



Nunavut Canada

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NUNAVUT

**Nunavut Leadership Forum:
Election of the Speaker, Premier and Ministers**

Official Report

Wednesday, November 17, 2021

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Members Present:

Mr. David Akeeagok, Mr. P.J. Akeeagok, Mr. Tony Akoak, Mr. Bobby Anavilok, Ms. Janet Brewster, Ms. Pamela Gross, Mr. George Hickes, Mr. David Joanasie, Mr. Joeline Kaernerck, Ms. Mary Killiktee, Mr. Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Mr. John Main, Mr. Solomon Malliki, Ms. Margaret Nakashuk, Ms. Karen Nutarak, Mr. Daniel Qavvik, Ms. Joanna Quassa, Mr. Inagayuk Quqqiaq, Mr. Alexander Sammurtok, Mr. Joe Savikataaq, Mr. Craig Simailak.

>>*Meeting commenced at 10:00*

Prayer

Clerk (Mr. John Quirke): Good morning. I call this meeting of the Nunavut Leadership Forum to order.

Before we proceed with the agenda, I call upon the Member for Baker Lake to deliver the prayer. Mr. Simailak.

>>*Prayer*

Adoption of Agenda

Clerk: Thank you. Members, it is my duty to convene today's proceedings of the Nunavut Leadership Forum for the selection of the Speaker, Premier, and Members of the Executive Council.

All members have copies of the procedures for the leadership selection process in front of them. The procedures have been agreed to by all members.

A copy of today's agenda is also in front of the members. Do members agree to adopt the agenda?

Some Members: Agreed.

Nominations for Speaker

Clerk: Thank you. I will now open the floor for nominations for the position of Speaker.

I remind members that if you are nominated, you must immediately accept or decline the nomination.

Are there any nominations for Speaker? The Member for Cambridge Bay, Ms. Gross.

Ms. Gross: *Koana*, Mr. Chairman. I would like to nominate the Member for Gjoa Haven, Tony Akoak, for Speaker.

Clerk: Thank you. Does the member from Gjoa Haven accept the nomination?

Mr. Akoak: Yes, I accept.

Acclamation of Speaker

Clerk: Are there any other nominations?

I am pleased, therefore, to announce that the Member for Gjoa Haven has been acclaimed as Speaker-elect of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut.

>>*Applause*

Thank you, members. The appropriate motion will be moved in the House at its first sitting to confirm the selection.

I will now turn the Chair over to Speaker-elect Mr. Akoak.

Nominations for Premier

Chairman (Mr. Tony Akoak): Hello, Inuit, (interpretation) as well as Nunavummiut who are following the proceedings, I thank you. To my colleagues, I am very grateful for being selected by you to the seat of the Speaker which I will now occupy during our meeting today.

To all fellow Nunavummiut, we are thinking of you in attending to our decisions here, and we will work together towards a better life, and collaborate while here to support and assist our constituents. I am very thankful to each and every one of you. Thank you.

>>*Applause*

(interpretation ends) Thank you. I am also pleased to take this opportunity to welcome Nunavummiut who are following today's proceedings, which are being televised live across the territory.

As Speaker-elect, I am pleased to now open the floor for nominations for the position of Premier.

I remind members that if you are nominated, you must immediately accept or decline the nomination.

I am now open to nominations on the floor. Member from Cambridge Bay, Ms. Gross.

Ms. Gross: *Koana*, Mr. Speaker. I would like to nominate Iqaluit-Niaqunngu Member P.J. Akeegok for Premier. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Member for Niaqunnguu, do you accept the nomination? P.J. Akeeagok.

Mr. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I accept.

Chairman: Thank you. Are there any other nominations? Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: I would like to nominate Lorne Kusugak.

Chairman: Thank you. Does Member Kusugak accept the nomination?

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Yes, I accept.

Chairman: Thank you. Are there any other nominations for Premier? Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you. Good morning. I would like to nominate Joe Savikataaq. Thank you.

Chairman: Does Mr. Savikataaq accept the nomination?

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Yes, I accept.

Chairman: Are there any other nominations? Thank you. There being no other nominations, we will now proceed to the candidates' speeches. Each candidate has up to 20 minutes to deliver their speech. We will proceed in alphabetical order by surname. Mr. P.J. Akeeagok.

Mr. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I take pride in you having the trust of our colleagues as that was why they selected you to this role as Chairman, obviously, and I anticipate you will diligently fulfill the duties of your office and role.

I also wish a very good morning to all Nunavummiut, particularly my new constituents of Iqaluit-Niaqunnguu. Good morning and I am proud this morning to stand for this position.

I wish to start off strongly with this issue because yesterday we were deeply touched by our young people of Iqaluit who marched in protest into this House to voice their concerns. This was deeply emotional as we felt the passion and urgency in their voices. I wanted to firstly acknowledge our youth. (interpretation ends) They walked out from the school and marched into this legislature, into their House. The youth are demanding to be heard. (interpretation) They want to be heard. We are in a crisis. (interpretation ends) We are in a crisis. They are crying out for help. I want every one of them to know that I heard you loud and clear and that I will do everything within my power to bring tangible solutions to the issues that you brought forward. (interpretation) I heard the concerns that they wanted to voice to us.

I would like to thank my colleague from Cambridge Bay, Ms. Gross, for nominating me. (interpretation ends) It truly is an honour to be put forward by such an inspirational leader like yourself. (interpretation) Thank you very much, (interpretation ends) for your confidence in me to lead. I am very humbled to accept that nomination. (interpretation) I thank you very much. (interpretation ends) I am grateful for the overwhelming confidence that Iqaluit-Niaqunnguut constituents provided me and by trusting in me to represent them here at this legislature. I will work tirelessly to bring forward the issues that matter to them that have brought me here today.

I also want to congratulate all of my colleagues who have been elected and acclaimed to serve as the next Members of the Legislative Assembly. Running for office is hard work and it comes with many sacrifices, and being here means we've got the confidence and trust of both our constituents but also our families.

It's over two decades since our territory was formally established. (interpretation) Nunavut leaders had the vision which they worked hard towards. I am proud that Inuit had such visionaries that enabled the people of Nunavut to move forward.

(interpretation ends) Nunavut is a place for our people to take charge of our destinies and build a future for our families and our communities. It is that vision of hope that truly inspires me. It truly inspires me to be here today to seek your support for premiership. I am here because we are at a crossroads. We have a chance to decide on a new direction collectively.

In the past two decades we have accomplished a great deal as a territory and we have much to be proud of as a territory.

We have created a legislature where we govern in our four official languages and really have built a consensus model that truly brings the issues from every community that we serve.

We have built a college that allows young people to pursue meaningful careers, either as lawyers, as nurses, as artisans, (interpretation) or to take the Environmental Technology Program.

We have built the Piqqusilirivvik facility where Inuit culture and values form the educational foundation that can be promoted and taught in the future, allowing people to formulate better plans to address future challenges.

We have also planned for growth in the fisheries sector to create jobs for Nunavummiut and enable people to stand independently and provide needed cash infusions for many communities.

These are just a few examples, but there are multiple examples to portray what Nunavut has accomplished.

(interpretation ends) We also face many systemic challenges. After two decades as a territory, we continue to struggle with the lack of housing. Inuit continue to deal with the homelessness, with multiple families forced to share a single home. Many young families are still finding it hard to scrape together money for a down-payment; others can't earn enough to pay for rent and to put food on the table.

We continue to face shortages of services to address the intergenerational trauma, addictions, and mental health. (interpretation) Thank you.

(interpretation ends) Inuit in need of help have few options when looking for mental health services in our language delivered by mental health workers familiar with our culture and our way of life.

We have yet to find tangible solutions to providing elder care at home so our parents and grandparents could live their last years in dignity, surrounded by family and community. We need to find a way to keep our elders at home, where they could be supported by family and community.

Parents continue to struggle with the burden of finding accessible and affordable child care to give our children the head start in their foundational years. We have yet to implement a full-day kindergarten and our daycares struggle with the weight of the administration put on them. We have to champion daycares and open and expand facilities where they're needed most.

As we move forward towards devolution, we need a different approach to those challenges. It's time for a new way of governing. The solutions for Nunavut will not come from outside the territory. The vision for change has to be rooted right here in Nunavut. (interpretation) We should not forget that. As people of Nunavut we have to see a change and it's up to us to make that change. (interpretation ends) We need new energy, new ideas, and a renewed spirit of collaboration to move forward towards a brighter future for our territory. Nunavut is ready for new leadership. It's time for us to propose actions and tangible solutions.

During my seven years, (interpretation) Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) as the President of the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, I was able to accomplish, with a great team around me, with few resources at our disposal, but a very dedicated team and the willingness to collaborate with all levels of government. During my time at the QIA, we implemented a daycare subsidy program for Inuit families, partnered to produce numerous Inuktitut children's books, and created and distributed literacy resources to daycares right across our beautiful territory.

Together we were able to realize the vision of past leaders when we protected Tallurutiup Imanga as a national marine conservation area (interpretation) and Tuvaijuittuq (interpretation ends) as a marine protected area. These historic agreements created a strong foundation of diversifying our economy. They established the Nauttiqsuqtiit right

in our local communities, creating very meaningful employment opportunities for the smaller communities that often seek and want these opportunities.

While also doing that, we also bolstered sustainable industries such as fisheries by creating essential marine infrastructure right across the High Arctic. This infrastructure included most recently with \$40 million that was announced in new funding for the development of the deep sea port in Qikiqtarjuaq, an investment that will mean many more opportunities in the fisheries and marine sector that have been championed by the local community for many decades of that vision.

I am also pleased by the role the QIA played in the transitional men's home right here in Iqaluit, which houses many from every community that we all serve here in this legislature.

However, I know much more work is needed to support our children's education, creating and empowering meaningful jobs for Inuit, assist our elders, house our communities and grow sustainable industries, such as fisheries, here in Nunavut. As Nunavut grows, we also face the exciting task of negotiating our devolution from the federal government. I decided to run for office to tackle these challenges. I know that as Premier, with the support of my colleagues here right from across Nunavut, we could achieve meaningful change (interpretation) for Nunavummiut.

(interpretation ends) My leadership has always been based on *Katujjiqatigiinniq* (bridge building). I have always looked at ways to gain allies and achieve goals through true cooperation. I believe that Nunavut needs a leader who could break down the silos between the different levels of governments, including Inuit organizations, and create strong partnerships to better address the needs of Nunavummiut that we so know. I want to create alliances with all levels governments so that we could tackle the big issues in our territory: housing, elder care, and mental health.

As I look around the room today, I am truly inspired with the newly elected members that have come in right from across this territory. It gives me so much hope for the future of what we will be able to accomplish in the next four years collectively. Together we can build the houses that we need, brainstorm true solutions that come from everyone to address the elder care, and address the needs of our children and our families in Nunavut.

(interpretation) Mr. Chairman, I truly believe that if we work together and use *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* as our foundation, we will truly represent and know where we come from. It is something that we have to work on collectively. (interpretation ends) Our shared passion, (interpretation) our language, and our traditions could be our foundation to realize the dreams that we have. (interpretation ends) It is that shared passion for our language and people that will fuel our efforts to build our territory, vitalize our economy, and empower our communities.

As we move towards that next chapter for Nunavut, we will need to rely on each other through the consensus model to truly realize the vision for the territory, as encompassed

in the *Nunavut Act*. We must never lose sight of our shared vision for Nunavut. (interpretation) We should never lose our vision and to urge the people of Nunavut to continue realizing that dream.

(interpretation ends) This vision for Nunavut is not only a shared dream for Inuit but has become a beacon for many newcomers and immigrants who continue to join us as residents to our beautiful territory, Nunavut. As we continue to grow, these communities enrich our territory with new ideas and experiences from around Canada and around the world. As a government we must rise to the occasion and we must lead our territory to the next chapter as we achieve devolution. We have to believe in our collective ability and achieve what we have always wanted for our people: economic prosperity, language revitalization, cultural pride, and our opportunity.

(interpretation) Thank you very much, and I'm sure that we will collaborate and I would be very pleased to lead this government as Premier and realize all of our dreams. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. You may return to your seat. We will proceed to the next candidate. Member for Rankin Inlet, Mr. Kusugak. Mr. Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I wish to start off with voicing my appreciation and thanks to all Nunavummiut who took the time to vote in their communities, along with all of the candidates who ran in every riding. We now sit in this House, and I also wish to thank everyone who was unable to get elected or stuck at home, and I thank you all very much for your patience. It is through the election process that we select a government based on voting for whom we want to see and I am very proud and pleased to see you all. I also thank the member who nominated me.

All of us knocked on many doors to get to our seats here. We have all spent many hours and days over the last month talking to the people about their concerns, needs, vision, the issues that need correction or resolution, and many issues were voiced for our consideration from the people of Nunavut which we need to mull over here. How will we deal with these issues?

Our debates will shape our priorities and our decisions. I will not dwell on this issue too much today, but the selection of the Premier is our work today, and we must include these ideas that our constituents transferred when determining who will be our leader and Premier. I will speak to the issues I feel are best for our territory within my own perception or outlook. Some have spoken about changing legislation and we will definitely have to review some laws during the Sixth Assembly, as we are making the Sixth Government today within Nunavut.

(interpretation ends) One of the few things that most Canadians actually know about Nunavut is that we have a consensus-style government. For most of them, and unfortunately for many of us, that has come to mean a government without political parties, but that is not what consensus means.

To the negotiators and the founders of the GN, it meant much more than just an absence of parties when they opted for a consensus style government. The goal, I believe, was a government that isn't dominated by any single decision-making body or individual, but a government in which everyone has a voice; every one of you, a government that builds on the ideas that the creativity and the strength of every elected member of the team, not just the cabinet.

Under our current system, nine ministers answer to 13 regular members. That seems, for the most part, our members are responding to plans and materials tabled by members of the cabinet, and that to me is a waste of the talent and perspective of our MLAs, regular members, new or old, equally, and cabinet should be equal partners in governance right from the very first critical step, the development of this Assembly's mandate.

(interpretation) We were not elected just to review issues neither should we just stop at reviewing laws as that was not part of our campaigning promises. We must debate materials submitted by cabinet or prepared by bureaucrats and deputy ministers, and they should never be initiatives we the elected members have not seen previously. Each elected member holds the responsibility for governance and must partake in the review as part of this government, especially when future plans or strategies are being formulated, and I believe governance is the responsibility of every member here especially when brainstorming future strategies or plans.

(interpretation ends) I propose that we engage both members of cabinet and regular members in the development of this government's mandate, which will form the basis of our agenda for the next four years. I will call for this government to set its mandate through a retreat of all MLAs as quickly as possible, most likely in the new year. We will use that session to establish working committees of MLAs and ministers with specific policy and planning tasks in key areas, which I would like to outline.

There are many specific things I see us achieve over the life of this government, but the most important one that many of us see is change in the culture of our government, a real step towards consensus government. (interpretation) I believe this is critical as we need to start changing how this government operates, especially since this government will have to make tough choices in partnership, not divided or individually. Divisiveness never causes people to reconnect.

(interpretation ends) On one hand, interest and knowledge of Nunavut and Inuit has never been higher in the general population, thanks to our creative sector and thanks to the appointment of Canada's first Inuk Governor General. On the other hand, Canada is entering a very challenging period in terms of its finances. We can't kid ourselves about that. COVID has created a massive global financial crisis. We can't count on additional support from Ottawa, so that is the challenge. We have federal goodwill, but we can't expect any increase in federal resources.

(interpretation) We must deliberate on these tough and hard choices, which I want you to be aware of, as we need to move beyond the sense of competition for community-specific

benefits, as we need to first determine from whence this funding will be raised from. We must deal with wildlife, housing, and health issues all from one pot. Where are we going to get the funds from in order to deal with these issues, and how will we allocate these scarce resources? Where are we going to see it and how will we use it? That is a decision we have to make. (interpretation ends) As Premier, I would see my job as facilitating the development of a four-year agenda to meet our priorities and building real consensus for its implementation.

Over the course of the campaign and in the days since the election, I had the opportunity to read your campaign brochures and, in some cases, your websites, along with mine, and I was struck by the fact that all of us seem to share almost exactly the same priorities. I think that bodes well for the collaboration on the work ahead. I would like to touch briefly on some of those shared priorities in no particular order.

(interpretation) Housing, over the course of my campaign and in listening to radio shows, this was continually and repeatedly raised as a number one concern, which is no wonder. Current estimates suggest that we need at least 3,000 new units just to meet the current needs. Three thousand! How will we build these units as it's also growing every year? I know that every single member has a friend or family member on a waiting list for housing and some have been on the waiting list for years. We all know the devastating impacts the lack of housing is having on physical and mental health, employment, and virtually every indicator of social well-being.

(interpretation ends) The reason housing remains such a critical issue is that our strategies have always been geared to meeting immediate critical needs. We all know that's essential, but going forward, we will need to work with what we've got to set in place measures that will also address the long-term need. Otherwise, we remain trapped in a permanent cycle of managing a permanent crisis without doing anything to eliminate the root cause.

Every year we hammer out a hundred houses and spend the money. We have focused to date on increasing the number of public housing units constructed using a stick-build approach because it maximizes short-term employment and economic activity in a given community, but that approach has failed to meet the demand and we find ourselves in a worst position than ever.

(interpretation) I think that an initial action of a government should be to create focus groups, such as a housing working group or committee that will immediately begin working on the file, such as the Minister responsible for Housing, MLAs, perhaps set it at two and recruit some NHC and LHO representatives, employees to look into this challenge. I believe we need to deliberate on immediate ways to provide specific and tangible recommendations that can be acted upon by existing bodies and how we can best evaluate whether current designs or single units or a mix would be best. We obviously need to look at various ways to meet our housing challenges and how best to resolve this challenge.

Many members here have spoken about housing and also asked questions related to housing. Obviously we need to work together and not have decisions made for us. We need to deliberate now as we were elected to serve in our roles and to look at what the recommendations may be, perhaps not right away but perhaps two or three months' work before they return to report on their recommendations to the membership and this House. They would most likely speak to options and recommendations.

(interpretation ends) In the short term we need to look at alternatives to stick-built housing and examine some of the solutions emerging in other jurisdictions based on new technology. There have been some remarkable successes elsewhere in Canada and the United States on modular housing units and other innovations for us to explore. I think housing is a priority we all agree on.

I am very proud of the work of the Department of Health, as I switch onto health. Over the last couple of years they have done tremendous work. I think our territorial response was among the best in Canada in terms of protection and communication with the public on actual outcomes.

I would like to take just a moment here to thank the extraordinary people who were on the frontlines and still are helping to fight the COVID crisis. I applaud each and every one of you that is working to deal with this crisis. Unfortunately, the crisis tended to overshadow some of our long-standing needs in the area of health policy. While we are still dealing with COVID and its aftereffects and will for some years to come, some things can no longer afford to wait on the backburner.

We're now in the final stages of negotiating a whole new level of devolution and we are on the road to eventual provincial status. We have to start building the human and technical infrastructure to take care of our very own people. For example, I believe we need to take a hard look at the huge portion of health funding that we spend on medical travel alone. This is a perfect example of spending to meet short-term needs while failing to address the root cause of those needs over the long-term.

Why are we paying to fly people south for dialysis, for example, when we know the need for dialysis support is growing in Nunavut? Why are so many of us travelling south for chemotherapy when we know this is care that's going to be required by a growing population of Nunavummiut? It's time to engage in discussions with Health Canada to establish a realistic long-term capacity development strategy to provide both services right here in Nunavut, in your community.

(interpretation) We have to plan for the expansion of health care provision, not only in the larger communities but in your health centres. Why can't we start working on those things, such as dental care and mental health? All these services can be provided in our health centres. We should not just be waiting now. We were told by young people yesterday, "We are tired of waiting." Certainly.

I believe that elder care should be one of the first priorities, elder care in our community, not just in regional centres, in all of our communities. Elders are not all ill. Some are elderly and are much healthier than some of us. Their families' grandparents need to go home and their communities need to provide support for them and not just support them. Our elders have contributed so much to our communities and they can still contribute much to our communities.

When we send elders away, we lose a lot and this is true and we should not just be sending them south. We need to have facilities for our elders and we need to build infrastructure in all Nunavut communities. This must be our priority today. Communities are more settled when elders are home and elders should be there, not just in facilities, and it is something we should have taken care of yesterday.

(interpretation ends) I spoke earlier about the goal of trying to establish a truer, deeper consensus with government and of breaking down some of the barriers between cabinet, regular members, and our staff. There is another important partnership I would like to develop over the next four years and that's our partnership with NTI. The Government of Nunavut and NTI have collaborated formally and informally since the earliest days of implementation. That cooperation has included participation, planning, decision and policy making in the institutions of public government, structured consultation in the preparation of critical legislation, including wildlife, education and language Acts, and the ongoing joint initiative with the NNI program.

In 2020 we saw the ratification of the Katujjigatigiinniq Protocol between NTI and the Government of Nunavut intended to lead to productive working relationships and outcomes, yet too often we still maintain an adversarial mindset with NTI and Inuit organizations seeing themselves as somehow on the other side. Well, I worked for Inuit organizations for years, and I can tell you there is no other side. We are all on the same side. We all want exactly the same thing: a territory that reflects Inuit history and culture, creates Inuit communities, and promotes Inuit prosperity and well-being of every kind. We shouldn't see NTI as the opposition and they shouldn't see us as the enemy. We welcome critical scrutiny, but we welcome informed collaboration and partnership even more.

(interpretation) I would like to talk about decentralization. When the government first started dividing up the departments into communities, communications were weak. We had to use CB radios and fax machines. We had to rely on that kind of technology back then. With computers and the Internet, our computers would stop working, but we got past that and we continued with decentralization.

(interpretation ends) Today the opportunity to really realize the potential of decentralization is a promise. The technology has just about caught up with the need and it is forecast that in the very near future we will enjoy bandwidth comparable to that of southern Canada.

Ironically one of the most difficult crises in our recent history, the COVID epidemic, may have prepared us for a huge step forward. We have learned through COVID that the old days of big bricks and mortar government buildings are passing and that people can work effectively, economically, and comfortably from their homes, even while their office is in another region.

There is no reason not to consider moving positions to underserved communities. Again, the benefits are huge; lower facility costs and an opportunity to address one of the most stubborn problems the GN has yet to tackle, staffing and training. Decentralization could help us fill the 1,500 vacant positions. We can begin to fill them in every community at every level in your communities.

Of course this could further relieve housing stresses on the regional centres, while stimulating local construction and small business. Some have expressed concern about the impact that further decentralization might have on Iqaluit. Frankly I would see it as a net gain for both Iqaluit and the communities. The pool of skilled, experienced employees in Iqaluit is already maxed out and drained, and hiring and relocating Nunavummiut to the capital has put a tremendous burden on the capital's infrastructure. Instead of overloading the health and education and social services of Iqaluit, let's move the jobs to where the people are, to your communities instead of the other way around.

