



Nunavut Canada

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NUNAVUT

**Nunavut Leadership Forum:
Mid-term Review of the Executive Council**

Official Report

Saturday, November 7, 2015

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Members Present:

Mr. Tony Akoak, Ms. Pat Angnakak, Hon. Monica Ell-Kanayuk, Mr. Joe Enook, Mr. George Hicke, Mr. David Joanase, Mr. Pauloosie Keyootak, Hon. George Kuksuk, Mr. Steve Mapsalak, Hon. Johnny Mike, Mr. Simeon Mikkungwak, Hon. Paul Okalik, Hon. Keith Peterson, Hon. Paul Quassa, Hon. George Qulaut, Mr. Allan Rumbolt, Mr. Alexander Sammurtok, Mr. Tom Sammurtok, Mr. Joe Savikataaq, Mr. Isaac Shooyook, Hon. Peter Taptuna, Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk.

>> *Meeting commenced at 10:00*

Prayer

Chairman (Hon. George Qulaut)(interpretation): Good morning, my fellow Nunavummiut. Members, ministers, (interpretation ends) Premier, (interpretation) all of our staff, visitors in the gallery, and my wife, Patricia, welcome to the House.

Before we proceed, Member Shooyook, can you say the opening prayer, please.

>> *Prayer*

Adoption of Agenda

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Good morning. Are you in agreement with the agenda?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Members have before them the procedures for the Nunavut Leadership Forum. Do members agree that we can proceed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. As the Chair of the Nunavut Leadership Forum, I wish to take this opportunity to make some opening comments in English.

(interpretation ends) These proceedings are being viewed by Nunavummiut across the territory. As their elected representatives, it is our responsibility to demonstrate the highest standards of conduct and decorum. It is also our responsibility to focus these deliberations on Nunavut-wide procedures and issues of ministerial leadership, performances, and accountability.

This is not the appropriate forum to discuss constituency-specific, governance, and trivial matters of departmental administration or the status of complaints raised by individual residents. I would encourage all members to focus their attention on matters of performance and not personality.

All members have been provided with a copy of the detailed procedures for the conduct of this midterm leadership review. These procedures have been agreed to at Full Caucus.

Following the Premier's opening statement, members will have the opportunity to ask questions of the Premier.

At the conclusion of the Premier's appearance, we will proceed to ministers' statements and members' questions.

Ministers will make their statement in alphabetical order.

Following the conclusion of ministers' statements and members' questions, we will proceed to balloting.

All members will have the opportunity to express confidence or non-confidence in each member of the Executive Council.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all members that I will be enforcing the rules of order and decorum that members have agreed to follow for this process.

I now call upon the Premier to deliver his opening statement. I remind the Premier that he has up to 20 minutes to deliver his opening statement, which he may deliver from his usual seat. Please proceed, Mr. Premier Taptuna.

Premier's Opening Statement

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I want to congratulate Inuit. It's a special day for Inuit. It's international recognition for Inuit Day. Again, congratulations to all Inuit for this special day.

Good morning, colleagues, Nunavummiut, and Kuglukturmiut. Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

Mr. Chairman, we are halfway through Nunavut's Fourth Assembly and it has been an honour and a privilege to serve this government and Nunavummiut.

I want to thank Ms. Ugyuk, MLA for Netsilik, for nominating me for Premier two years ago.

For the past seven years, I have served Nunavut as a cabinet minister, Deputy Premier, and now Premier. I'm the first Inuinnaqtun speaker and member from the west to serve in this role. This honour would not have been possible without the support of my constituents in Kugluktuk and Members of this Assembly.

Thank you to my wife, Joanne, who has always been the backbone of our family and who has always supported me through thick and thin for 40 years.

Mr. Chairman, leadership hinges on building a coalition and mobilization of our partners, stakeholders, and Members of this Assembly to be active participants in making real change for Nunavut. It's not the work of a single person or a small group; it's a broader and much more inclusive process. Critical action, tough decisions, and common approaches do not always work harmoniously, but these approaches must be managed with humble yet confident determination to serve Nunavummiut for the greater good of our territory.

Mr. Chairman, that is what I continue to bring as Premier of Nunavut. This is an inclusive government and I remain committed to more transparency and collaboration amongst all members.

Mr. Chairman, Full Caucus agreed to move forward with a mandate that didn't spread us too thin and one that is achievable. The result is, of course, *Sivumut Abluqta*. It underscores four key areas: education and training; healthy, resilient families and communities; responsible economic growth; and good governance.

We promised to fulfill 25 commitments, which led to 113 action items, and I am pleased to report that almost a quarter of those promises have been achieved, over 70 percent of the action items are in various stages of progress, some are near completion, some are halfway complete, and others are in the mid to early stages. This means that close to 90 percent of this mandate is actioned in one way or another.

Last October, in Whale Cove, we had a second cabinet retreat. At that community, we reviewed and updated progress from *Sivumut Abluqta*. Mr. Chairman, today, I provide you with an overview of some of those key achievements throughout this mandate.

I have reviewed our *Hansard*. One of the overriding themes is centred on education and training, both of which have become a priority for this government.

Mr. Chairman, on education and training, we invested substantial resources into education and into early years of a child's development to foster the basics of reading, writing, and math. We added \$20 million towards the Department of Education's budget. We have moved forward to study common vocabulary for Inuktitut and implemented literacy and assessment frameworks.

Mr. Speaker, we strengthen our engagement with district education authorities and families to increase attendance records and support education.

We commissioned a study for a better understanding of the benefits of a standalone university. We are also seeking more on-site training opportunities with the private sector, and through Family Services, we are actively working with individuals to see them transition from unemployment to employment.

Mr. Chairman, all of these actions, including the ones that are not mentioned here, are long term and further emphasize education and training.

It is also timely that we formed a special committee to review the *Education Act*. We will carefully review the recommendations we heard during our session and continue to address all levels of learners, from early childhood through adult learning. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the special committee on their hard work in completing the review and community consultation. I know it takes a lot of hard work, so I appreciate the fact that committee members from across here have done their part in ensuring that we have a better future moving forward.

Mr. Chairman, on healthy, resilient families and communities, we, as the Assembly, unanimously approved a motion to appoint a child and youth representative for a five-year term last June.

We declared suicide as a crisis in Nunavut, an issue that has touched each and every person in Nunavut in some way or another. We appointed a Minister responsible for Suicide Prevention to lead the action plan to move this government forward. That plan is expected to be delivered to members by the winter session.

Mr. Chairman, we initiated a review to reform our outdated approach to social assistance and that began to flesh out the plan for reform and better promote potential incentive programs.

We released the Nunavut Food Security Strategy and Action Plan in partnership with the food security coalition.

Along with Nunavut Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, we approved the five-year Poverty Reduction Action Plan.

We are developing a family violence prevention strategy, which will likely be implemented during the remainder of this government's term.

We started to implement the Mental Health and Addictions Framework for Action, and we are in the midst of consultation on the *Mental Health Act*.

We have completed the long-term care assessment and strategic plan. We are looking to establish extended care facilities and programs to serve our elders.

We are upgrading health and mental health facilities. We are also building new community health centres in Arctic Bay and Cape Dorset.

Mr. Chairman, on responsible economic growth, we pressed and we will continue to press the new federal government to reduce Nunavut's chronic infrastructure deficit. This means housing, airports, harbours, and we will push the federal government to invest in most basic infrastructure needs to develop our communities such as power plants. Our debt cap has been increased. We submitted four major projects to Canada: the Iqaluit marine facility, the Grays Bay port and road project, the Kivalliq winter road, and the Pond Inlet small craft marine facility. I intend to address those with the new government.

Mr. Chairman, we are identifying housing and construction projects that are greener and lower cost, while reviewing the housing continuum and programs and developing the housing blueprint for action.

Mr. Chairman, on good governance, I would like to highlight that we tabled salaries and bonus payments of deputy heads. Full disclosure statements are now required and sent to the Integrity Commissioner to ensure another level of accountability by an independent officer. We appointed an independent ethics officer.

Mr. Chairman, phase 1 of our program review is complete. We're assessing the report. A comprehensive program review will be well underway before March 31.

Mr. Chairman, we launched the leadership Hivuliqtikhanut program to support emerging managers, supervisors, and senior managers. We restructured the Sivumuaqatigiit program to foster on-the-job training experience through intern positions.

Mr. Chairman, I confirmed that I will serve with Minister Quassa on a new Inuit training corporation established by Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

We are pushing to access funds for beneficiary training within the public service from the \$50 million implementation contract renewal from the settlement between Canada and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

We have directed departments to expedite direct appointments of qualified beneficiaries who are in casual positions in excess of 16 months.

Mr. Chairman, there's an overview of key achievements of this mandate. I can tell you that we are keen to work with Canada and I believe we share common ground.

The new Liberal government has acknowledged many things that are important in Nunavut in their platform, from housing to Nutrition North, an inquiry into murdered and missing aboriginal women and children, addressing suicide to economic growth and greener infrastructure. These are very important issues to Nunavut and I intend to follow up on all these promises.

Mr. Chairman, during my first meeting with now Minister Tootoo, we did not waste any time establishing common ground.

I am setting up meetings with Minister Bennett and the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs to discuss devolution and Nutrition North Canada, which are among our top priorities.

As well, I look forward to meeting with Minister Sohi to discuss our infrastructure deficit in Nunavut.

Mr. Chairman, there has been no better time than the last two years and the next two years to continue to raise Nunavut's profile on the international stage. There is genuine interest in the Arctic and especially Nunavut.

I look forward to joining Prime Minister Trudeau and the premiers' delegation to COP21 in Paris this December. It's a chance to move forward our agenda on the environment, but also to have additional discussions in relation to our unique needs in Nunavut.

I am pleased to confirm that I will be a keynote speaker at the Arctic Encounter Paris forum to talk about the impacts of climate change in Nunavut.

Mr. Chairman, throughout my mandate, I participated as a keynote in a number of international events related to the Arctic and especially Nunavut. From those in Washington, DC, Greenland, parts of Canada, these are all significant opportunities to put Nunavut at the forefront of the agendas.

Nationally, I have positioned Nunavut as a major contributor to the Council of the Federation, western premiers' and northern premiers' forums.

In the coming weeks, I am heading to Manitoba to renew our agreement between our governments.

We formalized a strategic alliance with Newfoundland and Labrador and with Greenland on joint opportunities.

I make a point to impress upon Canada and the world that we, indeed, have a lot to contribute to the global discussions, especially around climate change.

Mr. Chairman, at the territorial level, I visited over half of Nunavut's communities during my first two years in office. During these visits, I have addressed mayors, hamlet councillors, and my fellow MLAs.

Once this session rises, I'm going to visit more of the High Arctic and later onto Sanikiluaq. I committed to visiting every community in Nunavut during my term and I will follow through with that commitment.

Mr. Chairman, as Premier, I have an open door policy. We selected this cabinet and I have done everything to match the skills of the ministers with their portfolios. I will continue to lead with honesty and integrity.

Mr. Chairman, together, we have many accomplishments and successes in this Assembly and I expect that we will have more. I want to continue what we started and with your support and input, I am confident we can achieve what we set out to do in *Sivumut Abluqta*.

Mr. Chairman, real leadership creates a setting for partnership of each of us and enables us to step up and work with our stakeholders and Nunavummiut, seeing the principles of this government are upheld, and that progress continues for the benefit of all Nunavummiut.

Mr. Chairman, there are two years left in our mandate. We have accomplished a lot, but more can be done.

With increased training and emphasis on education and employment, our young people will be better prepared and are the catalyst to drive our future agenda. They bring hope for a better Nunavut. Mr. Chairman, that will be our legacy and we are proud to see them already becoming future leaders.

Thank you very much, colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for giving me this opportunity. (interpretation) Thank you.

Questioning of the Premier

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Premier. Each regular member may ask up to three questions to the Premier. Are there any questions? Mr. Shooyook.

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask a question to Mr. Peter Taptuna. You have been Premier for two years and we have seen the accomplishments and the importance of the things that you have been working on.

My question is: as the Premier and with the importance of your work through *Sivumut Abluqta*, are you going to be working hard to make sure that you fulfill all the elements of the mandate that you have outlined in *Sivumut Abluqta*? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) I want to thank the member for asking the question. While we were in Kugluktuk, during our meetings, we were asked and informed about our work ahead of us. We have two years left in our mandate and we still have a lot of work ahead of us in terms of our government. We plan on completing our mandate before 2017.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, we have accomplished a lot in our mandate of *Sivumut Abluqta* and there is still much to do. All government departments know that. We have taken a concerted effort to collaborate on completing our mandate going to 2017, and hopefully we will achieve all the action items that we together, as the Assembly, have formed in our *Sivumut Abluqta* Mandate.

Going forward is always a challenge. Mr. Chairman, we're trying to accomplish our mandate through thick and thin. As you know, Mr. Chairman, we lost a power plant in Pangnirtung and we lost a school in Cape Dorset. These became somewhat local

emergencies that we had to deal with that tied up a lot of key people within our many departments. Even going through that, we're still working together to try and continue to complete our mandate. (interpretation) Thank you for your question. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Premier. (interpretation) Mr. Shooyook, do you have another question? Please proceed.

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the Premier for his response. I have another question. You mentioned the suicide crisis earlier on. We would like to focus on doing something about this crisis and not just on paper. I would urge you to make sure that *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* is integrated into the Suicide Prevention Strategy, utilizing elders and Inuit counsellors. Are you going to make sure that this crisis is dealt with during your term up to 2017? Are you going to work hard on this crisis? That's what I would like to know. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Premier.

Hon. Peter Taptuna (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your question. Just the other day, I announced during our sitting that we will be having a committee struck. In terms of ministers, Mr. Okalik will be the chairman. I will be on the committee. Mr. Kuksuk, who is the culture and heritage minister, will be on the committee. You will also be on the committee as well as Mr. Kuksuk, who is also the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation. Those will be the main people involved in our committee.

I want to ensure that we have your full support and input on this matter. We will be working with the Embrace Life Council as well. We all know it is challenging and it's very painful to lose a loved one through suicide. This is the very first initiative we want to work on as a cabinet and we want to move forward on it during the winter sitting in the coming year.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, this is one of the few times but not the first time where I have directly appointed the health minister to chair a committee. We have appointed an associate deputy minister to coordinate all the events dealing with this sad tragedy that we face here in Nunavut.

It affects all of our communities, it affects all Nunavummiut, and we intend to tackle this and hopefully make a difference going into the future. Mr. Chairman, it's a huge task, but at the same time, we do have the capabilities if we work together to try and alleviate all the pain that we see happening through our communities and Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Are you done? Thank you. I have another name on my list. You can ask your second question, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you and good morning to everybody. As the Premier, when dealing with complex issues, how do you go about making sure that the concerns of the MLAs are being heard while at the same time supporting your own cabinet should the views on the subject be different? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I again thank the committee member for that question. Mr. Chairman, it's not easy trying to balance all these needs that we have throughout our communities throughout Nunavut.

As I indicated in my opening comments and presentation, I have an open door policy. There are many issues that we face every day from each and every community. We do have to deal with situations within our smaller communities and of course, there are always different opinions on how to deal with these situations and issues. By collaborating and discussing the differences that may arise, that's the only way to come to a conclusion or consensus where we can actually do something about these differences of opinion.

As I indicated, through an open door policy, it's about the only way we are going to resolve our differences of opinion and get things done for Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Do you have any further questions? Ms. Angnakak, please proceed.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Premier, what do you feel you have done well over our term so far and what do you feel could have been done better? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I thank Ms. Angnakak for that question. Mr. Chairman, there are many things that we have accomplished together through the Legislative Assembly. With the help of my colleagues, the cabinet, and the regular members across the floor there, we have accomplished a lot. We intend to do a lot more.

One of the things that we wanted to accomplish in our mandate is a review of our programs. That is significant to Nunavummiut and it is significant to our communities. Mr. Chairman, the programs are for the people of Nunavut. We've got to ensure that they are benefiting from the dollars that we put in for these programs.

At the end of the day, there's significant work that has been done. There's a lot more to do. At the end of the day, we want to find out and we want to know that, for the amount of money we do spend on programs, we want to make sure that Nunavummiut are

benefiting from our programs. We want to ensure that they are aware of all these programs that are out there. There are many programs.

At the end of the day, the government wants to ensure that there are actual benefits as a result of these programs. As I have indicated once before, we want to do the right things at the right cost and we want the right results coming from these programs. There are many accomplishments that were done. We continue to work on them.

One of the factors that we face in Nunavut that's a real critical issue is, of course, housing. With homeownership programs, we have to ensure that going into the future, our younger people, young Inuit and young residents of Nunavut, have these opportunities to become homeowners and opportunities for employment.

We have worked very hard to ensure that we put in the right programs. That does take time, but at the end of the day, I'm not one to sweep all these problems under the rug. I want to make sure that these things are done right and to the benefit of Nunavummiut. This is going to take extra time, but at the end of the day, we want to ensure that we do things right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Your third and final question to the Premier, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I didn't really hear anything specific, but I'm going to go on to my third and last question. As the Premier, how do you deal with conflict when it comes to setting the direction at the cabinet level? Not everybody is always on the same page and some of these decisions made at the cabinet level are very important and have a huge impact on Nunavut. I guess what I'm asking is your management style. When it comes to conflict within your cabinet, how do you deal with that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's no doubt there are always disagreements and conflict, conflict meaning that there are differences of opinion within cabinet. Again, that's why I always said that I do have an open door and anybody can come in and talk about things. It goes the same for my colleagues on the second floor. The best way to deal with that is through consensus discussions.

Mr. Chairman, like every democratic government, we decide by vote in some cases. That's what we do. The majority rules in every case. Through democratic discussion and consensus, we deal with our differences. Everything is not cut and dried. There are always differences. In most cases, there are difficult decisions to be made. My cabinet colleagues go through that and there are discussions with our colleagues on what is the best decision at the end of the day that's going to benefit Nunavummiut going into the future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Following my list, the next name is Mr. Hickes. You can ask a question of the Premier.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Concerns have been raised to the Premier in the past about knowledge and commitment level in government responses to questions raised by MLAs during sittings in this House and information requests made by MLAs to them. How did you, as Premier, address those concerns with your cabinet, and are you satisfied today with the response and actions taken by them to address them? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's a pretty loaded question and I appreciate that. As cabinet and as Premier, we do have to come to discussions on every situation that we face daily and some decisions that we do make are difficult. At the end of the day, we do have to make decisions on behalf of Nunavummiut. We assist one another and my colleagues do that. They give me advice and I give them advice. We try and come to a conclusion where we make every effort to make our decisions that we have to face that day a little bit easier.

As members are well aware, it's not easy sitting up on the second floor in cabinet. There are difficult issues. At times, it seems like there are impossible issues to deal with, but at the end of the day, through discussions and talking about some of the difficulties that we face, we ensure that we try and get the best support for each other to ensure that we're all doing our jobs better on behalf of Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Your second question to the Premier, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At the end of that question, I was asking if the minister is satisfied with the response and actions taken by his cabinet colleagues and was the one addressing that situation, but maybe if he could just supplement that. I don't want to burn up another one of my questions re-asking that one; I guess I'll go on to my next one.

I know there has been a lot of discussion amongst regular members on the proceedings that are going on here today. As people, we don't like to stand in judgment, but that's what we're here to do, to evaluate the performance of the Premier and his cabinet. I can honestly say that I can't look at any one of you in the eye and say that I don't like you. We're here for performance evaluation and I think this is an important step in a consensus government model.

My next question: is the Premier satisfied with the portfolio allocation and level of engagement with the responsibilities that the Executive Council is currently working with? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can't say no, so I'll have to say yes. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Your third and final question to the Premier, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Premier, you have undertaken central responsibility for senior programs. What steps have you taken to coordinate with stakeholder departments and agencies to highlight issues and bring further focus to senior programs? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Hickes for that very good question. As members are well aware, we have many programs for seniors and elders and they're dispersed throughout many different departments, which make it very difficult to coordinate for the betterment of our seniors.

As members are well aware, in Nunavut, the numbers of seniors and elders are going up, and I intend to make sure that we coordinate some of these programs through me. I committed to that last year. Even though the programs are going to be within the respective departments, for the coordinating of these programs, I want to ensure that the requests from the elders and community members out there have a window to go through to ensure that they benefit from these programs that are available.

There are many programs dispersed through seven different departments. I'll just give a couple of examples. There are some in the Department of Justice and the Nunavut Housing Corporation. There are many other programs that are out there. Through one of our reports in the past, the Qanukkanni Report, we had this discussion of putting GLO positions in each community to ensure that residents of those communities are able to access and get information about all the government programs.

Not just from the Government of Nunavut, but there are other programs out there, federal programs, university programs, and other research programs that are out there. We want to ensure that communities and residents understand that there are other avenues and there is a place where they can actually get information on all of these programs that are vastly distributed through many departments of this government.

Once a cohesive plan is put in place, I will surely be tabling that because we know that there are many elders out there that do need assistance. Mr. Chairman, I'm one of the committee members on seniors for the Council of the Federation. I intend to meet with my colleagues on many issues once we have the opportunity to discuss how the strategic program is going to be rolled out by the federal government, especially on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Enook is next in line to ask a question to the Premier.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, (interpretation ends) Premier. (interpretation) Nunavummiut, good morning, as well as all the people present here. I also note that several senior managers of some of the departments are also present, so welcome to the Chambers.

Mr. Premier, let me begin with this question. We held a retreat in Kugluktuk and agreed on our new government mandate by developing the latest policy paper which is now called *Sivumut Abluqta*. As regular MLAs, we agreed that we had expectations about a new beginning, especially given that our government was brand new. Whenever a new beginning occurs, most people have new expectations.

In order for this new beginning to become substantial, we agreed that all government operations, programs, and services require a review. I believe every single member agreed to this review process and to provide recommendations after each review to implement the improvements. I think there may even be some unnecessary areas that could be deleted to ensure our government operates in a manner that is more beneficial to the residents of Nunavut.

I wonder if these review terms of reference we requested were too broad, especially in looking at the life of this government. Did we band together too many issues into a singular process overwhelming the review we wanted? Will this impact the completion of the review or will certain recommendations not be implemented simply because some of the services haven't been reviewed to the end of our mandate? I believe this government will reach the end of its mandate without completing these reviews. What is your personal view of this issue? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we held the first caucus meeting in Kugluktuk, all members were happy, including the residents of Kugluktuk, who saw all the MLAs in their community debating the future of our territory by developing a policy paper. The priorities of the government were chosen by the members during that retreat in Kugluktuk. The residents of Kugluktuk felt included by virtue of that meeting.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, there are many programs that are working. There are many programs that are benefiting Nunavummiut, but there are many programs that we have to improve upon. The big ones are usually in housing.

Mr. Chairman, some of the programs we do run in housing have to be refined. As I indicated earlier, there are programs in there that very few people have taken advantage of and we intend to make sure that the residents out there in Nunavut are aware of these programs. We want to ensure that they take advantage of these programs that are available.

Mr. Chairman, one of the key things that I have noticed is that during our business planning cycle, we spend a lot of time on cost, how we're going to do it, and at the end of the day, how many PYs we put into the programs that we want to conduct. At the end of the day, there's very little information on the outcomes of these programs and events that we put through our business plan and that's one of the things that I want to improve upon.

We do spend a lot of time, energy, and effort trying to understand what the benefits of these programs are. By putting them into our business planning cycle, it alleviates a lot of time, energy, and effort because, at the end of the day, we want to ensure that we spend the right amount and we do the right thing for the right purpose and the right outcome for all the money that we expended on these programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Your second question to the Premier, Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Another matter here that we all agreed to and our Government of Nunavut has publicly stated is a priority, which we feel is the most important goal, is to have Nunavut become self-sustaining by controlling its own resources.

