



**NANA**

REGIONAL CORPORATION, INC.



## **Inuit Circumpolar Council 2010**

Marie N. Greene, NANA Regional Corporation, Inc. (NANA)  
president/CEO, speech to the 11th General Assembly of the  
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**Marie N. Greene**  
**NANA Regional Corporation, Inc.**  
**President/CEO**

Ariigaa, Taikuu

Good afternoon distinguished elders, delegates, honored guests and fellow Inuit. Thank you for allowing me to join you by video conference today for this most important General Assembly of the Inuit Circumpolar Council. Thank you ICC Chair Jimmy Stotts for your hard work and leadership. Thank you Executive Council for your dedication and commitment to the Inuit people. On behalf of the Alaska delegates I extend my appreciation and gratitude to the community of Nuuk, Greenland for hosting the 2010 General Assembly.

As president and CEO of NANA Regional Corporation, I serve NANA's more than 12,000 Inupiat shareholders. Many of you are familiar with our region – for those of you who aren't, our region is located in the Northwest part of the state. We have 11 villages spread out over this area, with about seventy four hundred residents living in the region, 82.5% of whom are Inupiaq and NANA shareholders.

NANA, as our regional corporation, exists to improve the quality of life for our people by maximizing economic growth, protecting and enhancing the 2.2 million acres of land we received as part of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and promoting healthy communities with decisions, actions, and behaviors inspired by our Inupiat Iitqusiat values consistent with our core principles. One of the ways we do this is through responsible resource development. (Pause)

In many ways, resource development has always been central to our economy as Inupiat. But, when we – as indigenous peoples – speak of resource development, we need to clearly define what “resources” means to us so that the Outside world can better understand our perspective and goals.

At NANA, our subsistence resources are the basis of our wealth and the economic base on which we will build our future; therefore the highest use of our land is for subsistence.

Any project we enter into must be consistent with this perspective – because to us, resource development means more than just extracting what is in the ground. It means the maintenance and development of our subsistence resources. It is using our cultural resources – our art, stories and dance – to strengthen and guide the next generation. It is developing the economies of our villages – so our people don't have to choose between feeding their families and staying in their ancestral home – and – it is developing the potential of our people so they have an opportunity to engage fully in the present while honoring our past.

Responsible resource development is a means to an end. It is one tool we use to create a local economy that allows our people an opportunity to create a better tomorrow for themselves and for future generations. Because this is our belief, NANA supports Articles 3 and 32 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

At NANA we like to say we live in two worlds but have one spirit – meaning that we will not forsake our traditional values when participating in the modern economy. We can be Native people and bring Native values to the table when looking at business opportunities. In fact, I think it is our greatest strength.

On April 20th of this year, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for the UN met for its ninth time to discuss this very strength. This was the same day that oil started gushing into the Gulf of Mexico – serving as a reminder that responsible resource development requires our constant vigilance.

As a result of the forum, the U.N. Department of Public Information issued a press release entitled “Speakers Highlight the Devastating Impact of Logging, Mining, and Other Mega Development Projects on Indigenous Lands, as the United Nations Permanent Forum Debate Continues.” I take issue with the title of this release because it does not reflect NANA’s decades of positive experience in regards to mining – but many of the comments made during the forum by people around the world spoke to me on a personal level – and hint at universal truths that should guide us – as indigenous peoples - into the future.

Sandra Creamer from the Global Women’s Caucus stated that: “Development projects must be the result of having obtained the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous people.” Chief Karl Hill of the Global Indigenous Peoples Caucus said that: “Indigenous development must be based on environmental and cultural sustainability that safeguards the needs of future generations”; and Jacquelyn Carino of the Asia Indigenous Peoples’ Caucus said that “development with culture and identity” meant that, throughout the development process, indigenous peoples’ rights to land, territories and self-determination were recognized, including the right to free, prior and informed consent for any projects that affected them.

NANA also supports the recommendations of Greenland delegate and Executive Council member of ICC, Aqqaluk Lynge, that the UN Economic and Social Council allocate funding for a summit on resource development decision-making by indigenous peoples.

We support these statements because, at NANA, we know first-hand the importance of “free, prior and informed consent”. We know the importance of holding the scales as we balance our traditional way of life with responsible

resource development. And while we all watch the news and our hearts go out to the communities on the Gulf dealing with this tragic spill, we must also remember that in the midst of this development horror story, there are good stories to tell...and Red Dog Mine is such a story.

As we worked to develop resources in our region, NANA was blessed to have had the leadership that brought our Inupiaq values to the table when developing Red Dog Mine.