Colleagues, we are not just MLAs. We are elected officials, elected to make decisions on these very things that I was talking about and more. There is so much more out there that we need to tackle and with your support, I would really like to lead this ship to ensure that every Nunavummiuq is included, is thought of, and participates in the decisions that we are going to make over the next four years. Thank you for giving me the time and opportunity to speak with you.

Chairman: Thank you, Member Kusugak. You may return to your seat and we will proceed to the next candidate. Mr. Savikataaq. Proceed, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. First of all, I would like to thank the people of Arviat because they believed in me enough to bring me back here and if they had not had the confidence to send me back here, I would not be standing here.

Right now we will be selecting the Premier and the Premier will be leading Nunavut for the next four years. Right now we are all the same. If you just got elected for the first time or a returning MLA, we are all in the same boat right now, we all have the same voice, and everybody will get a chance to vote.

While I'm speaking here today, I will be open to you all and tell you why I should be the Premier. I have been the Premier in the past four years and I'm happy with it. It's challenging sometimes, but I'm happy to do it and I would like to keep on doing it. In the past four years since I started, this has been the best job I ever had and I was always working hard for it and trying to do a good job, and I humble myself because I got

elected by the previous MLAs and the people of Nunavut would call me with their support and that they trust me as Premier and I thank them for that. Once we finish today, I would like to continue to be the Premier for the people of Nunavut so that Nunavut can proceed well.

(interpretation ends) My job today is to convince you that I am the right person to lead this territory for the next four years, and I'm going to base that on my leadership style, my views, my values, my commitment, my knowledge, my fairness to treat everyone as an equal, and I ask everyone here to listen to me with an open mind.

We should not have any preconceived ideas for the persons who are running to lead this territory. Listen to them, question them, find out who that person is, and cast your ballot with an open mind. When we cast our ballot, it will be a secret ballot and we will come out with a Premier and we will all support that Premier, but please have an open mind and listen to the candidates, feel the candidates out, know their values, know their commitment, know what they stand for and what is vitally important.

We need a steady leader to lead this beautiful territory of us that's going to work with all the MLAs, all cabinet members, all Nunavummiut, and I believe I'm the right person for that and I plan to convince all 22 of you, counting myself, 21 of you, 22 including me, that I am the choice to lead this territory again.

(interpretation) I would like you to look back at the four years that we completed on the things that the Nunavut government has done and is doing. We went through some challenging times. We went through the ransomware, the COVID-19 pandemic arrived here as well, and recently the water problems in Iqaluit.

(interpretation ends) I would like to talk about some of the challenges that we have had in the last four years and how we have overcome them.

Earlier on in the stages of this government, we had the ransomware. All government computers could not work anymore. Under my leadership, we met the challenge and we succeeded. Services still were getting to Nunavummiut that deserve it; income support was one of them. Services were slower, but they didn't stop. We were able to overcome that challenge, and then COVID-19.

COVID-19 came into this world and we kept it out of Nunavut for as long as we could. Some of the choices that we did were not popular, but we did what we needed to do to protect Nunavummiut from COVID. We always knew it was going to come, but keeping it out of Nunavut gave us time to prepare and gave us time to understand this COVID. Then when COVID did hit Nunavut, we were better prepared.

I was on TV daily to inform Nunavummiut, to calm Nunavummiut that we are dealing with COVID and let them know what government is doing; reassure Nunavummiut. It was a scary time, and as Nunavut's Premier, when Nunavummiut were scared and hurting, I was too. It was a scary time, but we know a lot more about COVID now and we

have the vaccines, and I encourage all Nunavummiut, if you have not been vaccinated, please get vaccinated. Now is the time. I went on the radio every morning in Inuktitut and English to assure Nunavummiut that we are working on their behalf, we are looking out for their interests, and we are doing what needs to be done to keep them safe; all Nunavummiut.

(interpretation) If we can look at what we have done in the past four years with infrastructure, the construction of big buildings, homes, health centres, and airport terminal buildings all proceeded well.

With education, the previous MLAs passed (interpretation ends) Bill 25. (interpretation) Education is very important and I know that we will all push hard for it.

Health is another matter for Nunavummiut where they want care closer to home. We worked hard on that and we will continue to work hard on it.

There is the Inuktitut language as well and we are trying to make sure that it progresses into the future because the people of Nunavut are supposed to be served with their mother tongue or the language of their choice.

We want to increase the number of Inuit employed within the government, and we have increased that number since Nunavut was created and we will continue to work on that following Article 23 of the *Nunavut Agreement*. We will push hard for that to make sure that Inuit have proper jobs within the government, not just lower level jobs. We want to make sure that they get the higher level jobs as well, like managers and directors. As Premier, we increased the number of Inuit in higher level positions and I'm happy about that.

Right now we continue to work on these things and we know we need to do more, and I will rely on all of the MLAs to do that, including the cabinet that will be elected. We will all have to work together to proceed forward. It is impossible to do the work alone. I kept trying to work well with all of the MLAs and once they are in town, I would visit them or have coffee with them because they don't live in Iqaluit.

To talk about why I would be a good Premier, I worked for the government before. I know how the government operates. I have been a hamlet councillor for 20 years and I know the challenges that hamlet councils go through trying to help their people. They work very hard and I know that. I have been a regular member and I know how you feel. I know how hard it is during question period. I know how hard it is to get people to understand you. I have been there.

I have also been a minister. I have been a Minister of Family Services, Department of Environment, the Department of Community and Government Services, the housing corporation, and the Department of Economic Development and Transportation. I know the challenges or how hard the kind of work that the ministers do, but our work has not been completed yet. I know that.

I have also been a premier for four years. It is a difficult position and sometimes we have to make some very hard decisions, but I have been through that and I know very well that in the coming four years, we are going to have to make some tough decisions, some very hard decisions. I have gone through that and I know it.

(interpretation ends) For the MLAs, experience accounts for a lot. I have experienced all levels of government: regular MLA, minister, and Premier. I have had to make some tough decisions and some unpopular decisions as Premier. I have made them, I can make them, and if I am elected as your Premier again, I will have to make them. Whoever is elected Premier will have to make tough decisions. If someone thinks there are no tough decisions to be made, the learning curve will be huge. We have a huge challenge in front of us and we have to meet it head on.

Some of the examples of tough decisions that I have already made are to do with ministers, to do with COVID. Some of the good decisions and good news stories that I have made are the agreement in principle for devolution. We have signed that. We're on the steps of getting devolution. The path is set so that we can dictate our own future; raise more revenue on our own needed revenues.

We signed the tri-party agreement to have the addiction and trauma treatment centre here in Iqaluit. I signed that agreement with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the federal government. That is coming. It can't be here quick enough, as we saw the protest we had seen in this House yesterday, but it is coming.

Looking forward, based on the work that I have accomplished since 2018, I want cabinet to keep gender in mind. We need the views of women. It is important. We need gender in cabinet. Cabinet should all not be one gender. I've had three female members in my cabinet and I hope I get at least the same number. It makes a difference. I support all the women that will want to run for cabinet. It is important.

And regional representation; cabinet should be from all regions. It is important. Cabinet is there for Nunavut. Nunavut is all three regions. As the Premier, I was always a Nunavut Premier. As a Premier, I treat everyone equally, fairly, and it's about Nunavummiut's needs. It's not wants; it's needs and the needs are great and the needs are varied. I have been there. I can do it. I just need your support for me to continue to do it.

I recognize your top priorities. I read all your campaign issues and they are more or less all the same. We all want housing, elder care, and mental health facilities and those are the real issues that we will tackle, and the only way we can tackle them and get results is together as one, with one voice.

I just want to talk a little bit about elder care. Elder care is not just about elder care facilities. Let's take the example that if there are ten elders, one elder will need elder care facility assistance. The other nine elders want to stay home with their kids or grandkids in the house, and some elders are quite capable of being in their own house. We want to help them out.

The Minister of Health of the day did tell the members that an elder care strategy was being worked on, not just for elder care facilities but elder care for all of our elders. We value our elders. They are an important resource that guides us, they give us wisdom, and we are obligated and we will take care of all of our elders.

Before the pandemic, I made strides to engage the federal government and, if I'm elected Premier, I will do that again. I will lead a delegation of cabinet members to go talk with the key federal ministers so we can educate them and let them know our needs in Nunavut here, working with our newly elected MP. It is important that the federal government knows our needs. They are willing to help and we just have to steer them in the right direction.

In closing here, just listen to all the answers that will be answered here once the questions start coming for the leadership forum. I have the experience and the knowledge of doing the job. I am fair. I treat everyone equally. I have a strong work ethic. Hard work will not deter me or scare me away. I am kind. I feel when someone feels pain. It is real. I don't just sit up high in the ivory tower. I know what Nunavummiut feel, I know what Nunavummiut need, and I am committed to my job. When the going got tough, I didn't leave my job, and it was tough with COVID. It was real, I stayed, and we are persevering. We will come out better in the end. We are making a very important direction today right now as where Nunavut should go, and I believe I am the person that will take Nunavut in the path that all of you want to take it, that Nunavummiut want to take it.

(interpretation) When you make your vote today, listen well to our answers to see if we are responding adequately. We have no idea what the results of the election will be and we don't know how you are going to vote. I want to be elected by you to be Premier again, and I will work hard for all of you. I thank you for listening to me. I have met with some of the members. You all know who I am. I will work hard as Premier.

(interpretation ends) I ask for your support today so that I will continue to be your Premier; not the Premier, your Premier. I am here to be your Premier. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Savikataaq. Before we begin question period for the candidates, we will take a 20-minute recess. I do invite all members to join me in the lounge for light refreshments. Thank you.

>>House recessed at 11:04 and resumed at 11:26

Questioning Candidates for Premier

Chairman: Welcome back, everyone. Thank you, members. The Nunavut Leadership Forum has reconvened. I will now review the procedures for the question period for candidates for the position of Premier.

Each member not standing for the position of Premier may ask up to two questions.

Each candidate will then respond in turn to the question.

Questions do not need to be asked consecutively.

As Chair, I will exercise discretion with respect to the order in which candidates are invited to respond to questions, and I will enforce reasonable limitations on the length of questions and answers.

Do members have questions for the candidates? Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to start off with... We have three candidates in front of us right now, two have two-term experience here in the legislature and one, as mentioned, a seven-year term as the highest level of leadership at a regional Inuit organization. I listened very closely to the speeches you made with a lot of interest and there are a lot of good ideas from all of you, but I'm just going to ask a very simple question: over and above what you stated in your speech, why should I vote for you? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Mr. Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In short, Mr. Chairman, I ask for your vote based on what I have committed to this legislature, that we need a leader that is going to be all-inclusive and that every member will be treated with dignity and have just as much say in where this government goes as those that are put into cabinet and with the Premier. I commit to that and, if you vote for me, you will see a true consensus government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Akeeagok.

Mr. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Hickes. That's a very good question, as being the Premier is extremely important and the vision emanating forth can be used as a guide as something we can work together towards, and I feel very strongly that this focus is needed now.

I do take pride in the fact that I was elected previously for a couple of terms as the president of the Qikiqtani Inuit Association totalling seven years, serving as the leader of the organization. I always hold firmly to this principle of cooperative collaboration and working together in partnership with others, even when they have different ideas and concerns which they prioritize.

We needed to work with other regions in our roles, so issues that can be seen and touched tend to be the ones I worked with in conjunction with the board of directors. In that role, openness and a willingness to listen is paramount, so I always try to be open. As a leader, the ability to listen is critical. To use yesterday's example when our youth marched in protest to this House, they didn't want just flowery language, but something actually tangible.

As a leader, we have to be able to listen and really take things into consideration. I would like to point out that you cannot make arbitrary decisions singularly, especially on agreed to priorities such as our housing crisis, mental health issues, or our elders requiring repatriation. To use those examples, we cannot do it alone. We have to deal with Inuit organizations and the federal government in reality, not just with words.

I am proud in the past years we have real tangible benefits, and I have worked on it. I know we have all worked hard and if I was to be elected as Premier, I would like us to carry on with that work. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Member for [Arviat] South, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Why me? I have done the job. I'm doing the job as Premier. I have the experience as doing the job as the Premier. I have been consistent in how I do my tasks and my duties. I treat everyone fairly. I work with everyone from the regular MLAs, cabinet ministers, the Inuit orgs. I listen. I listen to Nunavummiut. I feel their pain. I know what they need and I have a track record that we get things done. There is a lot more to do, but we have tangible things that we did get done.

We fulfilled a mandate even when ransomware was there, even when COVID hit us, we continued to work, and under my leadership as a Premier we will deliver for Nunavummiut. In all of the topics that were on your campaign; elder care, housing, mental health, we have been working on them. We do need to do more, we will do more, and the number one reason why I should continue as Premier is I have done the job. I am doing the job. There is no learning curve. The direction of the government will weigh a little bit in terms of what all you MLAs want as a mandate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You bring up a good point with the continuum and I know there has been some legislation that has been ready to go and some that needs to be amended. What specific pieces of new legislation or amendments to existing legislation should be the priority of the next government? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Some of the legislation that was being worked on fell off of the table, and it would be easy to continue those, such as the alcohol tax and other legislation that we would be working on. It could come from the regular members; what is a priority of the regular members. It has to be what we, as one unit, what legislation should we go forward with. We will make that agenda on what is important in terms of what legislation should we tackle. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When I hear this question there are numerous pieces of legislation that we have to deal with and it is very obvious they need to be made our priority. We keep going back, for example, to the youth here in Iqaluit who came into their House and were seeking support from the members. Even though we have a housing crisis we also have to focus on the youth and suicide, which is very devastating for all of the communities in Nunavut. My goodness, we have lost way too many people and in Rankin Inlet in one month alone we lost four youth over the summer. It was very painful.

For example, we had the *Mental Health Act* that was passed in June in the spring and under that there is room. There are responsibilities. We have to increase the number of mental health workers at the community level and we have to make that a priority.

We shouldn't just be focusing on hiring mental health workers imported from the south. That is not the way to go about it. We also have very capable Inuit mental health workers who live here in our communities and will keep living here. We have to look at the different ideas so that we can recognize somebody who has mental health issues.

I would like to work with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the regional Inuit organizations, and the other entities that are willing to help us tackle those matters. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Member Akeegok.

Mr. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the member for asking that very good question.

To begin, we are all elected members. I can't say what the priorities must be if I am voted as Premier. We have to listen to each other. We all have diverse skills and talents and the mandate has to come from this government collectively, but I would like to focus on working together to decide what the priorities will be.

We are diverse group. We have come from different regions and we are here to represent the people of Nunavut. I would first of all like to focus on what the mandate should be, and then from there, all 22 of us prioritize the work of this government. Yes, we have to focus on the children and the youth and I believe every single one of us hold that as something important as being very important.

As I was told, we have to look back and see where we come from before we can go forward. We will keep looking at this, but the legislation will have to come from the regular members and also from the cabinet members and we have to do a proper assessment of where we stand and where we should be going. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list: Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Some communities, as we all know, have very few Government of Nunavut job openings. Currently the driving force for employment in our region now is mining.

What specific policies and actions should the territorial government take to support economic and natural resource development in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Member Akeeagok.

Mr. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the Member for Baker Lake for that very good question. Yes, it is true, it was a priority to see development at the community level and we also set up decentralized communities and yes, mines have opened up a lot of job opportunities.

I have gone to Baker Lake a few times and went to see the mine and also went to the Mary River mine and also visited each of the communities and listening to the communities there looking for the creation of jobs, especially the government, who has the capacity to create those jobs. We have to be prepared as a government to look at Article 23. I am very proud that Inuit are looking for the creation of jobs. I would work very closely together with Arctic College representatives and look at the mining plans and development within Nunavut and also focus on what benefits will be going to the outlying communities closest to the development site.

Education is our foundation and even if a mine is closing, the Inuit have taken on apprenticeship programs through the mining sector. I would work closely with the Minister responsible for Arctic College and also with the impacted communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We need economic development in Nunavut. The government is a big employer and right now we believe in decentralization and we have decentralization as the government is a big employer, but in terms of mines, as long as a mine is built and operated on Nunavummiut's terms, if it's done responsibly and sustainably, then it's a good thing. Mines bring good, high-paying jobs.

I have seen the difference that the mines in the Kivalliq have made to the people from the smaller communities that never had a chance to be employed before and now they're employed. They're not on income support. They are supporting their families. They own a vehicle. They own hunting equipment. They feel better. They know they're providing for their family, to their spouse and their kids, and they're proud of it.

As long as mining is done sustainably and it's acceptable to the people that it's going to affect, that is a good thing. We need to be able to get employment within Nunavut, whether it be the mine, private industry, businesses, and from the Government of

Nunavut, mining in Nunavut is the second biggest employer of Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When mining was created in Rankin Inlet, Rankin Inlet was a large community and we understand exactly how mines are created, and we are still feeling the effects of the debris that they left behind. Before the mining sector became a subject at the government level, we used to ask how the government supports the mining sector. I don't think we would be able to answer that question until we find out if we are all placing a priority on the mining sector.

For example, the Mary River site was supported by the regional Inuit associations and when they started talking about the second phase, they were reluctant to see that expansion. Where are the regional Inuit associations? Are they supporting the mine or are they opposed to the mine?

For sure, we have to draft a bill focusing on the mining sector. There are a lot of people who would like to work at the mines, and the rotation schedules are not liked by all. How can we improve the system, including the members and the minister responsible? We have to look at how we can further increase the employment rates. Is there a better approach instead of doing it on a rotational basis? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, members. On a different subject; elder care across Nunavut as we know is very important. Changes need to be made going forward to properly look after these very special people. What specific policies and actions should the territorial government take with respect to elder care in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. With respect to two people being Akeegok in this sitting, I will use their full names. P.J. Akeegok.

Mr. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank Mr. Simailak for asking that good question.

It is very hurtful when our precious elders are sent away. When I was campaigning and visiting people, it was very painful to hear. We have to work on all aspects of this now. It has been many years since there has been talk about planning for our elders. I was very proud of you, Mr. Simailak, when the people of Baker Lake protested on how much more work we need to do down there. I really felt that.

First of all, once we are sitting on Friday, I know there is a signed petition, and we are all concerned about this issue in all of our communities. I see your question as being a two-part question.

First of all, our precious elders are being sent from all of our communities to the south. Once they have a disability, because of course they have to be properly cared for, they are sent down south because we don't have the facilities to properly care for them here. We have heard that facilities could operate or function here. If I am supported as Premier, I will have this thoroughly explored within the coming year. We have to come up with definitive solutions and make plans on this issue. The Premier should not be the sole person holding the pen. Leaders should not be the only ones running things. The Members of the Legislative Assembly have to have a hand in it too because our elders in all of our communities have been affected, so we have to fight for our elders and I will work hard on this if I get supported as Premier. I will work with others and make it a priority to develop a strategy to bring back our elders.

We will have to develop a proper strategy about this and I believe the solution will come from that and from all of the MLAs and I would want to look at this immediately because we need to address this right away because our elders are in a critical situation. They want to be in their home communities and it is painful for them to be down there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Elder care is heavy on all of our minds. We all care for our elders. We all have elders, and as I stated in my opening comments, we want to take care of all our elders; not just the ones that need to go into a home. We want to take care of all of our elders, the ones that are very able, the ones that are less able; we want to help them all.

We all agree it's not right to send our elders to the south. We want them to age where they are from, and that is the goal of all of us here, all of us 22. I know we all want elders to stay home and age with their family members in their own communities.

My plan is to give them the best possible care, as close to home as we can give it to them and the goal should be that we take care of our elders where they are. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm glad my fellow candidates are listening properly to what is being said about the elders' need for help.

Not all elders are in pain and they are not all unable to take care of themselves, but I know none of them want to go to an elder facility in the south. Nobody wants to go down there to an elder facility.

Those of us in the previous government never really dealt with the elder situation. This is the first time an elder facility has been worked on and is being worked on and it's great

that the work has started, but the work should have been started right away once Nunavut was created. Elders' facilities should have been one of the first things.

There are many aspects to elder facilities and elder care. There are some who can only be held in hospitals or in hospices and that's critical for Nunavut too. We need something like that here and healthy elders should be able to age at home.

There was a consultant that once said "only if they have certain number of rooms can an elder facility be viable." They need to have 24 beds apparently and more.

Why not have an elders' facility with four beds? Why don't we build things like that? So we need to change the way we run things. Let's make decisions here. Like, for example, if we need a six-bed facility in Gjoa Haven, let's do that. Why do we need a 24-bed facility?

What about the elders who are not ill? How will we take care of them? We know many people who take care of their elder parents at home and they take care of the elder at home and they don't get help from the government and then all of a sudden their elder is sent away to the south. Why aren't these families paid to help their elders like their grandfathers and their grandmothers? They should be paid for that so that the elders can stay home.

Within the House and outside of the House, we have to make this a priority. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I have seven names on my list for now. Before we proceed further we'll now break for lunch and report back at 1:30 pm. Thank you...

>>Meeting recessed at 11:54 and resumed at 13:28

Chairman: Welcome back, everyone. Good afternoon, people watching. We will reconvene from this morning questions to the candidates for premiership. The next name on my list is the member from Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How well do you work with people with whom you disagree? *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I work very well with people I don't agree with. It happens all the time. I have been in this legislature for eight years now as a regular member, as a minister, and as the Premier and I've had to work with people you disagree with. You work it out and more times than not, you come to a common consensus and you can't hold a grudge.

You can't hold something against somebody for any decisions. You work it out and nine times out of ten, you can do that. It's not hard to work with people. I can work with anyone, just from a past experience of many different people that I have worked with. I have no issue working with someone that is difficult and that I disagree with. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Working together in the House here and outside the House is very important. Although you want to agree with something or someone, sometimes there are disagreements, and I have worked with that. I have been a mayor in Rankin Inlet for three terms and this is my third term here, and I have been a part of other different organizations.

It would be great if we could all agree all the time, but that's not the case. (interpretation ends) The reality is you can never agree all the time. I think the strength I have there is that we work out the differences and come to a consensus on where we should best move on any given decision. Often that's not in the direction you prefer, but it is nonetheless still a direction where we could work together to solve issues. Actually that is one of my strengths. I can be really stubborn, but I also know when to draw the line and work together to move things forward for the betterment of everybody else.

There is never a one-hand decision that is being made. You have to listen to two, three, or sometimes four sides and base your movement forward based on that as long as the movement is going forward for the betterment of the majority of Nunavummiut and that's always the challenge in this Legislative Assembly. Those decisions don't necessarily always benefit your community or your constituents, but they always should benefit first Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Member P.J. Akeegok.

Mr. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Good afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Sammurtok, for that very important question. I have experienced that as well. We have to come to an understanding and work together, and we have always worked hard on that.

As president of the QIA, there were 16 committees that we had to deal with and, as my colleague said, you can't always agree on everything, so we have to be able to make certain considerations and listen to all sides of the argument and listen to all the issues. Afterwards we use that to learn how to proceed forward and sometimes you have to make unpopular decisions and that's part of being a leader, which I have experienced. I would like to acknowledge that I have been a board member for Nunavut Tunngavik and they have all pushed for many different things from the Kitikmeot, Kivalliq, and the Baffin regions. Although we don't agree on everything, we try to make considerations for all the people of Nunavut.

