Access and Benefit Sharing in the Nunavut Settlement Area

Land Claims Coalition Conference

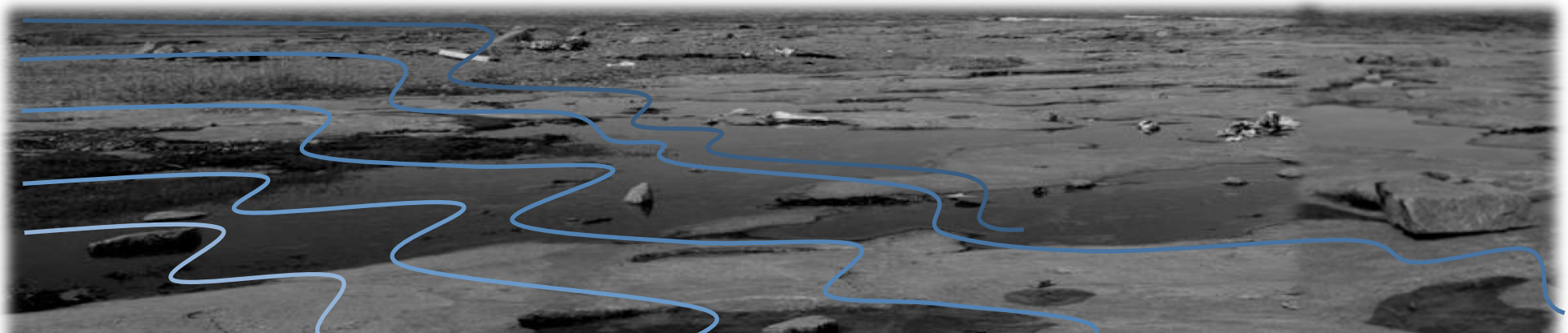
December 7, 2015

Sharon Edmunds
Senior Research Advisor

Department of Social and Cultural Development
Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated

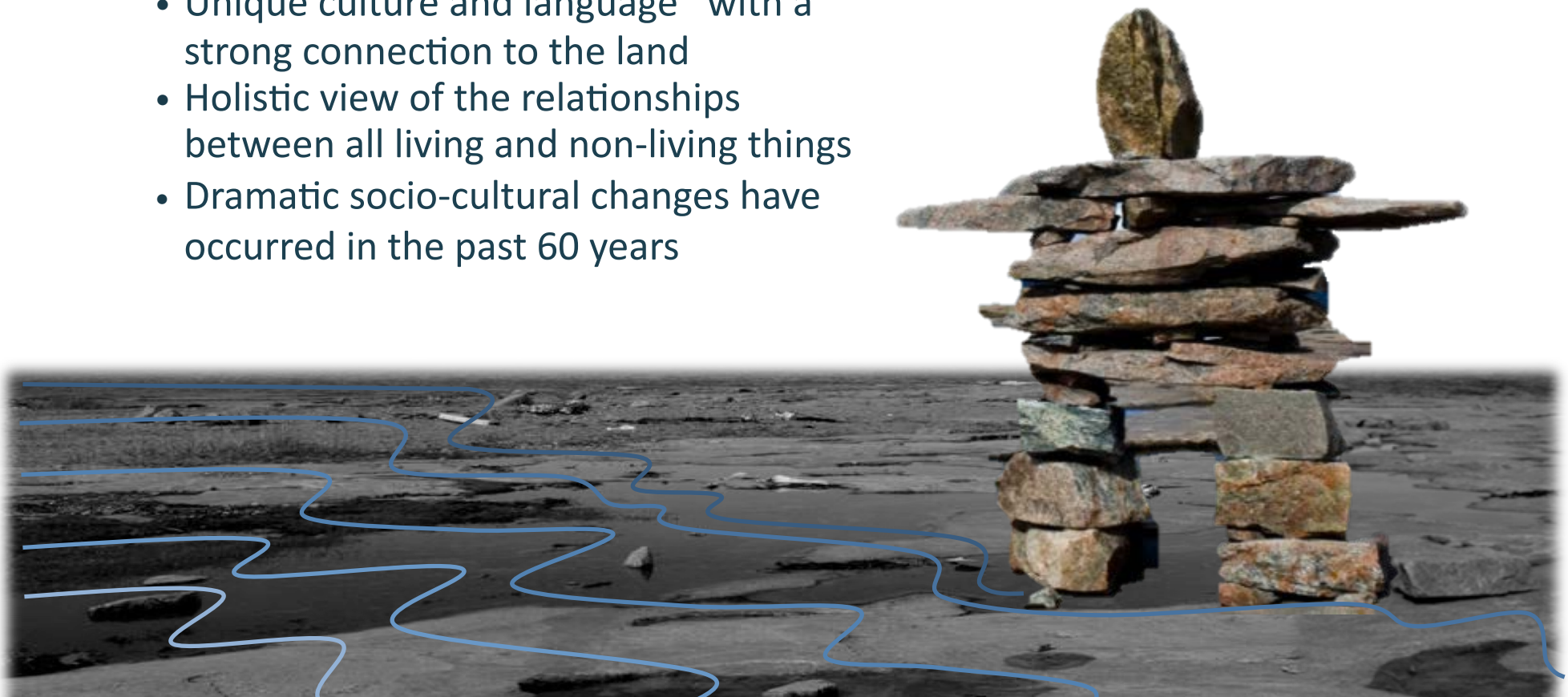
Nunavut Settlement Area

- 31, 113 Inuit in Nunavut
- Young population
- Inuit represent 85% of the population



