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Chair

The Honourable Wayne Easter

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• (0850)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order. We have an interesting gavel this morning. Our gavel was seized by security at the airport, if you can imagine that.

Welcome, everyone.

Welcome, witnesses. As you know, we're doing pre-budget consultations for the 2019 budget. For the witnesses who are at the table, just before the official start time at 9 o'clock, we allow anybody who registered for the open-mike session, because we never have space to have all the witnesses on. From the floor, there will be three individuals at the open-mike session who will have the opportunity to come forward to make a one-minute statement. There are no questions from the members on those statements, but they do go into the record and they are part of our submissions for the pre-consultations.

We'll start with Heidi Marion.

Welcome. The floor is yours.

Ms. Heidi Marion (As an Individual): Good morning, everybody. Welcome to Whitehorse.

My name is Heidi Marion. I'm with the ONE campaign. I understand that my T-shirt is now recognized by everyone on the committee, which is great. Thank you.

I'm here today on behalf of all the girls in the world who are not going to school. There are 132 million of them. I'm here for the teenage girls who account for 74% of all new HIV infections. In our world, 766 million people are living in extreme poverty. Women and girls are the most affected. Although Canada is the best-performing country in the G7, we invest 37% less on international assistance than do the other G7 countries. Why have our investments been decreasing since 2010, when we've had the opportunity to meet development goals?

I'm here today to ask our federal government, in budget 2019, to reverse their practice of moving away from our responsibility and to increase the international assistance envelope. In our destabilizing world, we need to change now. The universally recognized target for countries like ours is 70 cents for every \$100 of income that Canada makes. Right now, we invest only 26 cents. That's an 18-year low.

Honourable members, if all the gender gaps in work and society were closed, the global economy could be boosted by \$25 trillion U.

S. Taking part would cost us only \$17 each per year. For three years in a row now, Canada's Standing Committee on Finance has recommended a path to increase international assistance so that we are at the official development assistance target by 2030. If we start with this budget and increase our investment by 15% per year, we will be doing our fair share.

Thank you for your time this morning.

• (0855)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Heidi.

We now turn to Albert Peter.

Mr. Albert Peter (As an Individual): [*Witness speaks in Kwanlin Dün*]

[Translation]

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

[English]

I want to acknowledge that we are on the shared territories of the Ta'an Kwäch'än and Kwanlin Dün.

My name is Albert Peter. I am a citizen of the Na-Cho Nyak Dun government. We have been involved in the growth of our government jointly with the Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon. My comments are really to encourage the committee to consider the opportunities generated by settlement of land claims and self-government obligations.

We are one of the largest employers in every community in Yukon. All our funds are invested in Yukon. We have a tremendous opportunity to work jointly with other industries to maximize the benefits to the people of Yukon and to the governments in Yukon and, indeed, Canada.

We've been engaged with the federal government recently in the development of a new fiscal policy. I'm sure the committee members are aware of that. Some of the initiatives launched by the Prime Minister also give us encouragement. One example is the discussion around the treatment of loans that are used to negotiate treaties and self-government agreements. Currently, the government is considering how future negotiations would be based not on loans but on either contributions or grants. That is a significant investment that Yukon first nations have made in the negotiations of our agreements, and most of us have repaid those loans. Those loans could be used to invest in the economy or in the growth of our governments.

With regard to fiscal policy, one of the issues the Government of Canada is looking at is the treatment of own-source revenues. This is another source of funds that could be used to invest in communities.

I would encourage the committee members to discuss some of these initiatives with their counterparts in Ottawa and discuss how we might be able to work together as governments to advance these initiatives and to bring greater understanding among Canadians and political parties about the opportunities that exist before us as Canadian citizens and governments within Canada.

Mahsi cho.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Albert.

Jonathan Vilness is next.

Welcome, Jonathan.

Mr. Jonathan Vilness (As an Individual): Good morning, committee.

I'm here to represent Engineers Without Borders. I'm a volunteer with the SFU chapter in Vancouver.

In budget 2019, I'm asking that Canada commit to a 10-year timetable of predictable annual increases of 15% to the international assistance envelope. This is in keeping with recommendation 85 that the committee made last year in its report on pre-budget consultations and an OECD report that Canada released in mid-September. I was really encouraged to see that the Government of Canada committed to increasing their ODA in budget 2018, but despite this increase, Canada's ODA spending is still at a near historic low and well below that of many of our global peers. This increase will simply keep the aid budget on track with inflation.

ODA is fundamental to our shared global prosperity, and these investments support vital services such as health care and education in some of the least developed countries. Increasing ODA through a predictable timetable in budget 2019 would show that Canada is a committed global leader helping to create a better world for everyone.

Thank you so much for your time.

The Chair: Thank you, Jonathan.

We have heard from Engineers Without Borders at every stop, I think, so you are well organized.

With that, we'll turn to the witnesses. I want to thank any people or organizations that had the opportunity to make a submission prior to August 15. That is on people's iPads or whatever they have for technology here, so they'll be referring to that from time to time.

Before we start with the witnesses, I'd like to go around the room and ask members to introduce themselves so you know whom you are dealing with.

I'm Wayne Easter. I'm a member of Parliament on the government side from Prince Edward Island.

I might say as well that Larry Bagnell was supposed to be here. However, he chairs the Board of Internal Economy in Ottawa, and there is what's known in Ottawa as a filibuster, so he has to be there

to chair that meeting. It's too bad for Larry that he is not able to be here.

We'll start with Mr. McLeod.

• (0900)

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Good morning. My name is Michael McLeod. I'm your neighbour from the Northwest Territories. Welcome.

Ms. Kim Rudd (Northumberland—Peterborough South, Lib.): Good morning. Thank you for coming. I'm Kim Rudd, the member of Parliament for Northumberland—Peterborough South. For context, that's in a rural riding in southeastern Ontario.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): My name is Peter Julian. I am vice-chair of the committee and I represent the New Democratic Party of Canada.

[*English*]

My riding of New Westminster—Burnaby is in the traditional territory of the Qayqayt First Nation and the Coast Salish peoples on the coast of British Columbia.

It's always good to be back in the Yukon.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): I'm Matt Jeneroux, member of Parliament from Edmonton.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): I'm Pat Kelly, the member of Parliament for Calgary Rocky Ridge and opposition in the Conservative caucus.

The Chair: Thank you, all.

Again, welcome. I believe the first one up is Karen Barnes with Yukon College. Peter Johnston is in a "supporting role", as it says here, with the Council of Yukon First Nations.

The floor is yours, Karen.

Dr. Karen Barnes (President and Vice-Chancellor, Yukon College): Thank you, Mr. Chair and committee members.

I want to open by acknowledging that we are convening on the traditional territories of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council. I'd like to thank the committee members for coming to Whitehorse to hear our story and the stories of all Yukoners as you help to construct the next federal budget.

My name is Karen Barnes. I am president and vice-chancellor of Yukon College, soon to be Yukon University, or, as we like to call it, "Yukon U". I'm honoured to introduce Grand Chief Peter Johnston, who leads the Council of Yukon First Nations, the organization that set in motion the modern treaty process with the delivery of the landmark report "Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow" to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau more than 45 years ago. Chief Johnston is here to demonstrate support for Yukon U and is available to answer any questions.

To get straight to the point, we are here today to request that you, the finance committee, recommend to the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister that budget 2019 include \$21.5 million for the construction of a science building at Yukon University, Canada's first university north of 60.

Here's why this federal funding matters. The new Yukon University will be a hybrid institution that will offer students made-in-the-north degrees, diplomas, certificates, trades, and academic upgrading, all designed to offer a pathway for northerners and all Canadians to pursue an education that is relevant to the place we call home. The people of the north and the businesses that employ northerners simply can't wait any longer.

Yukon College has been educating students for 50 years with an award-winning track record of success that reflects three pillars: indigenous self-determination, climate change research and sustainable resource development. We offer students an education that is consistent with our local and national values. Becoming a university does not just happen overnight, but we are ready. Yukon College has spent the last decade establishing the capacity, governance structures and external accreditations to enable our transition to a university. We have met the same rigorous quality assurance standards that every other university in Canada meets. We have developed curriculum and degrees built on northern values, and we are part of the University of the Arctic, in fact a founding member. I am very proud to say that this fall the first cohort of students entered the Bachelor of Arts in indigenous governance program, which is the first stand-alone degree program at Yukon U. Next year, we will launch a Bachelor of Arts in northern business administration, which will offer a uniquely northern perspective on business and entrepreneurship.

The final step in the governance process is charter legislation from the territorial government. The Yukon government has begun consultation on this legislation, with the commitment that it will be passed by spring 2020, in time for our first Yukon U graduates to receive their degrees, and marking the moment Canada joins every other circumpolar nation in the world with its own truly northern university.

Of course, as we all know, growing from a college to a university takes more than establishing governance structures. You also need to have the physical structures and facilities to foster learning. Yukon University requires significant investment in capital construction, upgrades, and student-centred investment. Through our foundation, we have launched a \$65-million fundraising campaign targeted largely at private sector donors, but we also need federal funding to meet our goals.

As I mentioned at the outset, and as outlined in our pre-budget submission, we are seeking a \$21.5-million investment from the Government of Canada in budget 2019 to help us build a new science building. We call it the "Knowledge Building", where traditional knowledge and scientific research will come together. This investment by the Government of Canada would provide a permanent demonstration of Canada's commitment to reconciliation, competitiveness, inclusive economic growth, responsible resource development, climate change adaptation, fostering innovation, and Arctic strategy.

Our overall fundraising campaign will be focused on other facilities: a new gateway building to create culturally appropriate gathering spaces for students and visitors, and to provide classroom space for our new Institute of Indigenous Self-Determination. A third building, the student hub, will serve students while celebrating and acknowledging the cultures of the two first nations whose land this campus sits on. Given our northern reality and the changing face of post-secondary education delivery in this country, we will also be raising funds to implement a robust distance-learning infrastructure to connect students living across the north. Every Yukon U capital project will create short- and medium-term jobs in the Yukon, offering local businesses procurement and business development opportunities and establishing legacy buildings that all Canadians can take pride in.

• (0905)

What would make an investment in Yukon University unique is that we will also be investing in the next generation of leaders who will help the north transition to a truly self-sustaining region of this country, because that's really what our transition is about: building a future that northerners and all Canadians can be proud of.

As you prepare your report on these hearings, we hope that you will recommend this \$21.5-million federal investment into Yukon U. It would be a lasting and concrete example of the Government of Canada's belief in the future of our northern people and of the Yukon.

While you are here in Whitehorse, I'd like to invite you to take a short drive down the road and tour our campus, meet our students, see the amazing research, and experience first-hand the success that will soon be Yukon University.

With that, I would like to close my comments. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll turn to the Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning, with Ms. Lafferty and Ms. Wrightson.

Ms. Catherine Lafferty (Director, Community Development and Indigenous Education, Dechinta Centre Research & Learning): *K'omoodo.*

Thank you for having us here today.

Dechinta has been filling the post-secondary education gap in the NWT for the past decade. Dechinta offers quality-assured accreditation in indigenous studies taught by elder professors, indigenous faculty and community bush guides. Dechinta is the only fully accredited land-based program in Canada and the world. Dechinta offers accessible admission for individuals who need it most.

The NWT has one of the highest dropout rates in the country. Dechinta is able to provide a solution to this problem by implementing transition programs for students. The majority of our students are women. This is largely because women are able to bring their children with them to Dechinta. This reduces barriers to education for single mothers who are unable to afford child care. It is proven that when indigenous women hold degrees, unemployment rates decrease drastically. Supporting women who are actively pursuing higher education supports everyone in the community.

At this time, we are able to host two semesters per year, with an average of 12 students per semester, not including the children who attend our KidsU Chekoa program, which provides children with confidence in the classroom and on the land. Dechinta would like to offer multiple concurrent semesters in all regions of the NWT year-round, but it is difficult for us to do this important work because we do not have the funds available to us. To offer continuity for our students, we require funding.

Dechinta has unanimous support from the indigenous leaders of the north. Also, we recently conducted a poll asking whether or not residents of the north felt that a land-based university was an important component of education in the NWT, and 100% of respondents agreed that it was crucial to the north.

Dechinta is not just a job for me. It is something that I strongly believe in. I was once a young single mother wanting to go back to school, but I had to leave the north, and that was a very hard choice for me to make. I almost didn't go. If Dechinta had been around when I first set out on my educational pursuits, there is no doubt that I would have been a student there. I wouldn't have had to uproot my children and my life to go down south for higher education, which was very difficult to do, with very little support.

Dechinta is life-changing. Every student I've seen come through this program has transformed into the best version of themselves. It needs this government's support now more than ever.

• (0910)

Ms. Kelsey Wrightson (Director, Policy and Programs, Dechinta Centre Research & Learning): In the last three years, Dechinta received funding from INAC as part of the post-secondary partnerships program. With this support, Dechinta was able to develop and deliver programming in the Dehcho and Peel river basins in the Sahtu region and to begin conversations about the regional implementation of program development.

This also allowed Dechinta to develop and deliver the first certificate in land and community-based research, in partnership with the University of British Columbia. Both the University of British Columbia and the University of Alberta are our long-term partners, and they have contributed significant in-kind contributions to our programming, demonstrating that there is national interest in supporting indigenous education that is rooted in a commitment to lands and to communities.

