut. The GN works with NTI and the federal government to implement the *Nunavut Agreement* and manage Nunavut's land and resources, pursuant to the Devolution Agreement with Canada and NTI and will come into effect in 2027.

Through various protocols including the most recent *Katujjigatigiinniq Protocol*, the GN and NTI set shared priorities and develop joint initiatives to address key issues in areas such as infrastructure and Arctic sovereignty. Together, they demonstrate that Inuit-led governance is central to Canada's Arctic sovereignty, working as co-authors rather than stakeholders in shaping Arctic policy.

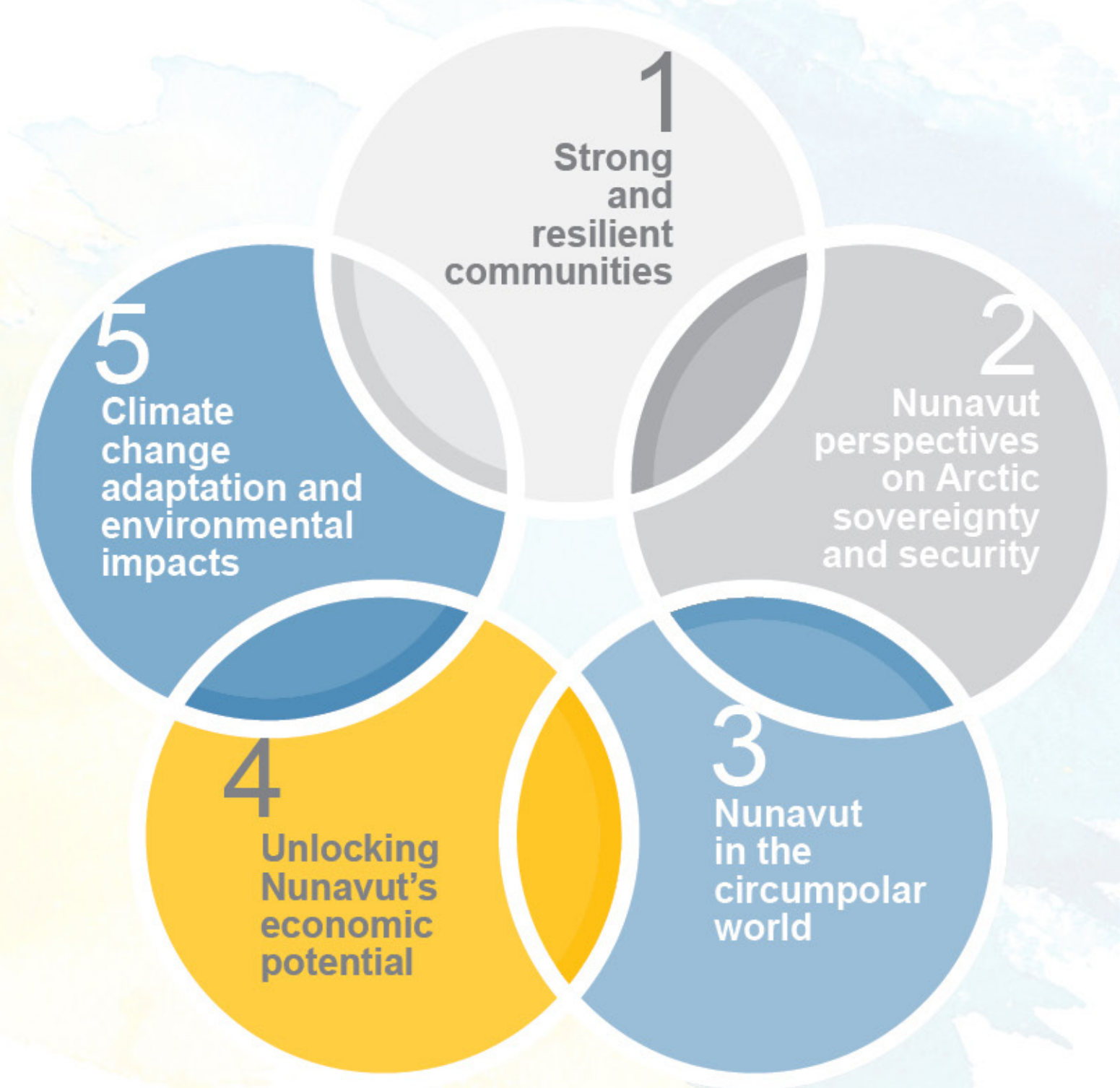
A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic

The actions of Arctic peoples and states, the interactions between them, and the conduct of international relations must be anchored in the rule of law...give primary respect to the need for global environmental security, the need for peaceful resolution of disputes, and the inextricable linkages between issues of sovereignty and sovereign rights in the Arctic and issues of self-determination.¹

¹ A Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic, adopted by the Inuit Circumpolar Council in April 2009.

03

THE FIVE PILLARS



The Five Pillars represent the basis for our understanding of Arctic Sovereignty and Security in Nunavut.

They help us identify and prioritize our needs and aspirations. They inform and help shape our vision for a strong, united and thriving Nunavut in a sovereign and secure Canada.

