

**NWT Aboriginal Languages Symposium  
Our Languages –A Shared Responsibility  
Explorer Hotel, Yellowknife, NWT  
March 30 – April 1, 2010**

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**FINAL REPORT**

**Delegates:** A total of 194 people were registered as delegates for the Symposium, including representatives of all language groups in the NWT, government agencies with an interest in languages, guests and media.

**Purpose:** The Symposium was intended to gather information and ideas for inclusion into the GNWT's Aboriginal Languages Strategy.

**DAY ONE**

**I - Opening Ceremony**

Master of Ceremonies Paul Andrew opened the Symposium by calling on the Yellowknife Dene First Nation Drummers to perform a prayer song. The opening ceremony also featured a performance by the K'alemi Dene School Choir, and a ritual lighting of the qulliq.

**Welcoming remarks:**

*Chief Ed Sangris of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation.*

*The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.*

*Kevin Menicoche, MLA Nahendeh and Chair, Standing Committee on Government Operations.*

**Chief Sangris:**

Chief Sangris noted that Aboriginal languages are not dead but at the point where they need to be given strength for future generations. He stressed the need to put life into Aboriginal languages. Language is connected to the land and it must be spoken out on the land. The Dene way of life must be taught through Aboriginal languages. For example, when he takes the youth out on the land, there is a rule that everybody must speak the language. The youth soon learned because they got hungry and needed to speak the language in order to get something to eat.

**Minister Lafferty:**

Minister Lafferty told the delegates this first Aboriginal Languages Symposium was being held so the government could get advice on how to make the Aboriginal languages stronger. The outcome of the Symposium will be taken to the Federal Government. If

everybody helps to improve our Aboriginal languages, “we will be strong like one voice.” The results of this Symposium will be part of the GNWT’s Aboriginal Languages Strategy and will shape the government’s work for years to come.

**Mr. Menicoche:**

Mr. Menicoche said it is important to challenge and strengthen Aboriginal languages by using them. Some of the ways he does this is by taking language classes and speaking his Aboriginal language in the Legislative Assembly. During the recent review of the territorial Official Languages Act, people in all language groups told the Standing Committee on Government Operations that they were concerned about losing their languages. Elders are concerned that children don’t speak it. Those that learn their language at school don’t have anywhere to practice it. Loss of language is loss of culture. This Symposium will help to preserve our languages in many different ways.

**II - Ensuring the Health of Languages:**

*Sarah Jerome, Languages Commissioner of the NWT*

Commissioner Jerome traced the history of Aboriginal language use from early days through the residential school era. Although she went to residential school where she was not allowed to speak her language, she said her late parents took the family out on the land during summer vacations and they spoke only Gwich’in. Half of the 14 children in her family could speak the language but the younger ones could only understand it and not speak it.

Commissioner Jerome emphasized the importance of using the language as much as possible, even if it meant having people laugh at you for speaking incorrectly. She recalled her pride when an elder recognized that she was lucky to have one foot in each culture because she spoke both Gwich’in and English. Teaching languages only in the classroom will not revitalize them, she said, because the classroom is not the environment for the language. The place to learn is on the land, surrounded by elders who speak the language.

Commissioner Jerome underlined the need for interpreters and for the government to ensure funding and services are in place to protect and enhance Aboriginal languages. It is also important to identify mentors who want to learn the language even if they are not Aboriginal people. Everybody needs to take a personal inventory of what they have done, and could do, to ensure the survival of their Aboriginal language.

**III - Keynote Address: Goxègoahdo: Learning and Teaching Indigenous Languages:**

*Dr. Leslie Saxon, Linguistics Professor, University of Victoria*

Dr. Saxon emphasized the strength of knowing two ways. People put themselves into different worlds when they speak other languages. She noted that language and culture was severely attacked in residential schools and that it can be restored through indigenous language education. Learning the language has restorative power and is part of the

process of becoming a whole human being. Elders have taught that language connects people to place, land, other people and history. It also connects people to the future as the words invented by one generation are used by succeeding generations.

