

Safe Sport

Madam Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories stands with the Government of Canada and provincial and territorial governments against harassment, abuse, and unethical behaviour in sport. By being a signatory to the 2019 Red Deer Declaration for the Prevention of Harassment, Abuse and Discrimination in Sport, we commit to do our part to ensure a Safe Sport environment for all participants in the Northwest Territories.

Canadian athletes and the sport sector have called on all governments to take action to address safety concerns in organized sports in Canada. Ministers responsible for Sport answered that call with the Red Deer Declaration and have been leading efforts to develop and advance Safe Sport in Canada. Today I want to provide an update on the progress the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has made through collaboration with representatives of the Northwest Territories sport community.

In August I attended the Conference of Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation. This gathering took place in Niagara Falls, Ontario, just prior to the Canada Summer Games.

During this meeting, all Ministers agreed to establish policies and procedures to protect athletes and to prevent harassment, abuse, and discrimination. This involves expediting a mandatory, third-party independent process, including establishing procedures for the reporting and management of allegations for all funded sport organizations starting in 2023. Also, we will continue to work with the sport sector and athletes to implement training and education on anti-harassment and abuse.

Madam Speaker, since the Red Deer Declaration was endorsed, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has completed an environmental scan of current safe sport practices in the Northwest Territories. In November 2020, the department held a Safe Sport Summit with stakeholders and partners and has since facilitated several information

sessions with sport organizations. There is now an NWT Safe Sport Framework, and a Safe Sport Implementation Plan is currently being finalized.

The NWT Safe Sport Framework provides the opportunity for territorial and major sport organizations to adopt a series of Safe Sport policies that will address several areas, including codes of conduct; discipline and complaints; dispute resolution; athlete protection; volunteer screening; and risk management.

We know that requiring a strong policy base is only the beginning. The department intends to work closely with organizations to facilitate open discussion and understanding of the Safe Sport Framework and include mandatory training requirements within the NWT sport system.

Madam Speaker, having an independent, confidential mechanism to report incidents of harassment, abuse, and discrimination is an important element of safe sport. Most provincial and territorial governments are either establishing their own third-party investigation services or are negotiating with the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada to provide these services within their jurisdictions. The department is actively researching options that are best for the Northwest Territories.

In addition to Safe Sport policies, the department will require sport organizations to adopt a Concussion Awareness Policy and Return to Play Protocols. This process will require a collaborative approach with our sport partners as we work toward the goal of implementing these initiatives by the end of 2023.

Madam Speaker, MACA is committed to fostering a safe and inclusive sport environment. We will continue to work with NWT sport organizations and our jurisdictional counterparts to make this a priority for our sport community in 2023 and beyond.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.