

MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

MANDATE COMMITMENTS

February 5, 2019

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the 18th Assembly will adjourn in 198 days. Thinking about it makes me anxious because we have so much to do by then. We all know that feeling of leaving town Saturday for a big holiday, with a full plate of work, things to get ready for the house sitter, and bags to pack. That is the feeling: lots to do, not much time. It is time to prioritize.

Mr. Speaker, according to the GNWT's mandate tracker, 109 of 188 mandate commitments are not yet fulfilled. I have questions about those marked fulfilled. For example, has the government fulfilled its commitment to reduce poverty? My answer is not yet, but using the government's rationale, 79 commitments have been fulfilled and an additional 109 are in progress.

Mr. Speaker, the mandate category lagging furthest behind is the economy, environment, and climate change. Forty-three of 68 commitments are still in progress, including 10 pieces of legislation, completing land use plans, and improving access to agricultural land. That is after the government's budget cutting has reduced the staff of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources by 10 percent. The department doesn't have the capacity to complete the work outlined in the mandate. This is substantial work that is important to the economic well-being of the territory as we embrace devolution and move toward the closure of the diamond mines.

Mr. Speaker, the category of community wellness and safety is also lagging behind, with 23 of 64 commitments in progress. We haven't yet seen the plan for recovering from addictions promised in the Mind and Spirit strategy tabled in 2016. Given that the homecare study is not yet complete, I wonder if the government is going to develop and implement an action plan in the next seven months. These are just samples of the unfulfilled commitments in every priority area.

Mr. Speaker, I ask myself why we have fallen behind, and one obvious answer is the work we have taken on through bilateral agreements with the federal government. We have taken Ottawa's priorities as our own, as the sessional statement demonstrated, because they are bringing substantial investment to the table. This money is welcome, of course, but it comes at a price. We are not fulfilling commitments we are funding ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, I am calling on my Caucus colleagues to meet and examine the mandate. We need to identify our priorities among all those in progress to ensure as many are fulfilled as possible in the next 198 days. Mahsi.