Referring to the “Reality Check” report, Dr. Saxon noted the need for planning, setting goals and for support from government and other organizations. She also emphasized that people didn’t have to wait for government to take action before working on the restoration of Aboriginal languages. She quoted Inuit Leader Mary Simon who promoted the use of languages for health and well-being, for respect, as a human right and as a political action.

She noted that language and culture workers are overworked because there is nobody to replace them. Holistic approaches such as the Dene Kede curriculum or languages nests seemed to work best. Youth needed to be challenged to improve their language and their ability to communicate. She closed by mentioning various programs for language workers and activists and acknowledging those who has been active in the field in the NWT.

#### **IV - Reclaiming our Stolen Languages: We Have a Plan and It Starts Today:**

*Dr. Don Taylor, Professor, McGill University*

Dr. Taylor began his address by emphasizing the need to get rid of the guilt and denial that people harbor in relation to using their Aboriginal languages. He noted that the languages were stolen from Aboriginal people and that every Aboriginal language is under threat. The first challenge is to stop denying that and to stop feeling guilty or blaming others for not using it.

In order to recover the languages, the maximum effort must be brought to bear against the many forces that work against it. These opposing forces include the low status of Aboriginal languages, lack of institutional support for them and low number of speakers. Dr. Taylor introduced the concept that people are “cognitive misers” which means they won’t use a language unless there is a specific reason to use it. He said the NWT could increase the reasons to use Aboriginal languages by learning from the Quebec example where French language use has been legislated.

In the education system, it is systemic discrimination if you don’t offer full bi-lingual education to children, Dr. Taylor said. Teachers often have lower expectations of Aboriginal children. But studies have shown that Aboriginal children do as well, or better, than non-Aboriginal children on IQ tests. Studies have also indicated that education in Aboriginal languages improved the self-esteem of Aboriginal children, as well as their academic performances. Children would learn if immersed in their Aboriginal language and this would not inhibit their capacity to learn other languages.

In closing, Dr. Taylor emphasized the need to engage people in communities in finding ways to revitalize Aboriginal languages by using methods such as surveys which involve everybody, rather than relying on meetings which will only involve those who are already

interested. Once you have surveyed everybody, you can then reflect the results back to them and ask them what they're going to do to support Aboriginal languages.

## **V - The Government of the Northwest Territories' Approach to Official Languages**

*The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment*

Minister Lafferty noted the GNWT was reviewing its approach to official languages and was relying on the expertise at the Symposium to guide this review. The "Reality Check" report has been of great help and the GNWT agrees with many of the recommendations in the report. But language revitalization will not take place by government actions alone. A 20-year strategic revitalization plan for each of the languages must be developed in consultation with the language communities. The effort must be driven by the language communities. Once goals are identified, the GNWT will continue work with language communities to address their needs. The government will set up a website to get feedback, hear concerns and generate ideas. An Aboriginal Languages Summer Institute is being set up as well as a Single Window Service Centre for Languages. Evaluation of the programs will be ongoing. Minister Lafferty said the government will table a Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Languages in the NWT Legislative Assembly in fall, 2010.

## **VI - The SCOGO Review of the Official Languages Act**

*Kevin Menicoche, MLA, Nahendeh; Chair, Standing Committee on Government Operations*

Mr. Menicoche noted the "Reality Check" report was tabled in the NWT Legislative Assembly in fall 2009 and that the Legislative Assembly has approved the recommendations in principle. To produce the report, the Standing Committee on Government Operations carried out consultations with stakeholders, invited public participation through the Legislative Assembly website and reviewed a wide variety of reports on the official languages.

Among the findings in the report are:

- Aboriginal languages are in a state of emergency.
- The Official Languages Act does not serve the speakers of the languages it is intended to protect.
- The Act does not match the NWT reality as Aboriginal people do not receive language rights even though the majority of NWT is Aboriginal.