Additionally, you had authorized a negotiation team to initiate negotiations on devolution between the federal government and this territorial government so that Nunavut could start to develop with all its inherent resources. Has the negotiation process resulted in any agreements or do you feel the process takes too much time or are you satisfied with the negotiation process to date? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Premier, Mr. Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The devolution negotiations are going to be ongoing. At the end of term of the last government, the negotiations had to be postponed due to elections, of course. As a Premier, I'm hoping that we can quickly initiate the federal government to clarify their mandate and name a chief negotiator so we can get back to the table to negotiate a devolution agreement in principle. I indicated that's one of my priorities for our MP and that's an opportunity to speak to some other key folks in Ottawa.

I have indicated that's one of our top priorities where we want a devolution that's beneficial for Nunavummiut. We just don't want to sign an agreement in principle for the sake of agreeing to something that may not be beneficial to Nunavummiut. At the end of the day, the agreement in principle and the devolution agreement have to be beneficial to Nunavummiut and I intend to make that promise to ensure that whatever devolution deal is negotiated is good for Nunavut.

As we indicated, we do want to become more independent. We do want to manage our lands and resources, and I believe that we have the capabilities to do that. That's why we are negotiating that devolution. I want to see from the new cabinet of the new federal government that this is our priority and we intend to keep that as a priority. There's no

doubt this is going to be a topic of discussion between me and the new Minister of Indigenous Affairs. Of course, the Minister of Fisheries and Coast Guard will be involved in that as our Member of Parliament for Nunavut.

At the end of the day, the devolution agreement has to benefit Nunavummiut today, tomorrow, and 30 to 40 years going into the future. We do want some independence on generating our own revenues from resource royalty sharing. That would give us an opportunity to go to the federal government and indicate that in most cases, if we put money into infrastructure, then they come up to plate and assist us in funding more infrastructure needs of Nunavummiut, especially when it comes to housing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Enook, you can ask your third and final question to the Premier. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask my regular MLA colleagues first: since we have been apprised that we can only ask three questions, can I borrow a question from them if they won't fulfill their three questions?

>> *Laughter*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Premier, on this other matter which this government has continually announced and as the government servicing our residents, most of the operational issues have to adhere to the provisions of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.

In particular, as you are well aware, Mr. Premier, we have raised the question about Inuit representation in the public service here in Nunavut because of the language written in Article 23 outlining the goals. We all know and I believe I can foresee your response that this government will continue to try to implement the obligations listed therein. Nevertheless, to date, many of the members have the perception that some departments aren't making any efforts to try to meet this requirement.

How are you, in your role as the Premier, directing your ministers to accomplish this? What exactly are the directions to do that or have you provided any new directives to try to enforce the obligations to implement the obligations this government has under Article 23? Here I am speaking about actual instructions either to implement the obligations or to try to have their department meet their obligations under this agreement as our government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Enook for that very important question. Mr. Chairman, as I have indicated earlier, Minister Quassa and I are going to be board members for the new entity that Nunavut Tunngavik has incorporated.

It is through money that they gained through their negotiations with the federal government on their lawsuit.

Mr. Chairman, we are looking forward to these things because we know that we are going to make a difference there when it comes to training Inuit specific to jobs within the government, not just within this government but also Canada and the Inuit organizations, of course including Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. I look forward to participating in that.

We do have an agreement where we will be tapping into a \$50 million implementation fund specific only to Article 23. I look forward to that because in the past, we were only getting about \$10,000 per year. With that increase, we are hoping that we can make a big difference and do things multi-year rather than just year by year. We're going to come up with coordinated plans that are multi-year rather than just fiscal year to fiscal year.

We have established a committee led by senior personnel from EIA and the senior managers of the departments to come up with employment plans for Inuit. There are many programs that we are tapping into that we have created and that's one of the things we intend to do.

Mr. Chairman, I'm not saying it's that easy. Admittedly our labour force stands at 15,900 and at this point, I believe there are over 11,000 Nunavummiut who are working from that labour force. Mr. Chairman, as you know, 15-year-olds and above are counted in the labour force. Most of them are in school. When you look at that, the pool becomes very small to tap into, which is great; we want our Nunavut residents working. Smaller the pool the better it is for Nunavummiut, which means that they are all working.

I am not saying it is going to be an easy task to fulfill Article 23. My long-term vision is to get our people educated and trained up for professional positions. We need more nurses, doctors, lawyers, psychologists, and wellness, you name it. We need semi-professional people, we need professional people, and the best way to retain them is actually the homegrown folks that we can train for employment in these fields.

In order to be effective in training, we do need educated residents out there. It's a difficult task and it is a long-term task, but it is about the only way we are going to improve the wellness of our people in Nunavut. Well educated, employed, that will deal with the poverty right at that point. One of the key issues in dealing with poverty is having employed residents of Nunavut.

We do have to create economic opportunities. By creating that, we create opportunities for our residents to actually gain meaningful employment, to put bread and butter on the table for themselves and their families. We deal with poverty and the housing shortage. At the end of the day, well-educated residents of Nunavut are in a better position to deal with all the social ills that we face daily.

Mr. Chairman, I know it's a difficult task, but we have been given the means to deal with that and hopefully and I'm quite confident that we will make a big difference in dealing with our shortages of Inuit employment within our government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Premier Taptuna. Looking at the names on my list, Mr. Mapsalak, you can now ask questions of the Premier.

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning. It's a good day in my books. Welcome, Premier. You already responded to the question I was going to ask.

What I would like to say is that those of us who are residents of Nunavut, we live in the most expensive place, especially buying food and all the necessities of life. They are the most expensive for the people of Nunavut when you look at Canada. When we are in that situation, people who are working... I know all the communities have not been able to keep up with the cost of living, no matter how small or how large the community is.

I really look at this aspect of it: we have many smaller communities in Nunavut and most residents don't have any jobs and they are in extreme poverty because so many people have no jobs and they only have the programs where the government hands out certain things, either the Nunavut government or other governments, like income support to try to get them to live. It's because of the fact that we don't have enough jobs in the many smaller communities and also those people who live in the smaller communities do not want to leave their small communities because their relatives and their families and base are there.

What do you envision as a government to try to improve the situation for those people and to try to create jobs for those people? What sort of plans or thoughts have you put into helping those people who are in extreme poverty? This is for everyone in general, the people of Nunavut in the communities. I hope that makes sense. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank Mr. Mapsalak for his question on that issue. Obviously these aren't the only issues we are talking about when we talk about Iqaluit, Kugluktuk, and Clyde River when we speak about people living in poverty.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, poverty is rampant throughout Nunavut. It's not happening only in small communities; it is rampant throughout our whole territory in our communities. Mr. Chairman, I'm quite aware of that. We're making efforts to find out how we're going to deal with that. Mr. Chairman, the best way to deal with that is through long-term education and employment. In the short term, it's very difficult. We

know the high cost of living, for transportation, air transportation. The high cost of food is rampant throughout our territory.

We do need assistance from our partners, the federal government, in ensuring that we collaborate to ensure that people who are in desperate poverty get the assistance that they need. At the end of the day, we do need more economic activity throughout our smaller communities. What that may be is very difficult to say.

One of the key things the Nunavut territory is blessed with is resources. In Nunavut, we do have a lot of untapped resources when it comes to minerals. We know that. It's in every region. Some of the exploration work that is taking place is near smaller communities. I would encourage any possible training for community members to take so that they can become an employee in some of these exploration activities that are happening throughout Nunavut.

I don't have the exact numbers, but I know that one time when I was the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, there were almost 200 different companies that were doing some minor to major exploration work. They do employ a lot of Inuit from the surrounding communities of their project. At the same time, I'm well aware that that's not the long-term answer.

It's very difficult when these smaller communities are in isolated places. We do have the largest territory in Canada. It's one-fifth the size of Canada. To transport supplies and foodstuff, it's very expensive both by sealift and air. I do know that.

One of the things that we have spoken about is some of the corporations that are out there, which is the Nunavut Development Corporation. They're mandated to try and come up with ideas on how they can help these smaller communities when it comes to economic development. At this point, maybe we haven't done enough as a government. Maybe we haven't done enough as the Legislative Assembly to increase the capacity of this corporation to make better efforts to assist smaller communities such as Nauyasat and all our smaller communities throughout Nunavut.

Maybe there are opportunities there. We will surely have to investigate that because, as you know, Mr. Chairman, in Nunavut, Inuit have the most artists per capita in the nation. There is nothing wrong with that. I understand it creates well over \$50 million of economic activity just by carving alone and artisans. That's a resource we have to pay special attention to.

In the past, we have initiated programs to identify all the local soapstone quarrying locations. There are deposits out there that were found that were unknown. We've got to continue to work on that so that we could provide for the smaller communities and our artisans. There are deposits that were found, high quality or good quality. The problem is we do have to find means of transporting the soapstone to our smaller communities so that artisans could take advantage of that.

At the end of the day, it's very difficult and we would have to collaborate with our federal counterparts to ensure that these smaller communities are looked after because of the lack of employment in most small communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Your second supplementary... Oh, you're done. Looking at the list of names, Mr. Savikataaq can now ask questions to our Premier.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Some of my questions were taken because I guess we all have almost the same train of thought.

One question that was touched on a bit was about ministers' engagements in their department. When we question ministers during the sitting and during question period, a lot of times, it's obvious we just get a response and we don't really get an answer. When we're at the sitting at Committee of the Whole, a lot of the questions are deferred from the minister to their officials. For some of the stuff, I would understand because the minister can't know every single little detail, but it's quite obvious that some ministers are not engaged very much with their department.

I would like to ask the Premier if he has done anything or is going to do anything to get ministers to be totally engaged with their departments. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Savikataaq for that question. Mr. Chairman, we were put in here by the wish of the Legislative Assembly. I didn't pick and choose my cabinet. Those were given to me.

I surely make my best effort to engage with my colleagues. I do indicate to them that they do have to write letters to clarify their points of view on the same subject that you're questioning me on. It's very difficult at times for ministers to deal with some situations or when it comes to a lot of information that's out there, it's no easy task. At times, it's very difficult for my colleagues, including myself, to determine what the next step is going to be to assist them in ensuring that they stay engaged with their files. There are a lot of personal issues that do arise.

My style of governance is consensus and through that, I aim to try and make sure that they get the best benefit of the doubt, some assistance, and I do engage with them to clarify their answers by writing letters to the members. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Your second question to the Premier, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This was touched on by Mr. Enook too about the reviews of the programs that we all agree should be done and are being done. You stated that the reviews are almost done. We're two years into the four-year mandate. Obviously the report should be coming out shortly and I assume it's going to be a fairly

thick document because the government has a lot of programs. Will this government act on those recommendations in this Assembly or will that report just sit and the next government will decide whether they want to go with the recommendations or not? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Savikataaq for that question. Mr. Chairman, we do get a lot of recommendations as a government, as a cabinet, and if they're good recommendations, we will surely try and incorporate them. If they're the right recommendations, if they're at the right price and the right purpose, we will surely make our best effort to incorporate them. This is not an easy task.

As I indicated, I'm not the type of person that will just sweep issues under the rug to benefit some of the requests that have been made out there. I want to ensure that the best possible review and the best possible outcome are done for our programs. I don't want to sweep them under the rug just for the sake of saying, "I'm finished. We're done." I want to make sure it's done properly and that's going to take time. We have two more years.

Phase 1 is completed. Our next step is phase 2 and phase 1 is completed. At this point, all of these reviews have to be done in a proper way so that we get the best possible outcome for the people of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Your third and final question, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will probably be the hardest question. Some time during today, the Premier and all of the ministers will be voted on for confidence or non-confidence by the House, and you are a leader and you are the Premier of all the regular members and of cabinet.

If one of the cabinet ministers should happen to get a non-confident vote, I know that you don't have the power to remove a minister. That is done by Full Caucus. I also know that when a minister loses the confidence of the House, they have two options: they can resign or they can be taken out by motion.

If any cabinet minister should lose the confidence of the House and they don't resign, I would just like to know your position on that. I know that you cannot remove them, but I would like to your position on if a minister loses the confidence of the House and they don't resign. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Savikataaq for that question. It is a tough question.

Mr. Chairman, as the Premier, I'm expected to do my utmost to keep my colleagues that were given to me by the House and that's my prerogative. When the time comes after our secret ballot, I'll make my decision then and not until then. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. The next name on my list is Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Premier, Nunavummiut, and colleagues. My question was touched on a bit by some of my colleagues. As the Premier, how would you describe your leadership style with your cabinet, and would you describe yourself as a team leader? Mr. Savikataaq touched a bit on it. We have to make a big decision, like you say Mr. Premier, at the end of the day. Would you be the one to be a leader? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Akoak for that excellent question. Mr. Chairman, the House put me in here, this Assembly put me in here as the Premier. You have expected me to lead with fairness, integrity, and honesty, which I have done for the most part.

Mr. Chairman, at the end of the day, there are very difficult decisions to be made and my responsibility as the Premier is to ensure that the best possible outcome is agreed to for the benefit of Nunavummiut, not on individual outcomes. We have to do this for Nunavummiut. At the end of the day, all our decisions are going to be made for Nunavummiut, not on individual personalities. This is one of the things I intend to do.

As I indicated earlier, these decisions are difficult at times. It seems at times that decisions you do make, there is no good outcome. It's very difficult to find that. At the end of the day, that's why you've got to think 10 and 15 years ahead, maybe five years ahead just to try and understand your decision that you're making now, what the effects are going to be within 5, 10, or 15 years. You have to determine that. You don't make decisions based on what you're expecting when your term comes up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Your second question for the Premier, Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In working with other organizations, such as NTI, ITK, and the Nunavut Association of Municipalities, how would you describe your relationship with them? If there were any specific things or anything that you have accomplished with them, can you describe them for me? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Akoak for that question. Mr. Chairman, the municipalities are our partners. We have worked with them very

closely. We try and do our best efforts to ensure that their issues are heard. There are many difficulties out there within the municipalities and we make our best efforts to work with them.

As I have indicated, we do have quarterly meetings with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. Again, having an open door policy, any organization out there is welcome to pitch in their thoughts on issues and how to make things better on behalf of Nunavummiut.

I do work with my colleagues on specific issues when it comes to communities. As I have indicated, some of these issues are very difficult to deal with, but we do try to come up with the best possible solution. It's not a simple example, but one of the examples is the loss of a power plant. Our departments reacted very quickly. The emergency groups and the departments worked with the community of Pangnirtung to ensure that everybody was safe during that terrible, disastrous loss of a power plant in Pangnirtung.

Mr. Chairman, I commend all the departments that were working together to ensure that the community residents of Pangnirtung were taken care of and all their needs were addressed. Again, I've got to commend Pangnirtung, the hamlet council and the emergency folks that dealt with a very difficult situation in a real professional manner. That's one of the things I see that's happening. There's coordination. There are plans that are put together and they're well coordinated.

Immediate action has been taken on these situations of losing a power plant, including the one in Cape Dorset. There was immediate action taken to ensure that everybody was safe in [Cape Dorset]. We're in the efforts of building a new school there. It takes a lot of time. It takes a lot of effort.

At the end of the day, we have accomplished a lot with our partners, both the municipalities and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, of course. Mr. Chairman, last March, there was an agreement to settle their lawsuit, which is very beneficial to Nunavummiut.

All the Inuit organizations, we do collaborate with issues that we face as Nunavummiut. They're partners in our poverty reduction table. They're partners in our food coalition. We do the best we can to include everybody to ensure that Nunavummiut get the best possible assistance that they need from our organizations, including this government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Akoak, I understand that you have no more questions. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good morning to the Premier and people of Nunavut.

Some of my colleagues have asked questions that I wanted to bring out. However, my question is, as the Premier, you have to work very closely with your federal counterparts. With that and as Premier of Nunavut, you will be required to meet with the federal counterparts. I'm sure you have meetings with them. If you did have a meeting, what are the two top priorities that you would bring to the federal government to benefit Nunavummiut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Mikkungwak for that question. I had the opportunity to visit his home community last month and I enjoyed it very much. The community is well set. There are plans in place. I enjoyed his hospitality very much and I look forward to visiting his community again.

Mr. Chairman, the priorities are many when it comes to the needs of Nunavummiut. Mr. Chairman, through discussion with my colleagues, we are going to be strategic in ensuring that we put our top priorities forward to the federal government and we're going to be strategic on approaching the federal government. Once they have established their files, I'll surely be talking to my colleagues down in Ottawa and we want to be strategic. We want to ensure that we have a plan. We want to ensure that we have a target and we want to ensure that we keep our message the same.

There are many meetings aside from the regular devolved services that we do have to provide. Devolved departments, of course, are the departments of Education and Health. I've got to say that since 1999, it's a very young territory at this point. I believe we have done a very good job in servicing our people through the departments of Health and Education. It's a real challenge; we have done that. Of course, it was developed through the territorial government.

At the same time, we have to be strategic when we approach a federal government. We can't necessarily go down there with a list of 100 things that we want; it usually doesn't work. We do have to understand what their Throne Speech is going to be. We do have to ensure that we're strategic after that's done. I believe the Throne Speech is going to be on December 4. Once that is done, we want to be strategic in our approach to set our priorities forth through the Prime Minister and our appropriate colleagues in Ottawa. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Your second question to our Premier, Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. As the Premier of Nunavut, I'm sure that you have to make decisions. Some of the issues that come up cannot be dealt with right away and I'm sure that you can't cover everything and deal with the issue at hand. What are the most challenging issues that have come up and what has not been given enough support? Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Mikkungwak for that very tough question. There are many challenges, but one of the challenges that we face is the basic necessities of life. That's a roof and a home, and we want a place for our residents to stay in. Mr. Chairman, there are a lot of absolute homeless people in Nunavut. As a territory, we're short about 3,600 units for public housing. It's very critical. We understand that. It's very difficult to move ahead without investment from our federal partners.

Mr. Chairman, we do a lot of collaboration with our organizational partners, the local housing authorities, and through organizations and associations. In all our communities, housing shortages is a critical factor that people face daily. At one point when that time comes, it's going to be very difficult as a government to sustain that.

Members are well aware that during the Committee of the Whole discussions, it takes \$26,000 per unit. It costs the government \$26,000 per unit to maintain, to keep it warm for our residents that are out there that are in these public units. By the time we add a few more houses to our stock, it goes up by that much.

Mr. Chairman, one of the huge costs in that factor is, of course, water. Mr. Chairman, we do have to work and collaborate together to ensure that we try and keep the costs down. Believe it or not, Mr. Chairman, the cost of water per unit costs more than power and fuel. We do have to work with our partners, the municipalities, to ensure that these public units are sustainable going into the future.

As members are well aware, we are trying to improve conditions in our programs for homeownership. Mr. Chairman, having been a past housing minister two years ago, we did make some changes to the homeownership programs. One of the things we did was that the criteria capping off applicants at \$125,000 wasn't a feasible number that applicants can work with. We increased the amounts depending on where they lived.

It's a similar situation for the northern living allowances. Each community is different and the criteria are fitted to each community. Each community is different. From Arviat, we raised the amount from \$125,000 cap to \$156,000, I believe. I can't recall the exact numbers. Each community is different. Again, Resolute Bay is one where the cap was raised from \$125,000 to \$186,000. We try and make it fit the communities.

It's very difficult, but we ensure that we give them the best opportunities for homeownership to try and alleviate some of the critical housing shortages we have in Nunavut. That's why we want to improve our programs to make sure that communities and our residents can take advantage of that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your third and final question to the Premier, Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Premier, along with your cabinet colleagues and as a government, we as a whole must identify clear priorities and balance competing public interests. Sometimes different interests may not be entirely compatible, such as natural resources development and environmental protection. As Premier, how have you approached this? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Mikkungwak for that question. Mr. Chairman, again Mr. Mikkungwak is absolutely right. It's a difficult thing to balance. Mr. Chairman, again, one of the things that we're quite proud of in Nunavut is our regulatory process through the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. Those are set out and it's quite clear that there are options in there and we do use those.

Mr. Chairman, when it comes to development out there, there are so many different factors that have to be taken into consideration. Every development is not the same. They're different. Every type of activity out there for every type of metals or minerals is different for each process. It's quite comprehensive that the regulatory IPGs out there understand the differences in the workings of mineral extraction or even extraction and exploration. We're quite proud that we do have a system that is already set out in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, which most jurisdictions in Canada envy. It's very cut and dried to a certain point.

I know it's difficult, but at the end of the day, there are avenues there for every public member to be a participant unlike in the past. That's why these articles are within the land claims agreement. In the past, there was no real public input or individuals were not even considered. It took 30 years to negotiate this and now we do have Inuit participation, community participation, and individual participation. Any individual has a right to write a letter to the regulator to be heard on their concern and those concerns are taken into account. In the past, we didn't have that. It was just the developer and the federal government.

With that, it took a long time to negotiate that, but we do have certainty within that. When I talk about development, I have always indicated that it's not development at all cost. It has to be sustainable and beneficial to Inuit, to the territory, and to the residents of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, the next one is Mr. Joanasié.

Mr. Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, everyone. (interpretation ends) Mr. Premier, (interpretation) welcome. I would first like to ask about the overall picture of Nunavut where children and youth comprise more than 50 percent. I believe that percentage is higher if we look at the people aged 25 years and under. With the majority of our residents aged 25 and younger, we have to provide a future for them and we continue to provide direction on their future as members.

However, as the government, what do you think are the immediate priorities for this government in preparing a better future for our children? I know we won't see any immediate impacts, but what exactly does our government need to undertake to ensure that our descendants have a better future? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Joanasie for that excellent question. I appreciate the fact that he hosted me for a visit in Cape Dorset and Kimmirut. Kimmirut is a community that I have never been to before, so I really enjoyed my time there.

Mr. Chairman, we're already making our best efforts to ensure that our future is brighter and better. We put education as a priority within this government. Mr. Chairman, well-educated people is something that we have to do to ensure that we lessen the social impacts of poverty, substance abuse, and to alleviate hunger. It's one of the things that is key. You're absolutely right. It's long term. It's going to take a long time, but we do have to create those opportunities.

As I have indicated, as a government, we do have to create opportunities for our younger people going into the future. Again, as I stated, we do have major difficulties as a government, not only in this jurisdiction but throughout our nation and throughout the world where every government is having difficulties in attracting health care workers, technicians, nurses, doctors, all levels of specialized technicians. It's very difficult to attract these professionals.

At the end of the day, the biggest impact we're trying to create is that we have to train and get our people educated, train our locals, our residents to become those professionals because it's very difficult to see how we're going to deal with that by just constantly bringing in professionals from somewhere else. We do have to become those professionals.

I appreciate the fact that as the Legislative Assembly, we are making that effort by making education our number one priority. You're absolutely right, Mr. Joanasie. It is long term, but at the end of the day, we do have to start and we're well on our way. We have come out of the gate.

At the end of the day, we do have to ensure that we preserve our natural beauty out there through the protection of our environment. There are many mechanisms through our Nunavut Land Claims Agreement to do that. There are many mechanisms in doing that by having our communities participate in public consultations when it comes to development.

As I have always said, in order to keep our language, culture, and traditions, the best way to do that is to have educated Inuit, educated residents, well employed with a meaningful income because the fastest way to lose your culture and traditions is to live in poverty.

We do have to make that effort to ensure that younger people have that opportunity to carry our traditions, language, and culture forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your second question, Mr. Joanasié.

Mr. Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Prior to raising my next question, I want to firstly express my personal appreciation for the Premier speaking in Inuinnaqtun on the international day of Inuit on November 7. The late Eben Hopson, who created the Inuit Circumpolar Council, based our land claims on the preservation of our language and culture. I'm proud that the Premier was able to speak in Inuinnaqtun. It's a unique culture and we have to hang onto it.

