

2006 National Aboriginal Connectivity and E-Services Forum

*"Sustainable Connectivity as an engine for
Social and Economic Growth"*

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Prepared By:



HUNTER-COURCHENE
Consulting Group Inc.

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Forum Opening

Ms. Anna Molley, the Master of Ceremonies, introduced Elder Paul Skanks who provided an opening prayer for the conference. Ms. Suzanne Tining, Associate Deputy Minister, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), provided opening remarks. She stated that she had followed this process over the last five years and added that the forum had an important and supporting role for connectivity between Aboriginal communities. She said that there was no doubt that connectivity could help in Aboriginal communities but they needed to identify how more communities could gain access to connectivity.

Assembly of First Nations' (AFN) Regional Chief Jason Goodstriker from Alberta thanked DIAND for taking the lead on connectivity and thanked the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) for taking on this portfolio from the National Aboriginal Organization (NAO) perspective. He stated now was the time to invest in connectivity with assistance and cooperation from federal departments including DIAND, Health Canada, Industry Canada, Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Privy Council Office, among others. He added that there was a need to consider the side of the information communications technology requirements of Aboriginal communities. First Nations were determining what worked for them and what needed more attention. He added that the results of this meeting would be part of the upcoming Economic Summit. He added the AFN looked forward to working with the new government and there were many areas where the partners could cooperate.

Forum Overview

Ms. Caroline Davies, Assistant Deputy Minister, DIAND, thanked the federal departments and the five national Aboriginal organizations that had put so much work into this important meeting. She added that while a lot of work had been done there was still much to do. This included working towards long-term federal support and commitment to ensure Aboriginal communities could participate in large-scale regional, provincial, and territorial broadband network, on a sustainable basis. She added that not any one of the Aboriginal organizations or federal departments had the resources to do what needed to be done alone; it had to be a cooperative effort at all levels.

Mr. Whit Fraser, Chief Operating Officer, ITK, said that the first satellites went up in early 1970's and, up until that time, the Inuit in different communities in the north were unable to talk to each other. He said that this technological advancement allowed for social and political developments that the satellite designers never planned. He added that whether or not they would see benefits from this latest technology was still unknown. He stated that there was a lot of new technology and people talked about training the Inuit to use it, design it and maintain it, but currently there was not enough infrastructure to support that. He asked if the Inuit were going to recognize the economic opportunities there. He added that partnerships were essential but so was good leadership. He said that they all had to work in identifying areas where they could best continue to elevate the issue in order to recognize the opportunities that exist in remote areas in the north. He concluded by saying that the technology could offer the Inuit a number of benefits but that was the challenge for leaders and policy makers; hopefully they could continue to elevate the technology.

e-Health Plenary Discussion

Mr. Ernie Dal Grande, National Program Manager for e-Health, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch - Health Canada, said that, for the past few years, they had shared challenges and success and talked about new projects and how they could work together. He explained that, over the next two days, the goal was to pinpoint outstanding policy issues. He introduced Dr. Valerie Gideon, Director, Health and Social Development, from the Assembly of First Nations.

“Connecting Aboriginal Canadians: First Nations Health-Related Interests”

Dr. Valerie Gideon, Director, Health and Social Development, Assembly of First Nation

Dr. Gideon stated that the overall objective of the First Ministers Meeting (FMM) was to close the gap in health between Aboriginal people and the rest of Canada. She said that there needed to be jurisdictional coordination and this increased coordination would impact on the ability of First Nations people to access quality health care where they lived. She explained that there had been increasing demands for First Nations health data and yet there had been no investments in capacity and technology that could respond to those demands. She stated that there was no comprehensive plan supported by the federal government and First Nations for how to move forward.

She mentioned that First Nations were not generally prioritized in federal, provincial and territorial initiatives. With any initiative, she said, there must be data and information that emphasized the need for evidence-based planning, clinical practice and evaluation. She stressed that implementing a series of fragmented applications based on specific diseases was not feasible. She added that they had heard about integration across the health care system but First Nations control in that process was important or First Nations would perceive it as off-loading of federal responsibilities.

She said that there was a need for flexible and scalable applications. She added that they could not develop the technology and then look at community needs.

“Inuit Communities and E-Health, an Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami Perspective”

Ms. Onalee Randell, Director of Health, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

Ms. Randell noted that the technical divide between north and south remained and widened all the time. Many people, if they actually had the Internet, were still using dial-up. A priority for Inuit around e-Health was for their communities to be able to link to each other; not just with institutions in the south. She said that the Inuit wanted to increase partnerships in order to increase access to relevant health services and training opportunities at all levels. She explained that Inuit regions span two provinces and two Territories; they needed the responsibilities regarding e-Health to span many governments. She also noted that one of the major issues that the ITK wanted addressed was the outdated and irrelevant measurement of “remoteness”. She explained that Health Canada determined “remoteness” by distance and the standard was if the community was at least 90 kilometres, from a hospital. She explained that, in the north, communities could be thousands of kilometres from the nearest hospital. She said that there needed to be initiatives in place that addressed the fear in Inuit communities that e-Health would replace face-to-face interaction with health care providers. She suggested that the technology infrastructure in the communities could be used to address non-medical benefits such as people talking and seeing those in other communities or in the south. She added that the Inuit wanted to be at the forefront of developing policies and to benefit from effective capacity and infrastructure. She said that what was important to

Inuit was that they not only be connected to doctors in the south but that those on the other end of the line had awareness of the north.

E-Health Update

Ms. Terry Fox, Executive Director, Inter-Tribal Health Authority

For British Columbia First Nations, Ms. Fox explained, the e-Health focus had been on tele-health. Canada Health Infoway funding had helped many BC First Nations recognize the potential benefits of Telehealth, as many were as isolated as communities in Canada's north. The five councils in BC had been consulted by the province's regional health authorities and this unique and collaborative body was an important milestone regarding integration of jurisdictions and getting attention as a model for others.

First Nation Technology Council Presentation

Ms. Sue Hanley, Technology Coordinator, First Nations Technology Council

Ms. Hanley explained that there were about five hundred First Nations communities in BC; they considered a community to be any group of people living together with about five houses or more; not just the recognized First Nations reserves. She explained that the focus could not just be on connecting the administration offices and health centres; the individuals living in all those communities needed to be connected as well. She added that access inequalities in BC needed to be addressed. She provided the example that there were First Nations that share a mountain with the Whistler resort area who did not even have running water or electricity.

She said that there was new funding to train fifteen ICT professionals. She added that this was exciting because a blended model would be used which meant that students would be spending some time in class but would also be out in the field working on the technology.

She said that they needed to work on raising awareness in communities where there were other priorities such as housing and water quality. She asked how they could get to the point where technology could be seen as a way to move those priority areas forward. She said that they applauded DIAND for their comprehensive community-planning model and added that they would be working with communities to implement that plan.

Ms. Hanley said that E-health, or tele-health, must not replace human contact; it should enhance that contact between patients and health care providers.

FutureCents Presentation

Ms Nicole West, FutureCents BC

Nicole West, youth from BC, spoke about the FutureCents Initiative, a youth-helping-youth organization that provides a variety of services to youth in all communities including First Nations. They work on support, advocacy and referrals to other agencies.

Small Group Sessions

There were four concurrent sessions held: E-Government/Service; Sustainable Community Connectivity; Economic Development; and, an International Session.

1. E-Government/Service

Panellists

There were a number of panellists who provided brief introductions and descriptions of the work that they were doing on e-government services. The panellists included: Mr. Ian MacArthur (DIAND); Mr. Ernie Dal Grande (Health Canada); Ms. Anna Molley (Donna Cona); Mr. Dan Wilson (Assembly of First Nations); Mr. Ryan Robb (Treaty 7); Ms. Suzanne Desjarlais (Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians); Mr. Joe Lance (Kativik Regional Government); Ms. Krista Wright (Woodstock First Nation); and, Mr. Wayne Osawamick (Wikwemikong First Nation).

DIAND Presentation on E-Government Services

Mr. Ian MacArthur provided a presentation on Aboriginal E-Government and Services, which highlighted the key connectivity priority investment areas, including: community infrastructure; community sustainability; and, federal-Aboriginal coordination. The presentation provided general information on federal Aboriginal programming, which includes 240 projects spread over 32 departments at the cost of \$8,839,000,000. The presentation outlined Service Canada developments as well as an Aboriginal Service Canada Framework. The challenge for Aboriginal e-government services was how to support communities with electronic tools to ease program reporting and increase community capacity development across a number of professional Aboriginal Service Delivery networks and support the combined efforts of funding service officers and community leaders and administrators. Mr. MacArthur also touched on the new broadband technologies available to improve and streamline service delivery.

Discussion

A concern expressed by participants was that there was no department that had the lead on connectivity and this was an issue that affected all departments. There was a need to identify a champion for connectivity and a department to house the initiative and to provide coordination at the government level. It was noted that Treasury Board was a central agency that had the capacity to develop a single policy framework and it should be approached for support. There was also a role for the Aboriginal leadership and a need for political support for the initiative.

The need for Aboriginal-friendly access points was raised as an issue for Aboriginal people living in an urban setting.

It was stated that there was a need for a stronger focus on sustainability. For example, in Nunavut, the systems and infrastructures were in place, however, if the system did not generate revenue for operational funding, the system would collapse. The question was raised around what would happen in five years if funding were not renewed. It was suggested that there was a lot of funding available for getting projects off the ground, however, there was no funding for maintaining the projects.

An issue was identified around determining the value of connectivity and whether or not it met the needs of First Nations communities. The issue was also raised that there was no one officially looking after First Nations Information Technology.

It was suggested that the model needed to be flipped on its' head and the leadership must come from the communities and not the usual top-down approach from government.

It was noted that there was a need to share information among communities and the regions to determine what was working and what was not working and how successful projects could be implemented in other locations. There was also a need to share the success stories from small and medium-sized companies, as communities might relate better to those businesses as opposed to big companies. The point was raised that not everything only happened in Ottawa; there were other communities and regions in Canada.

Privacy and control/ownership over community data was raised as an issue that required further discussion. First Nations needed to trust the department/agency that was holding or accessing their information.

It was stated that communities should determine their own connectivity needs and there was a requirement for capacity and operating funding to be generated or provided by government on an on-going basis. It was stated that not every community was ready for a system to be put in place so systems should only be put in those communities that were ready.

A blueprint or strategy must be developed to reflect how infrastructure, capacity and e-services could be created. However, it would also need to be flexible enough to work across the country with a multi-faceted approach to address those communities that had the infrastructure and those that did not. The framework could not hinder regional developments. In addition, partnerships were key to the success of connectivity.

2. Sustainable Community Connectivity

It was noted that the document in the kit was a collective of what DIAND had heard regarding sustainability and priority investments identified over past three years. The purpose of this session was to validate the document and improve upon it.

Broadband infrastructure was a crucial first step and, without adequate infrastructure, there would be nothing to maintain. Most Aboriginal communities had fewer than five hundred people and were far from service centres. Broadband set-up and maintenance was much more expensive for smaller and isolated communities.

Panel Members:

Mr. Jason Googoo, Membertou First Nation

Mr. Googoo, a senior technology advisor/consultant to Membertou First Nation in New Brunswick, shared some of their experiences and challenges. He said that Membertou First Nation was a self-sustaining organization and was the third largest employer in Cape Breton. He explained that they worked with new technologies early on and they had achieved national recognition for their economic development efforts. They've developed business relationships with international companies such as Lockheed Martin who work in the aerospace and defence sectors. Relationships such as those allowed Membertou to leverage those relationships to other activities. They were the first First Nation in Canada to achieve ICO9001 certification and work with other First Nations through Membertou Quality Management Services to send their knowledge to other groups. They've built other successful companies including Membertou Advance Solutions, a full IT service company, using their many partnerships. A

key area they worked on was as a repository of Aboriginal health records, always operating within OCAP principles.

He also mentioned that Membertou signed an agreement with Nova Scotia Community Colleges on training opportunities to support high school to college transitions and to the world of work. One of the programs would train First Nations to be technical support analysts and technicians.

He stated that currently a needs assessment was being done to determine what the broadband infrastructure requirements were in First Nations communities including a gap analysis and costs for having desirable levels of services. He suggested that First Nations needed help with capital and maintenance costs. He also mentioned that things were unrealistically compartmentalized and there needed to be a new integrated approach to look beyond the needs of just one area. Creativity was needed for this infrastructure to be self-supporting.

