

**THE HONOURABLE CAROLINE COCHRANE  
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
HOUSING CORPORATION**

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**Northwest Territories Housing Corporation  
Mandate Commitment Update and Strategic Renewal**

Mr. Speaker, I would like to report on the Government of the Northwest Territories' progress on its housing-related Mandate commitments and on the Strategic Renewal process currently underway at the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

First, among the mandate commitments laid out by the Government of the Northwest Territories is a promise to address the cost of living, in part by continuing to implement northern solutions for northern housing and working to address homelessness.

Mr. Speaker, similar to the project that the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation delivered in partnership with the Yellowknife Women's Society that created eight new, semi-independent, safe and secure living spaces for homeless women, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is committed to expanding that initiative in Yellowknife by exploring a further partnership of comparable design for men who may require this support. Outside of Yellowknife, I am happy to report that the shelter unit in Fort Simpson is operational while the one in Behchokò is nearly complete, and we are working towards securing a unit in Aklavik. A four bedroom unit was also provided to the community of Fort Good Hope for usage as a homeless shelter through the Corporation's Community Housing Support Initiative.

Homelessness often arises after people have exhausted local housing options and it becomes much more complicated to support the shelter needs of residents when they lose their housing stability through eviction. Focusing on prevention will ultimately lead to better outcomes for many and to this end; the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation will be launching a new pilot program in Behchokò. This program will dedicate a housing support worker to assisting families with challenges that are bringing them close to eviction.

Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful that some challenges in our market communities will be addressed through revisions to the rent supplement program and the introduction of the non-governmental organization rent supplement program. These programs should alleviate the large wait lists for public housing in our market communities and bring households out of core need by addressing affordability.

Addressing the cost of living and keeping elders in their own communities for as long as possible, is a priority for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. In an attempt to address these concerns, we have removed the co-payment requirement for repair applicant households with income below \$60,000 and have removed peripheral contractor costs such as travel and contractor fees from our repair programs. We are also offering additional repair programs specifically geared towards seniors and completed a senior's nine-plex in Whatì. Seniors complexes in Fort Good Hope and Fort McPherson are expected to be ready for occupancy before the end of 2018.

Mr. Speaker, another one of our mandate commitments is to dispose of our surplus units. So far this year; 31 units have been sold or have sales underway. Of the units that are deemed unsafe to sell, 20 have been demolished or are approved for demolition. All of these actions are expected to be completed by March 31, 2018.

Beginning in the new fiscal year, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation will pilot a Community Training Program whereby the abatement of units will include working with the Local Housing Organizations to hire youth to support the dismantling of buildings under the supervision of Local Housing Organization staff. The objectives of this initiative is to allow local residents to be able to salvage components of a house, thereby helping to address the cost of living; and provide local employment that also promotes the construction trades to youth.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation cannot successfully address all of the Territories' housing needs alone. The new Community Housing Support Initiative uses joint investment from the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and Indigenous governments and community governments to support innovative housing projects. We have already seen this program at work with the Salt River First Nation, which has created

two beautiful homeownership units, and we have had meetings with the Katlodeeche First Nations to explore opportunities for homeownership programs and local maintenance opportunities. We have also committed to working with the City of Yellowknife as they work on their 10-year homelessness plan and I attended an initial meeting where the City agreed to chair a homelessness committee. As well, we were pleased to provide support for the community housing plan developed by the Kasho Gotine Housing Society in Fort Good Hope and as stated above have provided them with a residence to be utilized as a homeless shelter. We have also received inquiries from other communities who have expressed interest in pursuing this program and are excited by the initiative and innovation shown by our communities.

In order to address our residents housing needs, we also rely on effective partnership with the Government of Canada. I have met with federal officials to discuss the National Housing Strategy and the ongoing development of an Indigenous Housing Strategy. We are close to finalizing a multi-lateral agreement that will lay out the principles of the National Housing Strategy funding and how that funding will be used. I anticipate that program and allocation details will be available in the coming months and am hopeful that the unique context of the northern territories will be reflected in the National Plan.

Mr. Speaker, discourse, sound analysis and data need to inform our future direction. Therefore the Housing Corporation will conduct a review of the Public Housing program, a seniors planning study, an evaluation of the Government of the Northwest Territories' homelessness activities, and a review of Housing Corporation rental rates for market units. The Housing Corporation will also continue to support communities in the development of housing plans, which will be a resource for stakeholders and decision-makers in shaping the future of housing in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, the Strategic Renewal process is not yet complete. I will regularly update this House on our research, policy and program changes, new initiatives, and achievements as we work towards providing the programming and supports so that residents can obtain, maintain and retain housing.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.