I would like to get to my question. He touched on Inuit employment within the government. It has not kept up. It has been at 50 percent for quite a while and he mentioned what has been done on leadership training. Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Nunavut government are creating a corporation on training. However, what are the major problems or roadblocks that you face when we are trying to achieve the goal of 85 percent Inuit employment within the government? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Again I thank Mr. Joanasié for that excellent question. There are many issues that we do have to face. One of the things that I have indicated earlier was that the labour workforce is very small in Nunavut. Our population is very small in our territory, 36,000 plus, hence our labour workforce is small. We do have a lot of employees within the government.

At the end of the day, the best way to address that is to ensure that our Inuit are educated and that graduates are trained and get that experience in the workforce to carry on. We do have programs to train them for leaders, senior management positions through internships and other training programs. As I indicated, we do have that opportunity now with the help of funds from NTI with the settlement of their lawsuit and I look forward to that.

At the end the day, we do need some qualified, trained, educated Inuit and through education, we're hoping down the line that once we have that, we will be in a better position to increase our numbers. I know that I have been here in the government for seven years and it's very difficult. The number hasn't moved very much from that percentage.

At the end of the day, we're creating programs. In fact, I have instructed the departments to start direct appointing from these casuals that have been there for 16 months plus. If they have been there for 16 months plus, you should be quite aware that they must be doing a good job. They probably qualify for these positions. I'm encouraging that in our departments to make sure that they take advantage of that to direct appoint our beneficiaries into some of these positions.

At the end of the day, we do have to abide by some of the regulations and protocols that are put forth out there. There are many of them when it comes to human resources. At the end of the day, I feel quite confident that with the programs that have been set up, our partners that we form, and the Inuit training corporation that we form, we will increase those Inuit beneficiary numbers to an acceptable level sooner rather than later. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Your third and final question to the Premier, Mr. Joanasie.

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ever since our election to this date, we have sat as a government for two years. I would like to ask the Premier if he can speak to his number one priority which he feels is the most important in light of the decisions made by the leadership of this government. In the Premier's opinion, what is the most important priority we face today? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Joanasie for that question. It's very hard to determine. There are a number of decisions that were made along with my colleagues, participating in major decisions, and I don't take credit for all the decisions that are made for the government. We do that in collaboration with my ministerial colleagues and the House here.

One of the exciting completions I have seen is the work of a special committee. We have made education the number one priority. We promised to review the *Education Act* and the consultation process has finished. There are 23 recommendations that have come out of that. I look forward to ensuring that we take a good, hard look at these recommendations and make it better for our education system for our people out there in Nunavut, our young children, our teenagers, our adults. Without that, it's very difficult to have a future that's good for our residents.

I know it took a lot of work, it took a lot of travel, and I thank the committee members for that hard work. Mr. Chairman, I'm sure they will be getting calls from consulting firms to do more consulting and community consultations, but I appreciate the hard work that they have done and I see that as a major accomplishment. It took the whole Assembly to get that done. I'm appreciative of the work that they have accomplished.

That's one of the key things that I see this whole Assembly doing through collaboration, participation, and moving forward on the key priorities as a government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I have no more names on my list for questions to the Premier. It also falls exactly on our scheduled break, so the timing is perfect to take a lunch break. We will resume at 1:30. Thank you.

>> *Meeting recessed at 11:48 and resumed at 13:29*

Ministers' Opening Statements and Questioning of the Ministers

Chairman (interpretation): Good afternoon, Nunavummiut, MLAs, ministers, and (interpretation ends) Premier, as well as staff and visitors. Please feel welcome.

I will call on Minister Monica Ell-Kanayuk to deliver her statement. I remind the minister that she has up to 10 minutes to deliver her statement. The ministers may remain at their usual seats or proceed to the witness table if they wish. You may proceed, Ms. Ell-Kanayuk.

Hon. Monica Ell-Kanayuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. Today, prior to commencing my opening comments, I want to speak to my portfolio with the Department of Economic Development and Transportation as I have numerous people to thank. I wish to thank all Nunavummiut, particularly the constituents I represent in Iqaluit-Manirajak. I also thank my husband and relatives who are watching the proceedings. They continue to be very supportive of the work I am doing.

Additionally, I wish to thank my colleagues here for selecting me to be part of the cabinet. I particularly thank the Member for Tununiq for nominating me at the last leadership forum. Thank you, Joe.

It has been an honour to serve Nunavummiut in my position and I take pride in doing my work as it is humbling. I was also fortunate enough to be a part of the cabinet in the previous government. Now I serve as Deputy Premier. I am very proud of that title and I thank Premier Taptuna for placing his confidence in me as Deputy Premier.

As the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, colleagues, I was truly humbled when our colleagues entrusted me with this position as I felt the respect and belief in me to sit on the Executive Council. It has been hard on a personal level, but it has also been satisfying. I have been with the Department of Economic Development and Transportation for just under a year, 11 months to be exact, and I am confident that the portfolio is moving forward under my leadership. Mr. Chairman, I also rely on the valuable input from my cabinet colleagues, Members of this Assembly, and our partners.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, during the last leadership forum, I stated that I wanted to bring lessons learned from my time as an entrepreneur to the table, such as prioritizing efforts and building successful and sustained partnerships. These experiences as an entrepreneur, both challenging and rewarding, have proven invaluable and I apply those experiences every day in the Executive Council. My time as Minister of Economic Development and Transportation has been highly rewarding.

Although there is still uncertainty and turbulence with the current situation of world markets, growth is still taking place in Nunavut. We are starting to see increased investments across many economic sectors. Mining exploration is one. We are also

seeing the development of a vibrant service sector and growth in tourism, fisheries, and cultural markets.

Ultimately, we are contributing to the Canadian economy along with other provinces and territories. That is not to say that we do not have our challenges. We are subject to world markets like any other jurisdiction. Commodity prices fluctuate and have a direct impact on the plans of exploration and mining companies. To address this, we continue to work with industry partners, regulators, and the federal government in building new paths to success.

(interpretation) Economic growth does take time and planning and maintaining clear goals are vital to its success. I say this as a former entrepreneur and as a member of the Executive Council. Networking, building partnerships, and seeing opportunities for success can build economic prosperity for all. I believe we must continue to work with our partners across all sectors throughout Nunavut and Canada to maintain momentum, attract new business, and pursue opportunities as they present themselves.

Mr. Chairman, we continue to seek these opportunities with openness and resolve to move forward in the very best interest of all Nunavummiut. This is also part of what I mentioned earlier. We need to collaborate and stay focused on serving our people. Only together we can build healthy and diversified economic centres and also harness momentum that seeks to enrich families and communities.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, we have come a long way from the creation of Nunavut and as government matures, all things take time and we are seeing the benefits of our efforts with this mandate.

We have put a number of key infrastructure projects forward to the federal government like the marine facility developments that are in their formative stages. It's a priority for me and the Premier to approach Canada and to begin the process of seeing these projects become a reality for Nunavut. As well, it requires the support of the members and that is something I will be addressing during the winter session. Through sustained collaboration with all stakeholders coupled with through planning, these important projects are well positioned to succeed.

As a minister, I hear from constituents from across Nunavut and they have told me they want easier ways to access government programs and those that government can provide for them. In response, we have streamlined and continue to streamline the Department of Economic Development and Transportation's application processes and programs and we are committed to meeting the growing demand for program funding. We have updated community transportation programs so that hamlets can apply once for funding for small craft harbour upgrades and roadwork.

We are working with our partners at the local chambers of commerce to modernize business development, counselling, corporate training and mentorship, and networking

opportunities for entrepreneurs. We are seeing signs of economic growth and development in Nunavut and we must sustain this growth to benefit all Nunavummiut.

We are making great efforts to build opportunities for community economic development with our partners from across small-, medium-, and large-scale industries. We are working closely with our community economic development officers to ensure programs are in place. Mr. Chairman, to do this, as ministers or MLAs, for the greater good and ultimately to represent all interests, we should move forward and take the opportunities for change. Mr. Chairman, it means working with all Members in this Assembly and our partners to do what is right.

With that, I am pleased to address questions at the appropriate time and I thank the Legislative Assembly for their confidence. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I would like to explain that after each minister has made his or her statement, regular members may ask questions to the minister. Members may remain seated when asking questions. Once I have no more names on my list, I will proceed to the next minister.

(interpretation ends) Members may ask up to eight questions in total. Please note that a regular member may choose to ask all of his or her questions to one minister or divide his or her questions between a number of ministers. Regular members are not required to ask all of their questions consecutively. Once all ministers have delivered their statements, members who still have questions remaining in their allotment may return to asking questions of any minister.

(interpretation) Are there any questions? Mr. Alexander Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Minister. Good day. (interpretation ends) What have been your three most important accomplishments since taking office as the minister? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Madam Minister, Ms. Ell-Kanayuk.

Hon. Monica Ell-Kanayuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague. I find it hard to talk about just three accomplishments. We came together as a cabinet and decided what we wanted to push as a government and we set that up all at the same time.

I have been with the Department of Economic Development and Transportation for 11 months and since I have been there, I can say that the things that were asked to be set up for our future, such as the programs that we use, they asked us to review our programs. That is part of the review that is happening.

We deal with many issues and things, and the two main things that are continuing nicely by working together are the *Motor Vehicles Act* and the *Travel and Tourism Act*. Those are the ones that we will start to deal with. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your second question, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Since you became the minister, has there been a request from the communities that you might have had to say no to? What requests from communities or other MLAs have you had to say no to and why? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Madam Minister, Ms. Ell-Kanayuk.

Hon. Monica Ell-Kanayuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I haven't really had to directly say no, but as cabinet, we hold meetings and we come to an agreement as to what needs to progress. Also, we all agree on certain things before we leave and that's how we deal with things. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Enook, you can now ask questions.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Minister. As the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, you stated that Nunavut helps the rest of Canada economically.

Ever since we attained Nunavut, Inuit that have businesses have certain expectations from your department, from what the government has initiated support for local Nunavut businesses. We have all heard that the NNI Policy is not working. It has been reviewed, it has been re-reviewed, and it doesn't ever seem to be corrected. Even after reviews by people of Nunavut, nothing ever seems to get better.

The people of Nunavut who try to make their own money through their own businesses, I believe, are one of the most important resources in Nunavut. They can employ people and help people make money because it can be spread so wide in Nunavut. Even if it's a tiny little business, it is owned by someone and it is a money-maker for them.

What I would like to ask is: as a minister, as the NNI Policy never seems to be settled correctly, what is the problem with the policy and how are you trying to improve it? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Ms. Ell-Kanayuk.

Hon. Monica Ell-Kanayuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the member for asking that question. I believe you're asking in regard to the NNI Policy. At this time, as we're all aware, we're reviewing that policy through consultation and

negotiation with other entities, and we still haven't tabled that information because, as a government, we have to work with a lot of entities.

We're reviewing the policy with the help of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. We consult and negotiate with them and we try to work on the changes to the NNI Policy. We have also given our recommendations. They're reviewing the policy to look at ways to improve the policy. It's near completion, but we have not tabled it yet. I expect to table it during the winter session and that the Members of the Legislative Assembly can review that. I know that you will be providing assistance to us when the time comes.

I cannot tell you what the contents and barriers are in detail. I believe that the private companies should be informed more about NNI and educate individuals who have a private business to make sure that they have knowledge of the policy and how they can work with it. I believe we need to consult with them and inform them about the NNI Policy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Questions to the minister. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Mapsalak.

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is seemingly connected to the answer you just provided. However, in directing questions to our Premier previously, this question is similar in nature related to this question to the minister responsible for economic development.

As per my earlier statements, I voiced the fact that many residents don't hold jobs in Nunavut and this applies to both large and smaller communities, albeit smaller communities face the biggest hurdles as no employment opportunities exist. Some residents feel that the only way they can succeed is to create their own business. With that being the situation, it becomes quite obvious throughout Nunavut that only residents with discretionary funds tend to start the businesses as residents with no disposable income are limited in their options to get a job, even when they really want to work. That is the situation they face and many people have seen that first-hand.

Now, in light of what we have experienced with numerous people arriving from outside of Nunavut to take on the many public service positions, we also see businesses being created that are taking over responsibilities previously done by workers. The businesses are also challenged as some companies are disappearing.

I know it's very difficult to provide any economic opportunities in the communities without funding, especially in the smaller communities. When there is no funding assistance available, Nunavummiut tend to give up on a business idea. Even though their business may be viable, their ideas have merit, and the capabilities are up to task, it is obviously the lack of funding assistance that stops these initiatives.

With that being the case, in your role as the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, what kind of support or assistance would you look at to enhance

economic development and business and employment training? Hopefully my question was clear. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Ms. Ell-Kanayuk.

Hon. Monica Ell-Kanayuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I understood the member's question, he seemed to ask about private business development and that private businesses can create job opportunities in the communities. There are various programs available to assist businesses. Funding requests are sent to the Department of Economic Development and Transportation offices and we have five offices in Nunavut. We also have partners that work with potential business owners and there are quite a few organizations that provide that here in Nunavut.

Obviously, in recalling my own experience in creating a private business, there were so many funding agencies that it was kind of confusing trying to get funding. The process is now much simpler today, as people can approach several partners for funding their businesses, and they are able to negotiate with the various funding agencies to try and obtain funding to create their business. One has to have a clear understanding of the various programs they can apply for and it has to be understood that there are quite a few programs a business owner can apply towards, especially in creating a business. There are also programs to provide assistance to the person developing a business plan or a feasibility study.

There are other funds specifically for assisting existing companies, either for funding assistance or business expansion. When a business is looking at expansion, they can also look at developing partnerships with other businesses or expand their company as their capacity increases to provide services. They can also partner with other private companies, not just the ones existing in Nunavut. I don't think we should put up any barriers for creating businesses here or in southern locales if a person wanted to expand their business. These also have to be available.

This assistance should not just focus on private businesses as we also have to provide support to our municipalities or hamlets as well as local HTOs. There was a program created for community initiatives, such as community hunts or in providing a community freezer. This program was recently created to support communities. If they already have a community freezer, there is also funding for maintenance and repair work of community freezers with funding renewed annually. There was no assistance for these types of initiatives in the past, but it has now been expanded to assist community initiatives.

Another example would be a meat processing facility under small grants where each community can submit an application up to \$30,000 from our government for community initiatives or other locally beneficial projects. They can negotiate with our department on the funds they can apply towards. Just ordering country food wouldn't qualify as the purpose of this program is move from the past forward and deliberate on what kinds of community initiatives can be undertaken to assist our communities to grow and that can provide benefits locally.

As an example, fisheries, sealing or benthic species harvesting, if the community has those types of resources, could increase the capacity of the community and I personally believe that. However, we can also debate these issues if members feel I have made errors in this area. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Do you have additional questions? I'll move on to the next member on my list. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just before I get to my questions, one of the frustrations we as MLAs sometimes feel is that only a portion of our question gets answered. Unlike a normal question period, we don't have supplementary questions in today's format. I ask that the Chair recognizes discretion that if a question is not answered or understood, then we be permitted to rephrase or repeat our question as needed.

Mr. Chairman, the question that I would like to ask the minister is one key aspect of good leadership is self-awareness and self-analysis. How would you describe your strengths and weaknesses as a minister and member of cabinet and how would you rate your performance? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Monica Ell-Kanayuk.

Hon. Monica Ell-Kanayuk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for that question. The question is a difficult one. I used to hate self-performances in my previous jobs and I still do.

Mr. Chairman, I would say that my stronger points are that I have a background in entrepreneurship, I have sat on various venues that relate to economic development, vice-chair of the chambers of commerce, and I also sat on the Atuqtuarvik Corporation and so forth. I have managed things like that. I think I bring those aspects to the table. Sometimes that's what brings us to where we are at this time.

I'm sure the member can tell me what my weaknesses might be and also, I'm not sure I can answer that question at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes, do you have another question?

Mr. Hickes: I don't want to burn up any of my other questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq will now ask his question.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since we started, all the ministers talked about program reviews and everything is being studied. For the first year, the only answer we ever got was, "It's being reviewed," and it's always generalized. I would just like to ask the minister if she can name one program that has been reviewed and if any changes

were made to that one specific program, not a general description but just name one program that has been reviewed and has changed. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Madam Minister, Ms. Ell-Kanayuk.

Hon. Monica Ell-Kanayuk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Several of our programs sunset over the course of last year and one program that we all reviewed in the House in the spring session was, as an example, the travel and tourism programs. We were successful in increasing the funds for that program so that they can have better capacity to increase tourism for Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. There are no further questions. I will then go on to Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. Nunavut has little marine infrastructure in place, and if we had more infrastructure in place, I feel that revenue potential opportunities in such areas as turbot and halibut fisheries would most likely increase. What other areas of opportunities do you, as the Minister of Economic Development, feel can become a reality using our renewable and non-renewable resources? What are you going to do to make these kinds of opportunities actually happen here to make a difference? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Ms. Ell-Kanayuk

Hon. Monica Ell-Kanayuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question the member asked has very broad implications and the only way I can answer it is that through our partnership here, that is the only way we can move projects forward. In speaking about port or marine facilities, we have had to partner with the federal government and began negotiations with them to submit our infrastructure applications, and we are required to submit our reasoning for why these facilities are being requested. It can only be accomplished by having a complete business case to argue for approval.

Now, with respect to the (interpretation ends) non-renewable (interpretation) devolution negotiations for our land resources, the only way is to negotiate in good faith, with properly prepared arguments that the parties can agree to and that is how we would accomplish that.

To use this specific example, there are mining projects happening in the Kivalliq and Baffin regions. There are mining developments which look very good. Again, we have to fully participate and teach Inuit so that they could gain employment and training to participate in the mining industry.

We have fisheries that have very good potential. We have to make sure that we have trained resources. We have to make sure that these private companies can participate in the fishing industry.

We have to work with everyone and to train staff. Using mining development for example, we have agreements. In the Kivalliq gold mine, it was very obvious that they had a close working relationship with their staff. They had custodians who were given the opportunity to take heavy equipment operator courses. In that part of the year, this individual became a heavy equipment operator from being a custodian. Those are the types of entries we can take on to move people from the bottom to the top and climb up the ladder. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I have no more names on my list. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good day to the minister. My question is, as the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, you have to communicate and cooperate with other entities. What about the regular members here in the House? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Member Ms. Ell-Kanayuk

Hon. Monica Ell-Kanayuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the member. Yes, we have to work very closely together in order to get things moving. It's got to be an ongoing thing. At times, we have disagreements, but we do have to negotiate and work together. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I apologize for not calling you a minister. Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Joanasie would like to ask a question.

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Please welcome Minister Ell-Kanayuk. I would like the minister to talk about two items that have developed over the years. What two major decisions did you make over the last two years and how is the working relationship between you and the ministers regarding economic development and what kind of improvements would you like to see using one or two examples? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Madam Minister, Ms. Ell-Kanayuk.

Hon. Monica Ell-Kanayuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe I didn't understand his question. I would like the member to rephrase his question. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Please ask a question that makes sense, Mr. Joanasie.

>>*Laughter*

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation and working with the other cabinet members, could you use one or two examples of decisions you have made over the last two years, and could

you give us one or two examples of some projects that were started where you see it might have been done better? That is what I'm trying to ask. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Ms. Ell-Kanayuk.

Hon. Monica Ell-Kanayuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Executive Council, we have meetings and negotiate. It's called cabinet solidarity. When we make a decision at the cabinet level, we show solidarity. Even though we don't agree all the time, we show solidarity. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Do you have another question, Mr. Joanasie? Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Alexander Sammurtok would like to ask a question. Sorry, Mr. Tom Sammurtok.

Mr. Tom Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's a little confusing when there are two Sammurtoks in the House.

I have a question that was partially asked earlier regarding the oral question period and I just want to make a supplement. When we're asking questions in the House to the ministers, we just don't ask a question out of the blue; we look for solutions on how to make improvements and we try to help the ministers with how or where to make improvements.

My question to you is: because you have to negotiate with the other ministers on behalf of your department, do you have discussions with the other ministers when you don't know how to deal with a situation? Do you seek help from the other ministers? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Ms. Ell-Kanayuk.

Hon. Monica Ell-Kanayuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the member. We do a lot of negotiating and we do that with my colleagues. I have an open door policy where any one of the ministers or members can approach me because going forward is the only solution. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Do you have another question, Mr. Sammurtok? Looking at my list of names, Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Nunavut government owns its own research vessel and it has been in operation now for four or five years and it has been operating in the Baffin region. It's gaining the nickname as the "Baffin Boat."

I'm wondering if the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, in her capacity, has ever had any discussions with the Department of Environment or the Department of CGS to look at the potential for fisheries in other parts of Nunavut in order

to create economic development in other areas and, if she has not, if she could explain why she hasn't entered into such discussions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Ms. Ell-Kanayuk.

Hon. Monica Ell-Kanayuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the member for asking that question. (interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, fisheries is part of the economic pillars for Nunavut and I believe strongly that we have a capability of increasing economic development through fisheries in Nunavut.

I actually have been on board the vessel that he's talking about when it landed here in Iqaluit and had the opportunity to see it first-hand and the potential that it has as fisheries in Nunavut. I have met with the Qikiqtaaluk Corporation's staff with that as well.

I have had some communication with the [Minister] of Environment, but normally our staff and us with a few directions here and there that normally bring forward strategies on opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I have no more names on my list for questions. If I didn't see anyone raise their hand, I'll give you the opportunity now to do so. I don't see anyone raising their hand. I thank Ms. Ell-Kanayuk very much.

We will move on to the next minister, Mr. George Kuksuk, to make his statement and he has up to 10 minutes to speak.

Hon. George Kuksuk (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good day, my fellow Nunavummiut and colleagues.

Mr. Chairman, I would first like to begin by thanking the Premier, who has entrusted me to be the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, the Minister of Culture and Heritage, the Minister of Languages, and the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Liquor Licensing Board. I am very grateful to the Premier for believing in my capacity to handle those portfolios as the minister responsible and to work with the cabinet.

Prior to taking on these portfolios, I previously held the portfolio as Minister of Economic Development and Transportation before the (interpretation ends) cabinet shuffle, (interpretation) and I considered it a privilege to have that role as members believed I could fulfill the responsibilities.

Mr. Chairman, I also thank my colleagues in the Assembly who selected me to be a member of cabinet and in their belief in my abilities. I sincerely appreciate that faith in me over the last two years. I'll keep working together with all the members to work towards our goals together.

(interpretation ends) When elected to cabinet, I pledged to do my best for Nunavummiut and to be a good leader, receptive to the people. It has not always been easy. All members know that we have to balance different points of view. Sometimes we disagree, but at the end of the day, we must work together for the best interests of Nunavummiut.

I have done my best to be fair in actions and to speak up for communities. Big or small the community, each community matters to me. I really believe that and I keep it in my mind all the time. I believe that Nunavummiut elected us here to bring forth change and positive development to improve our situation as a territory. The belief pushes me every day.

Mr. Chairman, we all know that housing in this territory is a challenge. We are in critical need of increased housing and must rely on the federal government for support. I have already begun lobbying for that and have sent out a letter to the new Minister responsible for CMHC and also look forward to working with our new Member of Parliament.

Iksivautaaq, the Nunavut Housing Corporation has come a long way in the past two years since I assumed the role as minister. Today, it is on a steady path and has been constantly improving operations. Right now, there are families moving into new homes in new buildings across the territory.

Through a new multiplex design, we are building more units with the funds we have. Smarter operations and new designs mean enough money for an extra 45 new units from our combined Economic Action Plan and Government of Nunavut funds.

I am also proud to say that we have already successfully tendered and constructed 140 units since I have become minister. More units are under construction and all of that has been tendered since I assumed this portfolio and will be finished by next year on schedule and on budget.

