

# Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

## Inuit and the Social Union Framework Agreement

March 22, 2002

The Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA) is a non-binding political agreement entered into by the Government of Canada and all provincial governments except Quebec in 1999. The purpose of the Social Union Framework Agreement is to get federal and provincial/territorial governments to work more closely on social and economic issues with the aim of improving the quality, and promoting equality, of services and opportunities for all Canadians.

The Ministerial Council on Social Policy Renewal, the body responsible for the overall implementation of SUFA, is composed of designated Ministers from the federal, provincial and territorial governments, except for Quebec which sends an observer only (because it is not a signatory to SUFA). National Aboriginal Leaders have been excluded from participation in the Ministerial Council. Participation by aboriginal representatives, including Inuit, has been restricted to working groups of officials.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), along with other national Aboriginal organizations, has been asked to provide an assessment of SUFA upon the third anniversary of the Agreement (February 4, 2002). This consultation exercise is part of a larger assessment and consultation process called for by Section 7 of the SUFA: *“By the end of the third year of the Framework Agreement, governments will jointly undertake a full review of the agreement and its implementation and make appropriate adjustments of the framework as required. This review will ensure significant opportunities for input and feed-back from Canadians and all interested parties, including social policy experts, private sector and voluntary organizations.”*<sup>1</sup>

This position paper contains ITK’s initial assessment of the SUFA and its implementation over the past three years.

### Inuit and the Inuit National Voice - Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

The Inuit of Canada are a people united by language, culture and kinship. We have lived in the northern regions of this land for thousands of year and are recognized as a distinct people under s. 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. Inuit are a founding people of Canada and assert our own unique place in Confederation and within Canada’s Social Union.

While the Inuit population is small (over 41,000) relative to the overall Canadian population, Inuit social values and Inuit approaches to social policy development are

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<sup>1</sup> A Framework to Improve the Social Union for Canadians, 4 February 1999.

informed by Inuit cultural values and our collective experience as a people of this land over thousands of years. Inuit culture and values have endured and evolved through many changes, including the arrival of other people in our lands.

Inuit have experienced radical social and economic change over the past 50 years as a result of increasing interest in our lands and resources. Similarly the interest of federal and provincial governments in Inuit social policy issues is relatively recent. Inuit social policy issues have unique aspects. Any coherent and inclusive plan to express the values of Canada's Social Union and to build a national partnership to improve and develop the Social Union will require the full and equal inclusion of Inuit leadership in the SUFA process at all levels.

Since its establishment in 1971, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (formerly known as Inuit Tapirisat of Canada) has been the national voice of Inuit. ITK played a major role in launching land claims negotiations in each of four Inuit regions. The aim of these agreements is the protection of Inuit social, economic and political rights and interests. ITK's Board of Directors includes representation from the four Inuit regional organizations: the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA), Makivik Corporation, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. Three of the four regions have each negotiated a final comprehensive claims agreement, and LIA has reached agreement-in-principle stage in regard to its claim. Pauktutuit (the national Inuit Women's Association) and the National Inuit Youth Council are non-voting members of the ITK Board.

Over the past thirty years, ITK has represented Inuit at the national level in numerous Ministerial meetings, First Ministers Conferences and Premiers meetings over the years on a range of subject-matters. ITK has played an important role in the evolving political and constitutional relationship between Inuit and the federal and provincial and territorial governments.

#### Inclusion of Inuit in Ministerial Council on Social Policy Renewal

ITK maintains that the Crown has a special responsibility to consult with Inuit on fundamental policy and legal issues such as the Social Union as part of its fiduciary relationship with Inuit. The special constitutional relationship between Inuit and the Crown must be recognized as an important aspect of Canada's social union. Consequently, our participation in the SUFA assessment process is distinct from that of non-aboriginal stakeholders. Likewise, the governments' responsibility to respond to Inuit input is of a special character. The Crown's duty to consult typically requires more than merely providing opportunities for input and listening. For example, under the Nunavut Final Agreement, the federal government has an obligation to provide Inuit in Nunavut an opportunity to participate in social and cultural policy development relevant to Inuit (Article 32.2.1).

