A. 3 The process for this Indigenous rights and self-determination table is evolving. Now that NunatuKavut has been established as a collective that holds Indigenous rights, discussions will proceed to formalize those rights. This milestone has been reached after decades of exhaustive and extensive research by multiple experts from historians to genealogists to anthropologists, confirming our longstanding and unbroken presence in Labrador that goes back hundreds of years prior to European contact.

The signed MOU between the NCC and the Government of Canada will guide this process and we will now move forward with developing our joint mandate to negotiate on matters of interest and priority to NunatuKavut Inuit. This will involve ongoing engagement and consultation with our people and communities so that our collective priorities are reflected. This process is important to ensuring meaningful and tangible benefits to the people of NunatuKavut. Once the joint mandate(s) is finalized, the parties will begin negotiations on substantive agreements.

Q 4 Why does NCC’s traditional territory map (below) show an area that encompass a fair amount of Labrador?

A. 4 NCC first produced a map, similar to the version below, in 1995 and it has been in circulation since that time. The map reflects a broad representation of past and continuing traditional use based upon generations of Inuit oral history and extensive research. It shows NunatuKavut Inuit travel routes, as well as hunting, trapping and harvesting areas, over hundreds and hundreds of years. It also depicts a marine area in which our people travelled, fished, sealed and engaged in traditional activities. This type of map looks very similar to traditional territory maps of other Indigenous peoples, both in Labrador and throughout Canada.

It is well documented that Indigenous peoples have historically occupied and had a close relationship with the lands and waters of what is now known as Labrador, unrestrained by modern political and geographic boundaries. There were areas of exclusive and shared use among Indigenous groups, which is common throughout Canada.
The traditional use areas of all Indigenous peoples must be respected in all land engagement, when and where appropriate, with the Nunatsiavut Government, the Innu Nation and RIRSD processes. NCC is willing and welcomes the opportunity to engage, when and where appropriate, with the Nunatsiavut Government, the Innu Nation and possibly other Indigenous groups as NCC addresses issues that may arise during the negotiation of a modern agreement(s) with Canada.

Q. 5 This news has been a long time coming for the people of NunatuKavut. Why now?

A. 5 Yes, the recognition and respect of our rights is something that NCC has been working on for nearly three decades since our Land Claim was first submitted to the federal government. We have fought on so many fronts: on the ground, on the water, in the public arena, in bilateral and multilateral meetings and in the courts. As a people, we stood united in our pursuit for justice and have been persistent and resilient.