After 10 years of successful program delivery, Dechinta is positioning to expand both our research and our programming. However, changes in our funding have threatened our ability to continue to support our students.

With only \$5 million annually for the next five years, Dechinta can create over 150 northern jobs, the majority of which will be in rural and small communities. This would also allow us to continue expansion of programming to meet the demands of northern students across the region, increase student enrolment across Canada, and respond to increasing demands across sectors for indigenous-led research and innovation, leveraging further funds for economic growth.

Indigenous knowledge systems are increasingly leading in the fields of environmental studies, geography, sustainable economies and climate-based science, while also innovating in the fields of law, philosophy, education and health. The potential is right here to build an economy that reflects the strength of northern peoples and provides communities and individuals diverse employment opportunities to support indigenous innovation and their connection to culture and communities.

Without stable funding, it's impossible for students to plan for their future and for post-secondary success.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the final report from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples from 1996, and numerous articles in the TRC calls to action support education, language and cultural programming that are led by indigenous people. If we are to uphold these obligations, it's imperative that the government support indigenous peoples to develop and deliver their own programming.

Dechinta supports indigenous students to connect to their communities, culture and law, and enables non-indigenous students to learn how to effectively and respectfully live, work and collaborate with indigenous nations and communities.

Dechinta is truly reconciliation put into action.

Mahsi.

The Chair: Thanks very much, both of you.

From the Mental Health Association of Yukon, we have Mr. Schultz and Ms. Tasane.

Mr. Nathan Schultz (Chair, Mental Health Association of Yukon): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to start by acknowledging that we're meeting on the traditional territory of the Ta'an Kwäch'än and Kwanlin Dün first nations.

I'm here today with Tiffanie Tasane.

The Mental Health Association is a Yukon not-for-profit organization dedicated to reducing the stigma of mental illness, increasing partnership and collaboration among stakeholders engaged in promoting mental health, and providing education, awareness, advocacy and support services. We aim to support the specific mental health needs of Yukoners, so that all Yukoners have opportunities to enhance their ability to embrace life and deal with day-to-day challenges.

In partnership with first nations, the Yukon government, and national organizations such as the Canadian Mental Health Association and the Mental Health Commission of Canada, we have positioned ourselves to support capacity-building throughout the territory. Through the delivery of programs such as Living Life to the Full and Mental Health Works, MHAY has both enhanced the map of available services in the territory and further contributed to the mental health literacy of Yukoners.

We're pleased to observe the growing national awareness of the ubiquity of mental illness and the significant impact it can have at the individual family and community level. Corporate initiatives such as the Bell Let's Talk program, provincial and territorial mental health strategies, and recent federal—

The Chair: Could I ask you to slow down a bit? They're trying to keep up with you in the interpretation booth.

Mr. Nathan Schultz: Can you tell I'm nervous?

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: We're not so pressed for time today because we have only five members on the panel instead of six.

Mr. Nathan Schultz: Corporate initiatives such as Bell Let's Talk, provincial and territorial mental health strategies, and recent federal funding commitments have signalled that Canadians are paddling together in the right direction when it comes to improving health outcomes.

As we meet today to discuss Canada's economic competitiveness, we'd like to draw upon that awareness and emphasize that at the family and individual level, it's indisputable that mental wellness is a foundation upon which most measures of individual success are built. As is the case with physical illness, the burden of mental illness on individual functioning, especially mental illness couched in traumatic experience, is well documented. On these grounds, we believe that the federal government's obligation to budget for mental health funding priorities is a moral one.

That said, there's a lot of evidence to make a strong economic case for supporting mental health as well. The Mental Health Commission of Canada estimates that the economic cost of mental health problems in 2011 was nearly \$50 billion. Further, they estimate that mental health issues have a \$6-billion impact on productivity through absenteeism and presenteeism.

Therefore, we urge the committee to give strong consideration to the recommendations that have been put forth by the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health, specifically the recommendation to increase mental health funding so that it accounts for 9% of public health spending. That would be up from 7.2% in the previous commitment, and it equates to \$777.5 million annually.

Further, the Mental Health Association recognizes that Canada's indigenous population is one of the fastest-growing demographic groups, which saw a 42.5% increase from 2006 to 2016. The indigenous population accounts for nearly 5% of the total population, and indigenous people tend to have significantly lower socio-economic well-being than other Canadians. Therefore, MHAY encourages the committee to give consideration to the aboriginal education funding priorities that were outlined in the brief presented by the Assembly of First Nations.

Thank you.

● (0915)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Nathan.

We now turn to Nunavut Resources Corporation, with Mr. Northey, chief operating officer; and Mr. Duxbury, adviser.

Welcome.

Mr. Scott Northey (Chief Operating Officer, Nunavut Resources Corporation): Thank you, Mr. Chair and committee members.

We are here on behalf of the Kitikmeot Inuit Association leadership, who are not able to be here today due to their annual general meeting, which is being held in Cambridge Bay this week. The Kitikmeot Inuit Association, or KIA, represents more than 6,000 Inuit living in the westernmost region of Nunavut. I'm the chief operating officer of Nunavut Resources Corporation, or NRC, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of KIA. Patrick is an adviser to both NRC and KIA. On behalf of our colleagues, I'd like to say that KIA very much appreciates the opportunity to present to you.

Our focus today is on a transformational project that KIA is proposing, the Grays Bay road and port, or GBRP. This project will profoundly improve the economic and social prospects of the residents of the region, and simultaneously yield significant benefits for all of Canada and assist in reconciliation efforts with the Inuit of western Nunavut.

The GBRP project is a nation-building initiative. It's a modern-day version of Canada's 19th century railway development. It consists of three major components: one, a brand new port at Grays Bay, strategically located on the Northwest Passage; two, an all-weather gravel road running due south 230 kilometres from the port to the Jericho mine site, where it connects to the winter road that goes all the way to Yellowknife; and three, an 1,800-metre-long runway at the port site.

Mr. Patrick Duxbury (Advisor, Nunavut Resources Corporation): The primary economic rationale for this project is that it would lower the cost to access, explore and develop the mineral-rich Slave geological province. It will lower the cost of developing known projects and increase the likelihood of finding significant new mineral deposits. In short, it will bring a new Canadian mining district online. With abundant and known gold, diamond, base metal and rare earth deposits, the Slave geological province is recognized as one of the most promising mining regions in Canada.

There are already mining companies holding mineral rights along the Grays Bay corridor. However, without this type of publicly financed infrastructure in place, which has supported resource development in other Canadian regions, most of these projects will remain unfeasible. The minerals will remain in the ground, and Canada will forgo a substantial opportunity to benefit from this region's economic development.

This opportunity cost is very real. Already one mining company is poised to invest over \$1.5 billion in development, with an additional \$300 million in shared use infrastructure that would be available to other users, including the Canadian government. We have provided a copy of the letter to the clerk, which outlines this company's commitments.

Just a single mine going into production is expected to generate an annual average of 3,500 jobs nationally over an 11-year period, with more than 700 of these at the mine site alone, with projected tax revenues of more than \$665 million to either the federal or territorial governments over the same 11-year period, and a \$7.5-billion surge in gross domestic product.

While we have outlined a compelling enough economic argument to merit government investment, there are many aspects of this project that bring value to Canada. The Department of National Defence and the Canadian Coast Guard could have access to a central deepwater port that would facilitate the exercise of Arctic sovereignty, while simultaneously improving marine safety. The project will also provide a climate-resilient resupply route for diamond mines in the Northwest Territories. The infrastructure will reduce the cost of landed goods to the region by up to 40%, thus lowering the cost of doing business in this area, while reducing household expenditures and increasing food security in an area that has extremely high food insecurity. Finally, job creation will lower dependency on government social programs.

• (0920)

Mr. Scott Northey: Why are we here today? Our extensive efforts in Ottawa to promote this project have garnered near-universal praise. However, there is no clear path to obtaining the necessary public financing that would unleash the economic potential of this area. The northern envelopes for existing infrastructure programs are not large enough to accommodate this nation-building project.

Beyond direct support for our project, we have three recommendations to the federal government that would help us to unlock the vast mineral wealth in this region. First, add new funding to the national trade corridors fund, which would align well with the government's objective of diversifying trade. Second, ensure that any northern envelope for infrastructure funding is sufficient to support large-scale projects, with the significantly higher cost of infra-

structure development in the north and the lack of conventional public resources compared to the rest of Canada. Third, create and ensure sufficient funding for programs like the strategic partnerships initiative, to allow indigenous proponents to seek to lead and develop their own projects in support of the natural resource sector.

Thank you for your time. We would be pleased to answer any questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Scott and Patrick.

From the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, we have Ms. Acheson.

Ms. Colette Acheson (Executive Director, Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce): Thank you.

Thank you for the invitation to appear this morning. My name is Colette Acheson. I'm the executive director of the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce.

I know you will have already received a comprehensive submission from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce on most of the larger issues, so I will focus my thoughts today on concerns that are closer to home for us in the north.

The chamber has been involved for many years, almost 15 years that I'm aware of, in developing and delivering a number of training and support resources to the business community in and around Whitehorse. That is typically a partnership, with some funding from our economic development department in the Yukon, and some funding from CanNor. Although we've seen cycles and there were times when things were easier and more complicated, in general, of those three partners that take part in pulling those things together, CanNor is often the weakest link, due to what looks like a complicated internal approval process and instability of funding. Even as recently as spring 2018, I believe, the CanNor programs were under review, so for those of us who are delivering programs to improve the economic infrastructure of businesses in the north, that's a bit of an axe hanging over our heads.

We would encourage the federal government to consider making CanNor a permanent part of the annual budget and, if possible, to look at multi-year programming or multi-year budget agreements and a simplified internal process.

Thank you.

• (0925)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Colette.

From the Yukon Chamber of Mines, we have Mr. Hartland.

Mr. Samson Hartland (Executive Director, Yukon Chamber of Mines): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, everybody.

Thank you for the invitation and for the opportunity to speak to you this morning. It's great to see some of you again. I've met some of you in the past.

I, too, would like to acknowledge and thank Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council for allowing us to meet this morning to discuss these important issues.

I'd like to tell you a little more about the Yukon Chamber of Mines before starting my remarks.

The Yukon Chamber of Mines is a chamber organization that was created in 1943 and represents over 500 members with direct or indirect interests in Yukon's mining industry, and that's everything from a prospector all the way up to a fully operating quartz mine.

The Yukon Chamber of Mines fully supports the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada's pre-budgetary recommendations. You may have heard some of these already. We're adding strength to some of those recommendations, as well as interweaving some northern aspects to those recommendations.

The five recommendations that would have a direct impact on supporting economic development in Canada's north are about the renewal of the mineral exploration tax credit for a minimum of three years, and I'll speak to that a little more; strengthening competitiveness in Canada's north and remote regions through an infrastructure investment fund; enhancing the capacity of indigenous peoples in the industry; creating a funding mechanism to support comprehensive mineral resource assessments; and finally, supporting geoscience mapping and innovation.

We believe the north would benefit from all these initiatives. However, the most pressing to us are strengthening competitiveness in Canada's north and remote regions, enhancing the capacity of indigenous peoples in the industry, and renewing the mineral exploration tax credit.

When we talk about strengthening competitiveness in Canada's north and remote regions, the cost of operating Canada's north and remote regions is high, which directly affects investment in the region, and in turn economic development opportunities for northern indigenous communities. We've heard that from some of the previous panellists here. The future of Canada's mineral industry lies increasingly in remote and northern regions. We represent 40% of Canada's land mass.

While many factors influence decisions about where to explore and mine, cost is a primary driver. Costs are largely a function of remoteness, and remote deposits are significantly more expensive to find, develop and mine. Due to significant infrastructure deficits, it can cost up to six times more to explore, and two or two and a half times more to build new mines in remote regions. A disproportionately high percentage of known mineral deposits also remain undeveloped in Canada's territories, compared to non-remote regions. Infrastructure investments are key to unlocking mineral potential in the north.

The federal carbon pricing backstop and the resulting output-based pricing system will add additional costs to mineral projects in Canada's north and remote regions, further reducing the viability of these projects. Given the lack of energy infrastructure in the north,

companies operating in these environments rarely, if ever, have viable alternatives to the diesel fuel used to power drills and camps.

Other costs associated with mineral exploration will also significantly increase. Taken together, these costs will adversely impact Canada's mineral industry competitiveness. Without any action, Canada will lose out on development opportunities and associated benefits to more competitive jurisdictions.

The federal government can do two things to improve competitiveness in Canada's north and remote regions. First, to address the region's infrastructure deficit, it can increase strategic investments in critical transportation and energy infrastructure, which in this case would mean maintaining the federal government's support for the Yukon resource gateway project, which was identified through the northern envelope of the infrastructure investment fund.

Second is ensuring that any new carbon pricing regime addresses the unique challenges faced by remote and northern regions, and includes a fiscal support mechanism for mineral exploration projects that must rely on diesel and other fossil fuels. We heard that through a presentation and a submission from the Mining Association of Canada, which provided recommendations—everything from delayed implementation to rebates, a funding pool, or potentially a tax credit.

