

Fulfilling our Plan

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has highlighted our efforts, as Government to provide residents of the NWT with an interactive online accounting of the strategic initiatives introduced to advance the priorities and goals of the 16th Assembly in a deliberate and organized fashion.

Later this afternoon, I will table a companion document to this project.

Titled, Northerners Working Together: Fulfilling our Plan, this document provides an overview of the vision set out by our Assembly – and the specific actions, projects and investments that this Government is undertaking to support it.

Mr. Speaker, as we embark on the final two years of our term, these two resources provide an accounting and guide to the work that has been set out, actioned and completed so far in our strategic plan.

Things like:

- Taking action on energy costs and improving transportation access to help reduce the cost of living;
- Actively looking for alternatives to expensive imported diesel and investing in roads, bridges and airports to help lower the cost of goods in our communities;

- Investing in education and skill development, supporting economic diversification and promoting investment in the NWT as a way to maximize economic opportunities for our people;
- Increasing our emphasis on children and youth, encouraging healthy choices, supporting volunteers and improving the safety and security of our communities; and
- Taking steps to protect our natural environment, defining our interests in land and water, reducing our reliance on fossil fuels and adapting to climate change to better manage this land.

In the midst of all of this work, Mr. Speaker – we have also moved to secure a footing from which we can honestly and realistically address our future. We have:

- Completed the difficult task of putting our fiscal house in order;
- Implemented the steps necessary to ensure our programs and services are effective efficient and sustainable;
- Maintained a tight control on our costs;
- Improve budget process to make it more controlled, planned and accountable;
- Weathered the brunt of a global recession;
- Renewed, our commitment to the unique consensus based system with which we govern; and
- Established and nurtured strong relationships with the federal government and our own northern and Aboriginal leaders.

We have accomplished much to get to where we are today and I encourage members to look back on the first part of our journey to get a full appreciation and understanding of how far we have come.

However, now is not the time to slow down. Now is the time to keep moving forward – and to build on what we have begun.

Based on the sturdy foundation we have built, I look forward - in the next two years - to making real and significant progress on some of the biggest issues and opportunities that exist here in the North:

- The Mackenzie Gas Project;
- Devolution, Resource Revenue Sharing;
- The Development of our Incredible Hydro-electric potential;
- Transportation infrastructure like the Mackenzie Valley Highway;
- The NWT regulatory regime;
- The rising impacts of climate change; and
- A common vision for the political development of the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this Assembly – with the vision that it holds, the work that it has done and the commitment, courage and foresight of its Members - is positioned to move forward and improve the lives of our residents, build a vibrant, sustainable Northwest Territories and contribute to a stronger Canada.

Thank you