



## Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

### Speaker

**Hon. David Joanasié**  
(South Baffin)

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok**  
(Iqaluit-Manirajak)

*Minister of Family Services; Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation; Minister responsible for Homelessness; Minister responsible for Poverty Reduction; Minister responsible for the Status of Women*

**Hon. David Akeegok**  
(Iqaluit-Niaqunngu)

*Government House Leader; Minister of Education; Minister responsible for the Nunavut Arctic College*

**Hannah Angootealuk**  
(Aivilik)

**Edward Attagutaluk**  
(Aggu)

**Hon. Janet Brewster**  
(Iqaluit-Sinaa)

*Minister of Health; Minister responsible for Suicide Prevention*

**Hon. George Hickes**  
(Iqaluit-Tasiluk)

*Deputy Premier of Nunavut; Minister of Justice; Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut; Minister responsible for the Labour Standards Board; Minister responsible for the Human Rights Tribunal*

**Jamie Kablutsiak**  
(Arviat South)

**Gordon Kautuk**  
(Uqqummiut)

**Hon. Brian Koonoo**  
(Tununiq)

*Minister of Culture and Heritage; Minister of Languages; Minister of Environment; Minister of Energy*

**Simon Kuliktana**  
(Kugluktuk)

**Hon. Cecile Nelvana Lyall**  
(Netsilik)

*Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation*

**Hon. John Main**  
(Arviat North-Whale Cove)  
*Premier; Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs; Minister of Finance; Minister responsible for Indigenous Affairs; Minister responsible for Immigration; Minister responsible for the Utility Rates Review Council; Minister responsible for Seniors; Minister responsible for the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Commission; Minister responsible for the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Board*

**Johnny Mike**  
(Pangnirtung)

**Fred Pedersen**  
(Cambridge Bay)

**David Porter**  
(Gjoa Haven)

**Abraham Qammaniq**  
(Amittuq)

**Daniel Qavvik**  
(Hudson Bay)

**Alexander Sammurtok**  
(Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet)

**Hon. Craig Simailak**  
(Baker Lake)

*Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation; Minister responsible for the Nunavut Development Corporation; Minister responsible for Mines; Minister responsible for Trade*

**Hon. Annie Tattuinee**  
(Rankin Inlet South)

*Minister of Human Resources; Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission*

**Steven Taqtu**  
(Quttiktuq)

### Officers

Clerk  
Stephen Innuksuk

Deputy Clerk  
Wendy Bens

Clerk's Assistant  
Kooyoo Nooshoota

Law Clerk  
Michael Chandler

Sergeant-at-Arms  
Maliktoo Nooshoota

Hansard Production  
Uqausirmit Uqausirmut Inc.

926 Sivumugiaq Street,  
Iqaluit, Nunavut X0A 3H0  
Tel (867) 975-5000 Fax (867) 975-5190 Toll-Free (877) 334-7266  
Website: [www.assembly.nu.ca](http://www.assembly.nu.ca)

## Table of Contents

Opening Prayer.....	1
Ministers' Statements .....	1
Members' Statements .....	7
Returns to Oral Questions .....	10
Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery.....	11
Oral Questions.....	14
Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters .....	28
Report of the Committee of the Whole .....	54
Orders of the Day .....	55

**A.**

**Daily References**

Thursday, May 28, 2026..... 1

**B.**

**Ministers' Statements**

28 – 7(2): Congratulations to Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated President (Main)..... 1

29 – 7(2): Expanding Services at the Umingmak Centre (Healey Akearok)..... 2

30 – 7(2): International Day of the Midwife (Brewster) ..... 3

31 – 7(2): Canadian Parks Council High Achiever Award (Koonoo) (Healey Akearok) ..... 4

32 – 7(2): Supporting Homeownership in Nunavut (Lyll) ..... 5

33 – 7(2): National Chemistry Conference 2026 (Healey Akearok) ..... 6

**C.**

**Members' Statements**

42 – 7(2): High School Graduates (Attagutaluk)..... 7

43 – 7(2): Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.'s New President and the Government Mandate (Kablutsiak) ..... 8

44 – 7(2): Inuit Harvesting Rights (Mike)..... 8

45 – 7(2): Appreciation of Interpreters and Translators (Pedersen) ..... 9

46 – 7(2): Netsilik High School Graduates (Lyll)..... 10

**D.**

**Returns to Oral Questions**

15 – 7(2): Nunavut Land Use Plan (Koonoo) ..... 10

**E.**

**Oral Questions**

49 – 7(2): Information Technology Infrastructure (Qavvik) .....	14
50 – 7(2): Staff Housing (Kuliktana).....	17
51 – 7(2): Expanding Services at the Umingmak Centre (Pedersen) .....	18
52 – 7(2): Caribou management in the Kivalliq (Kablutsiak) .....	20
53 – 7(2): Fisheries (Mike).....	23
54 – 7(2): Etsy to Prohibit Fur Product Sales (Angootealuk).....	25

**F.**

**Bills**

Bill 1 – Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2026-2027 – Consideration in Committee .....	29
--	----



**Iqaluit, Nunavut**  
**Thursday, May 28, 2026**

**Members Present:**

Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok, Ms. Hannah Angootealuk, Mr. Edward Attagutaluk, Hon. Janet Pitsiulaaq Brewster, Hon. George Hickes, Hon. David Joanasie, Mr. Jamie Kablutsiak, Mr. Gordon Kautuk, Hon. Brian Koonoo, Mr. Simon Kuliktana, Hon. Cecile Nelvana Lyall, Hon. John Main, Mr. Johnny Mike, Mr. Fred Pedersen, Mr. David Porter, Mr. Abraham Qammaniq, Mr. Daniel Qavvik, Hon. Craig Simailak, Mr. Steven Taqtu, Hon. Annie Tattuinee.

>>*House commenced at 13:30*

**Item 1: Opening Prayer**

**Speaker** (Hon. David Joanasie) (interpretation): Before we proceed, I would like to ask Mr. Kuliktana to lead us in prayer.

>>*Prayer*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kuliktana, and good afternoon people of Nunavut, my colleagues. *Orders of the Day*, Ministers' Statements. Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Main.

**Item 2: Ministers' Statements**

**Minister's Statement 28 – 7(2): Congratulations to Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated President**

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon, colleagues, and people of Nunavut.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Gloria Uluqsi on her successful election as the newest president of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

Mr. Speaker, since the foundation of our *Ikajuqtigiikta* mandate is about harnessing the power of partnerships, there is no greater partnership in guiding the success of our territory and its people than the one between our government and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. We can only design a successful vision and mandate for our government with the support, knowledge and contributions of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated; and they were an essential partner and advisor in our mandate development.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working collaboratively to implement the *Ikajuqtigiikta* mandate, and the Nunavut Partnership Committee on our many shared priorities, as we work towards our common goal, and building a stronger Nunavut.

*Quviasuqatigivagit*, Gloria Uluqsi. I look forward to working closely with you.

Colleagues, please join me in congratulating President-Elect Gloria Uluqsi, and in wishing her all the best during her term in office.

Congratulations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): We congratulate her, and I believe a lot of us stayed awake way into the night watching the elections. Minister's Statements. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Healey Akearok.

### **Minister's Statement 29 – 7(2): Expanding Services at the Umingmak Centre**

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, the Umingmak Centre was established in 2019 in Iqaluit as Nunavut's first child advocacy centre. The centre provides wrap-around health, wellness, and justice services to children and youth who have suffered trauma from abuse and neglect. Pediatric services at the centre are conducted by Dr. Amber Miners, Nunavut's Territorial Child Abuse Physician Specialist, in partnership with Family Services and the Department of Health.

The centre follows an integrated youth services model, with the goal of creating a sense of security and consistency for the children and youth who need their services. The centre collaborates with schools and other community organizations to ensure children and youth receive the support they need. Services include clinical assessments, forensic examinations, and follow-up care for children and youth supported by a multidisciplinary team of case managers, counsellors, and advocates. Interview space for justice and law enforcement partners is also available.

Care at the centre is delivered in a child-friendly, trauma-informed environment designed to reduce re-traumatization and support recovery. The team environment is supportive and positive, with a focus on the well-being of the children and youth.

While the focus remains on child-centred care, a new family wellness coordinator position was recently created to support caregivers, recognizing the importance of family involvement in a child's healing journey.

The organization has also partnered with Healing by Talking, to provide therapy services, utilizing a combination of in-person and virtual sessions. Umingmak is exploring ways to continue to support caregivers, including those involved in the child welfare system, to better support the children in their care.

The centre is also providing training on sexual assault and human trafficking to social workers, nurses, and victims' services workers. And they are working on developing a training program to expand their reach in pilot communities. While the goal is to expand services across the territory, the centre is using existing resources and partnerships between departments to provide training and support to other regions.

Mr. Speaker, this important work is supported through a memorandum of understanding between the Departments of Family Services, Health, Justice, Education, the RCMP, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., and the Arctic Child and Youth Foundation. Collaborating to deliver care this way helps to avoid re-traumatizing children, youth, and families with a singular focus on the well-being of the young people who need immediate help.

I would like to thank our partners, including my colleagues in this House, for their continued support in this important effort.

*Qujannamiik*, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Health, Ms. Brewster.

### **Minister's Statement 30 – 7(2): International Day of the Midwife**

**Hon. Janet Brewster:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, Nunavut recognized International Day of the Midwife, which is observed each year on May 5.

I want to recognize the midwives working across Nunavut and thank them for the care they provide to mothers, babies, families, and communities.

Midwives are primary care providers. They support prenatal care, birth, postpartum care, newborn care, and sexual and reproductive health. In many communities, they provide culturally safe care during one of the most important times in a family's life.

Mr. Speaker, Inuit midwifery has deep roots. Inuit women have long supported pregnancy, birth, and the first weeks of life through knowledge passed across generations. Strengthening Inuit midwifery is about improving access to care, supporting families closer to home, and recognizing the importance of Inuit knowledge in maternal and newborn health.

In Nunavut, the Department of Health is working to strengthen midwifery services in a way that reflects our territory, our communities, and the role of Inuit midwives. This includes work on Inuit midwifery education, workforce supports, recruitment and retention, and reviewing the legislative framework needed to support safe, effective, and culturally grounded midwifery practice.