Mr. Chairman, we all know it is not simple to build and maintain houses here in the north as it is in the south. In recognition of that, the Nunavut Housing Corporation has been improving programs to better serve Nunavummiut.

Lastly, on the topic of housing, I would like to mention an initiative that I'm very excited about. Right now, *Igluliuqatigiilauqta*, the Blueprint for Action on Housing, is being worked on at the policy level. Mr. Chairman, in the blueprint for action, we're going to have a strong tool to work on the challenges and barriers that form our housing crisis.

I have also held the portfolio of Minister of Culture and Heritage for just about a year now. Since stepping into this role, I have participated in two federal/provincial/territorial meetings and many more in the territory.

Mr. Chairman, one of my priorities was to understand our current heritage facilities challenge and begin working on that with my officials. Right now, we are in discussions to renegotiate our current agreement with the Northwest Territories and I have pushed

hard behind the scenes on those negotiations. My department has already been working to secure warehouse facilities for our heritage collections and I will continue on in that work in the future.

As the Minister of Culture and Heritage, I have been very supportive of the push to better implement *Inuit Qaujimatuaqangit* into our government processes. I'm always willing to work with members on this. I have met with the Inuit Qaujimatuaqangit Katimajit and have taken the time to listen to their concerns.

Mr. Chairman, I have made it my priority to remain open to other members to listen to their concerns and travel to their communities with my officials when I am able. One particular event that I have been proud to attend is the Hudson Bay round table, where I have acted as co-chair and have been a voice in the discussions around the Manitoba-Nunavut proposed power line and winter road, and I will remain committed to working with counterparts in the future on that.

I feel that it is important that as minister, I remain in touch with Nunavummiut across the territory and across the three regions. Over the past two years, I have travelled to Pond Inlet, Cape Dorset, Naujaat, Igloolik, Rankin Inlet, (interpretation) Baker Lake, Gjoa Haven, (interpretation ends) and Kugluktuk. In the near future, I have made commitments to visit other communities as well in the High Arctic like Clyde River, Arctic Bay, Resolute Bay, and Grise Fiord immediately following this session.

Mr. Chairman, when our cabinet met together in Kugluktuk for a retreat, we decided on a common vision together and that is all expressed in *Sivumut Abluqta*. I still go back to those moments at times to reflect on what our mandate is and where we are and where we need to go to build a better future for our children.

Before I conclude, (interpretation) I just want to say thank you to all of the staff in the Nunavut Housing Corporation and my other departments, including the housing staff and boards, for their hard work and support in the government and our communities. (interpretation ends) I know their jobs are not always easy and I have heard many stories of staff who really go above and beyond to do their best. (interpretation) I'll end there, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Regular members can now ask questions to (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister Kuksuk. (interpretation) Looking at my list of names, the first one will be Mr. Mapsalak.

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister we are asking questions to holds two portfolios. Maybe I'll ask you first. If I ask the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation and then the Minister of Culture and Heritage, does that count as two questions?

>> *Laughter*

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Yes, that would be two questions.

>>*Laughter*

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): I'll ask the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

>>*Laughter*

Mr. Chairman, we had heard that the housing units that the Nunavut Housing Corporation provides as social housing are expensive to maintain. Furthermore, our expectations are that we will never catch up with the housing needs with the current housing shortage crisis we are facing here in Nunavut. With that being reality and based on the expensive costs of each unit, it leads to vast expenditures of money in just trying to maintain one unit. We were informed about the costs. Another factor is homelessness, as per a previous statement, that we have many homeless people in Nunavut.

When a resident is trying to purchase a private home anywhere in Nunavut, many Nunavummiut face hardship today even with a well-paying job. When there is no funding assistance available, it seems to lead to further problems. With that being the situation we face, can the minister provide some thoughts on his approach for the next two years? Has the minister reviewed the issues to determine other assistance programs for private homeownership for Nunavummiut?

Obviously the housing corporation provides assistance for homeownership, but there are no programs that can assist a homeowner. Members feel that there is a gap as it exists now. Our priority is to try to catch up with our housing needs for our residents who aren't able to purchase their own homes. What is your outlook on future assistance programs for homeownership so that it can be easier for Nunavummiut to purchase their own home? We would like to see an easier process for Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Kuksuk.

Hon. George Kuksuk (interpretation): I very much thank the member for that question as that is a very good question. Mr. Chairman, residents who wish to become homeowners or those who already own a home have to be aware of the many people who have benefited through our homeownership programs as well as other types of assistance.

These programs were to provide assistance to residents, but the income thresholds were set too high and unreachable for many residents. The limits have been changed to allow residents with high incomes to become eligible for the assistance programs. I can use an example to showcase how it has already had an effect.

For the other programs where we provide assistance to private homeowners, such as fuel tank replacement, building repairs, or other things like expansion, they do assist

homeowners already and this is noticeable as many applicants have submitted their requests to improve their homes. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. The next person who wants to ask a question is Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the housing minister about homeownership. I believe it's quite important that people get their own homes in Nunavut because public housing is just not sustainable.

In past programs, people used to get actual structures. They had HAP units under the HAP program and they had the access program where people applied for that and once they qualified, they actually got a structure.

Currently, the only way a person can get assistance, I believe, from the housing corporation is financially. With that program, the majority of the money is being used up in the larger centres. The three regional centres are getting most of that money.

As the minister, does he have any plans to come up with a homeownership program where an applicant can get an actual structure of a house before the end of this Assembly? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Kuksuk.

Hon. George Kuksuk (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the member for that question. Mr. Chairman, yes, what he stated is the way it is. Our programs to homeowners and prospective homeowners from the government are for that person's eventual house. After we reviewed the program, we increased it and we know that it has benefited some people in Nunavut.

In regard to your question about producing actual houses through assistance, if there is a program still available like that Housing is a very big issue. You have to look at social housing, private housing, housing corporation houses, or rental units as well. Everything is being reviewed and I spoke about this a few days ago. It doesn't matter what kind of house it is, if it's a rental or a private house, all of those programs are being looked at.

In the Blueprint for Action on Housing, no matter how big or how small the house is, all the houses under our administration will be looked at. In the year 2017, we will have a final report that we will be able to table in the House and that is our plan, but I cannot directly respond to your question right now as to whether we can bring actual structures into the communities. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the minister has stated in his opening

statement, the relationship between the Nunavut Housing Corporation and the federal government is very important. Considering the shortage of public housing throughout Nunavut and the need to build thousands of houses in the near future... . He also talked about the blueprint for housing. With respect to new public housing, what do you hope to accomplish with the new federal government within the next year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Kuksuk.

Hon. George Kuksuk (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for that question. Mr. Chairman, as I stated earlier, and I totally agree with the member, after the cabinet was announced for the federal government in Ottawa, I wrote to the new Minister of CMHC who will be the minister in the Parliament of Canada. I asked him to meet about the critical lack of housing and the lack of housing construction in Nunavut. With our new MP in Ottawa, Hunter Tootoo, we are starting to explain to him that we want to meet with him about the lack of housing and we are requesting more money for housing. That's what we are working on and I will meet directly with the Minister of CMHC in the near future. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I have already stated earlier, I consider a key aspect of good leadership to be self-reflection, self-awareness, and self-analysis. As stated in an earlier response, this is not an easy task, but I'm going to ask the minister to do just that today. How would you honestly and objectively describe your strengths and weaknesses as a minister and a member of cabinet, and how would you rate your performance to date? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Kuksuk.

Hon. George Kuksuk (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the member. I can say that upon election as an MLA in 2013, I had past experience on different boards.

Compared to the experience of members beside me who are ministers, as this was my first ministerial portfolio, I had a steep learning curve over the last two years. I am always working with my cabinet colleagues within our government. As was stated previously, we aren't always in agreement within cabinet. However, by working in partnership with my colleagues, I have learned a lot. That is what I can respond with, Mr. Chairman.

I can't state here whether I have certain strengths or even that I may have a weakness in this area because every person has different strengths and weaknesses. I, too, am in that same boat. Certain weaknesses exist that are easy to see. However, on a personal level, I can't say what they are. It is unfortunate, but I try to use all of my abilities.

Through the support of my cabinet colleagues, I have learned a great deal and the weaknesses I may have had when I arrived here in 2013, in my estimation to date, I think I have greatly improved compared to then. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickee. Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the minister: when it comes to the needs in regard to housing needs; there are lots of needs in Nunavut, but as the Minister of Housing, what do you think are the three top areas or priorities you feel we should be addressing when it comes to housing? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Kuksuk.

Hon. George Kuksuk (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. As that is a very good question, I am happy you asked about that as it is an extremely important issue and the crisis we face in our housing shortage is a message we keep voicing. The housing needs information has been released showing that we need over 3,000 units to accommodate our current population. With the current operating budget of this government, we will never be able to build that many units.

However, through our partnership with the federal government, they can provide further funding in order for this government to meet our housing shortfall. I can speak to the \$100 million fund we received from the federal government as it vastly improved our situation, but without any new funds set aside for housing, this government and the federal government in Ottawa would have to come to an agreement on funding for housing. As I stated in my previous statements, one of our first priorities will be to try and get more funding for housing to meet our current needs.

Another related issue is our homeless people, who have no place to call home, and I will never let that issue go as it is true that the operating budget the GN receives from Ottawa would not allow us to reach our needs. We can only start towards that by receiving funding from Ottawa and CMHC. The housing shortages we face with that number will be my absolute priority. I should inform the membership that I really want to assist our people who are homeless and we have to try to assist them, but it is only possible if the federal government provides us with assistance to construct housing that we will finally start to catch up.

That's all I can say. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Shooyook.

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask the minister about *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*. I have always pushed for *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*. In response to my questions, you stated that you consider *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* very important as well and that you're glad to work with it. As a minister, as we have reached this year, are

you planning to fully support the regular members' efforts to push for traditional Inuit counselling? Are you going to try to put that into programs as a minister? What are your plans along those lines? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Kuksuk.

Hon. George Kuksuk (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for that question. Mr. Chairman, I completely agree with him. If I can go back and talk a little before I answer the question, I believe that at the beginning of this year, we really talked about this. Afterwards, we started making considerations about it.

With respect to his question about *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*, will I promote it in the government and make sure the government is proud of it and utilize it, that's what I understand from his question. Mr. Chairman, yes, very much, I can say that with the housing corporation, we have initiated *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* within the government. There is a committee within the government that looks at *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* and the fact that it needs to be utilized.

I can't speak for other departments, but with the housing corporation as an example, we have initiated quite recently what is called the IQ coordinator in English that will work in the Nunavut Housing Corporation. This is in an effort to make sure that we handle *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* properly and that committee will report to departments as to what's happening along the lines of IQ.

While I am the minister, I can tell my colleagues, especially when it comes to culture and heritage, the fact that we want *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* to be used in government. I would like it to be used. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Shooyook.

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank him for responding on this issue I have always wanted to see. Let me ask this question and I will keep it brief. When questioning various ministers about this, they usually respond that IQ hasn't been recognized or nothing is written or that it is only oral knowledge. These are the kinds of responses I have heard to date.

In looking at this issue, the department of Culture and Heritage should be aware that information on *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* is being collected in every community and is being compiled. This is part of the plan to repatriate it and now that planning has been completed. I wonder, in your role as the minister, if these documents can be reviewed by your department and identify which areas have missing information and if your department and officials will develop a proper plan to implement it. Can you provide me with some information so I can understand? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Kuksuk.

Hon. George Kuksuk (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Can my colleague further elaborate on his question? I'm not too sure what he's talking about when he said "documents." I apologize, but I didn't quite understand the member's question. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I'm sorry, but the minister didn't understand your question. Please rephrase your question, Mr. Shooyook.

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll try to make it brief. As a member, I work passionately on areas of traditional knowledge. The people of Clyde River have already made plans and they collected information from the surrounding communities. They say that traditional knowledge is not written down or documented, so it's not recognized. We will be looking at plans in the future to see what is required under traditional counselling. Will you commit to making sure that you start implementing these recommendations? I hope that is clear now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Kuksuk.

Hon. George Kuksuk (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Now I understand. Thank you for explaining your question. Mr. Chairman, yes, I couldn't remember the committee name within our department, but it is the Tuttarviit committee that is able to work closely with other entities in regard to culture and traditional knowledge.

The Tuttarviit committee, Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit Katimajit, and Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit (IUT) is under the department. They all have an impact on the traditional knowledge of Inuit. The Tuttarviit committee consists of government employees and we will be working closely together. As the minister, I will have to keep in touch with them and monitor them, whether it be IQ or IUT, so that we can work closely with those entities.

In regard to your question on how we can implement Inuit traditional knowledge or societal values into our programs, yes, we have plans to incorporate that within our government and we also have established an IQ committee and we have an IUT committee and we can work closely with them. I hope you can understand me. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is to the Minister of Housing.

The ministers have to compete between themselves for the government's scarce financial resources. Do you think that your department's budget is adequate for its responsibility? Did you ever have to ask other departments to reduce their budgets so that it can free up resources for your department? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Kuksuk.

Hon. George Kuksuk (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. With respect to the housing corporation budget at times, especially for providing social housing and constructing social housing, I would like to see it funded more. Although we need funding to address the housing shortage, there are other programs in the government that require funding. Briefly, I have never asked for funding from another department, but I have gone through supplementary appropriations which were requested. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Joanasié.

Mr. Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask Minister Kuksuk a question. I know that it's very important as the minister, but you have to be able to communicate with your staff and I'm sure you have asked questions to your staff as the minister. It's important that the ministers be able to ask questions of their officials and not accept everything at face value.

Has there been any occasion, since you became a minister, when you did not agree with a recommendation made by your officials, whether it be the housing corporation or the Department of Culture and Heritage? Have you ever not agreed with any recommendations made by your officials and what happened? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Kuksuk.

Hon. George Kuksuk (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the member for his question. If any of my officials ask questions to me... I hope I understood your question, so I'll try and respond to your question. According to the way I understand, I will respond to your question. I have never really had to experience that personally where I don't accept everything at face value or I have never really been unhappy with my officials. Is that understandable? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Did you want to ask another question, Mr. Joanasié?

Mr. Joanasié (interpretation): Provided that my limited number of questions isn't reduced, then I can ask another question.

>>*Laughter*

I am unsure if he understood my question and I am unsure if I understood the response either.

>>*Laughter*

Would you reduce my questions if I re-asked my question? For example, each department has their own officials who make recommendations to their minister or who require the

minister's approval. I imagine you don't approve every recommendation provided to you by officials. Do the ministers question their officials about the reasoning? Have you ever disagreed with a recommendation brought before you by an official? If you have experienced that, what was the outcome? Hopefully it is clear. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. For all of us to be clearly understood, if a minister does not understand, please state that you didn't understand the question so that you can provide adequate answers. Mr. Kuksuk.

Hon. George Kuksuk (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'll respond briefly. No, I don't remember if I ever experienced what the member was asking about. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good day, Mr. Minister. My first question relates to your opening comments where you identified the portfolios you hold. I understood clearly that these were the housing corporation, the Department of Culture and Heritage, Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit, and the Liquor Licensing Board. Thereby that shows you are responsible for four portfolios.

As Members of the Legislative Assembly, if we voted having confidence in you, what would be your three most important priorities if you remain a minister? What are your top three priorities you would want to move forward with? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Kuksuk.

Hon. George Kuksuk (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I will respond briefly as it is impossible to directly answer that question. I apologize. There are many issues I have to deal with, especially if you hold more than one portfolio and are responsible for more than one or two departments. With responsibility over several portfolios, I would like to identify the top three priorities in each department. Nonetheless, all the departments are equally important and I want all of them to move forward. That is the only way I can respond to that question and all of the departments are equally important to me in my position. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Mr. Minister. Some members here and some Nunavummiut wonder seriously if *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* forms a basis for the Nunavut government or if they even believe in the concept and it confuses people when inconsistency occurs. Some residents even hold the opinion that this government proclaims belief in *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* only for optics and that the written statements are nothing more than wordage with none of the principles being used. That is how some people perceive this government's acceptance of IQ.

A while ago, we invited the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajit where we held a hearing over an entire day. At that meeting, they stated and clarified that they submit recommendations to our government and the various departments. If my recollection is correct, I believe that they stated that one department had responded to their recommendations, although there are numerous departments.

Further, the recommendations they sent, and I have no idea where this number came from, but there have been 38 recommendations submitted by the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajit. What I want to ask about... . Actually, let me jump back. When the committee didn't receive responses to their recommendations, the perception that this government has no faith in *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* seemed to gain ground since the recommendations have never been acknowledged or responded to. I can't think of any other reason when I hear that.

As the Minister of Culture and Heritage, you should look at the recommendations as I imagine you would push to have them implemented if you agreed with your IQ committee. When departments or your ministerial colleagues don't even bother to respond to these recommendations or if the government as a whole can't respond, do you try to convince your colleagues? Do you bring up the IQ recommendations and ask what their department has planned for a response? Do you push to get them implemented? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Kuksuk.

Hon. George Kuksuk (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Just a brief response, as I know the departments work hard, at least my department is one I can speak to, as other departments work through the IQ committee, as I stated earlier. The Tuttarviit committee, which is the title, is an interdepartmental committee that I have faith in and we utilize this committee to work together on this issue to date. I can't force a recommendation on other departments by asking them to implement changes, as we use the Tuttarviit committee within this government to handle the IQ issues. As Inuit, we have given that responsibility to the department. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I have no other names on my list. Have I missed anyone? I see no show of hands. Therefore, while we transition from one minister to another and prior to members asking questions, we will be taking a 15-minute break. Please return after 15 minutes.

Hold on, just for the information of the visitors and the public, I have been informed that we can convene in the foyer. We will meet in the foyer. Thank you.

>>*Meeting recessed at 15:01 and resumed at 15:22*

Chairman (interpretation): Good afternoon. We will proceed with the ministers' statements and members' questions. I will now call on the (interpretation ends) Hon.

Minister, Johnny Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Good afternoon and thank you. First of all, I would like to think about my wife, who I haven't seen for quite a while. She is escorting my father-in-law and my children. Good afternoon. My wife had supported me when I ran for the Member of Legislative Assembly representing Pangnirtung.

I would like to thank everyone who nominated me for the Executive Council. As I have served as the Minister of Environment and as a previous Minister of Community and Government Services, I will be talking about some of the issues that we were able to proceed with within the departments of Environment and Community and Government Services. I will start with the Department of Environment.

I like the challenge of being the Minister of Environment because we deal with the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. In Nunavut, the Wildlife Regulations have to be implemented for the people of Nunavut. It has been 16 years since the creation of the Nunavut. Just last year, we started enacting the new *Wildlife Act* since the Nunavut government was created.

We've got a made-in-Nunavut *Wildlife Act*, which was a very long process, but we have to work together with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, and the federal government. It is now a made-in-Nunavut *Wildlife Act*. We will see more of what Nunavummiut want to see, but only through working together can we proceed properly. We have been working on the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement for the past two years.

The Department of Environment created the regulations to manage wildlife and we also did research projects and incorporated *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* into the management of wildlife, for example, polar bears. We increased the quota in the Amittuq area and western Hudson Bay in the Kitikmeot area. We have increased the polar bear quota in those areas.

One thing that was a very challenging issue was the caribou in the Baffin region. Even though there was a moratorium set on caribou, we did set up a tag system and that's part of good management of wildlife. There was also a review of the hunter support program. It has been completed and there are going to be some changes taking place. We have sent the document to the hunters and trappers organizations. I'm sure that there are going to be some changes made, especially around the concerns that we have heard from the hunters and trappers organizations. The document has been sent back to the HTOs.

Another matter revolves around freshwater fish and our offshore fisheries as this is an important sector here in Nunavut. I would like to thank the Qikiqtaaluk Corporation, the Baffin Fisheries Coalition, and (interpretation ends) the Arctic Fishery Alliance, (interpretation) as well as the fishers, hunters, and trappers who participate in the fisheries division. We make approximately \$80 million in the fishing industry.

We would like to see more development done in the fisheries and to increase our industry. That is why they are able to move forward by working together in partnership. Additionally, in Igloodik, Coral Harbour, Kugluktuk, and Pond Inlet, we did some commercial fisheries research, which is going to be very beneficial to the future.

Also, the Nulijuk research vessel has been ongoing for quite a while and it will have to keep going. Nunavut is very vast and they're going to have a lot of work to do, but there are benefits in there and seals, seal pelts and furs. We saw a 25 percent increase in the seal pelt prices and I'm sure it's a benefit to the hunters of Nunavut. Sealing, which was banned in the European countries, we have now started it again and we hope to see a good future regarding seals.

Parks is a big issue, but it's very helpful to us, especially in Iqaluit, Kugluktuk, and Rankin Inlet. We work with the regional Inuit organizations in creating new parks in Clyde River, Arviat, Sanikiluaq, and Grise Fiord. With those, I am very pleased that the Department of Environment is progressing very well.

I would also like to touch on the Department of Community and Government Services. I would like to thank the previous minister, Tom Sammurtok, who started the initiatives. The reviews are underway. It will be beneficial to all, including the hamlets and the communities.

With the land referendum issue that was brought up on April 10, 2015, CGS took the lead on this referendum regarding lands in hamlets and we are getting our preparations underway, with the land referendum scheduled to be held on May 9, 2016. We are working with the Premier's Office, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, and Nunavut Elections because we want to make sure that all Nunavummiut are informed.

Telecommunications in Nunavut is under the Department of Community and Government Services. We will have to look at new and innovative ways to improve communications. We have seen some problem areas in telecommunications. The Department of Community and Government Services would like to work with everyone regarding telecommunications in Nunavut because it would be a big benefit to all of us, to the government and people of Nunavut.

In closing, I would like to thank my staff, the Executive Council, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, regional Inuit organizations, hamlet councils, and other entities like NIRB, (interpretation ends) the Nunavut Water Board, (interpretation) and NPC. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Following the list of names on my list for questions, Mr. Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Firstly, I would like to ask the minister about an issue he brought up in his opening comments. We know that it is a very

important portfolio you hold. What does the minister do to inform the people of Nunavut and what is the working relationship among cabinet members?

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you for your question. I work very closely with my ministerial colleagues on any issues that are being brought up by the Government of Nunavut. Usually if necessary, I bring it out at Executive Council meetings.

For example, the wildlife issues affect a lot of stakeholders out there. I have worked closely with the Department of Justice regarding management of wildlife, especially environment, and other decisions that have to be made on the initiatives we are taking on. If it has something to do with finance, then we work with the Minister of Finance. It depends on what the issue is and depending on the issue, I work with the appropriate minister. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Joanasié.

Mr. Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Minister Mike. I would first of all like to ask the minister... . The ministerial position is very important and you have to be very well aware of the issues that you have to deal with. What does the minister do when staff request information on his department's actions, as an example, how many hours a week you spend on reviewing correspondence and reports so that you can be caught up on day-to-day activities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you. Communications is very important and we have various ways of communicating with staff and others like computers and texting and other forms of electronic means. We probably get a lot of information flowing in between these paths and the different GN departments by email, either by face-to-face meetings and bouncing some ideas with the other ministers, especially on the issue of protocols, regulations, and other things.

I have to consult with my colleagues or the regular members or other entities like Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, the Nunavut Planning Commission, the Nunavut Water Board, or NIRB. One thing I find hard is that at times, we are overwhelmed with the issues that have to be handled as soon as possible. Even though that's the case, there's a close working relationship among our colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Joanasié.