Among the recommendations in the report are:

- Every GNWT employee should understand how to provide language services.
- Strategic planning that spans a 10-20 years period.
- An Official Languages Secretariat.
- A non-governmental Aboriginal Languages Centre.

## **VII - Panel Discussion — Exploring Challenges and Opportunities in the Preservation of Culture and Tradition**

Moderator: *Joseph Handley*

Panellists: *The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment;*  
*Kevin Menicoche, MLA, Nahendeh; Chair, Standing Committee on Operations;*  
*Sarah Jerome, Languages Commissioner of the NWT;*  
*Dr. Leslie Saxon, Linguistics Professor, University of Victoria;*  
*Dr. Don Taylor, Professor of Social Psychology, McGill University.*

### **Commissioner Jerome:**

People are challenged because the residential schools took their language and culture and a lot of people still do not have a voice, noted Commissioner Jerome. They are not going to teach their children a language they were punished for speaking. How do we overcome that? In Inuvik, people have been doing land programs with students and a lot of students don't know how to live off the land. Immersion camps on the land with elders who speak their language would be one way of teaching our children to speak their language.

The "Reality Check" report recommended the Language Commissioner position be phased out. If that happened who would ensure that all the recommendations are addressed?

### **Minister Lafferty:**

Language is a personal responsibility that comes from the community and the home and should be spoken in the workplace. Actions plans and funding are needed. Minister Lafferty said he would talk with federal officials for funding to make it possible. He stressed that everybody should work together.

### **Kevin Menicoche:**

Aboriginal language use is in decline in all areas, even in communities where the languages are the strongest. It is a challenge to find qualified and certified language teachers, interpreters and translators. Elders also need to be given an opportunity to learn how to teach children. It is also a challenge that there are nine different languages in the NWT and there will need to be nine different programs.

### **Dr. Leslie Saxon:**

Young people need jobs and it is a challenge to find jobs that come out of their cultural interests. Youth need to learn to follow in the footsteps of the elders. How can youth connect with adults? How can we take the technology to further the cultures so youth will be interested in working with new technologies and their culture?

**Dr. Don Taylor:**

It is important to do quality control research on our children. Ten percent of the budget should be devoted to objective analysis to ensure language programs are in the best interests of the people they are trying to serve. Nobody will put resources into a program without demonstrated need. The need for language programs must be demonstrated in hard-core number and every step along the way must be measured.

**Question and Answer Period:**

Following the presentations, panelists answered questions and listened to comments from the floor. Topics included:

- The difficulty of finding examples of successfully revitalized languages.
- How language is an economic and political tool of power.
- The possibility of Gwich'in working with other Gwich'in speakers in Yukon and Alaska,
- Funding lapses in Aboriginal language programs.
- What kind of money and laws are going to be put in place to save languages?
- The need for certified instructors to train interpreters in all languages
- The need for immersion programs in schools

**VIII - Panel Discussion —What is the Normal Cultural Change and does it Conflict with Traditional Values?**

Moderator: *Joseph Handley*

Panellists: *Alestine Andre, Heritage Researcher, Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute;*  
*Emily Kudlak, Language Officer, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation;*  
*Lucy Lafferty, Director of Education, TliCho Community Services Agency;*  
*Fibbie Tatti, Language Consultant.*

**Ms. Lafferty:**

Ms. Lafferty explained the TliCho Cosmology Project which is on the TliCho website. Cosmology uses stories and myth to explain how the people view their own beginnings. Every aspect of life is related to cosmology. There are many legends and stories to explain how culture changed over the years. There are deep connections between culture and language and language evolves to accommodate changes. Culture changes for many reasons. Environmental changes often force cultural changes to people and animals. For example, the drum dance was not originally part of the TliCho culture. The custom was adopted from the south when people moved into settlements and had more leisure time. Before they moved into communities, people were more mobile and didn't carry big drums around. They had tea dances.

