

N W T

Plain Facts

On Land and Self-government



Indian and Northern
Affairs Canada

Canada

Devolution

What's it all about?

Historically, discussions of devolution in the Northwest Territories meant transfer of responsibilities from the federal government to the territorial government, for example the transfer of management and responsibility over forests, health and airports. However, this approach had limitations.

Now discussions of devolution in the Northwest Territories involve a more comprehensive and inclusive approach which refer to the transfer of responsibilities from the Government of Canada to northern governments - both territorial and Aboriginal. Devolution will reflect a comprehensive government-to-government approach to developing governance structures, sharing resources, building the economy, and managing the environment.

An objective of the federal government for many years has been to transfer these responsibilities to the territory. However, before devolution can be accomplished, Aboriginal interests in land and resources must be addressed. Progress in resolving land claims and self-government issues have now established an environment in which a comprehensive approach to devolution can occur.

What does it mean?

Devolution will influence and determine how all three governments – federal, territorial, and Aboriginal – work together. It will affect three priority areas for the north: governance, economic development, and environmental stewardship.

Governance

Devolution will clearly define relationships among the three governments: federal, territorial, and Aboriginal. An intergovernmental forum, planned for the spring of 2000, will work to establish and flesh out this relationship, and move beyond local and regional issues to build a forum to address issues of concern to the whole territory.

Economic development

Devolution will result in an approach to resource revenue sharing that involves all three governments - Aboriginal, territorial, and federal - to ensure that all people in the north have access to the jobs, investment, and other opportunities that development brings.

Environmental stewardship

Devolution will involve federal, territorial, and Aboriginal governments in protecting and managing the environment.

More background

Fact sheets:

Intergovernmental Process in the NWT

Fact sheets are available by contacting

Communications Directorate

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