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the minister use one or two examples on initiatives he has started or what changes he has made in the last two years? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When I first became minister, I planned on environment and in those two weeks as a new minister, I had to go overseas to Moscow, Russia. We already had things to do and it was obvious that Inuit traditional knowledge needs to be implemented. I was told to bring it up when they were dealing with polar bears internationally in Moscow in 2013 right after I became minister. I was extremely happy that the federal government and the federal environment minister were involved. You could really feel how *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* can be utilized by the five governments that deal with polar bears internationally.

I can say that this work was done for a very long time regarding the implementation of the Nunavut Wildlife Regulations, even though the Nunavut government was in operation for 16 years. I worked very closely with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. I met with them as a new minister to complete this work. It was implemented on July 1 and I'm happy about that.

Also, the harvester support program took a long time. When I first started working on it, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated was involved. When they said that they weren't going to be involved anymore, it suddenly increased my work. The harvester support program has taken a lot of work because we weren't able to work with NTI, as they were reviewing their own programs. There is not much work left to do in that and in my statement to the Legislative Assembly, I pointed out and we will see once it's fully implemented. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Joanasie.

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My last question to him is: of the decisions the minister has made in the last three years, are there any he would have made differently? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank my colleague. I can use one example. If I had more information, then I could have done things better. The need to think of government operations, I can use one example that was really... I thought I had done it a certain way and I had made a mistake and I had identified it. I amended it in the House.

There is another one that seems to be implementing properly, but even though there seemed to be no more concern, in my heart, I felt that I had to return to it, even though it seemed like a good decision, but it will affect all Nunavummiut, all communities, and all

hunters. I returned it and once I get it back, I'll probably be satisfied with it because I will know in my heart if it's a better decision. That is how you have to do things and that's what I have done. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a question to the Minister of CGS. I realize that you started your portfolio not so long ago. What have been your three most important accomplishments since taking office as minister? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Hon. Minister, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. His voice was very distant. I'm sorry, but if he could repeat his question.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. When the light goes on, you can start talking. Please repeat your question.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It was to count as one question? Thank you.

>> *Laughter*

Minister of CGS, what have been your three most important accomplishments since taking office as the Minister for CGS? I realize that you just started the portfolio. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you. When you become a minister in mid-term, with Community and Government Services being a big department, the first one would be with the type of work that we have to do. I found that to be extremely hard just because it's a big department and it takes a lot of work. I still don't fully understand inside of the six months and I still haven't been able to grasp everything within that department.

However, the Nunavut Association of Municipalities is a powerful organization and I think it's one of the more powerful organizations within Nunavut. It's called NAM. Wanting to work properly with that organization is one of the things I wanted. We always hear about what improvements or what could have been done more. I think we have reached a stage now with the Nunavut Association of Municipalities in discussions and meetings with them this fall in Cambridge Bay. A decision was made that as long as you work together in the future and I as minister representing the Premier, this was the first one that I can recall.

As the Department of Community and Government Services, we were told to handle the lands plebiscite and it is being planned in a good way and we're working with Nunavut

Tunngavik Incorporated and the Premier's Office and Nunavut Elections. I can say that the plebiscite will be run properly until it is held.

The third one is working with my department's colleagues. Community and Government Services is very much dealing with capital projects. We need to have a good understanding of each other. Some of my colleagues already understand about CGS and I'm still learning the process as I have gotten there just recently. Working with my cabinet colleagues and my officials has been beneficial. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is important that ministers recognize when they could have done something differently or better. In the House, we're always asking questions and we're hoping to get some answers most times. What is the one thing that you would have done differently as the minister since you took office? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you. It would be much simpler to be a minister of one department or at least that is what I have thought to myself on occasion.

>>*Laughter*

This was part of the reason, but perhaps to reiterate the need to understand fully the issues because even when someone is briefing you, you may hear the information and not grasp the meaning. That has been the most difficult aspect of working with the Department of Community and Government Services. I can use actual examples where I will make a statement about an issue and finally understand the meaning after speaking about it. That has been the most difficult part.

However, the perceptions of the public or by non-governmental organizations where a concern has been raised attached to my department, when I don't understand the concern, it has made it stressful, but I have made improvements. This is what I can identify. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Do I even need to say it?

>>*Laughter*

As I have stated a couple of times now, I consider a key aspect of good leadership is self-reflection, self-awareness, and self-analysis. It has been obvious by some of the responses that it's not an easy task.

How would you honestly and objectively describe your strengths and weaknesses as a minister and a member of cabinet, and how would you rate your performance today?
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hey, look at me!

>>*Laughter*

(interpretation) I was only joking.

Indeed, this is a very difficult question to try to answer and I have never really found it easy to do so. I will use this as my foundation to do that. I had a grandfather who was difficult to please, whom you couldn't just ignore, and who didn't want his grandchildren to act inappropriately. I have broken that rule many times.

Nonetheless, in this day and age, in being involved in the operations of several departments, I notice my weaknesses that I need to strengthen. One of my weaknesses I note, now I can't determine if it is an actual weakness but obviously it has had an impact on some of my officials. Sometimes I think the authority of the department extends further than it does and sometimes I may come off as wanting to change things immediately and I feel that has been a weakness. I have identified it.

Further, when an issue is brought before me and I am advised that it can't be accomplished the way I want it is another weakness I have. I have really noticed that as a past weakness and have tried to change that.

Furthermore, with respect to my strengths, my language, lifestyle, and sense of accountability to fulfill my responsibilities as a minister, to be always present in the House, the need to be very clear and to be available, I believe that constitutes my strengths as a minister. I am usually available to the Premier and my fellow cabinet colleagues as well as to my officials. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the Premier's opening comments, he talked about transparency, that the government should be transparent, and I would think that he would have told all the ministers that they have to be transparent too.

I would like to question the Minister of Environment on that. You could say that the minister and I have had energetic exchanges about... .

Chairman (interpretation): I'm sorry. Some of the audience aren't able to hear you, so it needs to be fixed.

Can everyone hear now? Mr. Savikataaq, if you can start over again, please. I'm sorry. We had some technical difficulties. Please start over.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the Premier's opening comments today, he talked about the government's transparency and I would think that he would have told all his ministers that this is a transparent government and the ministers would try to be as transparent as they can. I would like to ask the Minister of Environment about that.

As I stated earlier, the minister and I have had energetic exchanges about western Hudson Bay polar bears. I asked him a number of times how he came to the decision on the TAH of the western Hudson Bay population. He never did tell me, but later on, not very much longer, he wrote me a letter explaining how he came to his decision and why he came to his decision.

When we ask questions here, it's not only for us; it's for the people of Nunavut so that they can get information from a transparent government. When you just write a letter to a person, the person who gets the letter can table it, I guess, but for the system to work properly and transparently, the answer should be here in the House so that the people of Nunavut can see it and hear it.

I just want to ask the minister why he chose not to make the reasoning for his decision public and transparent. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Indeed, after we made the decision on this issue, we had to send the correspondence to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board and KWB about the western Hudson Bay total allowable harvest increase. I know that the announcement that I made in the House was done properly. However, I also stated in this House that I would respond by letter and explain the reasons in written form and not just have an announcement about the decision. The letter I wrote is publicly available as it wasn't a confidential letter. This letter can be read by anyone with access to the web. I can state here that there was nothing hidden in the decision as it was transparent. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know we have a ration of questions, but I have to use up another question.

The minister already made his decision when I asked and all I wanted was the reasoning so that it would be transparent so that everybody would know why he made his decision. That's all I wanted to know. He didn't answer me yet why he didn't want his decision transparent. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't think I ever said that I didn't want the answer tabled for the record. I never said that and I want it on record that I never stated that the reasoning for the decision was confidential. I have never said publicly to any person or in this House that was the case. Let us all be aware of that fact.

What I did speak to was the decision made at the cabinet level. When I started working with my cabinet colleagues, the decision was made. The letter outlining the decision was sent to NWMB as well as to the Kivalliq Wildlife Board. Also, I wrote another letter to my MLA colleagues on this issue and this letter isn't confidential. I also made the announcement in this House beforehand prior to the meeting of the (interpretation ends) CITES (interpretation) committee called (interpretation ends) animal committee of CITES.

(interpretation) We dealt with wildlife issues and in particular, the polar bear management agreement used by NWMB and other wildlife organizations, as well as our Nunavut polar bear management history. There have been several attempts to stop polar bear hunting or the trade in polar bear furs. The opinion of the (interpretation ends) CITES animal committee (interpretation) when they reviewed Nunavut's actual polar bear management system was that this system is satisfactory. That was the first time it has ever approved our management.

I stated previously that I wanted to use this as ammunition when looking at the western Hudson Bay polar bear management zone to increase the tags by four for the year 2016, and I don't fear any criticism that may come our way for increasing the TAH by four animals. The reasoning is because the CITES animal committee will be keeping an eye on Nunavut and whether we are properly managing our polar bear harvests in a manner they can accept. There is some danger or risk involved.

I stated earlier that the TAH has increased in these zones: Qaggiujaq, Amittuq, and western Hudson Bay. Although the increase has been implemented, we haven't heard from the animal rights groups whether the increase is for food or trade and I have yet to be informed that Nunavut is starting to mismanage their polar bear populations. Due to that, as the Nunavut Minister of Environment, the things I take into consideration go far beyond our borders. Although some members may not believe that to be the case, that is the reality we face.

This is my reasoning: I want the sale of polar bear skins to succeed and I am in full support. Due to that and other considerations revolving around polar bears, I am very happy to be participate. Further, the zone I am referring to, the western Hudson Bay zone, the quota was down to eight tags just recently in 2011. They had eight tags and we have increased that by 20. CITES has no problem with that. We will review that in 2016, as I announced in the House.

Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague for asking these questions. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is important that ministers be able to ask questions of their own officials and not accept everything at face value. Have there been any occasions since you took office as minister when you did not agree with the recommendations made by your officials and what happened? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you. The way I work and as a minister, I always consider that I have to work with others. It's not that my officials' ideas and my ideas are the only ones I have to consider. I have to consider the opinions of other people out there as well and I have to consider that all the time so that we can be prepared for everybody, even if it's not suitable for me. I always discuss things with my officials and my staff as to what is the best way. However, whenever there's something that we don't hear about, things work out differently. I want to continue doing this as a leader or member. I never just say yes to everything that is brought to me and I don't always say no to everything that's brought to me either, but I have to consider things carefully. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Tom Sammurtok.

Mr. Tom Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can ask this question to all the ministers, including the Premier, but I will ask it to him. (interpretation ends) As minister, are you in charge of the departments you are responsible for or do you implement the departmental programs and directives as dictated by your senior staff? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank my colleague for asking about that issue. As I stated earlier, as ministers, we have to take into consideration the legislation, regulations, as well as (interpretation ends) protocols. (interpretation) I usually talk to my deputy ministers in order that I share the same understanding of the issue as my deputy ministers. I am in the minister's office and you have an office where you work, so ensure that you look after your responsibilities so that I won't have to walk into your office unannounced.

Further, with respect to your question about whether I am run by my officials or if I just quash any senior staff recommendations, no, I am not that way either. I confer with my officials to arrive at the best, informed decisions on all matters, particularly with my cabinet colleagues. I wasn't used to a ministerial oversight role, so I received a lot of assistance and advice from my colleagues. I want that to be known, especially in ensuring operations run smoothly.

Another matter when we became ministers is we had to state our oaths and I agreed that we would not be run by our staff, but that the ministers would run the department and that is my position. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I have no more names on my list. Did I miss a member? Thank you. I would like to remind the members that you have 10 minutes. The next minister is (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Paul Quassa. I'm sorry, Mr. Paul Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik: (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am sometimes given totally different names.

My colleagues, I have been blessed with an opportunity to have a role in our government and I welcome this opportunity to account to our constituents.

First of all, to my lovely Aluki, thank you for filling my life with joy, wisdom, and kindness. Thank you to my children Shasta, Jordan, and Béatrice, and my granddaughter, Brynn, for giving me a reason to be a better person.

I am the son of Annie and Aujaluk Okalik. In my younger years, I was lost for a while. With the foundation given to me by my parents, I have learned there's always a better way. I am so blessed to have family who taught me to look for better days ahead.

Not long ago, I was trying to find my role in Nunavut. I visited with one of my elderly advisors who told me that I am an Inuk who uses my education to give us a perspective that we would not have thought of and I believe that. The education that my late mother asked me to acquire gave me new tools to navigate our changed world.

I am honoured to be entrusted with this duty. I am here before you with strengths of this great network and I am here to serve our territory with the knowledge and abilities I have been able to acquire. Colleagues, we have a duty to our territory to provide the best government possible. I will support your decisions. You have entrusted me as a cabinet member representing your constituents too. You are committed to public service. There is no greater honour or responsibility than to demonstrate to your constituents with trust that is well placed.

I take it upon myself to act swiftly when constituents share issues with me. In our first days of government, in Baker Lake and Iqaluit, with regard to the Qulliq Energy Corporation staff under the tremendous stress caused by senior management, above all else, I have endeavoured to listen well and take it upon myself to investigate your constituents' concerns immediately and respond.

When I started as the Minister of Health, I was dismayed by the number of our constituents who are unilingual elders who travelled to medical appointments. With your advice, I immediately worked to correct the policy.

More recently, the increase to the minimum wage is an achievement. It is no coincidence that the minimum wage will be increased after discussions with the Department of Family Services indicating that it pays better to be on income assistance than earn the minimum wage. By addressing issues holistically and working together, we amended the legislation to increase the rate and simplify the future increases, making it easier for people to live well and be contributors to our society.

Listening well means listening better. As you can all attest from the mountains of letters and briefing binders in my office, I use my office to work. Listening well also means getting out of the office. To that end, I have met with hundreds of constituents who work hard every day to improve our incredible territory, such as members of the committees for justice, health, and youth, Justices of the Peace, coroners, RCMP officers, nurses, mental health workers, and power plant operators.

I have visited 15 of our communities, many more than once, and this month, we will visit an additional four communities. By and large, what I hear in the communities is the vision of Nunavut is still a work in progress with gaps which need to be filled. Article 23 obligates us to target the initiative to increase Inuit employment.

A public government can only serve the public when it represents the public. For that reason, I have been working tirelessly with the Minister of Education to reintroduce a law program. The Department of Justice has none of our first law graduates and the territory only has four Inuit pursuing a law degree. A law program will assist Inuit in accruing more tools to tackle the legal barriers of tomorrow and will benefit our Inuit employment gaps in the long term.

In the short term, I have eliminated barriers to Inuit employment where I can. This March, we made 16 clerk interpreter positions permanent in health centres, positions that had previously been filled with casuals. In doing so, patient health outcomes will improve. Our dedicated employees were given equal job benefits and security.

As a cabinet minister, I take it upon myself to build bridges with our partners at Inuit organizations and other governments. I work with any leaders in my pursuit to represent all Nunavummiut. After a busy 11 weeks, I am looking forward to making strides with our new government in partnering for mental health, restorative justice, and aboriginal issues.

Colleagues, I'm not new here. I joined the Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut as a research negotiator and began negotiating the land claims agreement in 1985. It has been 30 years and I have been there, in my office, and in this Chamber. Based on experience, I know the vision of Nunavut may get blurred by the challenges we face. However, I want a brighter future for my fellow Inuit where we have the same standing as the rest of the citizens in our homeland because we are in Inuit lands.

Thank you once again. I look forward to working with you for the remainder of our term. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I have absolutely no names on my list. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) How would you describe your working relationship with the standing committees of the Legislative Assembly to which you report? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I must say I have been very pleased to work with all members and in particular, the committees that I report to, and I have found them to be very supportive and informative in advising me on what we should be doing. I always look forward to appearing before the committees and reporting on the latest progress that we have made and what we're trying to do. I thank the committees for their help in assisting me in managing my departments. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I would like to get my question written into the record as read.

>>*Laughter*

I'll take it a little step further this time, though, Mr. Chairman. The need to take an introspective analysis of strengths and weaknesses is a key component to developing and improving ourselves as leaders. Without doing so, how can we work better to utilize and enhance our strengths and work to address and overcome our weaknesses and turn them into strengths?

I will ask this minister: how would you honestly and objectively describe your strengths and weaknesses as a minister and as a member of cabinet and how would you rate your performance to date? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik: I have taken the steps necessary to do the best job that I can. I have studied government, I have studied law, and I have grown up with wonderful families that have taught me well on how to be a better person. I use those skills when conducting myself through my work.

I have made mistakes, of course, but I learned from those mistakes. I'm doing the best I can and it's not up to me to decide how well I have done. I have done the best that I could and I have no regrets in the last two years that I have served with this cabinet.

I will accept any decision that my colleagues render on me and do my best for the remainder of my term. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When it comes to equal access to health care, we have some elderly people who don't have insurance to cover living expenses when away on medical leave. How will you go about ensuring that all Nunavummiut, especially the elderly, get the medical help they need without having to take funds from their own pocket first to do so? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I know that my officials are working on this. They are reviewing all different policies in place throughout our country, as we want to make the best plan for our territory and make it work for the environment that we're under. We have to travel a long ways to get real health care, unfortunately, so we have to find the best balance for our elderly patients regardless of who they are. Hopefully in the coming year, we will have a new policy in place that is comprehensive and that can cover everyone. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Alexander Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ministers usually want to say yes to requests from communities, but sometimes they have to say no. What requests from communities or other MLAs have you had to say no to and why? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I want to evaluate every request and see how it could work. I just don't say no; I make sure that we arrive at the best decision possible for any request. I just don't say no to begin with. My colleague is well aware that we are reviewing the elders' care and that needs a bit more time. Once that is done, we can assess it. I have said no for the time being.

I've had to say no to dialysis patients for our territory because there were only two patients and we don't have the equipment and the expertise that you would need on an ongoing basis for those patients' care. We would not be able to maintain the health care requirement that is needed for those patients.

Those are very difficult, but we have to review the case on each situation. It's always difficult to say no, but at some point, we have to carry on and make due with what we have. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the question to the Minister of Health.

As we are all aware, the nurses are the frontline workers in all our communities and we're also all aware that we have problems with keeping more permanent nurses and there are lots of agency nurses and casual nurses. When a patient sees the same nurse all the time, there's history to it and they know what the problems are and what the problems have been.

I know that the minister is working hard to get more permanent nurses, but can he tell us of his initiatives to try to get more permanent nurses in Nunavut? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) What we have done as well is that we have developed teams of health care workers to look after a patient so that if one health care worker is no longer able or is elsewhere, then another practitioner will review the file so that there's a continuum for the patient. That's one way that we have tackled this issue of lack of nurses in our communities. We have a team that reviews each patient so that they're not new to the file on each case.

As I have said, we're working very hard to try and train our own nurses. We are continuing to try to get more of our own so that we will have a proper set of nursing skills acquired by Nunavummiut. I do hope that those people who are continuing in the field in nursing will pursue a career through our college. We will provide them with the support that they need in our territory so that they can practise in Nunavut.

I must add that we changed the practice of making sure that those graduates stay in Nunavut. Before, they had to work for two years elsewhere for them to practise in Nunavut. I made sure that we changed that so that they can stay in Nunavut.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Shooyook.

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to ask my question on the issue of health.

During your replies to oral questions, you indicated that you're going to work very hard on diagnosing patients. For the past two years, we have heard of patients who have not been diagnosed for a long time or misdiagnosed. There are quite a few people in that situation in Nunavut. They go to the nursing station and then they're asked questions by the nurse without doing any physical examinations. That is a problem in a lot of the communities and by the time the patient is diagnosed, it's too late and they can't help the patient anymore.

Early diagnoses of patients that go to the nursing stations, especially the elders, have to be re-examined, especially in cases of accidents. There was one individual who went to the nursing station and was told that he was perfectly fine, and then when a visiting doctor examined him, he was diagnosed with a problem. I don't know how many months, up to a year, he had to wait for that visiting physician and he's still under a doctor's care today.

Can your department look at doing early diagnoses and physical examinations of people who have had accidents? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In some cases, they're harder to diagnose and that's where the challenges are. We are trying to re-coordinate so that the system is improved, but we're working very hard to make sure that the nurses in the communities know how to deal with and assess patients in cases of accidents. When I hear of such cases, I make sure that we look into the issue and to make sure where the misdiagnosis was. It's something that we shouldn't tolerate. No one should tolerate that. If they're going to be under care, then every Nunavummiuq or anyone who is sick has to have proper health care. That is the goal of our Department of Health. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Shooyook.

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understood your response, but you didn't respond to my question.

There are nurses in the communities and there are some long-term nurses. The patients are not given proper care. In regard to the community nurses, are you sure that they're doing what they're supposed to be doing? Is it possible for you to urge these nurses to do what they should be doing? Proper services are sometimes not provided at the community level. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I know that we have to realign today's services. The Department of Health can hire nurses, but we can't discipline or fire them. We have to approach human resources first and then it would have to go through that department. That's where the challenges are. We're not the only department, but we know that there's a problem in there somewhere and we will make sure that there's a realignment of this process.

I have to be informed first by an individual or a constituent about a misdiagnosis or some kind of infraction so that we can deal with it. We would do a review after it was reported. It would be assessed and determined as to how we can make an improvement. I want

proper services to be provided in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I have no more names on my list. I give you an opportunity to make an indication if you have a question. There are none. The next minister who will be making a statement is (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister Keith Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank all of my colleagues in this House for giving me the privilege to serve as a member of your Executive Council and to represent our territory. I would like to thank Mr. Mikkungwak for nominating me in November 2013. I would also like to give special thanks to Premier Taptuna for having confidence in appointing me to serve you as your Minister for Finance, the Qulliq Energy Corporation, and the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission.

I am grateful our territory is led by Peter, who always places Nunavummiut ahead of personal self-interest. He's a true consensus builder and has an open door policy. He allows us to operate without interference, but also offers support and advice. His straightforward approach has led to some of our most important accomplishments.

Our team is well positioned to move forward with our new Prime Minister and our new MP, federal cabinet minister and former colleague, Hunter Tootoo. Mr. Tootoo understands our challenges and I'm certain he will bring our voice to Ottawa. I agree that real change is possible if we all work together.

Mr. Chairman, less than two years ago, this House convened to appoint our Premier and cabinet. Shortly after, we worked together to set an achievable mandate: *Sivumut Abluqta*. We have two years left and I believe we're well positioned to continue to deliver on the commitments we made.

I recall my first finance ministers' meeting in Saskatoon in December 2008 with finance ministers to discuss the challenges faced by the global recession. As I said before, the mood was gloomy. However, we weathered that storm together and Nunavut continues to make progress.

We tabled the public accounts within our statutory deadline the last five years in a row, a significant improvement over where we stood in 2009 when it took more than a year or longer to be processed. The Office of the Auditor General has commended us for these improvements.

Since 2012, we have posted modest surpluses. These small surpluses indicate prudence and ensuring that we live within our means. It also signals stability and investment potential. This is why Nunavut received an Aa1 credit rating from Moody's Investor Service, which is a higher rating than for most of our provinces.

Our work and the Premier's efforts resulted in an increased borrowing cap to \$650 million from \$400 million. The increase assists us with securing major infrastructure investments, such as the Pond Inlet and Iqaluit marine facilities. Our Territorial Formula Finance Agreement was renewed last year, which means long-term, stable funding is secured and in effect until 2019.

On the human resources front, we now have a revised and improved *Public Service Act*. A new human resource strategy is in place as are a new Code of Values and Ethics and an ethics officer who provides fair and unbiased reviews. I hear the concerns from my colleagues and I appreciate them. When I was on your side of the House, I raise similar concerns. At that time, we didn't have many of the protections in place now. I recall specific incidents where employees didn't have any of these avenues to bring concerns forward. This is progress. We are on the right track, building greater accountability to our human resources across the Government of Nunavut. We have improved our public service and we're doing the same at the Qulliq Energy Corporation.