Mr. Jean Francois Dumoulin, Kativik Regional Government

Mr. Dumoulin explained that Internet home delivery started as pilot project in Kuujuaq in 2004. The target price was sixty dollars per month per home. He explained that organizations were charged by numbers of users as opposed to uses and also that bandwidth was set accordingly. Within a year, he said, 820 homes and 75 organizations were hooked up including police stations, government offices and community centres. He added that it was in Kativik Regional Government's mandate to operate this and they wanted to build a business model where revenues paid for the costs of running the network. He added that they were looking for ways to get to parity with the people hooked up to terrestrial networks, which could be achieved through NSI or partnerships with the private sector. He concluded by noting that a lack of local capacity was a barrier since there was difficulty in finding trained people to maintain Internet technology.

Mr. Dave Smith, Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation

Mr. Smith mentioned that DIAND had hired him to work on the ICT requirements for the new government in Nunavut after it was established in 1999. He started out working with the new government's economic development department and from that the Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation was developed. He provided an overview of the Qiniq Network.

Ms. Sue Hanley, First Nations Technology Council

Ms. Hanley mentioned that recently the Chiefs in BC approved the "FIT model" or fully integrated model for communities. A big barrier before was that ISPs did not want to go to small communities, as it was not profitable. She said that there had to be a concept of public good. She added they were working with their regional DIAND office on sustainability.

She said that protocols were very important to Aboriginal communities to protect traditional knowledge. She added that there was fear that once information was on the Internet, there was no way to protect it. Further, she explained, First Nations languages and cultures had to drive all of this. She said that to parachute in the technology without strong language and culture components did not do the community a real service.

She also mentioned that to deal with the high costs of having service technicians come to communities was to start a First Nations virtual support network. Another way to deal with costs was to develop

partnerships between agencies and organizations to share the costs of using the technology. She explained that there was a strategic plan in development to have three regional mobile labs to provide technical support and training. The training had to be continuous for software and hardware to be kept evergreen.

Open Space Input

It was mentioned that community champions were necessary for successful implementation of technology and certified technicians must be available. There had to be an understanding with anchor tenants to get payments through the current transfer payment system. DIAND was saying people working on those transfer payments could now work with the communities. There had to be a mechanism in place so networks could maintain sustainability to the technology remained evergreen. The community had to have the tools necessary to help communities develop a sense of wellness. It must be community driven and community priorities must be respected. Youth must be involved; their creativity must be harnessed. Any savings realized must remain in the communities. Individuals must retain right on how to receive health care.

Michael Corbett from the Smart Communities Society in the NWT said that, in his region, four out of thirty-three communities were well connected. He suggested that a knowledge transfer had to take place in the NWT, He added that community economic development could not take place without socio-economic development and vice versa. He stated that governments could not assume to tell communities what they needed and how money should be spent; communities needed to tell the government what they needed and how it should be delivered. He said that DIAND and other departments such as Industry Canada needed to do some integration so there could be “one stop shopping” for programs that addressed the concerns.

What is the primary element of the sustainability situation?

It was noted that KNET had videoconferencing set up in twenty-six communities in northern Ontario with doctors and specialists in different cities such as Winnipeg and Toronto. All of this was done because communities decided what the ownership structure would be in each community. It was suggested that they had to look at the whole notion of ownership and models, like the RMO, that clearly make headway in developing connectivity. In addition, the Kativik Regional Government had a partnership with KNET and formed a large northern Indigenous network.

3. Economic Development

Mr. Steven Fox Radulovich provided an outline of the discussions topics for panel and delegates, which included:

- Outline successes in addressing issues and opportunities over the past year;
- Identify communities of interest and how they may be best engaged; and,
- Identify priorities for the upcoming year.

Community Economic Development – On-Line Year in Review

Mr. David Henley, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development

Mr. Henley provided a power point presentation titled “Community Economic Development On-Line Year in Review” to the delegates. He talked about the CEDOL Workshop that was held in 2005 and the

three major themes that had emerged from the workshop. The first theme was *Communities and Partnerships*, the second was *Human Resource Skills and Capacity Development* and the third was *Economic Development and Business*. The main recommendations that came out of that process included: a need to create virtual on-line communities and work groups in the area of economic development; the need to develop terms of reference for work group(s) and communities of practice and interest; and, a requirement for a formalized Community Economic Development On-Line Working Group. Mr. Henley stated that the next steps would involve initiating an ongoing process for a CED On-Line working group(s) and communities of practice and interest and developing an ICT Roadmap with the CED On-Line working group that supported an integrated strategy for related communities.

Participant Questions/Comments

A participant stated that he had worked on large-scale projects and that he was the Economic Development Officer in his First Nation. He asked whether the group was concerned about economic development tools online or economic development online. He added that it could not be just tools but it needed to include community building. In 2001, he was approached to develop an economic development portal and the concept developed was ecdev.ca. The first thing they looked at was the economic viability “value proposition” of the portal. The participant stated that portals should have a forum to rate the vendors and that portals should have value or it was wasted money.

Mr. Tim Whiteduck stated that there was a need to look at the reality in First Nation communities. He asked a question around how they could possibly access all the information from a dial up connection. He stated that broadband support and connection was necessary in the communities. The sustainability of connectivity needed to be addressed.

Mr. Brian Beaton asked how Community Economic Development could use tools in innovative ways. He stated that there needed to be leadership at the community level. He stressed the need to put language first in the initiative. The technology could become a means for survival of culture. He stated that the technology needed to be community owned and operated. The information needs to be managed by the communities. This was not just a discussion about the Internet but of having the people and skills to manage the local communications.

One of the participants asked how they could get away from government intervention and put the control in the community. In the remote northern communities, they survived on what was provided to the community; not what the community made and sold to the world. They asked how they might use the portal to assist the communities in reaching a market place for what the community had to offer. Participants also asked what the economic benefits were for the communities. Mr. Henley responded that the program was dependent on whether there was money and, he admitted, there was limited flexibility with government programs. He stated that there was a need to create an environment for communities to reach private industry.

One of the participants raised a question around the extension of programs. They asked how they could guide the transfer to the private partnerships. Mr. Henley responded that there were a number of factors including: some governments and areas were better positioned with funding; some had to wait for the federal government; and, others might want to create partnerships with private industry.

Mr. Murray Dion stated that the shift in economies meant that Chiefs needed to implement information management strategies; align schools; business tipping point was with the communities. Ms. Judy Whiteduck responded that there needed to be increased First Nations control over economies and

economic programs. She added that they needed to get away from application-based economy (applying for funding) and move towards increased control.

Virtual Tour of Aboriginal Canada (VTAC) On-line Launch

Mr. Barry Parker, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development

Mr. Barry Parker presented a power point titled “Virtual Tour of Aboriginal Canada: A Work in Progress” to the participants. He stated that VTAC would be a website that people anywhere in the world could use to virtually visit “connected” Aboriginal communities in Canada. VTAC would also provide a platform to showcase Aboriginal tourism development.

Participant Questions/Comments

Mr. Henley stated that DIAND acknowledged that the Internet was a valuable tool and that VTAC Aboriginal showcase would build on the success of Virtual Aboriginal Trade Show (VATS). He stated that there was a need for community content for the portal. Mr. Parker stated that the vision of VTAC was to tell the stories of the communities and it was being put in place to meet the 2010 deadline. He said that he needed identify what was important to the communities and what should be on the website.

A participant from Turtle Island Tourism stated that, as an Aboriginal cultural attraction, their product was marketed internationally and one of the main challenges they faced was educating the people on the diverse cultures that existed within the Aboriginal community. She felt that VTAC could provide some of the education but that the success of VTAC depended on making sure that the communities were ready.

Another participant stated that the cultural portals were growing and that there were limitations on the Aboriginal cultural content. He stressed the importance of having an Aboriginal presence on the web and ensuring accurate cultural information.

Community Economic Development Online (CEDOL)

The discussion paper entitled *Community Economic Development On-Line* was presented to the participants.

The Aboriginal Canada Portal team was seeking opinions on what Community Economic Development Online (CEDOL) should be, with the understanding that it should build on the work of the Aboriginal Canada Portal and not displace existing authorities and service providers. The discussion paper put forward an initial concept that showed CEDOL as a tool that could be used to provide information, awareness, education and a platform from which to advocate for change and engage program and policy designers. Essentially, it could create strategic linkages between those who had needs and those that could address those needs. The next steps for CEDOL included: seeking approval from Aboriginal stakeholders to proceed; establishing an Aboriginal Canada Portal and Connectivity Working Group; sharing work plans and developing Internal/External stakeholder partnerships; and, securing resources for CEDOL.

Participant Questions/Comments

One of the participants indicated that if this was going to be a success, there was a need for the discussion paper to be sent out to people to get their input. The response was that CEDOL was a concept in

development and that any comments or suggestions should be sent to Barry Parker at ParkerBa@inac.gc.ca.

4. International Session

The purpose of the session was to review what had been happening internationally with regards to connectivity and to gauge the participants' level of support for continuing work in this area. The first presenter was Mr. Dan Hughes, International Relations in DIAND, who provided an overview of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). He also reviewed international and domestic policy frameworks and added that the ICTS could be used to support Indigenous issues both internationally and domestically. He also suggested that the development of a portal could be done in the short-term and it would be practical and necessary step. He concluded his presentation by asking the participants if they felt that was a valuable approach and added that they would be looking at supporting the work of international partners as a next step.

The second presenter was Mr. Kenneth Deer. Mr. Deer stressed the importance of follow up on the work that had been done to date and on the recommendations out of the WSIS. He also stated that importance of linguistic and cultural integrity and protecting traditional Indigenous knowledge. He said one of the gains that they had made in the WSIS was that the Indigenous people were considered stakeholders in the international process and, while they were not satisfied with this definition of their involvement, it could be looked at as a positive first step. He stressed the need for Indigenous people to have concrete involvement in these international processes and there was a need for funding in order for them to participate effectively. He said that it was important to become more involved in the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) events such as the World Telecommunication Development Conference, which was currently taking place in Doha, Qatar. He underscored the difficulty of getting involved with this organization as their meetings were limited to their own members and they did not allow non-governmental observers to participate.

Mr. Deer acknowledged Canada for the funding received to organize and participate in the side event at WSIS and stated that they had to make sure that they followed up on that. He stated that they needed an Indigenous secretariat to work on these issues. He agreed that Canada was progressing domestically but work would need to take place to assist Indigenous people internationally.

Mr. Tony Belcourt, Métis Nation of Ontario, provided a presentation on the development of ICTS in the Americas. He stated that importance of working internationally on Indigenous policy and rights issues and added that there were a lot of opportunities internationally. He said that, out of the meeting in Mexico City, they developed a working group with other Indigenous people from the Americas. He admitted that there were some language issues in their attempts to work together. He said that access to ICTs was another issues and gave examples of his experiences in Central America where people travel great distances to access even rudimentary systems. He provided examples of the limited telecommunications infrastructure and identified their accomplishments despite having so little. He added that individuals have little idea of the possibility for the technology and there was a requirement to identify what their needs were. He said that there was a need to engage the private sector since they had the funding and were interested in expanding into untapped markets south. He concluded by saying that they needed to continue to work with the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of American States (OAS) but also take care of their own issues domestically, namely building partnerships.

The next presenter was Mr. Joe Norton from Mohawk Internet Technology who provided a private sector perspective on this topic. He said that if they are going to work internationally on ICT, they needed to make sure that they also work on the issue domestically. He said that he now worked in the private sector but he remembered what he had learned as a community leader about the needs, concerns, wishes and dreams of the people. He said that even though he came from a community that had been on the forefront of many initiatives, there were still many in the community who were wary of modern technology and this was an issue that needed to be addressed. He said that there was a need to be visionary and bold about building partnerships with government and transnational companies. He said that they, as First Nations people, needed to have the confidence to partner with these groups but maintain their own distinctiveness. He stated that many felt that technology was a weapon that could be used against them but it could also be used to connect them. He addressed Mr. Deer's point about becoming more involved in the ITU and he said that he would take that back to his office for discussion because they could, as a company, look at joining this organization. He also said that his company could also look at providing host space for different international initiatives since this was an issue that he wanted to work on. He concluded by saying that they needed to develop an inventory on who was doing what in the area of connectivity to aid them in their work.

Mr. Charlie Sark, Assembly of First Nations, was the next presenter and he discussed AFN's experiences in co-hosting an international summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina, with their counterparts from that country. He said that that forum brought together a number of Indigenous people from around the Americas and it was evident the different levels of communication issues that this involved. He advised that certain communication terms or concepts here in Canada took on a different meaning coming from the communication contexts of other less technologically advanced countries. He stressed the importance of working in partnerships to identify long-term solutions to issues around access and infrastructure. He also spoke of the commitment from all partners to ensure that they would complete the work effectively.