Canada has long recognized that its status as an Arctic nation is tied to continuous Inuit land use and occupancy in Canada's far North. But as a country, Canada has struggled to understand and acknowledge that sovereignty in the Arctic cannot be credibly asserted or maintained without sustained investment in its people and their social, cultural, economic, physical and mental well-being. Canada must continue to confront the legacy of colonial policies that led to the forced removal and relocation of Inuit, and the painful consequences which reverberate today.



The background of the slide features a stylized world map. A large, semi-transparent white number '1' is positioned over the North American continent. The map uses a color palette of muted blues, greens, and greys. The text 'Strong and resilient communities' is centered within the white area of the number '1'.

**Strong
and
resilient
communities**

PILLAR 1 STRONG AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Strong and resilient communities form the backbone of every nation. And without community strength and resilience in Nunavut, the safety and security of Inuit and Nunavummiut will remain elusive and the legitimacy of Canada's claim to arctic sovereignty will be compromised. Youth, Elders, and families must be able to live and build futures in the North with dignity, ambition, and hope. Canada's presence in the Arctic is strengthened through our lived reality rather than policy formulated at a distance.

Housing

The well-being of Inuit and Nunavummiut begins with ready access to safe, adequate and affordable housing that can meet the needs of a rapidly growing population, in a changing and challenging Arctic environment for communities across Nunavut. This fundamental requirement is not being met today.

There are chronic housing shortages in Nunavut marked by limited public and private housing options, aging and inadequate housing stock, and the high cost of construction and maintenance. More than 60 per cent of Nunavummiut rely on public housing, much of which is overcrowded.

The housing shortage is exacerbated by widespread disrepair in existing housing due to poor initial construction, the absence of sufficient resources for repair and ongoing maintenance, and the impacts increasingly wrought by a changing climate.

Progress is being made through the Nunavut 3000 strategy including those advanced through the Nunavut Inuit Housing Action Plan which has sought to drive transformative change to the housing *status quo*. Still, more sustained investment and commitment is needed. This includes considering how to further implement scalable approaches, such as the Sakku Innovative Building Solutions, which creates employment while addressing housing needs across the territory.

We must shift away from a patchwork of crisis response to proactive planning and capacity building, seek Inuit-led solutions, and recognize that housing security is the essential building block of strong and resilient communities in Nunavut.





Health and Well-Being

Our ambition for Nunavummiut is simple—for children to grow up strong, healthy and confident, for youth to thrive and achieve, and for Elders to be able to share their wisdom and age with dignity. Realizing on this ambition requires vision and sustained investment informed by the understanding that loss of culture, language, and the traditional way of life has profoundly negative impacts on the health and social well-being of Inuit and Nunavummiut of all ages.

Nunavut needs sustained investment in education, language and culture that can help address intergenerational trauma and further a sense of belonging and rootedness in community for our children and young people. Job training and access to meaningful work opportunities empower our people to take on new challenges and increases the capacity and skills necessary to meet the needs of a growing Nunavut economy.

Persistent inequality of access to essential health services alongside the high cost of healthcare in Nunavut remains a significant obstacle to Nunavummiut well-being. Work is being done to address this inequity, such as the Inuit Child First Initiative that seeks to provide Inuit children with equal access to essential health, social and educational resources, recognizing the impact of intergenerational trauma caused by colonialism and forced relocation. Initiatives like these must be expanded to improve access to healthcare for all Nunavummiut.

Nunavummiut also struggle with food insecurity as Nunavut continues to depend almost entirely on southern supply chains. By investing more in community-based food systems, seeking Inuit-led solutions and building supporting infrastructure such as community docks, greater food security and sovereignty can be achieved. Investments like these also strengthen connections to traditional ways of life (harvesting, hunting, fishing) which support social, cultural, physical and mental well-being of Inuit and Nunavummiut.

Connectivity

Just as housing is a foundation of Inuit and Nunavummiut health and well-being, connectivity is the modern digital fabric that can bind Inuit and Nunavummiut to each other, to the rest of Canada, the circumpolar world, and the global community beyond.

Connectivity is also opportunity; the opportunity to integrate economies, unlock opportunities and growth, spur innovation and creativity and enable all, especially our youth, to stay, live and thrive in Nunavut. Connectivity enhances access to technologies otherwise out of reach and helps address service delivery challenges in healthcare and other sectors.

At the core of Canadian nation-building is understanding the fundamental importance of connection and connectedness. Canada was built by overcoming distance and geography to connect people and communities first by water, and then by road, rail and air. Telecommunications must be added as an integral and indispensable pathway to our connectedness and Canadian nation-building in the Arctic.

Without growing Nunavut's telecommunications capacity, we cannot realize on the enormous potential and ambition of a modernizing Nunavut.

The need for reliable, affordable, Canada-Nunavut-owned connectivity, supported by reliable broadband technology and fiber redundancy is an indispensable component of Arctic sovereignty and security. Where communities are driven to rely on foreign satellite technology, Nunavut and Canada are vulnerable. It underscores the central importance of proceeding without delay with nation-building projects like the Kivalliq Hydro-Fiber link which will provide faster and more reliable internet for communities in Nunavut.