Mr. Chairman, we all know our energy corporation has faced significant challenges. We have made changes and we're still making changes to ensure accountability and stronger planning systems. We appointed a new board chair, Julie-Anne Miller, and vice-chair, Elijah Evaluardjuk last summer. They bring stability and oversight strength to the organization. Our recruiting team is interviewing candidates for the president and chief executive officer positions.

We value our staff and their hard work. We're pleased that the union and the government have signed a new collective agreement. Employees also need to know that they have stability. I am committed to seeing Inuit employment and training increase at the management level. We're committed to this within the entire public service, which includes the Qulliq Energy Corporation. We encourage training at all levels.

Our staff shows leadership. This has been demonstrated many times, especially during the power plant fire in Pangnirtung. The community and our staff did a tremendous job and I commend them for their extraordinary service.

As Minister of Finance and the Qulliq Energy Corporation, I will continue to work with our Premier and lobby Canada for sustainable power plant infrastructure. We can't afford another power failure of this magnitude. Our aging infrastructure is in need of replacement. I also recognize a need for greener energy solutions and that is something the federal government supports.

We have also made progress at the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission. WSCC is a joint responsibility with the Northwest Territories. My counterpart, Minister Lafferty, and I work very closely together. Dave Grundy, the president, and his team were also instrumental to the commission. Some important legislation this House passed were amendments to *Workers' Compensation Act* in 2014 and amendments to the *Safety Act* only a few days ago.

I have appointed two solid individuals from Nunavut, Janet Brewster and Bob Kabloona, to the governance council of WSCC to represent us and bring forward our issues and concerns on behalf of our workers. I see a larger role of health and safety in Nunavut. I have set up a number of meetings with our finance staff to discuss the financial impact of injuries at work on employers, employees, and to the Government of Nunavut as a whole. There's more work to do. There's more we can all accomplish in this Assembly and in all portfolios of this government.

Today, members, I provided you with an overview of some accomplishments. Our leadership is committed to working with our members, partners, and Nunavummiut. We are all here to work together, not in silos. We may not always agree, but I think it's important that we are prepared to present different views and vote with our conscience and act in the best interests of all Nunavummiut. I thank you for the confidence you have placed in me. I look forward to the next two years and I would be very honoured to continue to serve Nunavut and this government.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, I wish to thank all of my staff and officials across Nunavut for all the services to our public. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. We are now moving to the questions. The first name on my list is Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to switch it up a little bit. I'm not going to ask the same question I have been asking the other ministers.

Recently, there were a number of long-term service awards all throughout the territory. I believe there were 425 people who were recognized as providing five years or more service to this government.

There have been a number of recent, whether real or perceived, allegations of harassment or bullying. There has been a lot of coverage. I acknowledge that it could have easily appeared as some of them just stem from workplace conflict and maybe could be dealt with in an easier manner, but there's an old adage of where there's smoke, there's fire. It seems that there are potentially real issues of staff that, again whether it's real or perceived, still feel that they're in a position where no one is looking out for their best interests.

I know that the minister has been very much aware and he stated in this House numerous times on how much he respects the people who work in our public service, as do we all in here. I would just like to get some information of what steps have been taken to alleviate any concerns of our public service and break down some of these real or perceived issues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Hickes for his question. Yes, I have heard your concerns. I have met with several of those individuals. I have constituents in my own riding who... . When I'm not a minister, I'm an MLA, so we have some of the same concerns.

Mr. Chairman, when I became a minister, one of the things I started to look at was a revised and improved *Public Service Act*. I have mentioned that. We put some clauses in there for an independent ethics officer. We tabled the Human Resource Strategy last year to assist our employees. We have the Code of Ethics and Values, which specifically says in there that employees have responsibilities as do the mid-level managers and the deputy ministers.

Everybody should understand that workplace harassment and bullying isn't allowed in the workplace. You're never going to eliminate it, but we have to do a better job, I guess. I have encouraged my finance staff to continue to work with the departments and work with the deputy ministers' committee level to ensure that deputy heads understand that workplace harassment isn't tolerated.

We put out educational packages and we will continue to do that. I have an initiative underway where all employees, new and existing employees, will sign a compliance letter to ensure that they understand the workplace harassment policy exists and it's outlined on the Government of Nunavut's website and all the Human Resources Manual directives. Workplace harassment is right in there. We're going to continue to push on it.

I know we have processes in place within the departments where, if there is workplace conflict, we can have fact-finding meetings. If an individual wants to be represented in their case and they're a union employee, they can have a union representative attend with them. If they are excluded, they can have a close friend or trusted advisor with them. These are not witch hunts. These are to find out the facts. If they agree on the facts, then sign off and try to improve on them.

Once we have an employee, we want to retain them. We have invested heavily in those employees. If they're casuals, we hope that at some point, they will become indeterminate employees. It's in our best interest to provide a safe workplace. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that answer. I hope we can all work to alleviate any concerns brought forward by members of the public service.

I would like to go back to a topic that the Premier brought up that direction had been given to address casual staffing across the territory. I know that this is another issue that I have spoken to the minister about and it sounds like there has been some clarity and direction of how this government is going to move forward in dealing with casual staffing

actions, of which probably some of those people are entitled to long-term service awards over five years.

>>*Laughter*

I guess I would just like to get some further information from the Minister of Finance, who has responsibility for HR, of how fast and how aggressive is this direction going to be followed to deal with the high number of casual staffing actions that proliferate this government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Hicke for the question. Mr. Chairman, I have heard the concerns about casuals quite a bit over, I would say, probably the last decade. I can't remember exactly, but I was probably asking the same questions when I was an MLA.

Mr. Chairman, there are many reasons for the high numbers of casuals. They cover off positions that are indeterminate but can't be staffed. There may be medical or maternity reasons; short-term work. I have my staff tracking the high numbers of casuals in the departments. There is a monthly report generated. I have my officials that will contact the departments to ask, "Why is an employee still on casual after two years or two and a half years?" They have to give valid reasons. You have to keep in mind that usually after a year, the union is also agreed to the casuals.

It's not just simply a matter of converting a casual to an indeterminate position. Many of the casuals are only fulfilling partial duties in an indeterminate position and they may be only paid at a reduced level for the duties they're completing. You can't just put a casual into an indeterminate position and ask them to do that job because they may not be qualified, so we have to be careful about that. We do performance management on the casuals to see what level they're at.

One of the benefits of being a casual is you can gain experience and you can also receive training. At some point when the position goes out to competition, there's a good chance you can apply or maybe the department will contact the Department of Finance and say, "We would like to do a direct appointment," and that's a process that would be initiated by the department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to ask something other than bullying at the offices, which has been my favourite topic so far during our last sitting.

The global economy sometimes faces challenges and Nunavut is one of these areas in Canada that is almost completely dependent on the federal government transfer payments.

There has been much talk and focus in keeping the budget that we have within the government in the black. We don't want to go in the red. Everybody wants to see a surplus for a rainy day. Although I agree that we need a surplus of some kind, I am also of the opinion that many rainy days are upon us when we talk about the lack of housing, our high poverty rates, and the lack of infrastructure.

I guess what I would like to ask the minister is: as the Minister of Finance, what specific areas would you reduce government spending in order to free up funds for higher priority areas, such as addressing education, housing, and our high poverty rates? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Ms. Angnakak for the interesting question. In this government, there are no low-priority initiatives. Everything is a high priority, so cutting anything would be a challenge. We had that several years ago with the Nunavut Housing Trust. We had to tighten our belts to come up with \$110 million and that was a challenge and a half.

We were worried that if you start cutting programs, then you start eliminating people and there are no more jobs. You have to take that all into consideration when you start cutting things. I don't like to put people out on the street. They may have mortgages or they have families to support, so we've got to be very careful.

What I do encourage departments is to be very careful in their main estimates process, "Don't just come forward with unnecessary programs. Come forward with forced growth initiatives or uncontrollable expenses because we're going to put them through the fine-tooth comb and we're going to be saying no." We don't want to be creating more PYs that aren't going to be staffed.

We do that, but if it came to it, if we're facing a deficit, in the unlikely event that that happened, we would start cutting and probably would have to start eliminating programs, and then when you eliminate the programs, you would start eliminating jobs. That's what I don't want to happen.

That's why surpluses are good, modest surpluses, so that you have money for a rainy day. The Cape Dorset high school is a prime example. We're looking at \$30 million to \$40 million. That was a rainy day item. We've got to be careful in how we manage our money. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with the minister. It is a difficult situation and challenge to be in, and you talked about an Aa1 rating, but to have that kind of rating, somebody has to pay the cost. In order to have that kind of surplus, it means that we're not building more houses or we're not addressing the poverty rate.

Somebody has to be that person that would say, “Well, I’ll go without a house.” I do mean to say that I do agree we do need some kind of surplus or I would never want to see our government without one, but I wonder how much of a surplus. Have you ever given it that thought of how much of a surplus we need so that we can continue to have that rating? At the same time, we have some Nunavummiut that are really going without.

When we talk about cutting, have you ever thought about looking at all the capital projects, perhaps, that have been on the books for years without them going forward? Maybe that would be one area. I don’t know. I’m just saying that. I would be interested in your comments back. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is difficult. Shortly after I became finance minister, I was given all-purpose cards to use on all-purpose occasions. When people come asking for money, you would full out the first card and you say no. The next one would be never, maybe, or not this year.

It is a difficult balancing act. You have many departments and territorial corporations. Everybody has got competing demands for money. The hamlets all require infrastructure. There’s no question about it. I think the Premier mentioned earlier that there’s a desperate need for 3,500 to 4,000 houses. We have crumbling and aging power plants across Nunavut. I have many sleepless nights.

Once a project is on the five-year capital plan, we try to keep them moving along. It’s up to us and incumbent upon us to ensure that those projects are delivered on time and on budget. It’s important to the communities. It creates employment.

You may get Environment Canada coming along with those protection orders saying that your sewage lagoon or your water plant or your solid waste dump is an issue and demand that you replace them. There are environmental liabilities out there that we’re required to clean up. The Auditor General of Canada insists that we have to have a plan in place to deal with those. That costs money.

That’s why I’m always talking about prudence. We’ve just got to be wise managers with our money. We don’t try to come out with crazy surpluses on a \$1.6 billion budget. We’re projecting usually around a \$25 million to \$30 million surplus. We’re very happy when we’re hitting \$20 million to \$30 million. That shows that we are using our money wisely. It’s important to have a good credit rating. It’s important to show Canada. As you said in your initial question, they provide 85 percent of our funding through TFF. If we’re not wise managers, we’re going to have some difficult times in Ottawa attracting P3 Canada funding or increases to our debt cap.

We have gone from \$200 million in 2012 to \$650 million this year and that allows us to invest in some of this infrastructure across the territories. That’s why we have to have modest surpluses and a good credit rating and manage our money wisely. Deficits, in my

opinion and I'm sure all of us agree here, are not the way to go. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You are a minister in the Legislative Assembly and if we approve of you and of your work, what will be your top three priorities before your term is over? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Keyootak for his question. My top three priorities will continue to be the prudent management of our limited finances. We need to keep posting small, modest surpluses and manage our money. I'm going to continue to push for the strengthening of our financial management across the government.

It's important that we have open, transparent, and accountable government. We have to report to the Legislative Assembly and the people in Nunavut. Of course, the Auditor General of Canada comes and audits us. They are encouraging us to manage our money properly.

I'm going to work with my cabinet colleagues to continue to attract federal infrastructure funds to Nunavut. As we have talked in this House many times, we need money for additional housing and money for our power plants. We passed a motion the other day about attracting green energy. We need those kinds of investments.

Those are the kinds of areas I will to continue to focus on. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The relationship between the Government of Nunavut and the federal government is important. I am aware that you have to establish new relationships with your new federal counterparts. What do you hope to accomplish with the new federal government? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Like a lot of Canadians and all Nunavummiut, I was very excited on election night that the Liberal government was going to form our new government. I was very excited that Hunter Tootoo became the MP for Nunavut. I'm very excited that he became our MP and a minister and a minister for the north.

I talked to Hunter before he went down to Ottawa last week and I was lobbying already. I saw him out in the foyer and he was running to catch his plane. I said, "We will be

coming to Ottawa more frequently. Hopefully we will have open doors down there to see yourself and all the ministers that we need to see.” I’m hoping for a very strong, open relationship with the new government. As some of my colleagues have mentioned, we’re working on our “asks” for the new government, “asks” being the money or investments we are hoping to get.

My first opportunity to meet the new Minister of Finance will be about a month from now. I’m writing him a letter to welcome him to the finance portfolio. Of course, I’ll be talking about some of our infrastructure needs and other investments we need. I’m looking for a very good relationship with Ottawa over the next couple years of this mandate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Alexander Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance, who is also the Minister of Human Resources. As the government priority is to have the Inuit employment increase and realizing that each department has their own human resources, the department’s supervisors or the management usually does the hiring of casuals.

The minister, in your capacity, would you consult the casuals that are hired by the departments? They usually don’t know what the job is about, but by whom they are known, there are some casual employments that have actually worked over five years or more and not on continuous employment. They take a break, get hired, but when a vacancy opens up, they’re not hired at all.

Would you be able to direct all the departments that if they would be able to look into their casual employment procedures? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Alexander Sammurtok for the question. We’ve had a few conversations about HR issues over the last couple of years.

Mr. Chairman, under the Human Resources Manual, there’s a directive that specifically outlines for departments how the casual staffing process works and they must adhere to those practices. In the *Public Service Act*, we have clearly outlined that people get hired on merit and promoted on merit. It’s incumbent upon all deputy heads and all officials in the departments and human resource people as well to understand those hiring policies. Article 23 is a top priority for this government. We have our GN Human Resources Strategy. We have put that out there as well.

I can make a commitment to Mr. Sammurtok that I will direct my officials to continue to interact with all the departments to ensure that they’re following all of those policies and

directives. One thing you must understand about the HR department, the big HR, we don't have eyes and ears in every department. An individual department, their HR should be making sure they're going through whatever they're required to do. Unless we hear about it, we may not know that they're not complying with all the directives or policies.

I'll ensure that my staff continues to follow up and regularly monitor the departments and their hiring practices when it comes to casuals. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Mr. Minister. I would first like to ask a question in regard to human resources. You just said that each department has their own human resources division and you just said that if you don't hear about that from their division, then you don't know what's going on.

In regard to human resources, let me ask: as the minister for human resources, what has been the most difficult issue for you? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Enook for the question. Mr. Chairman, when it comes to human resources, we're working with people and dealing with people. Individuals are all different. They all have different personalities. They all have different emotional make-ups. When you have people in the workplace and they are in situations that they may not understand or be trained to deal with, a lot of conflict could arise.

It challenges me. I mentioned in my opening comments that we put in more protections for employees; the Code of Values and Ethics, the *Public Service Act*, the ethics officer. We have tightened up our Human Resources Manual and continually reviewing directives and putting new ones in place. We work closely with the unions, yet I continue to hear these issues. That's one of the most difficult, troubling areas for me when I hear all these things.

I ask myself, "Are the employees getting all the information? Do they understand their role?" Employees have to take it upon themselves in some cases to make sure that they utilize the protections that the government provides and don't just sit there if there's a manager or supervisor bullying you. Use the tools available to you and don't be worried about fears of reprisal or reprimand. If you know that there's bullying in the workplace, we have the workplace harassment policy. Use those tools and don't be afraid to use them. That's why they're there.

It's troubling because we want people to view the Government of Nunavut as an employer of choice and we have a lot of jobs to fill. There are a lot of great careers and opportunities for people to pursue in the Government of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr.

Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I noted that you hold quite a few portfolios, but the two portfolios that you're holding are very large, Human Resources and Finance, and I believe that these are the busiest departments. Since you're the minister for those two portfolios, do you believe that the work is not being spread too thin because these two departments are so huge? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Enook for the question. No, I don't think we're spread out too thin. When HR was dissolved two and a half years ago, part of the HR department went to the Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, training development and Inuit employment. We just deal with the recruitment, staffing, and labour relations. We have a very strong team in the Department of Finance. The HR side is under the comptroller general and all of the finance is under the deputy minister, so we have a very strong team. We could use a few more employees.

Like every government department, we run into issues with staffing and we have to rely on casuals as well, but we're making good progress. As I mentioned, we have done several good things since 2013. As for myself, whether I'm spread too thin, I've got a lot of knowledge about finance from being the finance minister for almost seven years. From all that, learning the HR side has been really challenging and again as I said, when you're dealing with people, you're going to have a lot of issues, but we're tackling it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Minister of Human Resources a question.

My fellow MLAs have touched on this about casuals and big departments. At one time, it used to be called the Department of Personnel. It was on its own and it went with Finance. We know that our neighbours over in the NWT did the same thing and then they went back again. I'm just wondering if you've had any communications with them on the difference between either having it as a standalone or with Finance. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Savikataaq for the question. I haven't personally had any conversations with them. I know, over the last 30 years, one of the things about the Government of the Northwest Territories and our Government of Nunavut is we're always in a constant state of change; realigning departments, breaking departments up, and moving them around. It wouldn't surprise me

in the least if, in a few years from now, the human resource side of Finance is out on its own again or maybe in another separate department. That's something that goes on quite regularly in the government.

My memory might be a bit fuzzy, but I think the Government of the Northwest Territories has done it a couple of times over the last three decades, but I haven't had any personal communications with the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I get a third question. I want to talk a little bit about casuals. Just to say that, I heard what you said like your comment about the *Public Service Act*. It identifies how casuals should be dealt with. The union has to be involved if it goes over four months and stuff.

I've had quite a few constituents come to me and if it's not about office bullying, it's about the fact that they have been in a casual position for over two or three years. I will then make a phone call to the minister and I will say, "Look, I'm calling on behalf of this person. They have been in the casual position for this long. What are you going to do about it?" Then I'm told, "Well, we would like to do a direct appointment, but we can't." The reason is that they have been told that all direct appointments are sort of like at a standstill.

I don't know where this information is coming from or what you're going to say about it, but what can we do to help people that come and see us with this kind of problem, where they are in a casual position for quite a few years and they have tried to deal with it. The person in charge wants to do a direct appointment, but they're told that they can't for whatever reason. I want to understand this better and perhaps you are the best person to tell us here: what's happening with direct appointments? Is there a problem? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not sure how many questions Ms. Angnakak asked here; six or seven.

>>*Laughter*

One thing I would advise regular members is don't go directly to departments. Talk to managers, supervisors, and deputies. It's not encouraged. What you would want to do is come to someone like me. They would just tell you to go to human resources anyway or the Minister of Human Resources. If you went to one of my colleagues, they would say the same thing, "Go see the Minister of Human Resources." If you have a constituent like that, come to see me or send me an email. I can get my officials in the Department of Finance to follow up on a particular individual's case. It won't take them very long because usually every employee has got files.

When it comes to direct appointments, there has been no freeze on direct appointments. Direct appointments have to be initiated by the department. Of course, they have to meet certain criteria, but when they meet the criteria, they still have to come forward with a job description. They have to come forward with a performance assessment report to show that the employee is an employee who can do that work. It has to be signed off by either the deputy minister of the department, I believe the Deputy Minister of Finance will do an assessment, then it goes to Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs for an evaluation and a recommendation, and then it comes forward to the cabinet. The cabinet are the ones that approve the direct appointments.

There has been no directive or freeze or any issue that I'm aware of about direct appointments. You heard it from me. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I have no more names on my list. If I missed a member, here's your opportunity to raise your hand. There are none. The next minister to make a statement is Mr. Paul Quassa.

Hon. Paul Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, today is International Inuit Day and I'm very proud of that. On behalf of my colleagues, I'm excited that today is Inuit Day.

Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to be here at the leadership review. This is the first leadership review that I have taken part in and I want to begin by thanking my nominator for the position of the minister, Mr. Hickes, which was in 2013. I thank him first of all.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the good people of the constituency of Aggu in Igloolik for supporting me as a Member of the Legislative Assembly for our community. I also thank my wife, Elisapee, and our children for their support.

I was very honoured to be asked by the Premier to take on the role of Minister of Education and Nunavut Arctic College. I was also very honoured to be asked to take on the role of Government House Leader.

Mr. Chairman, if you remember correctly, when we negotiated our land claims that created our Territory of Nunavut, we wanted to ensure that Inuit were given full opportunity and support to work, and I'm very proud of that. To help do this, Article 23 was included in the agreement.

Today, I'm now a Member of the Legislative Assembly and your Minister of Education. I'm excited about the possibilities we have together in this Fourth Assembly to make proactive changes and to bring forward opportunities to ensure our schools and Nunavut Arctic College and all Nunavummiut will benefit from lifelong learning within or outside government or in schools or in our college.

Mr. Chairman, as your Minister of Education and Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, I have tried very hard to be open and work with each of you to support all

of our students, the school and college staff across the territory, and to ensure that education and training are kept on the front burner of our government.

As the House Leader, which is a position I'm very proud to hold, I have been involved as the main liaison between the members and the cabinet. That role has given me a unique opportunity to view the inner workings of the legislative and House processes.

As minister, I have been able to visit all of our Kivalliq communities, the Baffin region communities of Cape Dorset, Hall Beach, Igloolik, Clyde River, and Pond Inlet, and the Kitikmeot communities of Taloyoak, Kugluktuk, and Cambridge Bay. After this session, I will be looking forward to visiting the schools, students, staff, as well as to visit the Nunavut Arctic College adult learning centres in Arctic Bay, Grise Fiord, and Resolute Bay. Those are my expected visits this year.

Mr. Chairman, coming out of our caucus retreat in Kugluktuk, we all decided at that time that education and training would be the number one priority of our government and mandate. To help facilitate this, I have committed to four key priorities to improve education in Nunavut. They are: literacy, support for our school staff, equity and standardization across the territory, and accountability for student achievement and outcomes.

We have increased our education budget to meet the needs of our new initiatives. One area is we have initiated research on standardization of the Inuktitut writing system that would be used in all schools across the territory. One very important and exciting initiative is we have begun the process of how and what we would need to understand a need to get the University of Nunavut.

We have continued to enhance the training of our school staff to ensure we can carry out the new initiatives within our schools. We have successfully graduated several of our community school counsellors, *ilinniarvimmi inuusilirijiit*. Through the recognized Langara College program, we have put in 43 new learning coaches to support our teachers to carry out this new literacy initiative.

We have continued to enhance the available learning materials in Inuktitut working with a renowned publishing company and we have begun the process for testing for standards within the general school system.

Through Nunavut Arctic College, we have delivered a very successful first year of the Environmental Technology Program in Cambridge Bay.

We have developed the Inuit Language and Culture Centre of Excellence, which includes a resource development team.

Further, in the Kitikmeot region, Inuinnaqtun language courses have been offered in partnership with the University of Victoria in Cambridge Bay. This is also meeting the demands of revitalizing Inuinnaqtun.

I have been asked by NTI to sit on the new Inuit Training Corporation along with the Premier. In this role, we will have an opportunity to work with NTI to ensure that money that came from the settlement with the Government of Canada will be targeted towards ensuring that Inuit will receive training and that in turn will help support Article 23. Education is very important and we have to make sure that we keep it going forward for all students.

Today, I would just like to thank you for your confidence in me. I'm open to questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I have a name on my list. Mr. Shooyook.

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to welcome the Minister of Education.

I have a question for the minister about education. Education is very important in Nunavut and what we hear is that you have to be properly educated in order to gain employment. With that being the case and when you became the Minister of Education, upon your review of the department, did that strengthen your resolve to ensure that the Inuktitut language and western educational systems can be meshed together to improve the educational system? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Quassa.

Hon. Paul Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the member for that excellent question. Yes, that was my goal when I became a Minister of Education. I personally went to school, so I have experienced education first-hand.