We have experienced disagreements as to what direction we're supposed to take, but we always have to think and make considerations. If I get elected, I know I'll have to keep myself open and the direction I would get would not just be from the staff here but from my constituents as well. We always have to make sure that the truth comes out and that's important. That's my answer, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: How would you approach relationships with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and to what extent do you believe that NTI's formal agreement is required for the territorial government to make changes to the legislation and policies? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am very aware of the issues between Nunavut Tunngavik and the Government of Nunavut. In my opening comments in my speech I talked about NTI and how we need to be on the same side because we are on the same side. I think that miscommunication or misunderstanding happened early in the years of governance and we need to mend that disagreement so that we realize we are both on the same side and we are working for the betterment of Nunavummiut.

When I talked about needing to be a full consensus government over and over again, I talked about how we need to deal with the housing shortage. Well, we can't do it alone in here. The Minister of Housing cannot do it alone either. We need to include the Housing minister, the regular members, and NTI in those discussions, and they need to be there with us to look for solutions. They need to be there with us to find solutions for health care, for elder care, for education, for suicide prevention, and the list goes on.

They should be there with us, helping us to make decisions. There is nothing wrong with that. It builds more ideas and more collaboration between two of the largest organizations in this territory. I think that is going to be key to moving forward, is that we need to begin better and more fruitful and beneficial communications with Nunavut Tunngavik.

(interpretation) They have to be a part of our work here. They were elected by the people of Nunavut to help Nunavut progress. We should not work against them. We should work with them and we can go very far through collaboration. If we are going to do it on our own here, then we are going to come up against barriers and things won't be completed for many years to come. We have to get along and do things together. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Member P.J. Akeegok.

Mr. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank Mr. Sammurtok for asking that very important question. I agree we have to have good

relations with the Nunavut Tunngavik. That is very important. We were elected to be here because Nunavut was created.

Like I stated when I began, we can't forget where we come from. Nunavut was the Inuit dream that Inuit worked hard for. We have the same goals. I always hold in me the ideas of working together because we have such a big job ahead of us and I have been thinking about this for many years now. It sounds really good in talking about it sometimes, but then the end doesn't seem to be getting any closer with Inuit and the government working together.

If I am elected as Premier, my first priority would be to go directly to the President of NTI and explain that we want to have an open relationship with them. Additionally, I will work hard with regard to the regional Inuit associations in the Kivalliq, Kitikmeot and Qikiqtani regions. I would go to their communities and listen to them and see where we can develop collaborative efforts. It is very difficult finish accomplishments when you do it alone, but I completely believe that if we work together we can proceed well into the future.

The housing shortage and mental health issues are being experienced by many people and we have had to deal with that. The *Nunavut Agreement* contains 32 clauses that have really needed to be a part of everything that will touch the lives of Nunavummiut. I always carry that knowledge, and I'm always thinking of ways we can better work together. I know we will not always agree on everything, but we have to start and be open and see how else we can collaborate together on these major bills and other important matters that we will be dealing in the House here.

I expect that we will work more closely with the Inuit organizations to come up with even bigger things. I have those expectations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will stop here for now.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Likewise, we have good working relations with NTI and we will continue to work closely with NTI. We signed an agreement concerning Article 32 and we will have a corporate working relationship. If we establish our mandate we will work with NTI as we are exercising today. I often say, I'm in constant contact with the president, Ms. Aluki and all winter, all year, the minister and the NTI officials, we meet this past spring, we met in Baker Lake and things that we have put out, we have worked with NTI and the issue of devolution. We signed an agreement in principle as GN, federal government and NTI signed the agreement. The AIP is in the process and this is towards devolution.

And here in Iqaluit, the family treatment centre, we also signed, as government with the federal government and NTI. We signed the agreement and the funding is now available towards the treatment centre here in Iqaluit. Anyone who may have concern or people who are having addiction problems will now have a place for treatment here in Iqaluit

and that's an agreement we have signed and we are constantly in working relationship and we know as GN, as Premier and NTI, we have our focus on Inuit. That is one objective and for that reason we always work with NTI and we go a lot further as a unified voice and I work with the president in many areas and along with the federal government and it is felt that we are working together and this is one of the priorities if elected Premier. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Member for Uqqummiut, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am very proud to be sitting here and experiencing this for the first time and I am proud of this.

The question I have to the candidates for premiership here in Nunavut in the arctic in all of Nunavut there are barriers and difficulties. We have homelessness, our elders and poverty, lack of housing, all these issues and there are many other issues.

Now, for the premiership, as a candidate and how can you initiate if elected Premier. Have you recognized Inuit from Nunavut what they have expected for years, as I mentioned earlier, to establish what people want and what areas would be priorities to Nunavummiut. What initiatives would you undertake? That is my question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Member P.J. Akeegok.

Mr. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you, Member for Uqqummiut. I also wish to congratulate you on a successful election to your seat as it is palpable and I think that is an excellent question.

I believe I can use this unique example from our Inuit experience specific to the vision we articulated for decades related to Lancaster Sound along with Tuvaijuittuq. This effort was led by our communities over four decades. Once a vision is established, Inuit become very persistent in advancing towards their established goals as patience is a strongly held virtue. At the appropriate time, when everything is laid out, then we will establish the area.

This, when you stem from these surrounding communities, has been in the works for many years, even prior to and during my tenure as the President of QIA, where we pushed towards this goal. Not just myself, but all leadership collectively from the communities as this was a commonly held vision and we expended real energy to realize the Inuit grand vision of these areas, by including issues such as deep-water ports.

People wish to see job creation due to the scarcity of employment opportunities in our communities, especially in regions with multiple non-decentralized or small communities. The work took over 40 years, over multiple generations as Inuit also had a vision involving more devolvement of decision-making powers to the five communities, which is also recognized in that agreement.

The communities will have a voice and be the ones making decisions, so I am quite proud of what Inuit envisioned and the funding of \$255.5 million allotted towards this conservation area. This is something that we were able to negotiate as part of the establishment.

To your question on where I would prioritize our challenges would include our current working relationships, the corporate working relationship would have to focus on the issue of the lack of housing. As mentioned earlier, only by being a unified force and body, will we be able to realize this. We should work with NTI, our regional Inuit associations and their staff to have more unified funding from the federal government for our territory.

We are at a critical stage today. It's an issue that should not just be endlessly debated, and we should look at how to strategically use our own funding and not just request funding as a government without purpose, and our focus should be on our constituents whom we serve and the depths of poverty they are enshrouded in.

The lack of engagement is something which we need to look at, at the highest levels especially in trying to collaborate and partner with NTI and other Inuit organizations. That would be my priority. Another objective discussed was listening to those whom we serve as the source for outlining our priorities for this government as we will need to soon outline our stated priorities.

I think we need to start working closely and immediately in the month of December, as MLAs and cabinet should work together as we are here for that purpose, to develop a plan. To your question on what would be my top priority, I think housing is the biggest priority because it has the greatest impact. We also had youth coming yesterday raising the issue of mental health and overcrowding that exacerbates cases of detrimental mental health. I thank you for a very good question. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. For the members, try and keep your answers short. We have another ten names yet. Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The issue of homelessness is very important and we are constantly working in this area and working with volunteer organizations. For example, here at the soup kitchen, the Uqutaq shelter and these were created to ensure that homeless people have shelter and food to eat.

And as the Government of Nunavut, we are constantly working very hard. Another area we have worked on was finalizing deep-water port funding from the federal government for Qikiqtarjuaq where we were initially denied but we persisted and then got an agreement for the funding.

Now, the project will be going ahead in Qikiqtarjuaq and this will be very beneficial for fisheries. We met with the federal Minister of DFO on the issue of quota allocations in Nunavut settlement area that need to be increased.

Many outside fishers have majority of the allocations of quota in the area and this is an area where we are currently working. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you. I am pleased along with elected MLAs and when I started my introduction, it has been raised by the other candidates. As I mentioned earlier let me look back on that.

When we got elected for four years, this is how it used to be and on an annual basis when a new government is elected the ministers in the past, people would go back and relax and come back and reflect on developing a mandate setting upon their meeting.

The MLAs would be participating in this area and we held these meetings in Igloolik and Mittimatalik. It shouldn't be this way. As an elected territorial leader, all of us here should be passionate whether it's here or in your community. Let's start developing areas of our priorities if it's in Qikiqtarjuaq, Clyde River, Naujaat or Resolute Bay, somewhere in Nunavut.

What is the most critical issue? We should be discussing these together in those retreats and to say, the buildings that we put together have to change. We heard that in Taloyoak we have seen any housing for eight years. What are we going to do in these areas?

These are issues that we can develop together, perhaps somewhere in a retreat and focusing on our priorities or areas that have less priority. This is a very critical question you asked, as is.

I think we would have a much clearer vision what we need to do and I could say that there are no huge sums of money out there for housing. It's not the case. The funds that we receive should be things that we need to make decisions on to build a hospital, or if it is going to be coming for constructing a school, we should use those funds.

At home we have to make our own budget too. We have to decide how much we put for food, and so forth. These are things that we need to be discussing and prioritizing together, face to face. I think we could have a much clearer vision and start developing priorities, if it is a priority for three years. We have the means. We are elected for that purpose. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Do you have any further questions? Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you for those very good responses. We will be conducting an election and we are listening right now, and the public is listening. I would like to ask a very quick question. Some of the responses were already towards this. You have all been leaders, even if it is not here; somewhere out there or even in here.

When you were leaders, what is one thing you can speak to that would have a bearing on how I would vote, because I will be voting? I would like to make my mind up, so I am asking: what is the proudest thing you accomplished to date, or what is under development today that was approved when you were a leader in another place, or wherever it was when you were a leader. Thank you for giving me another opportunity. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can have a very short answer to it. It is possible is my response. What is more useful in my decision or what was unique: treating everybody equally, being kind to all Inuit, so that they will be kind to you and be one with it and work with them.

We have the same goal by working together. I have always been like that in whatever I do, and I treat everybody equally, and work with everybody. I have been using that since I started working and I won't give up, and I won't be stopping. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>*Cellphone ringing*

>>*Laughter*

An Hon. Member: That's embarrassing.

>>*Laughter*

Chairman: My apologies. Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. After this is all over, could you please email me your playlist?

>>*Laughter*

(interpretation) How exhilarating! We must smile, especially when dealing with serious and tense issues, so let us smile from time to time, and your phone had a nice ring or tune.

I am happy to answer your question and I will try to keep it brief as I understand our answers have been ongoing it seems. I was Mayor of Rankin Inlet and I think I was the mayor at that time along with you.

When I was the mayor, we would be advised by the government what asset was coming as the departments didn't even allow us to submit plans and they would state that the government would build such a facility in Rankin Inlet, Chesterfield Inlet, Taloyoak, and

Pond Inlet, or wherever, and we were never asked for our opinions and have to patiently wait for an asset.

When the mayors had a meeting, we struck a committee of mayors who would decide where infrastructure such as municipal offices will be built. It was called the (interpretation ends) infrastructure advisory committee (interpretation) created when we were mayors because we wanted more involvement in deciding our own local assets as we already have certain capacities as communities and we don't just want to hold up our hands for a handout. That is that.

Secondly, in the Third Assembly, quite a while ago, when I became Minister of Community and Government Services, we put in place a process where communities request certain heavy equipment, such as a water truck or a dump truck or a bulldozer, they had to submit a request to the government. At that time, I asked for the creation of the (interpretation ends) mobile equipment funding.

(interpretation) Communities are given funding by the government annually, where they can either keep the funds to grow it or use it to purchase their own vehicles and what they need. We also put standards in place such as life years where equipment such as fire trucks would be replaced by certain ages.

Those are some of the things that I have done as a leader which I take pride in. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Member P.J. Akeeagok.

Mr. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have great dance moves, so I doubt I would be able to dance anyways if that tune played again.

Yes, I appreciate that question as I like it. I too, have the experience of being elected as a leader, and I take great pride in accomplishments that are visible and that provide actual benefits to the people, so I tend to focus on those types of projects. Some work requires more preparation behind the scenes, and I am unable to single out a specific example.

Nonetheless, I can refer back to the Tallurutiup Imanga and Tuvaijuittuq, which are in the High Arctic, and it involved many partners, communities, the federal government whom we worked in partnership with, and in our negotiations with the government, NTI assisted us, along with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

We explored ways to try to provide benefits through a mutually beneficial partnership, both federally and territorially, and that was our end goal, so that is one issue. Another revolves around our Arctic College students who needed more support and we always felt that need. The policy makers and decision-makers of the boards were passionate in their support, and thusly introduced these initiatives that can provide actual benefits to our students.

I work extremely hard as a leader to try to resolve people's concerns and deal strategically with the issues our constituents want us to focus on, and that has to formulate our foundation as leaders, and sometimes, we may not always agree or reach consensus on the request, but it is at the behest of our constituents so we must always look into their concerns.

I try to be transparent and show how hard I work. When you have been elected for many years, we base our campaigns on what we have accomplished and some of the issues I am most proud of relate to fellow Inuit who served as directors representing their communities and who sat on the Qikiqtani Inuit Association board while I was in the role of president and that includes my role at Nunavut Tunngavik. That has been my goal, if you ask about what we're proud of. Thank you for that good question.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list: Member for Tununiq, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that we definitely have to move forward. My question is in two parts, but Joe Savikataaq partially answered the question. Housing is the biggest problem in Nunavut.

Can you tell us if you have worked with the Inuit organizations or if you are going to work with them to improve the housing situation, and (interpretation ends) are you prepared to allow the next government to run into deficit to improve the housing crisis in Nunavut? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you. As I stated earlier, the housing shortage is a real issue and it touches us and it has the most impact on our wellness and is a cause for wellness issues.

Mr. Chairman, we have to work with not just Nunavut Tunngavik, but the regional Inuit organizations all together because they get royalties from mining. We have to work with them and look for ways on how we can deal with the housing shortage.

We have to start having discussions even with the mines and how they can help with the housing shortage. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami also receives federal funding for Inuit on the housing situation.

We have to work as one, and the Government of Nunavut receives funding from the federal government and it doesn't really change annually. It increases a bit with inflation. You just asked if we can move this government into a deficit to deal with the housing shortage.

The Government of Canada gives the Government of Nunavut a credit limit, a borrowing limit and we can work with it on (interpretation ends) public-private partnerships. (interpretation) Government and private businesses put funding in place together to build

something. If that has to be the case, the committee decides that a deficit is acceptable on new housing construction.

There are local housing organizations and if the committee decides to get into a small deficit, then it will move us forward and I would base my decision on their decision. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeegok.

Mr. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that very good question. I think housing is the biggest issue in all of Nunavut. As I said earlier, it impacts a lot of people in their lives, in their mental wellbeing and in their culture.

I think we all know that the people of Nunavut are experiencing problems because of the housing shortage and have the highest rate of suicide in Canada, and it hurts just to know that because you feel for Nunavummiut. We have to consider your good question.

Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated has set aside a couple of the vice-president roles, such as the VP of NTI and the regional Inuit organizations. They have a committee already and have begun discussions that they want to work on this. I would be very open, as I stated earlier when speaking to it.

At first, I would like to go and hold actual meetings and deliberations if I can be selected to this role, specifically on the housing shortage. I think it is in two parts. Housing should be available for people with low incomes and we've all discussed this and there are people who want to own their own homes.

A lot of Inuit are working and a lot of them want their own homes. We'll definitely have to look into that. It's not only Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated; it's NNC or Sakku or QC. Those are organizations. I think we have to be open to them on how we can work together better.

On the issue of our housing challenge, we have to collaborate with other bodies and if we run into a deficit as a government, I definitely think that we should consider it and we are facing a crisis. Too many people go through hardship in their lives because of the lack of housing.

If we had the funding, I would want to work with the (interpretation ends) Minister of Finance (interpretation) to do a comprehensive visioning and evaluation process on areas we can partner up on, both with the RIAs, and other businesses, and we need to face that as a government on this front if needed.

Nonetheless, I can state now that if we are to contemplate running deficits to combat our housing crisis, I would do a very careful analysis of our options as we currently have funding set aside for that, so I would want to review our choices, as in English, (interpretation ends) it would be our equity into the issue.

(interpretation) We cannot just pay lip service any longer, as we as the government must grab this problem and wrestle it down with ideas. That is why I believe this is our most urgent priority currently, so if I were to be selected as the Premier, I would work my hardest to detail out a comprehensive strategy as we need to bear down and resolve this challenge. So I thank you for asking that question.

Chairman: Thank you. Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The lack of housing has been on the agenda for many, many years. I had a meeting with the Prime Minister and I indicated to him that we need to increase the number of houses that are being built in Nunavut.

There is overcrowding, there are social ills, there are students who are not attending school on a regular basis, there is food insecurity, there is a shortage of housing, and it all stems from the lack of housing and because of overcrowding. It is something that I have been working very hard on. Today we need 3,300 new houses built.

There is overcrowding in my house. There are some children staying at my house and I know exactly what it means when we talk about overcrowding and a lack of housing. You asked: (interpretation ends) would I run a deficit to make housing. The short answer: yes. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Do you have any other questions? (interpretation ends) I have about 11 names yet and I would ask the Premier candidates to shorten their answers if they can. We have a lot of names yet to go through. The next name on my list: member from Aivilik, Member Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the smaller communities in Nunavut, they are decentralized communities and have the highest numbers of unemployment. What are you going to do about the smaller communities in Nunavut? Thank you.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeeagok.

P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the member for that very important question. Earlier I used an example of Tallurutiup Imanga and at that time we wanted to focus on the communities that are decentralized and lack government employment opportunities and (interpretation ends) diversifying our economy (interpretation) and how Inuit the communities in Nunavut could benefit from mining.

Not everyone wants to work in the mines and not everyone wants to work with the government. We have to look at other economic opportunities, like fishing for example. It could create a lot of jobs especially because all of our communities are located on coastal areas with the exception of one. We have to focus on other opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We keep in mind the smaller communities and how they can better benefit. (interpretation ends) Decentralization (interpretation ends) is still the same model that Nunavut has in place. There are centralized and decentralized communities.

We provide support to businesses so that they can increase their revenue and they can create more job opportunities. In Arviat we look at how we can create more job opportunities, we have a mine training centre now where they take pre-trades and more Inuit will benefit and get jobs at the mines. I know in Naujaat that there are opportunities.

We look at all communities including the smaller communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you for the question. As I indicated earlier, we have to look at employment opportunities. For example, there are mines in almost every region and we would like to increase the Inuit being employed, including Naujaat.

There is room for improvement; I think we are just not looking. I know that the mines are very willing to have discussions with the communities and as I indicated earlier, there are 1,500 jobs available within the government and we are not able to fill those positions because there is there is a lack of housing in Iqaluit and there is lack of offices. We just found that out and this winter during the COVID-19 we find that it is easy to work at home in any community as long as you have a computer and the means.

Why do we have to create positions in Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet, or Cambridge Bay? Why not divert those jobs to Naujaat, Pond Inlet, Taloyoak, and to the smaller communities? Not everybody wants to move to the central hubs. If it is not possible for them to come here, then we have to go to the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank you for your response. I have another question regarding the 25 Nunavut communities. How can they benefit more equally and how would you go about it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We work with the hamlet councils in regard to the infrastructure, heavy equipment and what is needed at the communities.

We provide adequate funds so they can operate and maintain within their communities and we review that on an occasional basis. Every community in Nunavut is treated equally. We want them all to develop and we want the people to benefit. We do not help one community more than the other; we treat all 25 communities equally and usually we cannot provide everything that they want because of our budgets. We're going to make sure that all communities are treated equally. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Mr. Chairman, I am very glad to hear that question. As I indicated earlier this morning, from the inception of the government, aside from the cabinet and the Premier, members are called just regular members because they are not the ones making the decisions. It was the cabinet and the Premier who made all the decisions.

So I am looking at seeing a change in the government so that all members all make decisions collectively.

If I should be elected to Premier I would like to see a change within the government. We already know that there is room for improvement and the reason why I'm saying this is that the infrastructure for the communities, we have to work together to find out what is needed at the community level and how we can have more benefits going to Naujaat or Sanirajak or to the smaller communities and I think that there should be meetings between the regular members and the cabinet so that we provide better benefit to all. It shouldn't only be one-sided. That's what I would like to see. We all have to make decisions collectively. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Member P.J. Akeeagok.

Mr. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for that very good question. I grew up in a small community in Grise Fiord. That's where I was brought up and raised and we didn't see anything big coming in to the community.

As having visited most of the communities, some communities are envied by other communities. For example, and to your question, the regional hubs, I would first of all like to review what has happened over the last five years. We have to look at all the communities and do a community audit.

One community is benefitting more than the others. We hear of projects that are being delayed for a number of years. We hear of communities not getting any houses built, for example and we have to look back to know where we are going into the future.

We have to do community audits and find out where everything stands, and should I be elected, not only the Premier's community would benefit. I've heard that going on out there.

If I was the Premier I would treat every community equally. Each community has the right to be treated equally. I wanted to make that comment because we have to get the communities up and running.

If we, as a government need more money, then we would have to ask for it. We have to plan together and that should be our foundation. We would like to see the communities benefit. We have to look at economic development opportunities and look at where we can get the communities and more returns for the communities.

I'll leave it at that for now, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list: Member for South Baffin, Mr. Joanasie.

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am proud of you as you will be the Speaker of our Legislative Assembly. I say "good day" to the people of Nunavut and my colleagues here. We all are feeling welcome here.

The first question I would like to pose is, our government is one of the largest employers for providing jobs and looking at the way it operates, their operating budget is \$2.6 billion. Have you made any considerations about the operations and the different departments and agencies? Are you thinking about dividing them up further or if there is any need to do cutbacks in the budgets so that we can attain our goals? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Working within the government and working with the organizations, the way I look at it is it has to change. We may not need a drastic change, but the way the departments and agencies are set up needs to be improved. Once we are setting up the mandate, I would want all the MLAs to think about how we should change things.

I'll keep it short. The Department of Community and Government Services deals with fuel, the municipalities, infrastructure, and IT infrastructure as well. That's a huge department. The electrical people work separately and the fuel people work separately, so they should all be combined into one resource department.

There are other departments like communications. IT can be on its own as well and health can be on its own. Elder and youth supports and social development should be in one department. The assistance to elders should be in one department. There are others we can talk about as well. That's all. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeegok.

Mr. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to my colleague for asking that good question. Yes, with the way the government operates, there is always room for improvement and because we always have room for

improvement, I will want to hear where changes or improvements are needed. We hear the way it operates, especially close to elections, the government is still far away and people feel that it is far away.

The way it operates and the way it communicates would be really good areas to look at once we are in session and when we are thinking about what direction that we want to take. We can use those as a base. Work on marine matters has moved from different departments, so we will have to see if we need to consider making changes there as well and as to where the changes are requested to be made.

We have heard that the Department of Health uses a huge amount of money because we have to take care of the people of Nunavut. There must be ways to improve that as well so I'll be very open to that.