Mr. Speaker, this work matters. When midwifery services are available closer to home, families can receive care with stronger connection to language, culture, and community. It also supports Inuit employment in the health system and helps build services that reflect the needs of Nunavummiut.

To the midwives serving Nunavummiut: thank you for your ongoing commitment and care.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): And thank you very much to the midwives. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Environment, Mr. Koonoo.

### **Minister's Statement 31 – 7(2): Canadian Parks Council High Achiever Award**

**Hon. Brian Koonoo:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share positive news from the Department of Environment.

The Nunavut Parks and Special Places Division has been awarded the High Achiever Award by the Canadian Parks Council, in recognition of its outstanding work as host of the 2025 Canadian Parks Council Congress.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Parks Council is a national, non-profit organization that brings together park leaders from across Canada to foster collaboration and advance parks, protected areas, and the communities they support.

In October 2025, following meetings in Pinawa, Manitoba, Nunavut Parks and Special Places hosted congress participants in Rankin Inlet for a unique land-based learning experience. Participants engaged with park staff, members of the Iqalugaarjuup Nunanga

Community Joint Planning and Management Committee, and local community members. They explored the territorial park and visitors' centre, and participated in presentations highlighting Inuit stewardship and co-management practices.

Mr. Speaker, this recognition is a reflection of the dedication, professionalism, and hard work of Nunavut Parks and Special Places employees, and I commend them for showcasing Nunavut's leadership in parks management on a national stage.

*Qujannamiik*, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Ms. Lyall, Minister for Nunavut Housing Corporation.

### **Minister's Statement 32 – 7(2): Supporting Homeownership in Nunavut**

**Hon. Cecile Lyall:** Mr. Speaker, today I rise to update Members on the Nunavut Housing Corporation's work to help Nunavummiut build, buy, repair and remain in their homes.

Under *Igluliuqatigiingniq*, building houses together, the Nunavut Housing Corporation has updated its homeownership and affordable housing programs. These programs help Nunavummiut overcome barriers to homeownership, and support the construction, purchase, repair and maintenance of homes across our territory.

In 2025-2026, the Nunavut Housing Corporation approved more than 300 applications from Nunavummiut through the Nunavut Down Payment Assistance Program, the Nunavut Homeownership Assistance Program, the Home Renovations Program, the Emergency Repair Program, and the Elders Housing Program.

These supports help Nunavummiut purchase homes, complete urgently needed repairs, remain in their homes longer, and improve housing conditions.

Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to highlight the recent launch of the Nunavut Interim Financing Program. One of the major barriers to building a home in Nunavut is access to short-term financing during construction. Mortgage financing is often not released until construction is substantially complete.

The Interim Financing Program helps address the gap by providing eligible applicants with interest-free bridge financing during construction. This support will help advance new homeownership and affordable housing projects across Nunavut.

The Nunavut Housing Corporation also continues to support homeowners facing rising housing costs through the Canada-Nunavut Housing Benefit. This benefit provides eligible homeowners with up to \$600 per month to help offset ongoing housing expenses. As of March 2026, 171 Nunavut households were receiving this support.

Mr. Speaker, homeownership is one important part of Nunavut's broader housing system. By helping Nunavummiut build, purchase, repair and maintain their own homes, these programs create more housing options and reduce pressure across the housing continuum.

I encourage Nunavummiut interested in these programs to contact the Nunavut Housing Corporation, by visiting [NunavutHousing.ca](http://NunavutHousing.ca), or call the Housing line at 1-844-413-9355.

*Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister for Arctic College, Ms. Healey Akearok.

### **Minister's Statement 33 – 7(2): National Chemistry Conference 2026**

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation ends) I rise today to recognize an important event taking place in Iqaluit from May 29 to June 1. Over this weekend, the Nunatta campus will host the annual College Chemistry Canada Conference.

For more than 50 years, this conference has brought together educators from across Canada to share knowledge, strengthen teaching practices, and support student success in the sciences.

This year's theme is "Chemistry for All." This theme reflects a commitment to inclusive and accessible education, which aligns with the Government of Nunavut's *Ikajuqtigiikta* mandate, focussing on strengthening education and training, building local capacity, and supporting Nunavummiut to succeed.

This conference marks the first time this conference will be hosted within Inuit Nunangat. This milestone highlights the growing recognition of northern and Inuit contributions to science education. The Nunavut Arctic College is proud to be a part of this recognition.

The program will feature keynote speakers including Jennifer Winters of Nunatsiavut, recognized for culturally relevant chemistry education, and the Nunavut Research Institute, which will be highlighting its work in Arctic research and country food safety.

Participants at the conference will also take part in cultural programming led by the College's Cultural Studies Department. These sessions will demonstrate how Inuit knowledge systems reflect scientific principles through practices such as jewellery making, fur preparation, and the respectful use of animals.

In closing, I would like to note this conference will recognize the achievements of Nunavut Arctic College science students and include a scholarship to support the next generation of Inuit and northern scientists.

I ask all members to join me in welcoming delegates to Nunavut.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Item 3, Members' Statements. Member for Aggu, Mr. Attagutaluk.

### **Item 3: Members' Statements**

#### **Member's Statement 42 – 7(2): High School Graduates**

**Mr. Attagutaluk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Joanne Quassa and her husband.

I rise today to recognize and acknowledge the graduates of the students in Igloolik this year in 2025-2026 school year. The graduates are, and I will mention their names:

Katelyn Akittirq, Delano Alorut, Cadence Arnatsiaq, Lakisha Arnatsiaq, Elanor Attagutaluk, Madeline Auksaq, Carolyn Awa, Zacharias Awa, Scott Ipkangnak, Terry-Allan Irqittuq, Josie Joanne Kangok, Dylan Kayotak, Rachel Malliki, Lucas Panimera, Hailey Qamaniq, Ezekeil Qattalik, Megan-Liz Qaunaq, Jennifer Quassa, Sheldon Tapardjuk, Terry Tulugarjuk, Breanne Ulayuruluk, and Robert Uttak.

I would like to congratulate the students from graduating their school, and they can look forward to any opportunities they have. Thank you.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Member's Statement. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Kablutsiak.

**Member's Statement 43 – 7(2): Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.'s New President and the Government Mandate**

**Mr. Kablutsiak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would also like to speak about the premier's comment to congratulate the newly-elected chair of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, President Gloria Uluqsi.

Based on the 7th Legislative Assembly mandate, the *Ikajuqtigiikta* mandate, on page 14 it states:

(interpretation ends) "Simplify operations and enhance partnerships: Collaborate with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and Regional Inuit Associations to accelerate shared priority projects through the Nunavut Partnership Committee and its working groups."

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you as well. Members' Statements. Member for Pangnirtung, Mr. Mike.

**Member's Statement 44 – 7(2): Inuit Harvesting Rights**

**Mr. Mike** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Inuit of Nunavut, and also to the people of Pangnirtung, good afternoon.

I rise today to the issue that I would like to ask a question in regards to the men's culture, in regards to Land Claims Agreement.

Prior to, Inuit men used to hunt and harvest using traditional tools, using harpoons, hooks, and bows and arrows, although we may be using some of it today. The Land Claims Agreement, Article 5, Wildlife, harvesting using traditional ways and modern ways of harvesting.

It also talks about this under that article especially the whales, especially the two species, beluga and narwhal, they have a quota system in place for some communities, according to the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, Inuit rights.

We have to speak to this issue, but especially the whales that have a quota system in place. Every time we deplete the number of tags, the men just stay home, even though

there are whales available to harvest. I will be asking that question in the upcoming days, how Inuit men's harvesting rights, how we can bring those rights back to prior to Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.

When they were negotiating the Land Claims Agreement, they were saying that we will go back to the traditional ways. But with the quota system in place, we no longer have any whales when the tags are depleted.

I want to talk about the traditional ways of harvesting and wildlife management. Where is that in line with traditional ways of harvesting? Because that's Inuit way, a right.

In the upcoming days I will be asking that question. I'm not too sure to which minister it will be, but thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Iqaluktuuttiaq, Mr. Pedersen.

#### **Member's Statement 45 – 7(2): Appreciation of Interpreters and Translators**

**Mr. Pedersen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to you all, and to constituents watching back home in Cambridge Bay.

Today I would like to give a shout-out to the interpreters and translators, not only to the ones that work here in the Legislature, but to all interpreters and translators and across Nunavut, and to those that live outside of Nunavut as well.

For those of us that are unilingual in whatever language, they allow us to hear and understand all reports, discussions and speeches.

Some of us can understand parts of the discussions and be aware of what the topic is about, but to fully understand, we rely on them.

I encourage young Nunavummiut that can speak and understand Inuktitut to take training to allow themselves to become certified interpreter-translators. You can have a good, long career, both at home and probably across Nunavut, and even internationally. You can make a good living for you and your family, and more importantly, you can help to ensure that our Inuktitut languages can flourish.

Today in Cambridge Bay and Kugluktuk, only about 6 per cent of the population can fully speak and understand Inuinnaqtun, and those numbers have been steadily declining over the years as language holders pass on.

We need to see more programming and more courses being offered so that our individuals can enter this important field. I look forward to seeing these additional courses from this government through Nunavut Arctic College, and from the Kitikmeot Inuit Association.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Yes, we're very proud of our interpreters. Thank you very much. Thank you to our interpreters. They are very hard workers. Members' Statements. Member for Netsilik, Ms. Lyall.

#### **Member's Statement 46 – 7(2): Netsilik High School Graduates**

**Hon. Cecile Lyall:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon to everyone in the House today and everyone watching online.

I rise today to recognize an important accomplishment for three students at Netsilik School in Taloyoak. Later today Ernie Lyle (ph), John Jayco (ph) and Rocky Tatalik (ph) will have their graduation ceremony.

Congratulations on this accomplishment, and we all look forward to seeing your future endeavours and are cheering you on from afar.

I would also like to acknowledge their friends and families for their support and guidance in bringing them to this milestone in their lives. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Going back to *Orders of the Day*, Item 4, Return to Oral Questions. Minister of Environment, Minister Koonoo.

