

**VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Support for the voluntary sector is a priority of this government. Yet voluntary sector organizations who deliver key human services continue to struggle to find funding to help improve salaries, keep their staff, pay their utility bills and keep their doors open to those in need. Their only options seem to be to cut services or to run a deficit.

Forced growth requests from NGOs throughout the NWT have been met with limited success, and some agencies are not even offered this opportunity. Family violence shelters have been instructed that help is on the way in the form of a GNWT review of sector financing.

This would be most welcome to the Sector.

Mr. Speaker, late in the last assembly, the Government expressed dismay at how they could operate a shelter for the same amount they have previously allocated to an NGO to operate it. Yet, little has been done to support these NGOs who provide incredibly valuable services to the people of the NWT.

As a note, the Family Violence Action Plan includes some relief for staff retention in this fiscal year, but not after that.

NGOs and other Voluntary Sector organizations would like some assurances that this review of sector financing will be timely, produce tangible results, and include their participation. Given that these, our stakeholders, are our best resource when discussing the challenges the Sector faces it would be unfortunate to not involve the sector in review and identification of solutions.

The clock is ticking and the human service agencies do not want to be forced to reduce key services year after year. It's not in the best interest of the people of the NWT for this to happen.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be asking the Premier some questions on this topic.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.