The special nature of Aboriginal consultation and participation in SUFA has been an issue from the outset. It remains to be resolved.

Leaders of national Aboriginal organizations, including ITK, have always insisted that they should be full participants in SUFA. **The national leadership of ITK should be full participants in the Ministerial Council on Social Policy Renewal, because of the unique nature of Inuit social policy needs and the special relationship between Inuit and the Crown.**

It must also be recognized that commitments to include Aboriginal organizations in a proactive and planned way in the implementation and assessment of SUFA have not been properly realized.

For example, the issue of fuller participation by Aboriginal organizations has been discussed at Ministerial meetings since the signing of SUFA. In a communiqué of 22 March 1999, Premiers, Territorial Leaders and National Aboriginal Organizations (but not the federal government) stated *“It was agreed by all participants at the meeting that the National Aboriginal Organizations be engaged in the implementation of the Social Union Framework Agreement wherever such implementation has implications for Aboriginal people.”* Further, a communiqué of 16 December 1999 from the federal/provincial/territorial Ministerial Council on Social Policy Renewal, Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and Leaders of the national Aboriginal organizations stated that: *“Ministers and Leaders agreed to develop a process for the three year review called for in the Framework Agreement. The review process should include consideration of proposals by Aboriginal organizations to strengthen their involvement in the Social Union process.”*

Federal funding to conduct an assessment of SUFA was offered in January 2002 with an initial deadline of March 1 (extended to March 31, 2002) for a report on ITK’s assessment of SUFA and its implementation. **Clearly, a greater effort must be made to include Inuit in the implementation and assessment of SUFA in a more planned and thoughtful way, and in a manner consistent with our unique constitutional status and rights.**

### The SUFA Process

The very existence of the SUFA reflects the ongoing tensions between federal and provincial/territorial governments over the use of the federal spending power on social programs and a commitment to resolve those tensions. The debate about how the federal spending power should be used, and how it should be regulated, are related to other federal/provincial disputes about the fairness of the current split of taxing power between the federal and provincial governments relative to their respective obligations for social programs. Provincial governments often argue that there is an imbalance in this relationship - that provincial governments with the bulk of responsibility for the most expensive social programming such as health, education and social assistance have too little tax room and too small a share of overall Canadian tax revenue.

Inuit have an interest in seeing an effective federal/provincial/territorial dispute resolution mechanism in place but also in ensuring the federal spending power is recognized as an

important tool to ensure equal opportunity and substantive equality for all. The federal spending power is an important tool to assist Inuit in our social policy goals and to invest in social and economic development in Inuit communities. The federal spending power can be used to support activities and programs under s. 91(24) Constitution Act, 1867 and to meet the Crown's obligations under s. 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 including obligations under comprehensive claims agreements, self-government and other agreements with Inuit. While the manner in which the federal spending power is used is typically regarded as discretionary, the Crown's discharge of its obligations to respect aboriginal and treaty rights is not, nor is the proper discharge of its related fiduciary obligations. The social and economic development needs of Inuit are related to the implementation of our aboriginal and treaty rights and the fundamental right to development recognized in many international human rights documents. The needs and interests of Inuit, as an aboriginal people of Canada, therefore must be recognized as a priority in any decision making on use of the federal spending power.

It must also be recognized however, that the ongoing debate over use of the federal spending power and the absence of an agreed upon dispute resolution mechanism impedes the ability of federal and provincial/territorial governments to collaborate and make greater progress on improving Canada's social safety net and helping those most in need. The failure to resolve key disputes in areas such as the CHST and territorial funding formulas has a negative impact on Inuit citizens in provinces and territories, as is the case for all Canadians.

