



# **18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories**

## **Terms of Reference**

Special Committee to Increase the  
Representation of Women in the  
Legislative Assembly



# **SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INCREASE THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Special Committee is to identify and recommend initiatives to increase the representation of women in the Legislative Assembly to 20 percent by 2023 and 30 percent by 2027.

### **BACKGROUND**

On December 17, 2015 the Priorities of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, as agreed upon by all Members, were tabled in the House. One of the priorities of this Assembly is to Support initiatives designed to increase the number of women running for elected office in the Northwest Territories. This priority is reflected in the Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories 2016-2019, which was debated in the House during February 2016 and remains in the revised Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories 2016-2019, which was debated in the House during the October 2017 sitting.

On March 8, 2018 the Legislative Assembly adopted Motion 13-18(3) Increasing Women's Participation in the Legislative Assembly. This motion calls on the Legislative Assembly to support:

“the goal of increasing women's representation in the Legislative Assembly to 20 per cent by 2023 and 30 per cent by 2027;  
AND FURTHER, that Members of this Legislative Assembly work together and individually to identify and implement a wide range of strategies, including positive action, public debate, and training and mentoring for women as leaders, to achieve these goals.”

Motion 13-18(3) was passed unanimously, with 16 Members voting in favour of the motion and no Members opposed or abstaining.

On May 31, 2018 the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly tabled a Discussion Paper on “Temporary Special Measures” to Increase the Representation of Women in the NWT Legislative Assembly”. This paper examines Samoa's Experience with a guaranteed minimum number of seats for women and considers the United Nations findings that a critical mass of at least 30 percent women is needed before legislatures produce public policy representing women's concerns, and before political institutions begin to change the way they do business.

The paper concludes that “the time has come for bold action to overcome the persistent underrepresentation of women in the NWT Legislative Assembly.”

## **COMPOSITION**

The Committee is comprised of six Members of the Legislative Assembly. All Members of the Special Committee, including the Chair, are to be appointed by motion of the Legislative Assembly.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

This Committee is accountable to the Legislative Assembly.

A final report from this committee is to be tabled no later than the first day of the final sitting of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

## **DECISION MAKING**

Decisions will be made by consensus when possible; however, in the absence of consensus, decisions will be made by majority.

All members of this Committee serve as equal members and are encouraged to participate in discussions free from Cabinet or Committee solidarity.

## **SCOPE**

The Special Committee in undertaking the goal of increasing the representation of women in the Assembly adopts the following as operating principles:

- 1) The Special Committee is committed to consulting relevant interest groups within the Northwest Territories, nationally and internationally, as appropriate.
- 2) The special Committee will consider relevant studies or reports aimed at increasing the representation of women including, but not limited to, Tabled Document 208-18(3) *Discussion Paper - "Temporary Special Measures" To Increase the Representation of Women in the NWT Legislative Assembly*.
- 3) The Special Committee shall have access to such persons, papers and records as is necessary to conduct its business.
- 4) The Special Committee will prepare a report and present it to the House no later than the first day of the final sitting of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.
- 5) The report should be moderate in tone, factual in approach, and respectful of the authority of the future assemblies.

- 6) The report should identify, describe, and where appropriate, make recommendations with respect to:
  - a) The barriers that prevent women from running, incentives that mitigate these barriers, along with incentives to increase the representation of women in the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly;
  - b) Solutions designed to increase women's representation in the 20<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly to 20 percent, and in the 21<sup>st</sup> Legislative Assembly to 30 percent; and
  - c) Changes to any current rules of the Legislative Assembly; and current and related legislation, or policies and programs of the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Legislative Assembly.
  
- 7) The Special Committee is committed to an open and public process in undertaking these terms of reference, and to providing opportunities for relevant interest groups and the general public to participate in the process, and to make their views known.

## **BUDGET**

As a Committee of the House, the budget for this Committee will be drawn from the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 operational funds of the Legislative Assembly.

## **QUORUM**

Quorum for the Special Committee will be three Members including one Member of the Executive Council.

## **TIMING**

The Committee will come into existence upon adoption of a Motion of the Legislative Assembly and will discontinue upon dissolution of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

## **OPERATIONS**

The Committee:

- a) will meet monthly or as required at the call of the chair, in person or by phone;
- b) will record decisions taken; and

c) will report, as necessary or as prescribed, to the House, through Caucus.

## **OPERATIONAL SUPPORT**

The Committee will be supported by staff from the office of the Clerk including:

- a Committee Clerk; and
- a Committee Analyst

Supporting officials will assist the Committee by:

- a) arranging for and organizing meetings of the Committee;
- b) coordinating the preparation of information or material required by the Committee;
- c) summarizing Committee decisions and direction; and
- d) maintaining and retaining Committee records.