Ms. Lafferty noted that assimilation had torn the culture apart. Accelerated culture change has had many negative impacts such as addictions, mental illness and loneliness. If you don't know the language, you won't understand the culture. With a loss of our language, we are at the brink of extinction as Tlicho people. People have to realize the effects of residential school.

**Alestine Andre:**

Ms. Andre explained the mandate of the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute, then described how cultural change has impacted three generations of her family. While in her father's day, there was no question about who was responsible for keeping the language and cultural values, when Alestine was born in the 1950s, cultural change had begun to conflict with traditional values. She went to residential school for 12 years but also spent time on the land. Some of the people from her generation can speak the language fluently and have maintained touch with traditional values, while others have lost the language and culture. Her nephew who was born in the 1990s has spent very little time on the land and his cultural change conflicts with traditional values. Today's people face TV, media, ipods, globalization and these present a huge challenge to the effort to revitalize Aboriginal languages.

Ms. Alestine stressed that the responsibility for revitalizing the languages belongs to the language groups. The challenges we face with languages are like trying to walk through a thick bush of willows. It is easy to blame others for the state of our languages but the responsibility of preserving them is ours and ours alone. The GSCI has carried out 15 projects and collected volumes of cultural information. It has published language dictionaries and has a website, books, publications and maps. The Institute is using technology to preserve the culture by transferring information to digital sound bites.

Ms. Alestine applauded the healing journeys of people, which she felt were not adequately recognized. She was also encouraged that the "Reality Check" report recommended the establishment of a language centre but added that the recommendation needed to be stronger. A centre should put all languages under one umbrella, similar to what exists in the Yukon and Alaska. In conclusion, Ms. Alestine stressed that the language was in the people and that the attitude that people should be paid for saving the language and culture must be overcome. The only solution is to speak the language at home and in our daily lives.

**Emily Kudlak:**

Ms. Kudlak said it was important to promote people who are using Aboriginal languages and to provide people with opportunities to learn. Elders need help to pass their knowledge on to the younger generations. Ms. Kudlak was grateful to have a radio station in her home community that gave people the opportunity to use the language publicly. She also said that Innuinaqtun speakers were separated by borders and that those borders needed to be erased.

## **Fibbie Tatti:**

Ms. Tatti described a recent experience when she spent nine days working with youth in Deline on a Great Bear Lake place names mapping project. The students themselves demonstrated the language opportunities and saw opportunity rather than limitations. The students were revitalizing the language. They were working on collecting words and familiarizing themselves with the history of their families and ancestors by using digital mapping. They were familiar with the sound of the languages and were working on internalizing language by repeating the phrases they'd learnt. They were working on ethnography and learning traditional songs and using the traditional methods of storytellers.

We have so much to learn from the youth, Ms. Tatti said. Youth face many challenges and are using the computers to learn traditional culture. Youth have become creative out of changes. Each generation learns to define what language means to them. Language is not stagnant. Youth of today are finding their own understandings and keeping open a window for the understandings of yesterday.

## **DAY TWO**

After opening the meeting with a prayer, MC Paul Andrew introduced Mark Cleveland who is drafting the NWT Aboriginal Languages Strategy. Mr. Cleveland summarized the key points in the presentations from Day One and explained the goals of the day's workshops were to set the context and discuss issues in preparation for action planning the next day. The Delegates then broke into workshop groups. Each workshop had a note-taker and these notes were given to ECE for use in developing the Languages Strategy. The notes appear in the *Language Communities Working Group* section of this usb.

### **I - Morning Workshops: Language Communities Working Groups — Setting the Context**

The delegation broke into workshop groups, each representing one language community. Participants at the workshops discussed 10 key questions about their particular language group. The discussions focused on the current health of the language, what is being done to revitalize it, what needs to be done and what is required to do it, long and short-term goals and funding requirements.

