

**Government of the Northwest Territories
Disability Action Plan 2018-2019 to 2021-2022**

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories made a commitment in its mandate to ensure that effective supports and programs are available for persons with disabilities. Our government believes that every person living with a disability has the full right to citizenship and opportunity which is why we have been working with our partners and stakeholders to advance plans that will effectively guide our efforts to support this goal.

In March 2016, our government initiated the Disability Program Review and Renewal Project to look at the status of current services and identify gaps and opportunities for improvements through the development of a new strategic framework, programs and services inventory and action plan.

Mr. Speaker, in February 2018, we released the Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion, and Participation: NWT Disability Strategic Framework: 2017 to 2027, Disability Matters: A Companion to the NWT Disability Strategic Framework, and the GNWT Programs and Services for Persons with Disabilities Inventory.

Our Action Plan, which will be tabled later today, builds on the priorities established in the NWT Disability Strategic Framework to ensure our work supports outcomes that are person and family centred; supports inclusion and accessibility; promotes and supports awareness, education and training; and ensures timely coordination, evaluation and reporting.

The Action Plan represents a shared vision and partnership between the Departments of Health and Social Services; Education, Culture and Employment;

Justice; Finance; Municipal and Community Affairs; Infrastructure; and the NWT Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, this work was guided by the results of extensive engagement with our Non-Government Organization partners in the disability sector. Our partners provided valuable input as to what is needed to support persons with disabilities and their families. We will continue to engage with them to ensure that our actions are meeting their intended outcomes for persons with disabilities.

We know that there is a growing demand on disability services, driven by an increased incidence of physical and cognitive disabilities, a growing Seniors' population, increased rates of disability associated with aging, and the need for caregiver supports.

We want to improve the lives of NWT residents with disabilities by focusing on five objectives: increasing income security and reducing poverty, building awareness and knowledge through education and training, improving transition planning and options, encouraging universal design and living options, and improving access and quality of caregiver supports.

The Action Plan will help our government pursue new avenues and resources available to promote more equity, accessibility and inclusion and help us support the participation in all aspects of economic and social life of persons with disabilities in the NWT.

We will be accountable to persons with disabilities and all residents on the progress on this Action Plan. Each department will report on the status of their action items, and the Department of Health and Social Services will coordinate and monitor the reporting of the individual actions within it.

I want to thank all of my colleagues and their department staff for supporting our government-wide approach to improving services and programs for persons with disabilities. I also want to thank our Disability NGO partners, including the NWT Disabilities Council, Yellowknife Association for Community Living, NWT Seniors' Society, Hay River Committee for Persons with Disabilities, and the NWT Foster Family Coalition for their input and support. It will require that we all continue to work together in order to deliver on action items.

We are looking forward to implementing the GNWT Disability Action Plan, which will guide the work required to advance our vision to make the NWT an inclusive and accessible territory.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.