Now with the COVID-19 experience, what did we learn from that? Did our lives improve and with support systems that were available like the food baskets? We always have to see how it worked out and how people were affected by it. I would want to ask the Department of Health look at what we've learned from this and to see what we can improve. Thank you.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the different departments and their government, sometimes we need to make changes and improvements and sometimes we have to divide the responsibilities. I looked at that this past year and looking at all their responsibilities.

I looked at one, the Department of Community and Government Services. It has been growing with the petroleum department, within that department and sometimes the work has not been completed. That's the department we've been looking at. The infrastructure branch can be on its own and once the government decides to build something, they would build it through that and work with Community and Government Services but the independent (interpretation ends) infrastructure department.

I think we're at a stage now in Nunavut where we need to have an infrastructure department that deals with our infrastructure. At times we don't have the resources because it's growing too much in Community and Government Services to properly manage our infrastructure, and it would be a shame if we got the funding from the federal government and we couldn't spend the money on infrastructure in a timely manner.

This is actually one of the things I'm looking, is to put a department of infrastructure in to make sure that we can deal with all our infrastructure needs in a timely manner and in a quality manner so that we get what we need and build on time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Joanasie.

Mr. Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your responses. Housing is something else that will always be talked about. It's a big deal in all the communities that has affected all the communities and the money is never enough. Do you believe that the funding available for housing needs to be increased? Should we cut back on some of the other projects that are there and put more into housing? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Member P.J. Akeegok.

Mr. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to my colleague. What he said is very true. Shortage of housing is the most important issue in Nunavut. We have all heard that we need to do something about it.

As to the question, I believe we've answered most of the question already. As a government we have the authority and the money is set aside for that. We have to think about how to use it and work with the Inuit organizations.

If we need to turn to the federal government as we were told by the housing corporation, its \$2 billion that is needed just to catch up in housing and Nunavut Tunngavik had a request of \$500 million for the housing shortage.

We really feel the division between us and the organizations. The government is moving this way and the Inuit organizations are moving that way. We are really feeling the division now for the first time and we need to work more closely together and we will have to work on doing that.

As for your other question, as to if we would make cutbacks to other programs? We have to look at that now because we know the effects of the housing shortage. People are getting sick. People are committing suicide because of the lack of housing.

We really have to look at that and do something about it now. So I would be very open to that, but first of all we have to work on working together so that we can come up with a one strong voice. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ever since I was elected eight years ago, we have always talked about housing and worked on it. Right now we've been building over a hundred units annually in Nunavut and that's not enough. I know that.

However, this spring we received \$25 million from the federal government and that is not enough, but it will be a start and more money will be coming apparently. So I expect that the federal government will provide us more money to build houses with so we will be working with them, and if we receive funding we will work with them to build housing.

It would not make sense if we just built the houses and didn't have any discussions with other bodies, so we have to work with the other organizations to build cheaper housing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you. We always talk about the lack of housing or there being no housing here and we will always talk about it here. It was already being talked about before we became Nunavut and no solution has ever been found and many people wait many years for a home. There have never been any changes or ideas on how to change the way houses are provided or where they are going to be provided.

So we really need to think about that. At least if we know, for example, in Taloyoak they'll be a number of units will be built in one year, or Gjoa Haven or over there, maybe we need to change the way we allocate houses.

Maybe we need to bring in more modular housing where they can just put them together and finish them right away or find different ways of constructing houses.

I know the way they build houses is changing around the world and they are finding cheaper ways to build housing around the world. Meanwhile here in Nunavut we are still doing the same thing out of wood and nails. While in the rest of the world and the way they build houses is always changing, the way they heat houses is always changing, the way they provide the electrical is always changing, but we still use the same old methods that make them so much more expensive.

If they're going to be changing the way they build houses, we also have to change the way we build them to make them less mouldy and cheaper to maintain, and once they are cheaper to maintain, then we can use the extra money to build more houses.

Those are conversations that need to take place. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list: Member for Cambridge Bay, Ms. Gross.

Ms. Gross (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you (interpretation ends) to all of the members running for Premier. I appreciate your responses to the questions.

My question is; the age of Nunavut on average at 50 percent under the age of 26, with 4,000 youth coming to the age of majority over the next four years. What are your ideas for additional programs and services for those youth that are going to be entering post-secondary? How would you like to help them, and what improvements can you see for those youth? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We know that Nunavut has a very young population. Arviat has a very young population, and we need to do more for our youth. For education we have to make sure that they have a good... . It comes back to housing again. We have to make sure that the youth have a nice stable household so that they can further their education, go to school without being hungry, and that is where the bases start.

In terms of what we offer them, we offer them money for tuition through FANS and we help them. We have a whole support system for any student that wants to further their education, whether it's in Nunavut or down south, and we work with the students to make sure that it is easier for them to get further educated.

Mr. Chairman, in my first term I was part of the Special Committee on Education so that we could amend our *Education Act* so that it could fulfill the duties of what someone going through our education system can do.

When a young person finished their education, they should be able to go to further education and be skilled at that level to whatever they chose to do, whether it be a trades, a nurse, a doctor, a lawyer, and we are helping and we will be helping to make sure that our young students get all the help they can get to further their education. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak: Thank you very much for that question. Education is key to opportunity. We all know that. The more education you get, the more opportunities will open for you. It's very simple. I think we need to start taking a look at the opportunities that are in our communities. There are opportunities there that we don't take advantage of.

I believe, and I stand to be corrected, but I believe that we need to take a look at how we educate our children. Inuit naturally have the skill and the knack for repairing things right from when they are little children. When we were kids, when you get a new toy, you take it apart, half the time it doesn't run properly, but you learn from it. We are a hands-on type of learning society, I believe.

We need to take a look at and visit our education system to see if we need to make some changes and see how we could better take the natural instincts of our children to teach them and to increase their natural skills and abilities. We don't have enough vocational training opportunities in our schools. It starts there. It is not all reading, writing, and arithmetic and learning about Einstein. If you want to be in different trades I think we need to spend more time on that. We need to revisit the education process, and I think it starts from full-time kindergarten. It starts from allowing parents and mothers to get into employment because we have so many young mothers out there. They need an opportunity to get involved and get into these opportunities. Down south they have \$10 a day daycare in a lot of the provinces coming up. Why not us? We should be getting that. We should be fighting for that.

I think one of the important things we need to do; I think FANS does a great job with the tools that they have. I believe we need to give them more tools and support so that it will encourage more of our youth to go onto post-secondary education and trades and use the FANS, but they need to get support from this government in terms of retooling and making FANS more user-friendly for those that would like it. In order for Nunavut to succeed, our youth need to be successful. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeegok.

Mr. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Member for Cambridge Bay for that very good question. It is true, and I'm looking at the 4,000 youth that are becoming adults that will have to be a priority and education is a lifelong thing. We all know that education starts when you are very young and (interpretation ends) early childhood education (interpretation) is something that I would want our government to work very hard on.

(interpretation ends) The breakfast programs, the after school programs (interpretation) are very critical areas that I would like to look into further because it touches on childhood development and here, the daycare issue is one of those in early childhood education, and eventually I look at Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students that has to be upgraded too when people start aspiring for higher education for a youth.

I know we have to ask what preparations we have and we need to envision. If I were to be selected as a Premier, I would work closely with (interpretation ends) the Minister of Education (interpretation) and focus on higher education and I would like to completely review that. We need to be supportive of those who take initiative.

I know FANS has not been mentioned much and I am very pleased with the program, but other supportive measures should be taken too to ensure they succeed and I would also like to look into this area especially when our youth want to pursue higher education. Thank you.

Chairman: Second one of questions, Ms. Gross.

Ms. Gross: *Koana* for your responses. My second question, Mr. Chairman, is we all know that in our territory we have the highest rates of suicide in the country. I am wondering what types of new implementation strategies would you like to see this government make towards suicide prevention. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak: Wow. That hit close to home. Suicide prevention starts from the day your child is born, and they say it takes a community to raise a child. It is so true, but more importantly it takes parents and family to raise the child.

Suicide prevention starts at home, but it does not end there, Mr. Chairman. Suicide prevention is something that the government definitely cannot do alone otherwise it would have been solved governments ago. This is something that this government has to deal with, with the regional Inuit associations, with the Federal Government of Canada and as many interest groups as can get involved in suicide prevention.

Mr. Chairman, not that long ago I had a nephew that worked in the department dealing with suicide prevention. He committed suicide, Mr. Chairman, but yet all of the resources were there in front of him. That should not be happening. We need to go out and take a listen collectively; as with the ministers responsible with the Member of the Legislative Assembly, as NTI, and this point, anybody interested in being involved and looking for solutions. How to look for those solutions; we need to create a body to specifically look at suicide prevention; a short, medium, and long-term strategy on dealing with it. We need to begin that conversation and that conversation and that conversation should include our youth, and our elders, and anybody that wants to be involved. Thank you, Mr. Chairman...

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeegok.

Mr. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for the question from the MLA, which is a very heavy issue. As I mentioned earlier, we had youth here yesterday and they let us hear them and we have to listen today. They showed us the urgency of this issue. I really felt that we need to look at it as a critical issue and work very hard on the issues related to suicide. We often ask the question... Since COVID-19 measures were taken, governments were able to mobilize very quickly. They were able to provide support to ensure safety and they visited communities. I look at this issue similarly to minimize suicide.

(interpretation ends) The response that we provided to COVID has to match the response we need to provide to mental health. That's how serious I see this and I really see this as an issue that this government will have to tackle. I think there are questions in terms of accessibility that does come up in terms of all the communities.

I know there is already a five-year strategic plan that this government is involved in. It's in partnership with NTI, the RCMP, and the Embrace Life Council and there are eight items in that strategic plan that are very clear, that are both factual and does come from the communities. If elected as Premier, I would want to revisit those as well, considering the end of the mandate of that strategy is coming and I think, if anything that COVID has taught us, we are more than willing and able to mobilize around an issue that threatens our people, and I think we're at that point in terms of the situation that we're in with mental health as well as the issues of suicide.

With that as well, I did want to highlight that I would like to review the work of Embrace Life as an example, who provides amazing services right across this territory, to determine whether more support is needed there or not as a government agency to provide potential supports there. I really feel there is an opportunity here and within that

strategy, I really see housing and investments in early childhood education being at the forefront that you've got to start investing early to ensure that (interpretation) we don't have to see them going to treatment or healing.

I'm sorry (interpretation ends) I went back and forth, but it really is an issue that I think that hits home to all of us and I really think there's an opportunity for us to really mobilize around this as well. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Suicide is a hard, tough issue to even talk about. There are too many Nunavummiut suffering. Statistically we're ten times above the national average for suicide rates. We all saw and we were here yesterday with the young folks asking for help. I went and had a small talk with them just to let them know that we are listening, we care, and we do care. The first step anyone who is struggling mentally should do is to ask for help. There is help available.

In the Fourth Assembly, the government of the day declared suicide a crisis. The Quality of Life was set up. There are programs available. I would revitalize the programs that are available for suicide prevention. Like my colleague said, suicide prevention starts at an early age. A child needs a good family foundation right from the get-go. We have help if someone falls off and starts struggling. We do have help there, but Nunavummiut, I'm telling you, call for help. That's the first step and we will give the services there of what we have.

I'm open to hearing any suggestions from the MLAs, from Nunavut members on how we could further help people who have mental health issues and are struggling with suicide. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Just looking at clock, I have eight other names to go through yet, so we will take a 20-minute break. Thank you.

>>Meeting recessed at 14:55 and resumed at 15:17

Chairman: Hello. Welcome back everyone. Continuation of questions to the Premier candidates, my next name on the list is Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and congratulations. I would just like to take a moment to wish a very special happy birthday to... . I almost said "happy Brewster." I am a happy Brewster today. I would like to take a moment to wish a very special happy birthday to one of our true matriarchs of Nunavut, Betty Novalinga Brewster, who is 74 years old today.

>>Applause

Happy birthday, *Anaana*. I love you.

Mr. Chairman, as a target of child sexual abuse, I know all too well the ongoing impacts of trauma that our beautiful children are experiencing and vehemently demanding action on, having first attempted to take my own life at nine years old.

Yes, our children and our youth are our future, but they are also our now. Children and youth are now. As leaders we have the responsibility to do everything that we can to address the impact and break the cycle of trauma for our people to ensure that individuals can reach their full potential in education, the workforce, and of course, in life.

Over 20 years in, we have failed too many generations of Nunavummiut in this regard. There is no denying that trauma is at the root of the issues that so many Nunavummiut struggle with today.

My question, Mr. Chairman, is: how would our candidates evolve existing programs and services, such as mental health and education systems, to better serve and support our children and families in breaking the cycle of abuse and trauma? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Member P.J. Akeagok.

Mr. Akeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ms. Brewster. That is a very good question. Yes, you are telling the truth. The sexual abuse of our children definitely has to stop.

First of all, we will have to look into how big it is. The past government had questions on that. How big is it exactly concerning our children? I would work with the Department of Justice to look at it in detail and exactly what the statistics are because we need to start by understanding how big it is.

I totally agree with you. They are not only our future. They were there yesterday and we heard how urgent it is and that we have to deal with it. Yes, I grasp that on how we can ask she said, we haven't solved the issue in 20 years. If we are going to follow our path I can envision that we need to look at our children on potential benefits, sources of pride that they can grasp while they are children, as this government needs to prepare the plans now.

We all are aware of the many concerns. It starts with this concept, called in English (interpretation ends) early childhood education (interpretation) and of the need to protect them. Yes, there are lot of dysfunctional families out there. We've seen them and we've felt their pain and sorrow.

When I was at the Qikiqtani Inuit Association we also debated the causal effects of colonialization which the Qikiqtani Truth Commission was formed to establish the truth based on Inuit stories, as well as their visions and the recommendations resulting from that.

It should not be just words and the help should be available. Not all communities, for example the Umingmak Centre, I can envision that it should be available in all communities and use one path in providing assistance.

It's not only to the child. It's to all the family members, the protection surrounding them. They need to follow that path. Thank you for asking that question, Ms. Brewster.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Umingmak Centre here was a step in the right direction. We don't want to re-traumatise our children over and over again that are sexually abused. We want to help them and one of the ways that we can do that better is to have Inuit culture as part of the counselling in the healing process and in their own language, and we have specialists for that.

We need more and we need more services available to the communities so that the child does not have to leave the community.

I think the tireless work that the social workers do within our Nunavut communities to look out for our children and our youth. Sometimes they can't protect themselves and we have to be there to protect them.

We, as a government, have to stop this cycle, help stop this cycle. It is unacceptable. We talked about numbers here. One is too many. One is too many. We know it's big, and due to the reporting system it's hard to get a handle on it but we are tackling it and as for numbers, Mr. Chairman, one is too many. We have to help the vulnerable and the helpless. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a very good question. Unfortunately you and I aren't the only ones who were abused when we were children. There are many, many victims out there, but I hope there is a day when there will be no more.

We didn't raise our children and grandchildren to be victims of this horrible thing. One of the things we should... I mean, there are many possible roads we could look at, but we have to begin to take the child and youth advocacy a lot more seriously than reporting to the legislature once a year. They have some very strong recommendations that should be put forward and paid attention to.

We need to look at our youth leadership; some of the ones who came here yesterday. There are many things that are out there and I think as a government we need to reach out also in the work we do through the mental health strategy and other avenues that this government has. We need to work with the residential school foundation and the healing foundations. There is money out there to begin to start to heal not just the victims, but those who also do that harm because most likely they are victims themselves.

We have to reach out to the youth, we have to communicate with the youth, and yes, maybe putting an ad on *Nunatsiaq News* might work once in a while, but there is so much more out there that the youth are using. We need to look for the tools they are using to communicate with each other. If it's Tiktok or whatever other avenues are out there, we need to take advantage of those avenues and start talking with our youth.

For those out there listening and everybody in this room, start talking to your youth. Put those cell phones down. Start communicating with your children and let's work together to make sure that our youth have a better community to live in because you and I took the time to listen. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. You may have a second question later on, as per discussion. The next name on my list: member from Netsilik, Mr. Quqqiaq. It's not on yet. Not yet.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I was the one that made that viral video on Tiktok. I was hesitant at first to post it, but I thought maybe I could send a message out and maybe I could save a life, but it turns out I saved not just one. I don't know how many. Maybe 100. My video went viral. It had half a million hits and it was on suicide, so I saved a lot of lives; not just Inuit lives, but all over the world. I was hesitant at first to post it, but maybe I could save a life. It turns out I saved more than one life, so they see me as a king; as a savior. My message to all of the youth: you are loved and cared for.

My question is to the three candidates running for Premier. Will you help to create more resources to address mental health? I would love to see suicide prevention programs and more resources, and if you do create a board or a committee, I would love to be on that committee. I would love to help the youth. I care for the youth; I care for anyone, so that is my question to the three premiers that are running.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we take suicide prevention seriously, Mr. Chairman. It was declared a crisis back in the Fourth Assembly and it still is. It is not slowing down. We will have more resources, but the resources are there, and the member is correct that we have to send the message that you are cared for. You are not alone. We are there to help. Our hand is there, but you must take it. Ask for help. We have programs available. We will also have a trauma treatment centre here in Iqaluit. It is due to open in 2025. I wish it would be open tomorrow, and that will help for intergenerational trauma that has happened for people with mental health issues and who are hurting.

We have to change people's attitude. People sometimes see it as if you have a sore arm, you go to the nursing station and they don't think any different of you, but if you have mental health issues and you ask for help, some people think that's a sign of weakness, that you're not normal.

We have to get passed that. We are here to help. If you are hurting mentally, we are here to help. We have the resources and I commend you for what you've done. You've done a good thing and, yes, I will make more resources available and we will do what we can for Nunavummiut to give them resources and the tools to help them so that suicide can slow down.

People need help and it's mostly the youth that are committing suicide, and I'm committed to helping the youth. For any youth that are listening: you are cared for. You are loved. You are not alone even if it feels like it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, mental health is real. It is as real as a toothache is real. There is nothing unreal about it, and I think over the short time, it's good to see professional athletes start to speak up about that they need mental help. It's making people speak out and that's a good thing.

There was a time when people went for mental help, like in the Kivalliq at Selkirk. That was seen as "oh he or she went to Selkirk." It should be good. I'm proud of you for going there.

We need to change the way we think as a society about people with mental illness. We need to give them support, and I think what's very important is that we get a mental health facility here in Nunavut.

Where it goes? Just get it here in Nunavut so that we could help our people, our Nunavummiut with mental health issues. And yes, it would be great to have that committee I keep talking about on different issues to deal with something like that, and I'm sure the committee would love to have someone with your knowledge background on that committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeegok.

Mr. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank Joseph for his very important question. I have watched the impact you've had not only to the people of Nunavut, but outside of our territory, and I'm very proud that you created that and it has saved some young people.

There are way too many suicides in Nunavut. We have to set up a plan as soon as possible. Not just implement it, but hear the youth, especially the males. There are no services available in Inuktitut, or (interpretation ends) cultural or language relevant (interpretation) services.

We have to work on that as a government and we also hear that there are no services available in the smaller communities outside of Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet, or Cambridge Bay.

Those services have to be provided to all communities. When I was with NTI, they were going to start setting up patients out of their communities to be provided the services but we haven't seen that.

We are in an emergency mode and just recently in Iqaluit, we had a great loss and it impacted us greatly. That's why the young people came in here because they were asking for help.

Also, you asked if we would be able to help immediately. Absolutely, we can help immediately. Thank you very much for your question.

Chairman: Mr. Quqgiaq.

Mr. Quqgiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As we all know, we only have a Northern Store and a Coop store, and it says "high cost of living in Nunavut." What the stores do is they make it harder for Nunavummiut. A lot start asking for food due to the high cost of living. I think the blame should be on the businesses that provide the necessities we need.

My question is to the three Premiers: what is your view on Inuit-owned small business? Will you help support Inuit small business to grow? I would love to see more grocery stores, or welcome Walmart, or NorthMart to Nunavut. I would love to see more businesses where we can go buy groceries at an affordable cost. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) For private businesses, retail outlets have to make a profit in order to operate, and especially in the communities, there are only one or two retail outlets. We would like to see more of those types of services provided. If we can increase the employment rate, we could do so by increasing the number of service providers, and if there was more employment, then we would be able to see more private businesses operating.

As I stated here earlier, there are 1,500 positions within the government that are vacant. We can provide and fill those positions if they open them up in the other communities and therefore, economic development would boom and that increases the possibilities of service providers being established in a community.

I would work closely with Economic Development and Transportation, the hamlets, and also economic developers, and I'm sure that would improve the benefits in the other communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeeagok.

Mr. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for asking such a very important question. I really see your question as being two-pronged

[question]. Whether we support small businesses; absolutely, but the bigger question of food insecurity, I think, is at the heart of your question. I think that is really the struggle of what all of our communities are facing.

I really am a strong supporter of how communities could really tackle food insecurity and I have been very fortunate to have worked with some incredible people of communities in which we created Nauttiqsuqtiit, where they harvest locally for their communities to provide nutritional food, especially to those that need it most, whether it's single parents, whether it's elders, or whether it's for the community as a whole. That has been something I am really proud of. There are incredible people in the communities that know best what the issues are. For us as a government to truly support local initiatives such as that, is something we should be open about, and the impact it has had to the community is something I am very proud of.

I also think the ability for us to advocate for the Nutrition North program to be more transparent is something we have to be open to. I understand there is recently a new board member directly from Nunavut that was appointed to that, and I truly feel there is an opportunity there where we could advance key issues, but you are absolutely right. It is very unfortunate some stores do gouge Nunavummiut and it is very evident. I think you have really demonstrated that with your videos as well of showcasing the true cost of the north of how we live here right now.

So I really see an opportunity where we could really advocate as a government to see if there are areas in the programs that we could continue to advance for. (interpretation)
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We absolutely do support small business. During COVID we did three rounds of grants for any small business within Nunavut.

Small businesses are creators of jobs in small communities where jobs are limited. A business must also make money though in order to stay in business, but they shouldn't gouge and I agree with the member, the cost of living is high.

Another example of how we help small businesses in small communities is the coop of Grise Fiord. It was about to be insolvent. We went in there and we helped the community rebuild and help them run their coop to make sure that they a grocery store.

Some communities have one. Some have two. It almost became a community with no grocery store, so we are there to help Nunavummiut and Nutrition North should be looked at again. It should be more transparent.

We see the cost of some certain products that are reasonable, some are really high and there is a lot of federal money that is pumped into Nutrition North. It should be more

transparent and it should help the people it's meant to help, not the retailers, the people it's meant to help, the people of the communities that buy the food, that eat the food.

I agree with the members that the high cost of living is high and we should tackle that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list: member from Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask a question for those that are trying hard to become Premier in Nunavut. My question is: in Kugluktuk the road for Grays Bay road and port proposal will provide a lot of jobs and the cost of living would also go down. I would like to ask: how will you help Inuit look for jobs and those who would like to work outside of their communities?

