

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NUNATUKAVUT CONDEMNS INNU NATION ATTEMPT TO QUASH MOU WITH CANADA AS FORM OF RACISM AND LATERAL VIOLENCE

HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY, LABRADOR, October 8, 2019 – NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC) President Todd Russell today issued the following statement:

“It was appalling to learn of Innu Nation’s Federal Court application to quash our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Canada on the Recognition of our Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination (RIRSD).

NCC is the representative governing body for approximately 6,000 Inuit of south and central Labrador. We are an Inuit collective that continue to have a deep connection to the land, sea and ice that make up NunatuKavut, our home. NCC represents an Indigenous people, recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the Constitution, the federal and provincial governments, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Court of Appeal. NCC rejects any attempt to deny our culture, our connection to land, water and ice, and our people. The inflammatory and misleading allegations made by Innu Nation in a recent Federal Court application are completely unfounded and deeply troubling. These allegations are a form of racism and lateral violence against NunatuKavut Inuit and perpetuate colonial narratives.

The MOU between NCC and the Government of Canada reflects the strength of our people and the progress we have made with the federal government in advancing our communities, our priorities and our rights. The MOU marks the beginning of a process that sets out how we will work together to develop a joint mandate for future negotiations. There is no potential for our MOU to delay or diminish the Innu Nation’s land claim.

There will be overlap between our land claim and the land claim of Innu Nation. This is not a unique occurrence in modern land claims processes, where multiple overlapping claims often exist. The overlapping claims speak to the historical and modern reality of our respective peoples’ land use and cultural expression. This can be an opportunity for cooperation and mutual respect, and it is disappointing that Innu Nation have decided to pursue needless litigation rather than meaningful dialogue. We hope there is a time when all Indigenous groups in Labrador can sit at a table in a respectful way and move forward together.

The recognition and respect of our rights is something that NCC has been working on for many years. We remain focussed on ensuring that our RIRSD process will result in tangible and positive change for our people, while protecting our culture and way of life for many generations to come.”

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