

**Successful Relationships with NWT Indigenous Governments**

Mr. Speaker, the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly has made it a priority to strengthen relationships with NWT Indigenous governments. We have focused on fostering government-to-government relationships, and advancing, finalizing and implementing land, resources and self-government agreements. Together we have charted a vision for the economic future of the NWT, and we have come together to make the case for greater investment and decision making in our territory.

Our government understands that strong relationships are built on the principles of respect, recognition and shared responsibility. With this foundation, the GNWT and NWT Indigenous governments can advance our shared goal of a strong and sustainable future. This includes concluding agreements in order to bring increased certainty to land and resource management in the Northwest Territories and economic opportunities for communities and regions.

In support of this strong and prosperous vision of the NWT, I am pleased to report that the GNWT currently has nine signed intergovernmental memorandums of understanding with Indigenous governments, with the most recent signed on June 7<sup>th</sup> with the Délı̨nę Got'ı̨nę Government.

This collaboration also takes place at the Intergovernmental Council where we are working together to “promote the harmonization of legislation, policy and programs areas of common interest” related to lands and resource management.

Significant collaboration has occurred during the life of this Legislative Assembly, made possible through the *Devolution Agreement* and the willingness of the GNWT and Indigenous governments to work together on a government-to-government basis.

Mr. Speaker, this type of collaboration and coordination on lands, resources and water management, is becoming standard operating process amongst our governments and identifying more “Made-in-the-North” solutions.

We have also made good progress in the finalization of land, resources and self-government agreements. The Sahtu Dene and Métis of Norman Wells have reached a self-government agreement-in-principle. Significant progress has been made towards the conclusion of a consultation draft of the Inuvialuit Self-Government Final Agreement. We are also optimistic about the prospect of being able to conclude negotiations on a draft of a land, resource and

self-government agreement-in-principle with the Akaitcho Dene First Nations in the near future.

Meeting treaty obligations and honouring the spirit and intent of settled agreements is not only a legal obligation, but also an important part of our overall relationship with Indigenous governments. This work requires a shared commitment by all involved, and implementation committees are an important part of how we advance this work together.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories participates in five implementation committees that oversee the implementation of both land claims and self-government agreements.

Capturing the progress on implementation efforts helps advance future work and is the reason Implementation Committees publishes annual or comprehensive reports on their efforts. Later today, at the appropriate time, I will be tabling reports from the territory's 5 Implementation Committees. I am pleased to note that for the first time ever, several of these reports have been translated and published in Indigenous languages. Language is an important part of the cultural identity and I am hopeful to see this trend continue.

Implementing agreements in an evolving landscape of reconciliation and indigenous governance requires the GNWT to be adaptable and open to change. This is the reason, the GNWT is also working with its treaty partners on new and reasonable approaches to better support the implementation of the spirit and intent of previously signed agreements.

Experience has shown that we are stronger and more successful when we work together as partners and this government remains committed to working with Canada and Indigenous governments throughout the negotiation and implementation of agreements.

Partnership and mutual respect has been the key to success for our territory and has resulted in positive outcomes. The foundation for working together has been nurtured and strengthened by the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly and this work will continue to advance shared territorial social, environmental and economic priorities for years to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.