Emergency Preparedness

Nunavut's emergency response capabilities are a core component of community health and national security in Nunavut. The building blocks – knowledge, experience, and skill – are already in place. What is needed is a renewed and sustained commitment to communities and community-based defense through an expansion of the Inuit Guardians Program, Canadian Rangers, and through investment in related infrastructure. Emergency preparedness and response requirements are continuing to evolve and grow as climate change and its corresponding impacts on the environment increase both the demand and complexity of response programs, systems, and coordination.

Sustained investment in our culture and language, education, food security and sovereignty, housing, equal access to health services, and childhood development remain the key lynchpin to strong and resilient communities. This approach must be supported by critical infrastructure and robust emergency preparedness and response systems to ensure the security of Inuit and Nunavummiut.



Nunavut Perspectives on Arctic Sovereignty and Security



Arctic sovereignty starts with Inuit self-determination and leadership in defining, shaping, and defending our land and our way of life. It requires Inuit-led governance models that harness Inuit knowledge as a strategic advantage while ensuring infrastructure development serves dual purposes of community empowerment and national security. A lack of infrastructure remains the single greatest barrier to achieving true local, territorial, and national security and with it, full Canadian national sovereignty in the Arctic. A community-centered approach emphasizes collaborative relationships and community resilience rather than external force, providing a more comprehensive and sustainable foundation for Arctic sovereignty.

Foundations of Arctic Sovereignty and Security

The strength of the Canadian jurisdictional claims in the Arctic are based on Inuit presence in, and stewardship of, the land. Inuit are not just stakeholders. We are rights-holders and, as such, co-authors of our sovereignty. This is reflected in the *Nunavut Agreement* that stands as the only Canadian treaty to explicitly reference sovereignty while formally recognizing the essential role of Inuit in establishing Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.

Global interest in the Arctic is growing—and so is the risk.

The current geopolitical environment presents both challenges and strategic opportunities for Canada's national sovereignty in the Arctic. The opening of the Northwest Passage draws increasing international interest that potentially threatens the Inuit way of life, requiring careful management of mounting pressures from transiting vessels and expanded activity on our lands and resources.

As international shipping continues to expand and foreign interference intensifies, this legal foundation may face unprecedented challenges, making Inuit stewardship and sustained leadership in Arctic governance increasingly vital for preserving Canada's sovereignty claims in the region.

Strengthening Arctic Sovereignty and Security Through Action

Inuit and Nunavummiut must serve as the key architects and authors of Arctic policy frameworks. The federal government must support Inuit self-determination as the cornerstone of Arctic governance, ensuring that Inuit make decisions rather than simply agreeing to decisions made elsewhere.

This includes expanding and strengthening existing programs, such as the Canadian Rangers that maintain operational readiness and integrate Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and practices into training, operations, and local emergency preparedness efforts.

It also requires that infrastructure development be Inuit-led and Inuit-driven, ensuring that projects align with both Canada's defense-related infrastructure plans while serving the broader needs of Arctic communities.

By grounding sovereignty in the practical security and well-being of Nunavummiut, encompassing food security, economic opportunity, cultural preservation, and thriving communities, Canada can establish a more authentic and resilient foundation for Arctic sovereignty that withstands both current geopolitical pressures and future challenges in the region.



Nunavut
in the
Circumpolar
World

PILLAR 3 NUNAVUT IN THE CIRCUMPOLAR WORLD

Nunavut occupies a central position in the circumpolar world, both geographically and politically.

Inuit are a circumpolar people, sharing close territorial, linguistic, cultural and familial links with Inuit in Alaska, Greenland, Chukotka (Russia), and across Inuit Nunangat in Canada. The assertion that “We are one people across Inuit Nunangat” reflects a deep and enduring unity that transcends political boundaries. These transboundary connections offer a powerful model of diplomacy rooted in shared culture, language, family and values, dating back thousands of years.

Inuit and Nunavummiut are not only stewards of a vast area of Arctic land, waters and ice, we are a bridge between Canada and other Arctic nations, fostering cooperation and collaboration in multilateral forums such as the Arctic Council and the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC).

Inuit are uniquely positioned to lead in building stable, cooperative relationships with other Arctic nations and Indigenous peoples, enhancing Canada’s legitimacy, effectiveness and credibility as a responsible Arctic nation in global Arctic affairs.

Learning from Our Circumpolar Neighbors

As Nunavut grows, there is much to learn from others in the circumpolar region that have successfully implemented innovative infrastructure and unlocked economic opportunities. From broadband connectivity in northern Scandinavia to increased sealing activities and sustainable housing in Greenland, best practices across the Arctic can inform Nunavut’s path forward.

Nunavummiut have suffered from higher costs and a lower standard of living and more limited economic opportunity compared to our Arctic neighbours. These disparities are not inevitable—they are the result of policy choices that can and must be addressed.

Positioning Nunavut as a leader in Arctic geopolitics requires investment in infrastructure and unlocking economic opportunity that supports both community well-being and strategic resilience. By exchanging knowledge with other Arctic jurisdictions, Nunavut can adapt proven solutions and contribute to a shared vision of sustainable northern development.



