



UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON  
THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES  
ACTION PLAN REPORT

March | 2026

DÉCLARATION DES NATIONS UNIES  
SUR LES DROITS DES PEUPLES  
AUTOCHTONES  
RAPPORT DE PLAN D'ACTION

Mars | 2026

*Le présent document contient la traduction française du sommaire et de l'introduction.*

K'áhshó got'jne xədə k'é hederı ɔedjhtl'é yerınıwə nı dé dúle.  
Dene Kədə

ʔerıhtl'ıs Dēne Sųlıné yatı t'a huts'elkēr xa beyáyatı theɔą ɔat'e, nuwe ts'ēn yóftı.  
Dēne Sųlıné

Edı gondı dehgháh got'je zhaté k'éé edatl'éh enahddhə nıde naxets'é edahfı.  
Dene Zhaté

Jii gwandak izhii ginjik vat'atr'ijahch'uu zhit yinothan ji', diits'àt ginohkhii.  
Dinjii Zhu' Ginjik

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqluta.  
Inuvialuktun

Ć'đ< 00<sup>ab</sup>Δ<sup>c</sup> ΛϛLJ&ŕ<sup>c</sup> Δ.đ'0>ċ<sup>ab</sup>ŕL>0<sup>b</sup>, Đ<ċ<sup>c</sup>ŕ<sup>a</sup>.đ<sup>c</sup> Đ<sup>đ</sup>ċ<sup>c</sup>ŕ<sup>a</sup>.đ<sup>c</sup>Đ0<sup>c</sup>.  
Inuktitut

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.  
Inuinnaqtun

kıspin ki nitawıhtın ē nıhıyawıhk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.  
nēhiyawēwin

Tłıchq yatı k'èè. Dı wegodı newq dè, gots'ó gonede.  
Tłıchq

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## Executive Summary

This annual report focuses on the work the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is doing to implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Implementation Act* (the *Act*). It has been co-developed by the Action Plan Committee (APC) with input provided by all GNWT departments.

The work is continuously evolving and requires meaningful engagement with Indigenous governments and organizations across the Northwest Territories. The implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (the UN Declaration) is critical to the ongoing path to reconciliation.

GNWT departments have provided updates on work that aligns with the *Act*, in addition to the APC's recommendations and next steps. This annual report highlights the measures taken under the *Act*, including the preparations and implementation of departmental actions and initiatives for the action plan by each department and public agency.

The APC is currently co-developing the action plan to implement the UN Declaration. The action plan will provide markers to measure true reconciliation and the importance of stepping forward together with Indigenous governments and organizations. The 2025 annual report, and subsequent future annual reports, will track the progress the GNWT is making in implementing the UN Declaration.

## Sommaire

Ce rapport annuel présente les actions entreprises par le gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (GTNO) pour appliquer la *Loi de mise en œuvre de la Déclaration des Nations Unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones* (la *Loi*). Il a été élaboré par le Comité de plan d'action (CPA) à partir de commentaires fournis par tous les ministères du GTNO.

Le processus ne cesse d'évoluer et nécessite des échanges importants avec les gouvernements et les organisations autochtones des Territoires du Nord-Ouest. La mise en œuvre de la Déclaration des Nations unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones (la Déclaration des Nations unies) est essentielle au chemin vers la réconciliation.

Les ministères ont fait le point sur les travaux prévus par la *Loi*, sur les recommandations du CPA et sur les prochaines étapes à franchir. Le présent rapport présente les mesures prises en vertu de la *Loi* ainsi que les travaux effectués par chaque ministère et organisme public pour préparer et mettre en œuvre les mesures et les initiatives prévues dans le plan d'action.

Le CPA collabore actuellement à l'élaboration du plan d'action pour mettre en œuvre la Déclaration des Nations unies. Ce plan fournira des indicateurs de l'évolution des efforts de réconciliation et de l'importance d'aller de l'avant avec les gouvernements et les organisations autochtones. Le présent rapport annuel et les rapports annuels ultérieurs permettront de suivre les progrès réalisés par le GTNO dans la mise en œuvre de la Déclaration des Nations unies.

# Introduction

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) is an international instrument that outlines the fundamental human rights of Indigenous peoples worldwide. The UN Declaration recognizes the rights of Indigenous peoples, both as individuals and as a collective, to self-determination, culture, language, and traditional lands. It describes the minimum standards of rights required to protect the survival, dignity, and well-being of Indigenous peoples.

With the passing of the *United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Implementation Act*, (the *Act*), the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) commits to reporting on the progress made in implementing the UN Declaration. This annual report has been prepared in collaboration with Indigenous governments and organizations of the Action Plan Committee (APC).

This annual report highlights department specific projects, initiatives and reforms that reflect current work of the GNWT on the implementation of the UN Declaration. The work highlighted in this annual report, however, is not the only way the GNWT is moving forward with Indigenous governments and organizations towards reconciliation. Unique forums, partnerships and government-to-government relationships are a fundamental aspect of the way life in the North. Weaved throughout the annual report are updates on the Northwest Territories Council of Leaders (NWTCOL) and the Intergovernmental Council (IGC). A consistent thread at these forums is the importance of the UN Declaration.

The UN Declaration is a valuable tool that describes specific rights of Indigenous peoples and the actions governments must take to protect those rights. Both the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) include calls for all levels of government to adopt the UN Declaration as a framework for reconciliation with Indigenous peoples across Canada.

## Context

Article 38 of the UN Declaration directs governments to work in cooperation and collaboration with Indigenous peoples to implement the provisions of the UN Declaration.

*“States, in consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples, shall take the appropriate measures, including legislative measures, to achieve the ends of this Declaration” (Article 38, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.)*

The *Act* formalizes the mechanisms the GNWT will use to work with Indigenous governments and organizations to ensure that future laws, regulations, and policies are consistent with the UN Declaration. Established through the *Act*, the APC consists of representatives from the GNWT, and interested Indigenous governments and organizations.

As defined in the *Act*, an Indigenous government or organization is “an entity that is authorized to act on behalf of Indigenous peoples that hold rights recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 and chosen by those Indigenous peoples in accordance with their own procedures and decision-making institutions to represent them and to act on their behalf.” The membership of the APC is open to any Indigenous government or organization that fits under this definition. Qualifying Indigenous entities that are currently not participating in the APC are welcome to join anytime, and any currently participating member can choose not to.

The main task of the APC is to co-develop an action plan that aligns GNWT laws and policies with the rights in the UN Declaration. The action plan is also a progress marker for the achievements and outstanding work on reaching the objectives of the *Act*.

The APC has other responsibilities as set out in the *Act*, including:

- facilitating collaboration and cooperation between the GNWT and Indigenous governments and organizations in preparing and implementing departmental actions and initiatives included in the action plan;
- reviewing, discussing, and determining common priorities and opportunities for collaboration and actions on a consensus basis;
- providing research and analysis of best practices and any other topic related to UN Declaration implementation in the form of reports from the APC to its members;
- monitoring the implementation of the action plan;
- conducting reviews and co-developing amendments to the action plan, and;
- making recommendations for proposed amendments to legislation and policies to be consistent with the UN Declaration.

The APC meets regularly to undertake its responsibilities outlined in the *Act*. Terms of Reference were established to help guide the relationship between the members of the APC and how they will work together collaboratively through consensus. The APC also developed a work plan to identify tasks and timelines needed for the APC to meet its roles and responsibilities.