Speaking of tax credits, the renewal of the mineral exploration tax credit is a fiscal and tax incentive that supports the flow of capital into mineral exploration projects, ultimately supporting Canada's competitiveness in the global mineral industry. Mineral exploration is a high-risk endeavour, and the probability of a successful discovery of an economic deposit is very low. Attracting investment for small- to medium-sized exploration companies is extremely difficult, especially given today's investment climate. METC is an innovative, made-in-Canada policy tool, complementary to the flow-through share regime. The tax incentive supports exploration financing by providing individuals who invest in companies that are exploring for minerals in Canada with a 15% tax credit on eligible expenditures.

● (0930)

Extending METC for a minimum of a three-year period would catalyze investor interest in flow-through shares and support access to exploration financing for proponents. In fact, a three-year extension would provide greater certainty and boost confidence for investors in Canadian projects.

With regard to enhancing the capacity of first nation peoples in the industry, government investment is critical to enhancing the meaningful participation of indigenous peoples in the mineral industry. The mineral industry strongly supports efforts to facilitate meaningful participation of indigenous peoples and the economic opportunities it generates through training, business development and procurement, employment, and mutually beneficial partnerships. There is a great potential to further increase participation by indigenous peoples in the industry, particularly given the young and growing indigenous population, the impending mineral industry labour shortage, and the proximity of indigenous communities to projects.

However, many indigenous communities are faced with various barriers that affect their ability to participate. Investment in indigenous communities by government to improve health, living conditions, early childhood development and secondary or post-secondary graduation rates is critical to increasing participation and maximizing the opportunities generated by mineral exploration and development.

The federal government can support efforts to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples in the mineral industry by making foundational social investments—as we heard earlier this morning—and also through housing, water and infrastructure, which contribute to improved health and educational outcomes for indigenous communities, as well as providing targeted funds for skills training and entrepreneurship to assist indigenous peoples in maximizing opportunities generated by the industry.

To tie that back around, we heard earlier from Yukon U. Of course, it has the Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining facility, which trains up a lot of the locally trained workforce for the mines of tomorrow.

If I have one more minute, I can talk about mapping and innovation.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Mr. Samson Hartland: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Government investment in geoscience and innovation is critical for spurring mineral exploration activity and enhancing the industry's efficiency, productivity and environmental performance. Geological surveys in Canada play a critical role in producing high-quality public geoscience information, which has attracted exploration activity to Canada and led to successful discoveries.

Presently, the absence or the low quality of geological maps and models compounds other challenges faced by the industry in exploring Canada's northern and remote regions. The lack of detailed mapping in potentially prospective regions reduces the likelihood of economically viable discoveries.

First-pass mapping programs need to be followed up with more detailed programs to better target mineral occurrences. Lacking detailed maps and models negatively impacts Canada's attractiveness for mineral investment compared to other mineral-rich countries, such as Australia. Innovation in the mineral industry is critical for advancing efforts to improve efficiency, enhance environmental performance, and increase the mineral deposit discovery and extraction rates needed for modern society. While the mineral

industry invests millions each year in research and development, Canada underperforms compared to its peers.

To remain sustainable, progressive and profitable, the Canadian mineral industry must innovate and collectively challenge existing ways of thinking. Through investments in innovation for both industry and governments, critical business challenges can be addressed and continuous improvement of Canada's mineral industry performance can be realized.

The Government of Canada can support geoscience mapping and innovation in the mineral sector by providing increased funding to the Geological Survey of Canada, particularly for the mapping of remote regions, as well as funding or fiscal incentives for mineral companies to encourage the testing and adoption of innovative technologies and processes. To add to that, CanNor also provides funding to the Yukon Geological Survey, so a strengthened and maintained CanNor funding system also supports the geological mapping system of the Yukon.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to you this morning.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Thank you to all.

Starting on the seven-minute rounds, we have Mr. McLeod.

Mr. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to everybody who presented here today. These were very interesting discussions.

I want to start with Dechinta.

The issue of employment in our small indigenous communities is something I talk about non-stop at this level. I watched with interest, as we have hundreds of thousands of indigenous people across the country who are sitting in communities unemployed. There are many issues we could point to.

Then I see programs such as the one being conducted by the Mine Training Society, where they train indigenous people to go into the mining workforce. Every person who goes through is hired. I see your program, where you have indigenous people go through the training and get the certification through your facility, and almost every one of them goes on to post-secondary college.

We know that some things have to be conducted differently when we're dealing with indigenous populations, in order for them to move from a community into either post-secondary education or the workforce. The opportunity has to be there. For me, and for many other leaders across the country who are promoting indigenous hires, a job is the best program we could provide.

I'm curious. What do you do differently? What is it you're doing that other facilities are not doing and that allows you to have the success rate that you have? That's my first question.

●(0935)

Ms. Kelsey Wrightson: I think we're doing a lot of things differently.

Dechinta is recognized across Canada and globally as leading in indigenous education, land-based education and land-based pedagogy.

For the last 10 years, we have really been developing this new way of teaching, which is actually an indigenous way of teaching. It's bringing elders, youth, children, and students of all ages together on the land, in this really immersive environment.

One of the things that make it so successful is that we make sure it is accessible to students. We do a lot of work making sure they're able to bridge from wherever they are into our programs. We meet students where they're at.

I think the design of the program especially reflects the value that's put on indigenous knowledge. Students come into our program and see that their knowledge, what they have, is already valued. They see their elders being treated as professors; they see students and children being respected as valued members of a learning community. That's incredibly important.

The other point is that the way we reach out to the communities, the way we employ elders and people who may not have other opportunities for job success, really helps to foster a holistic approach to community wellness. We're not just educating the students; we're educating and working with the entire community.

Mr. Michael McLeod: Thank you.

I was just in the town of Hay River, and we cut the ribbon on a marine training facility. Every position was filled by students from the communities, and it was really good to see a lot of excitement in the area. I'm hoping we're going to be able to expand that through programs such as yours, where we start tapping into the need for pilots, nurses and social workers, so that we can fill some of the void of some of these areas and sectors that really need it.

You mentioned that you're looking at \$5 million a year, for the next five years. Would you be also looking at trying to access some of the research money that is passing us by? I think Nunavut has the same issue as the Yukon, as do we in the Northwest Territories. A lot of research is being done in the Arctic and in the north, but we don't have any universities in the north. Would that also be something you'd be looking at trying to attract?

Ms. Kelsey Wrightson: Yes, absolutely.

One of the things Dechinta has been informed by is research-led teaching. We have a research component to our academic programming, as well as the instructional side. Up to this point, we have not been able to access research funding through the federally funded research bodies, and that includes SSHRC and NSERC.

This is a serious problem, because we have researchers who are really excited and want to work with Dechinta. They want to work in northern communities and indigenous communities. All of that research money has been housed at southern institutions. Along with that research money come indirect costs from the federal government to support administration, which is up to 80% of the first \$100,000 of research funding. Rather than that money going back into northern communities, it goes again to these southern institutions.

Dechinta really wants to change that and to make sure that research funding is actually grounded in, and stays in, the north.

● (0940)

The Chair: If anybody else wants in on any of these questions, just raise a hand.

Go ahead, Michael.

Mr. Michael McLeod: My next question is for Scott. Thanks for coming here to talk about one of my favourite subjects—infrastructure investment in the north. We really worked hard to get a carve-out for the trade and transportation pot of money, because we knew that going up against national projects where there are large populations is always a challenge for us in the north. The pot of money that was earmarked for us for trade and transportation infrastructure was good to see, but it is very small.

What should that number be? If it were \$400 million, we could keep it all in the Northwest Territories and it still wouldn't be enough. That would probably be focused on only one project. There are many projects in the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and Nunavut. What should that number be? What should we be working toward to get a carve-out? There needs to be a carve-out; otherwise we wouldn't be able to compete.

Mr. Scott Northey: I totally agree with you. Our project is \$550 million in the Slave geological province. It's the other half of our corridor from Yellowknife to the Jericho mine, which is over \$1.2 billion. There's another corridor in Nunavut, for another \$1 billion. I can't speak for anything in the Yukon, but I suspect the requirements are closer to \$500 million or \$800 million as well.

We're talking about \$3 billion to \$4 billion as a start. For Nunavut, the corridor we're talking about is the first terrestrial connection to the rest of Canada. Nunavut is 25% of Canada's land mass that's not connected to Canada right now. It seems to me that \$550 million is a relatively small price tag to connect the territory to what the rest of us enjoy.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll turn to Mr. Jeneroux.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to everybody for being here and travelling to come here as well.

I want to pick up where my colleague Mr. McLeod left off with you, Mr. Northey, and you, Mr. Duxbury. I want to give you a bit more time to explain the true impact that road will have. If you could, speak in terms of jobs and revenue for the region, as well as the levels of support you currently have or hope to have to be able to maintain the federal support for this road.

Mr. Scott Northey: Patrick alluded to some of the jobs and opportunities. Really, this is meant to stimulate mineral exploration activity and mine development. There's a mine that's ready to go into production, but they can't afford the infrastructure because the size of the deposits is a little too small to be able to absorb it. As we alluded to, that mine alone will result in 700 jobs in the area.

We're anticipating that the corridor is going to result in additional mineral exploration activity. We hired an economist, who has determined that for every million dollars spent on exploration activity, 5.2 jobs are created in Nunavut alone. That's logistics support, whether it's trucking, helicopter services, etc.

We also believe it will lower the cost of community resupply, which is crucial right now. For example, a litre carton of juice, which you can get for \$2.99 at the Superstore here, would cost about \$14.99 in Nunavut. Those kinds of healthy foods are very expensive and hard to bring in. The general view is that the corridor will result in savings of about \$500 per person per year in our region. It doesn't sound like a lot, but for a family of four, \$2,000 savings in a region where the median income is around \$10,000 means an ability to really bring the cost of living down and promote additional liquidity within the household.

The last part is the stimulated activity associated with all the other mining-related activities. We can see barging services getting formed, and additional logistical services. Some of the communities will become much more of logistical hubs. We would see primary, secondary and tertiary stimulation developing from that corridor.

Mr. Patrick Duxbury: It also improves the quality of services that already exist there. Some of you may be aware that there was a scrubbed resupply barge that was coming from the west and going up to the Mackenzie River. Due to the ice situation in the Beaufort, the barge is not able to reach Cambridge Bay and Kugluktuk, so effectively there are millions of dollars' worth of equipment, goods and vehicles sitting in Inuvik right now that were destined for Cambridge Bay and Kugluktuk.

Our view is that with a project such as the Grays Bay, this would never have happened. If you're able to deliver goods over to the port site during the winter resupply trucking season, then this area opens up in July for barging, rather than having to wait for resupply that's coming from either the Montreal region or Hay River, and typically delivering in September or October. There are huge advantages to just improving the logistics of this area.

● (0945)

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Just quickly before I ask you my follow-up question, how much are you asking for? Is it \$550 million?

Mr. Scott Northey: Well, there are no programs right now that will allow us to access that, so that's the big ask. Our short-term ask is to try to get the projects up already, which could take us two to three years. Just under \$30 million is really the primary ask.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: A \$30-million investment would have a long-term impact of 700 jobs and \$500 savings per person, essentially.

Mr. Scott Northey: Thirty million dollars would get us to the point where the next step would be to put shovels in the ground and start the construction process. Our hope is that, by asking for \$30

million, we will have two to three years for some program or some other source of funding to emerge that would make more sense.

I want to point out that we think we can finance 25% to 30% of it through third party capital. We are asking for the net of that number.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: That's significant. Great.

Have you approached the Canada Infrastructure Bank in the past? Have you heard anything...?

Mr. Scott Northey: They're not ready for these kinds of projects. They're looking more for capacity-relieving projects, congestion-relieving projects in the south. They want a big bang to start with. They're looking for projects with at least a marginal positive return that they think they can boost to make a much more market-based return. We're not even close to a positive return over a 20-year horizon. We could probably get there in 50 years, because it's a nation-building project, but I think they're a couple of years away from being in a position to do something like this.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: I think there was \$15 billion put aside for the total infrastructure under the five pillars, but only three of the pillars were included, with \$5 billion each. The north wasn't one of the pillars included, as I'm sure people around the room here know.

I'm curious. Samson, from the Yukon Chamber of Mines, do you and Scott and Patrick talk? Are you guys friendly?

Mr. Scott Northey: The short answer is no, but we will.... There is another, separate chamber for Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, and we talk to those guys extensively. We speak to MAC and to PDAC, so....

Mr. Samson Hartland: You can tell we talk to the same people. You'd think we worked on our notes together this morning.

Mr. Scott Northey: Yes, that's right.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Good. I was just curious, as they sound very similar.

The Chair: Colette wants in. You can get another minute.

Ms. Colette Acheson: Just to restate, the Canadian Chamber did have a policy put forward at our regional AGM and convention. It was on behalf of the Grays Bay project, and it was passed. You have the support of the entire Canadian Chamber of Commerce, including our Whitehorse chamber.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Wonderful.

I would like, quickly, to ask Kelsey and Catherine about the tie-in relationship with the University of Alberta. You touched on it, but would you mind expanding on what that is?

Ms. Kelsey Wrightson: Yes. We've been working with the University of Alberta since the beginning. For the last 10 years, we've been working with the Faculty of Native Studies. All of the courses we deliver are accredited through that faculty, and we can deliver any of the courses on those books.

