

Aboriginal Languages Framework: A Shared Responsibility 2017

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories made a commitment in its mandate to strengthen culture and heritage in the NWT by working with partners and stakeholders to update the 2010 NWT Aboriginal Languages Plan.

I am pleased to share with Members that later today I will be tabling the 2017 Northwest Territories Aboriginal Languages Framework: A Shared Responsibility. This is the product of extensive engagement across the territory, with Indigenous governments, language communities, cultural organizations, Elders and regional language coordinators. The Official Languages Board and Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board members worked very hard in reviewing past recommendations Standing Committees had put forward during their reviews of the *Official Languages Act*. They discussed and debated which recommendations would best serve to help shape the future of language preservation and revitalization and they are the primary architects of the Framework. I thank them for their clarity, commitment and valuable advice as we move toward a future where all official languages are supported, respected, and thriving.

This Framework, and the soon to be released Action Plan, reflects the Government's new partnership approach to language revitalization and promotion, where regional Indigenous Governments are funded and responsible for managing their own language revitalization efforts. It also includes measures to ensure all partners in language revitalization remain accountable.

Mr. Speaker, we have a monumental task ahead of us. Many of our languages are in a critical state, in danger of disappearing as we lose language speakers across the North. Languages are the foundation of culture.

If we are to preserve and invest in our many cultures across the North, we must be focusing on preserving and teaching, which will aid in rebuilding the foundations.

Earlier today, our MP Mr. Michael McLeod, representing Canadian Heritage, and I announced much needed investments in Indigenous languages over four years, totalling \$19,600,000.

This will allow us to increase funding for Indigenous Governments' regional language plans, and provide more support for the regional language coordinators. We will also be appointing a new territorial linguist to assist Indigenous Governments in their work, investing further in the interpreter/translator program, offering professional development, increasing funding to community radio stations, and providing support to communities to deliver Indigenous language and culture programming.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the Territory we live in, and welcome people from all cultures to visit, and hopefully stay. Multiculturalism in the North is constantly expanding and becoming more vibrant. Language is the key to thriving cultures, and supporting and revitalization efforts in partnership with language communities and key partners are critical.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.