There are issues specific to Inuit that require attention in order to ensure equitable access to social programs across all Inuit regions, in all provinces and territories in which Inuit reside. In particular, there is a need to develop a mechanism to ensure the federal government will provide programs and carry out its obligations for Inuit in provinces on the same basis, or to the same extent, as Inuit living in the territories (for social or infrastructure needs). Special accommodations for Inuit needs or northern realities that are in place for the territories are often lost for Inuit living in provinces when programs are managed or delivered through federal/provincial arrangements. The solution may be to have the federal government enter into the necessary arrangements directly with institutions of governance in the northern areas of the provinces that have been, or will be established through negotiations with Inuit for public or other forms of self-government.

A key issue at stake in the implementation of SUFA and its possible evolution, is how SUFA can lead to improved and more equitable access to social programs by all Canadians, particularly those most in need. On this last point, the use of the federal tax power to redistribute wealth on a national basis, there are three key mechanisms in the Canadian federal system – the CHST, the system of equalization payments to provinces and formula financing system for territorial governments. All three mechanisms are intended to redistribute wealth with the aim of ensuring that reasonably comparable levels of service can be provided in all provinces and territories at reasonably comparable levels of taxation.

Currently, it appears that provincial and territorial governments are primarily preoccupied with ensuring the federal government implements its commitment to establish a dispute

resolution mechanism for the Canada Health Act. This objective is regarded as essential for federal/provincial/territorial governments making any sort of real progress on the major CHST funding disputes that have been ongoing for sometime.

A key concern of ITK with respect to policy development by all levels of government is the ad hoc nature in which priorities are identified with respect to Aboriginal people in general, and the failure to take an Inuit-specific approach to policies and programs intended to apply to Inuit regions or to ignore the needs of Inuit altogether.

With respect to Aboriginal health policy for example, the Communiqué coming out of the Provincial-Territorial Premiers' Meeting of January 24-25, 2002 recognized this problem and made a strong statement on the role of the federal government in fulfilling its responsibilities to all Aboriginal people:

*“Premiers strongly urged the federal government to fulfill its responsibility with regard to the provision of health services to all Aboriginal people, wherever they live in Canada. The federal government has yet to act on last year’s Throne Speech commitments to improve health care services to Aboriginal people. Even though the recent budget identifies additional funding for Aboriginal health issues, such as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, the allocated funds are restricted to Aboriginal children living on-reserve. This includes the effective implementation of federally funded home care services to Aboriginal Canadians.”*

Inuit held a national Inuit Health Policy Forum in 1999 and identified the following priority health issues:

- ◆ Violence against women and children
- ◆ Mental health and suicide prevention
- ◆ Improved medical services
- ◆ The need to improve non-insured health benefits for Inuit
- ◆ Housing
- ◆ More support and services for people with disabilities.

Health Canada acknowledges that “overall, Inuit in Canada experience poorer health than the Canadian population in general as evidenced by lower life expectancies, higher infant mortality rates and higher rates of some chronic illness such as respiratory disease.”<sup>2</sup> Health Canada also acknowledges that crowded and inadequate housing contributes to a range of social and health problems, such as the high incidence of respiratory disease among Inuit children. Other factors negatively affecting the status of Inuit health is the high cost of store-bought food in the North, decreasing availability of traditional foods, high rates of smoking and alcohol, substance and solvent abuse.<sup>3</sup>

The lower status of Inuit health relative to the Canadian population and the many unique aspects to Inuit social and economic conditions demonstrate the need for Inuit-specific strategies, policies and programs to address the distinct health needs of Inuit in all

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<sup>2</sup> Inuit health status, February 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Inuit health status, February 2000.

regions. These factors must be taken into account as part of the Social Union process, and this can only be done by the full inclusion of Inuit leadership and funding to ensure our full participation in policy and program development.

