

Mandate Successes – Developing Our Renewable Resources

Mr. Speaker, strong economies must encourage economic diversity.

While our economy relies on the resource sector as its foundation, our government has committed to fostering an economic environment in which small business can grow and thrive.

Today I would like to highlight some of the commitments that have been met by the ongoing work of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Mr. Speaker, we committed to increasing the number of immigrants working in the NWT and to increase investments by immigrants. Together with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, we have done that, with the release and implementation of our Immigration Strategy. More importantly, we have streamlined our processes and strengthened the profile of our Nominee Program's business stream to ensure that immigrant investment will continue to grow.

Two years ago, we committed to developing and implementing an Agriculture Strategy to encourage local food production and shepherd this budding sector towards commercial viability. Mr. Speaker, we released this Agriculture Strategy in March. We now have the foundation to guide the expansion and growth of the business of food in our territory.

We also committed to finalizing the Great Slave Lake Commercial Fishery Revitalization Strategy, and we did. We introduced our Strategy in the spring alongside funding to build a new fish processing plant that will allow us to export

fish to southern and foreign markets. As we work to implement our strategy, changes in our Fishers Support Program have increased catch volumes on the lake; we are working on a marketing strategy for Great Slave Lake fish, and, we are supporting the NWT Fisherman's Federation on a number of recruitment initiatives to encourage young people to consider commercial fishing.

Two years ago, our Government committed to investing in artist-to-market and product-to-market opportunity chains to build the profile of NWT art both at home and abroad. Our re-vamped NWT Arts website now includes a Where to Buy feature, which connects regional, national, and international customers to NWT-made art like never before. Airport exhibits, including two at the Edmonton International Airport, are helping us to build profile and demand for NWT Art. As we celebrate NWT Arts week this week, Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to connect with the Pop-Up Art gallery in Yellowknife's Centre Square Mall that displays and celebrates NWT art and artists.

Our support of NWT Art also extends to the commitments we have made to grow our territory's film industry. Since the launch of the NWT Film Rebate Program, we have invested approximately \$280,000 in seven productions. Moreover, we have provided funding for producers to market and promote their creations. We have also provided opportunities for filmmakers to attend workshops, organize festivals, and showcase their films around the globe, and today, the NWT film sector is reaching new heights.

Mr. Speaker, our tourism sector has also reached new heights, both in the number of visitors that we have welcomed to the NWT and the amount of money they have invested in our economy. Recent numbers from 2016-2017 show visitors spent over \$200 million in the Northwest Territories last year, a 21 percent increase from the previous year. We also passed 100,000 visitors for the first time ever. In part, this is a reflection of the ongoing commitment we have to investing in world-class

tourism and parks facilities. In the first two years of our mandate, we have invested close to seven million dollars in improving and expanding our facilities with a variety of new playgrounds, camping loops, marinas and washroom and shower facilities.

On a larger scale, we have just completed a three-year partnered initiative with the federal government and the Doi T'oh Territorial Park Corporation to remove steel telephone wire from along the Canol Heritage Trail.

Elsewhere, Mr. Speaker, we committed to expand exports to international markets, and were pleased to welcome Almod Diamonds to the NWT last year as the NWT's newest Approved NWT Diamond Manufacturer.

We committed to connecting our furs with international markets to help encourage the traditional economy. With the leadership of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and the support of the Government of Canada, we've succeeded, earlier this year, in opening the European Union to seal pelts, a new opportunity for Inuvialuit sealers to access a multi-billion dollar market. Meanwhile, our continued investment in the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur brand also realized resurgence in fur sales earlier this year.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we committed to working with industry and the NWT Manufacturers Association to expand manufacturing by developing a Manufacturing Strategy. This work will formally begin next month with the release of a discussion paper intended to begin a conversation about manufacturing that will guide and inform our government's development of a Manufacturing Strategy for the Northwest Territories. The release of this paper will kick-off a series of public and stakeholder engagement sessions that will include opportunities to engage in-person, online, by email, by phone, and by mail. We look forward to completing work on this Strategy in a timely fashion, and moving to the implementation stage.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to diversifying our economy to ensure residents have a fair and equitable chance to create strong communities with stable and diversified economies. Our residents deserve the opportunity to achieve economic self-determination, and we stand committed to taking action to build a diverse economy for the benefit of all residents.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.