The APC and GNWT are actively working together to find consensus on the proposed draft list of action items. The Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs (EIA), along with the APC, are requesting to brief the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight on the progress of the action plan and to advance work in a delayed timeframe by approximately 6 months.

The collaborative nature of developing the action plan, along with some proposed action items requiring more in-depth consideration, and the iterative discussions with departments on all action items, have resulted in a clear need to move slower and in a good way towards consensus on the action plan.

The development of the action plan involves the GNWT and the APC identifying an initial list of potential tasks, laws, and policies for review. This list is currently under development and will prioritize the implementation actions identified by the APC. Using the action plan to provide direction and guide implementation progress is critical to the GNWT's commitment to reconciliation and building strong, sustainable and respectful relationships with Indigenous governments and organizations.

The APC is also developing additional processes to be included in the action plan, ensuring transparency and ongoing tracking of progress made under the action plan.

# GNWT Departmental Actions and Updates on Implementation Activities

The ongoing work of implementing the UN Declaration requires a whole-of-government approach, in addition to working closely with Indigenous governments and organizations. Each GNWT department is working to implement the articles of the UN Declaration through its areas of responsibility. The following updates are not intended to be exhaustive of all the activities the departments have undertaken that may contribute to the implementation of the UN Declaration. Instead, these updates serve to highlight the areas where individual departments are directing resources that contribute to the implementation of the UN Declaration.

## *Executive and Indigenous Affairs*

### *UN Declaration Implementation*

Executive and Indigenous Affairs (EIA) is supporting and monitoring the implementation of the UN Declaration by the GNWT and is the lead in meeting the obligations of the GNWT under the *Act*. As part of this work, EIA is developing tools to create more awareness across the GNWT of the importance of the UN Declaration and to promote a whole-of-government approach to the implementation of the *Act*. To promote a holistic approach, EIA provides regular updates across departments and leadership on the work of the APC and supports departments with any questions on implementation of the *Act*.

### *Aboriginal Rights Agreements*

Aboriginal Rights Agreements are underway in all regions of the Northwest Territories (NWT) and are at various stages of advancement, as Indigenous governments seek to clarify their Aboriginal and treaty rights in the NWT. Aboriginal Rights Agreements may address only land and resources (these are typically referred to as land claim agreements) or they may include self-government provisions. Where land and resources agreements have already been settled, separate self-government agreements may be negotiated.

The GNWT will review its negotiating mandates, principles, and interests for self-government and land claim agreements and assess their alignment with the UN Declaration.

EIA also monitors and facilitates ongoing GNWT implementation obligations and activities pursuant to settled Aboriginal Rights Agreements and represents the GNWT on trilateral Implementation Committees tasked with monitoring and coordinating the overall implementation of the agreements.

The implementation division of EIA has developed an electronic Implementation and Reconciliation Accountability and Management System. The system provides the GNWT with a comprehensive oversight and data management tool that tracks the ongoing completion of departmental activities

that fulfill legal obligations under treaties and/or support claims implementation objectives, and tracks activities that fulfill articles of the UN Declaration, the TRC Calls to Action and the MMIWG Calls for Justice.

**Articles 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 31, 32, 33, 37, and 39.**

#### *Indigenous Intergovernmental Affairs*

The Indigenous Intergovernmental Relations Division (IIR division) is dedicated to fostering respectful, productive, and effective intergovernmental relationships between the GNWT and Indigenous governments. These relationships are essential to promoting collaboration on shared priorities and achieving common goals. Strong working partnerships also support and improve the social and economic well-being of NWT residents.

The IIR division serves as secretariat for two key multi-lateral forums with Indigenous governments:

- Intergovernmental Council (IGC) – the goal is to work together to explore ways to coordinate the respective land and resource management practices, including the collaborative development of land and resource legislation; and
- Northwest Territories Council of Leaders (NWTCOL) – the goal is to work together to strengthen government-to-government relations, and in so doing, establish a forum and process for leaders to discuss and advance shared concerns and priorities.

Both forums remain active and productive, demonstrating a strong and evolving partnership between the GNWT and Indigenous governments, in alignment with the principles of reconciliation and collaborative governance. This work is complementary to the bilateral intergovernmental Memoranda of Understanding that the GNWT has in place with eight Indigenous governments that set out regular annual meetings among leadership to discuss areas of shared concern and priority.

In October 2024, members of the NWTCOL, including the GNWT and Indigenous leaders, travelled to Ottawa to engage directly with federal ministers on issues of shared concern. This initiative, described by the Premier as “reconciliation in action”, provided a platform to highlight the NWT’s unique challenges and collectively advocate for federal support on key territorial priorities. NWTCOL convened in Ottawa a second time in October 2025, reaffirming the GNWT’s commitment to collaborative leadership and long-term partnership.

These efforts offer a valuable opportunity to advance a vision for a more sustainable, resilient, and healthy territory, grounded in partnership and mutual respect between the GNWT and Indigenous governments.

**Articles 5, 19, 23, 25, and 32**

### *Governance and Service Integration*

The goal of service integration is to make it easier for people to get the support they need by removing barriers and ensuring they can access multiple services within the GNWT at the same time seamlessly. Service integration is the process of bringing together different social programs, resources, and services to create coordinated and responsive systems for individuals and families.

The GNWT is establishing five Service Integration Teams (SIT) across the territory to begin this work with Yellowknife, Inuvik, Hay River, Fort Simpson, and Behchokò. In collaboration with Indigenous governments, community governments, and other partners, SITs will work to provide better access to programs and services by removing barriers commonly experienced by residents.

**Articles 15, 20, 21, 23, and 24.**

### *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)*

Gender-based violence, family violence, and MMIWG are overlapping and intersecting issues. In order to be effective, the GNWT approach must address each of these issues, as well as the underlying issues of gender equality and discrimination against two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual plus (2SLGBTQIA+) persons.

There are many Calls for Justice within Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* (Final Report), which have significant implications for the GNWT and NWT residents. In August 2019, the GNWT released *Doing our Part*, the initial response to the Final Report. *Doing our Part* also includes a commitment from the GNWT to work with the federal government, Indigenous governments, business sectors, and nongovernmental organizations to address the issue of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

As a first step, the GNWT identified the need to work with our partners in responding to the Calls for Justice through in-depth discussions on how we collaborate and how we come to a consistent understanding of the issues involved.

The next annual report on MMIWG, which describes the GNWT's progress on the actions set out in *Changing the Relationship: Action Plan* has been issued and posted to the GNWT website.

**Articles 15, 21, 22, and 44.**

*MMIWG Advisory Committee*

The MMIWG Advisory Committee commits to working with Indigenous governments and provides an accountability mechanism in working with MMIWG issues and Indigenous governments. The newly formed MMIWG Advisory Committee held its first introductory meeting in July 2025 and now meets regularly.

**Articles 15, 21, 22, and 44.**

*Truth and Reconciliation Commission Monument Project*

To help address the legacy of residential schools in Canada and advance the process of reconciliation the GNWT has been working to address TRC Call to Action #82, the installation of a Residential Schools Monument.

The GNWT is committed to a Survivor-led process for the Residential Schools Monument. Survivors and intergenerational survivors are involved in all phases of this project and will take the lead in determining which artist(s) and monument design will be chosen.

