

NEWS RELEASE

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SECOND WORKING SESSION ON DESIGN OF A NUNAVIK FOOD SECURITY POLICY

Kuujjuaq, May 14, 2018 – The second working session on the design of a Nunavik food security policy was held April 26 and 27 in Inukjuak.

<u>Food security</u> means "All human beings having physical and economic access at all times to sufficient, healthy and nutritional food, enabling them to lead healthy, active lives." In Nunavik, food *insecurity* is a major issue; in the last regional health survey, conducted in 2004, nearly one in four individuals reported having lacked food in the month preceding the survey.

The design of a Nunavik food security policy principally aims at better coordinating the efforts of regional organizations and associations at improving access to and availability of healthy store-bought foods as well as access to traditional foods. Under the coordination of the NRBHSS Department of Public Health, the Nunavik regional working group on food security (NRWGFS) thus organized its second working session in April, pursuant to the first session on access to traditional foods, which was held last fall.

The topic of the second session was the promotion of healthy nutrition and support for individuals living in a situation of serious food insecurity (for example, skipping meals or feeling hunger due to lack of resources). More broadly, the topics raised were:

- the high cost of food and the unavailability of nutritional, fresh foods in stores
- the importance of discussing the issues of food security in the communities and mobilizing community members
- the need for further development of community kitchen projects in the various communities
- the importance of nutrition education in the schools
- the importance of better support for hunters (a point that was also raised at the first session)

Some 40 people (workers of the Family Houses and CLSCs, CLWWs, and representatives of the education sector, grocery stores and regional organizations) attended the session in order to speak about the reality in the communities and exchange on the topic of promising initiatives in Nunavik and Nunavut.

Workshops were organized to formulate a series of recommendations for improving Nunavimmiut eating habits and better supporting individuals and families in a situation of serious food insecurity. The recommendations for actions resulting from each working session will be studied by the NRWGFS and brought to a committee of regional leaders. They will then be integrated into a coherent policy that should be completed at the end of 2018.

The process under way in Nunavik, aimed at improving food security, is part of a broader movement in Canada's Inuit regions, where the levels of food insecurity are significantly higher than in the rest of the country.

The next (third) working session is scheduled for September 2018 and will cover the topic of access to and availability of food in stores.

The Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services is a public agency created in 1978 under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. It is responsible for nearly the entire Québec territory located north of the 55th parallel in terms of the provision of health and social services for the inhabitants of the 14 communities.

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