

**THE HONOURABLE ALFRED MOSES
MINISTER OF EDUCATION, CULTURE
AND EMPLOYMENT**

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**Culture, Heritage and Language
Across the Government of the Northwest Territories**

Mr. Speaker, now, more than ever, culture, heritage and language are at the forefront of our thinking, in the Northwest Territories and in Canada.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action; continued commitment to training and information on the history and legacy of residential schools; the Council for Ministers of Education Canada's Indigenous education agenda; and jurisdictions across Canada incorporating Indigenous history and issues into their curricula all speak to a renewed focus on Indigenous cultures and heritage at the national level. I will be bringing that lens to my term as the Chair of the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Culture and Heritage.

For the Government of the Northwest Territories, the ten-year Culture and Heritage Framework sets up a strong vision to support, promote and include northern cultures and heritage in all our work. The Framework aligns existing culture and heritage activities of all territorial government departments around shared goals and priorities. It encompasses traditional Indigenous cultures, as identified within the Traditional Knowledge Policy; contemporary expressions of Indigenous cultures; and the cultures and heritage of Northwest Territories residents of all backgrounds.

In accordance with our mandate commitment, we have developed an interim Action Plan for the Culture and Heritage Strategic Framework. This Plan sets out Education, Culture and Employment's actions and lays the groundwork for the development of a new four-year Action Plan with the input from all Government of the Northwest Territories' departments.

Mr. Speaker, at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, we celebrate and support culturally-based tourism, which helps preserve and promote traditional knowledge. Our exhibits feature the art, traditions, culture, and history of the Northwest Territories, and more than 50,000 visitors learned about the Northwest Territories rich cultural heritage in 2016.

The recent opening of “We Took Care of Them”, an exhibit on Aboriginal Special Constables in the Northwest Territories, illustrates the Centre’s key role in the stewardship of northern heritage and history. Our staff worked in partnership with community members, the Department of Justice and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to develop this exhibit over a period of three years. In the spirit of reconciliation, “We Took Care of Them” documents, shares and honours the stories of the Indigenous men and women who helped the Royal Canadian Mounted Police survive in the Northwest Territories. This exhibit has gained national interest.

Mr. Speaker, this past spring, we achieved our mandate commitment to work with the Government of Canada towards a strengthened multi-year Canada-Northwest Territories Co-operation Agreement for French and Aboriginal Languages. I am pleased to report that we received the most significant amount of funding that we have ever received to preserve, promote and revitalize Indigenous languages in the North. The Department of Canadian Heritage has provided nearly \$20 million over four years, which will allow us to develop key initiatives and strengthen our partnerships.

We have also fulfilled our mandate commitment to work with stakeholders to update the 2010 NWT Aboriginal Languages Plan: A Shared Responsibility. I announced earlier in the summer that the 2017 NWT Indigenous Languages Plan: A Shared Responsibility will soon have a robust action plan. Some of the highlights include increasing funding for Indigenous governments’ regional language plans, and greater support for the regional language coordinators.

We will be appointing a new territorial linguist to assist Indigenous governments in their work, investing further in the interpreter program, offering professional development, increasing funding to community radio stations for Indigenous language programming, and

providing support to Indigenous language communities to deliver language and culture programming.

In the junior kindergarten to grade 12 education system, we are piloting a new Indigenous languages curriculum called Our Languages. In those schools with successful core Indigenous language programs, students will hear and use Indigenous language during their school routines, and in interactions with staff and other students.

Additionally, Canadian Heritage increased the funding for French language service delivery, and provided \$22.5 million over the next four years. We have made significant strides with our francophone partners in delivering services across government in French.

We are continuing to fulfill our mandate commitment to work collaboratively with the Northwest Territories francophone community to support French language education. Working with our partners in the junior kindergarten to grade 12 education system, we broke ground this past summer on a gymnasium at Ecole Allain St. Cyr, due for completion in the fall of 2018.

Today marked the annual Minister's Culture and Heritage Circle. As you are aware, this is an annual award ceremony celebrating those individuals and organizations that have promoted, helped preserve, and contributed to the culture and heritage across the North. The award recipients have joined us here in the Gallery today.

Mr. Speaker, across the territory, northerners understand the importance of collaboration towards common goals. In the Government of the Northwest Territories' Culture and Heritage Strategic Framework, our government envisions "a strong, adaptive and forward-thinking territory, whose people are healthy and capable, rooted in their heritage and vibrant in their diverse cultural practices." I am proud of the work the Department has achieved with our partners in the fields of culture, heritage and languages, to meet our commitments to the Legislative Assembly and to the people of the Northwest Territories.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.