**Articles 8,11, 15, 21, 22, 39 and 44.**

*Family Information Liaison Unit*

The GNWT is committed to improving the safety and well-being of NWT Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQIA+, men and boys so that their future generations are granted the same safety and security as non-Indigenous people nation-wide.

The GNWT received a new five-year agreement with Justice Canada to continue the important work of the Family Information Liaison Unit from 2025 to 2030. This will provide financial support to ensure families are assisted when their family members go missing within the NWT and beyond.

**Articles 15, 21, 22, 39 and 44.**

*Gender-based violence prevention*

On behalf of the GNWT, and as a whole government approach, EIA facilitates the GNWT's response to the National Action Plan to end Gender-based Violence. This funding program financially contributes to Indigenous governments and Non-Profit Organizations in efforts to end gender-based violence (GBV) by contributing to existing GNWT programs and services and implementing prevention and awareness activities.

Financial support has been contributed to GNWT departments that flow the funding to NWT Family Violence Shelters, Transitional Housing Projects, Child and Family foster care program redesign and Community-Based Funding that focuses on prevention and awareness activities. The National Action Plan to end Gender-Based Violence funding has also provided financial support to the Project Coordinator, Gender Based Violence position within the Department of Education, Culture and

Employment (ECE), to facilitate gender-based violence prevention and awareness training and resources for NWT teachers, students and staff.

**Articles 15, 21, 22, 39 and 44.**

## *Education, Culture and Employment*

### *NWT Indigenous Languages Action Plan*

The Indigenous Languages Secretariat administers the NWT Indigenous Languages Action Plan: A Shared Responsibility 2018-2025 that supports the reclamation, revitalization, maintenance, and strengthening of NWT official Indigenous languages, and the expansion of public access to government programs and services in all official Indigenous languages. Jointly funded through the federal Canada-NWT Agreement for Indigenous Languages and the GNWT, the NWT Indigenous Languages Action Plan assists Indigenous governments to develop and implement their own regional Indigenous language plans and supports education bodies in the delivery of Indigenous languages and education programming that promote Indigenous worldviews, cultures, and languages. ECE works with education bodies from all regions to design and offer an Indigenous Language Employment Plan for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 Indigenous Language Instructors in NWT schools. With the current NWT Indigenous Languages Action Plan ending in 2025, work has begun on the next Action Plan to strengthen partnerships and better support the work led by Indigenous governments through a more cohesive, collaborative approach.

#### **Articles 13, 14, and 16.**

### *Dene Kədə, Inuuqatigiit Culture and Our Languages Curricula*

ECE continues to implement the *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit* foundational curricula within the themes of Indigenous revitalization and cultural integrity. The curricula were developed by Elders, Knowledge Keepers and educators from all regions of the NWT and aim to reflect northern Indigenous perspectives and practices in their teachings. This work promotes the cultural integrity of NWT Indigenous peoples by incorporating Indigenous languages, traditional knowledge, and cultural practices into territorial educational materials. Indigenous curricula support the continuity and revitalization of Indigenous cultures in accordance with the UN Declaration.

The Our Languages Curriculum (2020) is a competency-based curriculum that provides NWT Indigenous language educators with the instructional strategies and learning outcomes for core Indigenous language classes. The foundational curricula *Dene Kede* and *Inuuqatigiit* shaped this curriculum. Additionally, the Indigenous Languages and Education Handbook was created as a resource guide for all educators in implementing ECE's Indigenous Languages and Education Policy and operationalizing the Our Languages, *Dene Kede*, and *Inuuqatigiit* curricula.

#### **Articles 13, 14, and 15.**

### *Geographical and Community Names Policy*

The GNWT's *Geographical and Community Names Policy* recognizes that Indigenous place names for geographical features are important to the language, culture, and history of the Indigenous peoples of the NWT. The Policy promotes the official recognition of Indigenous place names for geographical

features to assure cultural continuity for the people of the NWT. ECE administers the process for changing official geographical place names and assists Indigenous communities with the process to restore Indigenous place names by making them official place names of the NWT and Canada. ECE officials also actively participate in working groups through the Geographical Names Board of Canada, which aims to increase awareness and facilitate the restoration of Indigenous place names on a national level.

The Policy is in the process of being updated with the participation of Indigenous governments to strengthen the GNWT's ability to support Indigenous people in restoring traditional and Indigenous place names.

### **Articles 11 and 13**

#### *Aurora College Transformation*

Aurora College's new governance system uses a proposed tricameral model of governance that includes the Board of Governors, Academic Council, and Indigenous Knowledge Holders Council. This model aims to strengthen the institution and make Aurora College a national leader in the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in strategic and operational decision-making. The Indigenous Knowledge Holders Council was established in April 2024 and promotes policies and operational decisions that foster the success of Indigenous students and staff at Aurora College and the overall success of the institution. The recommendations offered to the Board of Governors by the Indigenous Knowledge Holders Council are intended to inform decisions regarding academic and research programming and student supports.

### **Articles 14 and 21**

#### *Education Act Modernization*

Significant gaps in student outcomes exist between NWT students and the Canadian average; between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the NWT; and between Yellowknife and regional centres, and smaller communities. To improve student outcomes in the NWT, ECE is modernizing the *Education Act* and updating the legislative framework for the Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system.

Changes to the *Education Act* will seek to better support and align with self-government implementation, including the exercise of jurisdiction and assumption of responsibilities for education programs by Indigenous governments, as well as evolving governance approaches taken by Indigenous governments within the education system. Modernizing the *Education Act* includes a commitment to creating ways to support Indigenous governments to provide knowledge and leadership regarding education in their communities.

*Bill 81: An Act to Amend the Education Act No. 2.* received Assent in the 2023 Fall sitting of the Legislative Assembly. Initial engagement highlighted that more collaboration is required with Indigenous governments on further amendments so that Indigenous governments and communities

across the NWT can meaningfully lead and participate in the governance of a system that is educating future generations, in response to **Article 14**. Modernization involves longer-term discussions with Indigenous governments and education bodies about the future of the education system structure and governance in accordance with **Article 19**. In June of 2025, ECE met with the NWT COL to restart modernization discussions.

**Articles 14, 19 and 23**

*Gender-Based Violence Prevention in Education*

ECE is engaged in a multi-year GBV prevention initiative under the National Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence. This work builds educators and staff capacity to recognize, prevent, and respond to GBV in schools and early learning environments.

**Key 2024–25 progress includes:**

- NWT Educators Guide to GBV – a territorial resource outlining recognition, response, and prevention strategies, incorporating Indigenous perspectives, 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion, and intersectional approaches.
- Training Design and Piloting – development of workshop and online modules for educators, program support teachers, and school administrators, with pilots planned in multiple regions.
- Curriculum Integration – collaboration with working groups to embed GBV prevention benchmarks into the NWT Adapted Curriculum and align with Safe Schools legislation.
- Partnerships – engagement with Indigenous governments, non-governmental organizations, and federal partners to ensure cultural relevance, trauma-informed practice, and alignment with Calls for Justice from the MMIWG Final Report.

Planned 2025–26 activities include expanding training to all NWT education regions, refining resources through focus groups, and integrating GBV content into ConnectEd online learning for GNWT staff.

