



FOR RELEASE
October 17, 2012

Northern sport ministers meet with Arctic Winter Games International Committee

WHITEHORSE—The ministers responsible for sport in Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut are meeting this week to discuss the reduction in the number of sports at the 2016 Arctic Winter Games in Nuuk, Greenland.

Government of Yukon Community Services Minister Elaine Taylor, Government of Nunavut Community and Government Services Minister Lorne Kusugak and Government of Northwest Territories Municipal and Community Affairs Minister Robert C. McLeod are meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska today with the Arctic Winter Games International Committee.

"The Arctic Winter Games are an essential part of the sport development system in the North. That is why we have requested to meet with the International Committee to explore various options that would ensure young athletes are able to participate in a full 2016 Arctic Winter Games experience, while at the same time supporting Greenland in its role as host jurisdiction," Taylor said. "By working together, I am confident we can find innovative solutions to maximize sporting events and participation in the 2016 Games."

In September, the international committee announced that six sports, including speed skating, figure skating, curling, gymnastics, midget hockey and dog mushing would not be part of the Greenland Games due to limited hosting capacity and lack of facilities.

"The Arctic Winter Games are pivotal in the development of young athletes in Nunavut and across the North. The opportunity to compete with our circumpolar neighbours is important to the growth and development of our sport community," Kusugak said. "We need to look at creative ways to support high-level competition for all our athletes and to address the capacity and facility challenges related to hosting not just the 2016 Arctic Winter Games, but future games as well."

"We believe that sport and recreation contributes enormously to healthy lifestyles and that the Arctic Winter Games provide our youth with an important opportunity to compete on the international stage," McLeod said. "We have seen many successful Games in the past and want to continue to build momentum for our young athletes by providing them with opportunities to play a part in the world's premier northern sport and cultural event."

The Arctic Winter Games International Committee oversees the high profile circumpolar sport competition by defining the strategic direction for the games, selecting host cities, awarding the Hodgson Trophy and providing overall governance. The permanent member jurisdictions of the committee are Northern Alberta, Alaska, Greenland, N.W.T., Yukon and Nunavut. Past participating teams have included Alaska, Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Alberta North, the Yamal peninsula of Russia, Greenland, the Nunavik region of Quebec, and Scandinavia. For more information on the Arctic Winter Games, visit www.arcticwintergames.org.

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Contact:

Elaine Schiman
Cabinet Communications
Government of Yukon
867-633-7961
elaine.schiman@gov.yk.ca

David Maguire
Communications
Government of the Northwest
Territories
867-920-3092
david_maguire@gov.nt.ca

Hillary Casey
Communications
Community and Government
Services
Government of Nunavut
867-975-5342
hillary.casey@gov.nu.ca

Matt King
Communications
Community Services
Government of Yukon
867-456-6580
matt.king@gov.yk.ca

News Release #12-194



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