Defense Infrastructure and Commitments

As the North becomes increasingly important to both continental and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) security, there is a growing need for infrastructure that supports multiple uses, including military and civilian uses. Nunavut can and must play a key role in shaping the development of multi-use facilities that serve defense needs while also benefiting local communities.

These facilities—airstrips, roads, ports, harbours, docks, or communication and electricity networks—must be designed in true partnership with Inuit and reflect the dual priorities of sovereignty and community development. Investments should create local employment, enhance emergency response, and support broader goals of connectivity and resilience in a fast-changing landscape.

Nunavut's strategic location makes us an indispensable partner in Canada's Arctic defense strategy, and its leadership is essential to ensuring that security initiatives align with Inuit values and priorities. Defense in the Arctic must not come at the expense of Inuit rights or environmental integrity—it must be built with, not just for, the people who call the Arctic home.



Unlocking
Nunavut's
Economic
Potential –
Market Access,
Trade and Export

Economic inequality weakens communities and undermines sovereignty. Arctic sovereignty cannot be achieved without sustainable economic self-determination for Inuit.

Nunavut possesses vast, largely untapped economic potential. Realizing this potential requires fundamental shifts from old ways that have prioritized resource extraction and southern investment in favour of a new approach that creates meaningful employment and training opportunities for Nunavummiut, that includes building local capacity and strengthening communities rather than relying on temporary southern workforces.

The Nunavut economy must be integrated into the broader Canadian nation-building agenda, through frameworks that recognize the unique circumstances of Arctic communities while creating pathways for meaningful Inuit participation, control and equity ownership.

Economic integration must occur on Inuit terms, avoiding assimilative approaches that undermine cultural foundations. This includes recognition of traditional economic activities, support for mixed economies combining traditional and modern elements, and policies enabling Inuit enterprises to compete fairly in national markets.

Inuit economic rights also extend into Canada's marine territory. Under the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and Article 15 of the *Nunavut Agreement*, Inuit hold recognized rights within Canada's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), including rights related to marine resource management and development. As global shipping and marine resource extraction activities increase, these rights must be fully respected and integrated into national strategies for economic development and ocean governance.

For Canada to assert sovereignty effectively, it must work to make Canada the preferred option for economic partnerships with Inuit, particularly as global interest in Arctic resources intensifies.

Sustainable economic development requires moving beyond consultation models toward partnership structures where Inuit possess decision-making authority over development affecting their territories, including implementing free, prior, and informed consent principles and ensuring Inuit ownership stakes in all major development projects.



Strategic Infrastructure for Economic Development

Infrastructure forms the foundation of economic development in Nunavut. Without adequate roads, ports, energy systems, and connectivity, communities cannot access markets, attract investment, or participate fully in the modern economy.

Current project-by-project funding creates uncertainty that inhibits long-term planning and capacity development. Sustainable economic growth requires a coordinated approach that includes multi-year funding commitments, flexible structures allowing Inuit-identified priorities, coordination among Inuit organizations, balanced private sector engagement, comprehensive training programs, and regular community-based evaluation.

Fundamental Shift

Unlocking Nunavut's economic potential requires a fundamental shift from extractive development models toward Inuit-led approaches that prioritize community benefit, cultural preservation, and environmental stewardship. The path forward demands partnership based on respect for Inuit rights, recognition of Inuit knowledge and leadership, and commitment to sustainable development that serves communities first while contributing to national goals.

Economic security forms the foundation of Arctic sovereignty; healthy, prosperous communities with meaningful employment opportunities and strong cultural connections represent Canada's most effective assertion of sovereignty. Only through such partnerships can Nunavut's vast economic potential be realized in ways that strengthen both community resilience and national sovereignty.





Climate
change
adaptation
and
environmental
impacts

PILLAR 5 CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

A rapidly changing climate is transforming the Arctic with profound implications for Inuit and Nunavummiut security and Canadian sovereignty over its Arctic waters. Rising temperatures are resulting in extreme weather conditions, permafrost thawing, ice thinning, glacier retreat and changes to the habitats, distribution, and nature of wildlife and vegetation. These large-scale climate changes are disrupting our way of life and culture, food systems, and mobility and threatening housing and infrastructure.

Climate change is also exposing new security and defense vulnerabilities making the Arctic a target of renewed geopolitical focus and interest. As ice thickness and summer ice coverage decreases, formerly inaccessible waters become navigable, expanding opportunities for shipping and resource exploration. Foreign powers like Russia and China are ramping up their activities in the Arctic as they compete for authority, influence and critical mineral wealth, increasingly accessible for extraction.

Climate change adaptation and resiliency, rooted in Nunavut Inuit self-determination, are essential to protect the well being of Inuit communities and for Canada to assert itself as sovereign Arctic nation.

For Inuit, adapting to climate change is a matter of survival and sovereignty. Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, combined with modern approaches and ways of thinking, offers the best path forward. Guardian programs incorporate communities into ecosystem monitoring and surveillance, harnessing the deep knowledge and strengths of Inuit as the eyes and ears of the land and waters, drawing on generations of individual and communal experiences across the regions. These programs also help ensure young people are taught traditional skills and environmental stewardship, to preserve and carry-forward this critical on-the-land knowledge and experience while rooting youth in Inuit tradition and culture.