## **SUFA Principles**

The Principles section of the SUFA expresses substantive values and objectives that the federal, provincial and territorial governments commit themselves. These principles may be summarized as:

- a commitment to equality
- a commitment to provide essential social programs to all Canadians and to promote the full participation of all Canadians in Canada's social and economic life
- a commitment to ensure adequate, affordable, stable and sustainable funding for social programs
- a commitment that nothing in the agreement abrogates or derogates from any aboriginal, treaty or other rights of aboriginal people including self-government.

Essentially these principles state the collective commitment of federal, provincial and territorial governments to universal and equal access to basic social programs by all Canadians, including access to high quality and efficient health services – while respecting Aboriginal and Treaty rights.

The opening paragraph of the SUFA reflects values Inuit share with other Canadians “Canada’s social union should reflect and give expression to the fundamental values of Canadians – equality, respect for diversity, fairness, individual dignity and responsibility, and mutual aid and our responsibilities for one another.” These underlying principles of SUFA are important to the collective and individual welfare of Inuit and are consistent with Inuit values. Other specific goals of SUFA are also supported by Inuit such as enhanced government accountability to citizens for the effectiveness of government programs.

There are two specific mentions of Aboriginal people in SUFA. However, these can be fairly assessed as inadequate as substantive statements of principle. One is a non-derogation clause in the Principles section and the other is a provision in the section entitled “Working in partnership with Canadians” which states that governments “*will work with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada to find practical solutions to address their pressing needs*”.

Given the importance of social and economic policy to the welfare and rights of Aboriginal people, and given the special role of Aboriginal peoples in Confederation, there should be a positive statement of principle in the principles section that refers to Aboriginal peoples. The provision that appears later in the document that governments “*will work with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada to find practical solutions to address their pressing needs*” does not fulfill this objective. This provision is not inspiring or ambitious. It says nothing more than what one would expect governments to do in any case. It is harmless enough to leave in, but the Agreement itself should speak of Aboriginal peoples in an inclusive and positive way. For example, **ITK recommends**

**that an additional provision be added to the Principles section to reflect the unique place of Aboriginal peoples in the Social Union:**

**Within their respective constitutional jurisdictions and powers, governments commit to the following principles:**

.....

**Aboriginal peoples of Canada**

**Recognition of the unique role of the Inuit, First Nations and Metis peoples of Canada in Canada's social union and the contributions each can bring to reflect and give expression to the fundamental values of Canadians.**

Another area requiring improvement is the way in which equality is referred to in the document. Under the heading "All Canadians are equal", the principles section refers to fairness, equity and equality of opportunity. This section and the one that follows entitled "Meeting the needs of Canadians" does not specifically invoke the concept of substantive equality that has distinguished Canadian equality rights theory from U.S. and older Canadian notions that focused more on sameness of treatment as between individuals, rather than taking account of differences and substantively unequal starting points for some peoples because of racism and colonialism. "Substantive equality" requires that actions and policies take into account the ongoing impacts of an historical pattern of discrimination and of policies that have placed a particular group in society at a disadvantage. Another important principle of Canadian law and public policy is the commitment to gender equality. In SUFA, this principle is rather weakly expressed as a commitment that governments "respect the equality, rights and dignity of all Canadian women and men and their diverse needs."

**ITK recommends that some reference to "substantive equality" be added to the section headed "All Canadians are equal" to signal the need to take into account the particular circumstances of Inuit in Canadian society.**

Apart from these specific recommendations for change, the bulk of the principles contained in the SUFA (such as commitments to universal health care, to ensuring access to social programs and services to Canadians wherever they live, helping those in need, etc.) appear to be consistent with Inuit values. The SUFA could be improved by including a clearer acknowledgement that social policy must be used as a key tool to address existing inequities and barriers in programs and services for Inuit and for Inuit women in particular. SUFA should acknowledge the need to develop specific programs and services for Inuit women and should do so in the context of a stronger commitment to gender equality as a guiding principle of SUFA, flowing from the Constitution of Canada.

