



Nunavut Canada

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NUNAVUT

2nd Session

6th Assembly

HANSARD

Official Report

DAY 64

Wednesday, November 8, 2023

Pages 4057 – 4111

Iqaluit

Speaker: The Honourable Tony Akoak, MLA

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

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(Gjoa Haven)

Hon. David Akeeagok

(Quttiktuq)

Minister of Economic Development and Transportation; Minister of Justice; Minister responsible for Labour

Hon. Joelle Kaerner

(Amittuq)

Minister of Culture and Heritage; Minister of Languages; Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation

Karen Nutarak

(Tununiq)

Hon. Daniel Qavvik

(Hudson Bay)

Minister of Environment; Minister of Energy; Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok

(Iqaluit-Niaqunnguut)

Premier; Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs; Minister responsible for Immigration; Minister responsible for Indigenous Affairs

Mary Killiktee

(Uqummiut)

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(Rankin Inlet South)

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Deputy Premier; Minister of Education; Minister responsible for Seniors

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(Arviat North-Whale Cove)

Minister of Health; Minister responsible for Suicide Prevention

Joe Savikataaq

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Craig Simailak

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Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

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Iqaluit, Nunavut
Wednesday, November 8, 2023
Members Present:

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

>>House commenced at 10:00

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Tony Akoak) (interpretation): Good morning, everyone. Before we begin, Mr. Malliki, can you say the opening prayer, please.

>>Prayer

Speaker (interpretation): Good morning, everyone, and to Nunavummiut who are watching the proceedings, welcome, as well as my family in Gjoa Haven who are watching the proceedings, if they are awake, including my grandchildren. (interpretation ends) Two more sleeps.

>>Laughter

(interpretation ends) I recognize the Member for Arviat South, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the people of Arviat, I say “good morning” to you.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to proceed directly to Item 19 on the order paper. Thank you.

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to proceed directly to the Committee of the Whole. Are there any nays? There are none. Item 19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Tabled Documents 1 – 6(2), 120 – 6(2), 163 – 6(2), and 174 – 6(2) with Mr. Akoak in the Chair.

>>Laughter

In accordance to the authority provided to me by Motion 22 – 6(2), the committee will stay in session until it reports itself out.

I ask that all members remain at their desks so that we can proceed immediately in the committee.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>House recessed at 10:02 and
Committee resumed at 10:04

**Item 19: Consideration in Committee
of the Whole of Bills and Other
Matters**

Chairman (Mr. Akoak): Members, I would like to open the proceedings of the Committee of the Whole. Do members agree that we continue to deal with the following: Tabled Document 1 – 6(2), Tabled Document 120 – 6(2), Tabled Document 163 – 6(2), and Tabled Document 174 – 6(2)? Do members agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

**Tabled Document 001 – 6(2):
Katujjiluta Mandate –
Consideration in Committee**

**Tabled Document 120 – 6(2):
Government of Nunavut's
Progress on Katujjiluta Mandate
Priorities – Consideration in
Committee**

**Tabled Document 163 – 6(2):
Government of Nunavut's
Katujjiluta Mandate Mid-term
Report on the Highlights of
Achievements – Consideration in
Committee**

**Tabled Document 174 – 6(2): Updated
Ministerial Mandate Letters –
Consideration in Committee**

Chairman: Thank you. Before we proceed, do any ministers have follow-up returns to answers they provided yesterday to members? Minister Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, my fellow members and Nunavummiut who are watching the televised proceedings and listening to the radio broadcast. If someone smiles at you, smile back. It was nice to wake up to a sunny morning.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, during my exchange with the member from Baker Lake in regard to the Piqqusilirivvik program that is offered through satellite programming, I had stated that the program and the courses are offered between K to 12 where in fact it is actually grades 9 to 12. That's what I wanted to clarify to the member and to the members. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We will now proceed with questions. Next person on my list from yesterday is Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I send my regards to the people of Pond Inlet. We will be returning home soon and I will get to see them. I also send my regards to the people of Iqaluit.

I would first like to say that I am grateful that the ministers reply to our questions because we represent our constituents, whether it's an emergency or not.

I'm not sure who I'm going to direct this question to, but I don't know whether I should direct it to Nunavut Arctic College or the Department of Health. My question is in regard to the Nursing Program.

When students complete the program, they have to take a nursing exam and only when that's done can they become a practising nurse. Even if they have written their exam and passed, they're not hired directly. We do want to see Inuit nurses on staff. Once they have completed their program, how can we give more support to the graduating nurses? They're not in school anymore, but they also don't have a job. I would like to know what happens with those graduated nurses. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the member for asking that question. I touched upon this issue yesterday in regard to the nurses that completed their

programs. We would like to get them into their field.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, we have established a Graduate Nursing Residence Program. That's the program through which it's a mentorship program and that's the program that once the students have come out of Arctic College, if they write their licensing exam and they pass it, then they can enter into the mentorship program. The licensing requirements are set by the registered nurses association; it's not by the Department of Health.

From the date of graduating, graduates are given three years within which they can attempt their licensing exam. They can make multiple attempts. For those who don't pass their licensing exam on the first shot, we are able to offer them employment, not as a nurse because of licensing requirements. The exact job title escapes me, but it's working with in-patients within the Department of Health and the idea is that they can use that time, stay employed with the department, get some hands-on experience, and get further studied up or assistance if needed to attempt their licensing exam again. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister. I have a question for the Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College.

In regard to the nursing students, (interpretation ends) are they prepared for this exam at the end of their year? Do they go through this exam or

(interpretation) what happens? I would like to get clarification on that. As Inuit, English is not our first language and sometimes documents written in English are not easily understandable. I have heard that sometimes they don't understand the question in English and sometimes they don't understand the problem-solving questions. Are they prepared in advance to write those exams? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for asking a question in terms of supporting health-related programs that are offered through Nunavut Arctic College.

Mr. Chairman, exam preparations are supported and they will be provided during their program intake, including practise testing before they graduate. The college conducts a practise testing for Nunavut Arctic College. Also, the Nursing Program provides academic support and study program to the current and past students preparing to write the National Council Licensure Examination for the registered nurse and also the practical nurse component. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank Minister Qavvik. That's great to hear and I'm glad that we will be able to go to the health centre in the future and be served in the Inuit language, as the number if Inuit nurses will increase. My cousin is a nursing student and I am proud of her.

I also have a question for the Minister of Family Services. There were seven graduates for social services. How many are now employed by the department? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for that question. We have some challenges in that area as well. Some of the students who take the Nursing Program or social services income support worker, sometimes they don't enter the field but enter the administrative section. What we hope to do is to hire them after they have graduated.

While the social service worker students are in school, I urge them to work for our department. I don't know how many have graduated, but there is one student who took the program in Cambridge Bay and now works here in Iqaluit. I'm not sure where the other graduates are. I'll get that information. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister for saying that you are going to look into this. This issue is very important, especially when we lack employees or when we have many vacant positions. How else can we provide support to Inuit especially so that they could be hired? I know that it's very difficult and challenging to get into the workforce.

I know that your department is working and you have also brought up somebody to help the students. They were sent in to help the smaller communities. Are you able to support or send them out to the smaller communities or larger communities, perhaps? I believe there were mental health workers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't quite understand your question.

However, I recognized those individuals during their visit. They were going to support the social workers across Nunavut. One of the challenges or barriers we face is that our social workers at the level are alone in many communities and they get exhausted. Sometimes they work 24/7 and some social workers work like that and they are overworked. When they are overworked, they can speak to the individuals that had come here and one of them has been working within the Department of Family Services. I was very pleased to see that because the individual knows the responsibilities of the social service workers.

After the Auditor General's report, it stated that our social workers need more help at the community level as they are lone workers. I am very pleased that some positions are open. They were filled with casual employees, but since the report has been tabled, there are 13 social workers who have been hired permanently. We are looking to the future to make sure that we have plans and sometimes we have challenges with

the lack of social workers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you, Minister Nakashuk, for that good response and yes, you did understand my question.

I would like to pose another question. Will you be tabling information on child apprehensions? Do you provide support to the parents to make sure that they can get their children back after they have been apprehended? Will there be programs created for parents to support them, to say it in English, (interpretation ends) programs through parenting, counselling, and child rearing? (interpretation) Will there be such programs created or do they already exist? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for asking that question. The agreement with the parents can vary with each client. Some children are apprehended for a day if they have problems with the parents or for their safety issues, so we look at the children's safety first, to make sure they're safe.

The social workers continually work with the parents to see how they can return their children by developing plans. However, it is unfortunate that some parents no longer want their children back. This is when the social workers have to search for foster

parents, requiring long-term care in some cases.

When the social workers have too many cases on their plates, sometimes they request assistance from the mental health worker to see if they can make an appointment with the parents or the mothers. When they require more assistance, they use that avenue.

Nonetheless, when a child is apprehended under child welfare reasons with no return intended, then they do not make a plan. When a child is apprehended temporarily, they still have to follow the legislation specific to child welfare, and most cases include a plan to return the child eventually to the parents, if the parents are okay and if the child will not be in an unsafe position. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. This is a serious issue, and we feel compassion for the children when they have to experience this. Some parents don't do it on purpose when they lose their children. That's just a comment I would like to say. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Just a comment. Next name on my list, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to direct my first question to Minister Kaerner. What have been your early observations on how the mandate items that you're responsible for have been addressed by this government to date? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kaernerker.

Hon. Joelle Kaernerker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your question. In the *Katujjiluta* mandate, one thing that I noted is when I look at the Departments of Culture and Heritage and Health, the elders and youth grants and contribution funding have been increased.

That's one of the examples I can provide to you, and I'm very proud of that. I noted that Nunavut residents in the whole territory have now been scheduled to pay the same rate for energy to the Qulliq Energy Corporation. Those are the things that I have noted. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Although I do appreciate the response, I don't know if the minister fully understood what I was asking. Basically, where I'm going on this is: what early observations?

I know that as a new minister... . A couple of months ago, he was a member sitting over here on this side, so it's a different perspective when you look at things as a minister. I would just like to get some early observations, not specific examples of specific achievements or mandate items, but overall, what are your observations of how you're sitting on that side of the table now? What are your early observations on how this government has promoted some of the mandate items that you are now responsible for? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kaernerker.

Hon. Joelle Kaernerker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the member for his question. When I was a regular member, I worked very hard, passionately. Yes, during my time as a regular MLA, the issues I prioritized were queries to the ministers. Now, I have to respond to the questions from that side of the floor to my colleagues.

What I have observed is that I had just two weeks to try and learn my portfolio, followed by our fall session. Some of my observations compared to my time on the other side of the floor, was I seemed past my hot flashes in speaking. Now, I am prone to get sweaty and hot.

>> *Laughter*

Primarily due to trying to learn on the job, especially how the operations work when you are in the role of a minister. To date, I am still learning and trying to cram as much knowledge while studying the priorities of the department which I want to move forward. The biggest observation is the need to respond properly to you, my colleagues on the other side.

I am trying to respect all my colleagues equally, so the need to respond properly is my focus, although I sometimes still make erroneous responses, but there is always time to correct them the next day. Additionally, for the priorities in *Turaaqtavut*, these are the priorities we all shared in drafting, and we included the regional Inuit associations, and Nunavut Tunngavik.

The need to partner together on some issues is what I have noted in my portfolio most succinctly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to move on to Minister Qavvik, with the exact same question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for that question. Mr. Chairman, Nunavut Arctic College had made significant steps in terms of providing more programs that are offered outside the Nunatta Campus. For example, the practical nurse program has been offered at the community of Rankin Inlet, where four students are currently taking that program into year two.

I look forward to their success in the next year. They have taken steps on working with the Department of Health through practicums where they work at the health centre to gain more experience in the health field.

Also, on the mandate perspective the Personal Support Worker program will be underway sometime in the new year, and that will be offered in the communities of Rankin Inlet and Iqaluit.

The college is looking to revise that current Home and Continuing Care Program that will now be the Personal Support Worker Program.

Also, at the Nunavut Teacher Education Program, there are 17 communities across the territory, that are now taking that program, which made a significant step for the government to provide more education programs across the territory

to increase our much-needed teachers across the territory.

Also, again, Nunavut Arctic College works closely with the Department of Health in terms of health-related field workplaces. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not sure if I am not just wording my question right, I thought it was fairly straightforward, but what I am looking at, and again I do appreciate the responses from both ministers on the action they are doing behind the scenes on some of these mandate items and different programs.

What I am trying to get at, like I'd mentioned to Minister Kaerner, when you are sitting on this side and you are looking at mandate objectives that the government brings forward and the updates we've received, as a new minister you have a different viewpoint now, of how things are progressing or not progressing or the attention being given to some mandates items, maybe over others. There has got to be priorities that are looking to be achieved.