Climate and environmental changes are also causing more frequent and severe emergencies, placing increasing pressure on emergency preparedness and response systems that were already underfunded and under-resourced. The Canadian Rangers, utilizing their expertise and knowledge of the land and its people, play a key role in strengthening the disaster resiliency of their communities.

Together, the Guardians Programs and Canadian Rangers are a potent force, and a model of how Inuit knowledge, skills and Inuit stewardship build true resilience in communities, strengthening Canada's sovereignty. Greater, sustained investment must be made in these programs that have shown to be Canada's greatest assets in the Arctic as it continues to grapple with climate change impacts.

Guardian programs incorporate communities into ecosystem and surveillance, harnessing the deep knowledge and strengths of Inuit as the eyes and ears of the land and waters, drawing on generations of individual and communal experiences across the regions.



Climate Change and Energy

Accelerating climate change impacts require clean sustainable energy solutions to build economic, geopolitical and climate resiliency in the Arctic.

Currently, Nunavut is almost entirely dependent on diesel for power and heat. Diesel must be shipped in during the summer months with transportation of diesel through Arctic channels increasingly unpredictable due in part to the effects of melting ice. In the absence of deep-water ports, fuel must be transferred from tankers to shore with hoses with risk of spills.

Nunavut requires viable, locally produced, innovative alternative energy production, delivery systems, and storage solutions, aligned with Inuit values and priorities. Solar and wind projects are part of the solution, enhancing self-sufficiency of remote communities while addressing climate imperatives.

Nation-building projects such as the Kivalliq Hydro-Fiber link with its transmission capacity and the Iqaluit Hydroelectric Project also have the potential to assist Nunavut in transitioning away from diesel dependency.

Climate change presents profound challenges, nowhere greater than in the Arctic, but it also poses unique opportunities for leadership, innovation and investment. The global challenge to adapt to climate change can be met in Nunavut if Canada can recognize and leverage its leadership as an Arctic nation and help to safeguard and support strong and resilient communities, grounded in Inuit self-determination.