The relationship with UBC is a little different, because we created our own certificate that was specifically to be delivered at Dechinta, in the north, with UBC.

The Chair: Thank you, all.

Mr. Julian, go ahead.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thanks to everybody for their very interesting statements.

I have a quick question for Mr. Northey and Mr. Duxbury. It's a very interesting project, but the position of the Government of Nunavut is a little unclear to me. I wanted to get some clarification there.

• (0950)

Mr. Scott Northey: The previous Government of Nunavut was a co-proponent with us. The premier was a staunch advocate of what we were trying to do. He had the support of cabinet, and we worked very well with the senior bureaucrats who were put in charge of executing their role.

The new government came in last November. We are now, for the first time, at the end of this month, being given the opportunity to speak to the full caucus about what this project is and what the business case is. We were not given an opportunity to speak to them about what the plans were, and I think there was a lot of misinformation flying around that we were not in a position to address properly. As a consequence, they pulled out as co-proponent. They misunderstood the nature of their financial obligations. I'm not sure if you know, but Nunavut is tremendously challenged from a fiscal perspective. They are governed by a ceiling on the amount of money they can borrow. They have no debt capacity, so they're very concerned about what the potential liability would be.

We're optimistic that at the end of this month we'll probably be able to find the necessary clarification for them to come back and say, "Yes, we'd like to support this project more explicitly."

Mr. Peter Julian: It would be good for the committee if you could keep us up to date with that, as well.

Mr. Scott Northey: Yes.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you very much.

I'd like to go to Ms. Barnes, Grand Chief Johnston, Ms. Lafferty and Ms. Wrightson.

You've made a very eloquent case for funding northern education. I'd like to get some idea of the cost of the current situation. Some people would choose to leave the north to go to the south, but in this case we're actually forcing all students to go to the south for advanced education. What this means is that any support or subsidies they receive go to the south, so that those families, if they're supporting these students, have to send money out of their community to the south. Do you have any idea what the overall

economic impact has been of this drain of resources from northern Canada into southern Canada?

Dr. Karen Barnes: Perhaps I can speak a bit about the Yukon. I don't have exact figures, but I do know that the Yukon government spends about \$4 million a year on what's called the Yukon grant, much of which goes to students who are studying in the south. There is no return requirement for them to come back north, so many of those students stay in the south after finishing their degrees.

I think the most significant impact is the inability for students to stay in the community while going to school. One of the central mandates of the new university in the Yukon will be distance delivery. We're developing two degrees that will be entirely delivered by distance. The first one has just begun. We have 18 students enrolled in the indigenous governance degree. All of them are employed with their governments in their communities and are able to stay in the community while going to school. We also have an education degree, which we have just started delivering. We have students in rural communities in the Yukon—in Mayo, for example—studying to obtain a four-year Bachelor of Education degree. I think there's a real advantage to ensure that these opportunities exist everywhere.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you.

Go ahead, Grand Chief Johnston.

Grand Chief Peter Johnston (Council of Yukon First Nations):

As important as the economic impact is, the social impact to these folks is probably greater, in the sense of the impact to the community. We find better success not only when we are supported by our families, but also when we are living and breathing within our own environment, if you will. For us as a people, the traditional aspects are very important when it comes to such things as harvesting and other things that are greatly affected during that time. I think the social impact is just as important as the economic impact and has to be taken into consideration.

Thank you.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you.

Next is Ms. Lafferty.

Ms. Catherine Lafferty: I think that student financial assistance in the NWT provides a maximum of \$1,100 per student for living allowance per month. That's not including a fully paid tuition for northern residents. With student financial assistance, in order to get that funding, you have to be a resident of the north for at least one year. Therefore, we also see a lot of people who move to the north and live there for a year in order to get access to funded education, and then leave again.

There are also the ASETS, which are now turning into ISETS, through the federal government. Those funds are getting transferred to indigenous governments, but once again, the indigenous governments don't have training facilities in the Northwest Territories, so that money is also leaving.

Also, with Dechinta, I want to mention that we are complementary to the Yukon College. We are complementary to all the universities across Canada because we can partner with them and provide student exchanges. I just want to add that.

● (0955)

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you.

Ms. Wrightson, do you have anything to add?

Ms. Kelsey Wrightson: No. I think that's good.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you very much. I'm certainly supportive of both of your proposals.

Mr. Schultz and Ms. Tasane, thank you for coming forward. You've been very eloquent, in terms of the increase in funding required for mental health supports.

I come from a province that has now put into place, for the first time, a ministry of mental health and addictions. Judy Darcy, who shares my riding as the provincial member, is the first Minister of Mental Health and Addictions in Canada. The idea is to really focus the supports and have the resources actually channelled to enhance addiction programs so that people have alternatives, and to provide full mental health supports.

You didn't really reference that in your brief, though your brief was excellent. Isn't that where we should be going, as a country, so that we have full supports in place and have a ministry that actually coordinates mental health and addictions?

Mr. Nathan Schultz: In short, yes.

I don't know that I would want to speak to exactly the right way forward in terms of the implementation of the dollars. As you can see from my brief, I've been leaning on the suggestions of other organizations. However, as you're describing it to me, I do think that would be a good way forward.

That's a horrible way to frame that. I'm sorry.

Mr. Peter Julian: No, that's excellent. What it does is that it shows the importance of providing supports.

You've spoken of increasing overall financial supports up to 9% of what we spend on health care generally, but the health care costs of not providing supports for mental health and addictions are enormous. Every family, including my own, has been impacted by mental health issues, and they often lead into addiction issues.

How would you characterize the provision of supports for mental health and addictions currently in the Yukon? Is it centred in Whitehorse? Is it available—

Mr. Nathan Schultz: Actually, I'm also a clinical counsellor with the Yukon government and provide service in Carmacks, across the river from Pelly.

They've implemented a new wellness strategy in the territory and are trying to provide service and support in the community. I don't want to speak too much to what they're doing because it would be going above my capacity as an employee with the government.

However, it's heartening to see the emphasis on collaboration with first nations in terms of allowing them to guide the process for what sorts of supports they want to see. It's also bringing the supports into

those communities in the same way that we're trying to bring education into communities, so that people have the option to stay and the opportunity to have the support of their family and peers, and their first nation, while they're getting that support.

The Chair: Thank you all.

Peter, we'll probably have time for another round later.

Ms. Rudd.

Ms. Kim Rudd: Thank you.

Once again, thank you all for coming.

I have a couple of things.

To Kelsey and Catherine, could you give me a sense of your total operating budget for your organization?

Ms. Kelsey Wrightson: Over the last three years, we have had an operating budget of \$2.5 million. That has allowed us to do program delivery across the Peel River, in the Dehcho region, as well as the core delivery in Chief Drygeese territory.

With that, we've really built up the capacity. We graduated a bunch of students, and we're now at the cusp of being able to deliver programming across the territory as well as expand.... Weekly, we have students looking to do short-course programming, full-semester programming, and we're just trying to meet them—

Ms. Kim Rudd: I read your brief, but I also did a bit of research. I'm very fascinated. My background is in post-secondary education, and mostly for adult learners.

Is there some sense of the ability to replicate this program across the north? Obviously, you have to start somewhere. You've made great strides, I must say, with the amount of money and supports you've had. Congratulations.

Now, what's next? I was in Iqaluit earlier this year and had the opportunity to talk to some folks about the Nunavut law program and the partnerships they're doing, as well as to meet with a number of mining companies around their need for labour and skilled trades.

As I'm listening around the table, collectively you're the solution. Between PDAC and MAC, and the companies and universities and you, you're almost the starting the point for all the rest of it to work.

Can you tell me a little about what thoughts you have about replicating this?

● (1000)

Ms. Catherine Lafferty: In terms of partnerships with indigenous governments particularly, there's a distrust with the government.

We have proven ourselves. However, we need to have the funds in order to come to the table and say we can offer these programs in their respective regions, that we're not just asking for their money and can actually meet them halfway.

Ms. Kelsey Wrightson: We also have students from across the north who have come to our program. Over the last 10 years, we've had numerous graduate students. We've seen them start to develop their own programs in their own communities, which I think is really heartening.

Especially in the last two semesters, we've had a number of really strong indigenous women who've gone back home and said, "This is something I'd like to try and do in my community."

It's really incredible to see there are things that Dechinta and our program can teach that can then move to different places and be respectful of the cultures and the communities and the first nations that they are rooted in there.

The Chair: Go ahead.

Dr. Karen Barnes: I just want to add that we have been watching Dechinta's work and the really wonderful groundbreaking things they're doing.

I would also add that Yukon College recently received a very significant grant of \$5 million from the Mastercard Foundation. With that money, we are working on building all sorts of different kinds of strategies related to making sure there are more indigenous students going through post-secondary. That is the outcome they're looking for.

We have been putting programs in place in every community in the Yukon, related to trades and to women and children. We have a youth university, which is encouraging youth to get engaged in post-secondary. This summer we had a mobile science lab that went to every community in the Yukon to talk about science education.

We're working very hard to start that conversation early in people's lives, so that they can start thinking about what they want to be when they go to post-secondary education.

Ms. Kim Rudd: Thank you.

I'll go to Mr. Hartland, and to Patrick and Scott as well on the coordination that needs to continue to happen around tapping into our vast resources, especially in the north. Yes, of course it is about economic development, but it's also about community development and about opportunity.

Can you tell me a bit about what you said earlier in terms of how you talk to the same people but not necessarily to each other? What do you think collaboration among the three of you and your organizations might look like, and how might it provide additional heft, if you will, particularly for the projects you're presenting today?

Mr. Samson Hartland: We actually work very closely with our colleagues across the north. We haven't worked with these proponents specifically, but we work with the NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines. Tom Hoefler there has been a long-standing leader of that organization. We coordinate it through the Canadian Mineral Industry Federation, otherwise known as CMIF.

We meet on the margins of PDAC. We also meet at Mining Day on the Hill and other opportunities in Ottawa to share and collaborate on issues of mutual importance.

You'll see that we've identified infrastructure and competitiveness as being our issues in the north. We've collaborated through those

organizations, through PDAC and MAC, to communicate that consistent message.

That's why it's actually quite serendipitous that we have some consistent messaging this morning, even though we haven't met each other before. I've never met Patrick or Scott in my life, but we clearly share the same priorities and values and perspectives, and we're glad to have the opportunity to be able to have that emphasis here this morning for your members' deliberations.

Mr. Scott Northey: I have just one other thing to add. It's awful watching two white guys from the south talk this way, but at the heart of it we're hired to execute the vision of the Inuit. It's their vision and their product, and we're here to help execute it. Our project is unique in that sense.

The model of having Inuit as proponents is something that could be translated and transferred over to other jurisdictions. Both the Yukon and the Northwest Territories have multiple jurisdictions in first nations communities and have to find ways of bringing them into the fold, but my sense is that the Inuit tend to be a bit more united because they are one homogenous group. When they settled their land claim, the entire Inuit world settled its land claims.

This at least provides a model for indigenous pronency of essential lease and infrastructure, because at the end of the day there can be no regional infrastructure in any northern territory unless there is indigenous buy-in. If they can own and develop it, they'll buy into it.

That's the one thing I could say in terms of co-operation and providing a model.

•(1005)

Ms. Kim Rudd: Do you want to add to that?

Mr. Samson Hartland: Back here at home we also coordinate with other stakeholders as well, so we work closely with the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, the Yukon Chamber of Commerce and the Yukon First Nations Chamber of Commerce, which represents all the first nations development corporations here in Yukon. We ensure that we have a consistent message coming out of Yukon through PDAC.

PDAC meets with Parliament quite regularly. I know they meet with your office and the Minister of Natural Resources to communicate those messages effectively. As well, the Mining Association of Canada hosts their Mining Day on the Hill, typically in the second week of November, so that's coming up fairly soon. You'll be hearing some of those consistent messages over and over again.

As we coordinate on project issues specific to jurisdictions like Grays Bay or, in our case, the Yukon resource gateway project, our specific approaches in our jurisdictions can be complementary to each other as opposed to competing against each other. We share the same value system on opening up the north to opportunities, but also, as you have indicated, Ms. Rudd, supporting communities in their growth and opportunities.

The Chair: Thank you.

I think Mr. Duxbury wanted in and then we'll go to Mr. Kelly.

Mr. Patrick Duxbury: I just wanted to build on what Colette had mentioned earlier that a motion from the Kitikmeot Chamber of Commerce had been ratified and brought up at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce AGM in Thunder Bay late last month. That was endorsed by the other northern chamber of commerce territorial groups. It just indicates that, while as proponents we're working with partners ourselves, other entities and other groups are also recognizing the importance of this project and they're moving ahead with it. We had a very small role in getting that resolution passed, except to obviously explain the project to the members of the chamber of commerce in Kitikmeot, in which they did a lot of great advocacy work and obviously communicated with Yukon and NWT chambers of commerce and got something passed, which is obviously very important for us and we thank you for that.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Kelly.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Thank you.

Thank you to everyone for appearing today.