Other objectives mentioned in SUFA are also consistent with Inuit interests and values such as encouraging public accountability and transparency in government decision-making and actions, joint planning, collaboration and avoidance of duplication by governments in their actions. However, the implementation of these principles will

require a plan that takes account of the realities of Inuit communities, our approach to social policy and our assessment of Inuit social policy priorities.

For example, the following factors must be taken into account in the design and delivery of programs and services in Inuit communities:

- ◆ The representative role of Inuit organizations
- ◆ The resourcing needs of Inuit organizations in order to participate in joint policy development with federal and provincial/territorial governments
- ◆ That programs designed for First Nations people often do not meet the social policy needs of Inuit
- ◆ The lack of Inuit-specific programs is compounded when administrative responsibilities are delegated to non-Inuit structures without Inuit consent
- ◆ The disadvantaged social, cultural and economic conditions of Inuit in comparison to other Canadians, particularly Canadians living in Inuit regions
- ◆ Differences among Inuit regions and communities
- ◆ The special needs and circumstances of the various aspects of Inuit society – for example, men and women, elders and youth, persons with disabilities, and Inuit in urban centres outside the Arctic
- ◆ The need for basic economic foundations on which to build social programs and services
- ◆ The need for appropriate care and accountability in the use of public funds
- ◆ The need for comprehensive and planned social policy reform suitable to Inuit needs and priorities.

The non-derogation clause could have an important role to play respecting a number of Inuit interests. However, its most immediate and obvious protective roles are in regard to the mobility section of the SUFA. The mobility provisions could be in actual conflict with the provisions of Inuit land claims agreements in regard to hiring and contract award preferences and other provisions aimed at achieving substantive equality for Inuit in their own regions with respect to employment and business.

The non-derogation clause is an important inclusion but does not provide as strong protection as other forms of non-derogation in statutes. In addition, a non-derogation clause is, by its nature, a negative statement rather than a positive statement of principle.

**The non-derogation should be reworded to read nothing in this agreement *shall be construed* (interpreted) as abrogating or derogating from aboriginal and treaty rights including the *inherent* right of self-government and rights under land claims agreements.**

The current clause states that nothing in the agreement actually does infringe aboriginal or treaty rights. Simply stating an agreement does not infringe Aboriginal or Treaty rights does not make it so. By adding the word “shall be construed”, the agreement would more accurately reflect the intent of the signatories not to have the agreement interpreted in such a way as infringes Aboriginal and Treaty rights. Adding the word “inherent” before

self-government is consistent with federal policy, and would include the public forms of self-government Inuit have established or are in the process of negotiating with other governments. Inherent means nothing more than “not extinguishable”. It speaks to the nature of self-government as a fundamental human right. While the constitutionally protected provisions of land claims agreements clearly prevail over a policy statement such as SUFA, the policy intent of acting in a manner consistent with such agreements should be made clear in the SUFA principles.

### SUFA Implementation

**ITK recommends that the focal point of federal/provincial/territorial efforts should be on maintaining the basic elements of Canada’s social safety net, while improving its efficiencies and removing existing inequities and barriers to access and recognizing the importance of the federal spending power to address the socio-economic challenges facing Inuit.**

**Implementation of SUFA in a truly inclusive way will require the full participation of ITK and resourcing to engage in joint policy development with federal, provincial and territorial governments.**

Two key factors have contributed to the marginalization of Inuit in the Social Union Framework Agreement process: 1) the exclusion of ITK from the Ministerial Council on Social Renewal and; 2) the absence of an ongoing dialogue with Inuit through ITK and other Inuit representative organizations at a senior officials and Ministerial level within the SUFA process.

Any objective of fuller participation of Inuit in SUFA implementation will require ensuring Inuit have access to a process of ongoing policy development with an agreed-to workplan and schedule of meetings between at the Ministerial and senior officials level. Such a process could be coordinated by the federal government. Full participation in Ministerial Council meetings would be an integral part of the ensuring Inuit participation in a meaningful way in SUFA. ITK could better play its coordinating role across the Inuit regions by consulting member regional organizations and specific claims implementation bodies as well as Pauktuutit, participate in national processes and liaise with relevant provincial and territorial governments - if there was a specific Inuit policy assessment process - and if ITK’s participation in SUFA was funded on an ongoing basis.