(interpretation ends) My question is on the Grace Bay Port and Road Project. It will impact Kitikmeot in both positive and negative ways, with wildlife migratory and calving grounds being the negative. The positive side will bring long-term employment and lower cost for food and other needs.

As Premier, what initiatives will you help with this process and development that the Inuit will need help on employment and self-employment? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeeagok.

Mr. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the member for his very good question. I know and I have participated in their meetings and I'm very proud that through Nunavut Tunngavik we were able to set aside some funds through the Kitikmeot Inuit Association so that their dream can become a reality.

Again, we have to remind ourselves that Nunavut Tunngavik was able to provide the financial support and then the federal government was able to put in some money to find out what kind of impact it would have on the environment, on the animals and everything else.

Through that channel and as a Premier I would do a full review. We would have discussions with the communities and find out the peoples thoughts about this project and I look forward to that. We have to be open to the dreams of the individual communities across Nunavut.

I would especially like to recognize the regional Inuit associations who are handling these projects and again, they would like to do that in Kivalliq region. Those are perfect examples of the Inuit dreams becoming a reality and how it could benefit further.

I look forward to looking at the Nunavut Impact Review Board's decisions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the GN, we have been working with Kitikmeot Inuit Association on this project. We have shared the NTCS funds with them so that they can get funds to do their environmental assessment.

The Nunavut government and myself as premier we support responsible, sustainable development and it has to be the development that the people agreed to and want. Once it is deemed that there is a project the Nunavut Impact Review Board process will kick in and all the negative effects, positive effects will weighed and NIRB will give a recommendation to the federal minister whether the project should go ahead or not.

We are at the very early stages of the Grays Bay and port project and I wish the Kitikmeot Inuit Association good success in that, and we will work them on that project, and once the NIRB process kicks in, we will be part of the process, but NIRB is an independent process. It is IPJ, and they will make the recommendations just like what they are doing for phase two of Baffinland. It is a process that our forefathers chose that that is the path of Nunavut for development, and this Grays Bay and port project will go through that process so it will be development that the people of that area want and accept. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Mr. Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I think what is important for our government to take a look at this. I think a very important issue and one that has been discussed more than once in this Assembly, and questions asked about it in this Assembly.

I think this new government has to sit down and consult with the municipalities that are affected by this project sooner than later, and not just the municipal councils, but the hunters and trappers organizations, the regional Inuit associations and other interest groups to see what their feeling is on this even at this very early age, and begin to work towards where the government's position is on this so that we do not end up doing what just happened in other situations where a decision is made to be for it, and then while the program is still going on, the decision now is to maybe not support it so much anymore. Or, you know, we cannot be flip flopping on issues very important such as this, and I would definitely work with the organizations and work that are affected by this and encourage our government to listen and work with the municipalities and the regions that are affected by this very important project. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Any more, Mr. Anavilok?

Mr. Anavilok: That is it. That was my question.

Chairman: Next name on my list: Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question about infrastructure. We all know that we don't have enough infrastructure in Nunavut; looking at hamlet infrastructure, for example, or the Nunavut government's infrastructure, like schools and health centres and airports, and we know that we will always never have enough money.

(interpretation ends) My question for the candidates is: what specific ideas do you have in terms of reducing the cost or improving the way that our government builds infrastructure in Nunavut? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the ways it could enhance the best bang for your buck, if you want to say, for infrastructure structure is: work with the contractors, work with the engineers, work with the architects so we can get what we need so it's not overbuilt and overpriced just so that it will meet the needs of that.

For infrastructure with the hamlets, we work with all the hamlets so that the hamlets give us a list of what they need, and we work with that list. We don't tell the hamlets what they need. The hamlets tell us what they need.

We are lacking so much in infrastructure. We need all we can. Any federal meetings I've ever had, I've always said that we have such a deficit in infrastructure in Nunavut that we're not even at the start line compared to southern Canada and I have been working hard and I will continue to work hard so that Nunavummiut get the infrastructure that they need, whether it be ports, airports, roads, houses, all of that. All that infrastructure, we need it all. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very good question. I think it's one that the government is constantly trying to explore to see how much further we could go with the money we do get.

I think some of the critical steps that the previous governments have done is to take blocks of funding and give it directly to the municipalities, like the mobile equipment fund. Unfortunately, that's something that started a dozen years ago and it has never changed in terms of how much money they get for the mobile equipment fund. Every community, regardless of the size of the population, gets the same amount of money.

I think initially it was anticipated that that would grow depending on the size of the municipality. I think it's time for the government to move on from that and start giving block funding so that municipalities could decide what kind of infrastructure their municipality needs. Do they need a new hamlet office? Do they want mobile equipment storage? Do they need to build maybe offices that they could rent out? They shouldn't

have to keep coming to the Government of Nunavut to ask for money to build shelter for their equipment.

We should be giving them more responsibility and more funding so that the hamlets could begin to stand alone and make their own decisions. (interpretation) Hamlets are quite capable of doing things on their own and in some aspects they are even better at it than we are.

Why can't we provide them more funding so that they can freely do what they want with it? They should not always have to be underfunded. The other matter; if we all get together and put together a mandate for the next four years, let's put this on the agenda. What do the communities need? What are the priorities for the communities? So let's put that on our mandate so that we can start settling the communities in the next coming four years and decide what all the communities will be getting. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeagok.

Mr. P.J. Akeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for asking that very good question. It's very true that we will never have enough money and we haven't been able to keep up with the infrastructure up to now. Your question was what kinds of ideas we will have. I will use an example; the housing shortage. If we are going to have proper partnerships, we can work with NCC or Sakku. If we can actually collaborate with them, then we can build cheaper. Maybe we can build more houses that way. Cabinet will be able to make considerations about that and look into it properly. I know how critical it is, and see how we can build them cheaper. We have to start looking at the way houses are built.

A lack of housing causes illnesses and then they have to be sent out on medical travel. All of those things have to be considered. Lastly, I would want to take part in doing a review. This House, for example, is the people of Nunavut's House, and if the government can have (interpretation ends) long-term leases, (interpretation) we can look at things like that, especially for big buildings. If we are going to be looking at producing elder facilities in the future in the other communities, I would really want to look into those kinds of partnerships or private businesses that are out there to see if we can work together.

I would look into all of those options if I become Premier. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the very good response. This will be my last question. The nursing shortage is felt in Nunavut, especially in the smaller communities. For example, in Arviat, during my last four-year term, I also brought up shortage of health professionals in our communities. During COVID we have come to understand that in all of Canada or the entire world, there is a nursing shortage that is getting worse because of COVID.

If you were elected as Premier, my question is: how and where will you get more (interpretation ends) health professionals (interpretation) like nurses and doctors for all of the communities in Nunavut to increase the numbers? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you. What you are saying about the nursing shortage is very true. There is a nursing shortage in the world. Some nursing stations almost had to be closed because of the lack of nurses. It is not the fact that they are not looking for nurses, but because there are no nurses available. This problem will continue to grow if we don't increase the number of nurses we are producing. There used to be many more nurses when they had good incentives to come to Nunavut. They would be provided housing. They would have their own house, for example, and when they needed to go on holidays to the south, that would be provided too with a return ticket.

Now all of these benefits are gone. We have to look into that as a government to see what other benefits we can provide to these nurses because they are being attracted by better offers in the USA or southern Canada, and we are going to have to provide them with more benefits in order to get them up here. While they are up here we have to take care of them.

All health centres have (interpretation ends) security guards (interpretation) now because there is violence happening in the health centres. It's really sad. Now we're spending money on security guards where we would be using that for nurses. We have to look to see how we can get more nurses to stay up here. I know this will be more expensive, but we need nurses. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeegok.

Mr. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague asking another very good question. It's true that the communities are lacking nurses. It's a worldwide problem. I think we all know that and we don't need to talk about that, but we have to do something about it as soon as possible. Even though we're now in a critical situation, we have to remember our ideas for elder facilities.

We're going to have to provide nurses for the facility that is being built now in Rankin Inlet. If we can plan for major infrastructure like that, including elder facilities, we need to utilize Nunavut Arctic College. There is just a lack of discussion between the construction companies and Nunavut Arctic College and ask Nunavut Arctic College if they are planning to have certified nursing course.

Arctic College has a four-year plan on nursing programs, so I am proud that they are doing that, but the nursing programs are usually two-year programs and for nursing assistants and caretakers, if we're going to be planning for elder facilities, I imagine that in the coming year we have to plan for licensed practical nurses. They have to start

learning and be trained in the coming years so that Inuit who are interested can get into that.

I imagine that I would be working closely with the minister for Arctic College and work on this critical matter. I know that Arctic College has its own independent ways, but telehealth has been used more and more. I believe we were in a dangerous situation this summer when some health centres had to be closed. Some communities are in a critical situation like that, so I would want to look at that too in the future. If I became Premier, I would want to review that properly. The nurses would have to be able to speak Inuktitut as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Nursing Program is new. We have a shortage of nurses in Nunavut and across Canada. This is an area we have been consistently working on to get more nurses. We have had incentives and increased benefits and this is something that is still being worked on. They have a nursing program at Arctic College here and it is great to see that we have nurses now coming out of the program as full-fledged nurses and I encourage people who want to get into nursing to take the program and this program is delivered in Nunavut.

The pandemic measures made us realize how much of a shortage we have in nursing and at the moment we are a little more relaxed in the area. Perhaps before Christmas, we will have to work even harder to increase the number of nurses. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list: Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Iqalummiut and Nunavummiut, and Premier candidates. I would like to ask a similar question that was posed by my colleague from Iqaluit-Sinaa regarding child abuse. I would like to thank Ms. Brewster for raising the topic and sharing.

Many of the responses that were provided were how to help child victims of sexual abuse, and I thank you for those responses. I have been vocal about this issue quite frequently over the last four years.

I know that social workers and RCMP and health care professionals are doing their very best to assist these victims, but their efforts for the most part are all reactionary. I believe that the Government of Nunavut must do more to fulfill its obligation to ensure the safety of our children, including proactive efforts.

I would like to ask: how will your government address and reduce child sexual abuse in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeagok.

Mr. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I really want to thank Member Mr. Lightstone for working very hard in this area. Also, Ms. Brewster raised a really good question to start with.

Yes, it is very true; we have too many children being sexually abused across Nunavut, and we need to understand how much of an impact it has had in our communities. We know the work and I would like to hear from (interpretation ends) child advocacy (interpretation) first as to what they see or what we can do to further support them because we have encouraged them to look into these areas and look at what we can put in place. They are our advocates.

I think my priority area would be to get a handle on how big the issue is. We need to find other ways of how we can develop a strategy to ensure our youth are not going through these experiences.

I think I would want to work very closely with you and take on your thoughts you have in this area. We have also seen programs developed out there and we can look at those programs to see what has worked best. Again, I would like to thank the member for that very good question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These are heavy hard subjects that we have to deal with and one of the things that we are doing that I talked about several times here now is the trauma treatment centre that is going to be put here in Iqaluit for counselling services available for people that need it.

I know this is reactionary. As the member said, most of the efforts we have are reactionary. With the new healing centre that we have here now, there should be more counselling services available and more resources available for the ones that are incarcerated there. It is hard to give someone the services if you don't know they need it. So the first step would be to find out if they need it.

For sexual abuse, normally we find out because there has been a crime committed and the crime has been discovered, and that's all reactionary and it's all after the fact. I agree with the member that it's all after the fact. We would like to help everyone that needs help out there, but you have to ask for it. We have services available. We have resources available. Ask for it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I said with Ms. Brewster's question, I indicated there that we need to work with the child advocacy group. How many times does this group have to come here and make a report before this legislature finally acts on those very important topics?

The previous government, which you and I were fortunate enough to sit in, had hearings on dealing with this stuff and the child advocacy people spoke a lot about the need to take care of our children. That's where I think I would start and ask our government and staff to look there and review the situation. Also, it's important to look at other jurisdictions and see how they are working and see what works with them and what doesn't.

At the end of the day, Mr. Chairman, this government has to stop being a reactionary government on very important issues, such as child abuse, suicide, and other harms to our women and children. We need to become proactive in dealing with these situations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, premier candidates, for those responses. My next question for the candidates is regarding housing.

A majority of Nunavummiut reside in subsidized housing, such as public housing and staff housing. Recently the CMHC, or the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, has identified that homeownership in Nunavut has been on the decline over the last ten years. Subsidized housing has become the preferred option for Nunavummiut and the Government of Nunavut must do something to change that mentality.

I would like to ask: what will your government do to expand our limited housing continuum and encourage and support homeownership? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do support homeownership within Nunavut. We have programs available. We need more programs and we were working on a HAP type program, but we didn't have time to complete it. Back in the NWT days, that's what sprawled a lot of homeownership back then was the HAP program, the Home Assistance Program, and I would like to see that revitalized so that we can do that, so that we can help Nunavummiut get into their own housing. We had another initiative that didn't make it past the end of our government there too to help homeowners with more down-payment assistance funds.

I agree with the member that we need to get more Nunavummiut in their own houses, help them get in their own houses, but also help them financially to stay in their own houses. The subsidy that is offered to public housing and staff housing is substantially more than the subsidies that we provide to someone in their own housing. That is something that we have to look at to equalize that, to incentivize people to want to be in their own house because once a person is in their own house, there are very limited government funds that are helping them and then those funds are freed up by the government to spend elsewhere.

I agree with the member that we need to do more for homeownership in Nunavut and one of the programs that is available right now to help Nunavummiut decrease their costs are renewable energy projects that are being offered right now for homeowners that want to help subsidize their electricity bill with either wind or solar. That option is there and I hope Nunavummiut take advantage of that, the homeowners, to lessen their electrical bill. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak: Thank you for the question. I had to take that part of my speech out this morning because it was going to run me 25 minutes. I'll try to respond to that question in a nutshell.

We have seen the housing corporation over the years say we have housing down-payment assistance programs and everything else, but you have to fit in this little category to make sure that you qualify to get the unit or to get a down-payment, but you make too much money to actually afford to maintain that unit. I think we need to take those barriers away. We need to stop categorizing everything and have a different approach.

I'll try to make this as short as possible, Mr. Chairman. Here is what I see: I see the committee that we would like to see, as I said earlier, that's still in there, but in terms of a homeownership assistance program, why doesn't the housing corporation take \$2 million of their budget? It's not a lot of money in the big scheme of things, and then take that and put \$500,000, let's say, into a community like Iqaluit and say "we'll go to the housing association in Iqaluit, take the top 10 people paying the top 10 rent in Iqaluit", as an example, and then go to the individual, the number one on the list. It's a little different than the number one on your cell phone playlist, and say "okay, we have a home package for you. We have a three-bedroom unit and a four-bedroom unit. Would you like to enter into this three or four-bedroom unit, and we will work with the bank to give you the down-payment assistance program. It's a preapproved mortgage, the whole nine yards... ." I'm trying to make this as quick as possible. "If you are, would you like the three or four-bedroom prefab unit?" Then the individual would say "yes, I'd like the three-bedroom unit." The individual gets that house and now they are on the mortgage.

Now you've given a home to somebody that they have to pay for themselves because it's their mortgage, and you've taken that person off the housing list in Iqaluit.

You could do that for 10 people in Iqaluit very easily and it goes on. That way Iqalummiut, for an example, would not be paying \$800,000 for a house that's worth \$400,000, which is the dilemma they're stuck in right now.

If you played this over and over in other communities that can afford to do that, you will be spending a lot less money building houses and creating community wealth. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeagok.

Mr. P.J. Akeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank my colleague for his good question. I think we all support Nunavummiut getting their own homes and being able to afford them to keep their jobs and there are many of them.

However, right now it's getting harder and harder, especially in Iqaluit with the prices going up, I believe, and the assistance from the government for people who want to buy their own homes have to be reviewed on whether it's keeping up, not just review it.

Why are construction costs so high now and we have to look into that too and if you want to work with people and make big changes. I don't think we can do it alone.

I look forward to the Inuit organizations and regional Inuit organizations to work with them and how we can help people with more affordable for Nunavummiut to be provided the assistance. We feel that a review needs to be done with the assistance program from the government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list: Member for Aggu, Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before I ask my question, I would like to take this opportunity to say happy eighth anniversary to my daughter and her husband.

(interpretation) My question is: as you are talking about elders and youth, for those in the middle who are not too old and not too young, have you ever thought of how you can provide support to this age group Nunavummiut? Thank you.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for asking that question. Those in the middle seem to be left behind and they don't get assistance in any area, such as for hunting equipment and jobs. I would like to see how governments and associations can work more closely with those people who are just by themselves, who are not too old and not too young, perhaps through job training or planning for the future.

When there are mining companies looking for employees in our communities, I think we need to work more with them on how they can provide benefits to the communities. They will be making a lot of money. We have to work more closely with them in providing assistance to our communities.

Additionally, I think we have to depend more on the regional Inuit associations when we are doing work on this. According to the agreements with the regional Inuit associations, they all have goals of benefitting Inuit. We have to work more closely with them so that we can distribute our limited amount of money. I don't know how many times we have spent that money just talking in this room to see where it can go. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeagok.

Mr. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the Member for Aggu for asking that very good question. It is true that our elders are always our priority. We would not be here if it was not for them and I don't think that will change soon. We have to work hard for our elders and as we are bringing our children up, it has to be our goal.

Yes, I totally agree that we have to look at what is in the middle and the benefits that need to be there. If it's not through college, whether it's to jobs or other areas, we have to look into it. I can use an example. At the start of the pandemic, when we were at the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, those questions were coming up. We gave food assistance to elders and we gave material to children. However, the people in the middle need assistance, especially those people with jobs. They need to be provided assistance, but if I became Premier, I would like to work with my colleague on whether she has any visions so that we can work hard on them as a government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those people in the middle need to be provided more assistance. They are provided assistance through Nunavut Arctic College for those unemployed, through income assistance, with job training so that they can secure more jobs. They're provided assistance in that area. We should provide more assistance to those able to work with no jobs available so that they can move forward.

I agree that we have to assist them. We should be providing assistance to the people of Nunavut. We have been elected to help our people and our communities. We ran to be MLAs and we are here now, all of us, and I want to hear from all of you on how we can help the middle-aged people more. Please tell me that if we do it this way, it would benefit, this one is wrong and this one is right, and I would want to hear from you and I will work with all of you in the coming four years. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we start working, we will probably hear about how *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* should be incorporated. When the government tries to include it and you don't see it anymore, how would you try to incorporate it further? Thank you.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeegok.

Mr. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for asking that very good question. The *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* principles are the foundation for us making decisions. We really feel how we should push more for it. Having listened to it from the outside, they say they're just words.

I would look into how we're going to come up with ideas through legislation and serious issues, whether Inuit knowledge is being used properly. I would face the elders more on where we can make improvements. I turn to my elders because of their knowledge. However, as this is a very good question, I wanted to point that out. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* principles are being utilized right now. When it first started being used, it was prominent once we started making legislation or policies and tested whether IQ was being used. However, once you propose legislation, *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* principles are used right from the beginning. It starts at the beginning, not at the end.

All the departments have *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* coordinators presently, but you don't really see it. However, in legislation and policies, it's being used at correctional centres and income support. *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* principles are being utilized. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you. Yes, *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* within the government, maybe the utilization should be heard of more. We often hear that *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* is not being used. It is being used, but maybe it's not used enough. I'll use this as an example. When the housing corporation starts construction of houses, they talk to elders and committees on where the building should face and where the porches should face.

We have been told that and this summer and this spring in June, when we were talking about mental health issues, when the *Mental Health Act* was introduced, when we were dealing with it, we heard that *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* was being used. I'll use an example.

When there is a serious mental health issue, you try to provide help to the individual and the health professionals and the RCMP start making decisions for them. According to elders, there was consideration with the person with a mental health issue before they reach that stage that they identify their guide. If I had mental health issues, once I approach a mental health worker to deal with my mental health issues, they would ask me right away, "Quassa, if you have to be taken to the health centre because of your mental health issues and you cannot decide for yourself, who would be appointed as your substitute decision-maker?" I myself would appoint a relative or a friend who will decide for me.

Those are the things that are set through *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* by appointment and if the RCMP is going to approach somebody with a mental health issue, there should be a mental health worker or an appointee who has to go to the person. These are some of the

things that they deal with through *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*, and I apologize for taking so long. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next member on my list: Member for Quttiktuq, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Mr. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I am also proud of you and you are presiding as the Chair for today's meeting. I am very proud of the three candidates for Premier and I look forward to having a good leader, who will have to do a good job. The three of you represent all big communities. There are many smaller communities. The three communities that I represent are smaller communities and you always hear that the government doesn't inform about government activities. If you became Premier, what have you thought about going to the smaller communities? Are you open to going to the smaller communities to talk to them? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would go visit the smaller communities. We started going to all the communities, but with the COVID pandemic, we were not travelling anymore. If the member recalls, we were planning to go to Resolute Bay and we were set to leave, but it stopped because of COVID. We would resume visiting all the communities when COVID is over. I know the smaller communities never see the Premier.

I have been to all the communities, but I haven't visited some of the communities because of COVID. I have gone to Arctic Bay, to the member's community, and we went there to meet with the hamlet and the hunters and trappers organization. Yes, I agree with him that if I were to become Premier, once COVID is over, I would be travelling again to the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): It's great that you're asking that question, Mr. Akeeagok. When I was the Minister of Community and Government Services, I wanted to visit all the communities and I did try, but I didn't go to all of the 25 communities. It's not only the Premier's duty or responsibility to visit all the communities, but we have to do more than that. All ministers should be visiting the communities and the regular members have to participate in those community tours so that they will see the communities in person and look at their infrastructure.

What I would like to suggest is that when I become the Premier, I would like to introduce the idea of holding sessions in other communities outside of Iqaluit. They want to see the Premier, cabinet, and regular members and we have never had sessions outside of the communities. We would like to see the communities in person. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeegok.

Mr. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for bringing up a very good question. That has always been my platform ever since I got into leadership. As elected officials, we have a huge responsibility. We are responsible for both the small and the larger communities.

If I should be elected to be the Premier... I was brought up in a small community and I know that the leaders do not come to the communities because a community is too small, because the hotel is inadequate, or because the airfare is too expensive. I'm not going to be looking for excuses when it comes to visiting the smaller communities. We represent all the communities and that would be first and foremost.

Once we get our mandate, I am also thinking about going outside of Iqaluit. It's up to all of us to realize that we represent all communities. If I should be elected, it is something that I'm going to be pushing for. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list: member from Amittuq, Mr. Kaernerk.

Mr. Kaernerk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I would also like to welcome all the candidates.

Just for further clarity, all our foods are imported from the south to our communities and COVID has had an impact on the prices of food and goods. People who work for a housing authority, for example, and the hamlet councils and because of the increased prices of food, clothing, and merchandise, they can't afford to meet their basic needs.

If you should get elected, would you entertain the idea of reforming the *Income Assistance Act*? The price for everything has inflated, not only for food but for clothing and merchandise. Would you look at reforming the Act so that we can give financial support to the working poor or who are working but not making enough money to meet their basic needs? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): I'm very glad to hear that question, but it's a hard decision to make. The monies that are allotted for income support come from the federal government.