I'm just trying to get an overall perspective or observation that since joining cabinet, with your change in perspective, how do you feel this government is doing on achieving these mandate objectives? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope I'm clear this time.

Chairman: Minister Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for that question. Yes, I have to say that it's very

different to be on this side of the group whereas I had two years questioning the ministers.

Based on the mandate and mandate letters, in terms of Nunavut Arctic College, they are an ongoing process in terms of program offering across the territory.

In terms of the Department of Environment, one of the objectives that was completed which was the policy for the Wolf Sample Collection Program.

For the other priorities within the Department of Environment, there's an exploratory discussion, as we speak, with the federal counterparts and also Community and Government Services and Nunavut Housing Corporation for those priorities to move forward.

I hope I answered the member's question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Same minister, what mandate items under your responsibilities excite you the most to tackle and how do you plan to advance results? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's hard to pick which mandate item excites me the most, but again the Practical Nurse Program, I'm really fond of having that program being offered outside of the usual location where it was offered.

A lot of the health-related field programs are very stretched in terms of offering them to other communities because the health-related programs require laboratory components. That's very challenging for Nunavut Arctic College to expand to other smaller communities where there are no laboratory components.

Also in terms of health-related fields, I would say that the Practical Nurse Program excites me the most, to answer the member's question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Same question to Minister Kaernerck. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kaernerck.

Hon. Joelle Kaernerck (interpretation): I'm sorry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. In the Department of Culture and Heritage, what I take pride in, actually what I felt happy about were that the funds for our elders and youth were increased. Also, not just this fund, the funds for cultural or (interpretation ends) Inuit societal values (interpretation) was also increased that communities can apply for.

These two funds in particular are the two most obvious ones, and further, the fact our staff always tries to come up with new initiatives through the *Inuit Qaujimaqatuqangit* committee, who entrust the communities and this is another observation.

Additionally, under the Qulliq Energy Corporation, they try to make all the communities equal in terms of needed infrastructure, so I have taken note of that.

When I responded, I tried to visualize that from the perspective of making all communities equal in terms of the rates they have to pay. Also, they try to brainstorm new initiatives for ways to keep the ratepayers in mind when they are making plans. In particular, with respect to their employees, safety is the first priority which I have also observed.

Now, in being in this seat where I have to respond to my colleagues, I have had to look at the past successes in the past two years since our terms began, and the activities and their plans to move forward are what I noticed, compared to when I used to query the ministers, I want trying my best just to represent my constituents sharing their concerns, problems requiring repairs and such.

The past questions I had are partly within the *Katujjiluta* mandate, in terms of cooperating in partnership and collaboration as that was my perspective. In the upcoming next two years, my focus will be on ensuring partnership with my colleagues, and if we can move this ahead it will make things a lot easier, as we represent all Nunavummiut here.

This is the biggest observation I have had. I am aware certain things require additional improvement, but it is not carved in stone. Also, the senior staff also contemplate options and alternative means, so the need to try to make the improvements moving forward and providing more assistance to the people

we represent here in Nunavut, all of them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to start with the more veteran cabinet ministers. I will start off with the Deputy Premier.

Can the minister name at least two new mandate-driven programs or projects that you have initiated and implemented that you are most proud of? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Deputy Premier of Nunavut, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the member for the question. I see all of the priorities as being one to work on and excited for them in the development of the mandate, visioning where we are going with this document and the work that's being led by all of the public servants that are working hard on prioritizing and implementing the mandate for the government and Nunavummiut.

One area that I saw and was working hard with the team on was the FANS comprehensive review. I know it has long needed an overhaul, but I see it as one that makes me feel proud, even thinking of it, that it is an investment for our students. When we invest in our students, they bring our territory into a very healthy space that our Nunavummiut are achieving and being adequately funded for post-secondary.

We've had to make interim measures while the comprehensive review was happening, so I'm pleased that there are

seven casual staff which was needed. We didn't know exactly how many were needed for the department to grow, but it seems like it's been an adequate number for the students. I know this is also another interim measure but one that I've been passionate about is the new announcement we announced this week with the wellness benefit.

We really do see the cost of living rise, particularly in the past several months. It has been heard loud and clear from students and Nunavummiut that our cost of living at the grocery stores is rising. A better way to supplement that is to directly put funds into students' hands, and I really look forward to the funds out there to be distributed this month. The staff is working on getting that out there in the next several weeks. The students should see the money to support them this semester, and then again, next semester in January.

Those are two items I feel that we're within the FANS review is in the mandate, but then supplementing interim measures for the program to meet the needs and the demands that we currently face, because it is a long trajectory to get the FANS comprehensive review to the place that we truly want it and the re-envisioning of it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister Main, same question.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(interpretation ends) These are things that I'm proud of, or two mandate-driven items. I mean, it's really hard to choose, because I think there is so much good work going on within my department, and I must say that I'm really privileged to work alongside some incredibly dedicated staff, incredibly knowledgeable, smart, experienced, and it's humbling sometimes to see the work that they're doing in mental health, physical, primary care, you name it.

I think one of the biggest priorities has been around human resources and trying to, from the very basic level, make sure that we're able to provide as much care as we can across Nunavut.

It's been a huge challenge, but through creativity, dedication, listening to our staff, we haven't been able to move the needle, so to speak, and we are coming forward with some very exciting initiatives. I mentioned in my speech two days ago, looking at the coming months and years, I'm hopeful that we're going to see stabilization of our workforce, and that's going to lead to better work outcomes.

I want to talk about virtual care. That's a really exciting area tied to our mandate in terms of reaching communities, but I think the mental health work that's happening across Nunavut would be the second area I would want to mention because we had some discussion on it yesterday, it's such an important topic, it's right there, central in our mandate, and it's one that we do need to keep pushing on. We can't let go of the hope for the future and hope for improvement.

I see not just Department of Health staff, but community organizations and Inuit

organizations and all the different parties that are leaning into the task of making improvements. It's some really important and incredible work that is happening. Those would be my two, and thanks for the question. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll move on to Minister David Akeeagok. I just want to emphasize at least two new mandate-driven programs, projects or initiatives that have been initiated and implemented that you're most proud of. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, very much for the question. When we're doing our review within the mandates and seeing how much we've done so far, there are so many things I want to highlight. I will try and focus on the two.

I think one of the pillars that I've seen is under diversifying our economy, is to seeing our fisheries being developed and being made here in Nunavut. I think it's coming to it, and it really excites me when it comes to working towards it, not just a port, but to have the repatriation of our quotas, which allows the fisheries to get larger, and also to start focusing on the other communities that have in-shore fisheries and to try and get into the test fisheries. That's one that gets me really excited in terms of when I come here to work, amongst a lot of other things.

Working with my cabinet colleagues on delivering the mandate is another one. Although housing is not directly in my

portfolio, working with Minister Kusugak and our cabinet colleagues of getting houses in the communities, communities that have not seen houses being built. I think that's one of the pillars that I want to say makes me really proud that I contributed to as a minister. I thank each of you for putting me into this peer. I'm very open in terms of what others need to get through.

As the member wanted a couple examples, I'll stick to that because I think I can keep going and going on a number of initiatives that are under our mandate, and the work that we're doing as all of us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Same question to Minister Nakashuk.

Chairman: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for asking the question. (interpretation ends) I think it's a very good question, and I feel very privileged to be covering the departments, especially Family Services. I am so happy to be the Minister for Family Services because I know the issues, and it's a very heavy file, but I see a lot of potential.

I don't want to not say the Office of the Auditor report really has helped the Department of Family Services in the issues that I saw that needed support, but in terms of the mandate review, one thing I'm very proud of is one; the elders country food program that we are working on, and that was something that was from the very beginning. We are

going to be meeting with community members, and there are phases that we're going to follow. I think that one is very important because we get to hear what the elders say in the community, and what they want to see.

The other one I want to mention most is the community wellness hubs. I think those are very important for and from the communities, to see those come up and start running. We will start seeing more preventative programs, healthier lifestyle programs, and parenting skills that could start decreasing some of the issues that Family Services is doing, whether it be about children or shelters. I think they are one of the best things I really hope to see more of in the coming couple years.

The other one too I wanted to mention was Human Resources and the direct appointments that we've had to improve on how we can do more direct appointments for Inuit. You know how the process is in terms of RFPs that had to go up to the cabinet, and each one would have to go through the same cycle. For Inuit, we're looking at just one RFP for all of them, so they could go through as one document and not each. That's different for non-Inuit. We still have to practise what has been done prior, so I think those are the important ones I can think of.

When I was reading through the mandate review from my department, I couldn't believe how much work the department staff has done, the amazing work that they do because they know the issues and they know our goals. I think that's one of things, like Minister Main stated, I'm very fortunate to have such strong

team in the departments because they see the issues.

We have a long way to go yet, and it won't take another two years, it's going to take much longer than that to complete some of the work that we are doing. I think, like any mandate, I'm very fortunate to be part of a team that I started from the beginning and hoping to see what we can achieve in the four years that we're in.

I'm excited about that, and I think it's very exciting. Seeing it from the very beginning is a whole different eye-view for me. When I was on the other side, I could question the issues at a community level, but for Nunavut-wide, serving in that position, I think it's very humbling to be part of that. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just before I go on to Minister Joanasie with the same question, I do have an HR-specific question I would like to direct at Minister Nakashuk. I'm very sure the minister was paying attention during a line of questioning I had for the Minister of Nunavut Arctic College on the Bachelor of Arts program. As Minister of Human Resources, when we look at a lot of management and upper-level positions requiring a university degree, I would like to get the minister's position and commitment to pursue further a bachelor of arts program to be offered through Nunavut Arctic College to really accelerate. I think it would be a game changer to have more Inuit, more Nunavummiut with a degree that would be able to start qualifying for some of these upper-level positions that they may

already have experience working in; they just don't qualify for the position. I would like to get the minister's position on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you for that question. I think that's a very good question. At the moment, the department is actually reviewing all programs that we offer under Human Resources and our staff within the Government of Nunavut. I think it's a very good question. There are new programs that we are talking about on how we can better provide more advanced training for our employees.

We will certainly take that into consideration, but like I said, with all the other programs that we are providing with the public service training to our employees, we're actually reviewing a lot of the stuff because some of them are not as effective as they were because times are changing, and needs are different. It's a good time to start looking to what we need to advance in. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the response from the minister. I truly do think that this would be a real game changer for promoting Inuit employment at the position levels that are vastly underrepresented currently. To my earlier question, Minister Joanasie, I hope you remember what it was. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Chairman. Thank the member for his question. Maybe I'll start off with on the aging with dignity priority. I think that's one of the top items that we brought forward through our mandate. In support of that, my department, we have been able to contribute to this by assuming responsibility on the maintenance of continuing care facilities, which previously was through the Nunavut Housing Corporation. This has allowed the Nunavut Housing Corporation to focus their attention on housing, very much needed of course. I think, with that, I am proud of that achievement in support of the Nunavut Housing Corporation but also our elders being at the forefront of our mandate.

The other item I'll just mention too is that as a service delivery as well as a support department for municipalities to deliver services to Nunavummiut, I think that over the last two years, the investments we put towards municipalities towards increasing municipal fleets, parking garages, rock crushers, this is all in line with making sure that hamlets and municipalities and the city are equipped with the necessary tools to support the housing development. I think we're on the right path to achieving that.

I think those two are the two proudest initiatives that we have seen to date. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When I look through the mandate update documents that we have received and it's just the nature of the beast, they tend to

be all positive, highlighting what has been accomplished and maybe a few embellishments here and there, but one thing that they typically don't bring out is the negative and the challenges.

I would like to go back through the ministers, starting with the Deputy Premier. What mandate items that are under your purview that you were most concerned about in meeting mandate commitments and objectives and why? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. In terms of mandate items, I think curriculum development has been an area that has, since I have been in this position, it was at a longer trajectory and the time frame is a lot shorter, but I think as a whole that it's one that raises people's questions in terms of the length of time and that's one that it does take time to develop curriculum and to get it through the education outcomes, that they're all met.

I know that it does take time and for somebody who is just learning about education, they might think, "Oh, that's a really long time to develop curriculum," but I have learned that in all provinces, it does take a significant amount of time to create curriculum, but just from the public's perspective, it could seem like a very long time to create. I do look forward to the implementation of the curriculum and it has been such a pleasure to see that curriculum being created.