**Articles 14, 19, 21, 22, and 39**

## Environment and Climate Change

### Protected areas

The Department of Environment and Climate Change (ECC) supports Indigenous-led conservation and stewardship initiatives under the *Healthy Land, Healthy People* work plan to develop the NWT conservation network. ECC continues to collaborate with Indigenous governments and organizations to implement territorial protected areas under the *Protected Areas Act* as a shared responsibility to protect and maintain biodiversity, ecological integrity, and cultural continuity.

Currently, ECC is working to implement the shared management of two territorial protected areas:

- i) the Thaidene Nëné Territorial Protected Area, with operational partners Łutsël K'é Dene First Nation and Northwest Territory Métis Nation, regional partners Yellowknives Dene First Nation, and Deninu Kųé First Nation, and Parks Canada; and
- ii) the Ts'udé Niljné Tuyeta Territorial Protected Area with the K'asho Got'ine Dene and Métis of Fort Good Hope.

<b>Articles 29, 31 and Article 32</b>
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### Water management

The GNWT is responsible for managing water resources in the NWT through the administration of the *Waters Act* and regulations and parts of the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*.

The integrated systems of land and resources management within the Mackenzie Valley and in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region were established as a result of land and resources agreements with Indigenous governments. Indigenous governments with and without land, resources or self government agreements have a role in this system, primarily through the establishment and operation of regulatory co-management boards established to consider water licences, conduct environmental assessments, and ensure regulatory decisions consider Indigenous interests and traditional knowledge.

In 2009, ECC also established an Indigenous Steering Committee under the *Northern Voices, Northern Waters – NWT Water Stewardship Strategy* (NWT Water Stewardship Strategy), to guide development of the NWT Water Stewardship Strategy. The Indigenous Steering Committee continues to meet 2-4 times a year to discuss progress, identify priorities, provide guidance on implementing the NWT Water Stewardship Strategy and Action Plan, and act as an information conduit between the GNWT, Indigenous governments and organizations, and communities.

Working within established water co-management systems supports the ongoing implementation of land claims agreements and co-management systems in accordance with Article 37.

<b>Article 37</b>
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*Land management*

Since June 2023, ECC has piloted a new consultation and engagement process for proposed decisions respecting public land occupancy authorizations, such as leases. Under this pilot process, Indigenous governments and organizations may request a review of consultation and engagement carried out for a proposed decision to reconsider whether the GNWT met the duty to consult and accommodate in making the decision, and whether their additional concerns identified through engagement were considered. The pilot process was developed collaboratively by the IGC Secretariat technical working group on the *Public Land Act* regulations. ECC recently contracted an independent third-party to review and evaluate the pilot process.

**Articles 27 and 32***Wildlife management*

Wildlife co-management provides direct involvement for Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations in species at risk and other wildlife management in their land claim area or region, wildlife co-management boards established as essential instruments of wildlife management. In areas without settled land claims, the co-management system provides for input and involvement by Indigenous organizations in wildlife management. ECC is also collaboratively developing on-the-land and harvesting programs that promote culture and language.

**Article 37***Forest Management*

ECC is working in partnership with Indigenous governments and organizations to develop regional forest management agreements that reflect community-based or regional forest management goals. These agreements, enabled under the *Forest Management Act*, provide Indigenous partners with long-term rights to harvest wood from a defined area for the purposes of forest industry business development and growth. These arrangements will continue under the *Forest Act* when it is in force, replacing the *Forest Management Act*. Currently, the GNWT has a forest management agreement with the Deh Gáh Got'ie First Nation and the Fort Providence Métis Council and with the Denínu Kúé First Nation and Fort Resolution Métis Council.

**Articles 3, 5, 21, 26, 27, 29, and 32**

*Traditional Knowledge*

ECC provides administrative support for the GNWT's Traditional Knowledge Policy, coordinating government-wide traditional knowledge initiatives that have been approved by Executive Council. This ensures that traditional knowledge about the natural environment is considered in all government environmental management actions and decisions and in program development.

**Article 31***Contribution funding to participate in the regulatory system*

Through its Interim Resource Management Assistance (IRMA) Program, ECC provides contribution funding to eligible Indigenous governments and organizations in support of its mandate to manage, administer and plan for the sustainable use of public land in the NWT. Contribution funding provided to Indigenous governments and organizations supports participation in the land management, environmental assessment, and regulatory system of the NWT. In settled land claim areas, participant funding is negotiated directly with Canada through claims implementation funding.

In addition, ECC has Land Use Planning Contribution Funding available to Indigenous governments and organizations in the south-east NWT and Wek'eezhii that do not have other base land use planning funding. This funding supports capacity building and pre-planning activities.

**Articles 31, 32 and 39**

## Finance

### *Living Well Together: Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Training*

The Department of Finance in partnership with ECE and the Department of Health and Social Services (HSS) collaborated with Indigenous Elders, community members and Indigenous artists to ensure the Living Well Together: Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Training reflected the diverse and authentic perspectives of Indigenous peoples from across the North. This training was made mandatory for all GNWT employees and is available to the public.

### **Articles 14 and 15**

### *Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework*

The Department of Finance, Human Resource division, launched the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework (IRR Framework) and *Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Action Plan* (IRR Action Plan) designed to help the GNWT improve Indigenous representation among territorial public servants. The IRR Framework sets the foundation and explains the importance of having a Public Service representative of the people it serves, while the IRR Action Plan provides the direction the GNWT will take. Together, these two documents encompass and support existing GNWT programs designed to recruit and retain Indigenous employees including but not limited to the following:

- Affirmative Action Policy
- Indigenous Career Gateway Program
- Regional Recruitment Program
- Indigenous Management Development & Training Program
- Building Capacity in Indigenous Governments Program

The work done towards achieving the efforts of recruiting and retaining Indigenous people under the IRR Framework and IRR Action Plan supports the UN Declaration and is an ongoing initiative with no end date.

### **Articles 17 and 21**

### *Collaboration and engagement*

The GNWT is committed to building and maintaining a workforce that embraces diversity, cultural awareness and inclusion. As part of this, the Department of Finance coordinates and supports two committees.

- The Indigenous Employee Advisory Committee (IEAC) provides strategic advice to the GNWT on strategies and approaches to attracting, recruiting, advancing and retaining Indigenous employees within the GNWT; and
- The GNWT Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (GACDI) provides advice to the Deputy Ministers' Human Resources Committee on improving access for designated employment equity groups such as Women, Indigenous Aboriginal Persons, Persons with Disabilities, visible minorities and members of the 2SLGBTQQA+ community.

In addition, the Department of Finance has engaged with the public during the creation of the IRR Framework and IRR Action Plan, as well as during the Affirmative Action Policy Review done in October 2022 to April 2023. A main recommendation that came out of the Affirmative Action Policy Review was to implement an Indigenous Employment Policy (IEP). As such the IEP came into effect on April 1, 2025. Feedback received was incorporated and resulted in the following:

- Feedback from engagement with external and internal partners during the creation of the IRR Framework and IRR Action Plan resulted in 11 Action Items and deliverables split into two goals (Indigenous representation and Indigenous leadership). As part of these Action Items, each and every department had to create a Departmental Indigenous Employment Plan that detailed steps they would take to address barriers to employment for Indigenous peoples;
- Feedback received during the Affirmative Action Policy Review was compiled into a What We Heard Report tabled in the NWT Legislative Assembly with a recommendation to Executive Council based on the engagement done in nine communities, three virtual sessions and feedback received through the online survey; and
- Feedback received from Indigenous governments and organizations upon the presentation of the first rendition of the IEP was overwhelming. The first rendition presented the IEP as giving hiring priority to all Indigenous Canadians while feedback received required the GNWT to create two priority groups:
  - Stage One Priority – Indigenous peoples who are recognized members and descendent of a First Nations, Métis, or Inuit people indigenous to the present boundaries of the Northwest Territories; and
  - Stage Two Priority – Indigenous peoples who are recognized members and descendent of a First Nations, Métis, or Inuit people indigenous to areas of Canada, outside of the present boundaries of the Northwest Territories.

