

2018 Arctic Winter Games

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to provide Members with information on the 2018 Arctic Winter Games, which are being hosted from March 18 to March 24 in the South Slave Region.

The Northwest Territories has been an active participant in the Arctic Winter Games since their inception in 1970. These games are an important celebration of sport and culture for youth from the circumpolar region. We are proud to host the 2018 Games, and we are even more proud of Team NT who will be representing the Northwest Territories.

Team NT will consist of approximately 350 athletes, coaches, cultural performers and mission staff. Territorial Trials were held in December and January in the communities of Inuvik, Hay River, Fort Smith and Yellowknife. I would like to congratulate all the participants who tried out for Team NT. These athletes should be applauded for their commitment to their sport, their communities and to active living.

Team NT will join athletes and cultural performers from Alaska, Yukon, northern Alberta, Nunavut, Greenland, Nunavik, the Russian province of Yamal, and the northern European region of Sapmi.

The Arctic Winter Games play an important role in the development of our athletes. Our youth look forward to the Games every two years, for the opportunity to share in competition and cultural exchanges. I am confident that our youth will once again benefit from this experience. Friendships will be formed and our young people will return with many lasting memories.

I would like to extend my thanks to the Sport North Federation, the territorial sport organizations, regional coordinators and the many hard-working volunteers who are leaders in our sport system. Without their hard work and the thousands of hours they give, the Arctic Winter Games and many other sporting events would not take place.

I am pleased to confirm that we will also be sponsoring 20 Youth Ambassadors, ranging in age from 16 to 24, who will be assigned volunteer roles in both Hay River and Fort Smith. These young people come from 14 different communities, and they have been preparing since November to represent our territory as part of the host society welcoming the circumpolar world to the South Slave.

Our Youth Ambassadors will have a variety of roles, including athlete care and comfort, food services, medal ceremonies and providing support to sport venues. I understand that they may also have a special role in the Opening Ceremonies.

Mr. Speaker, each year since 2007, our Youth Ambassador Program has offered an opportunity for Northwest Territories youth to volunteer at a major event such as the Arctic Winter Games. These opportunities help build self-confidence and develop skills, and they provide a way for our youth to learn more about other people and cultures. I am extremely proud of the Northwest Territories Youth Ambassador Program and all of the participants who have humbly served at major events. They are our future leaders.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the South Slave 2018 Arctic Winter Games Host Society, the volunteers in the South Slave Region, and to those who will be traveling from within the Northwest Territories to volunteer. Without these volunteers, the Games would not be possible and it is important to recognize the tremendous work they have done and will continue doing, during the Games and after.

In closing, on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, I would like to wish Team NT the best of luck at the 2018 Arctic Winter Games. I would also like to reaffirm to them, and to all our young northern athletes and volunteers, how proud we are of their accomplishments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.