Mr. Hartland, you mentioned that it's good that you and colleagues around the table have a similar vision and a similar message. That is helpful to the committee. When the committee prepares a report, the government, then the Minister of Finance can either accept recommendations, not accept them or disregard them as he sees fit. The committee is independent of the government. We make recommendations and the government ultimately decides what it will do.

I want to actually pick out one piece that you mentioned. What we've been tasked to do is to have a lens on competitiveness. The competitiveness of the Canadian economy is our theme, as our chair sometimes reminds us. You mentioned the carbon tax and its effect on exploration and the ability for businesses to be able to compete compared with other jurisdictions and choices for capital allocation. I would like you to expand on that a bit if you will. We have now seen the beginnings of carve-outs on the carbon tax for large emitters in manufacturing, but not any consideration on the primary resource industries.

I will let you comment on that, if you like.

Mr. Samson Hartland: Thank you for that opportunity.

I will just preface my comments. It probably would be important to know that Yukon's mineral exploration industry has been a primary driver of Yukon's private sector GDP growth over the course of a century—ever since the Klondike gold rush—and continues to be the largest sector employer of indigenous people, as well as supporting the quality of life that we've come to enjoy.

Having prefaced those comments, I think it's important to note that in Canada's north, given the remoteness of our mineral deposits, it's an energy-intensive industry that has very little option for fuel-switching opportunities. If we talk grassroots exploration, there are roads—Yukon has a number of roads—but to get to an actual mine site requires, for a grassroots prospector, lots of driving and lots of ATV exploration. It's difficult to get in and out of these remote areas, including with our junior exploration companies with helicopter

costs and various other fuel costs. They really have little choice except to say whether we go ahead with that project this year or not. It makes a big difference.

Then, more close to home, I'd like to talk about the quartz mining companies. We have, or had, one operating quartz mine in Yukon, which has recently announced that it is going to go into care and maintenance as of last week. We understand that a couple of hundred employees will be laid off over the course of the coming month. Given that we're on the front lines of implementation of a carbon pricing regime here in January, we're concerned about what that means, not only for the current operation, of which there will be none now.... There will be two mines in care and operation, one of which is Capstone's Minto mine, a copper mine just north of Carmacks, and another one is the Alexco's silver mine just north of Mayo in the Keno Hill district.

When I say all of that, I want to also go back to levelling the playing field. There is a report we co-commissioned with the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada, the Mining Association of Canada, Engineers Canada, as well as the NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines, that quantified the increased costs of operating in Canada's north. As I indicated earlier in my presentation, it's six times higher for explorers and two and a half times higher for operating gold mines compared with our southern counterparts. That self delineation is simply the 60th parallel.

I just want to say that with this increased cost, when mines are shutting down and when employees are being laid off, this is probably the least opportune time to introduce a new tax in our jurisdiction.

● (1010)

Mr. Pat Kelly: Thank you, but you didn't even get to another thing that you had mentioned, which is the dependence on diesel for the generation of electricity in the north, which is widespread, of course. It affects all remote communities, in both households and businesses.

You have a moment here, at the committee, so do you have a particular recommendation on this? Would you recommend rescinding the tax? Would you recommend further carve-outs for the mining industry or for northern communities? Do you have any particular recommendations that you'd like to make to the committee on this?

Mr. Samson Hartland: Thank you for the opportunity.

In fact, we had written a letter to Minister McKenna on this topic and had provided a number of recommendations for consideration. We have said that, if exemption is not on the table, then consider what the Mining Association in Canada presented to you, which is delayed implementation. In December 2016, Pierre Gratton wrote about carbon pricing in northern Canada and he spoke to the need to balance the emissions mitigation with the northern mining realities. He provided a number of recommendations, which were mainly to “Phase in the carbon price on a different schedule in the North until the transitional programs and investments proposed below have been established, born fruit, and facilitate economically viable pathways to emissions mitigation.”

Mr. Pat Kelly: May I ask, did she respond to your letter?

Mr. Samson Hartland: We have not received a response, although we have received indication from our local MP, Larry Bagnall, that the ultimate decision will lay with the Premier of Yukon. Our intent is to relay the same recommendations to the Premier of Yukon.

The Chair: Thank you. We may have another opportunity—Mr. McLeod, I think you want in for a second round. Just before you do, on the \$21.5 million to Yukon university, are there discussions ongoing with any part of the federal government at the moment? Has there been correspondence or discussions of any kind with any of the ministries?

Dr. Karen Barnes: We haven't had discussions with the ministers, but I have been in Ottawa twice over the last few months and met with a number of the different departments, including Indigenous and Northern Affairs, ESDC and CanNor on a couple of occasions. Certainly, we meet regularly with the tri-councils, which are the three granting councils, because we are recipients of a number of research grants in the north at Yukon College and we want to make sure that this continues at the university.

• (1015)

The Chair: On the granting councils, I'm not sure, but I believe it was Kelsey who said that you are not able to access those research monies from SSHRC, etc. Why not?

Ms. Kelsey Wrightson: We're not able to access it because we don't have institutional recognition. SSHRC recently opened up the application to allow indigenous not-for-profit organizations to apply for SSHRC funding only, so we jumped at that and applied for three grants right away. Hopefully we'll hear in the next couple of weeks. With that, they did not also offer the opportunity for indigenous not-for-profits to access the indirect costs associated.

With eligible institutions, you get complementary funding to help support things, like infrastructure and administration costs. Indigenous not-for-profit organizations don't receive that funding. We receive research grants, but then no funding to actually support the implementation of those research grants. We've also been in conversation with SSHRC about that, to try to level the playing field so it doesn't actually cost us to administer research.

The Chair: Go ahead, Karen.

Dr. Karen Barnes: To clarify, Yukon College has been eligible for NSERC and SSHRC, for a number of years, and we currently have multi-million of dollars' worth of research grants operating in the north. We are the principle investigators and the money stays in

the north. One of the real advantages of that is that every summer, we offer about 50 students who from the north and who are studying in southern universities the opportunity to come north and spend the summer doing research through those granting opportunities.

The Chair: Okay. I had one more question and it relates to the chambers of commerce and the Nunavut Resources Corporation. As Pat said, one of the things that we're looking at is how to remain competitive, especially when you look at some of the things that are happening in the United States, with accelerated capital cost depreciation, etc. Where do we stand, or where does your industry stand, on accelerated capital cost allowance?

Also, could you explain a little further about flow-through shares?

Mr. Samson Hartland: I may not be able to speak directly to the two initiatives you just put forward, except for the....

Did you ask about the mineral exploration tax credit? Is that what I heard you say?

The Chair: Yes, that one too. I didn't ask, but go with it as well.

Mr. Samson Hartland: Now with regard to the CCA I'm not as familiar with that. What I can say is that when it comes to the mineral exploration tax credit, it incentivizes institutional investors to invest in the industry. There's an opportunity to see some of that credit back through a tax credit. In fact, the north used to have a special northern premium added to the METC that's not being asked for this time around. METC typically provides 15% back, but in the north we've additionally had a 10% premium added in previous budgets. That may be something we would want to consider to stimulate investment in Canada's north.

When we talk about competitiveness, I can't stress enough that we must consider and heed the warnings of national organizations right now regarding our slipping in the competitiveness index against countries like Australia that are further incentivizing exploration in their industries.

We are recognizing some telltale signs right now that are concerning, to say the least. Grassroots exploration is flatlining right now across the country, not just in Canada's north, and grassroots exploration is the pipeline that feeds and fuels future mines being created in Canada.

When we don't see activity on those front lines, it's almost like the canary in the mine shaft. We need to find out what the indicators are, what the problems or challenges are, and look to address those. I believe that the METC and what we've presented here today are some of those indicators that we've identified.

As for CCA, I'm sure that would be a competitive advantage to our industry. I would have to do more research to provide you with an educated response on that front.

• (1020)

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

We certainly have time for a couple of questions from each of the parties, and Mr. McLeod is first.

Mr. Michael McLeod: Thank you.

I have a couple of quick questions.

Could you tell us when the 10% addition was removed? Do you have that kind of information to share with us?

Mr. Samson Hartland: You know, I've been around long enough just to be dangerous. I feel like it was about a couple of years ago, if I remember correctly.

I couldn't say anything definitively. I just know that it was there, and now it is not being asked for anymore.

Mr. Michael McLeod: Are you able to provide it, or can we get...?

Mr. Samson Hartland: Absolutely. I can follow up.

Mr. Michael McLeod: My other question is for Colette.

On the issue of CanNor, we've been working quite hard to try to nail down CanNor as an ongoing program. I think we did that in the last budget, and it was pegged at \$20 million.

Now, I think you and I know, and anybody who lives in the north who has had to deal with CanNor knows, that we've had issues with the approval process. The other issue, of course, is the fact that it's oversubscribed. While we're seeing increases in western diversification and programs in Atlantic provinces, we're still struggling to bring our program up to where it needs to be.

I was hoping that you'd be able to talk a bit about what you think the investments should be in CanNor, because it's certainly something that I think warrants further discussion. We've been talking about it quite a bit. I've heard lots from the north.

Where do we need to focus? Do we need to rebrand our program so that we have a specific focus and we can try to strategically invest?

There's a couple of questions there: How much should it be, and where should it go?

Ms. Colette Acheson: I've been on the job for about two months, and I moved to this job from a whole other sector, so my knowledge on this isn't terribly deep.

What I see in terms of the specific programs that we access through CanNor, and also my general experience with other federal funding sources—and I believe that people are doing their best—is that there's clunkiness in the system. When you have application dates in July and you don't have an approval until January, there is something there that's taking a long time for wheels to turn.

Obviously, I'm not that familiar with the processes, but with CanNor specifically, I believe we have a current agreement that

expired March 31, and we won't have a decision on this year's funding until November.

Mr. Michael McLeod: It's \$20 million, unless it increases.

Ms. Colette Acheson: No, I mean for our specific projects, not the global pot. Anyway, so then I don't know whether this will happen, but it has happened in some of the other federal agreements, where we would be submitting a one-year proposal, get that approved toward the end of November and then rush like hell to try to meet all those deliverables before March 31 again. That does seem to be a bit of a pattern.

The Chair: Scott wanted in.

Mr. Scott Northey: I have just one quick comment on CanNor. As a result of multiple applications from intervenor groups in the environmental assessment processes, CanNor said it wasn't going to fund any environmental assessment activities. It hasn't considered the fact that some groups want to be proponents of projects, and it won't fund those activities. In terms of economic development opportunities, if you're not going to fund the environmental assessment process you're not going to get behind large-scale development opportunities.

The Chair: Mr. McLeod.

Mr. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Chair.

To the Mental Health Association of Yukon, this is an issue I worry about quite a bit. I just sat on a study group with the House of Commons indigenous committee that is putting together a study on suicide in indigenous communities across Canada. We had a study that went on for a little over a year. During that time I started keeping a tab on how many people were committing suicide in the north, in Nunavut through my Nunavut colleague, and in Yukon and Labrador. While we did the study, which lasted a little over a year, over 100 youth committed suicide. It's a quick count, but I'm sure that's still going on.

Nathan and Tiffanie, how widespread is the issue of mental health in the north? How does it compare to the rest of Canada? Is it more focused and evident in small communities?

●(1025)

Mr. Nathan Schultz: I can't give you a specific number because I'm not sure how many suicides there are in the north. I do know—at this table we all know, probably—that suicide disproportionately affects northern indigenous communities. I think there are significant mental health needs in communities, a lot of which stem from the difficulty of getting resources into communities. I did speak to that earlier, about the great work the Yukon government is doing to start to address that problem by putting the facilities out there. I live in Carmacks, so I'm going to run away from here as soon as I'm done today. Those sorts of steps are necessary because the need is there.

Tremendous stigma also impacts the willingness for people to even talk about or to address the issues that they have, and I see that as an area of focus in communities, to address the narrative that we haven't been doing as good a job of addressing by not being in communities previously.

Mr. Michael McLeod: Yes, I think it's also compounded in the area of people who deal with the suicides. I know many social workers who have developed post-traumatic stress disorder by having to deal with suicide after suicide. I know one lady I talked to had diagnosed four over a summer, and she crashed. She couldn't....

Mr. Nathan Schultz: Yes, and it impacts families tremendously as well, because everyone is so connected in a community. It's loss after loss after loss. I just started this job five months ago, and I had no idea how much need there was.

The Chair: Okay. We will have to cut it there. We will go a little over time, if that's okay.

We'll have Mr. Kelly and then Mr. Julian.

Mr. Pat Kelly: I have just a quick question or maybe an opportunity to get some more testimony from Mr. Northey. Your ask is for a federal contribution to be in partnership for the construction of transportation infrastructure necessary to open up the ability to build the mine. You spoke about the community benefits, obviously, of having a land connection that will drastically reduce the costs of living in the north for many people.

In response to Mr. Jeneroux's question about accessing the federal infrastructure bank, you were quite quick to say that this is not the type of investment that the infrastructure bank is interested in at all. Your phrase was that it just wouldn't give a big enough bang. I found it strange that a project that would create the first land connection of a territory to the rest of Canada would be considered to not be a sufficient bang. I'm not a fan of the infrastructure bank as a policy, but I want you to comment further on the magnitude and what this would mean to residents of the north, not just the hundreds who will work in the mine but the rest of the community, and the benefit to northerners to have this infrastructure in place.

