

## **Minister's Statement 86-14(5): GNWT Response to the Social Agenda Report**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*Mr. Speaker, in June of this year, we had the pleasure of advising this House that the Social Agenda Working Group had completed its report entitled Social Agenda: A Draft for the People of the NWT. Minister Miltenberger, who leads the implementation of the Social Agenda for the government, informed the House that the GNWT would be developing a detailed response to the report of the Social Agenda Working Group.*

*I am pleased today to advise the Members of the Legislative Assembly that the GNWT has completed this response, entitled Doing our Part: The GNWT's Response to the Social Agenda, which will be tabled later today by the Minister of Health and Social Services. In leading the government-wide initiative to implement the GNWT's response to the social agenda, Minister Miltenberger will be working with all Cabinet Ministers in co-operation with our partner agencies and organizations.*

*Mr. Speaker, when members of the Social Agenda Working Group held their conference in Hay River in June, 2001, we formed a partnership and committed to work together to improve the social conditions in which Northerners live. Members of the working group, which includes the GNWT, represent a broad cross-section of aboriginal, public government, and non-government agencies working to meet the needs of those people in our communities who are most in need of support. Improving the lives of Northerners is a cornerstone of this Legislative Assembly's agenda, and so this government continues to strongly support the efforts of the Social Agenda Working Group. There are some common themes running through the ten recommendations contained in the report of the Social Agenda Working Group. These range from recognizing that governments, social agencies and organizations must fundamentally change the way in which we work together, to trusting community leaders to know best how to affect change in their own home communities. We all have a personal responsibility to make healthy lifestyle choices. Government can contribute by removing barriers so that communities can better plan and set their own priorities. We understand that doing our part requires system wide changes and, in that vein, we have identified a series of actions -- concrete things that this government can do, within a number of departments, to make changes in areas that fall under our jurisdiction. Our response is, therefore, aimed at identifying the steps that this government will take in response to the recommendations directed towards us in the social agenda report, to contribute to positive social change for the benefit of all residents of the Northwest Territories. While we cannot do it all, nor cannot do it alone, we are prepared to make meaningful change in the way the GNWT does business. The Government of the Northwest Territories has a responsibility to work, in cooperation with our social agenda partners, so that we can overcome barriers and make improvements to the system recommended by those who know it best. The Social Agenda Working Group came together out of recognition that we can achieve a far greater impact on improving social conditions by working collectively than we can by working in isolation of one another. The response to the social agenda that we are presenting today signals the GNWT's commitment to continue the partnership started in Hay River.*

Mahsi Cho