It is also important that governments take steps to ensure that the implementation of SUFA takes account of the unique legal and constitutional context of each Inuit region as a result of the Inuit comprehensive land claims agreements. All of the Inuit regions have negotiated either a final comprehensive claims agreement (Makivik, IRC, Nunavut) or have an AIP (Labrador). In addition, unique Inuit self-government arrangements have been established or are being negotiated in each of the four regions. These agreements with Canada contain specific commitments to Inuit that are constitutionally protected and which have relevance to social policy development and cannot be ignored in the ongoing development of Canada’s social union.

In addition to claims implementation, specific Aboriginal programming that occurs separately from SUFA must be taken account of, in assessing the status and ongoing development of general social policy and its impact on Inuit. While such programming at the federal and provincial level is the focus of the FPTA process, the role Aboriginal specific programming plays in the overall social policy development process should be kept in mind as part of the overall social policy focus of SUFA. A particular problem with federal Aboriginal programming is its tendency too often to be restricted to on-reserve First Nation communities, despite the Crown's fiduciary duties to all Aboriginal peoples and despite general wording typically used in the Speech from the Throne and various departmental communication documents. The federal government often refers to "Aboriginal" programs as if they were actually available to all Aboriginal people. In reality, Inuit are often ignored completely (such as housing and FAS/FAE programs) or the development of Aboriginal policy takes place in ad hoc manner and the application of policy and programs to Inuit is no more than an afterthought, if it is thought of at all.

There is general need to assess the collective impact of social policy and programming on Inuit communities (both general programming and Aboriginal or Inuit-specific programming) with the aim of making existing programs more accessible by Inuit and more effective in their application to Inuit.

Consistent with SUFA goals of increased transparency and accountability, there is a need to identify the specific role and impact of the various streams of social policy and programming available to Inuit, and to establish specific goals and objectives for the application of social policy and programming in Inuit communities.

**ITK recommends that funding be provided for an ongoing Inuit social policy and program assessment process with the participation of the federal government and interested provincial and territorial governments. There is a need to assess the impact and effectiveness of transfer payments to provinces and territories in specifically serving Inuit social policy and program needs.**

#### The National Child Benefit and the National Children's Agenda

One of the few demonstrable products of the SUFA is the National Children's Agenda (NCA) and the National Child Benefit (NCB). Inuit regions did not have time to properly assess the impact of the NCA and NCB for Inuit children or families as part of this assessment exercise. ITK and its member organizations do have concerns about whether the NCB and the NCA have contributed in any measurable way to the welfare of Inuit families.

The NCB and NCA are related to one another. The NCB consists of federal contributions to pick up a share of social assistance payments being made to families with children. The amount of social assistance made to individuals under provincial and territorial schemes remains the same. The provincial and territorial funds that are freed up as a result of the federal contribution ("National Child Benefit Reinvestments") are to be used by provinces and territories to develop programs aimed at improving the social

development and overall welfare of children living in families receiving social assistance or living in low-income families (the “working poor”).

The three objectives of the NCB are:

1. to help prevent and reduce the depth of child poverty;
2. to promote an attachment to the workforce; and
3. to reduce program overlap and duplication.

The types of programs and services that are provided for parents and their children under the NCB/NCA through provincial and territorial governments fall into five broad areas: child/day care, child nutrition, early child development, employment and training opportunities. In respect to Aboriginal people, these programs are intended to be in addition to existing federal programs aimed at Aboriginal peoples such as the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Program and its companion First Nations/Inuit childcare program.

The NCA is an example of federal downloading of Aboriginal programming responsibility to provinces and territories. In the case of Inuit communities, it is not clear how and to what extent Inuit have benefited, nor has the net impact on Inuit families of this initiative in combination with other programs and benefits.