Language Communities Working Groups were:

- Group A: Chipewyan
- Group B: Cree
- Group C: Gwich'in
- Group D: Inuinnaqtun, Inuvialuktun and Inuktitut
- Group E: North Slavey
- Group F: South Slavey
- Group G: Tlicho and Weledeh Dialect



## **II - Morning Workshop: Organization Delegates Working Group — Setting the Context**

This workshop was for delegates representing organizations not directly involved with one of the language communities. Participants discussed three questions that focused on how organizations support language revitalization efforts, what they could do and what they would like to see included in the Aboriginal Languages Strategy.

## **III - Afternoon Workshops: Issues and Challenges**

The afternoon was devoted to various workshops on the issues and challenges that relate to Aboriginal languages. Delegates attended the workshops that interested them and each workshop was held twice to enable each delegate to attend two workshops.

The workshops were:

- Group A: Best Practices and Tools
- Group B: Teaching Materials and Community Involvement
- Group C: Language Standardization
- Group D: Parenting and Home Language
- Group E: Youth Culture: Defining a Youth Language Community
- Group F: Making a Place for Elders

## **DAY THREE**

### **I - Morning Workshops: Language communities working groups and organization delegates — Action Planning**

The Action Planning workshops built on the Setting the Context workshops of the previous day and had the following goals:

- Develop a vision for languages
- Identify goals for the next 10-20 years
- Describe key actions required
- Identify how responsibilities will be shared to support revitalization

### **II - The Impact of Residential Schools and Canada's Apology**

*Chief Wilton Littlechild, Commissioner, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada;*

*Marie Wilson, Commissioner, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.*

#### **Chief Littlechild:**

Chief Littlechild brought Cree greetings to the NWT. He noted that the impact of Residential Schools on Aboriginal languages is a global issue and he quoted a statistic that on a global level, an indigenous language dies every two weeks.

Chief Littlechild shared two stories, one about the loss of a language and one about the survival of language. At a United Nations meeting in Japan an elder who was offering a traditional thanksgiving asked people to listen carefully because he was the last speaker of his language. He died a month later and the language died with him. Chief Littlechild referred to this as “hard punch in the stomach.” His other story was one of hope. At another UN meeting, two years later in New York, a 91-year-old lady announced that she was the last speaker of her language. But she was followed by young people who were taping everything she said, so that the language could be preserved.

Chief Littlechild noted that many years of hard work had resulted in an International Legal Framework to help in the work of revitalizing languages, including the International Labour Organization’s Convention of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples and the UN’s General Comment No. 11.

Chief Littlechild was in the Canadian House of Commons when the residential school apology was presented. While it opened the door for new relationships, there was no action to follow it up and within two weeks, Canadian representatives were denying Aboriginal rights under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. He lauded the NWT Legislative Assembly for being one of the first to adopt the Declaration. The apology, Chief Littlechild said in conclusion, calls on us to work as partners. When languages die, nations die.

### **Marie Wilson:**

Ms. Wilson said her mother tongue was English but she had studied French in school and university so that she is now fluent in both languages. The difference between her and the people who went to residential schools is that she wasn’t forced to learn French and she wasn’t punished for speaking her mother tongue. She was never expected to trade one language for another.

As a Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner, Ms. Wilson has travelled to every province and two territories. She has heard countless stories of the impact of the schools on languages and flagrant examples of the loss of culture and language. She’s heard stories about injuries and abuse to children and collective harm to community and society. She also heard about good things that came out of the schools: lifelong friendships, love and marriage, successful sports teams and discipline. She heard that language was a key aspect of identity — where your place in the world is, where you come from, who you are. People in residential schools lost who they were. They came home and could no longer speak their language. People made fun of them and they felt ashamed because they had been told it was the language of heathens and savages. She said there was a direct connection between the residential schools and the negative statistics that define that Aboriginal society.

Ms. Wilson noted that the northern public service abounds with opportunities to learn French but not Aboriginal languages and that it is never a job requirement to be willing to learn an Aboriginal language.