We would have to look at how much more support we can give because people out there don't want to receive income support. It's their last resort. It costs money to provide country food to the elders and it also costs money to take care of elders. We have to look at all levels of government. Nobody out there wants to receive income support. It's because there is no employment. It's their last resort and I don't blame them.

We have to look at how much more support we can provide to the people. You can't just say there's a job opening; apply for it. That doesn't happen very often. We have to look at this further as a government and look at how we can supplement the income they are receiving and not decrease the amount that they receive from income support. We have to do that as a united front. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeeagok.

Mr. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and my colleague, for that very good question. We definitely have to do something about it now. We all go through hardship at times and there are people in need now. I'm glad that we do provide financial support, but we can do more than that as a government.

We could also look at the hunters and whether we can give them more support because they're the ones who are helping the community as a whole. They work on a full-time basis and we have to look at some kind of financial support to the hunters. It's a full-time job and they will have an income. For example, the stewards know all about hunting, the environment, and the animals and they provide for the entire community. We have to look at how we can trade or how we can provide financial support to the hunters.

I'm sure that this will be an increasing debate among the members, so I'll leave it at that for now, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's a very good question. Before clients received income support, their child tax credit was deducted from that amount. We now don't make any deductions and they're receiving a larger amount. Over and above that, if they work a little bit, there was a deduction on the amount they received from income support. We removed that deduction. We look at education so that they can gain employable skills. I think that 38 percent of Nunavummiut receive income support because we have no employment opportunities. The Nutrition North program is under the federal government, but I think that we have to make it more visible and how we can decrease the amount we pay for food and to have that money just directed to subsidize the food. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for providing the answers. On the other matter, I have been hearing of these hard-to-fill positions in Nunavut. Let's say for example, mental health workers. You need a university degree in order to get employed with the Health department. Now, with *Inuit Qaujimagatuaqangit* not being pretty much recognized with the ability to counsel people, I guess my question would be: what specific policies and actions should the territorial government take with respect to increasing the numbers of Nunavut Inuit employed in the departments, public agencies, and territorial corporations? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeegok.

P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you, Mr. Kaernek, for that excellent question. That was one of the issues that I heard repeatedly from the elders. They informed me that they did go to the cultural school, Piqqusilirivvik, in Clyde River to show that they can start counselling people. Employable people do provide a lot of support but they don't have the required certification, and they lose that position.

We know who provides counselling in the communities. They can be provided diplomas so that they can fill those vacant positions. It is not just a number. How many more jobs can we provide to the communities? If we can provide support to Inuit, because they are very knowledgeable in their culture and language, I would look at the employment opportunities and look closely at what the language requirements are and the certification or trades that are required.

There are a lot of people out there who provide those services but just do not have the certification or diplomas. I would want to look at that, first of all, and maybe first focus on counsellors. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member is correct; we have positions that are hard to fill. A lot of the positions are hard to fill due to a lack of housing, so we need to work on that part of the equation.

Mr. Chairman, for qualifications for any government jobs, we do have equivalencies for Inuit beneficiaries. Equivalencies count the same as a certificate. If they have the equivalency as someone who has a certification, and the one with the equivalency is an Inuit beneficiary and they score fairly close to the same, the beneficiary will get the job. We have priority hiring for Inuit.

Our policy is to hire Inuit first and foremost, and we will continue with that practice of having equivalencies and make sure that we do our best to take down barriers so we can hire Inuit. We want Inuit to work for the government and we are striving to get our Inuit employment numbers up. It's a policy that we have and we will continue with this until we have more Inuit working there. We want Inuit to want to work for the government. We want to be the employer of choice. We have to compete with the mines. We have to compete with the Inuit organizations. We have to compete with the businesses, but we will strive to do our best to hire more Inuit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is very important for more funding to go towards training Inuit for them to be able to get the very important jobs that were created. We created Nunavut and Inuit were going to get all these jobs, and that is the continuing challenge. We have a limited pot of money as a government and you have to decide

where you are going to put those monies. Education, adult education and Arctic College has a fixed budget to train, and they use that money the best they can to fill needs like the law program, the nursing program and all of these other programs, elder care programs.

Not that long ago the federal government gave money to Makigiaqta; money to train Inuit to get those government jobs. That board is made up of the President of NTI and the presidents of the regional Inuit associations and two Government of Nunavut ministers; the Arctic College minister I believe, and the Human Resources.

I participated in some of those meetings to try to get funding. That money is for training Inuit to do government jobs. When we went there to try to get money to do more money for government jobs, more often than not we got turned away. We didn't have enough of this. We need to put more of our own money into this, the government money. It was like pulling teeth trying to get money from them because the organization heads did not support our plans.

We need to have better communication with the heads of the organizations, including NTI, so that we can begin to take some of those funds from Makigiaqta to begin to train our Inuit to work for the Government of Nunavut. That is what that money is for and it gets tied up in bureaucracy and politics and that is not how it should be. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. The next name on my list: member from Hudson Bay, Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all I would like to say congratulations as you are the first Chairman from the Kitikmeot region for the meeting here.

My first question to the candidates for Premier will be: if you are selected as Premier, what would be your three main goals in the coming four years? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Of the three, one would be working together on a mandate and I've heard from everyone that they are housing, mental health, and our elder care. If you want to hear the three most important to me, those are the ones. If I can add more, education would be added to that and we would all work together on that mandate to make sure that funding for them is approved in the House so we can work on them.

You wanted to hear three; there is housing, mental health and the proper care of our elders. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Of those three, I'm not going to put one as a priority above the others. There is the shortage of housing. There are different reasons for the shortage of housing and there are different circumstance in all of the different communities.

We have to all at the same time look at the housing shortage in the communities, one at a time. We can't just wait now and look at just the communities with the most housing needs. We have to look at Nunavut as a whole.

Our elders were very able. We have to look at how they can age properly in Nunavut. We have to support them and bring out proper supports for the elders. As to what that would look like to make sure that they can age properly and not be hungry.

The third one; meanwhile, those other ones are very important but here, working within the government, there are 11 new members and when I first got elected, I believe it was in the Third Assembly, we were 11 new members. We have to work together. We cannot work as a divided body. Those of us who are new, don't classify yourself as a returning MLA or a rookie MLA. Let's all look at each other the same way. Let's have the same voice. If you are a new MLA or a coming back MLA, we all need to have the strength in our voices. The plans that we make for the future have to be the same.

Don't be intimidated, don't be worried, and just work together. That is what I will push for and I will always say we have to use one voice even though are working on things that are very difficult. If we work together we can make them easier.

There are people waiting for us. We have to start now. Thank you.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeeagok.

P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank my colleague for asking that very good question. There is that way too. I would like all the MLAs to work on our goals for the next four years; not just work on what we heard from the previous government.

We know that there were problems with the previous administration when we were on the outside. We have to look what our mandate will be, what our goals will be. It is kind of difficult to identify three priorities. I believe when we are putting together our mandate we can set that up. One of my campaign promises was for the elders. The shortage of housing is number one though when you visit the people. It is not just for the construction of housing but also the policies for housing that was mentioned. So I expect that we will all come up to the same goal. Four years will be over in no time at all and we know that and we have gone through that. So I expect that in the coming weeks we will be able to meet together and explain what our priorities will be and what will be important to us.

If we can imagine a dog team, we will starting at a trot and go faster and proceed into the future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My colleague asked a very good question.

Chairman: Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik (interpretation): Thank you for that response. This will be my final question. (interpretation ends) How would you deal with ministers who do not perform to your satisfaction? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) If cabinet members are not doing what they are supposed to be doing, they need to be spoken to right away to find out what the problems are and find a solution with them. Also, regular MLAs have to be aware of what is happening. If a regular MLA explains to cabinet that there's something wrong with a minister, then that has to be dealt with. We also have policies for the ministers and the fact that they have to do their work properly and also disciplined when necessary. I would follow those policies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeegok.

Mr. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank my colleague for asking another good question. Being elected, we hold some of the highest authority. We can represent people in our communities and we get directed to do that work for them and work hard for them. That's what we said during our campaigning.

What my colleague was saying, talking amongst each other and being open, it has always been very important to me and I have used that. If disciplining is necessary, there are policies that enable us to do that. I would work with that person first of all. Sometimes problems come from things that you can't control and I have experienced that with former staff, but unity is our strength.

Premiers hold the highest authority. I believe that we will be able to proceed and I won't be able to deal with them on my own and I would work with the Executive Council. Thank you for asking that question.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have gone through this. The first step is to talk to the minister and see what the problem is and see why there are non-performance issues. Sometimes it's stuff beyond his or her control. Sometimes there are other issues. I will work with the minister and I have worked with ministers to rectify the problem.

If the problem is not resolved, then there are two options: the Premier can strip the portfolios of the minister if so needed, if it warrants, if it's to that extreme, and then the matter would be brought to Full Caucus and Full Caucus would make the decision of whether to deal with the minister or not. It's not an easy situation, it's not an easy decision, but I have made them and I would make them again.

The ministers are put in the Executive Council, into cabinet by all the members for them to do their duties and they do their duties, but from time to time there have to be some corrections and I know the pressure is from Full Caucus to make sure that all the ministers fulfill their duties that they are obligated to do.

As a premier, I'm a fair premier. I listen to all the sides. I go to the matter. I don't prejudge anyone. I go into the situation with an open mind to find out what the problem is. I don't have go there thinking what the problem; I go there wanting to know what the problem is and doing what I need to do to fix the problem.

Mr. Chairman, as the Premier, my job was and, if I'm Premier again, will be to make cabinet work, to make it a well-oiled machine so each minister performs their duties. I don't interfere with their duties because they are there to fulfill their duties, but my job is to make cabinet work and if something is not working, it's my job to correct it and make it work. Nunavummiut expect a lot from our government and rightfully so. We should deliver on our promises and our duties as the Government of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list: member from Pangnirtung, Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm also proud of you for being placed in the Speaker's Chair. We have been hearing very good responses from the candidates for Premier.

The concerns that are raised that we often hear in our communities are areas of priority and a lot of work is put into the area of social services and mental health issues. These are things that are often raised and oftentimes we have clients who want to speak Inuktitut, but they face barriers. In our community these are all things that we expect.

When I first got elected for MLA, it was often mentioned what further the government can do in the area of compassion, and I was very pleased with the Sailivik Centre in Pangnirtung, which is also a safe place for people who have problems. We have elders and counsellors available for people if they need it. I am very pleased with that program. These are things that communities want and they want their language used.

These programs are not run by government; these programs are run by organizations. For disabilities, not everyone will be attending. What can you do to see more of these similar programs to realize that these programs are available in all communities with the use of our language? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeeagok.

Mr. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the member asking a very good question. I am very proud and appreciative of the program raised. Despite COVID measures, we were also able to provide funding to the centre in Pangnirtung and these important programs are critical in the communities.

The communities know what they require and often our communities are asked what they need, and we talked about housing and it opened many issues there and I often talked about housing and the desire to see more programming with the help of our elders to help our youth and to help anyone. I envision that all the communities can start looking into this.

I know everyone will not want to come to the centre for healing, even with the structure built, especially if their language or culture is not there. Those are the ones that we will have to provide a lot of support to. I know personally that Ilisaqsivik had run programs too that have been very positive, starting a camp outside the community and focusing on healers with the involvement of elders. I think that sets a very good example of what plans we need in areas where people are having problems.

I would again like to thank the member for that very good question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we need more support for the communities. I know that. Perhaps, now is the time. I think some of us recollect the hamlet receives counsellors funding. Not the municipal councillors, but social counsellors, that are made available and we need to open up this area more.

I think it's a good time and we'd like to see funding in all the communities, provide funding for the hamlets in this regard for those who are experiencing mental health issues, and we should be supporting that and I know, we all are in support.

We are going to have to help people who are disabled, people who are mentally ill. Perhaps now is the time to open up to make counsellors available in all communities for people with mental health issues and so on. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): It makes me happy to hear when communities want to stand up and when they are able to provide services, rather than just depending on the government. When they move forward on their own, you want to be very supportive.

As I mentioned earlier, all the communities and hamlets should be empowered and I see that there is a link here.

Not every program has to be the same. Healing won't be the same. Every community is different. You have strengths and weaknesses in our communities.

For example, we have a men's group in Rankin Inlet that helps the youth and fathers to be better fathers. These programs should be in the forefront in our communities based on the community's needs, perhaps in the area of housing or a centre.

There are many different aspects here, and we shouldn't just say we're going to have this program for all. We should perhaps be more open to understanding the issues in each community.

For that reason, I decided to run for Premiership. I have been in cabinet twice in two different Assemblies, and I have seen where the problems are in moving forward, and I have heard where those areas of problems are.

I have often talked about how best we can approach each issue. How can we be a better government? Perhaps we should have a little less hands-on control because I think it's due time that communities start making their own decisions if it's in the area of healing and healthy living.

We should be the ones that provide the resources and not assume that this is a program that this community needs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for very good responses. We've heard all the problems here, lack of housing, mental health, elder care and what we'll be planning for the next four years, our mandate that we'll be discussing. Many of these issues will not be new.

How do you see or envision, if you are elected Premier, with four years, how would you approach these differently? As Inuit often say, we want to see change. We want to see improvements. What are your thoughts in these areas? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I envision that we work cooperatively, all of us, those in the cabinet and those who are MLAs. We have to have a unified mission and move forward with that. Hamlets are also a level of government and work diligently with them. The hamlets know their community, what they need in the community, what the needs are. We should be more effective working here as a unified group because we are all MLAs. We are all in the same boat. We need to work closely together to have a more positive outlook and I would work hard to ensure that we work in a unified way as MLAs and cabinet. This is an area I would work hard towards here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): I think this is the last question and it is a good question to answer last. My goal and the reason why I wanted to run for Premier is because I was tired of the term "regular members." We should not have just regular members; we are all MLAs. When we ran for MLA, we didn't run just to be regular members. We should not be using that term. We all have the same power. I'll be working hard on that.

I said before that it has to change from 1999 to today. The system isn't working and it hasn't changed to this day. We still have regular members that aren't part of the decision-making and they're only shown things that have already been decided on. I didn't want to see that anymore and that's why I put my name forward. It has to change here.

I am aware of how government runs and how departments run completely now. I think we can come up with changes because we know them already. We should stop using the term regular MLA. We as elected members, if we were to come up with a proper term for premier and people who would be ministers, it should be from all over Nunavut and that would be good.

We need to be one here in this room from start to finish on everything if we are going to construct a building, a health centre, health issues, and education. We should all be informed from start to finish and not just at the end. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeegok.

Mr. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for asking a very good question. She asked how are we going to do things differently when we want to do new things. Looking at what has been done, we're just saying the same things year after year. The same questions are being asked and Inuit get tired of repeating themselves over and over again. I feel that we should be doing new things. It is true that we cannot do it as individuals, especially on our bigger goals. We have to be unified and agree on where we want to be headed. Being unified and working together will be very important.

Also, with being able to work with those outside of the government, like Inuit organizations and the federal government, I have good expectations. I used an example earlier. I look at it like a dog team. I feel that we will be moving forward. Our foundation will have to be based on cooperation. We have a big job to do and we will have to come up with considerations. I thank the member for asking a good question, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We are finally on our last name. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, this is your second and final question, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you everyone for your thoughtful answers on this very long day.

We know as we age and grow that we strive to do our best, and even though we try to always make good choices, sometimes we stumble. You have all been leaders in various capacities. Tell us about a time you had an error in judgement in a leadership role, and what you did to learn from it and fix the situation. Thank you.

Chairman: Member Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As an elected person, or even if you are not elected and you are a leader, you make an error sometimes. More than once I have hired people because I believed in their vision and their ability to perform their duties. A new employee was doing other things or was not able to perform the job and it became obvious more than once that I had made a mistake. I spoke with them regarding my mistake and I reported my error to the board and what needed to be done to fix it and how we could move forward. I have worked on that.

What I mean is, Mr. Chairman, when we make a mistake we should be able to say “I made a mistake.” We have to look for solutions. We don’t have to worry about it, and the solutions not to be done so that our workplace can move forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Member P.J. Akeeagok.

P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and I thank the member for that very good question. It makes you think. However, what I have learned is that language is very important. As an elected person our words can be heavy and they are heard. I grew up from childhood speaking Inuktitut and I have felt my inability to speak English. Sometimes because I am thinking in Inuktitut I catch myself not using proper language. I wonder sometimes if I am in a dangerous situation. What I have learned is that we have to retain our ability to speak Inuktitut in my words and thoughts. We make mistakes sometimes in English with things we don’t mean to say, but I learned from it.

When I made my speech this morning, we’re very proud that we can speak our language in Nunavut. That’s how heavy it is and that’s what is heard. What I have learned from that is that I should be prouder and keep on using the language because we have to stand up with it. I thank the member for the good question.

Chairman: Member Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have made mistakes from time to time and I have apologized for them publicly.

Mr. Chairman, you make the best decision with the best information you have at the time and you make that decision. We are elected to make decisions, but if you make the wrong decision or not-so-good decision, there is nothing wrong with apologizing and saying you’re sorry that you made the decisions.

If you want specific examples, this was not a mistake, but sometimes we’re quick to the tongue when you’re under pressure. When I was doing my COVID updates all the time here on TV, I made a comment about teachers that was not appropriate and the next day I apologized. I should have bit my tongue, but sometimes at the heat of the moment, it’s hard.

We're all human, but the ability to admit your mistake and apologize and correct it is where it matters. We will all make mistakes. If you make a mistake, don't defend your mistake. Own it, admit it, and say you're sorry and go on and promise to do better. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Election of Premier

Chairman: Thank you to all members. I have no more names. There being no more questions for the candidates, we will now proceed to balloting. I ask all members now to proceed to the voting table in an orderly fashion.

Thank you. The ballots will now be taken to a secure area in the precinct for counting. Members may wish to wait in the lounge while we take a brief recess. Thank you.

>>Meeting recessed at 17:31 and resumed at 17:42

Chairman: Welcome back, members. Thank you, members. The forum has reconvened. I wish to advise members that Member P.J. Akeegok has been chosen to serve as the Premier.

>>Applause

P.J. Akeegok, congratulations to you. Would you like to make comments? Mr. Premier-elect, P.J. Akeegok.

Mr. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am humbled in front of you as I know that you have given me a huge responsibility. It is not a joke to be in the Premier's seat. I would like to thank Mr. Savikataaq and Mr. Kusugak and especially the member who nominated me, Ms. Gross. Thank you for your faith in me and I look forward to the next four years and we will have a huge workload. I know that it's not going to be easy and I will be turning to the elders on a constant basis and to you as members and we will look at everybody equally. Thank you very much.

I remember my grandparents and my grandfathers and grandmothers, some of whom are not here, but I think of my elders and my family, my wife and three children. They are the ones who hold me up when I give myself to serve the people. I am very grateful. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>Applause

Nominations for Cabinet Positions

Chairman: Thank you. The appropriate motion will be moved in the House at its first sitting to confirm the selection.

We will now proceed to the selection process for members of the Executive Council of Nunavut.

I will first review the procedures for the selection of candidates for the Executive Council of Nunavut.

Members have agreed that the forum will select eight ministers to serve on cabinet.

Following the close of nominations, each candidate has up to ten minutes make remarks.

As agreed to by Full Caucus, there will be no question period.

I remind all members that if you are nominated, you must immediately accept or decline the nomination.

The floor is now open for nominations. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I nominate Jolie Kaernek, Member for Amittuq. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Does Member Kaernek accept the nomination?

Mr. Kaernek (interpretation): Mr. Chairman, I accept.

Chairman: Pamela Gross.

Ms. Gross: *Koana*, Mr. Chairman. I would like to nominate Iqaluit-Manirajak Adam Lightstone.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone, do you accept the nomination?

Mr. Lightstone: Yes, I accept.

Chairman: Ms. Pamela Gross.

Ms. Gross (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I would like to nominate [Iqaluit]-Sinaa Member Janet Brewster.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster, do you accept the nomination?

Ms. Brewster: Thank you. I accept.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: I would like to nominate Quttiktuq MLA Mr. Akeeagok.

Chairman: Thank you. Does David Akeeagok accept the nomination?

Mr. Akeeagok (interpretation): Mr. Chairman, I accept. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: I would like to nominate Pamela Gross, Cambridge Bay.

Chairman: Thank you. Does Pamela Gross accept the nomination?

Ms. Gross: I accept the nomination.

Chairman: Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you. I would like to nominate Alex, Rankin North-Chesterfield Inlet.

Chairman: Thank you. Does Mr. Sammurtok accept the nomination?

Mr. Sammurtok: Yes, I do. Thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to nominate Mr. Hickes. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Does Mr. Hickes accept the nomination?

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do.

Chairman: Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to nominate Kusugak. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Does Mr. Kusugak accept the nomination?

Mr. Kusugak: I do, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to nominate Craig Simailak. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Does Mr. Simailak accept the nomination?

Mr. Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I accept.

Chairman: Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to nominate Mr. Main. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Does Mr. Main accept the nomination?

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I accept.

Chairman: Any more nominations? Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to nominate the Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Anavilok, do you accept the nomination?

Mr. Anavilok: Yes, I accept.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish to nominate Solomon Malliki. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Malliki, do you accept the nomination?

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): I accept.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to nominate the Member for Aggu, Joanna Quassa.

Chairman: Thank you. Does Ms. Quassa accept the nomination?

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I accept.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: I would like to nominate South Baffin, David Joanasie.

Chairman: Mr. Joanasie, do you accept the nomination?

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Yes, I accept. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Any more nominations? Mr. Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I nominate Mr. Savikataaq. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Does Mr. Savikataaq accept the nomination?

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do.

Chairman: Any more nominations? Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik: I would like to nominate the member from Uqqummiut, Ms. Killiktee.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee, do you accept the nomination?

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Mr. Chairman, I decline.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I nominate Margaret Nakashuk. Thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Nakashuk, do you accept the nomination?

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): I accept.

Chairman: Any more nominations? Thank you. There being no more nominations, we will now proceed to the candidates' speeches.

Each candidate has up to ten minutes to make remarks. We will proceed in alphabetical order by surname.

Member David Akeegok for Quttiktuq, you may proceed.

Thank you. Before you start, I would just like to mention that we have 16 members that want to become a member of the executive committee. Mr. David Akeegok, please proceed.

Mr. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like very much thank the people of Quttiktuq who acclaimed me to this position in the Sixth Assembly. I am very honoured and I would also like to congratulate you, (interpretation ends) Speaker Akoak, (interpretation) for being elected and Premier P.J. Akeegok, and all 21 of you who were elected, re-elected, or acclaimed. I would like to have a very close working relationship with you.

I would also like to thank my wife, my children, my grandchildren, and my relatives, our elders in the communities who are leaders, my friends who have given me a huge responsibility, and I thank them all for giving me the support.

I would also like to thank the newly elected member for Aivilik, Solomon Malliki, for nominating me and I again ask for your vote to put me back into cabinet to represent our beautiful territory of Nunavut.