Mr. Scott Northey: I'm going to go back to my initial comment. When I said not enough bang, the bank right now only considers pure return on investment in terms of how they calculate what's a useful project to look at.

If the bank would consider tax revenues to Canada or the territorial government as part of that bucket, we'd be fine. We could have a long discussion with them. That's not what they're looking for. They're looking for what can the revenues we're going to charge

for users generate to be able to generate a return on investment that they can then market to institutional investors. That's what I meant by saying there's not enough bang for it to work that way.

In terms of the north, we alluded to this notion of sealift. Once a year a ship comes out of Montreal and delivers bulk and dry goods to the communities. This year it didn't make it to the two biggest communities coming out of Hay River. If you think about the cost of somebody.... The relationships with our region are north-south, so the relationships are with Yellowknife and with Edmonton. Our guys go to Edmonton, buy a truck and ship it to Montreal. It's shipped up on a ship, hopefully, and gets delivered to the community. That's an extra \$6,000 cost. Instead, if they had this winter road, they'd fly to Edmonton, they'd drive their truck on the winter road back up to the port, and when the ice goes out in the spring, they'd deliver their truck to their own community via barge.

That's the simple answer.

The cost of flying south is huge. This at least gives them some seasonal access initially to be able to drive to the south to lower their cost of actual travel and reduce the sense of isolation. The Northwest Territories is also looking at putting in an all-weather corridor to replace their winter road. This would be phase one. We're working very closely with them, but this is phase one in the opportunity to create an all-season connection from the Northwest Passage to the rest of Canada. We've quantified the value to community, we've quantified the value to the economy, but we haven't talked much about sovereignty and the opportunity it gives Canada to have a deepwater port for DND and the Coast Guard, and the increased safety through search and rescue opportunities.

There's a ship that ran aground in Nunavut this past summer. The first contact from the south was seven hours by a Hercules that flew over. That was it. We got lucky that nothing happened with that grounding, no spills, no fatalities, but who knows what's going to happen the next time.

●(1030)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Julian, you have the last question.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I want to follow up, Mr. Schultz, on my last question. If we look to an increase in mental health funding, what would be the most critical thing to address first in Yukon Territory? What is the area that is of most critical need?

I'm not trying to make it a trick question. If you don't have an answer right away, it's something you could certainly send to us later.

Grand Chief Peter Johnston: I think the support programs in the rural communities is definitely a problem. You only have maybe one individual who visits Mayo once every two weeks, and the demand and the necessity of that program and service to our people is very significant. I think when you look at fly-in communities such as Old Crow, it diminishes even that opportunity for those folks to get some necessary support. I think access, let alone the stigmas, as Nathan has brought forward, is very apparent here.

There's even having programs that are reflective of our traditional ways of doing things. When I talked earlier about the support mechanisms for our people, it's very significant that we recognize that we are unique as individuals here in the north, let alone as northerners, yet let alone the dynamics and the demographics. Even though we are a small community of Yukon, there are 14 unique first nations that have different ways of dealing with things, traditionally and ceremonially. I think we have to be reflective of what our clientele looks like. I think we really haven't had that ability to foster and develop programs that are significant but reflective of us as traditional people.

The Chair: There's time for one last question to the Nunavut Resource Corporation.

You have a pretty extensive proposal here on a new port at Grays Bay. The all-weather gravel road and the runway at the port site make sense. As a government, how do we quit spending money and how do we avoid going further into deficit?

These kinds of proposals make so much sense, for seizing the opportunities that exist in the north and giving the opportunities to the northern people as well. How do we do some of these big projects, which need to be done for the next century? If we stay where we are, we're going to fall further behind. We have to invest to get ahead. Do you have any suggestions on where the federal government could go, in an all-encompassing way, on those big projects that are so much needed and would make such a difference?

Mr. Scott Northey: There are multiple things to consider. At a minimum, government needs to ensure that the private sector's participation has been maximized, as much as it can be maximized. We've done our best to try to identify user groups and quite often it's difficult to talk speculatively about people entering into long-term usage contracts when there's not something concrete to put on the table. We think that we can access third party capital to the tune of 25% to 30% of the cost. That leaves us 70% short. There is a reality with nation-building projects. Unless you're willing to look at the tax revenues that are associated with the economic activities that have been generated as a result of the infrastructure going into place, it's going to be very difficult to generate the positive returns.

We do know that, in the review of the Canada Transportation Act, which was tabled two years ago, the final report suggested that, for the \$2-billion cost of the Northwest Territories portion and our portion, this corridor alone would generate a return of about \$39 billion over a 20-year horizon, but again, most of those returns are things like tax revenues or additional GDP. In terms of pure revenues generated from charging for usage, it doesn't move the dial as it relates to the Canada Infrastructure Bank, and that's where our

problem is. There are no programs available that would allow the government to participate in the way it normally would participate in projects like this.

• (1035)

The Chair: We appreciate all your presentations and your answers to our questions. With that, we will have to suspend for 15 minutes and come up with the second panel.

• _____ (Pause) _____

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• (1050)

The Chair: We'll reconvene with my new gavel.

Welcome to the witnesses who are here this morning.

As everyone knows, these are the pre-budget consultations, in advance of the 2019 budget.

Before I start, to just give you folks a little idea of where members come from and the regions they represent, we'll do an introduction around the table.

I apologize on behalf of Larry Bagnell, who couldn't be here because of what we call an Ottawa filibuster at the Board of Internal Economy. He had to go back to do that.

We'll start with Pat.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Thank you.

I'm Pat Kelly, the member of Parliament for Calgary Rocky Ridge and I'm a Conservative opposition MP.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: I'm Matt Jeneroux, the member of Parliament for Edmonton. I'm a Conservative member.

[Translation]

Mr. Peter Julian: My name is Peter Julian and I am vice-chair of the committee.

[English]

I'm an NDP member of Parliament. I represent the traditional territories of the Qayqayt First Nation and Coast Salish peoples, from the riding of New Westminster—Burnaby in coastal British Columbia

Mr. Michael McLeod: I'm Michael McLeod from the Northwest Territories. Hello to everybody.

Ms. Kim Rudd: Good morning. I guess it is still morning.

I'm Kim Rudd. I am the member of Parliament for Northumberland—Peterborough South. For context, that is a rural riding in southeastern Ontario.

The Chair: I'm Wayne Easter, the member of Parliament for Malpeque, in Prince Edward Island.

We'll start with Jennifer Flanagan from Actua.

Ms. Jennifer Flanagan (President and Chief Executive Officer, Actua): Thank you so much. It's so good to be here. I really appreciate the opportunity to address all of you.

My name is Jennifer Flanagan. I am the CEO of Actua, which is a national charity. Thank you for inviting us to talk a bit about how our organization is contributing to Canada's growth and economic competitiveness.

For the past 25 years, Actua and its network of 37 local member organizations have worked to provide essential STEM skills to Canadian youth and to instill in them the confidence to pursue careers in these high-demand fields. Every year, we engage 250,000 youth in 500 communities, reaching every province and territory in the country.

It is very fitting, and in fact an honour, to be able to speak to you here in Whitehorse, where Actua, through our partner, Yukon College, has been working for many years to deliver STEM programming to youth right across the territory.

Actua prioritizes outreach to youth who most often face exclusion from the workforce. This includes indigenous Canadians, girls, newcomers and those facing other socio-economic barriers. In fact, half of our total annual budget is committed to the work that we are doing in partnership with 250 first nations, Inuit and Métis communities.

Key to our success—and in fact what this looks like on the ground, whether it's in downtown Toronto or here in the Yukon—is year-round programming, where teams travel to communities and engage youth outside of the classroom to build the skills that are required for them to fully participate in the workforce of the future.

How does federal government support for Actua help to ensure our economic competitiveness?

By 2020, Canada's STEM workforce will require 220,000 additional workers to meet demand, a workforce gap that, as you know, is only growing. To remain competitive, Canada will need to look for creative approaches and partners that address this challenge—a challenge that is not currently being met by schools and institutions. Our work is filling that critical gap in workforce development: the gap between formal education and on-the-job training. We do this by engaging under-represented youth directly in their communities. We use local instructors to integrate STEM skills learning with personalized intensive and culturally relevant programming that is delivered within the local economic context.

We also use a multisectoral approach to achieve impact. We work with our network members, who are located at colleges and universities, and with our private sector partners, who help us develop new innovative content that builds the skills they are identifying as critical for the future of work. We're proud to work with global and Canadian companies such as Google, GE, Shopify, Suncor, TD and Microsoft, to name just a few.

It is within this context that Actua is seeking \$45 million in federal funding over the next five years to allow us to scale our programs to meet the growing demand. This federal investment would be leveraged with \$115 million pledged from our corporate sector partners, foundations and our network members.

According to a study conducted by the Conference Board of Canada, a \$45-million investment from the federal government in Actua would result in the following benefits. It would lead to \$560

million of GDP growth. It would increase government tax revenue by an additional \$169 million. It would generate \$341 million in new lifetime wages for participants. Also, it would encourage as many as 90,000 additional young Canadians to pursue careers in STEM.

Additionally, research indicates that careers in STEM earn on average 20% more in lifetime earnings than non-STEM careers. For indigenous Canadians, this effect is even more profound. Careers in STEM can increase lifetime earnings by as much as 141% for men and 150% for women.

However, as great as these results may be, we cannot achieve them without the federal government coming to the table. By 2023, at the end of that federal investment, we will have reached 3.6 million Canadians, many of whom would have otherwise slipped through the cracks. Less economic diversity means less competitiveness, and we're already facing serious shortcomings in our competitive ability to prepare Canadian youth for the innovative jobs of the future. We simply cannot afford to leave large parts of the Canadian population out of the future workforce.

As you consider your recommendations to the Government of Canada and the Minister of Finance, we ask that you endorse Actua's \$45-million request over five years to support and scale these programs across the country.

Thank you.

•(1055)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Jennifer.

Just for the benefit of everyone here, do you want to mention what STEM means?

Ms. Jennifer Flanagan: Yes. It's science, technology, engineering and math.

The Chair: Thank you.

Turning to the next group, we have the Association franco-yukonnaise, with Ms. Jeanne Beaudoin and Mr. Frédéric Nolet.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Jeanne Beaudoin (President, Association franco-yukonnaise): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, members of the committee. Welcome to the Yukon.

My name is Jeanne Beaudoin and I am president of the Association franco-yukonnaise. I would like to thank you for inviting me to appear for this pre-budget consultation.

The Association franco-yukonnaise (AFY) was created in 1982. It works to develop and maintain the services, programs and institutions necessary for the advancement of life in French in the Yukon, in collaboration with its government, municipal, community and private sector partners. More than 2,000 people participate annually in our various activities and enjoy our services.

According to the 2016 census, the Yukon ranks third in Canada for its bilingualism rate, after Quebec and New Brunswick. Of course, the figures are more modest, but, even so, 13.8% of the Yukon population speaks French. Statistics Canada forecasts a steady increase in the francophone population in the Yukon by 2030.

Clearly, French and the francophonie are key drivers of the Yukon and Canadian economy. Although the action plan for official languages announced last March contains some excellent measures, more needs to be done to support the Yukon francophone population. It is important to also respond to the call of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages that the federal government take concrete measures to reflect the significant increase in the number of francophone communities and residents in the three territories, as noted in the last census.

A number of Government of Canada programs have seen significant increases in their funding, but those increases are still based on an approach that does not take into account the asymmetry of realities in different parts of the country. We therefore recommend that the government consider basing the fund distribution formula not only on the number of francophones, but also on the factors of community vitality, the specific characteristics of the communities, and the economic reality of the provinces and territories, in order to provide them with the tools required to meet the needs of francophones.

As you know, it is through federal-provincial-territorial agreements that a large portion of the millions of dollars announced in the Action Plan for Official Languages 2018-2023: Investing in Our Future will be spent. Unfortunately, the Official Languages Act does not require the federal government to include language clauses for the benefit of official language minority communities in those agreements. We therefore recommend that all federal departments include a language clause in all agreements on the transfer of funds from the federal government to territorial governments. This clause must be clear, binding and, above all, enforced.

We also recommend that the government explore the possibility of matching the funds that are regularly channelled through the provinces, territories and municipalities with a francophone component going directly to the community organizations in question.

As you know, education is essential to Canada's economic growth. However, this sector is not included in the Action Plan. Despite the steady growth of many French first-language programs in the Yukon, the bilateral education agreements have not seen an increase in funding in more than 10 years. Franco-Yukon students are therefore forced to leave the territory to pursue post-secondary education in French. In most cases, they have to go east, either to the University of Ottawa, the University of Moncton, or in Quebec.

In fact, one young Yukon francophone, Anna Tölgyesi, gathered more than 500 signatures on a petition urging the federal government to address this issue. The petition was tabled in the House of Commons by our MP, Larry Bagnell, in June 2018.

● (1100)

We believe that federal support to increase the number of programs available in French in western and northern Canada would

help the economy and innovation across Canada. These programs would also allow immersion students to pursue their education in French in their part of the country, and help achieve the federal government's objective of seeing a significant increase in the country's bilingualism rate over the next five years.