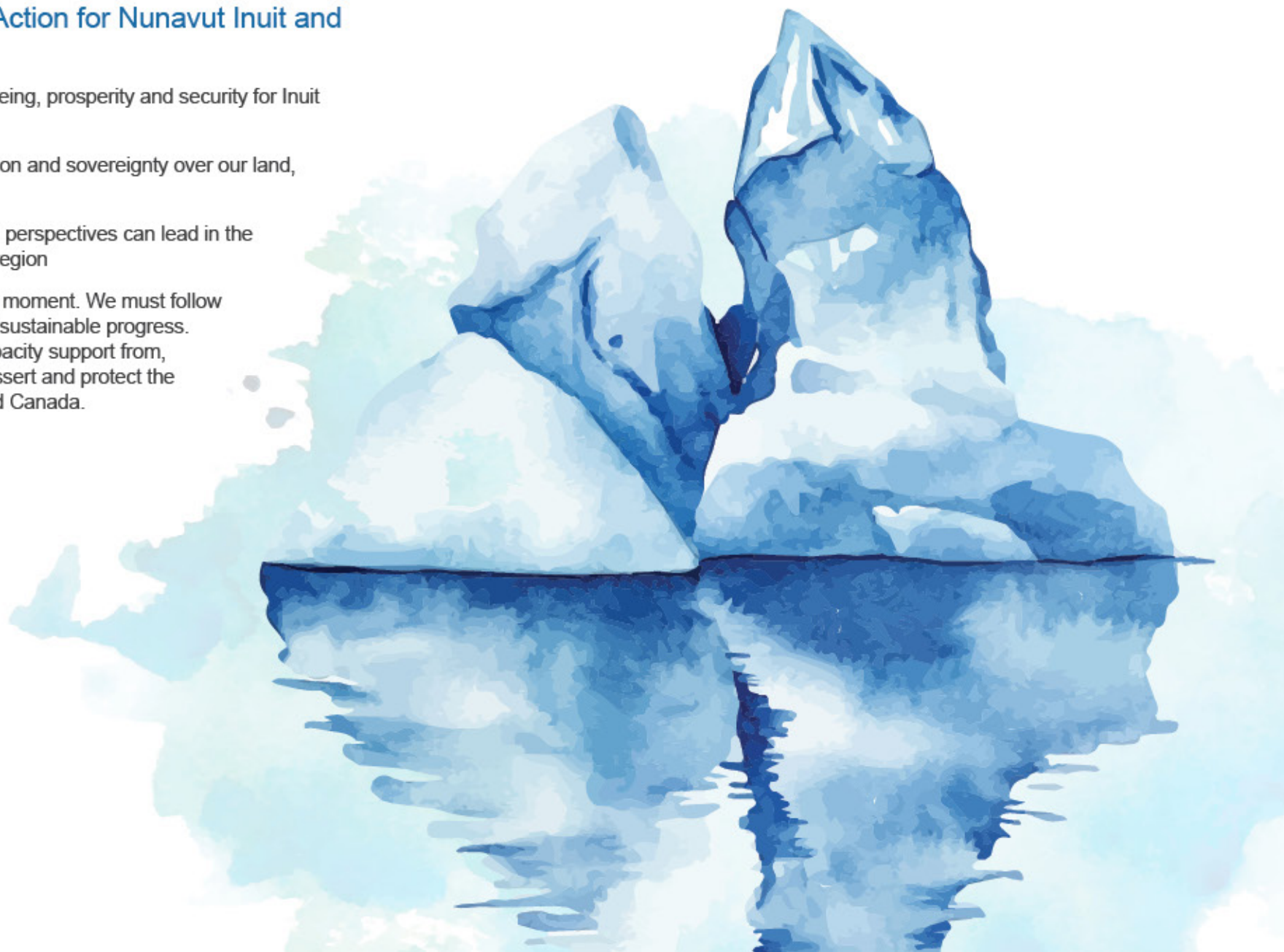
04

ADVANCING ARCTIC
SOVEREIGNTY
AND SECURITY

Our Goals and this Strategy are a Call to Action for Nunavut Inuit and Nunavummiut to:

1. Establish and safeguard sustainable health, well-being, prosperity and security for Inuit and Nunavummiut
2. Strengthen Canada's claim to full national jurisdiction and sovereignty over our land, waterways, sea, ice and air in Nunavut
3. Guarantee that Inuit and Nunavummiut voices and perspectives can lead in the growing dialogue on the future of the circumpolar region

We must work together and take decisive steps to meet this moment. We must follow through on our priorities to make concrete, measurable and sustainable progress. Through these priorities, and with adequate funding and capacity support from, and in collaboration with the Federal Government, we will assert and protect the sovereignty and security of our people, our communities and Canada.



OUR PRIORITIES

A. Sustainable Health and Well-Being

1. Remedying our chronic housing shortage by building new places to live and supporting the repair and improvement of existing residential buildings, including repairs and improvements to improve climate resiliency, and energy efficiency.
2. Improving quality and equality of access to health care and essential services by investing in critical infrastructure, including long-term care homes and mental health facilities, to permit more Nunavummiut to access care in Nunavut.
3. Investing in reliable, affordable, Canada-Nunavut-owned infrastructure that will support digital connectivity to provide faster and more reliable internet for communities throughout all of Nunavut.
4. Creating platforms for digital economy participation, from remote work opportunities to digital language resources and content creation in Inuktitut to encourage youth engagement in technology sectors, addressing both employment needs and cultural preservation imperatives.
5. Investing more in community-based food systems and infrastructure to achieve food security, reduce dependency on southern supply chains, and to support the social, cultural, physical and mental well-being of Inuit and Nunavummiut through strengthened connections to our traditional ways of harvesting, hunting, fishing.
6. Strengthening Inuit-led environmental monitoring and emergency preparedness programs, systems and related infrastructure to respond and adapt to the challenge of climate change and its impacts on our environment and our people.
7. Investing in locally produced, innovative alternative energy production, delivery systems, and storage solutions, including solar and wind projects, that reduce dependency on imported diesel and enhance the self-sufficiency of remote communities while addressing climate imperatives.



B. Opportunity, Prosperity and Economic Development

1. Realizing our full economic potential by attracting resource extraction and southern investment that creates meaningful employment and training opportunities for Nunavummiut, builds local capacity and strengthens communities in Nunavut. This includes:
 - i. advancing implementation of Articles 23 and 24 of the *Nunavut Agreement* through training-to-employment pipelines, especially for youth to prepare them for employment as projects develop
 - ii. enabling Inuit-owned businesses to participate in mining supply chains
 - iii. permitting Inuit-led monitoring and governance of major projects
 - iv. supporting pathways to Inuit ownership of projects and related infrastructure
 - v. embracing conservation values and meeting sustainability imperatives
 - vi. prioritizing infrastructure investments that serve community development alongside resource development, and national security objectives
2. Promoting economic integration of Nunavut with the South by improving trade access through regulatory streamlining, data collection on export opportunities, and targeted support for logistics and procurement in sectors such as fisheries, arts, and cultural industries.
3. Increasing investment and support for marine programs, including the Inuit Marine Monitoring Program, to protect marine environments by combining Inuit knowledge with modern technology and creating further opportunities for training and employment.
4. Supporting the development of fisheries through streamlined regulations, marine infrastructure, and training programs that complement traditional harvesting activities.
5. Repatriating Inuit cultural heritage to Nunavut through support of existing heritage centres, fundraising for the Inuit Heritage Centre, and training for staff to create new employment and strengthen cultural Inuit foundations.
6. Establishing new parks and conservation areas through strengthened Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreements to provide opportunities for investing in the tourism industry and community infrastructure to support micro-businesses, harvesters, arts and crafts and job-creation.



