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GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

RESPONSE

TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGENCIES, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

REPORT ON THE FIRST ANNUAL REPORT (1992-93) OF THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER OF THE NWT

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Yellowknife, N.W.T.

## **BACKGROUND**

The first Annual Report (1992-1993) of the NWT Languages Commissioner was tabled on November 30, 1993. A Motion was made in the Legislative Assembly on March 21, 1994 to refer the report to the Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABC Committee).

The GNWT Response to the 1992-93 NWT Language Commissioner's report was tabled on April 7, 1994. A number of recommendations directed to the GNWT were addressed in the tabled response.

The ABC Committee tabled its Report on the First Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner of the NWT on October 14, 1994. In the report, it was recommended that the Terms of Reference of the ABC Committee be amended to include the review of annual and any other reports of the Languages Commissioner. On November 9, 1994 a Motion to this effect was passed by the Legislative Assembly.

The ABC Committee Report on the 1992-93 Languages Commissioner's Report also recommended that the Executive Council table a response to the ABC Committee Report.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This response to the recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Agencies, Boards and Commissions Report on the First Annual Report (1992-93) of the Languages Commissioner of the NWT contains the following:

- An update on the status of the draft GNWT official languages policy and guidelines. In the ABC Committee report, numerous references are made to the official languages policy and guidelines.
- A response to each of the five recommendations contained in the report.

### **1. STATUS OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES POLICY AND GUIDELINES**

The draft GNWT official languages policy and guidelines are being developed with an aim to addressing how programs and services in official languages will be provided by the GNWT. The draft policy and guidelines are currently being reviewed by GNWT departments and agencies. The consultation phase is critical because it is the departments and agencies that will implement the policy and are in the best position to assess the impact of these guidelines.

Following this internal review, consultation with various territorial language organizations will be undertaken. Copies of the draft GNWT official

languages policy and guidelines will be provided to Members of the Legislative Assembly including the Members of the ABC Committee at that time.

**2. RESPONSE TO THE ABC COMMITTEE REPORT ON THE FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER OF THE NWT**

- **Recommendation #1, to amend the Terms of Reference of the Standing Committee on Agencies Boards and Commission**

This recommendation is outside the purview of the GNWT. However, the GNWT agrees with the amendment to include the review of annual and other reports of the Languages Commissioner by the ABC Committee.

- **Recommendation #2, that the Languages Commissioner define a set of annual goals and objectives to guide the activities of the office.**

This is outside the purview of the GNWT. The GNWT considers ongoing planning to be a necessary component for the effective use of resources.

- **Recommendation #3, that upon the expiry of the term of the present Languages Commissioner the position be changed to a contractual position.**

This recommendation is outside the purview of the GNWT. However, the GNWT supports any endeavors undertaken to make the most effective use of resources.

- **Recommendation #4 that the government complete the official languages handbook by December 31, 1994.**

The draft official languages policy and guidelines has been circulated to GNWT departments for their review and comment. Following Cabinet consideration, consultation with outside language and cultural organizations will be undertaken.

As the implementation of the policy and guidelines will have significant implications for human and financial resources, it is imperative that the GNWT take all concerns into consideration in finalizing this document.

- **Recommendation #5** that the Executive Council table a comprehensive response to the recommendations contained in the ABC Committee Report

This document was prepared in response to Recommendation #5.

- **Conclusion**

The GNWT is encouraged by the new and more defined role the ABC Committee is taking regarding the office of the Languages Commissioner. It is anticipated that the ABC Committee will be in a position to provide the Languages Commissioner with assistance and support.

This continuing effort and cooperation will only lead to progress being made with respect to official languages implementation.