This work engages with the public on IRR Framework initiative and the Affirmative Action Policy Review as well as the continuous collaboration with IEAC and requires continuous communication and relationship building with Indigenous governments and organizations and therefore has no end date.

<b>Articles 18 and 23</b>
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*Treaty Day Celebrations and Cultural Leave*

The GNWT recognizes the importance of supporting Indigenous employees in maintaining and celebrating their cultural identity. The GNWT provides up to 4 paid days, and unlimited unpaid days, of Indigenous Cultural Leave per fiscal year for the majority of Indigenous employees, as defined under Section 35(2) of the Constitution Act, 1982. This leave can be used to participate in ceremonial, cultural, or spiritual events that are meaningful to their heritage. This provision reflects the GNWT's commitment to reconciliation and cultural inclusion by ensuring Indigenous employees have the opportunity to engage in practices that strengthen community, identity, and well-being.

Treaty Days are annual events held in Indigenous communities across the NWT to commemorate the signing of historic treaties. In recognition of their significance, GNWT employees may be granted up to one-half day of civic leave per year to attend Treaty Day celebrations in their home communities. In addition to these historic treaties, the GNWT continues to support and implement modern land claim and self-government agreements that affirm Indigenous rights and promote reconciliation. To support participation in these milestones, a full day of civic leave per year may be approved for beneficiaries to attend land claim celebrations in their community of residence.

**Articles 11**

## Health and Social Services

### Cultural Safety Action Plan

HSS is committed to improving cultural safety for Indigenous residents of the NWT. Cultural safety is an outcome where Indigenous peoples feel safe and respected, and free of racism and discrimination when accessing health and social services. The *Caring for our People: Cultural Safety Action Plan 2018-2020* sets out four objectives at policy and service delivery levels to address systemic racism experienced by Indigenous residents in the NWT:

1. Create an Organizational Culture of Cultural Safety: Develop a whole HSS system approach, including commitment from leadership, policies and organizational structures to embed cultural safety in the organization;
2. Strengthen Staff Capacity for Cultural Safety: Build and enhance staff capacity through training and other professional development supports to have the knowledge, skills and behaviors to provide appropriate and equitable care rooted in culturally safe practices;
3. Honour Traditional Knowledge and Healing Approaches in Care: Explore and incorporate ways in which traditional knowledge and healing approaches can respectfully be incorporated alongside existing HSS policies; and
4. Improve Client and Community Experience: Improve the client and community experience through culturally safe and relationship-based care, which puts the needs of clients and their families first.

**Articles 2, 15, and 24**

### Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism Training

The Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism division leads the development, continuous improvement, and delivery of cultural safety and anti-racism training across the HSS system. This mandatory training for HSS staff is aimed to disrupt and correct long standing racist beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours at interpersonal and organizational levels by providing information and opportunities for discussion about the history and ongoing legacy of colonialism and anti-Indigenous racism in Canada.

**Articles 2, 15, and 24**

*Healthy Family Program*

The Healthy Family Program has been renewed after undergoing a review with extensive engagement with parents, caregivers and staff who work with children and Indigenous governments. Services offered aim to be inclusive, preventative, and centered around culture. Many communities in each NWT region have a Healthy Family Program, and it is open universally to anyone who has young children interested in learning and sharing about children and caregiving.

**Articles 2, 15, and 24**

*Indigenous Advisory Body*

HSS has established an Indigenous Advisory Body to provide guidance and advice on how to incorporate Indigenous tradition, culture and healing practices within the NWT HSS system. Membership includes appointees from each Indigenous government, HSS, and the Health Authorities.

**Articles 23 and 24**

*Primary Health Care Reform*

Primary Health Care Reform is an initiative to transform the NWT health system to improve health outcomes of residents in a way that centres resident experiences and takes an integrated and systemic approach to health and well-being. It is the system-wide initiative being used to implement a culturally safe and relationship-based care approach.

**Articles 2, 15, 19, 21, and 24**

*Community Wellness Priorities and Weaving our Wisdom*

The Community Wellness Initiatives are intended to reduce health inequities and improve the health and wellness outcomes of Indigenous individuals, families, and communities in the NWT. Funding is allocated to Indigenous governments and community organizations. The Weaving Our Wisdom (WOW) gathering is a collaborative space for wellness leaders and inspiring guest speakers to engage in a dialogue on current Indigenous wellness needs and imagined possibilities to implement Indigenous healing as part of the federal Northern Wellness Agreement. WOW dialogue shapes the work of the Community, Culture and Innovation division and the Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism division which were specifically established to prioritize Indigenous health and wellness at the GNWT, address anti-Indigenous racism, and facilitate flexible funding agreements.

**Articles 3, 5, 15, 18, 21, 23 and 24**

## *Industry, Tourism and Investment*

### *Community Futures Program*

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) funds the Community Futures Program in the NWT. The program is a community-based economic initiative delivered in each region by Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs). CFDCs operate independent of government as non-profit corporations and are overseen by volunteer Boards of Directors representative of the regions and communities they serve. The program supports community economic development by supporting the creation and expansion of small and medium sized businesses and the creation and maintenance of employment opportunities in NWT communities. This program provides services including: term loans and loan guarantees, lines of credit, business planning and assistance, information and training for entrepreneurs and delivery of human resources development. In the NWT, CFDCs play a vital role in supporting Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses, and some hold designations as Indigenous Financial Institutions in Canada.

**Articles 20, 21, and 23.**

### *Indigenous Capacity Building*

NWT Indigenous communities have identified the need for significant capacity expansion in order to be effectively engaged and participate in mineral exploration and development projects. The Client Service and Community Relations Unit's Indigenous Capacity Building initiative is bolstering the capacity of Indigenous governments and organizations, aiming to increase Indigenous participation with, and understanding of the, the minerals industry.

Capacity building activities include training and educational opportunities and strategic planning and capacity building workshops, as well as relationship-building and promotional opportunities at resource industry conferences and tradeshows.

**Articles 20, 21, and 23.**

### *Proudly Indigenous Crafts and Designs*

The Circumpolar Crafters Network was formed in 2019 to revitalize the traditions and production of authentic Inuit and Indigenous seal products. Inaugural members were from a number of circumpolar countries and were committed to working together to share knowledge and skills, in a spirit of mutual respect for cultural traditions, and adherence to ethical, economic, and environmental principles. From this, the Proudly Indigenous Crafts & Designs project was created in the fall of 2020 and launched to the public with an intense national marketing campaign in April 2021. The online store continues to showcase seal products made by Indigenous crafters from Canada and bring more awareness to seal products that come from traditional sources and values.