#### **Item 4: Returns to Oral Questions**

##### **Return to Oral Question 15 – 7(2): Nunavut Land Use Plan**

**Hon. Brian Koonoo** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I rise today to provide further detail on a commitment I made to MLA Mike on May 21, 2026 regarding the Nunavut Land Use Plan.

The Government of Nunavut continues to carefully review the 2023 Recommended Nunavut Land Use Plan.

This work includes ensuring the plan reflects the social, cultural and economic priorities of Nunavummiut, while also addressing implementation, considerations and consistency with existing legislation and government policy, and the long-term interests of Nunavut communities.

A decision regarding the plan remains a significant priority for our government. We recognize that Nunavummiut rights holders and stakeholders are seeking certainty, and substantial work is underway to complete the internal review process in a thorough, efficient, and responsible manner.

Any decision respecting the plan must be made jointly by the Government of Nunavut, the Government of Canada, and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. Our government continues to work collaboratively with both parties, while Crown consultations with Indigenous governments and organizations, led by the Government of Canada, also remain ongoing.

The member also asked about Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated's position and any issues they may be considering as part of this process.

While we continue to work collaboratively with NTI, I would be unable to speculate or speak on their behalf. Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated will publicly communicate its positions and perspectives once its own personal processes are complete.

We remain committed to reaching a well-informed decision that reflects the extensive input received throughout the planning process and supports the interest of current and future generations of Nunavummiut.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. I want to remind my colleagues that the clothing that we wear, the handmade clothing, it is suggested that we wear a suit and tie while in the Assembly.

Item 5, Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Ms. Healey Akearok.

### **Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery**

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation ends) Earlier I rose to sing the praises of the work done by the compassionate and caring staff at the Umingmak Centre.

Today I'm lucky enough to thank them personally for their supportive and positive efforts in the work they do with children, youth, and families.

Mr. Speaker, the centre follows an integrated youth services model with the goal of creating a sense of security and consistency for the children, youth, and families who need their services.

Care is delivered in a child-friendly, trauma-informed environment designed to reduce re-traumatization and support for recovery.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in thanking this team and welcoming them to the House. If you could please rise when I say your name:

Ulliaq Kowmuk, child and family advocate; and Dr. Amber Miners, lead physician.

*>>Applause*

Mr. Speaker, this week as well, at the Nunatta campus here in Iqaluit, the Nunavut Arctic College hosted its senior management team for a week-long gathering. This gathering allowed the team to meet in person, and to engage in several collective discussions related to program delivery, student services, research, information technology and policy.

It's my pleasure to recognize the team in the House today. I do ask individuals to stand when I say your name.

- Lizzie Aliqatuktut, Dean for Education, Inuit and University Studies, based here in Iqaluit;
- Nunia Anoe, Dean for Community and Distance Learning, based in Arviat;
- Deborah Clifford, Dean for Health and Wellness and Business Programs based in Cambridge Bay;
- Jason Mikki, Dean for Trades and Technology, based in Rankin Inlet;
- Alex Farmer, Director, Student Services;
- Jamal Shirley, Director for the Nunavut Research Institute;
- Bola Lawal, Chief Financial Officer;
- Jennifer Lane, chief information officer;
- Kaviq Kaluraq, vice-president; and
- Jackie Price, president.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*>>Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

**Hon. Craig Simailak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to recognize a fellow resident of Baker Lake, Kaviq. (interpretation ends) I certainly missed the work that you did with them back home in Baker Lake. She was instrumental with helping with so many searches back home, successful searches back home.

(interpretation) Joanna Quassa and your husband, Simon, welcome back here. It's good to see you back again. And Joanna was just appointed to serve on the Kitikmeot Inuit Association, the community director for Igloodik. It's good to see you're still advocating for (no interpretation). Let's welcome them, please. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Welcome to the Assembly, Mr. and Ms. Quassa. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Arviat North and Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

**Hon. John Main** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome everyone, all the visitors here.

First of all, a person who I have attended meetings in committees with, Ms. Quassa. It's great to see you back in the Assembly. I recognize you, and you'll recognize that our process here is still pretty much the same. And her husband, Simon. Next year, Toronto.

And also from Arviat, Nulia Ee (ph), I would like to recognize that person, too. That person has done a lot with education, working with education, and still does. We have welcomed her to Arviat. I'm not sure where she started off from, but she's a resident of Arviat now. Welcome to the Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Welcome to the Assembly. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, Ms. Brewster.

**Hon. Janet Brewster**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and welcome everybody to chambers today, and especially to my former colleague, Joanna. It's really different without you here, and it's so nice to see you again. Welcome back.

Mr. Speaker, I'm really happy to say that my colleague left out one name in her recognition of the Arctic College staff, because that gives me the opportunity to

recognize my friend, Sherri Young, who is the Director of Policy for the Arctic College. Welcome to your house, Sherri. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Please feel welcome. Recognition of Visitors to the Gallery. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Kablutsiak.

**Mr. Kablutsiak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome all the visitors to the Assembly here, and I would like to recognize a person from Arviat.

She works at the headquarters in Arviat headquarters, and she works for all of Nunavummiut. She also does a lot of advocate for curriculum. We work together at the Levi Angmak Elementary School in Arviat. So please feel welcome here, Nunia Anoe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. I have no more names.

Back to the *Orders of the Day*. Item 6, Oral Questions. Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Qavvik.

### **Item 6: Oral Questions**

#### **Oral Question 49 – 7(2): Information Technology Infrastructure**

**Mr. Qavvik**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut, and they concern the issue of information technology.

As the minister will recall, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission issued a decision in July 2024 that conditionally approved \$271.9 million in funding to the Government of Nunavut for the construction of a 1,300-kilometre fibre connection to the communities of Iqaluit, Kimmirut, Kinngait, and Coral Harbour.

This is referred to as the Kivalliq Baffin Connector Project.

As the minister is aware, his department's current business plan indicates that one of its priorities is to "finalize a Nunavut fibre connectivity roadmap for the West Hudson Fibre Link and Kivalliq Baffin Connector projects."

Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that the West Hudson Fibre Link Project involves the communities of Arviat, Rankin Inlet, and Whale Cove.

I would like to ask the minister if he can confirm how much federal funding has been committed for the West Hudson Fibre Link Project, and I am going to squeeze in another question, if he can confirm the extent to which Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and/or the Kivalliq Inuit Association will have an ownership equity stake in one or both of the fibre projects?

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut, Mr. Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member managed to get a few questions, a tactic I have used numerous times over my career here.

Mr. Speaker, with regards to the monies that have been expended and claimed to date, I don't have that detailed information right in front of me at the moment.

But Mr. Speaker, we are still looking at operation models and what type of partnerships will be available. We recently had discussions at the cabinet level on looking at there are so many different projects in the pipeline, not just through CRTC, but there's also monies from the Broadband Accessibility Fund as well.

So we need to make some decisions and work with our partners to see what projects are going to be promoted to move forward, to make sure that we have the proper redundancy across the network, to make sure that we're maximizing the economic benefit of fibre entering into the territory, and we need to make sure that it's going to benefit as many Nunavummiut as possible.

One thing it's worth noting: There are limited communities that fibre would be able to be offered into, but at the same time, it does allow additional bandwidth to be accessed in other communities. So any fibre project that comes into the territory is going to benefit the entire territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): First supplementary question, Mr. Qavvik.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, the government's plan in this area included Sanikiluaq at one point in time. This project involved communities in northern Quebec.

I would like to ask the minister if he can describe what plans the government has to extend fibre to Sanikiluaq. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Nunavut, Mr. Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm glad this topic is being raised, but I think we are at kind of a critical junction on deciding on a path forward.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the proposals that we submitted, some of the estimates on costs that are coming in, we have to take some very serious consideration into what communities are going to be linked into potential projects as they move forward. So I can't give a definitive answer on that today, Mr. Speaker.

We do have to sit down and look at the proposals that are in front of us, the monies that we've received for some specific projects, and how we can further advance the projects that we want to make sure that we're supporting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Second and final supplementary question, Mr. Qavvik.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in April of this year, \$86 million dollars in federal funding under the Universal Broadband Fund was announced for Northwestel to partner with Telesat Canada's planned Low Earth Orbit satellite constellation to expand access to high-speed Internet for residents in all 25 Nunavut communities.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister describe how his department is involved with this project, and can he clarify how it will be coordinated with the West Hudson Fibre Link and Kivalliq Baffin Connector projects? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, Mr. Hickes.

**Hon. George Hickes:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the line of questioning. When that announcement was made, I met with some senior officials with Northwestel here in Iqaluit, and describing the accessibility of lower earth orbit satellite systems through the Northwestel network, and looking at, that offer higher broadband speeds or bandwidth speeds or limits across the territory at fair market prices.

As this project is not a government project, we are basically a client of the network. Any time we have an opportunity to increase bandwidth and speed up access to information over the Internet, I think its a benefit for the territory.

But as it is a corporate decision by obviously Northwestel and with the federal government to increase access to lower earth orbit satellite networks, I think it's a positive impact on Nunavut. Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Oral Questions. Kugluktuk MLA, Mr. Kuliktana.

**Oral Question 50 – 7(2): Staff Housing**

**Mr. Kuliktana:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Human Resources, and they concern the issue of staff housing.

As the minister is aware, the information published by her department indicates that one of its ongoing priorities has been to review the government's staff housing program.

Can the minister provide an update today on the status of this work, and can she highlight what specific changes to the staff housing program are being considered? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Human Resources, Minister Tattuinee.

**Hon. Annie Tattuinee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank the member for the question. The program contract has been issued. No recommendations are available yet, as the report is not started. Consultations for this process will be in shortly.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. First supplementary question, Mr. Kuliktana.

**Mr. Kuliktana:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you minister for your response.

As the minister is aware, information published by her department indicates that:

“Many employees remain in staff housing long term, leaving limited options upon retirement. The Nunavut Housing Corporation is working with the Department of Human Resources and other partners to identify alternative pathways for retirees and strengthen the program's long term sustainability.”

Mr. Speaker, I am aware of situations like this in the Kitikmeot region also, in my community, and I recognize that there are no easy answers.

