

**GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO
COMMITTEE REPORTS 3-17(3) ON THE REVIEW OF THE
2010-2011 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER**

The Standing Committee on Government Operations (SCOGO) conducted a review of the 2010-2011 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner in June 2012 and identified four recommendations for response by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE).

Committee Recommendation 1:

The Standing Committee on Government Operations (SCOGO) recommends:

- That the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) report to this House on measures taken in 2011/12 and planned actions for 2012/13 to ensure that the public service understands, respects and honours the provisions of the *Official Languages Act*.

GNWT Response:

- ECE will continue to strengthen communications with the public service through the Departmental Official Languages Coordinators on issues related to the provisions of the *Official Languages Act*.
- Aligning with 20/20, the Public Service Strategic Plan, ECE will coordinate with the Department of Human Resources to ensure the public service understands and respects the provisions of the *Official Languages Act* through strategies such as the orientation of new employees and Aboriginal cultural awareness.

Committee Recommendation 2:

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends:

- That the Government of the Northwest Territories refrain from the use of the word “regime” in documents concerning official languages;
- That the Government of the Northwest Territories consult with residential school survivors and Aboriginal language communities on other terminology that may act as a barrier for Aboriginal people in asserting their rights under the *Official Languages Act*; and
- That the Government of the Northwest Territories ensure that public servants are aware of sensitive terminology in speaking and writing in the area of official languages.

GNWT Response:

- The Government will ensure that proper terminology is used concerning official languages and that such terminology will not be a barrier to Aboriginal people in asserting their rights in compliance with the *Official Languages Act*.

- The public service will be made aware of these decisions through the appropriate policies, guidelines and tools.

Committee Recommendation 3:

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends:

- **That the Government of the Northwest Territories review and respond to the Languages Commissioners' recommendations for legislative change, namely Recommendations 3 and 4 on Page 20 of the 2010-2011 Annual Report.**

GNWT Response:

- The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) will move forward with SCOGO recommendations; namely, recommendations 3 and 4 of the 2010-2011 Languages Commissioner Report. In the development of the proposed Official Languages Services Act, consideration will be given to designated areas of official Aboriginal language speakers, mobility of residents and the GNWT's obligations to promote and protect Official Languages; and
- The proposed Aboriginal Language Protection Regime will be considered in legislation; and further, that another appropriate terminology for "Regime" will also be considered as per Standing Committee's Recommendation 2.
- In order to make the recommended amendments to the *Act*, ECE will need to consult with various parties and submit a legislative proposal in the spring of 2013.

Committee Recommendation 4:

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends:

- **That the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this report within 120 days.**

GNWT Response:

- The Government is committed to responding to Standing Committee recommendations in a timely manner.