The final presenter was Mr. Keith Smith, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, who spoke about the importance of developing partnerships and the opportunities that existed internationally. He mentioned that he had a copy of the resolution being put forth by the ITU at the Doha (Qatar) conference and mentioned that the OAS also had a section that worked on Indigenous issues. He mentioned that they had met with the Navaho (who were on the forefront of partnership in terms of ICTs) and they had outlined a memorandum of understanding that they had with Brazil. He suggested that this might be a model that they could look at. He also provided some information on a source of funding at CIDA, which could be accessed to develop partnerships in Latin America.

Participant Comments:

One the participant mentioned that they agreed that work needed to continue on this issue internationally but stated that there were many regions here in Canada, such as the north, which were still unconnected. It was noted that many of the issues of the south were the issues of the north as well including: long distances; a lack of infrastructure; and, different cultures. It was suggested that they needed a strong and inclusive policy framework. It was also noted that there was great support for Indigenous people throughout the world to work on ICT but they needed to ensure that it was sustained and strengthened.

It was also noted that the idea of partnership with companies was a good one and, in the north, they had done this many times in the past because of shared interest in dealing with geographic challenges. One of the challenges they did face in working with the private sector was that there needed to be an organization with charitable status so that the companies could benefit as well.

It was stated that they had to have funding in place to focus on the issue on a long-term basis with some continuity. They also needed to work on this with a shared voice and not as isolated communities.

One of the questions that the group was asked was “Should the ACP&C Working Group continue to be involved internationally?” and, while there was agreement that it should, there were some challenges. One of the participants said that, while she did agree they should continue to work internationally, there were issues of understaffing within her National Aboriginal Organization (NAO) and if they had to choose, they would have to focus on their domestic work. She stressed that they needed a separate secretariat to work on these issues. Mr. Deer added that he agreed with staying involved as well but suggested that they needed a broader response from the conference goers on this issue.

Mr. Belcourt also agreed that they should continue their international work and suggested that, with the new government in place, the Aboriginal Canada Portal (ACP) would have to validate their work again. He suggested engaging the leadership of the Métis National Council to lend support to this effort. He stated that the Métis communities did not have access to the funding sources available for connectivity and maybe the ACP could look at facilitating that. He also asked for support for the development of a commission for ICTs in the Americas. He suggested that they needed to have a forum with private sector groups at the table as well to discuss partnerships.

Mr. Deer stated that they should have the capacity to work beyond the domestic scope and returned to the idea of the international portal. He said an international portal was an idea that was achievable and would draw in partners from inside and outside Canada. He also suggested that this was a good domestic conference but they should set up an international event to discuss these issues. He added that they could set up an international ICT Task Force that could have international representation and be funded in a collaborative effort between different countries, including Canada. He stressed the importance of setting up a secretariat to work on these issues.

Ms. Van Volsen mentioned that she had some concerns around building a “beautiful roof without a foundation” since she wondered if people in the communities were prepared to go forward at this time. She said that many people were still trying to feed themselves and the conference participants were talking about getting them connected. She asked if there were any pilot projects that could be looked at.

It was noted that it was critical that they had some movement and action on this issue since they had had many meetings and there was a need to shift from advocacy to action. It was suggested that advocacy and good intentions were hard to rationalize in terms of funding. It was stated that they needed to develop a model involving a seamless plan with services and implement it different parts of the country with different circumstances. This model could be reviewed and evaluated for its’ effectiveness and usefulness.

In terms of next steps, Mr. Hughes mentioned that they would have to discuss the ideas presented with the NAOs and the ACP. He said that it would be a joint challenge to address to convince the powers that be that they needed to look at international connectivity.

ABORIGINAL DIGITAL SHOWCASE

Ms. Annette Gibbons, Department of Canadian Heritage, chaired this lunchtime panel presentation on March 13, 2006. Presenters included: Ms. Gibbons on Canadian Culture On-Line; Mr. Steve Loft from

the Urban Shaman Gallery; Ms. Nene Van Volsen from Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council; and, Mr. Guy-Marc Dumais on culture.ca.

Canadian Culture On-Line

Ms. Annette Gibbons, Canadian Heritage

Ms. Gibbons stated that she worked in the Canadian Culture On-Line section at the Department of Canadian Heritage. The work of this section was focused on promoting Canadian culture on the Internet. They also helped people create content for the Internet and tried to increase awareness of Canadian content on the Internet. She said that they were looking to help Canadians involved in the creation of Canadian content on the Internet. The program funded a variety of content on the Internet such as: Authoritative Reference Work (i.e. Canadian Encyclopedia on-line); Archival Materials (i.e. CBC Archive Site); Museums (i.e. Virtual Museum of Canada); New Media Companies (i.e. Telefilm Canada Degrassi Site); and, Communities (i.e. Community websites).

Ms. Gibbons focused on the Community sites during her presentation. The Department of Canadian Heritage had a fund called the Gateway Fund, which was the fund that her co-panellists had accessed to create their sites. This fund gave communities an opportunity to share their stories in their own voice. Over the last year, Canadian Heritage had funded 50 sites under this program and, of those sites, 29 were Aboriginal sites.

Ms. Gibbons gave several examples of sites that were funded for development. She stated that the sites funded were very diverse in nature. Ms. Gibbons then proceeded to present the next speakers that received funding to develop websites and provide examples of the various types of sites receiving funding.

Presentation on the Urban Shaman Gallery

Mr. Steve Loft, Urban Shaman Gallery

Mr. Loft explained that was Aboriginal artists ran the Urban Shaman Gallery⁰, which was a public gallery funded primarily through government sources. The Gallery was operated by a Board of Directors that consisted of Aboriginal artists. The Gallery's mandate was the promotion, discourse and dissemination of Aboriginal art at the local, national and international level. The Gallery had been around for ten years and was located in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The Gallery was committed to helping emerging artist. He said that they used their on-line activities to help to promote artistic production and appreciation.

As a cultural centre, he explained, they played an important role in promoting the rich artistic legacy of their communities and this was always changing with the times. He said that they recognized that in order to make sense of the present and prepare for the future, they must look to the past. However, they, as a gallery, were forever challenging peoples notions of "Aboriginal Art", and while appreciating their ancestors contributions, they focused on promoting cutting-edge contemporary artists who were continuing from a long tradition of image making.

Mr. Loft stated that the idea that they had achieved equality within the general Canadian cultural art society was a falsehood. He said that they still had many barriers to cross in order to achieve equality. Without an understanding of different worldviews and history, he said, things would not change. He said that they needed to go back and look at how Canadian society looked at them as Aboriginal artists. He added that they needed to gain a clear voice within their own institutions in order to move forward.

Mr. Loft stated that the site was created was to address inequality issues and to provide a venue for Aboriginal artists to become part of the larger dialogue. The future of this technology lay in allowing artists to become part of the dialogue. This technology allowed artists to transfer the knowledge of their art history and culture more widely.

Mr. Loft provided an overview of the site for the participants. He explained that the intent of the site was to allow for the sharing of Aboriginal art and allowing the opportunity to exchange on Aboriginal art. He said that they engage in a living dialogue on Aboriginal art; art was more than just a presentation, it had to be interactive.

Mr. Loft described the three parts to the site:

- Urban on-line – a section about the Gallery and the artists that they presented;
- Conundrum (this was a e-zine and a critical part of the on-going discourse); and,
- Storm Spirit (a section that commissioned artists to use the web as their art medium).

Mr. Loft encouraged the participants to take a look at the site. The goal of the site was to add to the body of discourse. He said that they must remember that they were not stuck in stone and that Aboriginal art was still evolving in this country. Aboriginal art was finally getting acknowledged and, through technology, it could only get better.

Presentation from the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

Ms. Nene Van Volsen, Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

Ms. Van Volsen presented the website that the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council developed. She showed the participants the opening video of a song and prayer that would be used in the community to open a meeting. She stated that, by being able to access this type of video, Nuu-chah-nulth people living away from the community were still able to access their culture.

She stated that this had been an interesting journey from the time that the idea for a website was first discussed and she thanked Canada Culture On-line for the funding provided for the development of the website.

She added that the website allowed people that were living away from the community to access traditional teachings and culture. This also allowed non-Aboriginal people to have access to the culture, language and teachings in a safe and non-threatening way. She said that now there was a safe place to store their language and culture. In the past, she said, they had some very old tapes that stored their traditional songs and stories and these were slowly fading. This website allowed them to store both audio and visual songs and stories in a more durable format.

Ms. Van Volsen went through the website with the participants. One of the areas that she drew attention to was the language section of the site. She stated that this allowed people to learn the language by accessing the Nuu-chah-nulth alphabet, numbers, words and phrases. She explained that the site was very easy to navigate and could be used by anyone.

She shared some of the experiences that they had during the development of the website. She stated that the translation from Nuu-chah-nulth to French was very challenging, as the language was very complex. She urged people to keep this in mind when hiring a translator for these types of websites. She also gave a short example of the French portion of the site. She explained that what happened was that the person was speaking in English and the French appeared below the person speaking.

She also stated that they needed to have a highly technical team in order to pull the site together. She indicated that one of the components that they wanted to improve was the feedback portion of the website because they found that they needed more time to test this section prior to publication.

She provided some advice for those who might have wanted to develop a similar website in their community. She stated that in order to develop this type of website they needed to take a team approach. She said that they would need to form several teams to deal with different aspects of the website development. She advised that they would also need to make sure that the community was involved throughout the process. She also suggested that there was a need to have programs developed by the people for the people if this type of project was going to be successful.

She stated that one of the best outcomes of the website was being able to capture Elders teachings for posterity. All future generations would be able to benefit from the teachings of the Elders. This website, she concluded, would help people feel more connected to their communities even if they were unable to live in their own community. She said that they were very grateful for the opportunity to share this information with everyone.

Presentation on Culture.ca

Mr. Guy-Marc Dumais, Culture.ca

Mr. Dumais gave a short presentation on culture.ca, which was Canada's cultural gateway on the Internet. He explained that it was a collaborative website that was designed to feature Canadian culture and there were currently 15,000 websites were linked to the website. He added that this website allowed people from around to explore and share Canadian culture on-line. He said that they did not limit linking to different websites that they found but all sites had to meet their criteria. Mr. Dumais stated that the website was divided under the following categories: Art; People; Land; History; Culture; Sports; Media; Festival and Events; and, a Kids Section. He said that their main target audience was the 24-39 age group. Mr. Dumais stated that people could be drawn to the site through these various categories.

Mr. Dumais stated that the websites linked to culture.ca were refreshed regularly and it received 3.5 million visits per year. The site also presented interviews with interesting Canadians. The Department was currently working on the next generation of culture.ca for launch next fall. He said that they were exploring how they could create an Aboriginal zone within culture.ca. He added that there was Aboriginal content in various areas on the website and they would like to bring this all together in one location on the site. He said that they were packaging a showcase, which would give an overview of what they had in terms of Aboriginal content on the website.

PRIVATE SECTOR INNOVATION PANEL
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Mr. Richard Jock, the Chief Executive Officer from the Assembly of First Nations, chaired this lunch hour panel presentation. He mentioned that the panellists would look at where the private sector could invest in Aboriginal communities, in terms of research and development, infrastructure and community resource partnerships. Mr. Jock stated that the panellists would also share information on ways to increase Aboriginal partnerships and what elements of partnerships they wanted to see from Aboriginal organizations and government.

Presentation from Zerox

Mr. Tom Maracle, Zerox

Mr. Maracle explained that the company was created in 1906 as the Haloid Company and the first image was created in 1938 using xerography, which was essentially dry writing. In the 1950's, the Haloid Company changed its' name to Haloid Xerox and then in 1961, changed its' name to Xerox. The company had evolved over the years and became an international technology services company working with people to find more efficient ways to do things.

He added that Xerox spends US\$1B on research and technology per year and innovation was at the core of their business. They have produced significant technology, including the mouse, graphic user interface and Ethernet.

He explained that one of Xerox's priorities was in community investments, which focused on the following areas: workforce preparation; technology; culture; national affairs; and, the internal Xerox employee community involvement program. Under the community investments section, Xerox had a National Aboriginal Program that provided multi-year scholarships for Aboriginal students. These scholarships helped prepare students for careers in business, science and technology. Throughout the years, Xerox had supported more than 80 Aboriginal students.