Can the minister describe what specific options are being looked at to address this issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Human Resources, Minister Tattuinee.

**Hon. Annie Tattuinee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question.

We are currently working with the Nunavut Housing Corporation to revise the policy. As housing options increase, we hope that the pressure for staff housing will decrease. So we're looking for interim solutions to the issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Second and final supplementary, Mr. Kuliktana.

**Mr. Kuliktana:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for her response.

A number of my colleagues have spoken about the need for more staff housing in smaller communities, especially for critical positions in health centres and schools.

I understand and recognize that the limited supply of staff housing means that employees in some communities need to share units.

However, it is problematic when a staff housing unit is being shared by staff who have a direct reporting relationship.

To put it simply, Mr. Speaker, a supervisor should not be sharing a unit with a subordinate.

Can the minister indicate how her department is working with the Nunavut Housing Corporation to address this issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Human Resources, Minister Tattuinee.

**Hon. Annie Tattuinee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question.

Considerations are always when individuals are required to live together. Steps are taken to correct situations and people are moved around, when necessary.

Again, it is recognized that there is a shortage of housing, staff housing as well as social housing, and it will take a long-term process and partners to address this issue across Nunavut.

Thank you to the member for the question, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Oral Questions. Member for Cambridge Bay, MLA, Mr. Pedersen.

**Oral Question 51 – 7(2): Expanding Services at the Umingmak Centre**

**Mr. Pedersen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Family Services and regarding her minister's statement of today.

It was good information that she provided on what the Umingmak Centre here in Iqaluit is doing, and the part that caught my attention was that they are going to pilot in other communities in Nunavut.

I think it's unfortunate that we need these services in our communities, because that means that children and youth aren't being adequately looked after. But I'm glad that there are organizations that can help the children and youth.

So my first question is: Is Cambridge Bay one of the communities that this will be piloted in the future? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Minister of Family Services, Ms. Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question. The expansion plan is still in development. I hope to have more information to report back this fall to the member and to the House. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): First supplementary, Mr. Pedersen.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to hearing further from the minister on that.

In the news within the last year in Cambridge Bay there have been a lot of articles about vandalism and other things by youth in our community. To me that says they are crying out for help and are looking at ways to relieve the stress from whatever is affecting them in their lives. So I hope Cambridge Bay will be selected as one of those communities.

If a community is not selected and they want to mirror types of services that the Umingmak Centre does, is that possible where other non-profits in those communities could deliver those same type of programs using the model that Umingmak Centre has created? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Family Services, Ms. Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the follow-up question.

The Department of Family Services actually works with non-profits all across Nunavut to deliver a variety of youth support services, in a variety of areas and topics. This is done through our grants and contributions programs.

We welcome the opportunity to work with any non-profit that's interested and able to provide services to youth. That conversation is always open.

The model for the Umingmak Centre is very specific, but there are other adapted versions that can be explored, and we welcome the opportunity to expand all programs and services with our partners in our communities across the territory, to make sure we're reaching all of our young people, as the member identified. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Second and final supplementary, Mr. Pedersen.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can you confirm if non-profits in Cambridge Bay are currently being funded through your department for the 2026-2027 fiscal year? Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Family Services, Ms. Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the follow-up question.

I don't have that level of detail in front of me at the moment, but I can commit to following up and providing that information at a later date. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Oral Questions. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Kablutsiak.

### **Oral Question 52 – 7(2): Caribou management in the Kivalliq**

**Mr. Kablutsiak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Environment.

This concerns the caribou management in Kivalliq.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by quoting from the Nunavut Development Corporation's current business plan, which indicates that:

“Each winter, Kivalliq Arctic Foods in Rankin Inlet operates a commercial caribou harvest. Annually, the company anticipates purchasing up to 800 animals harvested by hunters from Arviat, Whale Cove, Rankin Inlet, Chesterfield Inlet, and Baker Lake.

The winter harvest creates work for both plant workers and harvesters at a time of year when employment opportunities are limited. The caribou are processed and sold throughout Nunavut to households, agencies and commercial establishments.

Commercial caribou harvesting in the Kivalliq is unregulated; it occurs year-round at various levels, including the regional hunters and trappers organizations. The unregulated harvesting of Kivalliq caribou has come under significant scrutiny; there is significant concern about the long-term sustainability of the herds if current harvesting practices are not better controlled.”

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that this issue is very sensitive.

My question is as follows: What is the Minister of Environment’s position regarding the regulation of caribou harvesting in the Kivalliq? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Environment, Minister Koonoo.

**Hon. Brian Koonoo** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for your question.

We are very much aware of the issue and concern in Keewatin concerning the caribou. However, at this moment, the caribou health in Kivalliq is the healthiest, and it is estimated 252,092 caribou are in the herd.

However, the number has slowly decreased over the past years, not in a drastic way. Nunavut Development Corporation is constantly working with the hunters in Keewatin, and they are constantly monitored as to the health of the caribou.

The Department of Environment is very much aware of the slight decrease in the caribou numbers. We will continue to monitor, but at this moment I can say the caribou are not endangered. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker**: First supplementary, Mr. Kablutsiak.

**Mr. Kablutsiak**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister is aware, his department’s business plan indicates that one of its planned actions for the year 2029 is to “begin planning” for a survey of the Qamanirjuaq caribou herd.

The health of this herd is very important to the people of Arviat and other Kivalliq communities.

Can the minister clarify why this important work is not occurring until the year 2029?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Environment, Minister Koonoo.

**Hon. Brian Koonoo** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the MLA for the question.

The caribou are constantly being monitored, and the Department of Environment tries to balance sustainable need and commercial need or requirement and to ensure they are not endangered.

As we know, caribou is very important to Keewatin. It's very much part of their culture and diet.

The Nunavut Development Corporation have an annual commercial quota, and not to try to overharvest for commercial reasons.

And at this time, Department of Environment can't really make changes with no total allowable harvest identified. They have not seen the threshold yet for that, so we can't really add much, and provide any more quotas.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Second and final supplementary, Mr. Kablutsiak.

**Mr. Kablutsiak**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister will be aware, information published earlier this year by the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board indicates that the minister's department "shared survey data which showed a rise in the Beverly herd's population estimate from 103,400 in 2018 to 152,000 in 2023. This bodes well for the Beverly herd, which has been in decline since the 1990s. Although the Qamanirjuaq herd is still experiencing a slow decline, it, too, is showing some signs of stabilizing."

Mr. Speaker, this is encouraging. Can the minister highlight some of the major initiatives that his department is currently working on in partnership with the Qamanirjuaq Caribou Management Board? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Environment, Minister Koonoo.

**Hon. Brian Koonoo** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the Beverly herd there had been a slow decline, and usually the Kivalliq and Kitikmeot work together and put a caribou management plan.

They can also buy caribou. They can also trade other food. The Qamanirjuaq herd are not in danger of decline. That's all I can add. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Oral Questions. Following my list of names, member for Pangnirtung, Mr. Mike.

**Oral Question 53 – 7(2): Fisheries**

**Mr. Mike** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Community Services, whose department is responsible for the government's Fisheries and Sealing Division.

As the minister is aware, the issue of unfair fishing quotas has been a long-standing issue of concern for Pangnirtung especially, and other communities in the Baffin region in regards to halibut fishing.

As the minister is aware, his department's current business plan indicates that one of its priorities is to (interpretation ends) "explore options to expand Nunavut's access to water allocations and fisheries quota."

(interpretation) Can the minister update the House today on what specific options are being considered in regards to quotas and the concern that I have in regards to halibut fishing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Community Services, Mr. Simailak.

**Hon. Craig Simailak**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for his question with regards to fishing quotas of halibut and in that work of field.

We at Community Services with the Fishing and Sealing Division have been continuing to advocate for an increased quota.

We've been meeting with Department of Fisheries and Oceans' federal minister, and imploring to her office that we need a better, fairer share of quotas off of our adjacent waters.

I have explained to her that it brings employment. It brings a better economy to the Pangnirtung fish plant. It directly affects Inuit, Nunavummiut, and that's what we've been doing with the fisheries and the quota system. We are trying to work on increasing Nunavut's share of that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker**: Your first supplementary question, Mr. Mike.

**Mr. Mike** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated's newly elected president. We congratulate her.

When I last raised this issue during our winter sitting, the minister indicated that his department has been working with both Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association of this matter.

Information previously published by the ministry's department indicates:

(interpretation ends) "Efforts are ongoing to advocate for federal financing support to facilitate the repatriation and acquisition of the fishing quotas."

(interpretation) It indicates here that in article 50 the adjacent communities to these fishing places should be given the first right of refusal, and it's in Nunavut waters.

Can the minister indicate what response he has received from his federal counterpart concerning this request? (interpretation ends) Can the minister indicate what response he has received from his federal counterpart concerning this request? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Community Services, Mr. Simailak.

**Hon. Craig Simailak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to thank the member for posing that question. And I'm very pleased and congratulate the president-elect for Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. I will make sure to bring this issue up when we have our first meeting in regards to fishing and fishing quotas. We have already had a meeting with the regional Inuit associations.

And also, the federal minister's response says he hears us, and will correspond once they come to a final decision. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Your second and final supplementary question, Mr. Mike.

**Mr. Mike** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to thank the minister.

In July 2025, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board issued a notice that it was "accepting applications for commercial marine fisheries allocations for turbot" in the 0A and 0B Divisions, as well as shrimp.

The board's notice indicated that "the call for applications is intended to apply for a five-year term spanning the 2026-2039 fishing seasons."

(interpretation ends) Can the minister confirm if his department has been advised on the board's decision? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Community Services, Mr. Simailak.

**Hon. Craig Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize, I missed part of the translation when my earpiece fell off. If the member can please clarify his question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Mr. Mike, if you would rephrase your question, please. You have the floor.

**Mr. Mike** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I do apologize that you dropped your earpiece.

(interpretation ends) In July 2025, the NWMB Board issued a notice that it was "accepting applications for commercial marine fisheries allocations for turbot" in the 0A and 0B Divisions, as well as shrimp.