One area that we noticed that we needed to enhance was showcasing the work

that is being done and celebrating it to everybody and having those opportunities to share what is the work that is being done and the great resources that are being created. It makes us feel proud to see the warehouse here in Iqaluit and know that all of these great resources are there for all of our schools. They're being implemented by being sent to our schools and our daycares. That's investments that you might not realize are being there.

It has been a big eye-opener to see curriculum development. I am proud of the team and it kind of pertains to the last question a little bit too in terms of enhancing the department and asking, "Can we speed this up?" They really did take a second look at it and they have been able to speed up the curriculum development by a significant amount of years and it does seem maybe daunting, but I am hopeful for it and we will continue to push for the creation of the made-in-Nunavut curriculum. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister's crystal ball must be working because I'm going to be giving her an opportunity to elaborate further on that as a curriculum development topic in QP (question period) tomorrow.

Minister Main, same question.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) There is a lot that I'm concerned about at any given day.

Looking at it from a high level, the human resource challenges, if we can't stabilize our workforce, if we can't bring more Inuit into health, and if we can't retain our existing employees, it's going to be very difficult to enable health and healing. It's going to be very hard to assist Nunavummiut with whatever needs they have, whether it's mental health, primary care, or cancer care. I'm hopeful and we are pouring resources into it and I have to thank my colleagues as well as the Minister of Finance, who is not here, but we are dedicating resources to it and taking new approaches. I'm hopeful, but that's a huge concern for me.

Under "Aging with dignity," the complexity of the long-term care facilities that we're trying to build is a concern. We do have partners. There are multiple departments involved in it to date. That's a concern in terms of the execution and the implementation of it, as it goes way beyond just looking at the facilities. There is a huge labour component to it and if we're not able to staff up our long-term care facilities with Inuit and Inuktitut-speaking individuals, ideally, it's going to be difficult to provide the level of care that we want and so that's something that is a concern in looking at it.

There is a lot more than just long-term care facilities under "Aging with dignity," but that in particular, the staffing up of the long-term care facilities and managing the capital side of things is a top concern.
(interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Same question to Minister David Akeeagok. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you for the question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What concerns me is the large amount of illegal alcohol and illegal drugs that are going into our communities and having a huge impact in social life within our communities. This is very concerning from my perspective and I do know that there are tools to help reduce it. I have been trying to work very closely with Canada Post and to getting those tools up and operational to stop it at the south and not making it up and bringing it up to Nunavut. Also, we're trying to see if we can do that on the airport side. They have the tools to do it, but there are a lot of barriers not to do it.

For a lot of our communities, we are seeing more and more of the illegal substance abuse that's taking place, which leads to very unhealthy communities. That's one that keeps me up at night, for the concerns and for the role I carry on both of my portfolios in Justice and Transportation. I know we can do it; it's just that it hasn't been enacted with the number of barriers that are there. A lot of work is progressing towards that.

I want to compliment, when you were in this role, the creation that I think you started where it used to be only First Nations is now First Nations and Inuit policing. We are starting to implement that now and the communities will be able to identify what kind of policing they want under that program. That gives me comfort. The tools that you

need are coming. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The same question to Minister Nakashuk. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for that question. In regard to social issues, we hear a lot of concerns about social issues and sometimes we lose sleep. Wanting that has been a huge challenge. There is no place for women and children to go when they are in a dangerous situation. That is a major concern for me.

We have discussed the subject, especially on how we can provide more support to women and children. We are trying to provide more financial resources to the hamlet councils so they can look at rectifying the matter. We have also provided funds for non-profit organizations.

Another challenge that I have is the elders. There was a poverty reduction roundtable here in Iqaluit and when elders had the microphone, they indicated that they have challenges around mobility issues. That's one issue that was brought up by the elders. We have to look at solutions that will help the communities.

We all have a direction and set our goals on a good social life for ourselves and for our families, but one of the challenges that we have in the indigenous communities is people being

sent out to residential schools and coming back to a healthy lifestyle after going through those institutions. To me, that is a challenge.

One of the harder challenges I have with Human Resources is that ever since the Government of Nunavut was created, we've wanted to see more Inuit in management or professional fields. As I indicated earlier, we would like to direct the education of Inuit in order to fill positions in the management and professional fields. This is part of the challenging aspects of trying to go this route, especially when a lot of Inuit transfer to other positions or departments, as they encourage others or when they are having problems with the senior management, they move to other positions.

This has continued for a long time, whereas some Inuit could have worked for many more years, and go up the promotional ladder to senior management. We want to see more Inuit working in the decision-making positions in the higher-level management positions. This is the most challenging aspect of this problem, and the lack of capacity with employees who are not just in casual positions. That is all. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister Joanasie. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think on this point I have to echo the concerns from Minister Main

on human resource capacity. I think having highly technical skills through the Department of Community and Government Services; many functions are highly specialized and hard to recruit for. Also, coupled with that, we are trying to address a large infrastructure gap and we have one of the highest capital budgets, it keeps increasing.

At the same time, I will also state that coupled with that is our aging infrastructure that some have experience with and seen here in Iqaluit. There have been critical failures and addressing those on an emergency basis has been quite challenging. I have to commend the people that have attended to those, not just here in Iqaluit but on a broader scale. I think those two are intertwined, human resources as well as the infrastructure. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Last but certainly not least, I would like to direct my question to the Premier now. What specific mandate items is the Premier actively involved in? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank my colleague for that question. I really go back to the first day where we met in Cambridge Bay, where the mandate really came from everybody's voices that are here around the room. It was very inspirational from the lens of how we wanted to see these bold and transformative changes that are there.

To the member's question, as the Premier I oversee all the mandate items that I've requested the ministers to do. In particular, I play a very key role in particular to the housing issue. That's something I take very seriously under different lenses. I'll look at the partnership structure, that's something I oversee.

Also, for us to look at how and where we could break the different silos that we see when departments, corporations, and agencies are working around advancing a mandate item that I've laid out in the mandate letters that are here before us right now.

To really see, right from day one, signalling specifically our willingness to go into large deficits to address the housing crisis. I've worked very closely with the finance minister specifically on that, and then with obviously the housing corporation as well; also, to continue to see specific investments around that space.

I was really involved, right from the beginning, specifically on that one, but I'm really proud that it's not just me but it's everybody around the room here that has played a huge role on addressing that. I as a Premier am really ensuring that those silos are broken throughout.

I'm also involved specifically on the elders' care strategy. That's obviously one that I'm really excited about and as I mentioned yesterday, it's so important to ensure that we actually have a plan that's rooted and grounded from the elders.

I know that there is some concern about the timelines that have been there, but just within one year for us to be able to

engage the elders, to talk with the elders, to do an in-depth review of all the different programs and services that are being offered from the whole-of-government approach, it does take time and we really spent that one year well. As I have mentioned, we have the “What we heard” document right now that I’m just reviewing as we speak, and I’m really looking forward to putting together the strategy of what those next steps will look like to ensure that we provide the care and the service that’s really simplified from the viewpoint of the elders that are in the communities as well.

If I may, I think those two are areas where I feel we have seen some improvement but also, obviously, a lot more work forthcoming in the next two years as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As it was highlighted earlier, everything is not always unicorns and rainbows.

What are the top five mandate items that are not moving fast enough and the Premier’s position on why they may not be getting the support to complete? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again I thank my colleague for that question. He is absolutely right; as great as the incredible achievements we have been able to do in very short order, just in two years, just listening to all the incredible advancements that we have been able to make amidst the

challenges that we face, I go back to the first six months of our first government where we had the COVID cases where it really shut down the territory. The challenges, obviously, were there right from the beginning, but to overcome that has been incredible.

I share a lot of the challenges that were already mentioned. I really lose a lot of sleep, looking at the infrastructure deficits we have in the territory, of where our starting point was. I think my colleague of CGS just mentioned that it has been incredible to see the largest ever capital investment in the territory’s history from year over year since we have created it, but we’re really playing catch-up to the rest of Canada. I really see that as a challenge and that’s really an opportunity I really seize in any conversations I have with my colleagues, the Council of the Federation being one of them. We’re using those avenues to highlight that when Canada was being built from coast to coast, it was through capital infrastructure that enabled them to sustain themselves, whether it’s the train tracks, the highways, among many. The challenge around the infrastructure deficit we do have is one that really comes to top of mind.

The human resource challenge is really not just a Nunavut problem; it’s a Canada-wide problem, but it’s something that I really do see as a challenge for us to really see advancements of the bold and transformative changes we envision. We have made some huge headway on a lot of fronts, but it’s really something that I lose a lot of sleep as well. I was really proud since we have taken over as a government that we as a government did settle every union agreement that was

outstanding and that was something that we really focused early on as a government. I'm so thankful for the incredible public servants we do have.

We know that there have been challenges that have been long-standing of the vacancy rates. Obviously, COVID did not help Nunavut in terms of the challenges we're now faced with further, but to see opportunities of bringing a new deputy minister into the department who has really a strong, extensive background is something I'm looking forward to. That's really a challenge of seeing one of the five issues that I do see forthcoming. I know it's not specific to a mandate item, but it does tie into it directly because we need people to implement the vision that we're laying out as a collective here.

The other challenge I do see is the work around the filling of the middle management with Inuit. I look at the TRPS report where we see that there is a challenge in filling with Inuit that are qualified, that are educated, and I thank my member for being a champion around bringing solutions to that table, but the work that I'm working with my colleague here to address the human resource, specifically Inuit employment, is one I do see as a huge opportunity and one where, with the appointments of the associate deputy positions, it has been incredible seeing that, as well as seeing Inuit at the highest level being represented and ensuring the Inuit voices are being heard at that table.

I think there is a lot more work we've got to do and looking at programs that the member suggested are clear ones where I think there is a challenge, but there is an opportunity that I do see. The

work from the lens where I'm looking at EIA specifically, looking at the statistics bureau of operations is one where I do see that as a challenge. I know that we have mobilized very quickly to see what we could do as a central agency to provide factual and sound stats that we could use and build business cases.

That's one where it has been long-standing for years where a lot of the positions looked great that we had them, but there were no people in them to work. Finding creative ways to address that is something I'm optimistic, but it's something that I did worry and I still worry that we need the sound, factual data to build strong cases, whether it's to ourselves to supply to the regular members or whether it's us building business cases to Ottawa to address the challenges that are there.

And then the fourth one would be going back to the aging infrastructure, looking at the aging power plants we do have, as the member is the former QEC minister as well, I think he understands that's really the backbones of our communities; as a former minister as well, just the challenges we have seen around bringing those infrastructures in, but I have full confidence with the member to find creative ways around addressing that and it really ties to the first point that I did mention of partnerships, what we could do not only as a government but bringing in partners to address these long-standing issues that we see across.

If I may, to summarize, those ones would probably be my main ones that do concern me, but I also am optimistic that in the next two years, we will be able to address a lot of these outstanding ones,

obviously with the support of all of us around the room here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll just finish off with a couple of comments.

One suggestion I have is the next mandate update report be a little bit more real. I understand the promotion and the positive messaging that needs to be conveyed, but have some reality in there that there are challenges, that it's not all unicorns and rainbows, as I used that term. There's a lot of information in there that's outdated. There are announceables in there from almost five years ago. Just a little bit more reality in there and just a couple of comments that I have often been quoted on, as ministers, it's your responsibility to give your departments the tools that they need to succeed. It's not always the money; it's the support or pushback sometimes.

Finally, I would really encourage you all to convey to your department heads, "Look for reasons to say yes, not excuses to say no." Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>> *Applause*

Chairman: That's just a comment. Next name on my list: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have listening a lot mostly for the past day and a bit and I would just like to get a bit more information. My first question will be to the Minister of Education under reinvesting in education. One of the members asked

yesterday about academic classes or programming in the high schools and the minister stated that it's available in all and I have to object to that because I absolutely believe that it's not available in all. Can the minister clarify her statement on that? The example I'll use is Arviat's John Arnalukjuak High School. Are there academic high school courses available there, like science, biology, chemistry, and physics? The programming that is needed for Nunavummiut to go into university, are they available in Arviat? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. I believe I did say that we do offer academic courses and, if they're not available in person, we have the opportunity to do distance education and that's available to all of our students. We do have students that are availing of distance education courses. I know that it isn't always ideal to take things online.

We do hope that and I have been into schools where they are offering academic science courses, for example, biology, chemistry, and physics, and it's so amazing to see our students in there learning body parts of *tuktu* or other animals, with the tangible animals from our communities, and using those innovative ways and real ways of learning in the classroom, but if there is no academic course that a student wants, they can work with their school leaders to enrol into a program or course online and do it distantly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it is nice to see hands-on experience with the students. Arviat is sometimes the second biggest community and sometimes it's the third; Rankin Inlet and Arviat go back and forth. I'll ask the minister again: are academic courses in high school available in school in Arviat? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. Yes, they are, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will get back to the minister on that because my constituents are telling me otherwise, so we will have the discussion out of this arena here.