In closing, Ms. Wilson noted that there were great possibilities for northern languages. She listed the following principles as necessary to address the effect of residential schools in the area of language:

- Humility, courage, forgiveness and goodwill on the part of Aboriginal people, churches and all of Canada.
- Progressive and courageous public policy framework.
- Development and engagement of official language experts.
- Determination to speak Indigenous language and teach others.
- Firm belief in the value of investing in what is still possible.
- Vision and hard work to turn values into priorities.

### **III - Workshop Reports — Presentation of the Action Plans**

#### **1. Tlicho/Weledeh-dialect Workshop**

##### **Vision 10 to 20 years in the future**

- 75% of Tlicho people will be fluent, youth will speak fluently and grandparents will be able to converse with their children
- Elders will be taken care of, people will carry their traditional skills and the communities will support each other

##### **Goals for the next 5 to 10 years**

- Immersion schools and daycares
- Language and Culture Centre
- Training programs
- Multi-year funding
- Public information in the Dene Language
- Dene Culture instructors
- A place for elders to tell stories
- Teaching material developed
- Healing program to encourage community involvement
- Use technology to keep language and culture alive

##### **Top Three Revitalization Actions**

1. Language Centre in the Region by 2015.
2. Language in Schools: Immersion to Grade 3 and half time after Grade 3; Language curriculum by 2012; Dene Kede by 2015; Elders teaching skills in schools; Dene culture and language instructors; Train instructors in immersion techniques.

3. Language Standardization by 2012.
4. Good land program/culture camp/traditional knowledge/healing program
5. Website by 2011.

## **2. Gwich'in Workshop**

### **Vision 10 to 20 years in the future**

- Move the Gwich'in language off the "critically endangered" list so it is revitalized by 2015.

### **Goals for the next 5 to 10 years**

- Increase the number of interpreters/translators.
- Ensure elders and linguists are working together in partnership.
- Develop an Action plan now.
- Gwich'in language programs are measured and evaluated annually.
- More on the land programs at schools throughout the year.
- Use of language in church.
- Immersion cultural camps.

### **Top Three Revitalization Actions**

1. Develop a centralized NWT language/cultural centre for all languages (or just for the Gwich'in language) that is developed by the language communities, not the government.
2. Create a new facility for GSCI/ GTC
3. Report on this Language Symposium to the people/leadership (GTC) and have them do public education now.
4. Speak our language and work together.
5. Ask communities for input about how to recognize and honour people by awarding them honorary degrees/designations.
6. Use the language more. Mandate that positions such as board members must be filled by Gwich'in speakers. Make incentives for speaking or learning the language. On job ads, say "the applicant **MUST** be able to speak/write/read the language," not "would be an asset"

## **3. Cree Workshop**

### **Vision 10 to 20 years in the future**

- Youth are more fluent in the language and the language has more presence in the community, in that it's spoken by everybody, not only Cree people
- International recognition of the language, culture and people
- More employment as historians and anthropologists.
- Cree history and anthropology is taught to others
- Greater Cree cultural presence in areas other than language.
- Both sacred and common Cree is preserved.
- Elders are healthier, live longer and spend more time with youth.

- An association sets standard for public protection.

### **Goals for the next 5 to 10 years**

- More visibility of Cree, such as signage, in Fort Smith.
- See the Cree language and hear it in Fort Smith in daily use
- More long-term commitments to stable, multi-year funding for programs and schools that focus on language
- Certification and credentials for Cree language.
- Immersion program in school system.
- More formal recognition of the language and re-enforcement of its place in society.
- More staff for official languages
- Revamp Aurora College School of Education programs to focus on language and culture.
- Mandatory language instruction for GNWT employees, with time off for classes.
- GNWT organizations to incorporate language and culture in mission statements across departments.
- Teach history, importance of language, healing and forgiveness rather than just words in language classes.
- Official language office to have a staff member for each language including Cree.
- Community media – radio broadcasts in Cree.
- "Cree Day" in Aboriginal Languages Month.
- Histories of the people and their languages in the airport for people to see when they arrive
- Take the polar bear out of the YK airport and replace with a local animal.
- Active cultural programs in GNWT services
- Positions outside the South Slave where people can get Cree material.