The board's notice indicated that "the call for applications is intended to apply for a five-year term spanning the 2026-2039 fishing seasons."

Can the minister confirm if his department has been advised of the NWMB Board's decision?

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Community Services, Mr. Simailak.

**Hon. Craig Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for his question and for repeating his question.

The department is aware of ongoing processes related to turbot and shrimp allocation access in adjacent waters. Officials continue to monitor developments closely and engage with federal and industry partners on matters affecting Inuit interests. At this point I don't believe we have been advised on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Oral Questions. Member for Aivilik, Ms. Angootealuk.

#### **Oral Question 54 – 7(2): Etsy to Prohibit Fur Product Sales**

**Ms. Angootealuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Community Services.

(interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Community Services, and they concern the Etsy company's recent decision to ban the sale of fur products.

(interpretation) I would first of all like to thank you for wearing seal skin clothing.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, Etsy is a global online market where independent sellers and small businesses have listed products for sale over the past two decades. Mr. Speaker, a number of Inuit have been selling their handmade products with seal skin and fox fur on the Etsy market for years.

Mr. Speaker, on April 2, 2026, the Etsy company announced a new animal products policy that indicates that Etsy will ban the sales of fur products, including seal skin, later this year.

Mr. Speaker, May 20 was National Seal Products day, and on May 21st, the minister recognized its importance and announced that Nunavut's first sealing symposium will be held in 2027.

Can the minister indicate what the government's position is regarding this issue?

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Community Services, Mr. Simailak.

**Hon. Craig Simailak:** Thank you Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for her question regarding sealing and seal products that were being sold on Etsy.

That is unfortunate that that is now being banned. It is not something I like to hear. I must say it was news to me. I am not familiar with Etsy.

We are looking at other avenues for how we can perhaps get Inuit-made products, in other words, seal or caribou, out into the market through various online platforms.

I actually brought it up in the previous Assembly, for the Nunavut Development Corporation entities to have a better online presence so that Inuit in Nunavut can find a way to help sell their goods, not only in their community, not only in their region or territory, but Canada-wide and, if regulations allow internationally. That is something that we will continue to look at. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Your first supplementary question, Ms. Angootealuk.

**Ms. Angootealuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) On May 21st, the minister announced that Nunavut's first sealing symposium will take place in February 2027.

Mr. Speaker, in recent years, more and more companies have been removing natural fur from their products and banning the sales of fur products on their platforms.

Etsy's latest decision to ban fur sales will negatively impact Inuit seamstresses and artisans.

Can the minister confirm if Nunavut's first sealing symposium will give attendees the opportunity to discuss the harmful impacts of fur bans on our local economies? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Community Services, Mr. Simailak.

**Hon. Craig Simailak**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I thank the member for her question. Yes, at the symposium we will be discussing all avenues around sealing and the commercial sales that we can possibly look at.

I might say fur is green; it's renewable, it's sustainable, it's good. We all see it. I'm wearing one myself, my sealskin vest today. And some of my colleagues here, thank you for that.

We will be looking at all aspects of sealing and how we can maybe boost up our economy, because we all know seamstresses and seamstresses back home in our communities that do wonderful work. They put together very beautiful clothing or knickknacks. I have even seen Christmas ornaments made of sealskin pelts, things like that.

So we will be discussing various options of various items or things at the symposium. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Last supplementary question, Ms. Angootealuk.

**Ms. Angootealuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) The Etsy company banning fur products have been a topic for discussions for other Canadian jurisdictions as well, including our northern neighbours, the Government of Northwest Territories and the Government of Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, on April 22, 2026, the Yukon Government unanimously passed a motion calling on the Minister of Economic Development, Tourism and Culture, to write an official letter urging the Etsy company to reconsider its fur ban.

Will the minister commit to write a letter to the Etsy company about the harmful impact of banning fur sales for Inuit who have been using their platform for their creation?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Community Services, Minister Simailak.

**Hon. Craig Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for her question regarding Etsy and contacting them. It is something I can look into.

I can learn a bit more about Etsy and their background and who their owners are and whatnot and go from there.

Regarding an online presence, as I mentioned earlier through some of our entities like the Nunavut Development Corporation, I can commit to looking at getting that going up and running better, because we can have an online presence.

We can go through our own entities, and I'm sure that entities like Etsy, they take a bit of a per centage cut; that's how they're making money. And if perhaps we go through our own online platform, maybe we can get more of that cut to the artisans.

There's a few different options we can look at, and that's what I can commit to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Oral Questions. I have no more names on my list.

Going back to *Orders of the Day*, Item 7, Written Questions. Item 8, Return to Written Questions. Item 9, Replies to Opening Address. Item 10, Replies to Budget Address. Item 11, Petitions. Item 12, Responses to Petitions. Item 13, Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. Item 14, Tabling of Documents. Item 15, Notices of Motion. Item 16, Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Item 17, Motions. Item 18, First Reading of Bills. Item 19, Second Reading of Bills. Item 20, Consideration of Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Before that we'll take a 20-minute break. Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 14:54 and Committee commenced at 15:28*

### **Item 20: Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters**

**Chairman** (Mr. Fred Pedersen): I call the meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole, we have the following items to deal with: Bills 1 and 2. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Taqtu.

**Mr. Taqtu:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We wish to continue with the consideration of Bill 1, *Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act 2026-2027* and the proposed 2026-2027 Main Estimates of Family Services. Thank you Mr. Chair.

**Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Taqtu. Are we in agreement that we first deal with Bill 1?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Bill 1 – Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2026-2027 –  
Consideration in Committee**

**Chairman:** I would like to ask Minister Healey Akearok, do you have officials you would like to have appear before the committee?

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I do have officials. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Does the committee agree to have the officials appear before you?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort them in. And for the record, Minister Healey Akearok, please introduce your officials and proceed with your opening comments.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

(interpretation ends) Appearing with me today is Family Services Deputy Minister, Mr. Jonathan Ellsworth; and Family Services Director of Corporate Services, Mr. Jayko Ellsworth.

Mr. Chair, I am pleased to be here today before the Committee of the Whole to present and discuss the proposed 2026-2027 Main Estimates and Business Plan for the Department of Family Services.

Mr. Chair, the department provides a range of programs and services that vary between ensuring the safety and protection of children and vulnerable adults to promoting the well-being and self-reliance of Nunavummiut. These services are delivered across four client-focused divisions.

1. The Family Wellness Division provides a broad range of services for children, families, and vulnerable adults who may require protection or other specialized supports. These intervention supports include immediate crisis responses such as emergency child protection investigations, temporary placements for children or vulnerable adults, and urgent safety planning for individuals experiencing violence or neglect. The division also delivers family unification services, in-home supports, and coordinated case management for families facing complex challenges.
2. The Income Assistance Division includes a variety of benefit programs that provide financial assistance to people 18 years of age and over, and their dependents. These include Income Support, the Seniors Fuel Subsidy, and a range of additional programs designed to help individuals and families meet their basic needs and maintain stability. This includes the Daycare Subsidy Program, which assists parents with the cost of licensed childcare; the Nunavut Child Benefit, which provides supplemental support to low-income families with children; and the Senior Citizens Supplementary Benefit, which helps elders with essential living expenses.
3. The Career Development Division promotes employment training programs, administers funding to clients for these programs, and offers career counselling services. The Career Development Division also oversees trades and apprenticeships, ensuring Nunavummiut have access to certification pathways and skilled employment opportunities. In addition, Career Development delivers employment readiness supports, training allowances, and wage subsidies, and works with Nunavut Arctic College, employers, and industry partners to align training with labour market needs. Together, these programs help clients build skills, access training, and transition into meaningful employment.
4. The Poverty Reduction Division coordinates collaboration across government departments and with Inuit organizations on strategic approaches to poverty reduction, food insecurity, and homelessness. The division leads the implementation of the Makimaniq Plan and supports community-driven initiatives that address the root causes of poverty. It also works to strengthen food security programs, improve access to essential supports, and advance territorial strategies to reduce homelessness. Through this coordinating role, the division ensures that efforts across the government and partners are aligned, culturally grounded, and focused on long-term well-being for Nunavummiut.

Mr. Chair, for 2026-2027, to support the ongoing programs and services provided, the Department of Family Services is proposing an operating budget of \$251.8 million, which represents an increase of 10 per cent, or \$23.2 million over last year's main estimates. These increases include:

- \$18.6 million for Family Wellness initiatives to continue the implementation of the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Action Plan such as:

- In-and out-of-territory group home services;
- Increased support to foster care families;
- Building capacity;
- Compliance with standards in referrals and investigation; and
- Youth support services;
- \$2.3 million for Career Development, including workforce development in conjunction with Nunavut Arctic College to support the Nunavut 3000 housing initiative and training for Nunavut's diverse sectors;
- \$1.2 million for wage increases related to changes in the Government of Nunavut's salary grid;
- \$1 million to support suicide prevention in communities.

These budget increases reflect the changes the department has been making to better support Nunavummiut who are struggling to meet their basic needs, as they work toward stability and well-being for themselves and their families. At their core, these efforts are about strengthening communities and ensuring people feel supported to meet some of their most basic needs.

While modest, these increases are an important step toward addressing gaps in service and improving consistency and accountability across the territory, so that individuals and families can rely on the support they need, when they need it.

Mr. Chair, the department recognizes that challenges persist in meeting the growing and diverse needs of Nunavummiut. Gaps in staffing, infrastructure, and specialized resources have impacted the department's ability to deliver consistent and timely services.

Mr. Chair, our approach to these operations and maintenance appropriations and business plans reflects a deliberate shift toward evidence-based budgeting. We are grounding decisions in data, outcomes, and demonstrated need, while at the same time rigorously reviewing existing programs and contracts through a value-for-money lens. This dual focus allows us to identify what is working, address gaps, and reallocate resources to where they will have the greatest impact, ultimately strengthening both the efficiency and effectiveness of our investments in family services and ensuring better outcomes for Nunavummiut and the communities we serve.

The proposed funding increase will help the department strengthen how we support Nunavummiut by investing in the people who deliver these services every day. This includes hiring more front-line staff and expanding training, so employees are better equipped to respond to the complex and evolving needs of individuals and families in our communities.