Xerox had supported and partnered with various Aboriginal businesses, organizations and committees, including: the Business Development Institute; Aboriginal Minorities and Supplier Council; Big Soul Productions; Aboriginal Financial Officers Association; and, the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association Annual Youth Entrepreneur Symposium.

Xerox partnered with the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) and developed the Aboriginal Community Records and Management Program, which was a training program for community members focusing on the fundamentals of information and records management. The program created an Aboriginal information management community that could contribute towards strategic management issues, which was an important part of connectivity. He concluded by saying that knowledge was a community resource and it needed to be preserved, managed and shared.

Presentation from EnCana

Mr. Andrew Popko, EnCana

Mr. Popko explained that EnCana was the largest oil and gas company in North America worth US\$50B. It was larger than the banks, Nortel and IBM, however, no one heard about the company because they did not sell a product. EnCana explored and bought market gas; 85% of which was natural gas. They drilled about 5,000 wells per year and spent \$5-6B in exploration and production. EnCana was the largest producer of natural gas in the world.

He also mentioned that EnCana dealt with approximately 60 Aboriginal groups in Western Canada. Seven years ago, he added, EnCana created an Aboriginal Department and began tracking how much money in contracts went directly to Aboriginal Peoples and it averaged \$70M per year. Throughout the next year, EnCana would do \$140M in contracts directly with First Nation or Métis groups.

One challenge that EnCana faced was connecting with 60 different groups in the Arctic and Western Canada for contracting, invoicing and payment. The solution that EnCana implemented was open invoicing. All invoices, approvals and payments were done electronically. A supplier sent the product

and an electronic invoice. The appropriate EnCana staff person then reviewed the invoice and simply clicked “accept” and it went directly into the EnCana computer system for payment processing. The supplier would receive payment within 30 days and the money would be directly deposited into their bank account. On average, open invoicing delivered payment to the supplier within 14-15 days.

For larger contracts where suppliers did not have the capital to complete the entire project and receive the final payment 30 days upon completion, open invoicing allowed the suppliers to receive payment daily for a processing fee of 2% of the total contract.

EnCana also paid the costs to set the vendors up on the open invoice system. The cost was approximately \$600 to \$10,000 per company; however, this system had strengthened EnCana’s supplier relationship.

It was a new system for EnCana and they had only been doing it for 18 months. In the last year, they had completed over 250,000 transactions, which represented 35% of total invoicing and had saved almost \$4M with the 2% processing fee. EnCana had 1,500 suppliers in total and the smallest invoice was \$0.01 and the largest was \$4.6M on the system.

Presentation from Aliant

Mr. Nadeem Ahmed, Aliant

Mr. Ahmed explained that Aliant was Atlantic Canada’s largest telecommunications company and Bell Canada Enterprises owned about 53%. Aliant owned 100% of xwave, which is the 3rd largest IT professional services firm in Canada. xwave also provided services to the US eastern seaboard, Ontario and Western Canada. Last year, Aliant and xwave merged allowing customers to receive the full range of IT services from one organization. He explained that Aliant had been expanding their broadband connectivity to rural areas and spent \$300M last year in the Atlantic region. The company would soon be expanding broadband connectivity across Québec and Northern Ontario.

Aliant recently partnered with the Ontario Ministry of Health, the Ontario Medical Health Association and the Smart Systems for Health Agency to provide electronic medical services to primary care locations throughout Ontario through an Application Service Provider (ASP) model. He explained that physicians would log-on to the system through the Internet, regardless of where they were located, chart their clinical encounters with patients, pull up electronic charts and share those electronic medical records when they did referrals.

Aliant had also partnered with GE Health Care to provide doctors with web-based access and paper charts that could be transferred in cases of tele-health. The project overcame policy issues, funding issues and regulatory issues, and privacy issues around the sharing of health records. The program also partnered with groups in communities to provide training and implementation services. This had save costs associated with flying someone from Toronto to the community to provide the training. The program was being launched in Ontario with a team of 80 skilled software engineers, business analysts, clinical workforce specialists and trainers providing technical support. The company had invested \$10M to bring physicians across the province together and looking for new partnerships with local communities to roll the technology out and address the jurisdictional issues.

Mr. Ahmed explained that Aliant was committed to removing those barriers between Aboriginal communities and Canada in order to connect Aboriginal communities to the centres of commerce so that two-way dialogue could occur. The true value was getting what was going on in the communities, such as the innovation, spirit and artistic nature, out to the rest of the world.

Mr. Ahmed stated that leadership + partnership = progress. The definition of leadership was “to be ahead of, to move forward, to get people to follow, and to create compelling visions”. From that, he explained, came initiative and innovation. Partnership meant more than one group coming together, finding common interest, finding common goals, and finding ways to collaborate. It also meant finding economic partnership without economic exploitation. From collaboration came innovation, investment and growth. Together those attributes could propel a number of initiatives including: business development; attracting, retaining and training a skilled workforce; enabling and exporting knowledge and services; and, creating an overall climate of health and social economic wellbeing.

He mentioned that, a few years ago, Aliant partnered with the Government of New Brunswick to move a paper-based administration system to a computerized Client Information System (CIN), which was a case management system for provincial jails. Aliant took that system to the State of Maine and modified it to develop the Correctional Information Systems (CORRS). All of the support activities and technology for both projects were being done in rural New Brunswick.

He concluded by saying that Aboriginal communities wanted to be self-sustaining, wanted new partnerships and wanted to participate in the new economy and it was up to the private sector to make that happen. He added that government must also play a play in supporting long-term sustainable business models that encourage private sector to invest in communities.

Presentation from Siemens Canada

Mr. Frank Suraci and Mr. Joe Norton, Siemens Canada

Mr. Norton introduced himself as an advisor to Siemens Canada and explained that he was tasked with developing a relationship between Siemens Canada, the Aboriginal people in Canada and the Government of Canada. He stated that it was an exciting and invigorating challenge.

Siemens was a large corporation with a diverse portfolio of companies around the world. There were 462,000 companies located in 198 countries producing 1.6M products. Siemens developed, trained, and built MRI equipment and creates e-health equipment.

Mr. Suraci stated that the backbone of communities was connectivity and the infrastructure that went into a community depended on that community’s ability to communicate, receive information and divulge information.

Siemens had developed a platform with a global focus on the Aboriginal community in Canada that focuses on five (5) different areas.

1. **Power Generation – Power Supply** – many communities were located near water resources and many had wind assessments that could generate power for use by the community or to sell. Siemens was willing to work with those communities to develop those opportunities.
2. **E-Health** – Siemens helped create a Mammography Clinic in Moose Factory, Ontario. The images were transferred to a radiologist in Timmins or Toronto and within 2 hours patients could get their results. Technology was available; rural and northern communities should have access to MRI and cat scans.

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3. **E-Learning** – Siemens was the best known supplier of e-learning processes in university sectors throughout the United States and Europe. Siemens had partners that could work with communities to bring certification to community members from reputable school boards.
 4. **Clean Water Issue** – Siemens had the world’s largest company that provided water filtration systems and water treatment systems. Siemens was in the process of deploying 40 portable water treatment units across Canada to be used in emergencies for communities that needed them. There was no cost to the community or to the government.
 5. **Economic Development** – economic development meant taking care of your own business; it meant living off of your own work; it meant that you were a partner; it meant the opportunity to generate your own revenue and create your own wealth. Siemens was committed to installing infrastructure within communities to generate economic opportunity for communities. Siemens was looking for direction from communities on how they support them and respond to community needs.

Siemens was currently looking for pilot projects. They understood that every community was going to have different needs and requirements and it did not matter how small or the large the community was. Mr. Suraci concluded by stating that Siemens was focused on customers and they were looking for opportunities.

FORUM ROUNDTABLES – Tuesday, March 14, 2006
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The second day of the forum was set aside for roundtables to address the specific issues around connectivity and different Aboriginal groups. Four roundtables were held including: First Nations Roundtable; Inuit/Arctic Roundtable; Urban Roundtable; and, Women’s Roundtable. There was standard agenda or process for the roundtables since each table produced an agenda suited to their own needs and dealt with issues relevant to their particular group.

First Nations Roundtable

Introductory Remarks:

Ms. Judy Whiteduck, Assembly of First Nations, introduced herself as the Roundtable Chair and provided background on her work on the Aboriginal Canada Portal Working Group. She added that some promoted the Aboriginal Canada Portal as the solution to connectivity issues but she said it could be better described as a gateway to information. She explained that this session was an attempt to look for solutions. She introduced Mr. Gene Ouellette who provided an opening prayer. Following that, Ms. Whiteduck provided an overview of the day’s agenda, which was available in the conference kits.

First Nations Connectivity Climate

Ms. Judy Whiteduck, Assembly of First Nations

Ms. Whiteduck provided presentation on the Assembly of First Nations Economic Partnership. She provided an overview of the AFN activities. She outlined their *Getting Results Strategy*, which involved a number of activities involving connectivity. She mentioned their plans for partnership and how important this was as a next step. She added that some commitments were made out of the First Ministers Meeting in Kelowna but she stated that they realized that there might be some changes with the change in government. She outlined some of the discussion including their support for connectivity and the

importance of corporate partners in the connectivity process. Connectivity, she explained, would be an important part of the economic infrastructure because there were physical requirements and economic programs/incentives which communities needed regionally and locally to influence their economies in the way that they wanted.

Ms. Whiteduck also provided an overview of a number of Assembly of First Nations resolutions that supported, directly or indirectly, the goals of connectivity. She mentioned that many communities saw the advantages of connectivity and were setting up systems but the issue was sustainability. She stated that there were not only economic development impacts of connectivity but, in First Nations communities, there were also socio-economic impacts. She also mentioned that another factor to consider was the diversity of economies and economic conditions in different First Nation communities. She stressed the importance of working together and having the right people at the table because there was a lot of work going on in First Nation research and data collection.

From this session, she explained, they needed to look at the sunseting of SchoolNet and at developing a recommendation to address that. She added that First Nations wanted to be in charge of all the policy areas that affected them and this included connectivity. In addition, she explained, they wanted to insure that they closed the gap inside of ten years. She said that they had to identify what their immediate needs were in terms of research. She stated that the Aboriginal Canada Portal worked well but it was not answer to their connectivity needs and they needed to use their involvement at that table to push connectivity policies with different departments. For information purposes, Ms. Whiteduck presented the AFN pre-budget submission and highlighted the areas relating to connectivity. Ms. Sue Hanley asked if the funding was received by the AFN or if it was allocated to government programming. Ms. Whiteduck explained that it would not go to the AFN but rather be accessed through federal programs.

Survey on Connectivity Presentation

Mr. Pat Haggerty, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development

Mr. Haggerty provided a background on the level of connectivity in First Nation communities. He said that they had collected community information from a number of sources including their latest survey in 2005. Based on their latest data, he explained, they were looking at full First Nations connectivity by 2007. He said that the information had been up on the Aboriginal Canada Portal for some time including individual profiles on First Nation communities.

Questions/Answers

There was a question raised about what the definition of broadband in this case and if they had criteria for speed in determining connectivity. Mr. Haggerty said that they did not have a minimum cut off for actual speed. There was some concern raised from the participants that Mr. Haggerty's presentation was painting an overly optimistic picture in terms of connectivity in First Nations communities. It was stated that a basic level of connectivity was not effective to run the operations that were needed at the community level and this should not be the base criteria to determine if a community was connected or not. It was stressed that this was especially important when approaching funding sources to fund connectivity activities.

There was another question raised around the budget required to maintain the Aboriginal Canada Portal and what process was in place for community input around what goes on the portal. It was noted that Mr. Haggerty did not have budget information on the portal; it was suggested that this was a question that could be posed to Mr. MacArthur in the next session. Mr. Haggerty did respond that the data products

were run through the Working Group made up of departmental people and people from the National Aboriginal Organizations. He added that the communities were not surveyed the Portal itself or how information should be displayed on it.

Participants noted that reliability was also an issue. It suggested that they did have access to DSL but it did not work some of the time and uptime was also a big factor.

Presentation on the Status of Connectivity

Mr. Ian MacArthur, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development

Mr. MacArthur presented some information on a powerpoint presentation entitled “Aboriginal Connectivity and E-Services”. To preface his presentation, Mr. MacArthur said that defining broadband was a challenge in any government department and there was really no official definition used by government. He suggested that the group might want to look at delineating that. He added that, at DIAND, they were not network builders by rather they wanted to look at identifying the gaps and at how they could work together to address those gaps.