C. Nunavut and Canadian Sovereignty

1. Working with the Government of Canada to forcefully assert Canadian jurisdictional claims in the Arctic based on Inuit and Nunavummiut presence, purpose and stewardship of Nunavut's land, waterways and ice.
2. Ensuring that infrastructure investments are multi-purpose, serving community development and national security objectives and designed in true partnership with Inuit.
3. Prioritizing Canada-Nunavut-owned connectivity projects that support our Arctic sovereignty and security and grow Nunavut's telecommunications capacity with reliable broadband technology and fiber redundancy.
4. Improving integration of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and local expertise in Canadian planning and decision making on Arctic security strategies.
5. Deepening public understanding — within Nunavut and across Canada — through storytelling, schools, media, that Canadian Arctic sovereignty is founded on Inuit occupation, stewardship, and legal agreements, and that Inuit are not passive participants in sovereignty, but its architects.
6. Promoting ongoing dialogue among like-minded Arctic governments and organizations within Nunavut, Canada and the circumpolar world on issues of national security and sovereignty.

D. Diplomacy and Circumpolar Leadership

1. Prioritizing Inuit diplomacy to ensure that our perspectives and priorities are central to shaping the global Arctic agenda and to strengthen Nunavut's and Canada's credibility as responsible actors in the Arctic.
2. Building capacity for Inuit diplomacy through education, training and apprenticeships, including exchange programs.
3. Identifying opportunities to establish or strengthen stable, cooperative relationships with other Arctic nations, organizations and Indigenous peoples in key areas of shared interest and need to enhance Canada's legitimacy and effectiveness in global Arctic affairs.
4. Exchanging knowledge through bi-lateral and multi-lateral collaboration and partnerships with other Arctic jurisdictions to enable Nunavut to identify and adopt proven solutions that can contribute to a shared vision of sustainable circumpolar development.
5. Connecting Inuit youth from Nunavut, Greenland, Alaska and Chukotka, recognizing that the next generation need to be prepared to act as circumpolar advocates.



OPTIONS FOR TAKING ACTION

1. Championing Local Strength

The Nunavut Arctic Sovereignty and Security Working Group will serve as the central mechanism for driving collaboration between NTI, the GN, and their partners. With the Working Group, NTI and the GN will continue to walk alongside communities, guided by the belief that lasting sovereignty and security are built from the ground up. Together, we will explore opportunities that reflect the strengths, knowledge, and aspirations of Inuit and Nunavummiut.

These may include:

- **Honouring the role of land protectors** by supporting and expanding initiatives such as the Inuit Guardians programs and the Canadian Rangers.
- **Empowering communities to shape their own futures** through housing solutions rooted in local vision, including those advanced through the Nunavut Inuit Housing Action Plan and Nunavut 3000.
- **Grounding our understanding of security in lived experience** by drawing on the insights of the *Qanuippitaa?* National Inuit Health Survey.
- **Nurturing the deep connection between people and the land** by strengthening Inuit food systems, expanding access to country food harvesting, and improving infrastructure such as community docks and storage facilities.
- **Building resilience in a rapidly changing Arctic** by working with municipalities to explore new approaches to emergency preparedness and response.



2. Advocacy

Advocacy will remain a cornerstone of the Working Group's efforts, rooted in the belief that Inuit voices, knowledge, and priorities must shape the decisions that define the Arctic's future. NTI and the GN will work together to amplify Inuit-defined goals in federal Arctic and defence policies, champion sustained investment in critical infrastructure, and encourage regulatory approaches that open doors for Inuit-led development.

Opportunities for advocacy may include:

- **Championing transformative nation-building projects** that strengthen both sovereignty and community wellbeing, including:
 - *The Grays Bay Port & Road Project* — envisioned as an Arctic Security Corridor, offering strategic access while serving community economic needs.
 - *The Qikiqtarjuaq Deep Sea Port* — strategically positioned along the Northwest Passage for emergency response and sovereignty operations, while also fostering local economic development.
 - *The Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Link* — connecting Nunavut to southern Canada's grid, enhancing connectivity, and reducing reliance on diesel fuel.
 - *The Iqaluit Hydroelectric Project* — bringing clean energy from the Kuugaluk River to Iqaluit, advancing local energy sovereignty.
- **Encouraging federal commitments to multi-use infrastructure** that serve both defence requirements and community needs.
- **Promoting policies that embed Inuit self-determination** in resource development, emergency preparedness, and Arctic governance.
- **Ensuring Nunavut Inuit perspectives are heard internationally** so that global decisions on shipping, climate, and security reflect Inuit rights, priorities, and leadership.



3. Knowledge Building and Sharing

Knowledge is the foundation of strong decision-making. The Working Group will promote learning that is grounded in Inuit lived experience and informed by evidence, ensuring Nunavut is ready to meet emerging challenges and seize new opportunities.

This may include:

- **Mapping the path to greater connectivity and mobility** through a roadmap that identifies and prioritizes needs for broadband, air and sea ports, rail, and roads—strengthening self-sufficiency and positioning Nunavut as a secure, connected part of Canada.
- **Preparing for the future of critical minerals** by developing a readiness strategy that coordinates land use planning, identifies opportunities, and equips Inuit for roles in exploration, environmental monitoring, and value-added processing.
- **Creating spaces for knowledge exchange** with communities, circumpolar partners, federal agencies, and academic institutions to integrate best practices into the Strategy's implementation.
- **Keeping communities informed and engaged** through accessible tools that share progress, invite feedback, and celebrate achievements.