It also supports individuals in building a path forward by preparing them for meaningful work through employment readiness programming, training, and related supports, helping people move toward greater independence and stability for themselves and their families.

Together, these investments will help ensure that programs and services are delivered consistently and with care across the territory, in a way that reflects both our responsibilities and the trust that communities place in us.

Mr. Chair, this proposed operating budget will also allow the department to support the Government of Nunavut to advance the *Ikajuqtigiikta* mandate priorities and associated government-wide strategies aimed at improving the health and well-being of Nunavummiut.

I am happy to respond to questions from Committee of the Whole members on the proposed 2026-2027 Main Estimates and Business Plan of the Department of Family Services.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Healey Akearok. Does the chair of the standing committee have opening comments? Please proceed, Mr. Porter.

**Mr. Porter:** Thank you, Chair. I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Wellness on its review of the proposed 2026-2027 Main Estimates and 2026-2030 Business Plan the Department of Family Services.

The department's proposed 2026-2027 operations and maintenance budget is \$251.805 million. This represents a 10.1 per cent increase from the 2025-2026 fiscal year. The number of positions in the department is increasing from 288.6 in the 2025-2026 fiscal year to 298.6 in the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

Members raised a number of issues and concerns during the minister's recent appearance before the standing committee.

During its winter 2026 sitting, the Legislative Assembly approved \$21.35 million in supplementary funding for the Department of Family Services to address "budget shortfalls" in a number of areas. The department's proposed 2026-2027 main estimates of \$251.805 million are \$23.280 million higher than the 2025-2026 main estimates. Members recognize the cost pressures facing the department and are hopeful that the increase will reduce the need for supplementary appropriations during the upcoming fiscal year.

The Government of Nunavut's December 31, 2025 Inuit Employment Plan quarterly report indicates that the department had an overall vacancy rate of approximately 40 per cent. The department's proposed 2026-2027 main estimates indicate that the number of positions in its Regional Operations Division is increasing from 114.6 PYs in the 2025-2026 fiscal year to 124.6 PYs in the 2026-2027 fiscal year. Given the department's challenges in filling its existing positions, it is unclear how successful it will be in filling the new positions.

Members are concerned that the department continues to lack indeterminate staff in a number of Nunavut's small communities. Members recognize that a number of factors are impacting the department's ability to hire employees, including a lack of housing and office space.

*The Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut: 2025 Follow-up on Child and Family Services in Nunavut* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on March 5, 2025. The Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts held a televised hearing on the report from April 29 to 30, 2025. During the Legislative Assembly's sitting of March 12, 2026, the Minister of Family Services announced that "the Office of the Auditor General of Canada has initiated a follow-up audit of the Department of Family Services' Family Wellness Division."

The standing committee expects that a televised hearing will take place on this report on a later date, which will provide an opportunity to examine the extent to which the department has been implementing its Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Action Plan.

The department's recent business plans have indicated that it has been reviewing the *Adoption Act*, the *Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act*, and the *Child and Family Services Act*. It is important that these reviews take into account the findings of the Office of the Auditor General, including those that were included in its 2011 report to the Legislative Assembly, which was tabled over fifteen years ago.

The 2026-2030 Business Plan of the Department of Family Services indicates that one of its planned actions for the 2026-2027 fiscal year is to "conduct internal and partner discussions to inform development of a pathway within Family Wellness to support Inuit social work graduates from Nunavut Arctic College interested in child protection roles." Nunavut Arctic College's 2026-2030 Business Plan indicates that one of its planned actions for the 2026-2027 fiscal year is to "conduct feasibility research into delivery of the Bachelor of Social Work degree across three regions, and evaluate outcomes to inform scalable territorial expansion." Members encourage the Department of Family Services and Nunavut Arctic College to work closely together to address the urgent need for more Nunavut Inuit to fill these critical positions. Members also encourage the department to remove artificial barriers that may prevent graduates from the program from obtaining work experience with the department.

A new *Apprenticeship and Certification Act* received Assent on June 8, 2021. However, the legislation is not yet in force. The department's 2026-2030 Business Plan indicates that one of its planned actions for the 2026-2027 fiscal year is to "develop regulations to support the coming into force of the *Apprenticeship and Certification Act*." The standing committee encourages the department to work closely with Nunavut Arctic College, which is responsible for the Sanatuliqsarvik Trades Training Centre in Rankin Inlet, and the Nunavut Housing Corporation, on this initiative.

The 2023-2024 annual report under the *Collaboration for Poverty Reduction Act* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on February 25, 2025. Members look forward to the timely tabling of the 2024-2025 annual report. The most recent annual report indicated that the department had "completed a feasibility study on a Guaranteed Basic Income Program for Nunavut."

The final report from this study indicated that:

"We learned that a Universal Basic Income, which is a cash transfer paid to everyone regardless of income and without any conditions attached, of any significant amount is financially infeasible for the territorial government to fund. An income-tested basic income would cost less, but still require significantly increased financing to have a discernible impact on monetary poverty." The standing committee encourages the department to continue to work to identify realistic and affordable approaches to reducing poverty and to focus efforts on addressing child poverty.

That concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2026-2027 main estimates and 2026-2030 Business Plan of the Department of Family Services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Porter. Do members have any comments before we proceed to detailed questions? Seeing none, we will now proceed to the page-by-page review of the 2026-2027 main estimates, starting on page L-4, which is Corporate Management Branch summary, total operations and maintenance, \$7,811,000. Do members have any questions? Mr. Attagutaluk.

**Mr. Attagutaluk:** Thank you, Chair. During the winter sitting, the Legislative Assembly approved 21.35 million in funding for the Department of Family Services to address budget shortfalls incurred during the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

The 2026-2027 main estimates of the Department of Family Services have increased by 10.1 per cent.

How confident are you that this will be adequate to prevent the need for supplementary appropriation during the upcoming fiscal year? Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Attagutluk. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the member for the question.

With Family Services, a number of our services are what we would call demand-driven, and so we don't always know, basically, in any given year what the demand will be for our services. So our services related to family wellness and income assistance continue to shift year to year, and month to month, and week to week.

Our supplementary appropriation request was largely due to an increase in demand for those services, and anticipating the level that we're at right now, the current budgetary request is based on that evidence that we have in front of us now. And not knowing entirely the scope of the demand we will have for 2026-2027, this is our best estimate of our anticipated need for those services and the costs associated with them.  
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Healey Akearok. Mr. Attagutluk, Done? Members? Do members agree with the Department of Family Services Corporate Management Branch, total operations and maintenance of \$7,811,000?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Please go to page L-5. We'll now review the Department of Family Services Family Wellness Branch. Total operations and maintenance of \$140,750,000. Do members have any questions? Mr. Kuliktana.

**Mr. Kuliktana:** Thank you, Chair. The Government of Nunavut's December 31, 2025 Inuit Employment Plan Quarterly Report indicates that department had 100 per cent vacancy rates in the following communities: Chesterfield Inlet, Resolute Bay, Sanikiluaq, and Sanirajak.

What specific challenges have been identified in filling these positions? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kuliktana. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question.

There are two factors that we've identified. One is a bit more of a global factor in that social workers are highly trained professionals that are in high demand across Canada, and so we are in competition with all of our other provinces and territories in terms of

recruiting and keeping our social workers. In specific communities, to the member's question, our challenges are related to the need for office space and the need for staff housing.

I would also like to add that while it appears there are vacancies in staffing indeterminate positions, in reality, we are filling those positions through casual workers so that the services can continue to be delivered. We want to make sure there's always someone there to answer the call as much as possible, and so that has been the interim measure to date. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Healey Akearok. Mr. Kuliktana.

**Mr. Kuliktana:** Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister, for your response.

How is your department delivering child protection and other services in communities where all of its positions are vacant? Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kuliktana. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair. (interpretation ends) As I mentioned, we're providing services through the use of casual social workers to fill those gaps in services. We also work closely with our partners in the RCMP and other community-based partners, depending on which community has different resources, different organizations working to support the work at Family Services. And so together those strategies are helping us fill those gaps. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Healey Akearok. Next on my list is Mr. Kablutsiak.

**Mr. Kablutsiak:** Thank you, Chair. Before I ask my question, with the recent graduation in Arviat with the Nunavut Arctic College social work program, and I'll relate my comment to my question.

Your department's draft 2026-2027 main estimates indicate that the number of positions in the regional operations division is increasing from 114.6PYs in the 2025-2026 fiscal year to 124.6 PYs in the 2026-2027 fiscal year. What positions are being created? Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the important question.

Those positions are wholly dedicated to fulfilling our commitment through the Suicide Prevention Action Plan, and so those positions will be front-line social worker positions that are focused on prevention initiatives. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Healey Akearok. Mr. Kablutsiak.

**Mr. Kablutsiak:** Thank you for your response. How many of the division's positions are currently vacant? Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair. (interpretation ends) If the member could just clarify if that's the entire department or just Family Wellness. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Kablutsiak.

**Mr. Kablutsiak:** Yes, I am under Family Wellness, and the question is: How many of the division's positions are currently vacant? Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair. (interpretation ends) In the Family Wellness division, we currently have 67 positions and 36 are currently vacant.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Healey Akearok. Any other questions from members on Family Wellness Branch? Mr. Qavvik.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Minister, and your officials.

You mentioned there are casual workers within communities identified where Inuit employment rates are 100 per cent vacancies, and that includes my constituency of Hudson Bay, Sanikiluaq.

I would like to know, for my first question: Is there a casual worker currently stationed in Sanikiluaq? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qavvik. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question and for highlighting the needs of his home community.

I'm actually happy to report that there is a filled indeterminant position now in Sanikiluaq. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Qavvik.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your response. It's good to have someone in indeterminant position in any department.

Under the action items for this fiscal year, 2026-2027, the last bullet "Conduct internal and partner discussions," I would like to ask if you can provide an update on efforts to conduct internal and partner discussions to develop a clear pathway within Family Wellness to support any social workers and graduates from Nunavut Arctic College who are interested in child protection roles. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qavvik. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the follow-up question.

This is a topic that is extremely important to us in the department, and in fact I'm going to be speaking with many of the NAC students in the Social Work Program tomorrow.