His presentation included an overview of discussions currently underway on the issue of connectivity and stated the importance of references to Indigenous people in international events and documents. He also mentioned the importance of national and regional meetings to discuss connectivity. He provided a overview of the impact of connectivity on all aspects of community life including health, economic development, culture and others along with some of challenges to community connectivity including infrastructure needs, monthly costs and community capacity. He also mentioned that they wanted to bring tools to the communities so they could not only reach out to government but to each other as well. One of the goals of connectivity was to relieve some of the reporting burden that First Nation communities were under to access government funding.

He outlined the difficulties with defining connectivity and addressing inadequate connectivity situations where only one organization in the community was connected. He said that the private sectors normally would work on connecting those communities, which were easier and more accessible to connect. He suggested that they could still build a business case for those a little farther away but isolated communities were a specific challenge. He said that the community needed to access the existing options and decide what options should be considered basic infrastructure and that needed to be defined here. He also talked about some of the issues around connectivity sustainability and one of these issues was the monthly cost to maintain the connectivity. He stated that they needed to look at developing business cases to set this up.

He concluded by suggesting that they needed an identified national champion to develop the framework for the connectivity work. He asked the participants who they thought were the key players and what specifically could be done to support the communities.

Questions/Comments

One of the participants from British Columbia mentioned that they had a specific deal in that province for standardized pricing and suggested that it was a model that the participants might want to review. Mr. MacArthur noted that they needed to develop an inventory of that type of information since they had to have a standardized approach so the systems that were being developed could interact with each other.

Mr. Brian Beaton brought up an issue around funding for an Internet high school, which was an initiative that was successful in northwestern Ontario. He asked why they had to lobby for funding for this every year from DIAND even though education was their responsibility and this was a proven program. Mr. MacArthur noted that he could not speak for the Education section at DIAND but he realized that there were a lot of pressures for funding different aspects of education already such as teacher salaries, supplies, or new schools so he was not sure were this new initiative fit within that context. He suggested lobbying the National Aboriginal Organizations and DIAND Education to make this initiative a priority. Another participant from British Columbia said that education was a provincial responsibility and they were working on a similar idea in that province. She stated that the Chiefs knew it was a priority to keep the youth in the community.

Ms. Whiteduck stated that she would bring the issue to her counterpart in Education at AFN and would continue to raise it at various AFN meetings. She suggested that it was important to resource those kind of solutions. Mr. Beaton noted that there were a lot of other negative social issues that came out of sending children out of the community to school and they saw evidence of this in the community. It was stated that there had to be a paradigm shift in Ottawa where they would begin to listen to the regions and support these successful initiatives.

Ms. Sue Hanley noted that they had passed a resolution through their Chiefs stating that broadband for the First Nations communities should be considered basic infrastructure. She suggested that coordination should come from the community level and not from government and there was a certain amount of frustration because they had been having these same discussions for five years. Mr. MacArthur said that they did not build from Ottawa but responded to the regions. He added that this work certainly needed to be coordinated at some level. Mr. Jamie Sterritt noted that connectivity impacted on all segments of the community – health, education, social, etc – and should be reflected in the budgets that way. He agreed that it needed to be a basic community infrastructure issue. Mr. MacArthur agreed stating that sustainability was an issue in itself.

Another participant raised another issue around Treasury Board authorities and reporting requirements and asked if these authorities would change to reflect the move to connectivity. Mr. MacArthur stated that this was one of the questions that they needed to work on. He said that they needed to decide if they would be adding funding or reallocating funding and this was a key policy discussion.

Ms. Whiteduck asked a question that one of the participants had asked earlier regarding the budget for maintaining the Aboriginal Canada Portal. Mr. MacArthur responded that it was approximately \$700,000 per year but this was a small budget compared to many other departments.

There was an issue raised network security and Mr. MacArthur noted that, while he was not an expert on security, there were many societal issues around the using the Internet.

Facilitated Session – Addressing First Nation Community and Regional ICT Solutions, Requirements and Related Considerations

The following question was posed to the participants, “Addressing First Nation Community and Regional ICT Solutions, Requirements and Related Considerations - How do we want these met so the ICTs can serve our communities well?” and in the session there was discussion on a number of different areas. These topics included: ICT Infrastructure; ICT Sustainability; ICT Coordination; ICT Support and Resources; and, ICT Partnerships (locally, regionally, nationally).

The facilitator stated that the ultimate goal of the session was the development of recommendations that could be taken back to First Nation leadership and the government with a consistent voice of where they needed to go from here on connectivity.

ICT Infrastructure

There was some discussion around Alberta's SuperNet initiative. Mr. Ryan Robb, Treaty #7, stated that the project was designed to connect all the First Nations in Alberta but it only provided for fibre up to the border of the reserves and delivering it directly to the people was the issue. He said that it become a jurisdictional issue between different departments on who would pay for it. He suggested that DIAND had not been helpful in the situation. He said that there was also a serious lack of information, or even misinformation, going to the communities on the SuperNet initiative. Regional Chief Jason Goodstriker from Alberta agreed stating that they had just completed the project but it was well behind schedule and over budget. He asked Mr. Robb what the status of connectivity was in Alberta right now. Mr. Robb said that many were hooked up but some, in the north, still did not have broadband because of jurisdictional issues. He stated that they needed to look at defining connectivity since the province did not have a definition either.

Mr. Brian Beaton noted that he worked on the Broadband Task Force and agreed that they needed to set a benchmark. He suggested that the people in Telecommunications would lead that discussion. He said that they were moving with fibre where it was possible but there were still many isolated areas where this would not be a reality for a long time. He suggested that a lot of what he was hearing had an urban focus but it came down to the fact that the communities needed to work different applications and that certain bandwidth was needed for that. He added that it did not help that DIAND placed connectivity as part of corporate services rather than in programming. He also stated that he agreed that they needed to look at connectivity as part of basic community infrastructure and needed to approach Infrastructure Canada with that view.

Mr. Tim Whiteduck mentioned that in terms of defining a benchmark for basic infrastructure, he had been working in the community and they would need 1.5 bi-symmetrical as the basic requirement. He said that it would work for tele-health and the other applications needed by the community. He felt that they did not need to define that now but rather should move towards meeting infrastructure needs in the regions. He said that they needed to look specifically what those needs were and work with AFN to lobby government to adequately fund the regions to ensure that these needs were met. He said that government mindset of restricting connectivity to departments delivering e-services to the community needed to change.

Mr. Richard Gray noted that they knew what their infrastructure and sustainability requirements in the regions were and there were commonalities between the different regions. He stated that it was now time to move into action and coordination. He stressed that their programs needed to work in collaboration on the First Nations side and, as well, government had to coordinate their departments. He said that to get anywhere on this issue, the First Nation programs in different regions needed to speak in a unified voice and work in collaboration. He said that this included a more coordinated approach from the AFN.

Ms. Hanley stated that she agreed with that and noted that they had developed a strategic plan in her province and they would be willing to share that information. She said that they looked a number of the issues and suggested that, to coordinate the responses, they needed regional participation at the national level. Mr. Steven Fox Radulovich suggested that they develop a national technical working group that could look at models and examples to address the different connectivity issues.

Mr. Mark Lawley stated that they could look at recommending a basic infrastructure requirement for every First Nation. There was some concern about putting a number to the basic service as the community might never be able to go beyond this because they now were “connected” and did not require any further funding. It was agreed that a small informal group would work on the specific wording for this during the day. The results of their discussion were noted below.

Discussion continued on national and regional collaboration where Mr. Kevin Burton suggested that they could work on addressing sustainability funding. Regional Chief Goodstriker stated that there had been some talk of funding but this was suspect now with the change of government. He added that they wanted to have meaningful participation in developing the strategies for their communities.

Ms. Hanley stated that they could put forward a recommendation to develop a resolution stating that broadband must be considered part of basic community infrastructure. She said that it was seen as cross cutting and also necessary for government to delivery their programs. Mr. Lawley agreed saying that, in his community, the Council had dedicated 1% of all budgets to connectivity.

Mr. Beaton noted that they could demonstrate that they were effectively utilizing the resources currently in place and there was a lot of work happening in the communities and the regions. He stated that they needed to use the tools as much as possible and he gave the example of web casting. He agreed that they needed to compile an inventory of tools currently in existence within the communities and regions.

In response to a question how this proposed technical group could work within the AFN system, Ms. Whiteduck suggested that it could be coordinated through her unit at AFN and the Regional Chief had mentioned meeting with the Chairs of the other Chiefs Committee on connectivity as one effort. Mr. Richard Jock, Chief Executive Officer at the AFN, stated that the AFN was currently reviewing their organizational priorities and were looking at new ones. He said that if there was a strong enough feeling around this table that connectivity should be one of those priorities, they needed to make that statement clearly. He suggested that they needed to mobilize political support and work with Ms. Whiteduck’s unit to work on setting up a technical group. He cautioned that the AFN needed to be strategic and did not want to part of a delivery process. Regional Chief Goodstriker stated that, in the perspective of timing, this was a good time because the AFN had just finished working on a number of issues and was currently looking at what the next step was going to be. Ms. Hanley reiterated her call for a recommendation on universal broadband as basic infrastructure for First Nation communities.

Ms. Nene Van Volsen noted that she concurred with what had been said and stated that she saw the value of connectivity in addressing many social issues. She said that she was concerned that they had not been able to address the issues outlined years ago in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples report and suggested that this tool could assist them in doing that. She stressed the importance of capacity building and community development to use the connectivity tools effectively.

Ms. Julie Gdowski, Industry Canada, said that these were timely discussions for their perspective as well since the Government of Canada had commissioned a report/policy review on whether or not broadband should be deemed an essential service. She mentioned that the report would be coming out on March 20, 2006.

As discussed earlier, a small group worked on the some recommendations based on discussions to be reviewed by the group as a whole. The entire group was provided the draft wording for recommendations in a document called *Draft Recommendations - First Nations Roundtable (March 14, 2006)*:

Immediate:

1. Creation of two groups
 - a. Cross sectoral group within AFN (i.e. Chiefs Committee) to ensure broadband and technology is front and center at all national tables
 - b. Technical Working Group on sustainable connectivity
 - i. To work on minimum standards, IP video conferencing, telehealth, digital education, etc
 - ii. Capacity development
 - iii. Modeled after FNTC
 1. regional representation
 2. community representation
 3. political representation
 4. multi-sector representation
 5. FN public and private IT agencies representation
2. Broadband should be defined:
 - sufficient bandwidth to effectively access and deliver applications
 - a. IP Videoconferencing, support for broadband applications
 - there are has to be equitable access for all sectors and broadband to supply services to all necessary community sector programming.
 - Evergreening infrastructure
 - Guarantee bandwidth in each sector
 - Quality of Service
3. Human Resources
4. Need to acknowledge the current regional initiatives and research
 - Development of regional strategic plan/ICT Road map
 - environmental scan
 - development of business models for First Nations ownership
 - a. regional ISP
 - i. centralized services
 - b. Community ISP
 - c. other
 - other research required
5. Use the as many tools as exist as often as possible
6. For Nene – address RCAP

The Ad-hoc group was made up of Steven Fox Radulovich, Tim Whiteduck, Mark Lawley, Brian Walmark, Jamie Sterritt, and Samantha Stevenson.

Comments on Draft Recommendations

Mr. Sterritt noted that they did not want to set a number on point #2 because they did not want anyone to latch on to that number make it impossible to advance further as new technical advances were discovered. He added that they just wanted to define something in order to stimulate discussion on the topic.

Ms. Hanley said that they had specifically discussed human resources around support needs that she did not see reflected in the recommendations. Mr. Lawley suggested that they could look at database of

skilled Information Technology people that could be shared between communities and regions. Mr. Beaton said that this could be addressed as a research project, which could be undertaken by the technical group. He also suggested that point #5 could be acted on now.

Mr. Gray noted that they needed to also look at how they could make more linkages between the different programs such as health, social, socio-economic, etc. He added that they had a tele-health working group in place in the regions that had looked at many of these same technical issues. He suggested that linkage between the leadership was a good idea but this needed to filter down to the staff at AFN as well. He added that they were looking at setting up a national tele-health working group and this group should be linked into the connectivity working group. He also suggested that there needed to be linkages between the sectors at the grassroots levels as well.

Ms. Hanley suggested that the recommendations should be translated across the highest levels of AFN and there was a need to make a statement that broadband had to be seen as basic infrastructure.