We have heard from Inuit and other people that there isn't enough standardization of courses and too many different courses are offered in the different schools. To use this example, if I was moving from Igloolik to another community and I registered my children into the school, we would see an entirely different course set-up. Due to the lack of standardization, we looked at standardizing the entire education system in Nunavut so that the courses offered are the same and students from any community could move anywhere in Nunavut and have the exact same courses available.

Also, the legislation we follow has very good language which we have to adhere to, which is what we are trying to accomplish, and ensure that Inuktitut and English are at the same level. That is the reason why at this time and as per my earlier comments, we are offering more reading materials in Inuktitut at the schools and which are being reproduced since I took the portfolio. That is the reason, to ensure our students can read in Inuktitut fluently as well as in English. This includes having the right resources to enable that. Ever since I became the Minister of Education, it was my priority to increase the resources available to our schools. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Shooyook.

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can see that you're very passionate about education.

Literacy is very important. I don't like mixing both languages all in the same sentence. When we're small, we're like sponges and learning everything that's around our environment, including the language. Starting from kindergarten and grade school, at what grade do you stop teaching Inuktitut both written and oral? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Quassa.

Hon. Paul Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's starting from early childhood education before they enter the school system. That's where we start. When I became the Minister of Education, we started literacy programs, got books and games written in Inuktitut. That's where we start. We start teaching Inuktitut at the pre-kindergarten stage, early childhood programming and so on, so that they will be ready to enter the school system and they can expect what they're going to be taught in the schools.

What we do is we concentrate on the daycares, the early childhood education programming, and start teaching them from there to prepare them for the education system and using the Inuktitut language and reading the Inuktitut print. We have also produced programs for young mothers and new families. We're starting to send them books because we know that from the day a child is born, they're starting to learn already. We send literature to new families and young mothers to make sure that the practice of reading to the child is already started at a young very age. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Shooyook.

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister. As the minister, you have the authority to deal with those issues. Are you going to ensure that the Inuktitut language is protected and taught in the school system? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Quassa.

Hon. Peter Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I can even say that that is our goal as a government. That has to be our goal as a government. There's the *Inuit Language Protection Act* that is the priority of the government. Again, in the *Education Act*, it is also entrenched there that we use *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*, Inuit beliefs and values. That has to be taught in the school system because of course, we are in Nunavut and Inuktitut is our language.

Again, in the NTEP programs, we also teach the students about the Inuktitut language at Arctic College. We urge everyone when we go to the communities to enter the NTEP

program because we can teach them in their community. We would like to have bilingual students in our schools. That's what I urge everyone when we go to the communities. We try to get the message across to enter the NTEP program. If you want to do it and if there's enough numbers, we can set up that program in your communities so we can have bilingual teachers in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Minister of Education and Nunavut Arctic College. Yes, it's obvious that this is important for our children and the youth who have dropped out and they can go to Arctic College and get more education. As minister, you have to recognize and know that it's important.

With that, your officials have to keep you well informed and make sure you understand your portfolio. With that, how many hours in a week do you study your documents? As ministers, you need to understand new information, new issues, and the documents that you need to be informed of. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Quassa.

Hon. Paul Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for asking that question. It's different number of hours. It's always changing. Even when we're not in the office, we're working because we can use computers and work from anywhere. When we're at home or in a community, we can work with computers and do our jobs, even if we're not in the office.

Yes, you're right that we have to read a lot of documents and new issues are always coming up from our staff. These are the things that you have to consider. We don't stop working at five o'clock; we work at any time. My colleagues, I'm sure are like that also. We don't follow a set number of hours. I'm happy that the deputy minister or the president of Arctic College can give me material any time, it doesn't matter what time it is, and I'm happy because it's what I do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the minister about daycares. There's a long waiting list, especially in Iqaluit, for people who want to work and/or go to school. Have you studied that question? Can you tell us about that? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Quassa.

Hon. Paul Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the member for asking the question. Yes, they don't have enough daycare spaces in the communities and I have seen it personally in Igloolik.

Right now, the way things are set, it's only after the communities acquire their own buildings that we can provide them funding for operations. We have stated clearly that we have decided and you have heard that the new schools that we're building will include daycares. If schools or community learning centres are going to be renovated, a daycare has to be added. We have to create daycares in the schools and community learning centres.

If daycares are going to be separate from the school, the community itself has to acquire a building. We have thought long and hard about how to make it easier to get daycares in the communities. This is something I'm starting to consider because we have to consider it some more. Our youth or fellow Nunavut residents have a high birth rate and we want the young people to stay in school, even though they're starting to have children. This is a big part of our consideration.

Looking at Igloolik as an example, we have been waiting for I don't know how many years. We're always looking for board members. The roadblocks we come upon include the need for a board of directors of a non-profit organization and to have society status under the *Societies Act*. It sometimes becomes very difficult to find board members in the communities. That is one area I want to deliberate on further in my role as the minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Mapsalak.

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have one question. The minister is aware that when a school has a bad environment, everyone has difficulty getting a proper education and it can affect anyone as they are loath to attend. With students today, I wonder what plans you have written as the minister regarding the environments of the schools to ensure that schools have a warm, welcoming environment that students can take pride in and that allows students to want to learn? Have you drafted any type of plans to look at improving our schools so that our students can look forward to attending school? Do you have any sort of plans in that area in our immediate future? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Quassa.

Hon. Paul Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've had my thoughts around this issue and our students will improve their attendance only by having a warm, welcoming school. The school should be clean and welcoming. I have brought up these foundational issues that the environment should be more welcoming.

The schools should be welcoming to everyone, the parents and our students. These are the factors we have looked at to date, such as (interpretation ends) parental engagement and family engagement, (interpretation) how can we make the schools such that their children will feel welcome and they will know that their parents are also welcomed. That is one issue.

Another aspect is the face of the school as well as the interior. It should be clean and free of mould or smells. These are the kinds of things we have to keep in consideration, as well as safety. As an example, all of our schools are working on safety guidelines. There are different ways of ensuring a welcoming environment.

Another important aspect is having the proper resources, especially Inuktitut reading materials. When I became the minister and did my first review, I noted that these resources were sometimes running out. We also noticed many teachers would write their own stories to teach their students due to lack of resources. Teachers need to feel welcome and have materials available for them in their schools. They teach better when they have more materials.

These are the different types of things to make a school a more welcoming place. These are the types of ways that we have tried to assist the schools to be more welcoming to our students, parents, and teachers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is my understanding that daycares are funded to only be open during the school year, which means most daycares in our communities are closed during the summer. I have seen a few cases where people said that they would have to leave their jobs because there were no daycare services in our communities. Has his department ever considered funding daycares so that they can be open year-round? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Quassa.

Hon. Paul Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank my colleague for asking that question. There are different things that we have to consider on how to improve our children. We should know that our department concentrates on education and daycares. We think more of the daycares and we want to have initiatives because we want our youth to further their education even if they have children. That is our priority.

We also have the proposed Child Care Act. We have started to review this Act. We have reviewed it and it concentrates on daycares. Maybe we can make changes through there. I think we have to review it to see how it would run to date. The communities have to acquire their own buildings and then we provide operating funds to date. Perhaps we can revisit it.

I truly believe that if there are better daycares in the community, our people would be able to work and we would be following Article 23 more if there were cases like that. Those are the things we have to consider. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I don't have any more names on my list. Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister Quassa, have you encountered a situation where you made a commitment to doing something, but for some reason, found yourself not able to fulfill the commitment because of a lack of resources? What are the reasons? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Quassa.

Hon. Paul Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's a very good question and I'm trying to recall the initiatives that I have wanted to start. To date, we have implemented things like literacy and having reading materials in our schools. Those have been implemented.

One thing that I can recall is our writing system. We're looking at standardizing our writing system in the schools because we use two writing systems where it should be one. I have considered that and we have to review that or I have thought about implementing it right away. We thought everyone would want one standard writing system in our schools, but I know some people don't support it. Therefore, I'm going at a slower pace now. That's the only thing I can seem to remember for my colleague. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I would like to go back to the things that you have done. Firstly I thank the special committee that reviewed the *Education Act* and the regular MLAs. You had a lot of work to do because education is very big and it affects the most people in Nunavut. There are quite a few recommendations.

I know that today, as ministers, you are saying what you think we want to hear. No wonder you want to look good to us today and you want to sound good today so that you can keep your portfolios. That much is obvious.

With respect to the issue, I would like to hear a truthful observation as the Minister of Education. Let me ask you this: in carefully considering the potential impacts without just speaking about the optics, but to carefully review the recommendations with a view towards the difficulty in implementing them, what would be the best way and how many years do you think it would take to implement all of the recommendations after this review? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Mr. Quassa.

Hon. Paul Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for asking a question on this issue. Yes, we are aware of the challenges we will face and that much is obvious.

If we recall the first legislation that we enacted back in 2009-2010, although it has been many years, there are still certain provisions that have never been implemented, perhaps five years since the Act was passed. We looked at the local district education authorities and some of the recommendations haven't been implemented. Due to that reason, we are now reviewing the *Education Act*. We reviewed everything that could not work and why they didn't work. We looked at every facet of the legislation when we reviewed the *Education Act*.

The recommendations from the special committee will be carefully considered by the Department of Education. I'm imagining that if they are put into the Act, we have to make sure the 25 district education authorities in the communities are following the Act. We will have to monitor them because not all DEAs follow the Act and we will have to be very careful in keeping track of that and making sure that all the recommendations can realistically be implemented in the communities. Some of them may be easier to implement. The language of instruction may be easier to implement. To date, we have been using three languages of instruction and if we can make that into just one. It may make things easier for the communities and the communities can find it easier to approve them.

There are many recommendations. We will not see some of them happening for a few years, but while I'm the minister, I will want to keep track of them. As I stated earlier in my opening statement, looking at the previous *Education Act*, it has been five years and not all of the provisions of the Act have been followed. We now know why some of them haven't been followed. Even after the recommendations are approved, it will be a while before you see them implemented. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I don't have any more names on my list. No one has their hand up. We will move on. We will have the last minister make her statement. I'm reminding you that you have 10 minutes to speak. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Ms. Jeannie Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, colleagues and Netsilingmiut. First, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my nominator for cabinet, Ms. Pat Angnakak, MLA for Iqaluit-Niaqunnguu. I would also like to thank Premier Taptuna and my colleagues for appointing me as the Minister of Family Services and as Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

We are just entering our third year as a department with the strong, optimistic vision for our future. The Department of Family Services is a place where Nunavut's social programs can finally come together and be efficient in the design and delivery so that we can ultimately serve and reach Nunavummiut for the better. My department has been working hard to make our transition a smooth one.

Mr. Chairman, in my previous role as a social worker and a mother of three, I understand the needs not only of our frontline staff, but also the needs of families who access our programs. My department supports people who face barriers or may be excluded from

full participation in our economy and communities by introducing programs and services that alleviate poverty, family violence, and unemployment. We are protecting our most vulnerable from harm and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to lead fulfilling and productive lives.

Mr. Chairman, the department and Nunavut Arctic College have worked together to create a new 12-week employment program for our income assistant recipients. The “Getting Ready for Employment and Training” program directly relates to *Sivumut Abluqta* and will assist in achieving increased self-reliance and increased labour force training and employment. This job readiness program is setting a leading example for Nunavummiut who have a desire to work but just need to acquire a few more skills and the mentorship to get there.

My department values the importance of self-reliance and poverty reduction through increased education opportunities and skills training for Nunavummiut. Some examples include:

- An increase to the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students basic grant by 85 percent from \$3,700 to \$6,855 per year;
- Amendments to the Apprenticeship Act in two areas to allow more apprentices to be mentored in Nunavut and to decrease the proposed wait time to rewrite exams;
- A new allocation of \$1,013,151 under the Canada-Nunavut Job Fund in 2015-16 to provide funding support for employers to train their employees in skills that allow them to advance in organizations, earn higher salaries, and increase their job stability.

Mr. Chairman, I am the co-chair for the Nunavut Roundtable for Poverty Reduction and we continue to work together to address the underlying causes of poverty. This December, we will be meeting and finalizing our five-year action plan on poverty reduction which outlines a framework for better collaboration on pressing issues.

My department’s Poverty Reduction Division administers \$735,000 in funds to support two emergency homeless shelters in Iqaluit, and we are working with the Cambridge Bay Wellness Centre to explore the possibility of establishing a shelter there.

My department is in the final stages of developing a homelessness action plan to guide our work, and the division has established a new fund that will strengthen community-based homelessness initiatives across the territory.

People who experience absolute homelessness are more likely to be victims of physical and sexual violence, so it is critical that we work across sectors to ensure the safety of all Nunavummiut. My department also continues to work with the Nunavut Housing Corporation to ensure that we address absolute homelessness.

Mr. Chairman, as a lead on family violence programs for the Government of Nunavut, my department is focusing on issues that are directly relevant to the territory. My department continues to work and address all forms of violence with our full-time family violence specialists and social workers.

Mr. Chairman, last year alone, my department provided \$2.3 million in funding to the five family violence shelters in Nunavut. My department further provided funds to the Qullit Nunavut Status of Women Council and continues to support them in their work.

On December 6, Qullit is holding a vigil to mark the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. I invite all of my colleagues to attend to show their support. As well, we are supporting family counselling and healing programming in this area, acknowledging that we need to engage all Nunavummiut in addressing this issue.

Mr. Chairman, in the coming months, in collaboration with the Department of Economic Development and Transportation, my department is conducting a timely social assistance review. We have been visiting Nunavut communities and holding public meetings with the goal of engaging Nunavummiut to help reform our approach to social assistance.

Many Nunavummiut are on social assistance. This has been an opportunity to determine how to motivate our territory towards greater self-reliance and culture sustainability as expressed in *Sivumut Abluqta*. This process will allow us to identify community-based solutions to better support training, career development, employment, economic opportunities, and labour market participation.

My department will continue to identify and increase benefits that assist our seniors. An example of our commitment is our recent increase to the Senior Citizen Supplementary Benefit, which increased from \$175 to \$200 per month as of April 2015.

My department is prioritizing an increase in staff capacity to better deliver services and offer more employment opportunities for Nunavummiut. My department is also expanding our supports and benefits available to social workers in each community. For instance, we work to adequately staff the children services system so that we can protect the best interests of all.

We are assessing all aspects of our residential care system so that elders, adults, youth, and children in our territory have quality services that reflect our Inuit societal values. I would like to thank all the non-profit societies and their board members who provide services enhanced by providing local employment. My department will continue to collaborate with other departments and organizations and provide resources on community-based solutions that help families and individuals find the care and the supports they need.

With the recent release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations, we are developing culturally relevant, appropriate parenting programs for our families.

Initial steps have been taken to establish the Inunnguiniq Parenting and Child Development Working Group under the Nunavut Roundtable for Poverty Reduction.

My department will continue to expand the opportunities for Nunavummiut through the apprenticeship and labour market training programs to ensure that certification meets or exceeds the national standards.

Family Services and innovation and energy have taken us this far in two short years. I am confident to be able to lead this department in its mandate and I know there is still much work to be done. We cannot do this work alone. I am grateful for the support I receive from my colleagues here today and the communities that entrust us to serve them. I strive to represent my constituents wherever I am and I'm open to all members in this House with suggestions and concerns.

I welcome any questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Mapsalak.

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask my questions to the Minister of Family Services.

Some time ago, I asked the minister in regard to social workers that are placed in the community. They are usually non-beneficiaries and their way of counselling is totally alien to the Inuit way of counselling in the communities. The majority of the community population is Inuit and a majority of the Inuit living in the community requires social workers. With that being the case, I previously asked questions about the inclusion of more Inuit when handling social work cases, particularly when the worker is a non-Inuk.

Western social mores and lifestyles in comparison to Inuit social mores and lifestyles are vastly different. With that information and with Inuit forming the majority of cases for social workers, some Inuit suffer hardship and stressful situations within families. The clients' lives are impacted and spiral downwards. Although the social workers are trying to provide assistance, these cultural barriers and lack of knowledge of Inuit practices and culture results in breakdowns. That is what we see far too many times.

Can the minister take into consideration in the future years or has she ever formulated a position on getting Inuit counsellors, particularly real traditional Inuit who practise a traditional lifestyle who could assist these non-Inuit social workers? The Inuit counsellors would provide more knowledge about Inuit culture and counselling techniques. Has the minister ever contemplated improvements or envisioned changes for our upcoming future? Hopefully I was clear in my questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Ms. Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for that question. Skilled Inuit are lacking everywhere. Not just our department

is experiencing a shortage of beneficiary employees. There is a shortage of Inuit RCMP officers, nurses, and teachers. Other government departments also look for Inuit workers. That means we tend to have to bring in social workers to work in the communities.

When I was campaigning to be a minister, I recall stating that as Inuit, we have to try to stand on our own and we have to start serving our communities. I believe in that statement today. We shouldn't just complain, but start the hard work in teaching our children and grandchildren so that they can provide these services. Upon getting the capacity to provide these services, they will still have to follow the legislation or government protocols. As an example, social workers have to abide with federal and territorial legislation related to social work and counselling. They also have rules they have to follow.

In looking at the future, yes, if there is a will to try that, we can discuss the request. As an example, we have the men's group, Angutitut Makinnasuaqtiit. We have begun discussions to work with them to deliver services specific to this field. The men's group founding principles are to eradicate violence and anger, and properly looking after your life. Yes, this is one of our envisioned changes.

However, it falls back to the parents and residents of Nunavut. If we don't push our children and grandchildren into education, Nunavut will always require transient workers. Our children are our future and if they don't get educated and they're not familiar with legislation, then they won't be able to provide services. We trust our children and we love them, so we urge them to stay in school so that they will have a better future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Mapsalak.

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you. Indeed, that is something we really want to see, especially locally. It would have a tremendous beneficial impact on our smaller communities. In the smaller communities, the majority of the residents are interrelated. With that being the situation today, I asked the minister if she had any future strategy or if she has set up a future plan to resolve this. I asked if that was the case and, if so, what timeline was the minister contemplating?

Many people already have training, especially in Inuit practices and lives, as they have experienced life's challenges, so we have many qualified Inuit who were taught the principles of rearing children properly and receiving timely counselling. With that being the situation today, can I ask what the minister's vision is for a timeline when this sort of initiative could be moved forward? I am referring to our future here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Madam Minister, Ms. Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also appreciate my colleague for asking about this issue related to social work. Last fall, we were in

Cambridge Bay conducting a workshop with the Qilaut Elders' Group where elders received training as counsellors. They will be a tremendous asset upon completion of their training. Further, their commitment to assist fellow Inuit is palpable.

As an example, for the children who are in foster or group homes, either here in Iqaluit or in Cambridge Bay, although they are in Nunavut, the funding or management is done from outside of Nunavut through a service contract. As the Minister of Family Services, I run into these types of questions about a vision for the future. Will we keep contracting out southern companies or will we better our future by encouraging our Inuit youth to move into these important fields?

I see a future where we become more self-sufficient by training Inuit to work as they wouldn't have to be taught about Inuit culture, language, and social values and they are able to counsel them in a better manner. I believe that and that is part of my vision for the future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me go back to old faithful here. I think this minister has had the longest time to dwell upon the questions I have been asking other ministers regarding the introspective look of looking into your own strengths and weaknesses and some self-evaluation on how you feel that you're accomplishing and how you're doing in your role. I guess I have asked the question a few times. I've had some reasonably close to fulfilled answers, but I still haven't had a full answer. I'm hoping this minister has had a long enough time. It has been a long day, so she had plenty of time to think about this question. I think she knew it was coming, so I would like to get the minister's response. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Ms. Ugyuk. I'm sorry. Can you please repeat the question. What is the question?

>>*Laughter*

Mr. Hickes: I didn't think I needed to at this point, Mr. Chairman, but I will. How would you honestly and objectively describe your strengths and weaknesses as a minister and as a member of cabinet and how would you rate your performance? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Yes, it has to be recorded, so I asked you to repeat the question. Thank you. Madam Minister, Ms. Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I personally know my strengths as I am from Netsilik, a woman, and I am rarely cowed by issues. I feel these are my strengths. I also put others firstly when considering whether or not this will be satisfactory. I believe these to be my personal strengths that I am aware of.

My weaknesses include the lack of experience as a minister and I have made some errors as a minister, which the members are aware of. I believe these are my weaknesses. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've yet to get a minister to give a self-evaluation, but I'll move on to the last question that I'm allowed for today and I'm hoping all ministers pay attention to this question. I'm directing it to Minister Ugyuk, but I think it's relative to all ministers.

There have been many occasions in which I have requested information or brought an issue from a constituent to be addressed and it has taken way too long to be responded to. This can lead to a loss of credibility for me as an MLA and the GN as a whole.

People come to us to help them get through an issue or to provide information to them through our offices, and those issues can often have a sense of urgency to them in their lives. With respect to request for information or for you to look into an issue on behalf of a constituent on my behalf, what priority is given to such a request from an MLA? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Thank you for reminding me that that's your last question. I add that was your eighth question and that was your final question. Thank you. Madam Minister, Ms. Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for asking about that issue. Regular MLAs sometimes ask questions about issues either in the works or that haven't been debated.

We can make legislative changes if members inform the government about social work barriers or issues. That is one of our roles, but I believe the lack of communication is the biggest barrier we run into. The one area that is usually understood is the legislative reasons for confidentiality. There are cases where a person or information about aspects of their lives can't be released, especially if it involves children in particular that are in the court process. These are some of the reasons for the need for confidentiality.

Another example is if the MLA is speaking on behalf of an individual, that person has to sign a consent form if they want their information questioned. It is called a (interpretation ends) consent form (interpretation) if the client wishes to have questions about their case. That is the general protocol that is followed by our office; at least I have enforced that in my role as the minister directing them to deal with the issues or information requests. There may be a risk.

When we are apprised of issues requiring urgent decisions, it is sent to the deputy minister. If there is an information request, we are usually provided with ten days to

respond to the request. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. David Joanasie.

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Minister Ugyuk. The first question I wish to ask the minister relates to a question I directed to one of her colleagues earlier.

As ministers, you have to have the ability to ask questions to your officials about their duties, and ministers are provided with recommendations to deal with. This includes our perception that ministers should not be pushed around by their staff, especially related to issues being sent to you by your officials.

I want to ask you this: have you experienced a situation where one of your officials submitted recommendations that you disagreed with or other recommendations that are forwarded to officials for implementation? Has that occurred? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Madam Minister, Ms. Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank my colleague for the question. I heard two or three questions he raised and I may forget one of his questions.

At the deputy minister's office, we meet with senior managers about issues being recommended or something members want to see in the future, the budget lines for the programs and services, and so on. We usually meet in that manner. Prior to the final decision, we look at ways to improve the situation through our meetings.

As I held this social worker position previously, it has been a benefit to me, especially when looking at possible improvements, as I have the background. Further, if it isn't approved, I can usually grasp the reasoning behind it.

Social workers are tied down with legislated requirements related to social work or alternatively, through the income support areas. The laws apply to my department, public institutions, and various group homes, either for children, youth, or our elders. All of them have regulations they have to follow. Some of the rules are listed in the Department of Health while others are at the Department of Education, but we are trying to make improvements by compiling them all.

I haven't really experienced a problem to date with non-approved recommendations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Joanasie.

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question on another matter. What initiatives related to Inuit culture has been undertaken by the Department of

Family Services with you as the minister and how is *Inuit Qaujimaqatuqangit* being implemented into programs and services offered to Nunavummiut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Ms. Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for that question. Inuit culture is still being practised by many Inuit, but people seem to think our culture is disappearing. While sitting here as an Inuk member, I don't forget my culture and values.

However, with respect to Inuit culture, under the third government's mandate, we reviewed the (interpretation ends) *Child and Family Services Act* (interpretation) and there were perhaps three amendments related to Inuit culture. This winter, it was increased to 25.

