

## PRESS RELEASE

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## THIRD WORKING SESSION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FOOD-SECURITY POLICY IN NUNAVIK

**Kuujjuaq, September 18, 2018** – On September 5 and 6, 2018, the third working session for the development of a food-security policy in Nunavik was held in Kuujjuaq.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, <u>food security</u> exists "when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." In Nunavik, food insecurity is a major issue; in the last regional health survey, conducted in 2004, close to one in four individuals affirmed having lacked food during the preceding month.

The development of a food-security policy in Nunavik is a collaborative effort by regional organizations and associations. The policy primarily aims at better coordinating the efforts enabling access to and availability of healthy store-bought foods as well as access to traditional foods.

Under the coordination of the Department of Public Health of the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS), the Nunavik Regional Working Group on Food Security (NRWGFS) organized this third working session that brought together 30 people: retailers, airand maritime-transport companies, territorial development officer (provincial government), administrators of nutrition-related programs (federal government) and programs for lowering the cost of living (regional government), health workers, representatives of the education sector, as well as representatives of regional organizations and associations.

The topic of the third session was the availability and quality of store-bought foods. Several issues were discussed in depth:

- the high cost of food;
- the considerable portion of family budgets allotted to food purchases;
- the varying availability and quality of fresh, nutritious, store-bought foods;
- the logistical challenges of transporting food from the South to the North;
- the need to raise the public's awareness of healthy nutrition, in order to increase the demand for healthy foods in grocery stores;
- the need to produce more food locally.

The process under way in Nunavik, which aims to improve food security, is part of a broader movement in Canada's Inuit regions, where the rate of food insecurity is significantly higher than in the rest of the country.

The fourth and final working session is scheduled for November, 2018. It will deal with local food production.

The recommendations for actions resulting from each working session will be reviewed by the NRWGFS and submitted to a committee of regional leaders. They will then be integrated into the Nunavik food-security policy and the related plan of action, which should be ready by the spring of 2019.

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 55<sup>th</sup> parallel in terms of the provision of health and social services for the inhabitants of the 14 communities.

-30 -

Source: Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services

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