As many of you know, NANA owns Red Dog – a mine that for more than 30 years has had a direct positive impact on the lives of our shareholders – protecting the environment, providing jobs and economic opportunities for our people, and allowing us to invest in sustaining our cultural identity.

But the path to develop Red Dog was not easy. Before the mine was approved by our people, it took years of work – of outreach – soul searching and prayerful reflection. As we began down the road to development, NANA, and our then partner Cominco, worked very hard to ensure that our consultation with key stakeholders was thorough.

In fact, consulting our people was the single most important step we took. As Native people, we know that our idea of consultation – and the rest of the corporate world's idea of consultation – is two very different things. Our consultations are not necessarily your average corporate discussions. They are more like family meetings. We move forward cautiously and deliberately, because we know that the business decisions we make affect much more than just a stock price – they affect every aspect of our lives.

At our consultations we involve our Elders. They are our history keepers. They remind us of our values, of who we are and where we came from – they guide us to where we are going. Our Elders remind us that the choices we make today are promises to future generations- that we are entrusted with their lives and the lives of their grandchildren.

It is this type of consultation we conducted as we worked to develop Red Dog Mine. We traveled to each of our eleven villages many times over a period of about ten years to consult with our shareholders. And while we, and our partners at Cominco, provided information – the most important activity we engaged in was *listening*. We listened to the views and concerns of our people, and it was only after our shareholders agreed, that we entered into a long-term partnership that resulted in the development of the mine. And, I believe, that is the reason behind its success.

Our people knew we were balancing responsible resource development with our traditional way of life. We knew there were risks. We knew there were benefits. But, more importantly, we knew we wanted to be the ones to weigh them. We – as a people – wanted to have a unified decision to move forward. It took us ten years to begin development on the mine, but it was worth every moment. As a result, today, we have the best of both worlds - a mine that allows us to maintain our traditional subsistence lifestyle and to participate in the modern American economy.

Responsible resource development has made a significant contribution to the well-being of my people. Our shareholders receive direct and indirect benefits from Red Dog Mine every day. As we move forward with the mine, we continue consultation with our people.

NANA conducts dozens of meetings a year with our villages about Red Dog. We visit each village and we present information – but again, we listen. We will continue to listen as long as the mine is in operation.

“The process to develop Red Dog Mine began more than thirty years ago and we all know that the world has changed a great deal in that time. Today, our area of the globe is in much dispute. As we observe changes in the Arctic – we see that the world is looking to us – not only for answers and opportunities, but also as their battleground.

In our region, we are being pulled– on all sides – by the politics of global warming, development, and conservation. NGOs and people from all sides of the political spectrum are coming to our region. Their message is the same: “We know what is best for this place; we know what is best for your people.”

We must tread carefully in our engagement with these groups. Our ICC Chair, Jimmy Stotts, has also counseled us in this regard. He points out: “the Inuit are being told to scale back our industrial development when we did not contribute to global warming.” He has warned us against forming partnerships with environmental activists because they are also opposed to subsistence activities, like whaling, seal and caribou hunting, and fishing, which form the cornerstone of our cultural identity.

We must heed his words and proceed with caution. Any mistake we make in this engagement can be costly and may – in the long run – limit our ability to make decisions about our lands – to determine our destiny.

I am concerned that these groups are working to create a political and economic environment where we must turn to them for permission, approval or

partnership. They insist that we need to be protected from ourselves (pause) and they are dividing us.

We must remember we are all tied together by a common bond. We share common values. We share common languages, cultures, and kin. Our peoples are the first peoples of our nations. We must work together. We must not allow anything, or any group, to drive wedges between our tribes and our corporations – to pit village against village, region against region, country against country, or brother against brother.

As the Arctic becomes more accessible to the Outside world, as the world moves closer to our borders; into our waters; over our lands – we must work together to protect them. We must stand together. We face strong Outside influences and we will need each other when this storm comes. If we are united, we will succeed. I urge us, as Inuit peoples of the North, to make a pledge to consult not only with our own peoples but with each other. To make every effort to work through our differences so we can face the world in the strength of unity.

We must remind the rest of the world who we are. We must remind them of our strength, resilience and adaptability. We must remind them that we are the original environmentalists and resource developers – we will determine – together – how to use our lands to benefit our people and protect our subsistence resources and cultures. We will have a place at the table in all decisions that affect our lands. We will show the world that though we speak our different languages – we are one people – we are the Inuit – and this land is ours.

Quyaanna- Thank you and God bless you.