

MEMBER'S STATEMENT – GREAT SLAVE – JUNE 6, 2008

CLOSURE OF VOLUNTEER NWT

Today is a sad day for the voluntary sector and non-governmental organizations in the Northwest Territories. As of yesterday, due to lack of GNWT funding and support, Volunteer NWT had to close their doors.

Volunteer NWT has been a champion for the voluntary sector, which includes volunteer organizations as well as NGOs, by promoting and supporting this sector. They have worked towards increasing the number of Northerners helping out, providing communities and organizations with the tools to increase volunteerism, and setting up a formal network to support the long-term goals and work of volunteers and voluntary groups.

This Assembly's strategic plan indicates the desire to support the voluntary sector, yet when the rubber hits the road, it is clear that Cabinet does not actually support this sector. As such, Volunteer NWT is dead.

Volunteer NWT was able to find \$79,800 in project funding from the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation to assist with further work on financing relationship issues between the GNWT and the sector. Unfortunately, the funding does not include Volunteer NWT operating funds. Volunteer NWT does not believe there are reasonable expectations for success with such a project at this time in the absence of GNWT support.

There is still a need for the services that Volunteer NWT has provided. Their united voice has a place. Their dedication to act as a point of contact between the sector and the GNWT will be missed. There is much left to be done on the part of the GNWT to engage this sector.

The GNWT must develop a dialogue and work with this sector. This sector plays an important role in creating healthy communities. The GNWT's unwillingness to support and work with the volunteer sector

and Volunteer NWT is the North's loss. I encourage this government to reconsider their decision to not support Volunteer NWT.

At the appropriate time I'll be asking the Minister responsible for MACA questions on this issue. Thank you.