We therefore recommend that the government invest more in education, from kindergarten through post-secondary, by bolstering the funding of bilateral education agreements by at least 20% and by allocating specific funding to increase the number of post-secondary programs in French in western and northern Canada.

In terms of immigration, we recommend that the Government of Canada invest additional funds for the recruitment of francophone immigrants, taking into account the labour needs of the provinces and territories. We propose that the federal government work with the communities and the provincial and territorial governments to develop a recruitment action plan to achieve the 4.4% target set for 2023.

As for seniors, we ask that the federal government significantly increase investments in programs for seniors, that it take into account the realities of francophones in minority communities when establishing the criteria for the distribution of funds and that it keep in mind the issues of isolation, lack of affordable housing and access to health care, and the costs of living in the north.

Finally, on the arts and culture front, we ask that the federal government increase the annual funding of the Canadian Arts Presentation Fund (CAPF) by \$30 million per year over three years, as recommended by the Fédération culturelle canadienne-française. The limited funding we receive for this purpose inhibits the growth potential of many communities, including the Yukon francophone community.

We have submitted a brief in English and French, which is a little longer than my presentation.

● (1105)

[English]

Thank you. *Mahsi cho*.

You can ask your question in English. If you don't mind, I will answer it in French. It will be more fluid for me and for you.

[Translation]

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Frédéric. Thank you very much, Ms. Beaudoin.

I believe the next four groups are with the first nations.

It might be helpful when you start your remarks if you indicate where you're from. I know some people went to pretty great lengths to get here. I think Ms. Joseph drove 600 kilometres from the north to get here. Mr. Johnston, who was here earlier for a one-minute statement, drove 400 kilometres, I believe. That will go on the record as well. If you could do that it might be helpful to the committee members as well.

With the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, we welcome Chief Steve Smith.

Chief Steve Smith (Champagne and Aishihik First Nations): Thank you.

Good morning, committee members. Thank you for coming to the Yukon.

First of all, I'd like to open up with thanks. We are guests on the land of the Tagish Kwan people, represented by the Ta'an and Kwanlin Dün first nations.

[Witness speaks in Dakwänje]

My name is Steve Smith. I'm the chief of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, representing peoples encompassing the southwest Yukon portion and the northwestern part of British Columbia, a drive of roughly an hour and a half from here, who are sharing the territory of the Kluane park with our brothers here, the Kluane First Nation.

I'd like to speak about a couple of broad notes. Then I'll speak about some things that are very specific to Champagne and Aishihik.

In the current situation, Yukon's economy is growing at a healthy rate. We have a very low unemployment rate. Our population, as was just announced, is over 42,000 people. Yukon first nations are roughly 25% of that population. Although the unemployment rate is quite low for the Yukon in general, Yukon first nations, as with most first nations in the rest of territory or the rest of the country, still experience fairly high rates.

We believe that to achieve long-term economic growth and competitiveness all sectors of the population and all communities across the territory must have the opportunity to participate in the growth. This is not happening at the moment, and for one main reason. We continue to struggle to implement our land claims and our self-government agreements.

For self-governing first nations in Yukon, our participation in the growth is not just good economics; it's a treaty right. We signed a deal with Canada. That includes all parts of the Canadian Confederation.

Yukon self-government agreements state the following principle: "The Parties are committed to promoting opportunities for the well-being of Citizens equal to those of other Canadians". We expect this commitment to be kept. Currently for our programming in terms of our FTA funds, we are always underfunded. You'll hear more from my colleagues about that.

With regard to budget 2019, I'd like to focus on three areas that will support Yukon first nations, and specifically Champagne and Aishihik, in economic growth: revitalization of the languages, improved community infrastructure and housing, and investment in the energy sector.

Language revitalization is seen by Champagne and Aishihik First Nations as the primary and most important project that we're undertaking. For Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, the people themselves have committed over \$1 million from their land claim compensation funds to invest in a language immersion program.

That program is now into its fifth week as of today, and it is really the first of its kind in the Yukon. We have 10 students going every day, for eight to nine hours a day, to be fully immersed in speaking Dakwänje—Southern Tutchone—in our community, with the hope that once they have done this program they will become the foundation of the language revitalization efforts for Champagne and Aishihik moving forward. They will be the ones going into the schools. They will be the ones leading the language immersion programs in the future. It's highly important.

What we ask of the government is support for this. It will cost us roughly a million dollars per year over the next 10 years to fund this program. Over the next 10 years, if the program is successful, you'll see approximately 50 students come out of this at a level that is adequate to be able to teach the language from a fluency level.

We've asserted some of our language jurisdiction by creating our own language act, which in Canada is paramount or equal to any other act of either Yukon or federal governments with regard to the protection of the Southern Tutchone language for Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. We are continually trying to increase the languages because this for us is the key first step to really becoming economically self-sufficient and self-reliant. Language is spoken about both in UNDRIP and TRC, and of course in the royal proclamation, as a necessary aspect of us as a people regaining our self-determination and really and truly taking our place within the fabric of Canadian society.

● (1110)

The next thing is community infrastructure and housing. Champagne and Aishihik is looking at our program, which will need roughly \$7.5 million over the next three to four years to adequately house the number of citizens we have in our communities.

We are looking not only for housing, but we need the infrastructure. Champagne and Aishihik has a number of parcels of settlement land, as do the other first nations, specifically within already designated communities. We're looking to have the ability to develop those parcels of land so that we can provide the housing for our people, and not just government-funded housing but to provide the access to the land for those individuals who have the ability to gain a mortgage and invest in Champagne and Aishihik land with their own dollars and build the community from that aspect.

The final thing for us is the inclusion in the energy sector. Champagne and Aishihik, for over 40 years, has been pushed to the side with regard to a major energy project within the Yukon. The Aishihik Lake dam was created in the early 1970s. It was 1973 when they started construction.

It was basically a situation where they brought in an almost illiterate chief, who could not speak English, and he was forced to agree to having the dam created within our traditional territory. Though you heard earlier about how it is important for mining growth and everything else, Champagne and Aishihik has continually paid, from our cultural side and our environmental side, for major mining initiatives within the Yukon, and it has never been accounted for.

That being said, we are not here to stop development. We want to be a part of the development. Part of that development is becoming a partner in the energy sector, to be able to fill the need which is currently at capacity in the Yukon. We can hardly face more development in the very near future, because we just do not have the capacity on the hydro, especially in electrical generation.

What we want when we move forward is to be a part of the conversation and part of the investment: people leading the actual development. We feel that first nations will have a better understanding of what the impact of any type of development would be in our traditional territory. Champagne and Aishihik, I think is poised.... We have a high opportunity to invest in areas—wind generation, hydroelectrical generation—but we want to be a part of that. The other thing is biomass on the environmental side, utilizing the biomass within our traditional territory to create electrical generation.

Mr. Kelly, you asked earlier on about the need for diesel generation in the very near future. There's going to be a need. Yukon is growing population-wise, but it's also growing from the development side. We have two mines that are currently in the development stage right now, and they're going to need power moving forward. Having the ability for us to be the purveyors of that resource puts our people into a positive situation with regard to any further development within the territory.

With that, I have one final comment. I've said this to every federal person that I've ever spoken to. We ask you to be concerted and truthful about the implementation of our land claim. Champagne and Aishihik signed our land claim and self-government agreement 25 years ago this year. We have been on the road of self-government for that time, and we have been committed to the further development of our people.

•(1115)

We've always tried to do a lot of good for our people with the few shekels we have, but we're always at a negative starting point because of our FTAs, our fiscal transfer agreements. Very similar to the provinces and the territories, our agreements with the federal government have always been chronically underfunded. You'll hear about that more from my colleagues, I'm sure.

With that, *kwänäschtis*. Thank you for coming. Thank you for your time.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Chief Smith.

We'll turn now to the Kluane First Nation.

Chief Dickson and Ms. Badenhorst, welcome.

Chief Robert Dickson (Kluane First Nation): Good morning. *Dännch'e? Shāw nithän*. Welcome to the Yukon.

I want to thank you guys for inviting me to speak to you today. My name is Robert Dickson. I'm the elected chief of Kluane First Nation, which is located about two and a half hours west of Whitehorse.

Our community has 250 members. We are continually dealing with capacity issues. We are a community unlike the other ones. Kluane First Nation is a stand-alone community. We have no YTG or municipalities to tie into and to deliver infrastructure to our community. We're the only game in town, and that's our issue. We have no school. We have no YTG resources. We've been working with YTG on trying to build a school. We're trying to build capacity and keep our students in our community. What happens in our community is that when our students hit grade 7, they have to move to either Haines Junction or Whitehorse. That creates a problem with capacity in our community. Whole families have to pick up and move. I wanted to tell you that little bit about our community, because that has a huge impact. Each year we lose families who have to move away for schooling.

I feel it is important that prior to setting the budget for 2019, you hear about the important work being done collaboratively between Canada and self-governing indigenous governments. This work will ultimately result in a budget 2019 request to Canada on improved funding for self-governing indigenous governments. By supporting self-governing Yukon first nations, the federal government is ultimately supporting Canadians and Canada's economy. Yukon first nations people make up 25% of the population. There are 11 first nations with final agreements in the Yukon. Those 11 first nations are important employers in the Yukon, and generate a significant amount of revenue that goes back into the economy. Economic growth comes from Canada fulfilling its obligation and having the necessary resources to allow Yukon first nations to provide important programs and services, provide jobs and support local businesses.

To ensure that self-governing Yukon first nations have the resources needed, self-governing indigenous governments and Canada are working on a new federal self-governing fiscal policy. Figuring out how to make the policy work is a major good-news story about the federal government making good on its promises to indigenous Canadians. While not complete, the policy is a result of unprecedented co-development by self-governing indigenous governments and Canada.

This collaboration over the last two and a half years has seen a new methodology for determining the resources needed by indigenous governments. In terms of big problems, the policy is a carefully crafted, comprehensive plan that definitely addresses a host of long-standing issues in self-governing indigenous communities, such as crumbling infrastructure, under-resourced governance, and disincentives to generating own-source revenue.

Finally, the policy deals with the need to catch up on, and keep up, the funding. It is set to provide catch-up funding to fix the legacy of colonialism and the resulting gap between Yukon first nations people and Yukoners—socio-economic gaps, infrastructure gaps, education gaps, etc.

It was to help close these gaps that budget 2018 allocated \$189.2 million for this current fiscal year. This is the type of funding that needs to continue on a yearly basis to catch up to other Yukoners and achieve levels comparable to Yukoners. At the same time, funding to keep up is required. This is the funding that Canada provides to maintain the status quo.

What am I recommending that budget 2019 include? There are funding methods already agreed to and new policies that will require new funding in budget 2019. They include governance, infrastructure, socio-economic gap closing, and an interim lands and resource proposal.

● (1120)

It is important to not forget the items in the policy that continue to be outstanding: language, culture, heritage, education, health, social development, housing, environmental management, economic development and modern treaty management. They will require funding in budget 2019.

Budgets include both expenditures and revenues. For us, there are two aspects to revenues: the own-source revenue offsets applied by Canada, and tax remedies.

Currently there's a moratorium on the clawing back of indigenous government revenues from Canada, but it ends this year. Both self-governing and indigenous governments and Canada are proposing to defer this practice until indigenous governments are properly resourced.

As part of the collaborative fiscal policy, the parties continue to discuss how to increase indigenous revenues via tax powers, as contemplated in the Kluane First Nation Self-Government Agreement, which establishes the main parameters of our right to self-govern and provide for ongoing fiscal relations with the Crown, including a framework for tax powers and tax revenue sharing.

Yukon first nations need to be properly resourced. The current federal self-governing fiscal policy process will see additional funds required for governance, land and resources, socio-economic gap closing and infrastructure. These amounts are better understood and discussed.

Funds are also needed for areas where our funding model is not completed in the collaborative policies. Canada and self-governing indigenous governments agreed that funding will be required for languages, culture, heritage, education, health, social development, housing, environmental management, economic development and modern treaties.

Ultimately, properly resourced Yukon first nations will mean a stronger Canadian economy, with more Canadians employed and more funds for buying Canadian goods and services.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts.

● (1125)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Chief Dickson.

We will turn then to Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, Chief Joseph.

Chief Roberta Joseph (Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation):
[*Witness speaks in Hän*]

Chairman and committee members, I'd like to acknowledge that we're on the traditional territory of Kwanlin Dün and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council. I'd like to thank them for being able to conduct business on their traditional territory.

I'm Chief Roberta Joseph from Dawson City, Yukon. I'm from the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation.

I'm pleased to be here today on behalf of self-governing first nations in the Yukon to speak on the issue of treaty loan forgiveness and reimbursement. We were encouraged by the announcement in budget 2018 that Canada is committed to engaging with indigenous groups on how best to address past and present negotiation loans, including forgiveness of loans.

From our perspective, treaty loan forgiveness should extend not just to those currently in negotiations, but also to those who have agreements in place. Reimbursement of our treaty loans is an opportunity to strengthen implementation of Yukon first nations' final and self-government agreements and promote the social well-being of our people.

The requirement to repay Canada for monies we were forced to borrow to negotiate our treaties has undermined our ability to take full advantage of the opportunities we sought to create when we signed our treaties. Loan repayment would play an important role in building capacity, increasing autonomy and promoting economic development in our communities.