### **Top Three Revitalization Actions**

1. Stable, long-term funding for the Cree language community and Cree in the schools.
2. Develop standards, credentials and credits for certification of language instructors through elders or an association. Credits should be provided for levels in high school, college, possibly GNWT.
3. Strengthen language instruction: begin a Cree immersion program in the school system. Start with one subject or grade level and move up.

## **4. Organizations Workshop**

### **Vision 10 to 20 years in the future**

- To support language communities through legislation, policy, educational training.

### **Actions**

1. Conduct research that shows effective legislation and policy.
2. Strong communication plan to highlight benefits of learning Aboriginal languages for all people.
3. Celebrate the use of Aboriginal languages for all ages and all settings by language-based contests, activities, literature, storytelling and signage in languages through the north.
4. Increase language services in all areas and in all organizations.
5. Implement immersion programs.
6. All measures should happen within the next four years

## **5. South Slavey Workshop**

### **Vision 10 to 20 years in the future**

- Elders' role in the community will be restored and there is ongoing progress in self-care and healing.
- Community members know, express, and actively support community values in their language.
- All the good programming already being done is better coordinated, and expanded.
- Mandatory use of Dene Kede will be enforced and effective. Student success reports will include Dene Kede.
- South Slavey immersion is available in schools, with supports to families for home use of the language.
- Mandatory use of the language throughout the region.

### **Goals for the next 5 to 10 years**

- Regional immersion camps involving whole families, on the land.
- Regional youth language conference.
- District Education Authority continues to be accountable and transparent with use of language funds.
- Language funding is administered by regional First Nations.
- Formal, frequent, supported mentorship opportunities for elders and youth to spend time together.
- The missing link of the language abilities of the middle-aged group will no longer be a significant problem.
- Honestly recognize the health of our language, and elevate its status and importance.

### **Top Three Revitalization Actions**

1. The Dehcho region will adopt a Strategic Language Use Plan, as part of a bold language policy. The plan will include Dehcho First Nation and its communities.

## **6. Inuinnaqtun, Inuvialuktun and Inuktitut Workshop**

### **Vision 10 to 20 years in the future**

- Read, write and speak the language.
- Make Inuvialuktun the first language of Inuvialuit Settlement Region.
- Everyone converses in a common language.
- All young people speak the language.

### **Goals for the next 5 to 10 years**

- Make the language cool for the youth.
- Promote the language everywhere.
- Produce more learning materials.
- Keep up with technology to have a computer-based dictionary in our language.
- Classes for the communities.
- Immersion classes for the first years of school: Pre-school, Kindergarten through Grade 3.
- Elders are compensated for their knowledge.
- Fully knowledgeable and trained educators in all institutes.

### **Top Three Revitalization Actions**

1. Provide culture and language activities and training in communities, including language classes for leadership, staff and GNWT staff working with and in communities.
2. Start or restart local community language boards to discuss goals and objectives. Meet together regularly to learn the language to the standards of the elders.
3. Networking development between the regions through the Internet, using existing material, creating new materials and updating to follow the growth of technology.

## **7. North Slavey Workshop**

### **Vision 10 to 20 years in the future**

- Our children will know their language and culture.
- There will be strong knowledge of Dene Laws for the whole community and for the youth.
- Our Own Dene School: No English, just straight North Slavey.
- Language and culture will be strong, and people will be proud.
- Strong knowledge of Dene laws in the whole community and for youth.
- Strong in both worlds; knowledge of both worlds.

### **Goals for the next 5 to 10 years**

- Sahtu cultural centres will be built in communities.
- Barriers will be removed between organizations so that organizations won't be working in isolation. The flow of programs will be improved in the community.

