

**GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
RESPONSE TO MOTION 3-17(2) - ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES SECRETARIAT**

Motion: That the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) consult and develop interim measures to improve Aboriginal language services, with the full involvement of existing interpreter-translators in the Northwest Territories communities who speak different dialects.

AND FURTHER, that the GNWT seek such additional funds as may be required for the Aboriginal Languages Secretariat from the federal government, as a matter of urgent necessity and equity.

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.

GNWT Response

Over the past several years, the GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) has undertaken supportive measures to improve and/or adopt new approaches towards enhancing and increasing support for official Aboriginal languages. This support includes developing resources such as dictionaries; coordinating training; developing the annual Language Institute; assisting with the collection of traditional place names; terminology development and traditional on-the-land programs. The primary purpose of these programs is to help Aboriginal languages communities have the capacity for the acquisition, maintenance and revitalization of their languages.

As an interim measure to improve Aboriginal languages services, ECE is continuing its partnership with the Yamoza Kue Society to deliver and complete the Aboriginal Interpreter/Translator pilot training project in another Aboriginal language region during the next fiscal year. To date, the program has been delivered with the Chipewyan and South Slavey language communities. The project is delivered with the full involvement and participation of existing interpreters and translators in the region and community residents who have an interest in becoming interpreters/translators and are fluent in their Dene language.

The focus of the training is to introduce the participants to the professional applications of interpretation and translation and to develop their language skills within the context of acting as interpreters or translators. The regional project would also put participants where the language resources are located and act as a first step to increase the overall access and quality of interpretation and translation services in the communities.

The federal government and the GNWT invest in official languages programs and services in the Northwest Territories (NWT). The federal investment is made through the Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement for French and Aboriginal Languages.

The current two-year agreement ends in March 2013. It is GNWT's intention, over the next year, to negotiate a multi-year agreement. An increase in funding toward Aboriginal languages will be part of the negotiations with the federal government.

Although the GNWT invests its own resources in official languages programs and services, it will require additional resources to implement the various actions identified in the Aboriginal Languages Plan. Specific investment needs for the establishment of an Aboriginal Languages Secretariat will have to be identified. Securing the required financial and human resources would be a significant challenge to the Secretariat's effective delivery of its mandate.

We are aware of the current economic situation and Canada's focus on reducing the deficit. However, we will continue to work with the federal government to seek support that will enable us to implement actions outlined in the Aboriginal Languages Plan.

We will also seek other funding alternatives and continue with our efforts and initiatives to support the establishment of an Aboriginal Languages Secretariat in the NWT.

This document forms the GNWT's comprehensive response within the 120 day deadline.