Mr. Gray also noted that, when the scan of regional initiatives was done under point #4, they also needed to do a scan of national initiatives as well.

Ms. Lily Menominee-Batise, Chiefs of Ontario, reiterated Mr. Jock's comments stating that there was a need for a national framework and support but these should support a regional function and not vice versa. She said that she had some concerns on how to coordinate this from a policy level; not only connectivity but to properly manage the resources that were a result of connectivity. She added that each region needed to look at the regional groups that were operating and how the groups could work together nationally. She stated that communities needed to decide if broadband would be a part of basic infrastructure and it would be irresponsible not to ensure that the approach was coordinated.

Ms. Whiteduck addressed the point of national coordination stating there would not likely be a new secretariat for fear of taking resources from the regions or the communities. She said that she had heard the call for more coordination between the sectors and they would organize themselves to make sure that it took place. Ms. Hanley asked if they could, since there was a Special Chiefs Assembly coming up, put forth a resolution about broadband being a basic service. Regional Chief Goodstriker said that these types of meetings drive the agenda of the Chiefs meetings so it was not too late. He suggested that they could look at any recommendations put forth from this meeting.

Regional Chief Goodstriker asked Ms. Gdowski from Industry Canada about the report on broadband she had spoken of. He asked what the First Nation input had been on that paper and what type of consultation process took place. Ms. Gdowski replied that it was not really her area but her Minister had requested it and it had been completed by a third party. She was not aware of the First Nations input into that but believed that there was a group from British Columbia that provided a submission. Ms. Hanley said that this was from her group.

Mr. Gray asked Ms. Whiteduck for some clarification on inter-sector interaction at AFN. Ms. Whiteduck stated that there was already a certain amount of interaction and she was going to ensure that they would share information amongst themselves. Mr. Gray suggested that this might not address the communication gap that he was concerned about. He stated that the regions were not aware of what discussions took place between the Directors at AFN and he noticed that the different programs had similar issues and concerns. He insisted that they needed to collaborate more and deliver a common message to all government departments. Ms. Whiteduck stated that she hoped that the recommendations stated those specific points to identify what needed to happen.

Mr. Gene Ouellette stated that, with regards to the development of a resolution around broadband, he cautioned against advancing a resolution too quickly without a coordinated approach. He added that there had been good ideas shared here but in order to support the development of a resolution, they needed some time to make sure that they covered everything. He suggested they needed to look at regional approaches, developing corporate partnerships and, another national meeting to address all the technical experts and to develop a political lobby.

Ms. Hanley stressed that they needed to AFN to endorse a statement that broadband for First Nation communities was part of basic infrastructure. Mr. Ouellette said that, if a resolution was passed which included a statement that all First Nations communities would be hooked up by a certain date, there would be lots of work that would need to go into that.

Regional Chief Goodstriker said that he would encourage the group to move forward since there were certain dynamics with a minority government. He explained that, if this issue was to become a priority, one or two ministers might latch on to the idea and then it could move quickly.

ICT Sustainability

The facilitator asked participant's feedback for a recommendation(s) around sustainability. Mr. Gray noted that he would like to see something around priorities that they could give to Ms. Whiteduck to take back to AFN. He stated that obviously sustainability was a priority but their discussion and recommendations did not directly say that.

Ms. Menominee-Batise said that their projects were not sustainable because government did not recognize them as such. She gave the example of tele-health, which was not recognized priority for Health Canada. She stated that they needed new moneys for this work and it should not be just a case of raiding of existing budget areas. Mr. Burton agreed stating that there was so much flux in the funding situation and, if it recognized as an essential service, it must have ongoing core funding.

Mr. Fox Radulovich stated that there was a disconnect between the technical experts and the policy people and they needed to develop a scenario where the technical people develop the plan and the policy people work with that. Mr. Burton said that it was also important that capacity building take place at the community level to work on their own infrastructure and services. He explained that people needed to be trained and work on connectivity at the local level.

Mr. Beaton said that KNET could work on providing a bridge for the technical group to meet and communicate using the connectivity initiatives at their disposal. Ms. Hanley noted that they had to look at engaging in coordination at the highest level to involve the politicians to lend support to their views on connectivity. Ms. Whiteduck stated that she would be briefing the National Chief and the Regional Chiefs on the issue. Ms. Hanley suggested that she should also brief the Directors of different sections at AFN.

Mr. Gray stated that they needed to look at addressing some pressing concerns such as the sunseting of SchoolNet. He asked if they could recommend that the AFN write a letter to the Prime Minister's Office saying that the First Nations considered this a priority and they were doing additional planning for the short-, medium- and long-term. The short-term priorities could include: connectivity; interoperability; data sharing; human resource strategies; and, tele-health.

Ms. Hanley suggested that the National Chief could write a letter specifically for SchoolNet but also introducing the idea of the working group and their plans in general. There was some discussion about broadening the topics of this letter but it was noted that due to the urgency around SchoolNet, the correspondence should focus on that with follow up contact on these other issues.

There was some discussion around research and it was noted that there was some information on broadband and connectivity at Industry Canada. Mr. Ouellette provided some cautionary comments around the protection of information that was collected and asked who the information would belong to. Mr. Beaton suggested that there were a number of data sources for information on connectivity so they would need to bring it all together before identifying gaps in the research.

It was suggested that a national strategic planning process incorporating regional strategic plans was necessary. Mr. Whiteduck noted that there were diverse issues at the provincial level so there would need to be a careful review of what the minimum standards should be.

Regional Chief Goodstriker noted that they needed to make sure that the information went out to the regional and local levels so everyone was informed of what they were attempting to achieve. He added that they had to identify the right people to sit on this technical group and where the funding would come from to support their activities. He stated that he felt this was important work because he wanted to make sure the First Nations did not fall behind mainstream Canadian society in connectivity.

There was a question raised on if the priorities were sectoral or related to connectivity. Ms. Hanley stated that, without connectivity, the sectoral priorities would not work. She added that they had to make sure that the communities were connected first. Mr. Gray agreed stating that connectivity and sustainability were directly attached. Mr. Burton noted that when they surveyed their communities, the word "broadband" did not show up by connectivity was an integral part of what they felt was important. Ms. Hanley stated that comprehensive community planning was also integral.

There was some discussion about costs related to research each community's current situation and needs and, while it could not be identified at this meeting, it was agreed that it would be costly but critically important to do it effectively and comprehensively. Ms. Menominee-Batise suggested the coordination/communication piece to realign and reorganize upfront was not expensive.

Closing Comments

The facilitator gave the group the opportunity to provide final comments on the issues as a closing activity. Participants stressed their hopes that the outcomes from this meeting would be acted upon due to the fact that they had met several times in the past without any movement on the issues. Many voiced positive thoughts and guarded anticipation around the discussions that had taken place and the fact that they seemed to get to some action pieces out of the discussions. The fact that best practices and success stories should be shared was also a common theme in participant's comments. Participants also noted that it was important to have both technical people and policy people working on this issue together in order to move forward effectively. It was also noted that, because connectivity was cross cutting across sectors, a business case outlining how to save money in all sectors should be developed. Participants also noted that grassroots involvement was necessary and it was reiterated that they needed to speak with a unified voice. Participants spoke eloquently and at length about the need for sustainability of their connectivity activities. It was also noted that corporate responsibility could be leveraged to pay for connectivity for First Nation communities. One of the participants noted that he worried about smaller communities and those communities that could not, or would not, make connectivity a priority. There

was also the suggestion that the next meeting take place in a First Nation community using more connectivity tools.

Next Steps/Closing

A question was raised around the process for developing the resolution for the Chiefs review. Ms. Whiteduck said that they would develop it at AFN and circulate it for the exact wording. She explained that Regional Chief Goodstriker could ask two Chiefs to sponsor it and the Chiefs in Confederacy could vote on it.

Ms. Whiteduck thanked the participants for attending and Mr. Ouellette closed the meeting with a prayer.

Inuit/Arctic Roundtable

Participants:

Jean-François Dumoulin, Kativik Regional Government
Tim McNeill, Nunatsiavut Government
Allan Clarke, Canadian Heritage
Benoît Farley, National Research Council
Craig Clark, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)
Daniel Hughes, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Daniel St-Denis, Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation
Darrell Ohokannoak, Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation / Polarnet
Dave Smith, Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation
David Joanassie, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)/NIYC
Duane Smith, Inuit Circumpolar Conference Canada (ICC) / Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
Eric Poncet, NunaSoft
Gordon Cobain, Kativik School Board
Heather Campbell, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
Henry Kudluk, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada/Inuit Secretariat
Howard Johnson, National Research Council
Janice Vardy, Nunatsiavut Dept of Health

Jay Arnakak, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
Jennifer Singerling, SSI Micro
Joey Lance, Kativik Regional Government
Johanne Desrochers, McGill University
Jose Kusugak, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)
Keith Russell
Lori Colbourne, Department of Health and Social Development
Lorraine Thomas, Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation
Madeleine Qumuatuq, Government of Nunavut
Marc Brooks, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Marcel Mason, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
Mary Stapleton, Arctic Institute of North America
Onalee Randell, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)
Pitsey Moss-Davies, Inuit Circumpolar Conference
RJ Carr, Northern Secretariat
Selma Ford, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)
Sharon Rogers, IRC
Stephen Hendrie, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)
Taqralik Partridge, Avataq Cultural Institute
Whit Fraser, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)

The theme of this roundtable was “Sustainable Connectivity and Information and Technologies (ICTs) development as an engine for Social and Economic Growth”.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) invited participants from across the four regions and national participants to the Inuit roundtable. It was important to have a cross-section of people working in the field of

Information and Communications Technologies. Participants included technical staff, policy makers and leadership.

The goals of the roundtable were to identify key federal, provincial, territorial and community partnerships opportunities and what was required to implement these partnerships and to identify and prioritize key policy and program investment areas that benefit Inuit and other arctic residents.

Mr. Whit Fraser, ITK, stated that the questions being asked at the roundtable had been asked before, but that the goal was to push the technological ball. He asked the participants to concentrate on the following: needs, requirements of and in the communities, the future and to concentrate less on the mega-projects and focus on the small communities.

Health

Key Questions:

- How does tele-health connect with other program areas?
- What sources can be shared?
- Are there Partnership opportunities that will benefit healthcare?

Group 1

- Currently tele-health stands alone and it must be integrated into the healthcare system. The idea that Justice, Education, or even Public Health can access it is not currently a reality.
- Begin with the communities in mind and this included nurses, patients, and the public.
- Identify successful projects, such as K-Net, and share their knowledge and lessons learned.
- Focus more on E-Health than tele-health.
- Document the costs.
- Consult with 'real' healthcare professionals in the communities on how development could meet needs of their communities.

Group 2

- Address privacy fears within shared connectivity. Educate decision makers since it was a barrier to growth.
- ICT Policies needed to be created and updated.
- Address legislative barriers between organizations
- A foundation should be established to educate about tele-health and IT applications.
- A good booking system is required to facilitate bandwidth sharing across sectors.
- Share community infrastructure and technical support.
- Tele-health was not necessarily about cost saving; it is about enhanced healthcare.

Group 3

- Develop infrastructure and capacity within the communities.
- There is a moral obligation to provide this type of access to Inuit communities.
- Integrate and share the capacity already available.

Group 4

- Identify Inuit health governance structure in order to co-ordinate tele-health development strategy.

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- Identify individuals in the community who are aware of ICT initiatives, develop a formal information management structure to co-ordinate and link.
 - There is a requirement for a needs assessment and inventory of IT and ICT to be conducted.
 - Jurisdictional issues needed to be resolved (Federal, Provincial, Territorial, and Inuit organizations) regarding who had the leadership in health.
 - Policy and funding.

Education and Economic Development Opportunities

Key Questions:

- How can technology help to deliver education and economic development programs?
- How do people become technologically aware? (Sometimes referred to as Community readiness or Technological Literacy)
- What new education, social, and economic opportunities are now possible through the use of Information and Communication Technologies?

Group 1

- Infrastructure leads to capacity.
- Individuals need to take the lead.

Group 2

- The North needed more basic infrastructure in the communities and this was a barrier to economic development.
- Build a business case that includes connectivity, or broadband access as a basic service. A subsidy must be recognized.
- Develop a process for the Far North to identify how it could participate in the global economy.
- Government has a responsibility to address infrastructure needs, and facilitate community and private industry involvement.
- Initiate bottom up education and training to meet the basic needs of the communities. Individuals need to participate in the wired economy.

