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POSTER SUMMARY

INDIGENOUS LAND RIGHTS: A SOURCE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL CAPITAL?

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Principal Topic

Worldwide, Indigenous Peoples believe that they have been unjustly deprived of their traditional lands, resources and 'nationhood.' Acknowledging this, in 1995 the United Nations recognized the legitimacy of Indigenous Peoples' struggle for three rights: (i) the right to ownership and control of their territories; (ii) the right to self-determination; and (iii) the right to representation through their own institutions. Claims to traditional lands and resources are important in two respects. First, traditional lands are the 'place' of the nation and are inseparable from the people, their culture, and their national identity. Second, land and resources are the foundation upon which Indigenous Peoples intend to rebuild the economies of their 'nations' and so improve the socioeconomic circumstances of individuals, families and communities.

This paper examines the 1984 Inuvialuit Agreement (IA) that ushered in the modern Indigenous land claim era in Canada. At the time of signing the Inuvialuit population was about 4,500. Collectively they received rights to 30,000 square miles of their traditional lands and \$62.5 million in cash compensation.

Method

The paper is based on a review of secondary sources relating to the IA and resulting economic activities development of the Inuvialuit.

Results and Implications

The Inuvialuit Corporate Group (ICG) ended 2000 with total assets of \$384 (\$281 million at the end of 1999), liabilities of \$114 (\$68 million at the end of 1999) and beneficiaries' equity of \$270 million (\$212 million at the end of 2000). The ICG earned a combined after tax profit of \$52.5 in 2000 (\$5.6 million in 1999). The 2000 profit was earned on revenues of \$277.2 million (1999 revenues \$161.8 million).

In 2000, the ICG paid out a total of \$9.0 million in wages and honoraria of \$577,000, provided student financial support of \$197,000, made payments to elders of \$368,000, distributed \$568,000 in dividends to beneficiaries, paid \$390,000 to Community Corporations and made other payments of \$577,000 to various community groups (in total, \$11.6 million in total; \$11.1 in 1999).

In the case of the Inuvialuit, a just settlement of land claims has provided the capital for entrepreneurship and business development, and contributed to the rebuilding of the Inuvialuit 'Nation.'

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