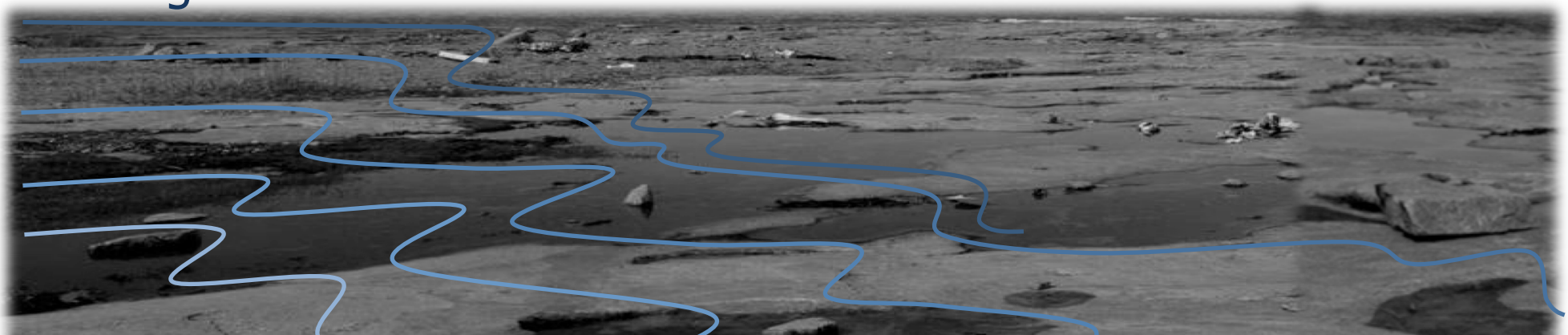
Inuit Culture and our Communities

- Remote communities, far from major centres
- Majority lack road access, only reached by air and sea
- Unique culture and language with a strong connection to the land
- Holistic view of the relationships between all living and non-living things
- Dramatic socio-cultural changes have occurred in the past 60 years



Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI)

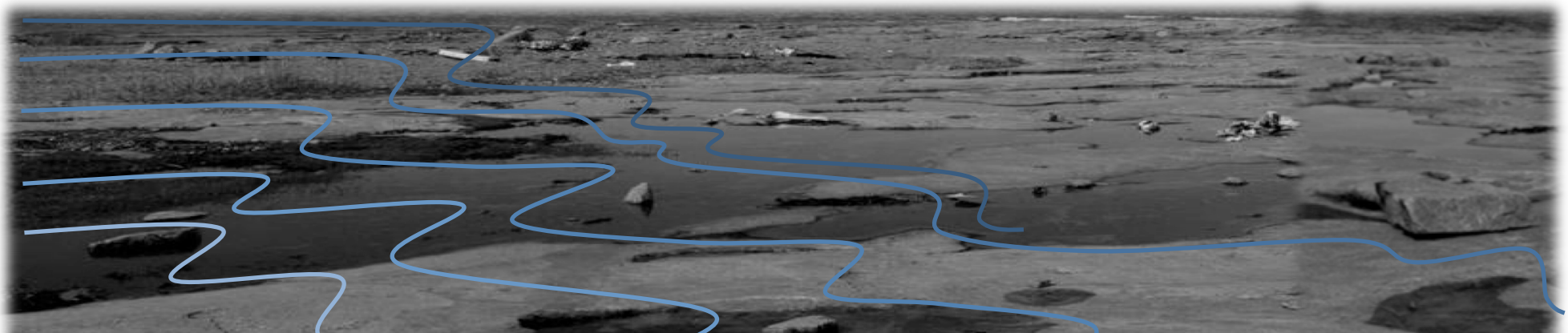
- Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut established in 1982
- Holder of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement
- Directed by a Board of Directors
- Imperative partner in implement Aboriginal rights for Government of Canada



Department of Social and Cultural Development (SCD)

Advocacy and Research:

In order to address gaps in policy, research is needed. The policy world is "evidenced based".