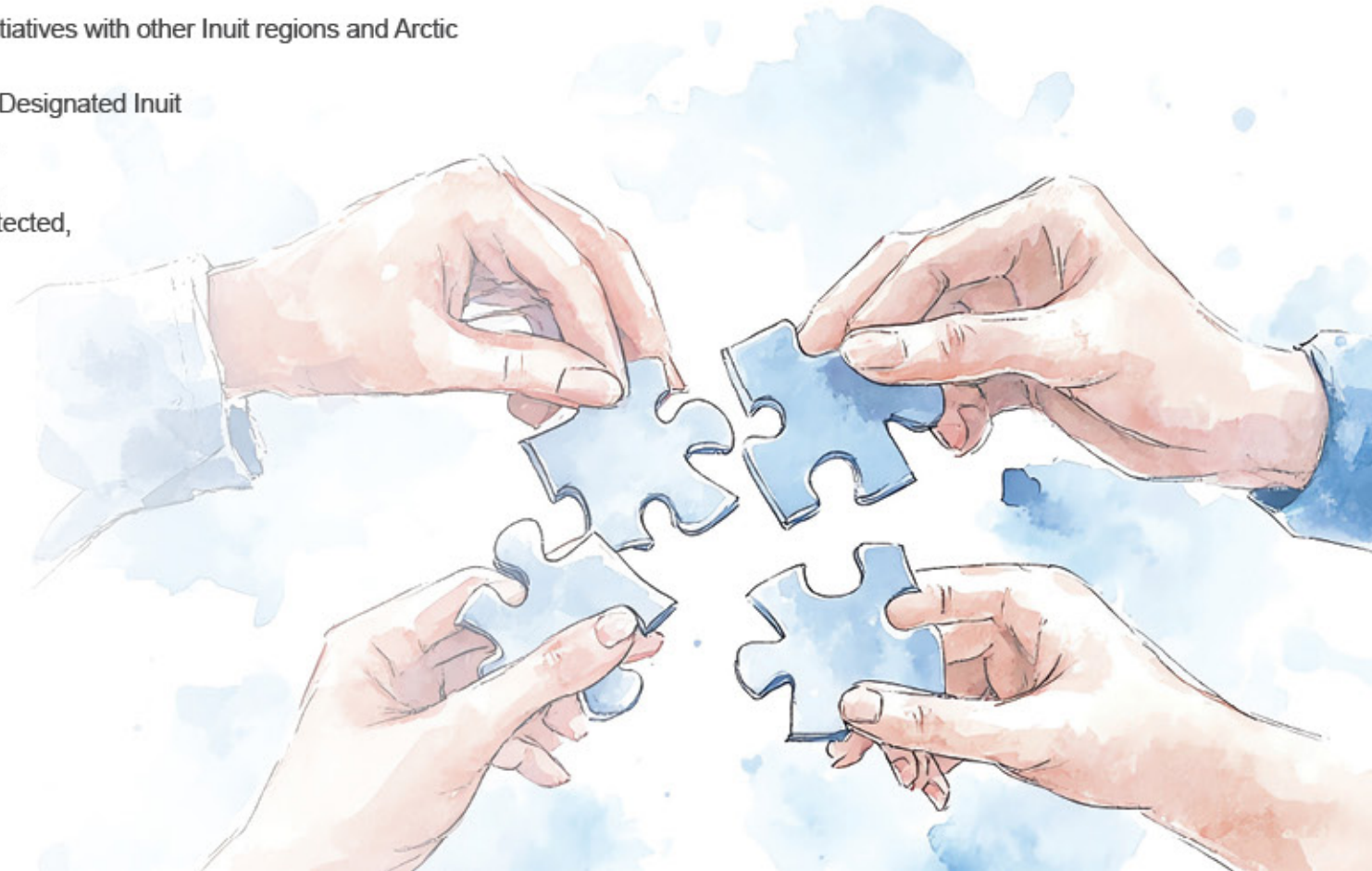
4. Building and Strengthening Strategic Partnerships

Strong partnerships amplify impact. With the Working Group, NTI and the GN will seek relationships built on mutual respect, shared responsibility, and a commitment to long-term outcomes that serve Inuit-led priorities.

Possible areas of collaboration include:

- **Aligning defence and community priorities** by working with federal agencies to ensure infrastructure investments serve both strategic and local needs.
- **Creating pathways into emerging industries** by fostering partnerships with the private sector in clean energy, digital innovation, and critical minerals.
- **Deepening circumpolar connections** through joint projects and diplomatic initiatives with other Inuit regions and Arctic nations, building on shared language, history, and culture.
- **Ensuring local leadership guides decisions** by engaging municipalities and Designated Inuit Organizations at every stage of strategic investment and governance planning.

These priorities are living commitments, guided by Inuit knowledge and grounded in community and national responsibilities—ensuring Arctic sovereignty is not only protected, but lived by the people who call this land home.



05

BUILDING A
FUTURE THAT
ENDURES



In the face of shifting geopolitics, climate change, and rising global interest in our region, Nunavut will not be defined by risk—we will be shaped by our resilience and ingenuity, we will define what leadership and sovereignty looks like in the Arctic.

And the world is listening.



Nunavut Arctic Sovereignty and Security Strategy

A Partnership between NTI and GN