Group 3

- Develop a program on “Train the Trainer” for curriculum development.
- A clearinghouse could centralize information, best practices, and available resources.
- Establish Professional Development Training (on the job accredited training),
- A mandatory consideration for technology use in economic development
- Funding for research
- Access to technology and infrastructure
- Literacy
- Long term planning in support of education and economic development.

Sustainable Connectivity and Application Development

Key Questions:

- How can the cost of connectivity be managed in order to meet the current and future bandwidth requirements?
- What does “sustainability” mean?

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- What are the priority areas of application development?

Presentation : Tamaani Sustainable Connectivity

Presenter : Jean Francois Dumoulin, Kativik Regional Government

The project began in 2000 and now there are 200+ sites hooked up. He stated that the commercial cost of satellite spectrum was the major barrier to sustainability. He stated that there was a need to build internal and external partnerships. Internal partnerships in the community, such as school boards, and external ones, like K-net, were necessary to pool: resources, network capacity, and management of satellites. An important Internet truism was counterintuitive; share more to get more. In other words, going alone means having a slower and smaller network. The only limit to pooling was that capacity must always increase.

In order to be successful, pool network resources and ensure there was enough revenue to cover operating costs. This is impossible if the cost of bandwidth over satellite transponders is considered as an operating expense. He started seeing that it would be more effective if, instead of paying monthly bandwidth bills, transponder space were a subsidized capital expense.

Presentation: Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation Sustainability Forum

Lorraine Thomas, Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation

Ms. Thomas from the Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation spoke to the participants about the NBDC Sustainability Forum. She stated that it was important to consult the community to ensure applications were meeting their needs.

Key ideas from Roundtable Group

- Sustainability assumes that satellite capacity is in place
- Sustainability means uniformity of services across regions
- Tangible benefits must be well explained to political leaders (\$=people work and receive an education where they live)
- The North needs lobbying and advocacy
- It must be explained to the country that a national investment in satellite is in fact money for the South since Telesat is based there
- Examine future technologies to bring costs down, such as different backbone options (fibre, last mile)
- Maintaining a high level of service over time means adapting with new technological developments; as an example, today's speeds will be inadequate in the future
- Sustainability involves: training in new technologies and constantly consulting communities to ensure the evolution of services meets needs
- Sustainability means meeting growing needs
- In the area of applications, show communities options and allow them to set their priorities
- Recognize there are barriers to reaching all individuals and address this
- Form an Inuktitut specific working group to set local, regional, and national priorities

Inuktitut Computing

There are challenges using Inuktitut on computers. Particularly syllabics. Key issues are usability and accessibility. This discussion will focus mainly on the technological end of Inuktitut computing.

Key Questions:

- How do we define accessible Inuktitut Computing?
- What partnerships are needed between Inuktitut Language experts and the programmers/developers?

It was noted that they were translating the operating system of office 2003 in beta format into Inuktitut. One of the challenges was that using Latin letters versus syllabics takes up 1/4 the size. The error message box in Windows would not allow for a message in Inuktitut. It was stated that they needed triple the space for error messages.

It was also mentioned that they needed to standardize the technical concepts and terms in Inuktitut so all four regions were served and an Inuktitut language authority needed to be formed.

International

It was stated that there had been a lot of international attention given to Indigenous connectivity in the past few years. The Information Society extended well beyond their communities and linked them to the world.

Key Questions:

- What are the Social and Economic benefits of participation in the information society?
- What can our communities contribute to the international community?

Presentation: Towards an International Indigenous Connectivity Strategy

Dan Hughes, Senior Advisor, INAC

Mr. Dan Hughes presented the power point presentation titled “Towards and International Indigenous Connectivity Strategy” to the participants. The first question he asked was if they felt that the ACP should continue and, if so, in what manner. He stated that Canadian Aboriginal people had the technical knowledge to help Indigenous people around the world. The idea of an international Indigenous portal may be pursued depending on support. He suggested that, worldwide, other governments and international bodies would support the portal. The Tunis experience told governments that they needed to step back and see how Indigenous people reacted to this idea first.

- It was recommended that Inuit look into the development of circumpolar networks and information sharing.
- Inuit should continue to be involved in International ICT developments, particularly as they relate to other existing international issues significant to people in arctic regions.
- Inuit should keep informed on international technology trends as they would inevitably affect people living in the north and, by keeping tabs on these developments, Inuit would be better able to advocate where necessary.

Final Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The Federal government has an obligation to provide infrastructure to support connectivity.

- Will lead to the capacity to deliver in all of the other areas
- Address limited bandwidth, last mile implementation and the costs of satellites

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- Address the high cost of delivering bandwidth over a satellite network

Recommendation 2: There is northern business plan for connectivity.

- Connectivity is not a luxury but compensates for systems that exist in the south: medical, educational, banking, health, etc.
- Needs to factor in the social and economic costs of not having connectivity?

Recommendation 3: Support northern communities with the opportunity to develop social, community and economic plans that address:

- What the community has to offer the global economy and how they will access it?
- What services the community wants?
- What services would best be integrated?

Recommendation 4: Facilitate the delivery of the education and training that the community has identified as needed.

- Part of a larger community plan.
- Connected to the economic goals of the community

Recommendation 5: Address the barriers to the range of public, private and government partnerships that are needed.

- Jurisdictional issues needed resolution
- Address legislative barriers to using the technology
- Break down silos within and between the government structures

Recommendation 6: Support the knowledge and research development needed to support connectivity.

- Research Tele-health use and cost
- Best Practices (e.g. K-Net)
- Inventory and assessment of IT and ITC in the north
- Clearinghouse of knowledge
- Archive material

Recommendation 7: Address the basic and immediate needs of the community to bring users and technology together.

- Address the IT security concerns
- Give priority to banking services (identified community need)
- Invest in the children and youth's education in this area
- Provide different education and training opportunities for the range of users in the communities

Urban Roundtable

Opening Remarks

Mr. Fred Caron, Assistant Deputy Minister, Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians

Mr. Caron remarked that training was essential and maintaining cultural sensitivity was important, particularly to the youth who were the future. Youth had to be provided with skills that allowed them to compete in the labour market. Students needed to complete high school and develop skills to assist them

with integrating into the economic life of the country without forfeiting their culture. They needed access to services in cities when coming from remote areas. Aboriginal people needed access, skills and capacity or the digital divide between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people would widen. He stated that Ms. Thompson would be giving a presentation on a one-stop virtual shop for urban Aboriginal people to connect with services and a prototype had been developed called the “Urban Directory of Aboriginal Programs and Services”.

Urban Directory of Aboriginal Programs and Services Presentation

Ms. Jody Thompson, Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians

Ms. Thompson stated that the Urban Directory of Aboriginal Programs and Services was a prototype that was based on the twelve (12) sites chosen for the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS). Although the UAS was not a partner for this initiative, the department used those cities as a starting point because information already existed for those cities. She stated that organizations could use the directory as their website, as many small organizations did not have the capacity to house their own websites. A user could click on their preferred city of choice and scroll through the information on the various programs and services offered in that particular city. She asked participants how the tool could be used and how could it be expanded. She mentioned that discussion boards could be added to the site to assist with communication between governments and communities.

Discussion

The question was raised as to whether additional cities would be added to the website and Ms. Thompson responded that there was potential for this tool to include cities of different sizes.

Ms. Lillian Beaudoin stated that the tool could be valuable, particularly for people who leave their communities to move to the cities and experience culture shock. Under Industry Canada, there are 4000 sites identified. She suggested youth could use these identified sites to advance their knowledge.

The question was raised as to whether other federal departments and municipalities were partners in the initiative. Mr. Thompson responded that there were partners and the department was in discussions with them to determine how they could expand the initiative. Ms. Thompson commented that connectivity was a tool and was not meant to replace what was already in the community. It was simply a tool to assist socio-economic programs for the betterment of the community.

Mr. Smith asked a few questions including: “How do they solicit links? Is it by opening it up and letting those come to it? How do you link the links back to points of origin through this tool? Does this tool look to future activity to link groups for collaboration and functionality? Ms. Thompson replied that the hope was to link to those organizations at the local level and promote it to those who did not have the communication tools at present. The Aboriginal Canada Portal had a tool with links that allowed stakeholders to select topics. There was a password, which would allow stakeholders to do this. There was some uncertainty about linking it back to communities.

Mr. Smith clarified by saying that this was just a start. There was discussion on the ongoing issues of access and capacity. At present, discussion tools were made much more user friendly and within a year or two there might be a virtual boardroom. There would then be on-line discussions to look at successes. It would also allow communities to have an archive of discussions.

Mr. Ward commented that there was a need for more one-stop shop resources. However, there were going to be dozens more of these, so “one-stop shop” might not be the best term to use. He recommended syndication. He asked if anything was being done to have the website syndicated and asked how it would be marketed. He explained that having syndication would assist with the site so that it would not become only a links page. He also asked about the accessibility for people with disabilities (i.e. those who would require voice commands).

He was also critical of the first page because the image was so large that it slowed down dial-up. He also questioned the imagery chosen and asked why it was a doormat. He said people would not relate to this and felt that using images of people living in urban settings might be better. Ms. Thompson explained that they started with two creative concepts and the doormat was chosen as the favourite concept and had already been published by the Government of Canada to represent Aboriginal people in urban settings. She said it might be adjusted as necessary.

A participant commented on the sharing of business sites where the sharing of information between like parties could occur. For example, all Métis organizations could share sites and trade information without having to maintain the site. Ms. Thompson commented that they were considering launching the site officially at the World Urban Forum in Vancouver in Summer 2006 and appreciated any feedback on the site.

National Association of Friendship Centres Presentation

Mr. Alfred Gay, National Association of Friendship Centres

Mr. Alfred Gay stated that the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) was in the process of creating standardized reporting criteria and automated data collection for all of their programming delivered to local Friendship Centres. This initiative would streamline the recording of projects and services for integration and would increase transparency and accountability to funders. Mr. Gay commented that Friendship Centres would input their reports directly on-line and the information would be transferred directly into the NAFC program database. NAFC had developed a standard profile for all Friendship Centres, which included sections on operations, financial pages, statistical information, etc. The database was a FileMaker program, which was compatible to most systems and could then be transferred to the various funding departments for reporting purposes. Mr. Gay stated that the program kept information current, linked to all federal initiatives under one common Framework and the information was secure.

Discussion

Mr. Martin asked if the reporting templates were easy to use as it had been his experience that people have difficulty fitting information into templates. Mr. Gay replied the biggest challenge was getting consensus as to what information was needed on the reporting template. He added that data fields could be inserted or deleted; depending on what information was needed to meet the necessary reporting requirements.

Presentation on Youth Involvement in Connectivity

Mr. Randy Martin and Mr. Frederic Vicaire, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples

Mr. Randy Martin and Mr. Frederic Vicaire of the Congress of Aboriginal People (CAP) spoke on their organization’s youth involvement in connectivity. Mr. Martin commented that CAP was currently not

engaged in any connectivity initiatives, although the organization was a member of the Aboriginal Canada Portal Working Group. Mr. Martin discussed the challenges that CAP currently faced.

He stated that the activities of the CAP Youth Council were not funded and because of this, the youth council was only able to meet annually at CAP's Annual General Meeting (AGM). He asked if anyone knew of funding that may be available for the youth council to meet more than one a year. Ms. Beaudoin stated that Industry Canada was aware of the importance of having youth participate in committees, councils and meetings. She suggested securing funding from Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC). Mr. Vicaire added that the biggest challenge was getting the youth together. They were currently using teleconference calls and e-mail to communicate and gather youth input on various initiatives.

A participant asked if video conferencing, in place of teleconferencing, would be helpful if funds could be found. Mr. Martin replied that youth were slow to trust so this was something that needed to be kept in mind. He said video conferencing had never been tried. He said that youth rarely fully participate on teleconference called and stated that face-to-face meetings help to bring out youth participation. A participant commented that the Virtual Boardroom was inexpensive and it was all web-based. Participants required a web camera, which is approximately \$30. Traditional video conferencing was more expensive.

Ms. Judy Watson stated that at the Connectivity Conference last year, there was a group of seven youth that did a presentation on connectivity and information technology and they later formed a coalition. She stated that she would provide their contact information to CAP as they might have some innovative ideas on how youth across the country could meet and discuss issues on-line.

Mr. Martin indicated that CAP also has a 35-year-old archive of various resources that could only be accessed if an individual physically went to the office. They would like to digitize their archives, however, funding was an issue. Mr. Gay suggested that an inexpensive solution to digitizing all internal documents is a scanning program that could be hooked up to Xerox copier. The archives could then be scanned by summer students and then posted on the CAP website.