You all know I was the Deputy Premier and the minister responsible for different portfolios, as well as an acting minister in the Fifth Assembly. I enjoyed it tremendously and for being given that responsibility by the Fifth Assembly. I again ask you to put me back to represent the people of Nunavut again. I had different portfolios and I would like to thank the former Premier and the former cabinet. I think we're still ministers, but we work very hard to do our job. The main challenge was COVID-19 and the ransomware attack. It seems like we were silenced for two years, but we did a tremendous job in the back.

We have a huge responsibility and we will have to have a close working relationship in order to progress. I believe that all members have the responsibility to ask questions. I try to give them the appropriate responses and I will do so again in the Sixth Assembly. I look forward to working with you all and once the elections are over, we will be overloaded with work and we have to be committed to our work and to our cabinet portfolios. I will look at cooperation among us.

We had a good working relationship with the regular members and with the Inuit organizations. For example, I was responsible for economic development and transportation and we had to repeatedly approach the federal government for things to become a reality. I can't work alone. I will have to work with you and I would like to once again represent Nunavut in the cabinet. I will keep my eyes and ears open.

Thank you all for giving me the opportunity and I think we're a little tired. It has been a long day. Once again, I look forward to proceeding. Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Akeegok. Next name on my list: Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'll make this short since I'm brand new to this and I'm counting on all of my colleagues for their help.

I want to congratulate you, Tony, the Speaker, and I want to congratulate all the newly elected members, returning members and acclaimed. I look forward to working with you all to help all Nunavummiut.

I just wanted to thank Adam Lightstone for the nomination for minister, and foremost I congratulate the new Premier-elect, P.J. Akeegok.

I would like to thank my constituents in Kugluktuk for supporting me to represent them for the next four years as their MLA. I will do my best to achieve needs, concerns, and also work with all the elected members of all of the communities to help them achieve their goals in helping their constituents with their needs and concerns also.

I have been involved in various groups and organizations over the past 15 years or so, helping not only Kuglukturmiut but other communities across Nunavut as well, helping them with culture, tradition, and revitalization. Nunavummiut need to work together to help keep and maintain traditional ways and also help each other adjust to the changing ways of climate that affect the land and wildlife around us.

There are many concerns in Nunavut that need to be addressed; culture, traditions that come from our elders, the youth that need our guidance with their self-esteem and good education in traditional knowledge in the highest degrees, social and mental health that come from overcrowding of homes, health and economic states of communities that come from lack of an Inuit workforce, and the changing climate that is already having huge impacts.

We have one team we can count on and that is all of us united. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Anavilok. Next person my list: Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you. Thank you to the people of Iqaluit-Sinaa for putting their faith in me.

I would like to congratulate Mr. Akoak and of course Mr. Akeeagok on their elections to these very important seats in our House, and of course to congratulate everybody who is here. We have a huge job ahead of us and I have been so impressed by the leadership that you have all shown in the last week and a half as well. Is it two weeks? Is it a week? I don't know. I don't even know how long it has been. In the last few days that we have been together, I think that Nunavut is very fortunate to have such a diverse group of people who share the same commitment and, that is, to do better for Nunavut.

I would also like to thank the member from Cambridge Bay, Ms. Gross, for nominating me. I feel like I have to acknowledge the public servants that I know are watching us right now because I have been there with them to view many of these forums and I have talked back to the screen with them many times, and I know that is happening. Your dedication and your commitment to doing good work in implementing the work of legislators is invaluable.

I would also like to acknowledge my family in Iqaluit and in the Kitikmeot for their support and love.

I haven't got anything prepared for right now because I woke up this morning and every morning since being elected just being really proud and happy to be chosen to represent Iqaluit-Sinaa and to be able to use my experience as a public servant that knows the system, that understands all of the processes that public servants undertake to support legislators, and of course, in my avid watching of every Assembly sitting, I have felt that whatever happens, I will do my best to do the best for everyone and to work together as well.

I am happy to be considered for cabinet and you can rest assured that I will also be happy to sit as a regular member in supporting cabinet and in holding cabinet accountable. That will happen either with me at the cabinet table supporting our Premier and other cabinet members or it will happen with me at one of these tables supporting in a different way but with commitment to making the best choices with the best information that we have right now and to help to uplift everybody here. I would like to see that happen and I wish you all the best. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Next person on the list: member from Cambridge Bay, Ms. Gross.

Ms. Gross: *Koana*, Mr. Chairman. *Quanaqqutit* to the MLA for Netsilik, Mr. Quqqiaq, for the nomination. I am very happy to be in front of you all for the Executive Council position. Congratulations first of all to Mr. Akoak and Mr. Akeeagok and everyone here in this room today for your elections. I'm looking forward to working with all of you.

I would like to thank the constituents of Cambridge Bay for believing in me as a leader, and *koana* to my close friends and family for all of your support. A special thanks to all of those who join me here today in Nunavut's House and to those who join from across Nunavut and other places around the country.

Unfortunately I have to start my speech on a somber note. This week we received sad news that my nephew, Hiktak Maksagak, died of suicide. I would like to send my heartfelt condolences to everyone at home for this very unfortunate tragedy. The loss of any life is sad, but the loss of death of a young person who should be just starting their life, via suicide, is devastating. My nephew, Hiktak Maksagak, was cherished by many. He was a kind young man. His life ended much too soon.

I was very, very moved to see the rally yesterday here in Iqaluit that the young people made happen and brought into our House to make their stance, calling attention to the issues of suicide and mental health. I hope more young people rally for change rather than succumbing to that hopelessness. I want every person listening to know that suicide is never the answer. Your friends, family, and community are always there to help and support you. Please reach out.

This week's events are another tragic reminder to the state of emergency our territory is facing due to the staggering rates of suicide, the highest in Canada. We all know the root

causes: intergenerational trauma, colonialism, residential schools, forced relocation, and loss of culture, language and identity.

My community is one of the many who have survived these colonial policies, many in Cambridge Bay, including my family, who were relocated from Umingmaktok and Qinnagaut. These communities are now ghost towns, abandoned. Families moved to follow their children who were relocated to residential schools and had to move in order to move to the bigger services.

Today my community continues to struggle to reclaim our language, Inuinnaqtun. I want to thank the elders, teachers, and knowledge holders who have worked hard to pass down our language.

I also want to thank our Inuinnaqtun translators who are working here today, Allen Maghagak and James Panioyak. *Quanaqqutit* for translating my words.

Preservation of Inuinnaqtun is one of the many commitments I have made to my community. Language is essential to cultural renewal and preservation and it will be central to my work in the legislature.

Those of you who know me know that I have dedicated my life to serving my community. I worked hard to obtain a university education so I could return home to help my people.

I started off at Nunavut Sivuniksavut and continued with a degree in anthropology and a minor in aboriginal studies. Later I went on to do a pre-masters in indigenous governance at the University of Winnipeg. I have used that education to fight for the betterment of our people for the services and stronger policies for Cambridge Bay, most recently as mayor.

As a leader, I'm a bridge builder, working with all levels of government to achieve real results. During my time as mayor, I was able to secure funding for infrastructure, youth, cultural programs, and green energy solutions. I have a proven track record for success.

My dedication to the betterment of Nunavummiut is what fuels my work as an MLA with your support and potentially within my role as a cabinet minister.

I know that as a woman, I bring a different voice to the table, a gendered outlook on systemic issues such as housing. It's important to have that gendered lens so that we don't lose sight of the connections between issues such as stable housing and domestic violence, affordable child care, and women's participation in the workforce, elder care, and cultural renewal.

Many of us in this room share priorities on what needs to be done for a better future for our communities and territory. Most of us agree that housing, education, mental health, elder care, language and cultural renewal are essential to our territory's future. What we

need are strong teams of leaders who will harness the full potential of our territory and leverage all available resources to address our urgent needs. I look forward to working with each and every one of you and I look forward to working for the betterment of our territory to empower our people.

I would like to have a moment of silence for Hiktak and to all those other people that we have sadly lost to this type of tragedy.

>>*Moment of silence*

Quanaqqutit, everybody.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Gross. The next name: from Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to congratulate you on your election as Speaker. You know more than anyone how much I value that role, and obviously to Mr. P.J. Akeeagok, our Premier-elect for the Sixth Assembly.

I would like to thank the constituents of Iqaluit-Tasiluk for electing me for a third term. It has been an incredible honour to serve as their MLA since 2013. It is a role that I have given my full effort and commitment to.

Literally hundreds of constituents have contacted me over the past eight years to help access services or navigate government processes, whether that has been trying to access housing, applying for jobs, getting a medical escort for health, elder care, or mental health services they need and deserve.

My constituents' experiences inform and guide my work as an MLA and as a minister. They motivate me to do more and to do better because they chose me to serve them. I thank them for their confidence and continue working for them in this Sixth Assembly.

To my colleagues around the table today, I would like to reflect on what I have learned over the past eight years as a regular member and as a cabinet minister and share why I think I should continue to serve as a minister in the Sixth Assembly.

When I arrived in this House back in 2013, I quickly learned that it wasn't enough to just know about the issues that are facing Nunavummiut. As a legislator I had to learn the ins and outs of government, understand the systems and decision-making process that create and solve these complex problems. Becoming an MLA was kind of like cramming for a test and every day in this House was exam day.

I can't even count the amount of hours that I spent in my first two years as a regular member poring over annual reports, budget documents, and briefing notes to learn everything available about the matter at hand so I could question government decisions here in this House, but I proved to be a strong and knowledgeable regular member

chairing too many standing committees to list here in the time allocated, including the special committee to reviewing the *Education Act*.

Identifying root causes and effects, asking tough questions, and holding government accountable is perhaps one of the reasons the past two Assemblies have elected me into cabinet. My fellow colleagues who have served with me before know that I am very quick to respond to their questions and take immediate action on their concerns.

I would like to think I have passed the course in being a regular member. It prepared me for a deluge of information and competing interests that you take on in a cabinet role. I have often said that being a minister is like drinking from a fire hose. The information, the meetings, the emails, the workload; it doesn't stop.

Most of you probably remember me from the daily COVID broadcasts to help keep Nunavummiut informed and reassured that we've got this if we work together. Those broadcasts were just one small part of a still ongoing global pandemic.

The sheer volume of work and pressure of public servants were and some are still under is truly hard to comprehend. To each and every one of those people, those heroes, I say "thank you" and know that I was right there with you. There were countless hours, early morning briefings, late night calls and emails. Complex decisions had to be made every day while still keeping the day-to-day files and our government's mandate up to date. I was here working tirelessly to do my part in protecting you and your families.

When I first became a cabinet minister in 2015, midway through the Fourth Assembly, I held the portfolios of housing and Qulliq Energy but for less than a year. That's a short time to make meaningful change, but there was very little action on green and renewable energy initiatives at Qulliq Energy at that time, an issue I was very vocal about as an MLA and a regular member.

That's why I made additions to the ministerial letter of direction to the Qulliq Energy Board to include LED street light replacements as a priority project in the year ahead. That project was already in the corporate business plan, but by taking a creative approach to include them in my ministerial letter, it gave the needed push forward to get that project funded and started.

In 2016 I was appointed the Minister of Health. On all levels, from the staffing, service delivery, or financial perspective, Health was being asked to do more with less and Nunavummiut deserve more than what they were getting. I always told the health staff that I'm not there to tell them how to do their job. I'm there to get them the resources so that they can do it.

When I took on the health portfolio, I employed my "Curious George" factor and started diving into these files to see where I could make an impact. The single biggest program expense of the Department of Health budget was the \$100 million plus in medical travel

program that we were paying out of our own pocket and most of it wasn't even Nunavut's program; it was the responsibility of the federal government.

I discovered since the creation of Nunavut that we have been short-changed by tens of millions of dollars a year. Every year the health department had new projects rejected or delayed because we didn't have the money to fund them. Every year Health would come back to the Assembly to ask for more funds because it didn't have enough money to cover all of the services that were provided to Nunavummiut.

Getting Nunavut a fair deal on this program became a primary goal. I knew that if we could secure this funding, we could begin to invest more in our own health care system here in Nunavut. More services means less reliance on the south and means families stay closer to homes instead of travelling to far and unfamiliar places to get the care they need and deserve.

For five years, I lobbied the federal government for a new Non-Insured Health Benefits agreement. I had to spend a lot of the first two years educating the federal ministers on Nunavut's health care system and our needs. I emphasized how big an impact the small acknowledgement to responsibility would make for Nunavut. The contractor agreement was extended multiple times without any increases or tangible changes. When the last agreement expired, I put my foot down and said no more. We told the federal government to prepare to take over medical travel and the costs associated with it.

Colleagues, it took five years, but the federal government finally came to the table with a fair agreement. In October 2020 I signed off on an agreement that brought \$78 million in new health care funding for Inuit in Nunavut and that was again extended in 2021 by the current health minister. That's over \$150 million in new money that did not exist in our budget forecast before.

In your fiscal update outlook presentation last week, you might have seen a graph that shows the revenues that contribute to our overall budget. There was a significant uptick in 2020-21 that's not just COVID funding; it's a direct result of this new medical travel agreement. This means that for the first time in Nunavut's history, Health didn't have to come back and request more money.

Wearing my other hat as the Minister of Finance, it also means that we were able to turn around what we had projected as the territory's largest deficit into a surplus. It has put our fiscal situation on a positive footing and has set this Sixth Assembly up for success to initiate new mandate priorities and projects. It's a wonder how a seemingly routine and administrative program, one that we have been doing all along, could make such a huge difference when we looked at it differently.

My "Curious George" factor has been piqued again as my role as Minister of Justice and Minister of Finance. I have identified a program that we need to work with the federal government on to secure a better deal and a better way of delivering policing services in Nunavut.

This time I bring a network of strong and productive relationships with numerous federal ministers who already know me and my approach to fair and collaborative negotiations. I have already started on these discussions. I don't want to lose the momentum on this work. We can't afford to lose momentum because I know that it could be a real game changer in the safety of all of our communities, but I can only do that if I'm sitting on this side of the floor as a minister.

That is why I'm asking you to re-elect me as a cabinet minister in the Sixth Assembly. I bring experience, leadership, collaboration, and proven results to our cabinet and a path forward for future success. I know I can deliver more results for Nunavummiut as a cabinet minister and you can hold me to that promise; in fact I expect you to. I am ready to hit the ground running and to work with you on our shared priorities. Nunavummiut want, deserve, and expect more from their government and I'm ready to get to work on delivering that for them.

Nunavummiut pijumajut gavamamit niriunnirmit ilauqataugunnaqpunga taikunga tikigunnaqulluta, and I ask for your support in re-electing me as a cabinet minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. The next person on my list: Member for South Baffin, Mr. Joanasie.

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you. Good evening. Mr. Chairman, I again congratulate you on your appointment to the role of Speaker and our Premier-elect, P.J. Akeeagok. It was interesting to hear your speech as well as your responses. We look forward to putting our minds together in our leadership roles.

Mr. Chairman, first of all, I send my greetings to the people of South Baffin, the residents of Kimmirut and Kinngait, whom I've had the pleasure to work for and represent for the last eight years.

I would also like to welcome all the newly elected MLAs as well as those who were re-elected, and the record number of MLAs who were acclaimed. I am also glad to see that the representation of women continues to be strong in the legislature and I envision more women in future legislatures to take on the important roles in shaping our society. It is a truly memorable moment to be here with you today.

Mr. Chairman, I am grateful to the Netsilik MLA, Mr. Quqqiaq, for nominating me for a cabinet position and I appreciate the respect and the respect is mutual.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, I would like to reintroduce myself to you and Nunavummiut. I am a father, a husband, a son, a brother, an uncle, as well as an in-law. My family is the anchor that keeps me grounded. Family is what drives me to do better, and as men, we play a vital role in taking good care of our children, our spouses, and our families. In saying that, I stand in unity with all of the men in our communities who do all

that is necessary to protect and provide for their families. Your contributions in our communities do not go unnoticed. I see you and I am cheering for you on the sidelines.

(interpretation) Mr. Chairman, the issue of mental health has impacted our population and we saw yesterday our young people, young men and women, who were here and wanted to be heard. I look back and remember when I first came into the Chamber eight years ago when I began to talk about our need to have hope and suicide awareness. I am glad to see that young people today are actively participating in making changes in our society as demonstrated by the protest we saw here yesterday in the legislature. My heart is with everyone who has lost a loved one recently, as well as those from years past. We must cherish their memories together.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, in the last Assembly, I was provided with the invaluable honour and privilege to serve on the Executive Council and I can say for a fact that it was never all that easy. There were some extremely difficult times that I had to make some tough decisions both personally and professionally.

Mr. Chairman, I am proud to say that I have lived through those challenging times and have come out with a thick skin and an understanding that difficult situations provide lessons and opportunities for growth. My approach has always been to remain calm, cool, and collected, as well as to be respectful to the people I both worked with and interacted with at all levels.

Mr. Chairman, I remain keen on utilizing the experience that I have gained over the eight years of being an MLA to our full advantage. Having first served four years as a regular member and the last four years as a cabinet member, I can say that both positions are roles I have enjoyed.

In my term as cabinet minister, I strived to demonstrate integrity, transparency, and new ways of addressing some of our territory's challenges. (interpretation) Mr. Chairman, as a minister I vow to continue to work hard, listen carefully, and work collaboratively with all Members of the Legislative Assembly as we serve Nunavummiut together. We must serve our young territory in meaningful ways for our territory to reach its full potential. The opportunities for Nunavummiut to succeed are there and we need to expand and increase those opportunities. This will provide a greater chance for our communities and people to thrive.

Mr. Chairman, to conclude, I wish all other candidates the best of luck and express my appreciation and gratitude to them. I thank you all for keeping your ears open. (interpretation ends) I hope that the consistent and steady leadership on my track record is a quality that all my colleagues will gravitate towards and support.

Finally, I thank my wife and children for the support they have in me to be where I am today. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Joanasie. Next name on my list: Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): A very good evening, my fellow elected representatives. First of all, I am proud of you, Speaker-elect, and our new Premier of Nunavut, P.J. Akeegok. I am proud of the people of Amittuq who elected me into this House. Thank you.

First of all, this evening I would like to say “good evening.” You are aware of what I did in the last four years. One moment, please. I’m very warm. I’m kidding.

>>*Laughter*

We have to smile this evening because it has been a long day. I am very thankful.

I would like to state when I first came here, I tried to truly represent the people of Amittuq with all my ability and I tried to serve the elders well in Nunavut and Amitturmiut were my priority. Looking at the younger adults and the youth, I tried to show collaboration. Looking into the future, it seems we are young, but with the youth being our future, let us work with them as a government, as they look to us to make decisions for the future of Nunavummiut.

Our culture is very important. We will not lose it. Our elders have said that even though we are Inuit and we can speak English, our culture will always be our strength. I still believe in that. I still envy people with parents. I had strong parents who were able to give us advice and they were leaders.

I would also like to state that with four years I have experienced, I have learned a lot from it in the Legislative Assembly. I didn’t know exactly how to represent the people, but I depended on my elders and people who were older than me. They told me, “When you ask questions, think of the people you represent.” I will still represent them while I am running for minister.

I should have said I also thank the Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove for nominating me. I thank him very much. I would also like to state that as I am running for cabinet, I truly believe in the Government of Nunavut because our land is our strength and let us decide on the foundation for our youth. I want to just state that and I thank you. I am proud of being nominated.

I will still be looking at how to improve Nunavut for our youth. I encourage all of our youth to go to school. We don’t know your future. You are the ones who will be deciding how Nunavut will be capable. I would like to encourage you to make Nunavut strong. That all is all I can say. Thank you. Have a good evening. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kaernerck. Next person on my list: member from Rankin Inlet South, Mr. Kusugak.

Mr. Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) My speech is a little bit shorter than my first one.

(interpretation) First of all, Mr. Speaker-elect, I am proud of you and I am extremely proud of our new Premier. My colleagues, we elected a very strong leader. I am proud of you. I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart. Please use your premiership well and I'll help you. We have to work as one here.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, I have just spent a better part of eight hours talking about where I want to see our government go. It has been a long day and I'm proud to have had the opportunity in-depth to speak with all of you and, hopefully, answer some of your very important questions.

I'm committed still, if I get the opportunity to serve as a member of this cabinet, to work with our new Premier and the new cabinet to bring forward these very important issues that we have discussed today and days prior and days coming forward.

I am committed to working for the betterment of Nunavut and for Nunavummiut. My heart is here in Nunavut and so are the dreams and aspirations of our children and grandchildren. They need a better Nunavut and I'm committed to working on that.

I would love for the opportunity to work with our new Premier and help him within the cabinet. It's important, I believe, that our new cabinet has some blend of new and old members so that we could work together and bring these very important issues that we have talked about for the last eight hours.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity and I thank Ms. Nakashuk for nominating me. Thank you. *Qujannamiik*.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kusugak. Next name on my list: Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Congratulations, Mr. Speaker-elect, and congratulations to our Premier-elect, P.J. Akeeagok.

I would also like to thank the Member for Cambridge Bay for nominating me. I'm grateful for your nomination as I have tremendous respect for you and your accomplishments as a young professional Inuk.

It has been an honour to represent Iqaluit-Manirajak in the Assembly over the last four years, and I would like to thank my constituents for their continued support.

Before I begin, I would also like to say "thank you" to my colleagues in the House for allowing me to speak and to all the Assembly staff and the interpreters as well for their work and support during our orientation program.

I recognize that we all have a very difficult decision to make here this evening as there are many talented members in the Sixth Assembly and I'm not surprised to see 16 names on the ballot.

In 2017 I put my name forward for a cabinet position, but I was not selected. They say that everything happens for a reason and I'm grateful for that outcome. I have come to learn and appreciate the important role that a regular member plays in this Assembly as well as in our own communities.

The role of an MLA is of course a very fascinating job, as well as one of the most demanding in Nunavut. The responsibility of reviewing programs and policies through the budget process requires considerable time and effort, while reviewing legislation is equally challenging and time-consuming, but these both must be balanced with addressing constituency matters and bringing public attention to pressing issues to ensure transparency and accountability of our government.

In the last four years I have demonstrated my work ethic and commitment. I have worked hard to address the concerns of Iqalumiut but always kept the broader picture in mind and considered all Nunavummiut when debating policy. During this time I have been vocal about many issues and I feel as though I have just begun to see the fruits of my labour.

With the wide range of responsibilities of being an MLA comes a significant learning curve. It was not until my third and fourth year that I was confident in knowing how to address a particular matter in an appropriate way to achieve the best outcome. For that reason, I have entered this recent election with the intention of remaining a regular member in order to continue my momentum.

However, that all changed when P.J. Akeeagok announced his intention to run for Premier. Mr. Akeeagok has proved his leadership abilities while serving as the president of the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, and I appreciate the emphasis he has placed on youth initiatives at the QIA, such as increasing the daycare subsidy, partnering with the Government of Nunavut to create early childhood education material, and distributing a quarter of a million dollars in scholarships towards post-secondary students.