I'm happy to report that we are working on that pathway that will involve hiring and training and mentoring new graduates into these positions.

We currently have had ten practicum students doing their practicums with the department. We have also hired five summer students.

These are some of the steps we're taking along that pathway to make sure the Nunavut Arctic College students are coming to us. We want them in our department, so we are extremely motivated to make sure we find those pathways to employment with our department, recognizing their skills are very competitive. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Healey Akearok. Mr. Qavvik.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister. What barriers have been identified that permit Inuit social work graduates from entering child protection roles, and how will this pathway address them? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qavvik. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question.

Previously there was a minimum work experience that was part of the screening process, and those barriers have been addressed now. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Any other questions from members or Family Wellness Branch? Mr. Kablutsiak.

**Mr. Kablutsiak:** Thank you, Chair. Your department's proposed 2026-2027 main estimates indicate that the Family Wellness Branch's budget for service contracts is increasing from 76.81 million in the 2025-2026 fiscal year to 86.477 million in the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

This represents an increase of 12.4 per cent. What accounts for this increase? Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question.

Our service contracts in this division are largely for the specialized services that children with complex needs require. This again is related to our demand-driven services. We don't know in any given year what the demand will be for services for children who have complex needs, such as complex medical needs, and maybe in a residential specialized facility accessing additional care.

This request for this 2026-2027 year is based on what we know now, the increase from last year for services for complex needs for children in our care.

And I would also note for the committee that we have been reviewing our contracts to ensure that we are realizing efficiencies across all of our contracts for this division as well. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Healey Akearok. Mr. Kablutsiak, go ahead.

**Mr. Kablutsiak:** Thank you, Chair, and I thank you for your response.

Your department's 2025-2026 business plan indicated that one of its priorities was to "finalize legislation proposal to make amendments to the *Adoption Act*, the *Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act*, and the *Child and Family Services Act*."

As of today, what is the status of this work, and what is your department's timetable for introducing bills in the Legislative Assembly?

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chair, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question.

The policy intentions paper is being finalized for cabinet consideration, and we're hoping to be able to put it forward in 2027-2028. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Kablutsiak, any other questions? Go ahead.

**Mr. Kablutsiak:** What specific amendments to the *Adoption Act* and *Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act* are being considered?

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(interpretation ends) The amendments are being examined in the context of updating the legislation to be more current and relevant to our families in Nunavut.

It has been quite some time since that legislation has been visited, and we'll be engaging with our stakeholders and partners through the appropriate processes to determine the full scope of the amendments that will be needed. We look forward to keeping the committee updated. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Healey Akearok. Mr. Kablutsiak.

**Mr. Kablutsiak:** Thank you, Chair, and I thank you for your response.

What specific amendments to the *Child and Family Services Act* are being considered? Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you Mr. Kablutsiak. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(interpretation ends) Specifically we would be examining our legislation in relation to Bill C-92, the federal legislation related to, specific to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children.

We would also be looking to modernize the act in general, and make sure it's in alignment with today's best practices in child and family services. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Healey Akearok. Mr. Kablutsiak.

**Mr. Kablutsiak:** Thank you, Chair, and I'll ask my last and final question for this page.

Your department's client travel policy, foster care rates policy, foster care special entitlements policy, and support services extended support agreement policy all sunsetted on March 31, 2025. What specific changes to the policies are being considered?

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(interpretation ends) The Department of Family Services has been working to implement the Ilagiitsiarniq Strategic Action Plan, which was the plan that was shared after the last Office of the Auditor General audit. These policies are being subsequently re-examined to be more in line with the standards and practices that have been put in place in the sequencing of the actions in our strategic plan. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Healey Akearok. Any other questions under Family Wellness Branch? Seeing none, do members agree with the, sorry? Do members agree with the Department of Family Services Family Wellness Branch total operations and maintenance of \$140,757,000.

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Please go to page L-6. We'll now review the Department of Family Services Income Assistance Branch. Total operations and maintenance, \$74,290,000. Do members have any questions? Mr. Kautuk.

**Mr. Kautuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(interpretation ends) The 2026-2030 Business Plan indicates that one of its planned actions for the 2026-2027 fiscal year is to "conduct planning and analysis support legislative reform of the *Income Assistance Act and Regulations* and the *Senior Citizen Supplementary Benefit Act and Regulations*."

What specific amendments are being considered? Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kautuk. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question.

Again, we're looking to modernize our legislation to make sure it better reflects and represents the values of our communities, and is in line with what Nunavummiut want to see in such legislation.

Again, this is one that has not been visited in quite some time, and we look forward to having the opportunity to modernize that legislation for Nunavummiut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Healey Akearok. Mr. Kautuk.

**Mr. Kautuk:** Thank you, Chairman, and thank you for the response. What is your department's timeline for introducing bills in the Legislative Assembly to amend these statuses? Thank you, Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kautuk. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the follow-up question.

We are aiming for 2027-2028 to introduce that. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Kuliktana.

**Mr. Kuliktana:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Your department's 2026-2030 Business Plan indicates that of its planned actions for the 2026-2027 fiscal year is to reform and update the Daycare User Subsidy Program by simplifying the application process, integrating it into their income support delivery system and developing a communication strategy to promote program update.

What specific changes to the process are being considered? Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kuliktana. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question.

I'm so glad for this question. The daycare subsidy program provides a subsidy to low income families to help access daycare for their children so that they can attend school or work outside the home, and eligibility for the program is based on income.

At the moment the program is not well used, and so we're examining all the opportunities to expand communication around that program and make sure all those who want to use it are able to access it and are aware of it. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Healey Akearok. Mr. Kuliktana.

**Mr. Kuliktana:** Thank you, Chair. You just mentioned that the subsidy program is determined by income threshold. As you know, in our smaller communities, even with both parents working, sometimes that threshold can be very challenging.

So would you consider making amendments in the future to disallow that threshold and determine the community needs in the subsidy program? Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kuliktana. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the follow-up question.

We absolutely welcome all opportunities to improve our programs and welcome the input, and absolutely will consider everything. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Healey Akearok. Next on my list, Mr. Qavvik.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the Business Plan 2026-2027 the second bullet, "Conduct planning and analysis to support legislative reform of the *Income Assistance Act and Regulations* and the *Senior Citizens Supplementary Benefit Act and Regulations*", what key issues have been identified in the current legislation that are driving the need for reform? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qavvik. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(interpretation ends) As I stated earlier, the purpose is to modernize and to bring forward this Act so that it reflects the needs of Nunavummiut so that it reflects Inuit *Qaujimagatuqangit*, and brings the legislation forward into today's times. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Healey Akearok. Mr. Qavvik.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister. Will this proposed reform address adequacy of benefits to better reflect the high cost of living in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qavvik. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the follow-up question.

We do anticipate looking at the whole system. So, yes, we do anticipate looking at the rates and the subsequent regulations that will come from a revised piece of legislation and recognizing the cost pressures on Nunavummiut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Qavvik, go ahead.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. What timeline has been established for putting forward amendments to these acts and regulations? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qavvik. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the follow-up question.

That Policy Intentions Paper is in development this summer, in 2026, and it will be submitted for cabinet consideration, and then we're looking to 2027-2028 year for putting it forward. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, minister. Any other questions under Family Services Income Assistance Branch? Mr. Kablutsiak.

**Mr. Kablutsiak:** Thank you, Chair. The *Income Assistance Regulations* were most recently amended in March of 2023 to increase Nunavut basic allowance rates. When will the increase to the rates be made? Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question.

We will be examining those rates, and that information is part of this process. This Policy Intentions Paper process that I mentioned will be examining the regulations as well, all as part of this process that I described. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Kablutsiak.

**Mr. Kablutsiak:** I don't think I caught what you said, but when will the next increase to the rates be made? Maybe perhaps I didn't catch that part, but I ask that again. Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize for not being clear enough for the member.

The rates are being examined as part of examining the regulations, and that's tied to the process of examining the legislation.

So we don't have a date, specifically a date for when those rates would be adjusted. We just have the date at the moment for our timeline for examining the *Income Assistance Act and Regulations*, which is beginning this summer. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Kablutsiak.

**Mr. Kablutsiak:** Thank you. And that answers my question. I don't have any other questions related with the Income Assistance Branch. Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Next on my list I have Mr. Porter.

**Mr. Porter:** Thank you, Chair. A new *Apprenticeship and Certification Act* received assent on June 8, 2021. The legislation is not yet in force.

Your department's 2026-2030 Business Plan indicates that one of its planned actions for 2026-2027 fiscal year is to develop regulations and to support the coming into force of the *Apprenticeship and Certification Act*.

Why has it taken almost five years to develop the regulations? Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Mr. Porter, right now we're on the Income Assistance Branch. The next one after this gets approved will be the Career Development one, and you can ask that question then.

I do have Mr. Qavvik on the list here. Go ahead.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask how many income assistance clients we have in the territory, and how much is it costing the territory annually. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Qavvik. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) and I thank my officials for double-checking my numbers for me.

The cost of income assistance annually is in the neighbourhood of \$60 million a year. The number fluctuates as well in terms of households, but we're in the neighbourhood of 5,000 heads of households who are accessing income assistance. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Healey Akearok. I have no other names on my list for this branch. So do members agree with the Department of Family Services, Income Assistance Branch, total operations and maintenance of \$74,290,000?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Please go to page L-7, and we'll now review the Department of Family Services Career Development Branch. Total operations and maintenance, \$15,476,000.

Mr. Porter, I'll start with you.

**Mr. Porter:** Thank you, Chair. A new *Apprenticeship and Certification Act* received ascent on June 8, 2021. The legislation is not yet in force. Your department's 2026-2030 Business Plan indicates that one of its planned actions for 2026-2027 fiscal year is to develop regulations to support coming into force of the *Apprenticeship and Certification Act*.

Why has it taken almost five years to develop the regulations? Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Porter. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question.

The department has been undertaking significant consultations with our stakeholders and with our industry partners. That has been part of the process. We do look forward to

continuing those consultations through the summer of 2026. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Healey Akearok. Mr. Porter.