Moving on, still staying on high school, I truly believe that Nunavut is going to a two-tier education system. You have the students that are in Iqaluit here have all the teachers and the courses that they need, and then you go to the outlying communities and they're just not there. The education level is not the same and it really shows. I'm pretty sure that if someone graduates from Iqaluit here, they can go straight into university. When you go to the outlying communities, when someone graduates from grade 12 in the outlying communities, they have a really hard time or they cannot go into university because they don't have the courses or the education level, even though they graduated. It's not good enough to university grade courses.

I'll ask the minister: excluding Iqaluit, does the minister know what the passing rate for the high school exam is? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. The students are following the Alberta curriculum and with the Alberta curriculum, the departmental mark that was there was different during COVID and now the departmental mark is, I believe, 30 percent, so that's the weight of the exam. Whatever they get on that exam, if they get 100 percent, it would be 30 percent of their mark, but just like everywhere else, we have been working on this within the department to standardize the marks for our schools, because they were all reporting, depending on the community, they were reporting in different ways, and that poses a challenge. If students move from one community to another, they're using different grading system, but now, we have that all standardized. With our new software, we are implementing marks from K to 6 and then grades 7 to 12. The marks are using the grade letters, so that is the standard across the territory that I'm happy and thankful that we have that new system available for all of our students.

The work, in collaboration with our district education authorities, and working on our programs; we do have educational programs. There is program planning that happens with the district education authorities in consultation. With that, we have our graduation passing, and they're available for our students and teachers to work with the

parents as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for elaborating on all the other stuff, but the minister did not give me the question I asked. The exam is set and the parameters to pass it are set. I'm not sure what it is, maybe you have to get more than 50 percent on an exam to pass the exam.

What is the passing rate of all the students that write it, excluding Iqaluit when they write the exam? If 100 students write the exam, do 70 percent of them pass? Is it 50 percent of them or 30 percent? What is the passing rate of that exam? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank the member for clarifying that. I understood the question after the second clarification. That's a detail that I will work to get to the member from our Pangnirtung office. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Educating our youth and our Inuit youth has to be a priority. All the other issues we heard from here, whether it's they can't fill jobs, they're not qualified to fill jobs, it starts at the educational level. If our educational system cannot produce students that can go from high school into university or into the college or into trades, then the system is not working.

In the Fourth Assembly, social passing was a big discussion, and I believe it's still going on. It's not a discussion that appears to be taking place anymore, but when someone graduates from grade 12, there are certain standards that they have to be able to do so that they can further their education wherever they want and do whatever they want. We have to give the students the proper training, the proper tools so they have a chance in life. We have to make sure that our education is just as good as anywhere else.

I believe education is falling behind in outlined communities. If you're in Arviat and you're in grade 6, or if you're in Coral Harbour and you're in grade 6 and you move to another different community, your grade 6 level should be the same. I believe that it is not. I believe that someone in grade 6 in Iqaluit is probably more advanced in terms of what their knowledge is, than in the smaller outlying communities. It's not the same. They are not being taught the same, up to the same level. That's just a comment. I'll move on.

One of the things that are written down here, I'm not sure if this would have been with the housing minister but is this, "relaunch the Canada Nunavut housing benefit program. The program supports individuals or families who are spending an unaffordable amount on rent." It says "there have been [11] recipients." I think there are more than 12 people, sorry 11 people in Nunavut that are finding their rent too high, that they need help. Can we get an explanation from... ? I'm not sure who runs this program. Thank you.

Chairman: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank him for that question. I believe the minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation has that responsibility and perhaps if you don't mind, I will use this to get the information to you as I do not have the details at this time. It is a very important question, so I will get back to the member on this matter, if that is fine by him. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I will look forward to that because I am pretty sure there are more than 11 recipients that are having a hard time meeting their rents in Nunavut. If it's a good program, then more Nunavummiut should have access to helping out with their rent.

I'll go on, staying on housing. The Premier stated earlier that one of his key roles is that he's hands on in housing because it's an important role. Also, the Premier stated that they don't mind going into deficit to build houses. He stated that when Member Hickes was asking him. If that is the case, can we get an explanation of why every single housing unit that was tendered in 2022 was cancelled?

There were no new houses constructed for public or staff housing in 2022. In 2023, I believe it was 66 units were tendered and cancelled. Why are tenders being cancelled when the Premier say

that they are willing to go into a deficit to build houses? Thank you.

Chairman: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank my colleague as well for bringing the top priority that we identified when we were in *Ikaluktutiak* as a collective.

The member is right, we did signal immediately forming government, we signalled that we are willing to go into large deficits to put our equity into the challenges and the crisis we've seen on the housing front. I think just yesterday we realized how housing is so connected to a lot of things, whether it's suicide prevention, whether it's family violence, whether it's the health determinants, the social determinants that we see, at the core of that is housing.

We understood that coming in as a collective and that as a *Katujjiluta* mandate that we were going to bring bold and transformative changes around certain areas. I truly believe on the housing front we have.

Obviously, that was one component where we did mention, not only did we signal that we're willing to go into deficits, I have to commend the incredible leadership of Minister Kusugak who is responsible for addressing and leading on the housing front.

However, specifically to those tenders if I recall, Minister Kusugak had indicated that the prices at the time were going well beyond over \$1,000 to \$1,500 per square foot. There are just not enough

funds for us to be able to continue to pay those amounts. Through the leadership of Minister Kusugak, along with all Cabinet, we did take a different approach and that of partnerships.

Through that, we did bring in Inuit development corporations to the table to see what we could do to address the housing crisis. That's really a top priority for them as well as us. Through that partnership we did bring, not only the price down by more than 50 percent, we've actually looked at building the number of what was typically built every season. We've really tried being creative around the housing front.

To the member's question why those were cancelled, obviously, the minister is not here, but if I do recall, and I may be corrected, but the prices of those tenders were beyond what was budgeted at the time and that was just a price that the housing corporation wasn't willing to pursue. As such, it did go the route of the discussions with the Inuit organizations' development corporations, which found a really creative way where we found a strategic partner that lowered the price by half and also the builds being tripled. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Premier for all the information, but my question still wasn't answered. The Premier stated that they're willing to go into deficit and they cancelled all those units, but in fact, the housing corporation would not have gone into deficit. I believe it would not have gone to deficit.

Member Lightstone pointed out that the Nunavut Housing Corporation carried over in the neighbourhood of \$280 million. \$280 million, so I don't think the Nunavut Housing Corporation would have gone in deficit. I'll just re-ask the question. I'm sorry that the housing minister is not here, but the Premier did state that he plays a key role because housing is so important and I agree that housing is important.

If the Premier stated to Member Hickes that the government is willing to go into deficit to build houses, why are houses being cancelled when there actually is no deficit in the Nunavut Housing Corporation? The Minister of Finance also stated at day's end that he believed that there was going to be about a \$20 million surplus at the end of the year. Thank you.

Chairman: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I again thank my colleague for that very good question. As I indicated as well, I did play a central role in advocating for the Nunavut 3000 that we had tabled here in this House.

I've had every opportunity with my bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister. I had mentioned and signalled that housing is our top priority. Further to those bilateral meetings in line with the discussion of partnerships, for I believe the first time, we brought Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated to my bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister where I was very privileged to have Ms. Kotierk as well as Mr. Eetoolook at the time join the bilateral meeting to address and discuss our

unified interest to address the housing crisis and the importance and urgency around that. It really has taken a whole-of-government approach to address the issue.

Specific to the cancelled tenders, I think it's important to have Minister Kusugak provide adequate responses specifically to that and the reasons behind why the tenders of 2022 were cancelled. I would like to get back to the member specifically. I believe there is course discussion in the House that we could provide the member of where the minister did provide those responses, but I would like to make sure that the information is accurate for the member. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll just move on because, obviously, I asked and the Premier stated that they're willing to go into deficit to build houses, but they're not building them because they're too expensive, so that keeps them from going into deficit. We're not getting anywhere, so I'll just move on.

Going on to the parking garages that the community and government services minister stated, I believe it's a good program and all the hamlets do need it. It has been two years and I would like to ask the minister how many parking garages have been started since this program came into existence. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We've had nine applications to date that have been approved. I'm just reminding people that there are different phases to this program and working with the municipalities. I have a table I could share with the members on those details of which community has been approved the planning phase or if you will allow, maybe now, either way.

In the planning phase, we have Arctic Bay, Baker Lake, Kimmirut, Pangnirtung, Resolute Bay, and Whale Cove. They have all been approved for planning, and then the design phase: Chesterfield Inlet, Gjoa Haven, and Sanikiluaq. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have much time left, so I'll go back to the Premier about his associate DMs, which I believe is a good program. When I first got elected in 2013, we had associate deputy ministers back then too. If we can get an update on the number of associate deputy ministers and which department they are in. Thank you.

Chairman: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again I would like to thank my predecessor for supporting, really, something that is really inspirational in terms of allowing Nunavummiut who are qualified and who are willing to be able to serve at the highest level of our public service. Just as a great example, I believe just my previous deputy minister is now moving on to the federal deputy system who started off as an associate as

well, I believe, under Mr. Savikataaq's leadership as well. I just want to say thank you for your leadership around that as well.

To the member's question, right now we have five associate deputy positions that are filled. We have one for Devolution. We have one for the Nunavut Housing Corporation. We have one for Justice. We have one for Family Services and also the Department of Economic Development and Transportation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Will there be more associate DMs for each department or is that the number that we're more or less going to... ? I know it's not a fixed number, but are there more that are coming down the pike or is this mainly what's going to be there? Thank you.

Chairman: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again I would like to thank my colleague. I am very optimistic that there will be a lot more coming. We have allowed the departments and agencies the opportunity to be able to bring forward associate positions to be able to provide the necessary resources. In the future, I do expect to see more and I'm really encouraged to see more Inuit to fill these very important positions, especially as we want to see the implementation of the *Katujjiluta* mandate.

As noted by my colleagues, the one where we lose a lot of sleep is the

challenges around capacity. To enable us to put more capacity into the departments to see the implementation of the *Katujjiluta* mandate, it's these very critical positions that allow us to be able to bring people in who gain the necessary experiences moving forward. To the member, I do expect to see more in the coming months. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have seen some of these associate DMs in the House here. I pretty well know the answer to this, but for the viewing audience, I'll ask the Premier: are all of the associate deputy ministers Inuit? Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, they are. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Looking at the time, we will break for lunch and come back at 1:30.

>>Committee recessed at 11:49 and resumed at 13:29

Chairman: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome back. The next name I had on my list was Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Chairman. My questions this afternoon are for the Minister of Family Services. I just like to refer back to make more remarks that minister gave on November 6, where she stated, "Mr. Chairman, it is important to note that I met my mandated obligation, while responding to the Auditor

General's performance audit on Child and Family Services in Nunavut."

I just like to ask the minister to talk a little bit more about that statement and what it meant. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister of Family Services, Hon. Margaret Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Chairman, and I thank you for asking that question. This wording is mainly speaking about that issue ever since the report was released, and we agreed with the assessment of the non-performance of care for the vulnerable children under our care, and part of the plan speaks to that, as not all were included in the mandate.

Within the plan some of the items mentioned were not included when the report was released, and we had to shift and turn towards focussing on the areas listed within the report, although they were briefly mentioned, nonetheless, it allowed us to get more ammunition in our argument of the need for more support to the Department of Family Services.

Basically, to work with the caretakers of the children held by the government, and this is where that aspect has been pleasant to see, and we committed to the recommendations listed in the report, and for these (interpretation ends) recommendations (interpretation) were never implemented.

Both the ones from the first report, and in the second report, stated action items were never begun and due to that, we

included all of them and are inserting them into the plan to amend it to the responsibilities under the Department of Family Services. Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Chairman. That confusion was because you might be happy to know that the clock was still running for my time, when you began your answer minister.

I would just like to talk about the apology that was given. What I noticed about it was that it kind of buried the lead on the apology. That minister's statement is titled Family Services Strategic Plan.

We heard about the action toward strategic plan and the apology came in the last two paragraphs, and to me I think that you might want to separate that.

I just like to hear about how that apology came about. Why was it put in a ministers' statement in the way that it was? Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, I partially do not agree with that statement due to the fact that it was only at the beginning of this session where I first made that statement. I used it to publicly apologize on behalf of the Department of Family Services for not fulfilling their duties of caring for the children.