It is important that the Government of Nunavut meets the needs of all demographics, and Nunavut has the youngest population in Canada with the majority of our territory under the age of 25. Unfortunately our youth face many barriers to success and to date none of the previous governments have placed a sufficient emphasis on youth initiatives and mandate.

Yesterday our youth peacefully protested against the high rates of suicide and the lack of mental health support. As a young Inuk, I understand the challenges that our youth face because I have lived them. They are our future and we need to give them the tools and resources to set them up for success.

I'm dedicating to supporting our youth as I seek to create a sustainable and healthy future. I have full confidence in Mr. Akeegok's potential to make substantial changes as Premier and I have faith in his leadership and ability to do things differently than former premiers. That is what inspired me and renewed my interest in joining cabinet. I want to be on the Executive Council to help the Premier and the next government achieve success.

I have worked for a number of years with the Department of Finance in a number of capacities and I understand the complexity of our territory's government. My time working in the system has given me a considerable amount of knowledge and I would like to contribute that knowledge in cabinet.

I have worked in corporate services for a number of years, developing the department's budgets and monitoring expenditures. This is where I gained intimate knowledge of the programs and policies of the Department of Finance as well as the Department of Human Resources, as they were one department at the time.

I have worked in financial reporting, producing the public accounts, which is no minor feat. This experience gave me a bird's eye view of the government's departments as well as territorial corporations.

And finally, I have worked in expenditure management to produce the main estimates, capital estimates, and supplementary appropriations which we pass here in the Legislative Assembly. This has given me unlimited access to the Government of Nunavut's systems and ability to learn about all departments and programs. In essence, I've had the opportunity to learn what is working and what needs some work.

Over the last four years in my previous work experience, I have developed tremendous respect for the public servants that work tirelessly for the Government of Nunavut and this Legislative Assembly. It's important to me that in this legislature we see real change that benefits Nunavummiut. There is work to be done and I would welcome the opportunity to use my own work experience in these areas to make these impactful changes and improve the effectiveness and efficiency.

With that said, whether I am in cabinet or a regular member, I will not submit to the bureaucracy. In the recent election, I have put together a strong campaign and I would like to highlight some key areas.

I suggested many policies aiming to address and reduce child abuse and domestic violence, to assist Nunavummiut in adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change, to reform our education system and increase supports for youth so that they may overcome the many barriers to success, and create out-of-the-box solutions to address our housing crisis and expand our limited housing continuum. I have big ideas on how to move our government in a new direction.

I believe there are three key requirements to being an effective member of the Executive Council: commitment, competence, and most importantly, compassion. I believe I have a good balance of all three. Ministers are responsible to oversee and comprehend the activities of their portfolios. I am ready to assume those responsibilities. Throughout the Fifth Assembly I have made it clear that I have high expectations of cabinet and take the accountability of this government very seriously. If I am chosen here today, I will continue to hold myself to those same expectations.

I recognize that being a member of the Executive Council is demanding, and I believe I have displayed my work ethic. I do my reading. I conduct my research and ensure that I thoroughly understand the topic before I bring the issue forward, and that will not change.

In closing, today I'm humbly asking for the support of my fellow members. If you would grant me the privilege of joining the Executive Council, I will endeavour to maintain your confidence by providing effective leadership and oversight over any portfolio I receive. I will continue to advocate for Nunavummiut and work tirelessly to help achieve the goals of this government and make good use of the knowledge I have gained over the last four years and beyond. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. Next person: Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I congratulate you and our Premier-elect. Mr. Kaernerck, I thank you very much for nominating me, but we know we are not supposed to be pointing fingers at anybody physically, but we can do it figuratively.

I also congratulate the members who are coming back and the new members. It is a pleasure to be sitting in the House representing our constituents and for the new members, please welcome to your House. I remember in 2017 when I was newly elected and it seems like it was yesterday.

I will try to keep my comments as brief as possible, but I would like to do a short preamble where I was born and raised, and then where I have worked, and then complete and go zip my mouth and go back to my seat.

First of all, I'm 41 years old. I'm from Arviat and it's a very beautiful community. I was brought up and raised there. My parents, Gordie and Martha, moved there in the beginning of the 1980s and they are still there.

I completed my education in Arviat and afterwards I left the community for university in the south for four years in economics and then I returned to Nunavut.

While growing up in Arviat, I was taught to be fluent in Inuktitut and it has benefited me to this day. It has served as an asset when it comes to employment, even though I am a qallunaaq. Looking into the future, I hope that my children get to experience that as well.

My life improved greatly ten years ago when I met my wife, Amanda, here in Iqaluit when I came to attend a conference. That was a big plus in my life.

>>*Laughter*

We now have three children. The oldest is six years old and the youngest one is six months old, my little daughter. When you have younger children, as a father, it gives you a better understanding of what the parents in Nunavut are experiencing, what they're challenging, and it also comes to the Department of Health or the Department of Education.

(interpretation ends) Now I'll switch to my other channel and to the other part of my speech.

For the professional side, my professional background, if this is a job interview, I'm going to briefly go over the jobs that I have held and why they would help me do the potential job as minister.

Since graduating university, I have held a number of positions within a number of fields in different parts of Nunavut. I have built up a range of different experience that I believe would allow me to be an effective minister within this government if you choose me to take that role.

I worked in municipal government as a recreation coordinator and as economic development officer. I have been within the media and as a television reporter. Hello, CBC. I have also worked within a regional Inuit association on Inuit business development. I have also had experience running my own business, being self-employed from home.

As I mentioned earlier, I have experienced not just living in Arviat; I have also lived here in Iqaluit for a period, I have also lived in Cambridge Bay, and I feel really lucky to have experienced all three regions of Nunavut. As a former colleague of mine used to mention, Nunavut is not three regions; Nunavut is one territory, and I think that's something important.

Of course my last job was a regular MLA, sitting here in this House for the last four years, and I spent those four years learning. I learned from the papers on our desks. I learned from my colleagues in this House and I learned through debate in this House. I really appreciate all the veteran politicians and leaders who have taken part in this Assembly in the Fifth Assembly because I really did learn a lot from them.

(interpretation) When you're representing larger communities like Arviat and Whale Cove, you see the uniqueness and the different sizes of the communities. When I was a regular member, I didn't look at the communities the same, but when it comes to infrastructure and providing services and programs, it's usually just the larger communities that benefit.

(interpretation ends) In conclusion, I'm just getting to the part of my speech where I will sit down and be quiet. I believe my four years as a regular member along with my previous work experience has prepared me for work as a minister. I have a supportive family that would enable me to do the work and to take on the challenge if chosen.

As some of the other candidates have mentioned, if you choose to elect me into cabinet, then thank you very much for your vote and, if you feel that there are other candidates who are more qualified, then I accept your decision. Regardless of who is selected into cabinet, I really look forward to working with all of you for the next four years.

(interpretation) I look forward to working with you in the upcoming four years. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Next person: member from Aivilik, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Congratulations *amma* congratulations, P.J., (interpretation) and I am proud of you, Savikataaq and Lorne, for running for the position of Premier. Your answers were really good, and thank you, Mr. Main, for nominating me.

First of all, I would like to thank the people of Naujaat and Coral Harbour, the people I represent, for electing me, especially my wife and my children, as well as my entire family. Thank you.

I will keep this short. I have been a mayor in Naujaat and also a councillor. I have also been a housing board member. I believe that I can use that experience as a minister. I am open to assisting anybody in Nunavut who needs help. You are all leaders and I would like to work closely with all of you because we need progress in Nunavut. We are here to help our fellow citizens.

Indeed, we need to provide more assistance to Inuit because there is a critical housing shortage in Nunavut and there are many concerns within the health care system that can be addressed within the government. I would like to work with you on finding solutions. We do serious business and life is not a game and our work is serious. I would like to work with you all. I am just keeping it short. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Malliki. Member from Pangnirtung, Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you. Good evening and I congratulate you again for being selected as Speaker, as well as our Premier-elect. I congratulate you and I encourage you to continue, as well as the other candidates who put in the same effort.

I would first like to thank you for allowing me to appear before you, especially my colleagues, new and returning members. I thank all of you, as well as my family, my husband and children. I am grateful to be a part of this tonight and I very much thank the people of Pangnirtung for placing their trust in me when I got acclaimed here, whether I

am going to be a regular member or a minister. I really feel their trust to be the representative for our community here in the House.

I would like to express my pride first of all for the newly elected Members of the Legislative Assembly and I know how it is and how confusing it can be to be a new member and sometimes we do not know if we are going to represent our constituency very well, but rest assured, we will work together and move together and we will go through challenging times.

I humble myself in this Chamber to be a part of this. In carrying a huge responsibility, our voice is the only thing that we can use to bring things out in representing the people of Nunavut.

I am running for cabinet. I would like to talk about some of my experience in the Fifth Assembly. Last year in November I got selected to become a minister and I was given the portfolio of the housing corporation, the Department of Culture and Heritage, and languages well.

We went through a very difficult time the past year. I was a regular MLA and I was the chairperson of the one of the standing committees for the regular members. I'm quite able to become a minister. I can speak Inuktitut proficiently and English as well. I was brought up by my parents; by my mother and father. My father is still alive. They only speak Inuktitut. They are unilingual Inuktitut speakers and they can't speak English, and that is how they brought me up. My husband, our children and grandchildren all speak Inuktitut. They are always doing what they want to do.

As a minister we had some challenging times, but I was able to keep things going and not everyone agreed with everything that I did. I had to carefully consider how my actions would affect the people of Nunavut, the elders, adults, and children. I was able to work with my fellow MLAs, especially during challenging times in Nunavut, particularly during the past two years.

As a minister we have to make some hard decisions, but having experienced those I know I can experience them again, and I can do it again. There has not always been enough money available, especially for the housing corporation. I saw that as a minister we are always talking about this and it is a big important matter and the fact that we had to make cutbacks was even more difficult when we were trying to get housing for the people of Nunavut. We even had to cut back our housing construction plans. We didn't want to do it, but we had to do it.

As a regular MLA or a cabinet minister, we have to keep our electorate in mind, the males and females. I am quite able to do that as a woman. We also need more women representatives everywhere and I am proud of the ones that are leaders now, as well as the ones that were elected to the federal government as well. I am also very proud of people like Eva Aariak and looking at the fact that they are women.

As a minister I worked with federal ministers. We communicated through teleconferences and correspondence back and forth to discuss funding for the most part. As the minister, one of the things I pushed hardest for was to ensure the federal ministers in Ottawa heard us. Many of them have heard us now. I met with Dan Vandal, the Minister of Northern Affairs, a number of times regarding the challenges Nunavut faces. I hope things proceed well in our Assembly. With the tripartite agreement that we had for housing between the federal government and the Government of Nunavut, we had more considerations that were for the House.

I would like to talk about some of the things that I did within the government. I worked for the government for 25 years in different positions and I was an adult educator for a while as well. I was a community health representative for the Department of Health and I was a career development officer with the Department of Education. I helped people who were looking for jobs, and I became a director in the Department of Family Services, representing the Baffin. Looking at my past experience, working together like that and making agreements, I have learned about that and how to make proposals for funding.

One of the things that I'm most proud of is I had a job for ten years as a tourism manager and we had elders in my workplace and I'm very happy that I could record their stories. The last series was about whaling and we produced very good information from that. It's about being proud of being an Inuk and they're using their languages well and they humble themselves. They're very strong in the communities and they have been leaders in the communities. We have to look to those people, even today, no matter where we are. We need to look to our elders as leaders.

My experiences and my job experience are very strong. I hold them very strongly today, especially with my husband. We have moved to different communities over the years and we have learned from them. We haven't always gone through happy times, but we have agreed to do things together and it has helped us proceed.

I thank all of my colleagues here and I want to work well with all of you because we have no choice but to work together here. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Nakashuk. Next person: member from Aggu, Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I am pleased of your new post and P.J., I'm very proud of you and I celebrate with you as well that we were elected here by our constituents and I am grateful to the residents of Aggu for voting for me, and Janet, thank you. If you had not nominated me, I would not have gotten here.

I would also like to thank my relatives, my family, my children, and my grandchildren for their constant support in any endeavour I take on.

I worked for the Nunavut government for 30 years in many areas. I was a teacher and developed Inuktitut curriculum and helped in developing books. I have worked in many areas in education. I also worked with a cultural group working with elders and youth.

While I was with this group, we met with elders and I have learned much from the elders who spoke about traditions and different traditions I have seen in other communities. We also met with our youth and what expectations they may have.

I was with the Department of Culture and Heritage for a number of years and while I held my position, I also partook with other programs. The RCMP had an indigenous advisory position and I was there for six years. When I left the Government of Nunavut, I worked with the hamlet as a councillor and an employee. I provided much support when the community needed support.

Having worked in different fields, I have gained a lot and I have experienced what it is like to be given advice and what the elders want to see, those who provided me much good advice. Many of them are no longer alive, but I am very grateful to them for the wise words they offered and what they had to teach.

I think my experience bodes well in moving forward and I know what I can take on and I know areas where I can provide support. At times, however, I can be impatient and I can correct this myself. When I feel things are running too slowly, I tend to move forward, and I want you to realize that, but I am grateful that you are able to listen to me. I won't give a long speech. Again, I would like to thank you. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Quassa. Next name: member from Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you. I am very proud of your appointment as Speaker and P.J. as our new Premier. I would like to start off by saying "thank you" to my wife and family and the people who voted for me in Chesterfield Inlet and Rankin Inlet. I'm also proud of all of you here for being elected.

From 2014 to 2017, I was elected and was a regular MLA for three and a half years, and I have returned this year. During the NWT days and then when the Government of Nunavut, I worked for 26 years and I retired in 2012. While I was working for the government, I was a maintenance coordinator, (interpretation ends) plumber, and a regional director for Community and Government Services.

(interpretation) Before working for the government, I held important positions in different communities that I would be posted to by the Hudson's Bay Company and when it changed to the Northern Store. I also served as a co-op manager and last year I was with the board of directors with (interpretation ends) Arctic Co-operatives Ltd. and Development Fund, a Nunavut-wide board of directors.

(interpretation) Inuit have varying needs in Nunavut and the government should provide support where possible, especially in the area of housing that we all know is always lacking up here.

In a way, if we work with Inuit organizations, NTI, ITK, QIA, KIA, and (interpretation ends) Kivalliq Inuit Association, (interpretation) the government can provide more services by working together with the Inuit organizations in Nunavut. All of those entities should be helping their people.

If elected, I will work very hard for the benefit of Nunavummiut and serve all of them as equals, whether they are from a small community or a larger community. Every community in Nunavut has different hopes and wishes and we should not discriminate communities whether they are small or not, as we should treat them equally. Thank you very much.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Sammurtok. Next name on the list: member from Rankin Inlet South, Mr. Savikataaq. Oh, Arviat South. Sorry.

>>*Laughter*

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I congratulate you on your new position as Speaker, and I congratulate our Premier-elect. I will provide support to the new government and I appreciate that we have a heavy workload. If we all work together collaboratively, we will be able to move forward.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, first I would like to thank my staff; I haven't had the opportunity. Ron, Virginia, Kate, and Dorcas, you have helped me so much in the last four years and I thank you for your dedication and your help.

(interpretation) At this time I am a candidate for cabinet. I have been a minister. When I was elected in 2013, I was a regular member for two years, learning the procedures of the House, the responsibilities of Members of the Legislative Assembly and the responsibilities of ministers. After two years of being an MLA, I became a minister and I have been a minister to date and I'm vying to be a minister again today.

I am tireless. I'm always working every day as hard as I can and I have had ministerial posts in the following departments that I will name: (interpretation ends) community and government services... . These are the portfolios that I've had as a minister: community and government services, Department of Environment, family services, economic development and transportation, and acting housing minister. (interpretation) If you vote for me as minister, I know that I won't have to learn the role of minister. I won't be saying... . If elected, I will work very hard in my position as a minister.

(interpretation ends) Lastly, I'm a team player. I will support this new government. In our four-year mandate, we have so much work to do, so much to accomplish, and we can only accomplish it as one team, and I am a team player and I hope to be on the Executive Council. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Savikataaq. Last name on the list: member from Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I congratulate you and P.J., I congratulate you as Premier.

My fellow residents of Baker Lake, I'm thinking of you and I thank you for electing me as an MLA for the next four years. I will keep working hard. Joëlle Kaerner, I thank you for nominating me for minister. Thank you.

I think the MLAs already know who I am and the work I have done. First of all, in Baker Lake I have been on the hamlet council three times and I was deputy mayor at one time, and I was a member of the board for the local housing association three times, but the last time I had to resign before my term ended because I became the MLA.

(interpretation ends) I have also sat on the community liaison committee for Agnico Eagle when they first opened up shop in Baker Lake. There was a lot of work to do with them as they dealt with the socio-economic impacts that comes with an operating mine. I also sat on the community liaison committee for AREVA Resources as they were exploring for uranium close to Baker Lake and there needed to be collaboration between the community of Baker Lake and the company.

I sat on the Inuit employment and planning committee with the Qulliq Energy Corporation. I actually worked there for 20 years. It was a great learning experience and we made some changes in there that have helped to get more Inuit working for the Qulliq Energy Corporation. I am very proud of that.

I have also volunteered a few years with minor hockey in Baker Lake and the Qamani'tuaq Qiniqtiit (search and rescue).

Getting back to my previous job at the Qulliq Energy Corporation, I was fortunate enough the last five years to travel through most of Nunavut communities. I have been to all of them, except for three. I tried hard to get to the last three, but it didn't work out due to weather and other requirements with the office.

I have seen many things in my travels, which I have been using here as well in this House to help try to advocate for our needs.

(interpretation) My first priority as minister would be elder care and how we can provide better care. We have to start considering it as it's becoming urgent and we have to work hard to accomplish that using collaboration with *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*. There are many communities within Nunavut and there are elders out there that don't need to leave the territory. They should be staying home. We have to think about what infrastructure to put up so that we can provide help to elders, if we were to build a five-bed facility, and some of them would have ten beds. We have to study that and we have to start working on that. I love our elders and it's obvious. Let us help them.

Secondly, the second thing I want to work on as minister, working with my fellow cabinet members, is our Arctic College community learning centres. I think all

communities have community learning centres. What other courses can be available, for example, a lot of people want to work at the mines, but they don't have the education. They can't have classes during the day and they work in the (interpretation ends) evenings and weekends. There are other options we can do. Let's use Qanuqtuurniq.

(interpretation) I have also seen in many communities the aging public housing stock. Some of the units were built in 1968. They're too small now. We have to deal with it. When do we stop using them and what do we replace them with? We have to work on that now. It's obvious that we have to build over 2,000 units, but older units will have to stop being used and we will have to build 5,000 or 6,000 units. I don't know exactly how many we need.

There are many people working at the mines and making good income, but they cannot get their own homes. I don't know how, but that has to be changed. Even though mines have been operating for ten years in Baker Lake, there are very few homeowners now. We have to be aware of that and work on it. They need to get their own homes.

Lastly, (interpretation ends) the last thing I want to mention for cabinet consideration is we have many artists right across the territory, but they don't really have a way to get their artwork out into the world. They can sell them online, but just to get it out there is very expensive. Maybe if the Government of Nunavut negotiates better freight rates. There's Canada Post, UPS, and FedEx. There are other options. Let's use *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*, Qanuqtuurniq.

Thank you for your consideration for me as cabinet minister. I agree with all of you. Let's all work together the next four years. We're all here for the betterment of Nunavummiut. Thank you.

Election for Cabinet Positions

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Simailak. Thank you to all candidates. We will now proceed to balloting, and remember that you're only selecting eight candidates out of 16.

I will ask all members to proceed to the voting table in an orderly fashion.

Members, we will now proceed to balloting. Sorry. Thank you. The ballots will now be taken to a secure area in the precinct for counting. Members may wish to wait in the lounge while we take a brief recess. Please note the counting of votes will take time as up to 176 votes have to be counted.

>>*Meeting recessed at 19:42 and resumed at 20:35*

Chairman: Thank you. Welcome back, everyone. Thank you. Members, the following members have been chosen to serve on the Executive Council: David Akeegok, Pamela Gross, David Joanase, Lorne Kusugak, Adam Lightstone, John Main, and Margaret Nakashuk, and the following members on the next ballot for the remaining one seat are:

Bobby Anavilok, Janet Brewster, George Hickes, Joeline Kaerner, Solomon Malliki, Joanna Quassa, Alexander Sammurtok, Joe Savikataaq, and Craig Simailak. Do any of the remaining candidates not wish to remain on the ballot?

As the ballots will take a few minutes to prepare, I will ring the bells when we are ready to proceed. Members may wish to wait in the lounge while we take a brief recess.

>>*Meeting recessed at 20:37 and resumed at 20:45*

Chairman: Welcome back, everyone. I will ask all the members to proceed to the voting table in an orderly fashion.

The ballots will now be taken to a secure area in the precinct for counting. You may wish to wait in the lounge for a brief recess. Thank you.

>>*Meeting recessed at 20:48 and resumed at 21:21*

Chairman: Hello, Inuit. Welcome back, members. Members, there is a requirement for a third ballot. The candidates on the ballot are Bobby Anavilok, Pitsiulaaq Brewster, George Hickes, Solomon Malliki, Joanna Quassa, Alexander Sammurtok, and Joe Savikataaq. I ask all members to proceed to the voting table in an orderly fashion. Thank you.

Thank you. The ballots will now be taken to a secure area in the precinct for counting.

Members may wish to wait in the lounge while we take a brief recess. Thank you.

>>*Meeting recessed at 21:24 and resumed at 21:35*

Chairman: Hello, Inuit, and welcome back. There is a requirement for a fourth ballot. The members on the ballot are Joanna Quassa, Solomon Malliki, Alexander Sammurtok, and Joe Savikataaq.

I would like to now ask all members to proceed to the voting in an orderly fashion. Thank you.

Thank you. The ballots will now be taken to a secure area in the precinct for counting.

Members may wish to wait in the lounge while we take a brief recess. Thank you.

>>*Meeting recessed at 21:38 and resumed at 21:46*

Chairman: Hello, Inuit. Welcome back. There is a requirement for a fifth ballot. The names on the ballot are Solomon Malliki, Joanna Quassa, and Joe Savikataaq.

Let's take a few minutes and the ballots will be input.

>>*Meeting recessed at 21:47 and resumed at 21:58*

Chairman: Hello, Inuit. Members, you have chosen Joanna Quassa as the eighth member of the Executive Council.

>>*Applause*

The appropriate motion will be made in the House at its first sitting to confirm the selection.

I will now ask for a motion to destroy the ballots. Mr. Simailak. Thank you. The ballots will be destroyed.

Before we conclude, I have two announcements.

I remind all members that the first sitting of the Sixth Legislative Assembly of Nunavut will convene at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, November 19, 2021, in this Chamber.

The proceedings of the House will be televised live across the territory and I invite all Nunavummiut to join us.

I also remind all members that a rehearsal for the swearing-in ceremony will take place here in the Chamber at 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The swearing-in ceremony will be held at 10 a.m. on Friday, November 19.

The Nunavut Leadership Forum stands adjourned.

>>*Meeting adjourned at 22:00*