**ITK recommends that funding be provided to ITK and Pauktuutit to conduct a study of the specific impact of the NCB and the NCA in each of the four Inuit regions.**

#### Infrastructure as a Key Element of Social and Economic Development

ITK expresses its concern about the need for infrastructure development in all Inuit regions and the integral link between basic infrastructure needs and the capacity of each region to meet basic social and economic development goals including the efficient and equitable delivery of basic health services. Inuit regions require infrastructure development funding for major projects such as roads, and airstrips (through national or Northern infrastructure programs). In addition, there is a critical need to move to a more realistic basis of funding other than per capita basis funding (which does not provide adequate funds that properly take into account the impact of transportation costs in delivering services to a small population spread across a vast territory).

The failure to properly respond to these needs will have a very real and negative impact on the ability of Inuit, territorial, provincial and federal governments to reach its social policy goals in respect to Inuit. Inuit and territorial governments have received the support of the provincial Premiers on this issue. In the concluding remarks made by Premier Gordon Campbell on August 3, 2001, he stated: *“One point became clear in our conversations, an equitable approach to infrastructure development and planning must recognize that per capita funding formula which has been in place in the past does not provide for the needs of northern and remote communities in our country.”*

As SUFA continues and evolves, the federal government must maintain and meet its fiduciary obligations to Inuit. The federal government must recognize its role and its duty to ensure the special circumstances of Inuit are factored into the Social Union and addressed by federal policies aimed at improving the socio-economic situation of Inuit in all regions of Canada. The federal government also must ensure its responsibilities to Inuit are met, when making federal transfers to other levels of government.

### Conclusion

Overall, it is difficult to identify concrete benefits to Inuit as a result of SUFA and this is due in part to the marginalization of Inuit leadership in the SUFA process and the failure to design policies and assessment processes that take into account the Inuit reality. ITK has made several recommendations in this paper to address these deficiencies.

### Summary of ITK Recommendations

1. The national leadership of ITK should be full participants in the Ministerial Council on Social Policy Renewal, because of the unique nature of Inuit social policy needs and the special relationship between Inuit and the Crown.
2. A greater effort must be made to include Inuit in the implementation and assessment of SUFA in a more planned and thoughtful way, and in a manner consistent with our unique constitutional status and rights.
3. ITK recommends that an additional provision be added to the Principles section to reflect the unique place of Aboriginal peoples in the Social Union:

Within their respective constitutional jurisdictions and powers, governments commit to the following principles:

.....

Aboriginal peoples of Canada

Recognition of the unique role of the Inuit, First Nations and Metis peoples of Canada in Canada's social union and the contributions each can bring to reflect and give expression to the fundamental values of Canadians.

4. ITK recommends that some reference to “substantive equality” be added to the section headed “All Canadians are equal” to signal the need to take into account the particular circumstances of Inuit in Canadian society.
5. The non-derogation should be reworded to read nothing in this agreement *shall be construed* (interpreted) as abrogating or derogating from aboriginal and treaty rights including the *inherent* right of self-government *and rights under land claims agreements*.

6. ITK recommends that the focal point of federal/provincial/territorial efforts should be on maintaining the basic elements of Canada's social safety net, while improving its efficiencies and removing existing inequities and barriers to access and recognizing the importance of the federal spending power to address the socio-economic challenges facing Inuit.
7. Implementation of SUFA in a truly inclusive way will require the full participation of ITK and resourcing to engage in joint policy development with federal, provincial and territorial governments.
8. ITK recommends that funding be provided for an ongoing Inuit social policy and program assessment process with the participation of the federal government and interested provincial and territorial governments. There is a need to assess the impact and effectiveness of transfer payments to provinces and territories in specifically serving Inuit social policy and program needs.
9. ITK recommends that funding be provided to ITK and Pauktuutit to conduct a study of the specific impact of the NCB and the NCA in each of the four Inuit regions.