However, the statement I made here, whether it was in the ending or the beginning, I had already announced

previously that I was sorry for this dereliction of duties with this public apology. Whether this apology was in the last part or the beginning is irrelevant, as the intention was to announce it publicly. Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, my next question is for the Premier and as we know at the beginning of the session, the Minister for Family Services did issue an apology acknowledging her department failed in its' most essential responsibilities to Nunavut's most vulnerable children.

Premier, what was your involvement in a decision to finally issue an apology and what do you plan on doing to ensure that the bold and transformative changes promise actually happens? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank my member colleague for that question. As a father as well to three children, I think we were all touched of the auditor general's report on the shortcomings and the challenges, and really that difficult report that it came with, in terms of the shortcomings as a government, especially the most vulnerable individuals in our communities.

I would first like to thank the incredible leadership of Minister Nakashuk for really spearheading the challenging tasks and I wholeheartedly agree with her that you have to accept the shortcomings, the

challenges that were identified in order for you to learn from that and to do better and as such, I did work with Minister Nakashuk on what we could do as a government.

Again, I thank the member's question alludes that this obviously is not identified in the mandate but this is one that came as an urgency that we had to mobilize quickly as Minister Nakashuk says and has really put a lot of our limited resources into addressing needs. I thank the members here who held a televised hearing along with our officials but the incredible work that they're doing on the whole-of-government approach.

To the member's question, I did work with Minister Nakashuk on what supports we could provide. Immediately, we as a cabinet, I as a Premier a focal point on what actions we could do, both in the short term and in the medium term. I'm really pleased with how quickly Minister Nakashuk had mobilized the resources that are necessary to address the outstanding recommendations that came from the auditor general. I think we've touched upon a few of them, yesterday and today.

The lack of capacity has been identified right in the report and the social workers, as an example, and I know I worked very closely with Minister Nakashuk as well as Minister Kusugak, in particular, to look at what resources we could bring forward. So as a central agency we did provide all the necessary support, in terms of putting together the business cases to be had, looking at the possibility of existing PYs that could be re-profiled, as an example, to address the

shortcomings that have been identified in the report.

So I really played a broad support role, but I can't thank Minister Nakashuk enough for her strong leadership on really, a very difficult issue, but it is one that as a whole government we took equally as a responsibility of all of us. Every department has a role to address the issues that were identified, how we really stood in unity with Minister Nakashuk. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, I agree that the key aspect of collective leadership which is what we have in our consensus government is collective accountability where the outcomes of decisions and actions are felt by every leader in equal measure.

The minister's statement that I'm referring to, before the apology address, the systematic deficiencies that were highlighted in the Office of the Auditor General's report and in his response just now, Premier stated he acknowledged the shortcomings as a government.

I'll ask the Premier: why did the apology come from Family Services and why didn't it come from the Government of Nunavut as a whole? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeegok.

Hon. P.J. Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank my member colleague for asking that question. The minister really led this file. We really saw a

systemic issue that we inherited. I think that's what the Auditor General had highlighted.

The words of the apology and, really, the implementation that's going to be forthcoming was really at the heart of that apology and I respected that was within the space of Minister Nakashuk, but I had indicated the response is really what we're going to be measured by. The apology is for us to really acknowledge the shortcomings that have been identified in two reports. Since then, the quick mobilization, as indicated by Minister Nakashuk, and really, the department we have tasked to bring forward a real comprehensive strategy that's going to tackle those issues.

The apology, obviously, came through the lead department that oversees that very critical work, but the reaction is, you're absolutely right, it will require a whole-of-government approach and that's the approach we have taken since, whether it's through the Nunavut Housing Corporation of providing the prefabricated homes, especially in communities where we have seen struggles or challenges of capacity or office space in general for privacy among many other departments.

Just to bring my answer a bit shorter, it will require a whole-of-government approach and as such, we took that apology from the lead department and in order for us to then mobilize around what supports we could provide on the actual implementation plan that's being drafted by the department that's leading this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Premier, for that response. I just want to say that we are in a unique situation where, as leaders in this House, we have sometimes personal relationships with the people that we are working with and so it can be really difficult to pose difficult questions because, when you have respect for somebody in their leadership and the work that they do, it can make it almost impossible to step forward with somewhat sensitive questions.

I say this because I would like to ask the Premier, with the knowledge that this, as he stated, the issues were inherited by this government, with the knowledge that the minister was also Minister of Family Services during the previous government, I would like to give the opportunity to the Premier to talk about whether or not the Premier considered shuffling cabinet and shuffling the minister out of that position as a result of the OAG report and, if he did, what were the reasons why the minister wasn't shuffled. That's with the utmost respect to the minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, *Iksivautaaq*. On that note, I can't thank enough the incredible leadership Minister Nakashuk has demonstrated in dealing with a really historic issue. If we look back, there are previous governments that had opportunities to acknowledge this, to apologize, and to invest into the issues that have been identified.

I can't go back and thank Minister Nakashuk enough to be able to pull together on, really, another opportunity and her incredible strength for us as a government to collectively put the necessary resources to address this issue. It first started off with the acknowledgement that we've had these shortcomings and to apologize to the people that are within our care and the significance of inactions of past governments, but I don't think we're here to look back. I think we're here to look forward and the forward-thinking the minister has brought forward to cabinet, to government is something that really has inspired me.

As I said, I am a father to three incredible children. They're my world. When we're talking about very difficult situations, we have to take responsibility sometimes and I think that with the apology, it was really allowing us to then see where we could go with it. Again, just the incredible navigation of sensitivity around this file has been one that I have admired Minister Nakashuk on and really, the full reaction from the cabinet here to invest in the opportunities that are there.

No, I haven't thought one bit at all if I could look back at other governments, but it's beyond my scope from this point on. When the Auditor General's report did come, I have been working very closely with the minister and my cabinet colleagues to see what we could do. We have known this being a systemic issue. We have known in two different reports and I believe you have even asked why there has been no movement at all in past governments of what investments could come.

I really take that to heart and we want to be measured by what investments we have made since realizing this and the business plans that are going to be put forward here. I look forward to seeing the support around what additional resources, whether it's human capacity or infrastructure, address the outstanding recommendations that came from the Office of the Auditor General. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Premier, for that response. I think that as Inuit, we know that our values are to uplift and support and to learn from mistakes. It settles my mind to know that there is that level of respect and value of the minister to be able to move forward to address those recommendations from the past as well as the issues that came forward in the most recent Auditor General's report.

Mr. Chairman, just yesterday I asked Minister Main if his department would launch a public health emergency to address suicide, and I believe he is taking the request seriously and knows that we need to do something different to bring the focus, effort, and actions required to secure the resources necessary to truly help our people.

As Premier and the leader of this government, will you commit to declaring a public health emergency on suicide? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to my colleague

for bringing forward a very difficult subject but a very important subject, I think, we have to talk about. I just want to thank the incredible leadership of Minister Main, who has a very difficult task of working very diligently on a very important topic on that one and I appreciated the exchange yesterday. I think we were all moved by the importance of us having the platform to be able to make change. I believe that the *Katujjiluta* mandate really allows us to be able to have that foundation to see what those changes could look like.

As such, I was very pleased to hear the request. I think that we're very open as well and I have talked to Minister Main immediately following and I trust that he as well as his officials will look at that with the utmost care. Between what those options are, and I really respect and appreciate my colleague for bringing that suggestion forward, I too will look at that very seriously to see what potential resources could be unlocked through the different channels.

I think that will require quick review obviously by the officials that know best and I have full confidence that Minister Main, as well his officials, I know that they will look at the very carefully. To my understanding very quickly, as well following the urgency around this very topic. Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you, Premier for that commitment. I do believe I heard a commitment in there.

Mr. Chairman, over that past two day, we have heard ministers' speeches

celebrating achievements. No doubt we've seen progress in select areas and it's clear that there are many areas where the government needs to get on track. We have heard that for couple of years now.

Ensuring that the failings outlined in the Auditor General's report do not happen again requires real effort, constant focus and collaboration by departments as well as accountable leadership to prevent the epidemic of suicide, we need to do something we have never done before and that's what a public health emergency could bring.

In the Premier's opening comments, he closed with the message about devolution, and taking on additional control and decisions over resources. Obviously, this would require more capacity. It will take up more human resource capacity and fully leadership focus in numerous new directions.

I ask the Premier, in the light of the Auditor General's report, our staffing, the housing crisis and all the other concerns raised by our colleagues. You think the Government of Nunavut is ready to add more to the plate through devolution. Is now, a responsible time to forge ahead? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The one immediate issue as we were just talking about the suicide prevention and really the work that we've been doing has been transformative. That I really feel we have made significant investments that address at the root of it.

I know we have talked about housing earlier and I truly believe that housing is at the root of a lot of the issues, including suicide and suicide prevention. The incredible investments we've been able to make as a government, as a collective government have been one that I'm truly proud of. I think we all know investments in early childhood agreement.

Early childhood plays such a key role and the leadership that I see with Minister Gross, immediately pushing hard on the investments for unlocking potential resources to build curriculum, daycares as an example, top up to that to the daycares are really good tangible examples of what investments really that have direct impact to the issue.

I know that it was discussed very much, the support to see the updated suicide prevention strategy. We all know that it will require a whole of community approach. The Government of Nunavut itself cannot solve or fix the problem alone, but it will require partners to address the systemic issues that we see in our communities, and the short comings that we see, where the challenges [are].

I just wanted to highlight in some of the areas where I feel we have made significant advancements that really address at the root of the issue that we are talking about. Which is suicide prevention, and I think, as really moving yesterday that the different age groups and really the challenges our friends are going through, and so, all the reason why I think that investments in housing specifically have such a profound impact to the work that we do.

To the member's question, I couldn't agree more that it will require sustained investments to the auditor general's report, and as such I have full confidence of Minister Nakashuk the vision that she's laid out, the immediate investments that we've unlocked and that we are unlocking in the coming months. That will provide the necessary resources, and as leaders it's our job to ensure that we're accountable and that we're transparent with what we're doing. As such, I have full confidence that that work will continue.

The member is right; I am very excited about the prospect of devolution. It has been a vision of Nunavut since the beginning, that Nunavummiut make decisions for Nunavummiut. Right now, we rely on folks outside of the territory to determine our future, whether a project advances or not. That to me is what I am really eager about, about Nunavummiut who I have full confidence in their abilities, in their desires to realize that vision and that dream of making decisions for ourselves.

I truly feel honoured to be leading that pace, to be able to negotiate that with our partners with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. and the federal government on what that agreement could look like, both as a territory but also the communities that we serve. There is no doubt there will be challenges as we take on more responsibilities. We've talked about the educational opportunities that were asked. It will require more investments, specifically in post-secondary in specialized areas.

I would imagine land management, water management, among many areas.

There will definitely be some challenges that we go through, but no different than when Nunavut was created at the time. We had to build infrastructure such as this facility here, we had to build decentralized office spaces in Gjoa Haven, like at Igloolik, staff housing to go with that, but we overcame that.

Now we're making decisions right here for Nunavummiut. I can't wait to tackle the challenges, whether it's capacity or infrastructure, for us to start making decisions on behalf of Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to apologize to Minister Nakashuk because I erred in my statement that Minister Nakashuk was Minister of Family Services prior to this Sixth Assembly, for that I wholeheartedly apologize to you.

>>Applause

Premier, you just mentioned capacity and infrastructure issues, and those are issues that we have to address, education issues, in order to successfully implement devolution. Again, going back to all of the issues of concern that have been raised for nearly 25 years, what we know is that we don't have enough staff housing, we can't fill essential positions, Minister Main mentioned a 46 percent vacancy rate in the Department of Health this week. That, I think, is probably split not just between health professionals but also paraprofessionals and other positions within the Department of Health that are not clinical in nature. So even for filling

positions that don't require a high degree of education, we're struggling.

I would like to hear from Premier about the way forward in addressing those capacity and infrastructure issues, all those issues with the additional needs of devolution. One second.

>> *Laughter*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, in the nick of time on that one.

I am really excited about the discussion about devolution specifically because it has been a vision of folks long before me, and I look at the former Premier who I am very privileged to serve here in the Sixth Assembly who signed the agreement in principle which laid the path forward, and I look at previous Premiers who really championed the vision right from the beginning; I go to Paul Okalik, Eva Aariak, among many others Premiers, Taptuna. Looking back, I really feel there is an incredible sense of humbleness that comes to me to continue to advocate for Nunavummiut on this path for us to make decisions on our own.

As I had indicated, there will absolutely be some challenges that we face. I had mentioned we have, I believe it was a previous member's question, challenges that I see forthcoming as well. Capacity is obviously one that we have talked about a bit earlier, one that we really provided additional resources when we

took over as a government that we prioritized the negotiations of all our collective agreements.