**Articles 11, 13, 15 and 16.**

*Artist to Market Program*

The Artist to Market Program (AMP) creates economic opportunities for NWT artists to showcase their talents and sell their work outside of the NWT. These opportunities include activities such as markets and events outside the NWT where consumers come to see and purchase work directly from artists. Once accepted into AMP, artists partake in a series of business development workshops to ensure they are market-ready and empowered to grow their business after they return home. Since its inception in 2019, AMP has supported 63 Indigenous visual artists to attend 20 markets outside the NWT. This has resulted in sales of over \$550,000 directly back to the artists and into the NWT economy.

**Articles 11, 13, 15 and 16.**

*Mineral Resources Legislation*

ITI is working to bring the *Mineral Resources Act* into force by completing regulations according to the *Intergovernmental Council on Land and Resource Management: Legislative Development Protocol*. This process aligns with the goal of ensuring transparent, equitable, and efficient resource management and increases the participation of Indigenous peoples in decision-making with respect to mineral development in the NWT.

**Articles 3, 18, 26, 27, and 32.**

## *Infrastructure*

Infrastructure corridors, including roads, airports, marine ports, and energy transmission, serve as a supporting element for a strong economic foundation. Dependable infrastructure corridors are essential for market access, economic security, and quality of life for residents. The Department of Infrastructure (INF) works to maintain and improve the public transportation and energy systems also supports the safety of NWT residents and communities.

The long-term vision is for the NWT to have a secure, affordable, and sustainable energy system that is less dependent on fossil fuels and contributes to the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the territory and its residents.

INF will continue to work in collaboration with Indigenous governments to advance the Mackenzie Valley Highway, provide energy security through advancement of the Taltson Hydro Expansion and Whatì Transmission Line projects and advance planning of the Slave Geological Province Corridor in a manner that respects existing Aboriginal and treaty rights.

INF works with other departments, Indigenous governments and organizations, partners, and the federal government to undertake actions to advance these interests and to ensure that our approach to projects is consistent with UN Declaration.

<b>Articles 7, 21, 22 and 32</b>
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### *Tłıchǫ Highway*

The Tłıchǫ Highway opened in November 2021 and provides all-weather ground-transportation access from Highway 3 west of Yellowknife to the community of Whatì. The Tłıchǫ Government identified the need for an all-season road to connect the community of Whatì with the Yellowknife Highway. The Tłıchǫ Highway was the first major infrastructure partnership with an Indigenous government.

The Tłıchǫ Highway project provides opportunities for increased access to Tłıchǫ lands for the Tłıchǫ peoples to exercise the right to have effective control over lands, territories and resources, such as the possibility to perform recreational, cultural, and harvesting activities.

<b>Articles 21, 23, 26 and 32</b>
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### *Taltson Hydroelectric Expansion project*

The Taltson Hydroelectric Expansion Project will establish a single hydro grid to consolidate community, industry, and transportation sector energy demand, while doubling the NWT's renewable energy capacity. The project will provide renewable energy access to the mineral-rich slave Geological Province and stabilize electricity rates for 11 communities, and over 70 percent of the NWT's population.

The GNWT, the Akaitcho Dene First Nations (YKDFN, LKDFN and DKFN), Salt River First Nation (SRfN), and Northwest Territory Métis Nation (NWTMN) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to guide the partnership and established a Steering Committee of leaders to direct a working group of representatives to advance the project. The scope of the MOU includes maximizing business, training, and employment opportunities for Indigenous government partners during all phases of the project, facilitating partnership and investment opportunities, as well as assessing financial and business models for economic inclusion of, and equity participation by, the Indigenous government partners including the option for increased equity over time.

A business case with estimated costs and benefits is complete and years of partner engagement and information gathering will form the basis of a regulatory application along with the negotiation of more defined commercial arrangements. This will allow the opportunity for Indigenous partners to be central to the decision-making process and to provide opportunities for Indigenous peoples in the NWT to improve their economic and social conditions.

**Articles 21, 23, 26 and 32**

## Justice

### *Statements of Consistency*

The Department of Justice (DOJ) supports the Attorney General of the NWT in the development of Statements of Consistency, which are required under the UN Declaration for all government bills. These statements assess legislative initiatives for consistency with the UN Declaration. The Department also supports the examination of proposed regulations to ensure they are consistent with the UN Declaration and the rights recognized and affirmed under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. The results of the examination are made publicly available online. In the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year, Statements of Consistency for approximately four bills and 127 regulations were prepared.

#### **Article 38**

### *Missing Persons Act*

In response to Call for Justice 5.8 of the National Inquiry into MMIWG, the Department of Justice introduced Bill 2, *Missing Persons Act*, which received assent on June 13, 2024 and comes into force on order. The *Missing Persons Act* will enhance the RCMP's ability to investigate missing persons cases. This will allow police officers to request information contained in client records with an urgent demand, an order for the production of records or a search warrant. It is intended to add to the investigative powers that the RCMP have at their disposal, allowing police to move more quickly with their investigations. At the same time, Bill 2 also ensures that an appropriate balance is struck in maintaining safeguards around individuals' right to privacy and policing accountability mechanisms. *Missing Persons Regulations* were posted online for a 30-day public engagement period in June 2025. The *Missing Persons Act* is now in force.

#### **Articles 7, 13, and 22**

### *Community Justice Program*

DOJ promotes the diversion of minor criminal offences away from the traditional court system through Community Justice Committees. The Community Justice Program supports the development and delivery of Community Justice Committees who work with their communities to deliver community service options and crime prevention activities and programs that reflect the unique cultural context of their communities. Community Justice Committees can set restorative measures that are appropriate and in the best interest of the victim, the community, and the offender. In 2024-2025, DOJ provided 23 Community Justice Committee funding agreements.

#### **Articles 5, 7, 12, 21, and 23**

*Community Safety Officer Program*

The GNWT is piloting the first Community Safety Officer (CSO) program in the Hamlet of Fort Liard. The program is administered and delivered by the Hamlet, with support from the DOJ, RCMP, and other community partners. The program is designed to provide a proactive, sustainable, trauma-informed, holistic approach to community safety, and to bridge the gap between community safety needs and the role of the RCMP. DOJ provides technical assistance and support to the Hamlet to fund, develop, and implement the pilot. Recently, the federal government announced they will no longer fund non-legislated CSO programs. The GNWT does not have CSO or peace officer legislation and has been advocating to remove this requirement. DOJ has an agreement for the CSO program until March 2026, at which time a review of the program will be conducted.

**Articles 5, 7, 21, and 23**

*Men's Healing Program*

DOJ administers the delivery of community-led approaches to men's healing programming as a preventative approach to address family and gender-based violence. DOJ has prioritized the need for culturally appropriate men's healing programs to prevent family and gender-based violence. These programs are essential in addressing root causes, promote accountability, and support men on a path toward healing and healthier relationships. DOJ works with communities to increase healing supports and resources for men outside of Yellowknife. Six communities have been approved for multi-year funding in 2025-2026. Programming is based on principles of community cultural competence, self-determination, and collaboration.

**Articles 5, 7, 12, 21, and 23**

*First Nations and Inuit Policing Program*

DOJ is in the process of developing and implementing the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program (FNIPP) in the NWT. DOJ signed a multiyear FNIPP Framework Agreement in December 2023. The agreement supports 13 additional RCMP positions for a total of 22. DOJ meets regularly with Public Safety Canada and the RCMP to develop a FNIPP approach for the NWT, including to discuss federal policies and their impacts. The Department continues to work closely with the RCMP and communities on the implementation of FNIPP and community policing.

