

**Indigenous Languages Action Plan**

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce the release of an Action Plan to support the 2017 NWT Aboriginal Languages Framework.

The NWT Indigenous Languages Action Plan has two goals. The first is language revitalization, with efforts intended to slow down, stop and reverse the decline of Indigenous languages in the Northwest Territories. The second goal is to improve people's access to public services in the nine Indigenous official languages of the Northwest Territories: Inuvialuktun, Inuinnaqtun and Inuktitut; Gwich'in, North Slavey, South Slavey, Tłıchǝ, Chipewyan and Cree.

Mr. Speaker, the Framework and Action Plan together support the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly's priority of increasing cultural programming in education and revitalizing Indigenous languages. Indigenous languages are essential to the history, culture and traditions of the Northwest Territories. They are vital to the identity, well-being and prosperity of NWT residents now and into the future.

Revitalizing Indigenous languages is an enormous task, one that takes the effort and commitment of many people. Parents, families and language communities; Indigenous governments and non-government organizations; early childhood programs, schools and postsecondary institutions; language representatives, Boards and the Government of the Northwest Territories; all share the responsibility for strengthening Indigenous languages.

Mr. Speaker, our investment in Indigenous languages has increased to \$21 million this past year, which includes \$5.9 million from Canadian Heritage, as part of a multi-year funding agreement. We provided a total of \$4.8 million last year to Indigenous governments to design and deliver Indigenous language programming in their communities. This amount includes support for Indigenous languages in early childhood programs. A further \$10.6 million was invested in Indigenous languages and culture-based education in schools.

Forty language partners were supported in taking Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute courses through the University of Alberta, to increase the quality and success of their local Indigenous languages programming.

The new Revitalizing Indigenous Languages in Communities Program provided multi-year funding to innovative, community-based Indigenous language learning and revitalization training programs, such as Elder and Youth Language Mentoring Programs and Family Language Learning initiatives. As well, we continue to support community radio stations across the territory to provide Indigenous language programming.

Our schools are doing their part towards achieving the Action Plan goals. Nineteen schools piloted the new Our Languages curriculum this school year. We will be piloting the program in all NWT schools beginning in September 2018. This means students in all schools will hear and use Indigenous languages during their school routines and in interactions with staff and other students.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Official Languages Board and the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board, many of whom are here today. They played a vital role in the completion of the NWT Indigenous Languages Action Plan: A Shared Responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, we must act now to revitalize Indigenous languages in the Northwest Territories and improve access to public services in Indigenous official languages. Our government is committed to meeting these goals, together with our key language partners. We are working with them to achieve a shared vision where Indigenous languages are supported, respected and thriving.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.