- Education in Dene and English skills is strong and valued equally.
- All research in Sahtu must include an Elder and must be available in the Dene language.
- Language laws similar to Nunavut.
- We need healthy leaders.
- Documentation of Elders' knowledge and stories.
- Host territorial Language Symposium every 2 years.
- Healing through dances.
- Funding must be carried over and there must be more respect for programs. No funding deadlines.
- Sahtu leadership needs to reclaim its authority.
- Remove the language barrier between elders and youth.
- Teachers in school will be Dene.
- All GNWT employees will speak the language of the community and know the culture.
- MLAs will speak the language.
- On the land medicine: medical reference material with traditional Sahtu healing.
- Arts, crafts, music promoted in the school and community.
- Review Language Symposium in regions to ensure goals are achieved.
- Human resources and financial support must be available to support vision.
- Communities must have resources and must direct activities through community consultations.
- Dene perspective and traditional knowledge will be valued in homes and schools

### **Top Three Revitalization Actions**

1. Sahtu cultural centres will be built in communities.
2. Barriers will be removed between organizations so they won't be working in isolation.
3. Education in Dene and English skills is strong and valued equally
4. Implement language laws like Nunavut to make changes that strengthen language and culture.

## **8. Chipweyan Workshop**

### **Goals for the next 5 to 10 years**

- College – a centre in the North that develops curriculum, trains interpreters/translators, trains language teachers and supports regional language development. Also includes On the Land projects that promote language use.
- On the Land Program – Cultural Learning to teach people to be proud of their history and of speaking their language.
- Strengthening language education in the schools.
- Take advantage of technology.
- Historical/Heritage Centre.
- Trained, certified language instructors in place.
- Resource people in the schools.



- Develop policy to standardize Chipewyan language teacher training.

### **Top Three Revitalization Actions**

1. Cultural Learning in the Community – involve Youth and Elders.
2. Immersion Program for teachers and students: Create an Aboriginal Language and Culture College to serve all NWT language groups. Taking a language course would be mandatory.
3. Language Leadership: Development of a language committee.

### **IV - Closing remarks and Media Opportunity**

*Jackson Lafferty, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment;*

*Kevin Menicoche, MLA, Nahendeh; Chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations;*

*Sarah Jerome, Languages Commissioner of the NWT.*

#### **Minister Lafferty:**

Minister Lafferty noted this was the first Symposium and that he was proud to be in attendance. He said that, as elders have reminded us, appreciation of the language is very important. The Symposium had accomplished a lot and there were many good recommendations brought forth. The vision to come out of it will not be one person's vision but everybody's vision. Minister Lafferty said he would now be able to send a strong message to Ottawa about the need for federal support for Aboriginal language revitalization.

#### **Kevin Menicoche:**

Mr. Menicoche thanked everybody and said the Symposium had exceeded his expectations. He promised to follow up on the suggestions made by the delegates and hoped to be able to act on some of the ideas over the next government business planning cycle. Mr. Menicoche pledged his support to garner more funding for Aboriginal languages through the GNWT business planning process. In conclusion, Mr. Menicoche suggested that the name of the NWT should be changed to an Aboriginal name.

#### **Sarah Jerome:**

In thanking the delegates, Ms. Jerome noted the importance of the Symposium and that now everybody had the responsibility to carry the language to the next generation. She reiterated the importance of training people to read and write the language and added that in speaking the language, people would take back their power. She challenged the delegates pick up the torch and begin working on their language in their homes, communities and with their children. It takes a whole community to educate a child, she said. Ms. Jerome concluded by inviting people to contact her in her capacity as Languages Commissioner.

The Symposium concluded with a number of questions from members of the media. CBC North television and radio, CJCD radio, and L'Aquilon (the French newspaper) were in attendance. As well those media were in attendance at different times throughout the Symposium, as well as CKLB radio.

The Symposium closed with a prayer.