**Articles 5, 7, 21, and 23**

*Policing Priorities*

The Minister of Justice establishes three-year policing priorities for the RCMP "G" Division, along with reporting requirements for performance measures. Priority areas for 2024-2027 include:

1. Target enforcement responses to reduce illegal drugs and alcohol;
2. Continue to build strong relationships with Indigenous communities and residents;

3. Provide policing services that reflect recognition and efforts to reduce harm to Indigenous women, girls, families, and children; and
4. Increase community knowledge and understanding of RCMP roles and responsibilities.

NWT policing priorities are developed through a review of community policing reports and input received from Indigenous governments, community leaders, partners, and service providers. As of 2024-2025, all 33 NWT communities have local Community Policing Priorities that have been developed between RCMP and local leaders to address each community's interests. The Commanding Officer of "G" Division meets bi-annually with the Commanding Officer's Indigenous Consultative Committee with members that represent the seven regions of the NWT and are chosen with input from Indigenous governments. The Committee provides advice to the Commanding Officer on policing issues across the territory.

<b>Articles 5, 7, and 21</b>
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#### *Corrections Programming*

Traditional knowledge sharing, counseling and support services are provided in correctional facilities, through the assistance and input of Elders, Traditional Counsellor and Liaison Officers, Counsellors and Indigenous staff. All corrections programs support participants to address the root causes that lead them to crime.

The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre operates as a Therapeutic Community. Using the concept of 'community as method', Therapeutic Communities use active participation in group living and activities to drive individual change and the attainment of therapeutic goals. With an emphasis on social learning and mutual self-help, the Therapeutic Community participants have a role in each other's recovery as providing support to others is seen as an important part of changing oneself. The Therapeutic Community Model incorporates the "Seven Laws of Living" and the traditional Medicine Wheel which supports the cultural teachings of Indigenous peoples. Activities will include opening and closing ceremonies, sharing circles, drumming, smudging and traditional land-based teachings by local Elders. It is anticipated that DOJ will evaluate the program in 2027, allowing for five years of data collection.

<b>Articles 5, 7, 21, and 23</b>
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#### *Specialized Courts*

Specialized courts focus on improving community safety and long-term outcomes for offenders by taking a holistic approach and focusing on the broad array of factors that may contribute to offending behaviour. The Wellness Court, Drug Treatment Option Program and Intimate Partner Violence Treatment Option (IPVTO) Court are alternatives to conventional court that function on the premise of therapeutic intervention to address the underlying causes of anti-social behaviour with an aim to reduce recidivism. Various Indigenous based on-the land activities are offered to

participants of the Specialized Court programs as well as recent graduates of the programs as aftercare.

**Articles 5, 7, 12, 21, and 23**

*Justice Navigator*

DOJ is piloting a two-year Justice Navigator Program to provide wrap-around navigation and supports to NWT residents who are involved with or being released from the justice system. These supports are intended to provide stability and reduce future contact with the justice system. This program will be delivered in partnership with four Indigenous governments between 2025-2027.

**Article 13**

*Trauma Informed Services*

DOJ works with frontline service providers to provide trauma-informed services to survivors of violence. DOJ funds free, territory-wide legal advice and legal representation through the Independent Legal Advice and Representation program for survivors of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and those requiring Emergency Protection Orders.

**Article 22**

*Legal Aid*

The Legal Aid Commission provides Legal Aid and Outreach Legal Aid Clinics to the NWT under the terms of the *Legal Aid Act*. Legal Aid is jointly funded by the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada. Regardless of economic status, all NWT residents are entitled to fairness and the opportunity to protect their legal rights. The Legal Aid Commission operates an “Outreach” program providing legal information services to the public without requiring a Legal Aid application. In fiscal year 2024-25, 1,094 clients received help from the Outreach Legal Aid Clinic. Demand for Outreach services has historically exceeded what is available. As a result, the service applies a priority process to ensure that those clients who are most vulnerable are served.

**Article 13**

## *Municipal and Community Affairs*

### *Community Government Land Management Support*

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) assists with the transfer of vacant Commissioner's lands to community governments by supporting the preparation of the required bylaws, the creation of development and planning tools and guides, and working with the Local Government Administrators of the NWT to provide community government training programs. MACA encourages community governments to engage with Indigenous governments when developing community plans and conducts Section 35 consultation as part of Ministerial approvals of final plans to ensure that potential impacts on Indigenous governments are considered during review processes.

**Articles 25, 26, 27, 32, and 39**

### *Collaborative Emergency Management*

The GNWT's current emergency management legislation requires reform to ensure alignment with the UN Declaration. The NWT COL Emergency Management Working Group was formed in Spring 2025 to review the NWT *Emergency Management Act*. The Emergency Management Working Group was formed to discuss Indigenous governments' concerns relating to emergency management and how best to integrate Indigenous government and Indigenous organization's participation into the NWT emergency management system.

The GNWT has developed an Emergency Response Event Communication Protocol with Indigenous governments to ensure clear communication between Indigenous governments and the GNWT during an emergency event. Community governments are encouraged to involve local Indigenous governments in their Local Emergency Management Organization (LEMO). In several communities, Indigenous governments serve as the local authority for emergency response or are already engaged as LEMO participants. In 2024, the GNWT updated the NWT Emergency Plan to clarify roles and responsibilities and developed templates for community governments to include Indigenous governments directly in Community Emergency Plans.

**Articles 18 and 19**

### *Sport and recreation*

The NWT Active Living Framework 2023-2033: *A Strategic Approach to Recreation, Sport and Physical Activity (ALF)* was released in October 2023, and sets out the GNWT's vision, principles, and goals in the delivery of physical activity, recreation, and sport programs. The ALF Implementation Advisory Committee was established April 2024 and is actively drafting both an Action Plan and an Evaluation and Monitoring Framework to guide the rollout of the NWT Active Living Framework. This work is being led by MACA in collaboration with the Indigenous Sports Circle NWT and three other territorial or regional sport and recreation organizations.

The implementation is grounded in the feedback captured in the Northwest Territories Framework for Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation: What We Heard Report, released in June 2023. This report reflects input from Indigenous governments, Indigenous non-government organizations, equity-owned sector representatives, and sport, physical activity, and recreation organizations across the territory.

In parallel, multisport games, including the Canada Games, are celebrating inclusion and reconciliation through initiatives like the Aboriginal Coaching Program, supported by the Canada Games Council and the Aboriginal Sport Circle. Preparations are also underway for the Arctic Winter Games 2026, with a focus on inclusive participation and cultural celebration.

**Articles 21, 24, and 31**

## *Housing Northwest Territories*

### *Collaboration with Indigenous Governments and Communities*

Housing NWT has increasingly engaged in collaborative work with Indigenous governments on housing-related planning and legislative development. Housing NWT's updated Mandate, released in 2022, emphasizes continued collaboration with Indigenous governments and partners.