I am really pleased to be able to say that the resources that we did put secured those, but there are a lot more negotiations to be had. I look forward to those opportunities for us to really realize the incredible public service that we do have. Although it is a challenge, I really see it as an exciting opportunity for us to address the challenges that Canadians are faced with, not just Nunavummiut in terms of these.

The negotiations of the devolution agreement will unlock some resources as well that I am looking forward to, specifically under the Human Resource Strategy that would accompany that, and the investments that we would be making towards investing in Nunavummiut to go through the proper channels, but I can't speak specifically to that as we are still in negotiations with our partners.

To the member's other question about the lack of infrastructure and the challenges, it has been incredible to bring forward budgets that really are historic in the sense that unprecedented amounts is really the vision we have laid out. *Katujjiluta* wanted to bring forward very bold and transformative change to how we do things.

Housing is obviously one where we talked about the record number of investments into housing. I have mentioned earlier that we have more than tripled the typical build that was done in previous governments, but also cutting the amount in half. It is not to save money; it is so we could do more.

We have really found creative ways around doing that.

There is a huge need. We have inherited a huge infrastructure deficit; the member is right. When Nunavut was created 25 years ago, it was already starting at a deficit. We have really played catch-up since then, but I am confident in the advocacy that I see around the table here and through partnerships, where I really expect to see some major advancements.

I look at the work that Minister Main has been doing on elder care facilities and the importance of federal government involvement in that space. The leadership of discussing that with, at the time, Minister Duclos, Minister Leblanc, myself, and Minister Kusugak to see what creative ways we could put investments into health care infrastructure. The nursing station that is being planned in Qikiqtarjuaq is long overdue. We know that; Baker Lake being another one, which I have had the pleasure of actually seeing for myself when I visit the communities, the different infrastructures that are there.

There definitely will be some challenges, but I am feeling very optimistic that we will be able to continue to build upon what we have and continue to build the vision of Nunavut, especially from the infrastructure lens that the member asked. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I say “hello” to Nunavummiut.

(interpretation ends) I just want to say first that we are all here for Nunavut. Each MLA is here for their community. When I first became an MLA, I was not sure how it worked, but as I went along, the best way to help my community was to have detailed information. I know all the ministers know that with more detailed information, you resolve things better and concerns get worked out. It gets better as we get to know each other and get to know the communities, but some things get resolved easily and some don't because mostly of lack of funding or it's almost impossible to resolve some things, for instance, suicide is a big one. Mental health is another one. Homelessness is a big one too. There are a lot of those in our communities of Nunavut.

Over the years since Nunavut started, I do some glances where I get some information on how the government is doing ever since Nunavut started and I always saw that one part where there was lack of funds; we need funds. Everything these days, you need money to get things done. The funding we get, I don't know, maybe is mostly from the federal government. I know there are other private entities too, but the part I want to ask is: how does the Nunavut government deal with getting funds from the federal government? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: That would be the Premier? Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am very happy to hear that my colleague asked that question. It is unfortunate that my Minister of Finance isn't here at this point in time, who

would probably provide a much thorough response.

I could agree that a significant portion of our funding directly comes from the federal government through the Territorial Financing Formula, which is really determined on base plus population among many variable factors, and I could get that specific material to my colleague.

Where it does tie into the mandate specifically is our push and drive to diversify our economies. Right now, much of our revenue directly comes from the federal government, but through our push, I would like to acknowledge Minister Akeeagok again for his incredible leadership of supporting different industries that could provide us more resources so that we could provide more services to Nunavummiut. I know he talked about the opportunity that the blue economy, specifically the fisheries industry, which is sustainable, and I know the mining sector plays right now a huge role in terms of providing us the different types of resources that are here in territory.

We are advocating and looking for how we could diversify the different revenue streams that could come to the territory so we could provide and enhance more opportunities, whether it is infrastructure or the different kinds of programs and services that Nunavummiut are longing.

To summarize this, it really goes back to the discussion we just had on devolution. As we become the managers of our lands and our resources that are in territory, it would really allow us to start generating wealth within the resources that are within our lands. To me, that is where I

really see an opportunity where I think we all want to be a territory where we thrive and we have vibrant communities that have wide-ranging economies, whether it's through the arts that we have talked about, the fisheries opportunities that are there, or the mining industry.

It's really going to be through the devolution agreement that allows us to be able to start generating the wealth of resources that could come into government and then for us as a collective to decide where those resources go in terms of the funds that we would receive in the future. I very much look forward to that day, as we're still in negotiations for that.

I apologize that I didn't go right into the specifics of how that funding formula equates to Nunavut, but I just wanted to provide a bit of a higher level response to the very good question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Thanks for that. During our discussions yesterday and today, I hear that word a lot, priorities, prioritizing.

When my colleague, Ms. Killiktee, asked Mr. Kusugak yesterday on how they prioritize to get funding for certain programs or departments, and prioritized ones were, I guess, the main ones that we're going to get funding for and the ones that were not prioritized are sort of left out all the time. It could be like mental health, suicide, and homelessness. Those are one of the big ones. I know there are some other ones,

but I thought it would be better if everything could be prioritized.

Some information I came across on, when was it, last month or a couple of months ago, was about fibre optics and the round figure for almost \$200 million and maybe just going to two communities. That's a lot of money. It was like a prioritized thing, but I know that didn't go through, but it's stuff like that... .

I guess I could say we're here for the health of Nunavut too and the health is every individual in Nunavut, all the communities. Does the whole cabinet go to Ottawa or just our Department of Finance go down, or how does that work? *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I again thank my colleague for that very good question. To his first part, we all go through the business planning process and I know that a lot of the priorities that not only my colleagues on this side; all the concerns that come from that side are really factored in. It does go through a very rigorous vetting process that does look at the different priorities that are there. As much as we would like to do absolutely everything all at once, there are just not enough resources, whether it's financial or people, to do it at this time in point. We have to really focus on the few things that will have the biggest impact territory-wide, so we really take that into consideration.

I know the discussions about small communities keep coming and I could

assure the member across that we take that very seriously in every deliberation that does happen. I can't specifically get into the details, but I know for a fact that the lens of the small communities and the distribution to ensure that all communities benefit is something that's always top of mind.

I just wanted to mention to the member and obviously there are different processes that are there for the prioritization of infrastructure or if it's operations and maintenance, it goes through another channel, but to the member's question, I was really pleased when we formed that, considering the majority of our finances does come from our good friends at the federal government. There have been strong relationships that were already forged that we continue to build on.

I was very fortunate to be joined by my colleagues for a Day on the Hill in Nunavut down in Ottawa, where I had the opportunity to continue to advocate on behalf of Nunavummiut with the Prime Minister, but also the incredible strength and leadership of every minister meeting their ministerial colleagues, advocating for what's in the *Katujjiluta* mandate and the requirement for us to find partners that we could work with. I was really pleased to be able to have the ability to work with them and I plan to continue to have that. Relationships are so important; they truly are. We really rely on them.

We also rely on not only the Day on the Hill; the federal-territorial FPT meetings are another avenue we use specifically with my colleagues. I unfortunately just missed the Council of the Federation's meeting that just happened in Halifax

just two days ago because we're here, obviously, debating very important issues, but it's through those channels that we use, advocating and pushing for the very issues that are outlined in the *Katujjiluta* mandate. I use that opportunity to advance the uniqueness of Nunavut but also the infrastructure gap we do see of the north.

Those are really the angles that we see of advocating and lobbying for transformative changes that are identified in the *Katujjiluta* mandate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for that. Has it been that way since Nunavut started, the same way of approaching the federal government for funding? *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again I really appreciate my colleagues for bringing that question forward. There are different types of streams of funding that are available to us. Obviously, there is a significant one that comes through the Territorial Funding Formula, which is really the base plus model that allows us to be able to run a government.

Further to that, though, there are specific contribution agreements we have. The significant one, obviously, is the Non-Insured Health Benefits that Minister Main works with his federal counterpart, but there are many streams where we have very specific contribution

agreements, whether it's environment, education, early childhood agreements. It's one where we have signed a long-term agreement that outlines where those funds will come from and how those funds will be distributed. To the member's question, there are multiple different forums where those funding pots come from and how those funding pots are arrived to.

Specifically on our advocacy work, we do talk about the uniqueness of the north and the challenges of the north, and I have been very privileged to have worked with Premier Cochrane, who is still the Premier of the NWT as they're going through their elections, as well as Premier Pillai, who are very close friends, where we advocate for the north with a unified voice. From that viewpoint, we do use every opportunity to not be lost in the population base only of distributions of funds because it doesn't capture our reality. We have the population of a few blocks down in Toronto if you combine all of them.

Just the challenges and the infrastructure deficit we have across the north isn't usually realized by southern public servants or politicians as well. It's our job to educate but also advocate for the realities that we do see. I feel very honoured and privileged to be able to do that during those forums. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Prioritize and priority situations, I just want to get back to Minister Kusugak's statement or answers like on prioritizing a department's sections or situations that

Nunavut could look at. The ones that are looked at as priority, why are those not prioritized also? Is it lack of detailed information? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I again thank my colleague for that question. A lot of the business planning does happen directly from the department that stems directly from the mandate. Early on, if we all recall, we brought the business planning forward immediately to reflect the mandate and then, really, those business planning processes do derive directly from the mandate.

I can't speak specifically to why one project doesn't advance or not. It's really case by case that they're looked at. The central role of the finance department, obviously, plays a big role of identifying which projects are advancing and that's obviously debated through the process there.

Specifically to the member, we do have processes and obviously one I really appreciated in this forum is that we're really listening to the issues that are very important to the communities. I think we all understood that we are only at the halfway point. I think we have made huge headways in just the short two years we've had, but we also have two more years to really pivot and make investments to what we're hearing here.

I have heard loud and clear that the smaller communities want to see their infrastructure projects advance as well and that there are many of the low-

hanging fruits that are important that don't require us to put \$200 million that the member just referenced, but the opportunity for transportation in the communities as an example, which have a big, profound impact to the most vulnerable, which is our elders. That's really something that I have really gathered from this and I'm sure my colleagues around here really heard that loud and clear, but it's an incredible opportunity for us to take that and then really start shifting where we implement then the next two years.

Mr. Chairman, I think we all knew that there were going to be some projects that advance a lot quicker than others. Things do take time and I look at the elder care facility that we identified in the budget where it does require a lot more review or where it does require a lot more attention, where it does require us to dig deeper. The elder care strategy being another one where it does take time to talk to our elders, to listen to our elders, to go back to our elders and say, "Is this correct?"

Things will definitely advance much quicker, but at this midpoint, it really gives us a good checkpoint to see where else do we shift to ensure that all the mandate items are implemented. I feel very optimistic that the implementation that we have laid out in the *Katujjiluta* mandate, we will implement all the priorities that we have identified when we were in Cambridge Bay early on in 2021. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) *Quana* for that. A lot of things we

requested in our mandate require lots of funds and for the Nunavut government to go to the federal government or all the other entities that we get funds from, and what I hear is they're prioritized, though; only the priority ones get looked at and the other un-prioritized stuff are left behind. That to me is just like it's not detailed.

When I talk about detailed information to get things resolved, like Nunavut has always been short of funds and maybe we need detailed information to approach the federal government and for me, the most detailed information you could get from Nunavut is sitting right here, everybody in here, because you want to go for election where we know our communities and that's why we're here and we know it and we've got detailed information from our communities.

I don't know if this might be taken into notice or suggestion. I know it's going to be a lot of us here to go down to Ottawa and debate, but depending on how many people are involved from the federal government to set a budget for Nunavut, if there are not too many, they could come here and get detailed information from Nunavut. I don't know how they work on this as the minimum amount or the maximum amount of budget we're going to get.

I would think that if we get the most detailed information from Nunavut and it's coming from all of us right here, instead of just the cabinet or the finance department going down to Ottawa and going down with just prioritized stuff that they could bring up. From all of us, it's everything; it's all priority because all the communities are not the same. I

guess that could be just a suggestion, but the Premier can comment if he wants. That's it from there. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: It's just a comment, but Premier Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank my colleague there. It's a very good suggestion. We do really try hard and I think we have realized that the lack of data has been a challenge. Just as a central agency, I was very blessed with the support of you as well that we reorganized the Department of EIA and looked at the statistics bureau office. I know I have been asked a few times now of the importance of that. It's crucial. You need live data to determine and build business cases, not only for us here but that with Ottawa.

