

MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE
**RENEWAL OF GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ANTI-
POVERTY ACTION PLAN**

September 22, 2017

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's time for this government to renew the GNWT Anti-Poverty Action Plan. The two-year plan expired in the last fiscal year, and when it was in currency it provided an important blueprint for addressing the needs of those who live in poverty or who are at risk of poverty. Now we need an updated and comprehensive plan that prioritizes actions to carry us forward in our common goal of reducing poverty.

Mr. Speaker, one of the limitations of the previous Territorial Anti-Poverty Action Plan was that it didn't include a monitoring, reporting, and evaluation framework, so it's hard to say now what effect poverty-reduction efforts have had. There was a commitment at the last Anti-Poverty Roundtable to develop this framework, but I am unsure what progress has been made on this.

Mr. Speaker, poverty remains a significant issue in the NWT. During the summer, the Conference Board of Canada produced a report measuring social outcomes in all three Territories. I'm going to highlight a few findings. The first is that a quarter of the Indigenous population lives in the bottom 20 per cent of household income. Secondly, almost a quarter of youth aged 20 to 24 are neither working nor in class. Third, income changes little across generations in the NWT, meaning that poor people remain poor.

Mr. Speaker, the Conference Board has three suggestions for improving social outcomes in the NWT. First is to have more people finish high school and post-secondary education, and we hear that's going the right direction from my colleague from Tu Nedhe. Then to bump up an income for people who do finish education, especially for Indigenous people, is very significant.

Second, we need to improve access to health care. I realize this is a challenge because of the limited health personnel available in remote communities, and I am also aware that the government is attempting to address both of these issues, both educational attainment and health.

The third suggestion, and the one that is the focus of my statement today, is to ensure there are ongoing investments in poverty reduction strategies. The starting point is to renew the Anti-Poverty Action Plan, introduce the evaluation framework, and prioritize action that not only alleviates poverty but moves people out of it for good. I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mahsi.