Another issue, Mr. Martin explained, was that many offenders were placed in institutions away from their homeland and had no access to community Elders. He stated that CAP was looking at methods to connect offenders with their own community Elders to assist with successful rehabilitation.

Young Offenders and Connectivity

Mr. Jed Roberts, Oak Hill Boy's Ranch

Mr. Jed Roberts stated that he worked with young offenders in Edmonton, Alberta. He stated that rate of offending youth who were successfully rehabilitated was one in five. He stated that 95% of the offending youth were diagnosed with ADHD, autism or similar. He stated that the youth of today were not afraid of technology and were often more advanced than adults. He stated that trust was a big issue for youth in care and they needed face-to-face meetings to build that trust. He stated that connectivity offered youth some access to the programs that they needed to learn, including completing their studies.

Ms. Watson informed the group of the Spring Board Program operating in Sioux Lookout, Ontario. The program had five organizations working together on programs for young offenders and giving alternatives to youth-at-risk of entering the justice system. The program helped youth deal with issues of self-esteem and anger. It was a pilot project that involved social workers and it might be something that the participants wanted to look into.

Roundtable Discussion

Mr. Jay Roberts informed the group that this part of the discussion would be led by the questions outlined in the briefing note prepared for the roundtable.

How would a 21st century national, provincial, or territorial Aboriginal organization better use these e-tools to serve people in cities?

Ms. Beaudoin suggested identifying what initiatives were already out there and then use existing ones as models. She stated that there was a need for computers for school programs where students could reassemble them as part of a hands-on skill development approach. Mr. Roberts explained that the sharing of information was cost and time efficient. He said this method was a good opportunity to increase literacy capacity amongst youth.

Ms. Watson referred to the functional web portal developed by HeadStart to meet the needs of researchers and health professionals. Parents were often encouraged to go to the sites and find the answers to their own minor health questions, which reduce heavy traffic in emergency rooms and assists adults with learning to use technology. The website is located at www.accel-capa.ca.

Ms Dopler discussed the creation of more access points in urban centers as many Aboriginal people living in cities live in poverty and had no access to computers. She mentioned that Wabano had an after school Internet access programs for youth.

Ms. Beaudoin mentioned a program called Computers for Schools that provided computers to schools and non-profit organizations. She suggested that Wabano look at their website and send a letter requesting computers, printers and scanners.

Ms. Thompson stated that technology could never replace relationships, but face-to-face meetings could help to build trust and that was why friendly access points were needed. Once those points were in place, capacity and skills development and training would naturally follow.

How could we best initiate multi-stakeholder pilot projects? How could we best enable service and delivery organizations and community-level initiatives to create and foster the necessary horizontal and vertical partnerships?

Ms. Beaudoin said it was important to work collaboratively with federal, provincial and municipal governments and agencies. Representatives must network to avoid duplication of work. She suggested piloting a project that provided youth with the opportunity to champion a project and train other youth. She suggested that letters be sent to Members of Parliament and Aboriginal leaders to make the issue a priority. Mr. Norris stated that if good cases were made, bureaucrats would offer their support. It would be helpful to find the right person or champion in the Minister's office who would help to push the projects forward to the Minister.

Ms. Beaudoin commented on broadband being a requirement for the receipt of tele-health, e-government, e-justice and other programs. She said that it was important to ensure that all youth had the same opportunity to learn and complete high school. There needed to be an alternative where youth could stay in their home communities for education instead of going to urban centres where they may fall through the cracks.

What are the characteristics and attributes of successful community-driven projects (online or offline)? In short, what is working and why?

Ms. Watson stated that there were three national programs for children and one was HeadStart. At present, they were doing on-line reporting with a user-friendly program. Accreditation could also be done on-line, as could the submission of on-line evaluations. She suggested giving communities the software to evaluate their own programs. She stated that incentive and accreditation were also important elements to getting proper reporting.

Ms. Dopler stated that Wabano tried to use technology as much as possible. She mentioned an Outreach program where they needed to track how many people were repeat service users at Wabano. They used palm pilots for this project, which helped track the numbers and keep better records which satisfied the funders. Ms. Dopler said there needed to be more community education to service providers.

Mr. Ward stated that projects should be driven by the client and/or by the community. There was a champion for his project, but there were also other people spreading the word. His goal was to take a spin-off of the software and have 12-16 year olds train others on easy to use tools. The intention was to have a one- or two-day training session and launch the sites that the youth created.

For many grassroots organizations, working partnerships, and using state-of-the-art technologies, may require facing change. Where are the capacity and tools to enable organizational change and growth?

Mr. Roberts stated that the biggest fear of change might be the possible loss of culture as people become consumed by technology. Culture loss began with those moving off-reserve and it was still a reality of today. Ms. Beaudoin remarked that technology could facilitate people becoming more efficient and effective and some Elders had embraced it to talk to children and grandchildren in other communities.

Ms. Thompson stated that grass roots organizations were smaller and often faced the loss of the technical people in their communities who created websites. They needed to know where they could get sustainable funding for those valuable human resources.

Ms. Beaudoin stated that communities must identify their exact needs. Technology was good, but they needed equipment and funding for skills development. Tele-health was a daunting concept, but knowledge needed to start somewhere. Mr. Ward said the government must be made aware of what was needed and a better process be placed in government. Ms. Thompson remarked that accountability and integration of data collected was necessary for government employees at the other end to account for everything in their paperwork.

What steps forward would you propose to develop Urban Aboriginal Connectivity and what are the potential contributions, roles and responsibilities of the:

- a) Aboriginal Communities
- b) Aboriginal Organizations
- c) Private sector
- d) Cities/municipalities
- e) Federal departments
- f) Provincial governments

Mr. Roberts stated that neither of the departments needed to take a stand on it's own, however, a combination had to occur so that someone had the responsibility to inform others (stakeholders). Representatives from the groups mentioned above were going to have to come together.

Mr. Norris stated that Treasury Board submissions were needed before the government departments get the go ahead for anything that was proposed. He stated that it was still uncertain on how it would work with connectivity, but a recommendation from this discussion to the Treasury Board might be necessary to get it moving.

Mr. Heighington stated that there needed to be a concentration of services in areas where people dwell and community driven projects can address that issue.

How should we move forward with the conclusions of this discussion paper and the feedback we will benefit from at the 5th annual National Connecting Aboriginal Peoples Forum?

Mr. Roberts stated that a report capturing the day's discussions would be developed and those in the Connectivity Working Group would address the suggestions and recommendations within it. He stated that, this year, there was a need to make the necessary recommendations to the various departments.

Mr. Norris suggested they take findings from the Roundtable discussion and put it into the report. The report could then be raised with the Aboriginal Canada Portal Working Group and then the Deputy Minister. Mr. Heighington asked if participants would see the various drafts of report and provide input at a later stage. Ms. Thompson stated that the participants might provide further comments later through an electronic discussion board. Mr. Roberts commented that it was a difficult process. He suggested that participants should receive draft copies of the report in various stages and send in comments as necessary. Mr. Ward recommended that there be an on-line discussion on the report.

Women's Roundtable

An Elder from Cochrane, Ontario, opened the roundtable discussions with a prayer.

Opening Remarks from Native Women's Association of Canada

Ms. Jennifer Lord, Native Women's Association of Canada

Ms. Lord thanked the participants for accepting the invitation from the Native Women's Association of Canada to participate in the Women's roundtable. She encouraged participants to draw from their own personal and professional knowledge in each thematic discussion that would be happening throughout the day. She noted that participants came from a variety of backgrounds as well as diverse regions and welcomed any and all input each individual had to share on e-services.

Ms. Lord stated that there were no formal presentations scheduled during the Women's roundtable because many of the participants indicated to her that they were unfamiliar with e-services as both a concept and in practice and wanted to join in the Roundtable purely to get more information on the subject. She mentioned that a background paper was sent to all participants prior to the event and hope that everyone found the resources helpful.

Ms. Lord noted that since this is the first year that a Women's Roundtable had ever been organized, she felt it was best to spend the day learning about e-services and sharing what e-services were available to

Aboriginal women in Canada. She encouraged everyone to sit in a circle and one-by-one share their thoughts and experiences using a 'sharing circle' format. By encouraging each person to introduce themselves and share what they knew about e-services in each theme Ms. Lord hoped to gain a better perspective as to how Aboriginal women, businesses and groups are accessing e-services, if accessing them at all..

The following paragraphs provide the reader with a quick overview of the discussion that occurred at the Women's roundtable. For details, we encourage you to view the video where the complete session was captured.

Ms. Lord reviewed the agenda for the day with the participants and indicated that they would be looking at the following topics from a connectivity perspective: Health, Education & Training, Community Connections & Cultural Preservation, Violence Against Women and Economic Opportunities.

She asked participants to consider the following three questioning when approaching each theme for discussion:

- 1) Do you or your family access es-ervices? Are you aware of any available e-services?
- 2) How is or could technology support the delivery of services to Aboriginal women in each theme?
- 3) How do you see your community or organization engaging in this process?

Health

Participants requested an explanation of what was meant by e-health services, which in turn highlighted how little was known in the community about e-health services. There was a need to educate the community members about e-services. Several participants in the group had never even heard of e-health services.

Economic Development and Education

It was noted that education was the cornerstone to the foundation but it was not the ends to the means. There needed to be ongoing support including "train the trainer" programs. It was suggested that they needed some expertise on site.

It was suggested that programs in communities were really expensive. The question was raised around how could they ensure the sustainability of their effective community initiatives. It was stated that there needed to be some long-term commitments made.

The Aboriginal Canada Portal needed to be approached to set up a women's page. It would be a good site that people would feel comfortable going to. It was also suggested that it would be good to share success stories of how Aboriginal women's business are succeeding. There should be a central information source of what a business plan is, why a business plan is needed, and other related questions women have.

They also raised the issues non-traditional business plans. It was suggested that there were places and situations where that would not work.

It was noted that Women's Space was a great place for women to build partnerships and to access information on where to find services. There was a lot of information out there on economic development. However, there was limited information on economic development relating to gender issues.

Participants stated that they could not forget about women in the communities who had disabilities, which were often restricted by criteria eligible for training. It was suggested that mentoring programs were needed between young women and older women who had been running successful businesses.

It was also suggested that more women needed to be involved in trades. There were lot of new opportunities in the north related to all the new mines and pipelines.

Violence Against Women

Pauktuutit was identified as the national organization representing Inuit women of Canada in all regions. The Nuluq Project was the National Inuit Strategy for Abuse Prevention. It is a collection of abuse prevention sources both in the north and south of Canada. All Inuit communities were contacted to see what services they had and that information was collected and compiled. Through the project, information on local service providers including contact information on shelters, RCMP detachments and crisis workers, was compiled, which was updated every six months. Nuluq was directed by an advisory committee of community level workers and regional government staff from all regions.

One of the main purposes of the project was to be a resource for community level workers who deal with women in crisis. It would help them find services for women in crisis.

Women's Space Presentations

Funding had been provided by the Status of Women Canada to do a violence against women initiative. A large part of the work was to find ways for abused women to use the Internet safely. Specifically when they seek help on line and how to keep secret who they were communicating with and what websites they were visiting. As well as what the new and emerging issues were in relation to new technologies and how they might be furthering the oppression of women. The goal was to create a virtual community of women. Research was conducted on cyber stalking and the digital divide to make sure women's voices were heard in the e-government process. The following website and email address were provided for more information:

- www.womenspace.com
- kathi@womenspace.ca

Technology was a helpful tool but not every woman was familiar with it and many women might not even know how to turn a computer on. Training might be needed at a very basic level for some people. For technology services aimed at women in crisis, they need to have a live person at the other end of the line.

It was noted that programs for young girls were extremely important; they needed to learn at early ages that it was not acceptable to be abused and to learn to be strong at an early stage so they would know how to deal with that type of situation if it comes up later in their lives.

It was suggested that they needed to remember that a women having an emergency was unlikely to go sit at a computer somewhere, she'll most likely look for a phone to speak to someone. It was suggested that

this could not be forgotten since, in the current era, everything seemed to focus around computers and the Internet.

Sometimes women are unsure if what they are experiencing is actually abuse so information need to include descriptions of types of abuse and plans to deal with it. It was stated that NWAC needed to continue to advocate for women. They should also explore e-commerce for women, particularly for those in remote/northern communities, since this could empower women and make them more self-sufficient.