

2023 North American Indigenous Games

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize the athletes, coaches, managers, and mission staff who will represent Team NT at the 2023 North American Indigenous Games that will be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia from July 15 to 23.

The North American Indigenous Game's mission is to improve the quality of life for Indigenous Peoples by supporting a self-determined approach to sports and cultural activities. The goal is to encourage equal access to participation in the social, cultural, and spiritual fabric of the community in which they reside. This event also promotes and respects Indigenous diversity.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has endorsed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, including Recommendations 87 through 91 which are specific to Indigenous sport. Recommendation 88 calls upon all governments to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games, and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.

This year I can confirm that just over \$1million of funding has been provided to the Aboriginal Sport Circle NWT for the purpose of team preparation and travel. This includes contributions from Sport Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, enhancing capacity and the long-term development of Indigenous athletes are priorities for our government. To support long-term Indigenous athlete development, I am engaged with my Ministerial colleagues in Yukon and Nunavut on how we can work more effectively with Sport Canada to further develop and improve Indigenous sport in the North.

This July, Team NT will be represented by more than 200 coaches, managers, athletes, mission staff, and cultural performers at the 2023 North American Indigenous Games competing in 11 different sports.

I would like to thank the Team NT leaders: Chef de Mission, Mr. Carson Roche; and Assistant Chef de Missions, Ms. Cheyenne Lafferty, and Mr. Damon Crossman. Thank you also to all the Mission staff for your support.

In addition to Team NT, the GNWT is pleased to support the NWT Youth Ambassadors Program at these Games. This program offers a wonderful volunteer experience for youth at major territorial, national, and international events in which participants work to develop life and job skills. There are 11 youth volunteers in the NWT Youth Ambassador Program, ranging from 16 to 23 years old, from nine different communities across the territory.

The Government of the Northwest Territories is extremely proud to support our teams at the North American Indigenous Games through financial assistance and a range of other programs that support the development of coaches and athletes at the local, regional, territorial, and national levels.

I would also like to thank the Aboriginal Sports Circle of the Northwest Territories and all other Territorial Sport Organizations who are responsible for selecting and

managing teams. Their contributions play a significant and important part in sustaining a healthy and strong Northwest Territories. Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the many volunteers and sponsors for their time and their donations. Whether a coach, an organizer, or someone who provided meals, these contributions to Team NT are very much appreciated.

I sincerely hope all participants enjoy this truly wonderful experience. Play fair, and most importantly, have fun!

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.