On that note, we do invite the federal ministers to Nunavut and we have seen a huge number come to see the realities that we face, whether it's Minister Vandal, and I know the Minister of Health went up to Qikiqtarjuaq directly to look at the infrastructure there; just in a few weeks, I will be inviting Minister Joly with many of the dignitaries from the circumpolar regions as well to see the realities of the north. We really do try hard to invite to show the realities that we do see.

To the member's point as well, I couldn't agree more. I look at the work that we were able to do on the lobbying efforts of the Grays Bay project as an example and I know the member has championed the support around what we could do to diversify our economies. I've had the pleasure of meeting with the United States ambassador numerous

times now, advocating for that, and our discussions with our federal colleagues around that, but it will require a coordinated approach not only from government but that of Inuit organizations, the regular members, among many partners. We have really tried taking that broad stroke of where we could go as well.

With that, I just want to highlight that right from the beginning when we were in Iqaluktuuttiaq, we wanted to be transparent and be very open. That's why you have four documents before you as well as regular members that oftentimes in the past I don't think were open, and I'll use the minister's letters as an example of what my expectations are of my ministers. Typically those were sent only to the deputy ministers in the past of past practices, but in openness and transparency, I felt it was important that not only the regular members but Nunavummiut realize my expectations, following the bold and transformative *Katujjiluta* mandate that came not only from us but from Inuit organizations as well.

Following that, we have also tabled progress reports. Further, we're obviously at the midpoint report and I look forward to tabling a very broad picture on what we have accomplished and the areas where we need to find improvements as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name on my list: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My first question will be for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation. In the minister's

mandate, one of the priorities is to work closely with the departments of Community and Government Services, Human Resources, and Finance to develop options, a work plan, and a timeline for a realignment of EDT and CGS. I was wondering if the minister may be able to elaborate a bit further about why the realignment is being considered. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That came as a result in looking at our departments and see if there are ways of if we need to realign. The Department of Economic Development and Transportation has big infrastructure needs and is getting into huge infrastructure. Community and Government Services is our infrastructure need in just about everything else. That's the emphasis in terms of to see that and also when it comes to the economic development side, a lot of the reliance is with the communities. Those are realignments that we will be exploring. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a follow-up to that response, so Economic Development will be transferring over to Community and Government Services or is being considered to transfer over to CGS and so is the infrastructure aspect of Economic Development and Transportation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we're going way too fast here. We're exploring and we're going to review the two departments, and our Premier has tasked both Community and Government Services and me into exploring any of those that could take place. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to move on to the Minister of Human Resources. Under "Reinvesting in education," one of the strategic outcomes is to have high rates of post-secondary education.

One of the issues that I have been following for the last number of years is the number of employees utilizing education leave as well as the Amaaqaarniq Education Leave Program.

In relation to this strategic outcome, has the Department of Human Resources been monitoring the number of employees pursuing post-secondary education and, if so, has there been any improvement over the last two years in this area? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for asking that question. (interpretation ends) This question doesn't seem to be more of a mandate thing, but with the Amaaqaarniq program, it's a very

successful program that's used a lot in Human Resources.

Like I had mentioned previously, we are reviewing some of the training programs within the department to see how we can better fit into some programs that are requested by employees. To give one example, I know the policy program has been utilized quite a bit as well, but we're also looking at other options like fact-finding training stuff for employees that could be better utilized on how to do performance reviews. We are looking at stuff like that.

For the Amaaqaarniq program, we have nine currently taking the Amaaqaarniq program. We have about 36 Inuit who have participated in that program to date. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I'll move on to another line of questioning. Again, under "Reinvesting in education," aside from increasing rates of post-secondary education, it also emphasizes employment following graduation. I would like to ask if the Department of Human Resources has been collaborating with both Nunavut Arctic College and the Department of Education's FANS to ensure that our grads are able to gain meaningful employment upon graduation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank

you for that question. We have discussed that quite frequently, especially as a cabinet, on how we can better employ graduating students from different programs. Within the Department of Family Services, it is something that we are trying to push, especially for social work training students, to ensure that they get hired getting off graduation.

In terms of what other programs, I know we have talked a lot about when we have funding available or let's say we provide funding to NAC for providing other programs, not just social work, we do discuss how we can try to target the students coming back to employ within the public service. Those are discussions that we're always having.

Like I have mentioned before, it's hard when some of these graduates don't want to be employed within the field they just graduated in. For example, the teacher's program, some of them want to be in curriculum and not go into teaching. We can't push everyone to be in the profession that they're training in; it's really up to the graduates. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll move on to my next line of questioning. Under "Enabling health and healing," one of the actions that are already underway states: "Implement planned workplace wellness programs and supports for Government of Nunavut employees." I was wondering if the minister would be able to provide an update on workplace wellness programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for asking that question. We are quite proud that the Department of Human Resources has established the (interpretation ends) Wellness Division. It's really early for us to define what we want to come up with in this area, but we are talking about how we can better provide supports to our employees and our wellness or mental health supports. There are different options that we have been talking about, but like I had mentioned, this is kind of early and we just recently hired someone in that area to start working further on how we can better have a service for the employees within the government. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll move on to the Minister of Family Services.

Yesterday during the minister's opening remarks...oh, sorry, it wasn't yesterday; it was Monday's opening remarks. The minister had made reference to a taskforce on gender violence and, I believe, another one on disabilities. I was wondering if the minister would be able to elaborate a bit further about these taskforces being under consideration. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) That's a

very good question; I was hoping someone would ask that.

Recently, when we had signed the agreement with the federal government for the \$16.4 million that was given to us for gender-based violence, we want to concentrate more on how we can better put more supports in that area. The \$16.4 million that we are getting in the next four years, there are things that we have to target in terms of how we can better provide more educational programs for people in the territory or how we can better put supports for families who need to get away from violence.

Those are things that we really want to concentrate on in the next four years, but also, we need to ensure that gender-based violence as well as... Well, for that one right now, we want to ensure that there are more supports in place and also being advocates. We need to make more awareness out there for people who need supports. We have to start ensuring that our society does not accept violence in any way, shape, or form and it's very difficult, especially in the smaller communities that don't have access to supports easily. We need to ensure that there are educational supports in our communities for ending violence.

The other question is on disability. We want to concentrate more on how we can provide more supports for people with disabilities. This file has been kind of in the backburner. We do recognize that there are financial supports for non-profit organizations for people with disabilities, but we do not have supports for people with disabilities from a department to the person and those kinds of things. How can we better advocate for people with disabilities?

We do recognize as a government that we have to ensure that we're hiring people with disabilities and we have to state that in our agreements because we do work with the federal government on financial supports from them to hire people with disabilities. We do provide a bit more funding for people who have a disability under income assistance, but it's very minimal. How can we put better supports and be advocates for the people in this area? There is not enough of that in this territory and the barriers are humongous. They don't get the support they need and those are things that we have to focus on, especially how can we better put more services for people with disabilities.

Those are things we really want to target in the next couple of years. We don't know what we want to achieve, but it's endless and if we're going to advocate for more supports for those two areas, then that's why I feel that we need to have a workforce so we can put more things in place for people who don't get that kind of support. (interpretation)
Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for providing some additional information about what's being considered for those two taskforce initiatives. Do you have any sort of projected or estimated timeline as to when that work will begin? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk: I think with the gender-based violence agreement that we just signed, it's pretty well clear

on what we can use those funds for over the next four years, but we also have to ensure that the communities utilize those funds as well. This is very early, so I can't pinpoint on what we want to target, because we want to ensure that some of the programs and services do focus not just on the bigger centers, but also on our communities, whether it be for gender-based violence or for disabilities. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under expanding the housing continuum priority, one of the strategic outcomes is to have more family violence and youth shelters and transitional housing. We have touched upon new and expansion of family shelters and transitional housing, but we haven't really touched upon the youth shelter aspect.

As I pointed out last week, there is significant need for children at risk during evenings and weekends. So I was wondering if the minister would be able to elaborate a bit further about the department's efforts to create youth shelters in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you for the question. Like I've been saying in the last couple of years, we have to work very closely with the communities to see what their community needs are. We do recognize that this is one of the top priorities that

we hear about. What programs can we see at a community level?

When we're working with non-profit organizations, we heavily work with the hamlet and I think especially in the last couple of years, we have talked about how we can better provide financial supports for, whether it be youth shelters, family shelters, or community programs from non-profit organizations. We've increased some funding in that area to ensure that they their buildings can expand, whether it be for staff housing or for community programs. I think those are things that we're starting to look at.

Also, for Iqaluit the youth shelter that we have closed right now, that's the one that we really want to focus on in the next while. We want to bring more financial requests from down the road to utilize that for youth in the city, so that we can have more programs running in Iqaluit. We do recognize there are not enough programs that are running. So we are really thinking about how we can better expand that. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am very happy to hear that. Thank you, minister, for that response.

I would like to move on now to the Minister of Community and Government Services. The ambitious targets set in the Nunavut 3000 plan, we all have significant challenges given our lack of developed land. I was wondering if the minister may elaborate a bit on his department's role in planning for current

and future land development in our communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My department has been working alongside Nunavut Housing Corporation in anticipation of what the targets are and what's being aimed at, and what the goals are for Nunavut 3000. Every community is being targeted.

I understand that through my department and working with municipalities, we are making sure Nunavut Housing Corporation and the hamlets are able to identify what's available, what they anticipate might be coming forward, and making sure they have the resources to meet the needs throughout to 2030 when the target is expected to be reached.

With the that, I think the challenges in the city here in Iqaluit have been great, but I understand that the city is trying to work out different opportunities or look at lot development, and maybe redeveloping existing sites as an example.

That brings me to my other point. We brought forward a disposal of surplus budget to demolish existing assets under the Government of Nunavut to: one, get rid of the safety hazards are in communities; two, present a space for either housing development or other infrastructure needs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. My next question for the minister; under the reinvesting in education priority, one of the actions is to increase opportunities for pre-employment work experience for high school post-secondary students throughout the year.

I would like to applaud the minister and the Department of Community and Government Services for announcing their after school employment program. I was really very happy to see that and was even more happy to share it.

I was wondering if the minister would be able to provide a little bit more detail about that program, if the minister has any idea of how many students that he would like to see employed by the department and in what communities. I am also very interested in learning how the department will be setting the wages for these students. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the question. This is very optimistic and something new we are trying out as well.

In light of the capacity challenges that we have been talking about and also trying to increase Inuit employment, these are important things that my department is trying to address as well, with the understanding that it's a new pilot program. We are targeting students to have a work placement after school or on weekends and evenings. It would be an arrangement where it would provide pre-employment, work experience, and an opportunity for young Nunavummiut

to get their foot in the door, so to speak, and get hands-on experience in the field. Some of these positions in our department are quite technical in nature, so just for them to get a feel for it.

As for numbers of who we want to target, I don't have information on that as it is quite new, but we do want to make it available to as many people as we can.

Our next goal is to promote this new pilot project to do outreach in schools and career fairs and that kind of thing, in communities across the territory. We hope that there will be an increased uptake through that.

As for wages, as I understand it, would be through a casual staffing action. So as they won't be fulfilling duties in the positions that they are assigned to, they're not earning the actual wages that the position would entail, but it would be a casual position. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I'm very happy to hear about this new pilot project initiated by Community and Government Services. I guess I'll follow up with that at a later date.

My next line of questioning is for the Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College. As I indicated under reinvesting in education, there is one very strategic outcome, which is to have higher rates of post-secondary education and employment following graduation.

My first question is: how does the college monitor employment following graduation? Also, how is Nunavut Arctic College going to ensure that it's able to meet this strategic outcome? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Arctic College, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for that question. During our question period exercise a couple of weeks ago, when you had asked about the graduations of the Nunavut Teacher Education Program, I had stated that that Nunavut Arctic College does not track employment after graduation, but I had considered to looking that, get back to you, and work with the Department of Education in this area.

For the second one, I lost my train of thought. My apologies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is not a new matter; this is something that I've been raising for years.

This is a key performance indicator used by post-secondary institutions and Canada and internationally. As far as I know, every other post-secondary institution in Canada utilizes this key statistic to measure their success rates, how well they are providing programming to their students and enabling them to gain new careers.

Given how small the college is, with only a few hundred students, and

looking at Canada's biggest post-secondary institution, University of Toronto, they have 70,000 full-time students and 11,000 grads. They are still able to ascertain how many students are able to find employment in their field of study within six months of graduation and they're at 86 percent.

It's a very simple exercise that they do. They put out a volunteer survey amongst their grads and they utilize that to determine the rates of employment of their grads. It's a very simple exercise. Universities with over 10,000 grads are able to do it and I think the college might produce 100 grads per year and I think that is very simple to do. I'm not asking for something that is very cost prohibitive or time consuming, I think it would be a very simple matter to do and it is in the mandate.