**Mr. Porter:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you for the response. Your department's Career Development Training Support Policy sunsetted on March 31, 2025. Your department's 2026-2030 Business Plan indicates that one of its planned actions for 2026-2027 fiscal year is to modernize the Adult Learning and Training Support Policy setting pathways for Nunavummiut youth to access training, certifications and employment opportunities.

Is the Career Development Training Support Policy the same policy as the Adult Learning and Training Support Policy? Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Porter. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I can confirm for the member that yes, it is. *Qujannamiik*.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Porter, do you have any other questions? No? Any other members with questions for Career Development Branch? Mr. Qammaniq?

**Mr. Qammaniq:** Thank you, Chair. What specific changes to the policy are being considered?

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Recognizing that all of our learners in Nunavut deserve support, we have been working to explore ways to ensure the ALTS Policy, the Adult Learning Training Support Policy is in line with FANS, the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students Policy, to ensure the supports are equitable across departments and for all our learners in Nunavut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Healey Akearok. Mr. Qammaniq.

**Mr. Qammaniq** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you.

(interpretation ends) Your department's 2026-2030 Business Plan indicates that one of its planned actions for the 2026-2027 fiscal year is to support government efforts to increase employment-focused training across priority sectors by establishing formal partnerships with Inuit organizations and private sector employers, and launch a jointly delivered employment-focused training initiative.

What sectors of the economy have been identified as being priority sectors?

*Qujannamiik.*

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qammaniq. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question. All sectors are considered for sure, 100 per cent, but some examples include the marine sector. What's the word I'm looking for? We shared an exciting partnership regarding the marine sector last week.

We're also looking at all the trades, of course, because we have strong relationships with the trades, as that's within our Career Development Division as well.

We continue to explore all the other opportunities as well to bolster employment opportunities in all our sectors across Nunavut.

We are also a partner department in the mine training strategy as well for the Government of Nunavut. So we're looking at all sectors. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, minister. Go ahead. Next on my list is Mr. Qavvik.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Earlier this week I believe, you made a minister's statement in regards to the Nailed It! Program.

I would like to ask for an update on efforts to finalize the program design and delivery plan with Nunavut Arctic College for that specific program, including curriculum, intake approach, and delivery schedule. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you Mr. Qavvik. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question.

For the Department of Family Services component, we are examining some of the components related to the trades entrance exam, for example.

The specific detailed components of the program and curriculum and so on are more the domain of the Nunavut Arctic College whom we partner with on this program, and I believe the plan is for that work to continue over this summer and more information in the fall. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Minister Qavvik, go ahead.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, minister, for your response.

How is the department ensuring this program leads directly to employment opportunities upon completion? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Qavvik. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question. If the Chair will allow, Deputy Minister Ellsworth can provide that level of detail. *Qujannamiik*.

**Speaker:** Thank you. Go ahead, Deputy Minister Ellsworth. We will see.

**Mr. Jonathan Ellsworth:** It's important to note for the Committee's reference that the Department of Family Services' role in the context of the Nailed It! Program arises from its function under the apprenticeship regulations and legislation, and so the Nailed It! Program will have to meet certain minimum standards to be able to be considered an equivalent to the trades entrance exam that currently is another option to enter the trade.

So the success of the program will largely be dictated by the success of the college's approach to the way it engages it.

Our role is simply confirming whether or not it is a trades entrance exam equivalent.

We are more than happy of course to support different ways to enter the trades, and of course, if Nunavummiut are entering the trades, our other benefits and supports will also take place through the lens of ensuring that they have positive outcomes and meaningful employment opportunities moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Deputy Ellsworth. No more questions? Any other members with questions? Mr. Mike.

**Mr. Mike** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Your department's 2026-2030 Business Plan indicates that one of its planned actions for the 2026-2027 fiscal year is to support strategic coordination of food security priorities by re-establishing the territorial food security coalition.

Why has the coalition been inactive in recent years? Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Mike. I believe that question is a poverty reduction question, for the next branch. Right now we're still on Career Development Branch. When we get to the next branch, I'll allow you to ask that question again.

Any other questions from members on Career Development Branch? Seeing none, do members – sorry, Mr. Kablutsiak.

**Mr. Kablutsiak:** Thank you, Chair. Before we move on, I'll just ask one question.

Which private sector employers have agreed to participate in this initiative?

And this relates to your Business Plan 2026-2030 indicates that one of its planned actions for the 2026-2027 fiscal year is to support government efforts to increase employment-focused training across priority sectors by establishing formal partnerships with Inuit organizations and private sector employers, and launch a jointly delivered employment-focused training initiative.

So my question is: Which private sector employers have agreed to participate in this initiative? Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kablutsiak. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question. We are just pulling up that detail for the member. If you'll give us just a moment here. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(interpretation ends) Our department, in partnership with NCC Development Limited, has been delivering the Build Trades Helper pilot program since 2025.

In addition, in 2025-2026, Career Development supported Agnico Eagle Mines Limited in delivering the AEM underground mining program.

And some of those participants were offered employment as miners and haul truck drivers as well afterwards.

We are currently continuing to explore additional partnership opportunities in the mining sector and with organizations with youth mandates to further expand those employment-focused training initiatives. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Healey Akearok. Mr. Kablutsiak? No. Okay, thank you.

Any other questions for Career Development Branch? Seeing none, do members agree with the Department of Family Services Career Development Branch total operations and maintenance of \$15,476,000?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Please go to page L-8. We will now review the Department of Family Services Poverty Reduction Branch total operations and maintenance, \$13,471,000. Mr. Mike, I'll start with you.

**Mr. Mike** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The department's 2026-2030 Business Plan indicates that one of its planned actions for the 2026-2027 fiscal year is to support strategic coordination of food security priorities by re-establishing the territorial food security coalition.

Why has this coalition been inactive in recent years? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Mike. Go ahead, Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question.

The pause on activities have largely been related to capacity, although we are continuing to support territorial food security coordination in other ways, including continuing our collaborations of course with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Department of Health to explore other initiatives, such as funding for full-time young hunter mentorship programs and providing funding to community-based organizations as well. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Any other questions from members for Poverty Reduction Branch? Mr. Attagutaluk.

**Mr. Attagutaluk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(interpretation ends) The *Makimaniq Five-Year Poverty Reduction Action Plan, 2017-2022* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on March 13, 2017. Your department's 2026-2030 Business Plan indicates that one of its planned action for the 2026-2027 fiscal year is to "finalize the Makimaniq 3 Five-Year Poverty Reduction Plan."

As of today, what is the status of this work? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Attagutaluk. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question.

This work is currently in development and we're looking to table the document in fall 2026. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Healey Akearok. Mr. Attagutaluk.

**Mr. Attagutaluk:** Thank you, Minister, for the response. How is the new five-year plan expected to be different from the previous plan? Thank you, Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Attagutaluk. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) One of the key differences is that we're seeking to have strengthened collaboration and alignment with Article 32 of the Nunavut Agreement. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Next on my list I have Mr. Qavvik.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the business plan action items 2027-2028, the third bullet indicates "with government partners, discussing some policy changes supporting the sale and trade of country food as a means of supporting a liveable income and food sovereignty.

I would like to ask the minister if she can provide an update on how the department is engaging with government partners to advance discussions on policy changes that would support the sale and trade of country food as a means of strengthening liveable income and food sovereignty in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you Mr. Qavvik. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the question.

We recognize the immense importance of country food in our lives and in our diets. It's one of the most nutritious, amazing foods available to us, so of course we make sure it's a priority in our food security and poverty reduction initiatives.

At the moment, the Poverty Reduction Division is undertaking research and assessments. That's where we are in the process.

And going forward into the 2027-2028 actions, we will anticipate working with all of our colleagues across the government and our stakeholder colleagues as well and our partners in the territory to explore all of the different parameters that would be needed to dive further into this issue. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Just before we go further, I would just like to remind the members to make sure that you speak slower so the interpreters can translate fully what's being talked about. Thanks for that. Minister Qavvik.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll talk slower.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask: Which department and regional partners are involved in these discussions, and what progress has been made to date? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qavvik. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the follow-up question.

It's still early days for this particular action item, but we for sure will be engaging with our colleagues at Community Services and the Department of Health, and other stakeholders will continue to be identified as this action item takes shape.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Qavvik.

**Mr. Qavvik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister.

What specific regulatory or policy barriers have been identified that currently limit the sale and trade of country food in the territory? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Qavvik. Minister Healey Akearok.

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) and I thank the member for the follow-up question.

That research is still ongoing and we're still identifying them at this time. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Any other questions from members? Seeing none, do members agree with the Department of Family Services Poverty Reduction Branch total operations and maintenance of \$13,471,000?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Please go to L-3. Do members agree with the Department of Family Services 2026-2027 main estimates total operations and maintenance of \$251,805,000?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Do members agree we have concluded with the Department of Family Services?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Any closing comments, Minister Healey Akearok?

**Hon. Gwen Healey Akearok** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman (interpretation ends) I would just like to thank the members of the committee for their attention and for their thoughtful questions, because we all care so deeply about Nunavummiut.

I also would like to extend my immense thanks to my officials who joined me here today, and all of our department staff who are working behind the scenes. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

*>>Applause*

**Chairman:** Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Taqtu.

**Mr. Taqtu:** Thank you, Chair. I move a motion to report progress. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman:** Thank you. There's a motion on the floor which is non-debatable. Those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? Motion is carried. I will now rise to report progress.

*>>Committee adjourned at 16:48 and House resumed at 16:49*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Report of the Committee of the Whole, Mr. Pedersen.

### **Item 21: Report of the Committee of the Whole**

**Mr. Pedersen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 1, and I would like to report progress.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): The motion is in order. Is there a seconder? Mr. Taqtu.

To our agenda, 22, Third Reading of Bills. Clerk, *Orders of the Day*.

### **Item 23: Orders of the Day**

**Mr. Clerk** (interpretation): For tomorrow, May 29:

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 the Opening Address
10. Replies to Budget Address
11. Petitions
12. Responses to Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
21. Report of the Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. *Orders of the Day*.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Today our meeting is adjourned. Tomorrow we will commence on Friday, May 29 morning at 9 o'clock. Sergeant-at-Arms.

>> *House adjourned at 16:52*