The (interpretation ends) Inuit societal values (interpretation) will be included for any student taking the social worker course as they have to be aware of the Inuit societal values, such as *Piliriniq*, *Pijitsirniq*, and *Tunnganarniq*, which apply to their work. As well, this includes the courses being offered in Cambridge Bay and that is another avenue where Inuit societal values are being taught. That is an area that is improving and a bit of good news.

With respect to service providers for the department and to use this example of group homes, either for children or youth, including elders facilities like the one here in Iqaluit and the southern facility that I was able to visit last summer, when I visit these homes, I always ask the managers whether they have integrated Inuit societal values in their institution. With the improvements we are starting to see and programs that can be offered, we are providing more funds if they want to teach the people in their care more societal values through the use of language or courses, such as sewing, carving, and so on. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I will remind you that this is your last and final question as this is your eighth question. Mr. Joanasie.

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for indicating that this is my last question. I would then like to ask the Minister of Family Services this: which areas or how has the department improved since you became the Minister of Family Services? I'm referring back to the last two years that I would want you include in your response. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Ms. Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for that question. Yes, all departmental programs and services within Family Services are regularly reviewed and I expect that improvements will continue to be made.

We also have numerous contracts related to social work and we review the contracts with an eye towards implementing their agreements. These are the two areas I am happy with improvements. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Shooyook. For the benefit of the member, I remind you that this is the eighth and final question that you can ask. Thank you. Mr. Shooyook.

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also have a question to the Minister of Family Services for the benefit of those listening to the proceedings. They also have many expectations about life skills counselling. As Inuit, we are stuck with a system we never set up. Inuit don't practise the values imported from western societal values, but we are following their legislation to date. I have directed numerous questions related to this subject.

The other title used is for Family Services aside from social workers. With that being the case, as per my previous statements, the Inuit traditional methods of life skills and counselling have to be recognized fully. An example I can use is the actual practices laid out by *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*. With that issue, there are slight improvements in previous plans and I am aware of the difficulty in trying to accomplish that.

A subject we debate from time to time is the incorporation of Inuit societal values. From this day forward while in your role as the minister and by using your ministerial authority, will you be working to improve the system by directing the department to fully incorporate the traditional Inuit life skills training and counselling methods? What is your vision to accomplish this while you are sitting as the minister of this department? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Ms. Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for asking about that issue. We held meetings on poverty reduction with NTI on the issues that result in Inuit living in poverty. The main reasons that cause our fellow residents to live in poverty were identified at those meetings and they included the concept of teaching Inuit to be Inuit and traditional child rearing techniques that should be offered to our fellow residents utilizing our elders. That is our vision for the future.

We have a meeting scheduled for December in Cambridge Bay for the Poverty Reduction Division. There is a five-year plan being developed currently and the foundation used is teaching Inuit culture as well as healing circles and a productive life. These meetings are held in Arviat for the elders' group related to teaching youth about Inuit culture and they have provided a clear direction of what they want taught and which values are important, and we will carefully review the suggestions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the minister about poverty reduction. She has mentioned it many times and there's lots of money being put into it. I would just like to know what she's doing about some of the causes of poverty like addiction problems, whether it be drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, or gambling. That contributes highly to poverty. What is she doing about addressing addiction issues in terms of poverty reduction? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Ms. Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for asking about that issue. The Poverty Reduction Division has scheduled meetings and a clearly laid out plan has been set out outlining how often they meet, how they arrive at a definition of cause and effect, and how the recommendation will be implemented by the government.

Many of us have other responsibilities. With respect to the question on addictions, this falls under the Department of Health and not Family Services. Nonetheless, we want to be involved in the process called the (interpretation ends) suicide inquest recommendation.

(interpretation) Family Services has received three written requests to fund addiction treatment centres in Rankin Inlet, Cambridge Bay, and Iqaluit. The Department of Family Services wants to assist the Department of Health when they are commencing their plans to create the addiction treatment centres. Our elders continue to accommodate us and they rarely refuse, as that is part of their strengths, so we want to ensure we include our elders when we are looking at creating an addiction treatment centre.

The poverty reduction meetings involving NTI, the hamlets, and various departments have a system for introducing concepts and for agreeing on specific recommendations to be submitted. The recommendations are then prepared, in this case, for the winter session outlining the (interpretation ends) five-year action plan (interpretation) of the group. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and the minister. I have some experience having worked in this field and I understand the legal framework surrounding social workers. The whole area of social work and social workers isn't a simple issue, as there is various legislation they are required to follow and this includes federal legislation, territorial legislation, and as per comments from our colleagues, incorporating *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* into this field.

Within your role as the minister from the beginning to date, as the Minister of Family Services, have you identified certain areas that you would have gone back and redone? Further, what improvements would you make now? Here I am talking about from the time you were appointed as a minister. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Madam Minister, Ms. Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for asking about that issue. Yes, when I first started as a minister, the homelessness file is one I would have redone, perhaps because I wasn't too involved and I felt this file has been largely forgotten by Nunavummiut. We often hear about residents who are homeless or families booted out from their units. This is one file I have been slow to complete and I can feel that it may be due to my not pushing this directive through my officials.

However, the other aspect is, from the time I started to now, I believe I have had four deputy ministers. Last year, it finally played out where I now have one deputy minister and my DM is an absolute godsend to me. When you have a strong deputy minister, you can make things move. That has been part of the weaknesses I have seen.

In looking at the homeless people on the streets, you feel incapable of changing their plight. One of my weaknesses is that I haven't focused on this file. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister Ugyuk, if the Assembly confirms its confidence in you as a minister, what will be your top three priorities before the end of our term of office? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister, Ms. Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you. Yes, the priorities that I wish to see if I remain in this role are (interpretation ends) second stage housing for women, (interpretation) as currently none exist in Nunavut while there are two facilities in the NWT. Here in Nunavut and particularly the women's shelter here in Iqaluit, it is usually at 101 percent capacity. The facility houses women who have left due to spousal issues and it is almost always over capacity. I do know this is an urgent situation where we have to provide (interpretation ends) second stage housing for women.

(interpretation) The other priority would be the homelessness file. I want to prioritize this. As you asked for three priorities, that was the second priority. For some of the Iqaluit facilities, they receive federal funding grants for operational funding. If we could have another facility here in Iqaluit since Nunavut is rather large, then we would request that the federal government fund this facility under the (interpretation ends) Homelessness Partnering Strategy, (interpretation) as it is called in English. It has a designation process for funding facilities. That is my second priority.

The third priority is to get more elders facilities at both (interpretation ends) levels 1 and 2 (interpretation) in order to get operating funding and we have an agreement in place.

Those are my priorities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to start by asking the Minister of Family Services this first question. When the Minister of Justice was responding to our questions, he replied that the minimum wage in Nunavut was quite low and that it was lower than the income support amounts. Apparently income support recipients were making more than people working at the minimum wage. Here I am talking about income support programming. I wonder if the minister knew that fact and started to push the members to change the amounts. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Ms. Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank my colleague for asking that question. With respect to his question about the statement from Justice about the income support recipients receiving more income than minimum wage earners, I can't really answer that question directly. However, in handling our income support program as social workers, we know that we aren't keeping up with the cost of living and the cost of food.

There are people who are living in poverty here in Nunavut and they depend on income support. In looking across Canada, even with this amount of income, the food they can purchase is smaller than southern locales, so I am not too worried about the difference between that and (interpretation ends) minimum wage, (interpretation) but I am happy that it has been increased. We review income support looking at Canada as a whole. Nunavummiut receive more income support overall with our fellow residents in our communities depending on it.

I also know that it can be a rough road, but in order to combat poverty, we are looking at ways to get the federal government involved to reduce poverty. We continue to voice the crisis situation we face here and we want to see improvements. However, many of us also know that we can get out of poverty by utilizing educational opportunities, by trying to live properly, and to get help if we require healing. There are always two sides and that's how I can respond. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can you speak to your ability to work with your ministerial colleagues, and can you speak to your own experience of working with your ministerial colleagues as a team player? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister, Ms. Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for asking that question. When we enter the role of a minister, the cabinet has

to work together. Although we may not always agree on every issue, the need to work together always exists. Even if we're in disagreement, we need to lend support to our colleagues. This is done by having debates until we come to a consensus and we always try to reach an agreement on issues facing us when we meet as cabinet. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Keyootak. I don't have any more names on my list. Perhaps I didn't see someone raise their hand. Mr. Mikkungwak, this will be your eighth and final question. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. My last question will be directed to the Minister of Environment.

Chairman (interpretation): No, you can only ask Ms. Ugyuk, the minister who is being questioned and that was my only reference to questions. Thank you.

If I missed someone raising hand, identify yourself. No one has their hand up. All the ministers have delivered their statements. Do any members still have questions? Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. My last question is to the Minister of Environment.

In looking at Nunavut overall, we have many communities totalling 25. Some of our communities don't just depend on marine mammals for their sustenance, as some communities depend more on herbivores that occupy their lands. With that being the case today, if members place their confidence in you to continue in your role as minister, can you elaborate on what plans you would have to manage this? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister of Environment, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you. I thank my colleague for asking that question. Looking at Nunavut, it's a large area and there are different traditions. I would follow the different traditions and that's where I stand. I believe in all of the traditions when it comes to wildlife. As long it is wildlife, Inuit tradition is all the same. For that reason, even taking the different types of wildlife and today's life with the land claims agreement in place, as long as the person is a beneficiary under the agreement, they can harvest anywhere and any type of animal. For those reasons, that's where I'll stand if I'm brought back as minister, if you have confidence in me. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my fellow regular members, you still have the opportunity to present me with your leftover questions since I only have three questions to expend.

Mr. Chairman, perhaps I should ask the Premier now that we have had a chance to question the ministers... .

Chairman (interpretation): I'm sorry. We're asking questions to the ministers, not the Premier. You already asked the Premier three questions each. Right now, you are asking questions to the ministers. You can ask up to eight questions to the ministers. We already finished with the Premier. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I misunderstood your opening of the floor and I apologize.

Let me then ask a question. Which minister to question? I will direct a question to the Minister of Family Services. We are all aware and with your earlier reference to this fact, we require rules that don't breach any legislation, as I also am aware that we can't breach any federal legislation and further, we can't breach the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. These were some of the laws you referenced.

Nevertheless, I want to ask this question about the lower level of regulations or policies that are present in your department. Here I mean internal (interpretation ends) policies (interpretation) and what causes my confusion is this and all the ministers have stated this. Although I know I am only an MLA for a four-year term, I have yet to understand government operations and I have a lot to learn. I know that.

Ministers tend to continually voice that they are trying to incorporate the best practices to serve Nunavummiut and that their departments are looking at the best manner in which to service them. I can provide many examples of policies that are absolute barriers to Nunavummiut. You are informed about these barriers as ministers and you hear that in your role as the Minister of Family Services. It is continually voiced to you publicly that your department has too many alien, non-Inuit policies that create barriers to Inuit, especially the social services division. Even though you hear these concerns, the ministers still spout that they are trying to incorporate the best practices for Nunavut.

Why is it that policies contrary to Nunavummiut wishes are established? Who exactly drafts these policies? As ministers and in your role as minister, you still make a statement that the best practices to assist Nunavummiut are being implemented. How can you state that when the actual policies developed just create more barriers? I would like some explanation so I can understand. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Ms. Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My colleague is asking about policies that he feels aren't in line with the Inuit cultural practices and about the social worker usage of inadequate policies that he feels we speak to as ministers.

Once we became a government, the legislation was grandfathered from the NWT and we are still using that legislation. The Nunavut government is a relative teenager and we

expect improvements in the future to protect our children and youth through legislation and using that to voice their concerns.

If members feel the need for legislative changes, they can recommend changes to the government. The government can enact changes to legislation through meetings with the MLAs and the lawyers, as we depend on the lawyers to draft up the laws. If the draft legislation is accepted, change would occur and if it's not approved, then we can't do so. We depend on lawyers to decipher legislation related to social services and to ensure they are administered properly within Family Services. It is also tied into a person's individual rights.

If changes are requested to the policies that are used to date, we would use the same path as practised in changing legislation with meetings to debate the best way to enact the policy. In order to change policies, we also need the support of the regular members and there are some that cause barriers, but not all of them are problematic. That is how I can respond. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I still have two questions left. I would like to now direct my second question to the Minister of Education to see if he will respond clearly.

With respect to education, the continual refrain of members and others is that Nunavut has only been in existence for 15 years. Nonetheless, I am personally tired of having that used as a crutch and tired of using it as a reason for our dysfunctional governance.

Let me ask the Minister of Education this question. Every one of the ministers state, including you, that we require the best legislation for Nunavut.

As per my earlier commentary, I am absolutely aware of the precedence of Canadian legislation and that we can't breach the laws, and I am also aware that we can't abrogate or derogate individual rights. I am absolutely aware that we can't breach any pertinent laws in Nunavut.

Nonetheless, in order to ensure the most beneficial practices for Nunavut and each department, why are there problematic areas included in each department although the ministers continue to state that they are looking at the best practices here in Nunavut?

Let me cite an example related to education. Although our people have been taking advantage of the FANS program to further their education in post-secondary institutions, this program has continued to be problematic for students getting timely financial assistance. In my opinion, that is a very simple fix if we are true in our commitment.

Another matter communities always voice concerns about is the need to still use the enrolment figures created in September when students are still outside communities. The

problem is that you use the start of the school year figures for the entirety of the year, but students may still be on the land with their parents and relatives. This applies to other areas within education.

All this seems to fly in our continual statement that this government is trying to get the best practices that are adapted to Nunavut, yet at every sitting, we hear about all of the problems we face with existing policies. Who exactly drafts up these laws? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister of Education, Mr. Quassa.

Hon. Paul Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Although the question is loaded with broad implications, all of us sitting in the legislature are called Members of the Legislative Assembly. We are the lawmakers here, as that is reflected in our titles. That question applies to all of us here, so in essence we are asking ourselves this question.

Perhaps to speak to a subject my colleague touched upon, yes, it has only been 15 years where we have had Nunavut and some pieces of legislation are being amended. As an example of that, just recently, we found out that the *Education Act* was undergoing legislative review.

We still need to conduct legislative review. This isn't a simple process whereby we enact immediate changes and we all know that here in this House. Many of us are first-time legislators; you and I are legislators. We are the ones who can enact changes to the legislation.

With respect to the enrolment figures set for September 30 that applies for the year, our department is reviewing that currently with perhaps an option of having a semi-annual recount of actual student enrolment numbers and that we should look at actual figures. This is an example of one area we are trying to improve. It is now being reviewed to no longer depend on a once yearly figure for students and to change it to twice a school year. That is what we are trying to change now.

Yes, I concur with your assessment that some legislation is inappropriate for some people in Nunavut, but that is our role as legislators, as we are the elected representatives who are to draft up changes to the laws. Additionally, another issue that may cause a barrier is because we are also Canadians and we have to follow federal legislation due to being citizens of Canada.

Nonetheless, I return to our role and our ability to change any law applicable here. Absolutely, this is our role and why we are called legislators. We have the authority. This is part of the reason why the *Education Act* is being subjected to further legislative review.

We are the ones who got elected to become Members of the Legislative Assembly, not anyone else. That is what we are elected for, to represent our constituents as legislators. Always remember that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Enook, I'll remind you that this is your eighth and final question.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's provided no one gives me their question.

>>*Laughter*

I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Environment based on his comments earlier. In recalling his earlier statement, he stated that when he is faced with a decision, he has to take outside interests into account. In particular, the group he mentioned was (interpretation ends) CITES. (interpretation) Without a background in wildlife management, I have no Inuktitut name for it, although I understand pretty well what it is. The minister stated on more than one occasion that this organization accepted our polar bear management system. As legislators, we weren't aware that outside groups also had to approve our management systems. That is how I understood it.

I would like to ask the minister this question: as the Minister of the Environment and to use our polar bear management system specifically, do you make your decisions taking outside organizations' interests into consideration? I am referring to your example of the usage of (interpretation ends) CITES, (interpretation) that they have to approve our system or rather, that they approved our current system. You don't use past population studies as your foundations for these decisions? Are you just trying to please these outside groups?

I am asking that question based on your earlier statement. When you have to make a decision, for example, on polar bear issues, do you have to take into account these outside organizations' interests when making your decision? You stated that this group approves of our current management system and I base it on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Environment, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you. I will base my answer in my role as a hunter as I am still a hunter, although I also hold the ministerial portfolio. I still hunt and continue to follow the interrelated issues ever since the animal rights activist group, Greenpeace, stopped the sealskin trade. I have kept my eye on global impacts and many hunters are doing that as well.

I will answer this question based on my position as the Minister of the Environment with respect to polar bears. In Canada, polar bears are under the mandate of Environment Canada and they are managed cooperatively. That is the way it is.

Now, Inuit have had trade markets lost where sales of skins formed the basis of Inuit independence, especially our hunters. I witnessed my father's independence taken away by people who had never set foot on our lands from the outside. That is why I have never let go of this outsider influence and I always keep an eye on developments. I will continue to fight these intrusions as I am a hunter.

That is why I stated and I hope you understand clearly that our management system, which incorporated both *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* as well as scientific studies, was reviewed by the (interpretation ends) CITES animal committee. (interpretation) That is a subcommittee of CITES. Today, this committee can finally approve of Nunavut's polar bear management system and our legislation in both Canada and Nunavut to this end.

It was the first time the (interpretation ends) animal committee under CITES (interpretation) that I was referring to has ever approved the system. Let's look at this statement. I said I would use that as a weapon in this House whereby I was speaking about CITES-related issues. I will definitely use that as a weapon if they are going to attempt further disruption in our management of polar bears. I stated I would use the approval of our system as a weapon in order for our hunters to be able to continue the trade and sale of harvested polar bear skins.

I have seen the approval of this subcommittee of Canada's polar bear management system and as I have stated previously, we have cooperative management and Nunavut is singularly unique. We listen to all groups and their positions, but it is the organizations that can close certain trade markets that we have to be focused on today.

I used a prior reference to the seal trade that collapsed. Preceding this collapse, Inuit were independent and there was no such thing as welfare and the majority of Inuit were able to survive without any handouts as we were self-sufficient. When Inuit hunters wanted to buy equipment, they used the sale of furs to purchase their equipment and most hunters had disposable income.

I am not saying that CITES is an animal rights organization, but a tool for world governments to monitor trade in plants and animals, as that is their role. What I am saying here is the management system created by government, NWMB, and NTI through the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement where finally *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* has started to be incorporated has led to statements of approval.

We have continued to state that our management system is adequate and our wildlife management systems have proper checks and balances. We have been managing wildlife for many years and they are finally getting that message. They are starting to comprehend this fact.

I am in that camp as a hunter, although I no longer can hunt every day. That is the reason why I tried to clarify that comment. I'm not only listening to CITES and I want that clearly understood. I don't know of one hunter in that group and I don't know of any ministers listening to that group.

As the Minister of Environment, Nunavut's polar bear management methods have been set up and it's probably the best in the world and it finally got recognized. We have been talking about it for a very long time and it finally got supported.

Animals make me emotional, at least personally, due to our historic subjugation to outside influences. I really want to look after this mandate. Our hunters and every person listening to us, we are trying to represent them properly to ensure hunters can succeed without unnecessary hurdles. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Looking at my list of names, Mr. Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's good that I still have many questions left.

>>*Laughter*

It may be due to my lack of guile that I have leftover questions and partially due to not asking enough questions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is to be directed to the Minister of Environment when it perhaps should be directed to the Minister of Transportation.

Nonetheless, we are all aware that I represent Clyde River as one of my constituency communities and I don't want to use this as my only reasoning, as we are all aware of the difficulties faced by the community of Clyde River.

We have heard of Clyde River's fight to stop the seismic testing due to their concerns on the impacts to our wildlife. This is a major concern since wildlife, wherever they inhabit their niche, whether they live in terrestrial or marine environments, would be drastically impacted if any type of accident were to occur. Furthermore, I think all members are aware that seismic testing has severe negative impacts on all animals. The entire eastern coast of Baffin Island would be impacted if an accident occurred or if seismic testing is approved for the coast.

Has the Minister of Environment been concerned on seismic testing having an impact on wildlife? Clyde River residents are fighting wholeheartedly against seismic testing through the court process to ensure their wildlife isn't unduly impacted by seismic testing. I would like to ask the minister if he shares in the concern about this testing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Environment, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you. I also thank my colleague for asking that question. Yes, this is currently being fought in the court process and it is hard to deal with this issue due to lack of clarity and until the court system completes their review. Once a decision has been made, planning can take place as to how we will approach this issue.

Further, with respect to work being done in the high latitudes and offshore areas, my mandate in the Department of Environment doesn't apply in that area. We would have to approach more senior government levels to deal with this issue, which is part of their mandate, and to wait for the federal government's position on the matter.

With this still in the court system, it is usually very difficult to anticipate which direction the court will take. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I also want to clarify that when we first started the questioning process earlier, prior to the ministers' responses, we wouldn't focus on individual community impacts, but on the mandate held by each minister that members could ask about.

Mr. Keyootak. Thank you. I have no more names on my list. Do members agree that we have now completed the ministers' statements?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. At this time, we will take a 10-minute break. Thank you.

>>*Meeting recessed at 19:14 and resumed at 20:03*

Vote of Confidence

Chairman (interpretation): The results are written in English, so I'll read them in English.

(interpretation ends) The Nunavut Leadership Forum has expressed confidence in the following members of the Executive Council: Peter Taptuna, Monica Ell-Kanayuk, George Kuksuk, Johnny Mike, Paul Okalik, Keith Peterson, and Paul Quassa. The Nunavut Leadership Forum has expressed non-confidence in the following member of the Executive Council: Ms. Jeannie Ugyuk.

(interpretation) Thank you, Members. We have completed the voting procedure.

At this time, on the agenda, we would like Minister, Ms. Ugyuk, to make a brief comment.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to see a motion if you would like to remove me from the Executive Council. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Do ministers wish to make their statement? Mr. Premier Taptuna.

Hon. Peter Taptuna: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll stand for this. I appreciate your confidence in me. As usual, I'll be doing my best to fulfill the obligations that we promised that we do for Nunavummiut and I appreciate that. Thank you very much, my colleagues from both sides of the House here. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister Kuksuk.

Hon. George Kuksuk (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, fellow Nunavummiut. I also thank my colleagues. Again, I have the same thoughts as the Premier. I will do my best to perform my roles and responsibilities. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Ms. Ell-Kanayuk.

Hon. Monica Ell-Kanayuk (interpretation): I would also like to stand to speak, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank all of my colleagues from both sides of the House for having confidence in me. I will do my best for the next two years and I'm looking forward to working together with you because that's the only way we can achieve our goals and objectives as a government. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Quassa.

Hon. Paul Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank everyone for declaring their confidence in us. I have always wanted to work on revamping the Department of Education because of its importance and because our children are our future. I will do so for our students, our teachers, and our staff. I will do my best to make sure that everything proceeds and of course, we will need your support and cooperation in the next two years. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, my colleagues. I would like to thank you for your confidence in me, (interpretation ends) and I will continue to protect your interests and promote your interests for all Nunavummiut, the environment, the land, and the waters. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, express my thanks to all of my colleagues for their vote of confidence in me. I'll continue to work hard under Finance, the Qulliq Energy Corporation, and the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, Mr. Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank you for giving me the confidence. You will know that I'll use all my powers and privilege to work hard on behalf of people of Nunavut. I am proud that you have shown your confidence in me. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Do you agree that the ballots should be destroyed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you. With the authority provided to me by Motion 7 – 4(3), I hereby recall the House to sit at 9:00 p.m. this evening. Thank you.

>>*Meeting adjourned at 20:10*