I would like to ask not just for the minister to consider it, but to commit to doing this and ensuring that the annual reports will actually have the number of grads employed in their field of study going forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I again thank the member for his consideration and acknowledgement of me committing to providing key performance indicators into college graduates. I look forward to tabling my very first annual report.

In terms of his question, yes, I can commit to looking into his question and that can set a key factor performance indicator in our Nunavut Arctic College graduation rates that will eventually get

into the employment into our government departments and agencies across the territory. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For my last 19 seconds, I would like to pose a question to the Premier. On page 50 of the August 2023 mid-term mandate report, it notes that the government is "developing a Nunavut Market Basket Measure in partnership with Statistics Canada to identify the cost of living in Nunavut." I'm assuming this question would go to the Premier. I would just like to ask for an update on the progress in this work. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you will allow, that question is better situated with Minister Nakashuk, who leads that very important work. If you will allow, I would like to defer that to Minister Nakashuk, please. Thank you.

Chairman: The question has been deferred to Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for asking that question. (interpretation ends) We have been discussing that one quite in detail because we understand that if we're going to provide more financial support, especially into the families, it is quite a big review that we would have to do, especially the cost of trying to determine how we can better provide

supports to our families. We are in discussion about this.

We have been working with Stats Canada to see how we can have a better understanding of the life in Nunavut when it comes down to a culturally relevant market basket measure because there are things that have not been included, but we have talked about this as well in the poverty reduction roundtable.

When we're trying to determine what is the cost of country food, sometimes that's really hard to put a price on. There are a lot of things that we are trying to discuss, but in the early findings, we are seeing the differences between the regions as well as the cost of food from different regions. We have put those numbers in that area, but we're still in the preliminary phases on this one. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Members, I have one more name on my list remaining. Before we proceed further, we will take a 20-minute break.

>>Committee recessed at 15:03 and resumed at 15:30

Chairman: Welcome back. I call the committee to order. Next name on my list is Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we were elected, I was told by an elder that we need to work with people who need support or help first. I think of all the people who need help. I'll speak English now.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, on page 25 on the Government of Nunavut progress on Katujjiluta mandate priorities, it indicates that the average number of Nunavummiut turned away from shelters each month is 121. On the same page, it indicates only 3 of 25 communities in Nunavut have a homeless shelter.

On page 26, plans for 2023, "The Government of Nunavut will: Identify requirements for emergency shelters and transitional housing units and help community organizations build partnerships and access resources to increase capacity in providing support services."

Also, Mr. Chairman, I had made a statement on what the Hamlet of Kugaaruk has done for my constituent and I had asked during oral question period to use what the Hamlet of Kugaaruk has done to address this issue of concern. I thank the hamlet greatly.

Now my question is: can the department use my constituent community as an example to help build shelters all over Nunavut and make shelters out of shipping containers and modify them into shelters. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that question. Everyone here desires transitional housing or shelters in our communities, nevertheless, when the operations are set at the community level, is the hamlet wanted to operate the shelter, then the Department of Family Services can

provide assistance, and we have funding specifically for the operational core funding.

There is an existing women's shelter in Kugaaruk and for a homeless shelter, if they want to convert a sea can into a shelter, we can work together on a plan towards that, even other communities, but there is a requirement for a local operator. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll move onto elder care. Government of Nunavut progress on *Katujjiluta* mandate priorities, elder care strategic outcomes on page 14 indicates "Fewer Inuit elders relocated from their home communities" and "Improvement in daily life for Nunavummiut who are aging." Some of the work done on page 15 indicates "We delivered the first course of a new Home and Continuing Care Worker Program to six students in Iqaluit."

Now my question is: will the department have a program in the Kitikmeot region anytime soon, similar as the six students in Iqaluit taking the program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq, which minister would you like to respond to that? Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: The Minister responsible for Seniors. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank the member for the question. This Personal Support Care

Worker Program is under the Nunavut Arctic College, so I would like the question directed to the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Arctic College. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Question deferred to Minister Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for that question. The Home and Continuing Care Program has been revised into becoming the Personal Support Worker Program. Funding has been obtained to provide the program for the communities of Rankin Inlet and Iqaluit in early 2024.

In terms of asking the question whether that program can be provided for the Kitikmeot region, Nunavut Arctic College would have to consider providing that program to other communities as this program is currently new but has been going on for many years.

The other question from the member; we would have to consider whether that program can be offered to other communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think my next line of questioning could be to the Minister responsible for Health. On page 18 on Government of Nunavut progress on *Katujjiluta* mandate priorities plans for 2023 indicates the Government of Nunavut will "Review current hours of home care operations and develop options to expand availability."

My question is: will the department expand the availability of expanding all the hours for all Nunavut communities, so elders who need homecare get the care needed daily? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. (interpretation ends) In terms of the work around home care, we are currently working to review the hours of operation and expanding the hours. While we're doing that, we have seen some staffing increases in home care. Those are related to clients and workloads.

The amount of staff we have in any given community depends on the caseload, and where the trend over a number of years has been more and more clients and families getting assistance through that program, we've seen the staffing numbers follow that. In terms of the hours of home care review, we're anticipating completing that by the end of this calendar year. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask the Premier now. In regard to *Katujjiluta* mandate, when you meet with your ministers, you see the people who require help. I'll be asking Mr. Chairman a question. The clients that require help, have you seen those people, and do you provide services for homeless people and elders who want to go home or closer to home from their care of

residents? For example, some elders are housed in Embassy West. They want to be closer to home and they would also like the family to visit. Is this possible? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also would like to thank the member for the very good question he just posed. We are aware that especially our elders would like to go home. We heard that during the initial stage of *Katujjiluta*, during our conference, we have stated that it was our priority.

That's why we have worked very hard. We need to hear from the elders of the plans. The plans came from the voices of elders, and they were included during our conference with the elders from Embassy West. We have the motions and I expect that this coming month, these items will roll out. I'll make a report on what the elders have stated and how we can start planning.

In addition, as we had stated in our mandate, the elders facility was going to be in Rankin Inlet, and it was going to be the first one. We are very pleased on the completion of the facility. I thank Minister Main for starting the plan for this facility. We will require operations; we will require staffing who know Inuit traditional knowledge and culture so that the elders can go home.

I'm very pleased about the fact that we are working on that as we have stated. This will be a priority in Kitikmeot and also Qikiqtaaluk that these elders facilities or care homes are a priority.

We're looking at ways to expedite this process, but there are many more years that we still have to work on this. Although we are working very hard, I would like to thank Minister Main for his support, and we're now looking at ways how we can provide support to the elders in home care.

At this time, I cannot give you details, but we're now working while they construct the facilities. We all know that the all the elders cannot go closer to home due to their illness. If we can expand it to Yellowknife, just as well as the member had stated, and other communities, we could bring the elders closer to home. We had been looking at this, but the review is ongoing.

We have heard from the elders, and through that, we're now reviewing. I just wanted to speak about what we're expecting, but the facilities that we have identified in the *Katujjiluta* report, the plans are forthcoming. I expect that we'll start from the Rankin Inlet facility, and the other two facilities will follow along.

On top of that, we're looking at and have heard about how we can build elders' facilities or elder care homes in the communities, and that's what we are expecting. We're now working on the planning, and they are now near completion. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): The member is finished. (interpretation ends) The last name on my list, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish to query the Minister of Health, related to the *Katujjiluta* mandate, in (interpretation

ends) in the Sixth Assembly (interpretation) related to the work of the Legislative Assembly and the listed items which we want to use as our foundation in 2022.

The urgent priorities were listed under the *Katujjiluta* mandate to improve the lives of *Nunavummiut* within the upcoming four years, initiatives and programs to work towards getting things started as our foundation. The listed priorities, aging with dignity, increasing housing units, to increase the services under the Department of Health as well as increasing funding, these were the main principles we wrote down under the *Katujjiluta* mandate, and in following these priorities, during November 6, a couple of days ago, the funding increase for programs.

During the previous days, the minister spoke to several priorities, and I wish to return to this briefly about the fact he stated he would try to focus on certain issues that he wanted to prioritize, through his department and his officials to benefit... That was to be his foundation under the *Katujjiluta* mandate.

Now, I want to ask this question, this wording states that the department will prioritize the repatriation of our elders, perhaps I can begin with a preamble. During the beginning of our sessions in 2022, we debated vigorously and especially the regular MLAs, the need to bring our elders back, and not just send them off to expire.

They should be cared for at home, if they do not have too many disabilities or do not require extensive care. If we look to the future, and younger generations

that may sitting here, and us as the descendants of traditional Inuit, we will eventually replace them in these elder facilities.

In thinking of the fact, here in Nunavut that the majority of us would be a bilingual society (interpretation ends) by that time. (interpretation) We are already experiencing that today. I think for once, we'll have two languages that we can speak in the future. Perhaps the issue of bilingualism that perhaps it is a loaded question I want to ask as I want to talk about two languages, that we may lose our patience, and due to that fact, I am using that as my foundation I want to speak to the previous comments regarding our elders and services closer to home for our elders and home care and help them with their bills and clean the house. I want to enhance that, and you also want to enhance this program by (interpretation ends) reviewing come care hours and exploring the possibility of increasing the number of positions.

(interpretation) When we speak about repatriating elders and closer to home care of our elders, in your responses, for the smaller communities, people that we are talking about might be working one to two hours per elder, maybe not even two hours per elder to clean their homes and provide care. I wonder, when you mentioned about my question regarding elders facilities or for those under home care. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank my fellow member for the question regarding this. From what we've heard as well, we're

all trying to work toward the same goal: they want to be close to home. We have heard that, and we have sought out solutions in that area, under *Katujjiluta*. It is a priority under the mandate, and the question that he's asking also applies to home care. Those in elder facilities are already looked after. We are talking about the hours, and we are reviewing the hours provided, to determine if we can increase or change, perhaps on a Saturday and Sunday as well. How would we figure that out?

It's almost finished. Once we've identified the change in hours, and we want these changes, it would probably include an increase to the salary section, so that works together for home care.

(interpretation ends) Home care is not just about the elder or the patient needing support, it's also about the family. That's right at the foundation of the program. It's looking at the individual needing support, and then the family needing support. When you look at it that way, it's kind of a holistic approach, and I think it's really exciting when we look at the work on the strategy being led by Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. It's that holistic approach where I think, in the future, Nunavut could be one of the strongest jurisdictions in terms of holistic approach for elders and being generous in our approach. We're one of the only jurisdictions in Canada where long-term care does not come at a cost. Most other jurisdictions, you have to contribute financially. Through that lens, we have one of the most generous programs. I think that's an approach that we should be proud of. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I totally agree with you in the support that we receive. I too, have been a mayor in our community. The support we receive is not all negative. I am grateful for the support and the work in caring. There are always areas for improvement. You mentioned in your response, and I too, was going to ask about the increase on the weekend. They work throughout the week, and it would be nice to provide seven-days-a-week service. You already answered that. I don't have too many questions. I wanted to make note of it before I forgot. Hopefully, I will be expecting it.

Mr. Chairman, in the days that we been engaging the ministers and the regular members asking questions, it's a good process. It's under the *Katujjiluta* mandate, as a base that we hear from the ministers. You guys have materialized things that we hadn't seen before and that we are seeing things proceed. I like to hear the progress and I want to support you. As a group here, we don't only oppose what we hear, but we're starting to see things come into action with planning and proceeding. Programs are being developed as per your responses. I know that we support you, and our fellow members know we want for Nunavut to be the base. Also to note, Mr. Chairman, I asked if it's appropriate and he said it was fine that I could proceed. Thank you.

We don't always agree, and we may go through difficult times. Sometimes we will debate, sometimes we'll get angry, but to keep lingering on, it's not the way of Inuit. I wanted to say that. I know you understand, you're nodding your head.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. I have no more names on my list. Do members agree that we have completed the mid-term mandate review?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. I thank all members for their participation and that it was an honour for me to chair these proceedings. Thank you.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

Speaker: Item 20. Report of the Committee of the Whole. I ask the Member for Arviat South, Mr. Savikataaq, to read the Report of the Committee of the Whole.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the committee has been considering Tabled Documents 1 – 6(2), 120 – 6(2), 163 – 6(2), and 174 – 6(2) and would like to report that they have been concluded. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

>> *Laughter*

All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried.

Item 21. Third Reading of bills. Item 22.
Orders of the Day. Mr. Clerk.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *Orders of the Day* for November 9:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Responses to Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motions
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

20. Report of the Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: In accordance to the authority provided to me by Motion 22 – 6(2), the House stands adjourned until Thursday, November 9, at 10 a.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>> *House adjourned at 16:00*