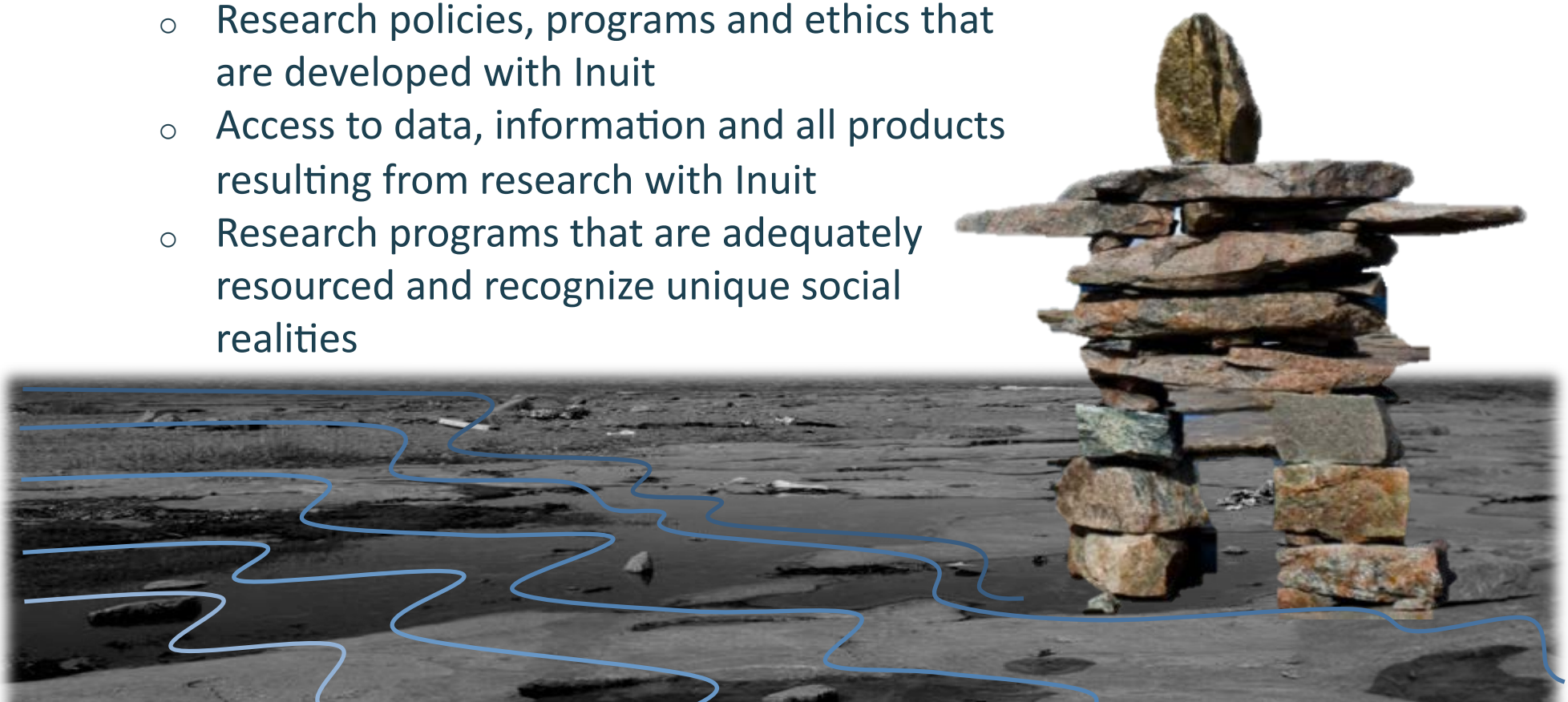
Inuit Involvement in Research

Vision:

Research programs, policies and outcomes that are meeting the needs and interests of Inuit

This requires:

- Research policies, programs and ethics that are developed with Inuit
- Access to data, information and all products resulting from research with Inuit
- Research programs that are adequately resourced and recognize unique social realities



Shifting Landscape of Inuit Involvement in Research

Some important questions Inuit must ask:

- **Whose priority is the research addressing?**
- **What capacity does the research provide to Inuit communities, regions and organizations?**
- **How will the outcomes be communicated to relevant decision-makers? In particular, to Inuit leadership, relevant governments and communities?**

Research Licensing in Nunavut

In Nunavut, research is governed by the Nunavut Scientists Act.

Depending on the type of research, different review and approval mechanisms are triggered, dependent on the nature of the research being proposed.

Case Study: A Bioprspecting License Application

- July of 2010 a Bioprospecting license application was received triggering a review

Case Study: A Bioprospecting License Application

- NTI recognized it represented a relatively new form of research interest in the region

- Given the commercial interest associated with Bioprospecting NTI reviewed activities at an international scale

Context of Bioprospecting in the Nunavut Settlement Area

"It's not difficult to find new chemistry, but to find significant new chemistry is quite a lot harder".

Dr. Roger Linington, Canada Research Chair in Chemical Biology

The Inter-Institutional Agreement: Features in Brief

- NTI and UPEI share exclusive responsibility for the commercialization of any technology that is developed
- Efforts will be made to recruit and employ beneficiaries of the NLCA to assist in bioprospecting and research related activities in Nunavut
- Commercialization Agreements will be led by UPEI in consultation with NTI
- Commercial Revenues will be shared equally by both parties

Lessons Learned

- It is a growing partnership
- Expanding the number of Inuit trainee's involved in collection and processing
- Greater clarity needed as it relates to Access and Benefit Sharing

Nakurmiik,
Thank you

Photo Credits: The Toronto Star, Nunatsiaq News and the Inuit Health Survey