Since 2022, Housing NWT has signed MOUs with the Tłıchǫ Government, Sahtu Secretariat Inc, Délı̨nę Got'ı̨nę Government, Gwich'in Tribal Council and Ach Dene Koe First Nation to formalize a relationship on housing and recognize the growing role Indigenous governments must play in the housing sphere. Housing NWT also continues to promote coordination and collaboration with Indigenous governments and organizations through the NWT Housing Forum, which has met six times since August 2024. The NWT Housing Forum also held a special engagement session with the federal government on the Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy. An NWT Housing Symposium was held January 22-23, 2025, in Yellowknife. This ongoing venue to discuss housing priorities with Indigenous governments leads to greater collaboration and improved housing outcomes for NWT communities and Indigenous residents. The NWT Housing Forum will continue to meet quarterly and host an in-person symposium every two years.

Housing NWT continues to work in partnership with Indigenous Governments, community organizations and developers to identify community-centered housing solutions. These efforts include working with Indigenous Governments and partners to support an increase in market housing options for professionals working in remote and Indigenous communities.

**Articles 14, 21 and 23**

### *Community-Centered Housing Solutions*

Housing NWT continues to deliver the Community Housing Planning Initiative, which supports interested Indigenous governments and communities in creating customized housing plans that reflect local needs, cultural values, and priorities. As of February 2026, eight Community Housing Plans have been completed and six others are currently in various stages of development. These plans will help guide future investments and policy directions in housing.

Work on the Territorial Housing Needs Assessment (THNA) is completed and will be released in March 2026. Through extensive engagement with Indigenous communities, combined with housing and socioeconomic data, the THNA identifies current gaps and future needs in housing throughout the NWT. The THNA will help guide investment priorities and inform community-centered strategies to address housing challenges in the NWT. Between May and September 2025, Housing NWT engaged with 20 Indigenous communities on the THNA. Engagement with all communities was attempted but not possible in some cases due to wildfires, elections and community bereavement.

**Articles 19, 21 and 23**

*Culturally-Safe, Trauma-Informed Supports*

Housing NWT continues to fund and support the delivery of supported and transitional housing infrastructure across the territory. These initiatives prioritize access for Indigenous women and others affected by long-term homelessness, often as a result of intergenerational trauma, violence, or addiction. Housing NWT has supported the development of transitional housing initiatives in 4 interested communities: Hay River, Inuvik, Fort Good Hope and Yellowknife. The Yellowknife site construction was completed in December 2024, and the first Transitional Housing for Addictions Recovery Program residence opened in Yellowknife in March 2025 and is operated by the Salvation Army. These programs provide safe, stable housing and recovery-focused support for individuals who have completed addictions treatment.

Housing NWT works in partnership with Indigenous governments and organizations to ensure that shelter environments are trauma-informed, culturally safe, and responsive to the unique needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. In collaboration with shelter operators, Housing NWT has encouraged the integration of traditional healing, Elder support, land-based programming, and Indigenous cultural practices into shelter services. These culturally grounded approaches help foster trust and healing for those affected by violence, trauma, and displacement. Shelter staff and partners can also access training on gender-based violence, Indigenous cultural awareness, harm reduction, and mental wellness. Since August 2024, Housing NWT organized 2 formal training sessions for shelter staff on culturally-safe and trauma-informed approaches. Most recently, 30 staff attended training sessions from the Crisis and Trauma Resource Institute on *Responding to Trauma and Grief with Decolonized Practices* in Inuvik from July 14-18, 2025. These efforts aim to enhance service quality and ensure that shelters are safe and supportive spaces.

<b>Articles 21, 22 and 31</b>
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## Recommendations from the APC

The APC continues to fulfill its mandate under the *Act* to facilitate collaboration and cooperation between GNWT and Indigenous governments and organizations in aligning GNWT laws, policies and practices with the UN Declaration.

Consistent with section 12(2) of *Act*, this report provides an update on the outstanding matters identified in the 2024 annual report and identifies ongoing and emerging priorities as the APC transitions from Action Plan development to implementation. Over the past year, the APC and the GNWT have focused on the co-development of the inaugural Action Plan, which will provide the framework for guiding and monitoring implementation of the UN Declaration across all areas of territorial governance. Expected to be finalized in early 2026, the Action Plan will build directly on the APC's 2024 recommendations, with each of those recommendations evolving into a corresponding action plan measure—marking a significant step toward a structured, co-developed approach to implementing the UN Declaration.

As the inaugural Action Plan enters its final stages of co-development, the APC's 2025 recommendations focus on finalizing and implementing the three foundational measures from 2024. Updates on each of these are provided below.

### 1. Sustained Institutional Support and Funding for Indigenous Governments and Organizations

The APC and GNWT have continued collaborative work toward establishing a long-term, sustainable funding framework to support Indigenous governments and organizations in fulfilling their roles under the *Act*. This measure will be formalized within the inaugural Action Plan as a key APM under Article 39 of the Declaration. Interim funding arrangements remain in place while the permanent model is finalized for implementation in 2026.

### 2. Departmental UN Declaration Implementation Officers

The APC and GNWT are co-developing an action plan measure for the inaugural Action Plan, requiring each GNWT department to designate a dedicated UN Declaration Officer to lead departmental implementation. GNWT Departments have begun internal scoping of these roles and structure for these appointments, with reporting mechanisms to be co-developed through the APC and implemented by 2026.

### 3. Amendments to the NWT *Interpretation Act*

The APC continues to prioritize the recommendation to amend the *Interpretation Act*, RSNWT 1988, to include a non-derogation clause ensuring consistency with section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* and the UN Declaration. This legislative review and reform will be incorporated into the inaugural Action Plan. The APC and GNWT have agreed that detailed policy work and legislative drafting will proceed in phases beginning in 2026, with the goal of developing a proposal for legislative amendments within this period and ensuring that amendments are introduced no later than 2031. Implementing such amendments will provide essential guidance to NWT courts, administrative bodies, and GNWT policymakers

to ensure that the rights affirmed in section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* and the minimum standards of the UN Declaration are respected across all territorial legislation and policy. The APC emphasizes the importance of timely progress on this measure, recognizing its foundational role in ensuring that territorial laws are interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with both constitutional and international human rights standards.

#### *Ongoing and Emerging Priorities*

Consistent with sections 9 to 11 of the *Act*, the APC's immediate focus is on finalizing and implementing the Action Plan in collaboration and cooperation with the GNWT. This process will establish a transparent, consensus-based model for implementation, monitoring, and legislative and policy alignment.

As implementation begins, the APC will continue to:

- Oversee the collaborative rollout of action plan measures;
- Develop mechanisms for tracking progress and accountability through annual reporting; and
- Identify future legislative and policy areas for review under section 11(2)(c) of the *Act*.

The APC notes that future annual reports will include additional recommendations as implementation progresses and as new priorities or further gaps are identified through collaborative review.

## Next Steps

The APC continues to meet regularly, and work on the inaugural action plan is nearing completion. Once finalized and endorsed by participating Indigenous Governments and Organizations and the GNWT, the action plan will guide coordinated implementation of the UN Declaration across the NWT.

Following the release of the action plan, focus will shift to include the implementation of the action plan measures within it, including the development of mechanisms to collaboratively track progress and shared monitoring and reporting.

The implementation of the UN Declaration in the NWT is a long-term, iterative process. For the UN Declaration to be effectively implemented in the NWT, all aspects of this work must be done collaboratively and through consensus, reflecting the spirit and intent of the UN Declaration itself.