Budget 2019 is Canada's opportunity to realize the commitment of loan forgiveness and reimbursement. We encourage the committee to work with the department of CIRNAC to get an estimate on the outstanding loans.

This is a major good-news story. Your government would be openly acknowledged for this action by self-governing first nations in Yukon and across Canada. This is also a matter of fairness and equity. Failure to reimburse our nations would effectively penalize us for blazing the trail and taking the leap of faith necessary to conclude our agreements.

Canada's former policy requiring indigenous governments to borrow against treaty settlement monies in order to fund negotiations did not reflect an appropriate nation-to-nation relationship. Unfortunately, 20 years after our effective date, significant gaps continue to exist in our communities in the areas of infrastructure, housing, education, health, and social and economic development.

It is time for self-governing indigenous governments, Canada, and the provinces and territories to take collective action to make that promise a reality. Loan reimbursement would be a huge step in that direction. Reimbursement of the loans can occur over multiple fiscal years to lessen the impact on the federal budget. Your government will be publicly congratulated for this action. Youth, first nations, Métis and Inuit people, indigenous nations who are now on the path of self-determination may be inspired to join the family of modern treaty holders.

It is critical that treaty loan reimbursement be addressed in budget 2019. This is the Government of Canada's opportunity to make it happen. Loan repayment is an important milestone on the road to reconciliation.

Along with my presentation, I have submitted two letters: one written on October 3, 2018, to Minister Bennett from the Council of Yukon First Nations Grand Chief Peter Johnston, as well as a joint letter written on October 1, 2018, to Minister Bennett from Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Vuntut Gwitchin and Na-Cho Nyak Dun.

Mahsi cho.

• (1130)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Chief Joseph.

Turning then to Teslin Tlingit Council, Chief Sidney.

Naa Sháade Háni Richard Sidney (Representative, Teslin Tlingit Council): [*Witness speaks in Tlingit*]

I explained to you who I was. I want to thank, as my brothers and sisters have, the Tagish Kwan for allowing us to conduct business in their territory this morning.

I thank you, committee, friends, for allowing us this opportunity to appear before you this morning and provide you an opportunity to share with you our thoughts on the upcoming federal budget.

The Teslin Tlingit Council is based in and around southern Yukon. It's approximately an hour and a half to two hours directly east of us, right adjacent to the B.C.-Yukon border. We have approximately 800 citizens who essentially comprise the citizenship of our government, who live both within and outside of our traditional territory. Teslin Tlingit Council signed its final agreement with the Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon in 1993. It was one of the first four Yukon first nations to implement our agreements. The implementation started in February 1995 officially. Entrance into our agreements formed the basis of our relationship with the Governments of Canada and Yukon, enabling Teslin Tlingit Council to define its place in the Canadian fiscal federation.

The implementation of our agreements enabled our distinctive cultures, language and history to be recognized and provided Teslin Tlingit Council with legal capacity, jurisdiction and authority to develop, grow and prosper within our treaty lands and our traditional

territory—again, in both Yukon and British Columbia. The agreements we signed contemplated several avenues for building fiscal resources, including financial transfer agreements, tax sharing, treaty land development, royalty sharing, and access to federal program monies for indigenous peoples in Canada.

The vision was for full participation in Canada's prosperity and growth, including removal of the Indian Act, and tax exemptions. In addition, these promises and aspirations required fiscal resources.

I have a number of recommendations with respect to the fiscal solutions. Number one, since 2015, Canada has initiated several attempts to address financial capacity shortfalls and economic and social gaps within indigenous populations, both here in the territory and at the national level.

Yukon's self-governing first nations have yet to see any money or assured access to this funding. Indigenous governments outside of Yukon—municipalities, provinces and territories—benefit directly. Yukon's self-governing first nations need assured and direct access to an enactable share of Canada's fiscal allocation. The final self-governing agreements provided financial transfer agreements and tax sharing as the essential tools to provide assured, predictable and adequate fiscal capacity. Increasing reliance on limited periods and uncertain contribution agreements and access to funding, as well as having to access monies from Yukon will create and foster dependency, not full self-determination.

Agreements recognize Teslin Tlingit Council's citizenship as distinct and different from Indian Act status and the status of registered people. Canada persists in not recognizing that Teslin Tlingit Council is responsible for its own citizens regardless of their status under the Indian Act. Teslin Tlingit Council citizens are beneficiaries of the agreements and simply cannot be ignored.

Since early 2016, Canada has developed a fiscal policy to guide its response to self-governing indigenous governments' fiscal realities.

• (1135)

The Teslin Tlingit Council has focused on the agreements and the implementation required under and called for by the agreements. Canada cannot focus solely on its internal fiscal policy to the detriment of addressing its obligations in a timely, enactable manner.

Healthy growth and independence at Teslin Tlingit Council and all other self-governing indigenous governments in the Yukon and Canada is recognized as the best way for reconciling our history. We're partway there, but we need Canada to take the essential measures and enable the indigenous peoples in the Yukon to be a full partner in our future for the benefit of all.

I returned as the Teslin Tlingit Council chief in 2016. This is my third term. Hopefully it will be my last term. I had the opportunity to review TTC's 20-plus years with implementation of our agreements. The fiscal and operational review demonstrated a tenuous and struggling indigenous government. Unlike the fiscal resources provided to the Yukon through devolution from Canada, most recently the devolution in 2004, the fiscal resources implementation for our final limits remains well below justifiable, demonstrated and comparable levels.

The overall vision for the final agreement was not for a handout. It was for the government to address the fiscal realities that we find ourselves in. We need fiscal relationships that are responsive, and we need the principles and objectives of the agreements to be recognized and to be fully implemented. Commitments made to our government should be honoured. All we ask for is an equitable share of the wealth this country is providing.

That's essentially who we are.

[*Witness speaks in Tlingit*]. Thank you very much for hearing me this morning.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Chief Sidney.

The last witness in this panel is Ms. McInerney, who is with the Women's Transition Home.

Ms. Barbara McInerney (Executive Director, Women's Transition Home): Good morning, everybody. Thank you for the invitation. This is quite a distinguished group that I'm honoured to present with.

I would like to acknowledge that I, as a settler, have the honour to work and live on the traditional land of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än.

My name is Barbara McInerney. I have been the executive director of the Yukon Women's Transition Home for.... Holy smokes, I'm nervous. Sorry.

The Chair: You don't need to be nervous around this bunch, Barbara.

Ms. Barbara McInerney: Okay.

I've been at the Women's Transition Home for over 18 years. Most of my crew have been there for between 15 and 20 years. We have a really dedicated crew. What we're finding, though, is that the millennials don't want to go into this work. We've been chronically understaffed for quite some time, which is quite a strain on everybody.

Our priority mandate is to support women and their children who are fleeing violence. It's an honour to do the work. We have been doing this work since 1981, after the amazing work of Kaushee Harris, a Taku River Tlingit woman. She passed away, tragically, before our new building was built in 1991.

We moved into our new building in 1991. It's called Kaushee's Place, for obvious reasons, and has about 18 beds and five apartments. We built a new building, with 10 apartments and offices, and moved into it in 2013. It has been named Betty's Haven, after the incredibly honourable work of Betty Sjodin.

Yukon has some of the highest rates of violence in all of Canada, especially for our indigenous women. Poverty, with the lack of affordable housing, is a huge issue for women's safety. INAC contributes to the homelessness of indigenous women because their cheques are always.... I know that a lot of efforts have been made, but we're still getting cheques that are really late. We can float women with that, but not every landlord can. We know landlords who will not rent to indigenous women because they can't afford to. I would urge the government to do more work to ensure that women's rent cheques are not late, because it does contribute to homelessness.

There are many times when our shelter is running over its capacity, and many times when our second-stage apartments have wait-lists. We have a total of three women's shelters that serve all of the Yukon and northern British Columbia. We also get women from the other territories who are coming in to get services, and we get the odd woman who is being abused and is coming up the Alaska Highway from the U.S. There is a huge range that we are serving.

Upon intake, indigenous women are asked to give their band number. This is a huge problem because it completely identifies a woman. All other people get total confidentiality at the transition home, but indigenous women do not. I've been fighting this issue since 2000 because I think it's wrong. We have to find another way to bill without it being on the backs of our indigenous women.

This fiscal year, we submitted a budget to the Yukon government that had a \$400,000 deficit, so our Christmas present this year is probably going to be closing or threatening to. Our funding has been flatlined since 2011. The Yukon government will only sign a one-year agreement. Being in a unionized environment in our shop—one of the other shelters is also—it is impossible to go into bargaining with our staff in good faith not knowing what our funding is from one year to another.

The Yukon government has also imposed a heavy new financial reporting. I am all for fiscal responsibility, but to add more pressure and more required administration and capacity around finances in the way that they have is going to cripple a lot of organizations. As it is right now, we're really behind because of the new changes. My finance manager will have to go full time, and she's part time now. I don't know how I will do that, because we have a huge deficit. The financial reporting takes much longer and is causing a lot of strain for all of us.

• (1140)

For our building that houses the emergency shelter, we do all the maintenance. We mow the lawns; we do it all. The funding for the emergency building is through an old CMHC agreement and it's housed now through Yukon Housing Corporation. Again, I'm all for accountability, but the audits up here are costing us between \$12,000 and \$17,000 a year. Because of the lack of accountants here, we actually have to work with one down near Vancouver at this point. In three years, I could have redone my roof. We've been solid since 1991. We have always been in good standing. I think the money that goes to those accountants could be better used in maintaining our shelters.

We would like to call on the federal government to ensure that when territorial governments come and go, they do not continue to undermine the services that keep women and children alive and safe. Not one of our indigenous women's groups in Yukon has base funding. This is a huge issue for us because so many of us have been in this field for so long that the committee on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls asked us for recommendations. When I looked around the room, I was appalled because all the white people were paid to be there to give their recommendations, and all the indigenous women were volunteering. That's wrong.

Safe rides save lives, and with no bus now coming up the highway it is a huge issue. The women's shelters need some funding so that we can get transportation for our most vulnerable people.

In closing I want to thank you all for the opportunity, and I'm sorry for being so nervous. Thank you.

• (1145)

The Chair: You weren't nervous at all when you got rolling, Barb, not at all.

I expect it's probably okay if we go about 15 minutes over. There is nobody on the list for open mikes at the end of the session, so that will give everybody an opportunity for one seven-minute round.

We'll start with Mr. McLeod.

Mr. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to everybody who has come here to present today. They've been very interesting presentations.

I am very happy to see the indigenous governments here presenting on the fiscal realities of the north. I would expect that many of our politicians would struggle to explain the fiscal reality and the flow of our funding that comes from Indian Affairs or the provincial or territorial governments, in our case, to the rest of the country, because it's complicated and complex and a lot of time it doesn't work for us because the territories do not fall under Indian Affairs. Indian Affairs is mandated. It's southern based. It's based on reserves, and we kind of fall between the cracks.

I certainly applaud your efforts to move forward to be self-governing. I think that's the way of the future. I, for one, make no bones about the fact that I'd like to see Indian Affairs shut down and those revenues be provided to the indigenous governments. There is no need to have 12,000 people in Ottawa looking over our shoulders

as we try to govern. We should be treated on par with everybody else who is providing governance.

I think we've made some significant strides in the last while. I am very keen to see some of the work you've done on the new fiscal models for self-governance move forward and be included in this budget.

Maybe I'll direct a question to Robert Dickson regarding the comments he made about new fiscal realities.

I don't see a submission. Is there a submission being provided to the government? I'm not sure.

The Chair: We do have them, but they're not translated. They'll be given to members as soon as possible.

Mr. Michael McLeod: I'd be very keen to see that move forward. It's broad. It covers revenues, own-source revenues, expenditure needs, social well-being, infrastructure, public housing, and a lot of things we need to tackle.

There was a budget of \$189 million in the last budget. Has that money flowed yet, has that money been received?

Chief Robert Dickson: No, it hasn't, as far as we know.

Mr. Michael McLeod: I'm trying to get an understanding of where it's at and what's going on with it. We're in the middle of October.

Naa Sháade Háni Richard Sidney: Yes, Teslin Tlingit Council actually had a one-on-one meeting with ADM Joe Wild and made some specific recommendations on the options for the allocation of the \$189 million. We have not received any indication from the government that we'll receive any money at all from the \$189 million identified in last year's budget.

The second point, regarding your assessment of how the north is being viewed with respect to any new funding that may be provided through budgets, we definitely are excluded from any of those allocations. We really have no reserves in the north. Teslin Tlingit Council actually had three Indian Act reserves in our territory, but the vehicle we created to flow funds was the financial transfer agreement process. Within the system itself, within the government, that process really hasn't been utilized.

• (1150)

Mr. Michael McLeod: We have two reserves in the Northwest Territories, but they don't get funding from the federal government. There's a budget of—I did the research—about \$18 billion earmarked for indigenous programming. It's not working for us. There needs to be a new mechanism in place.

Chief Roberta Joseph, regarding your point on treaty loan forgiveness, this is something that's been included in the discussions under the recognition and implementation of rights framework. It's something that I think is really exciting for most of the indigenous governments in my riding. They're seeing a change, moving away from the comprehensive claim policy to a new structure that will be based and focused on what indigenous governments need to operate, rather than a policy drafted by a government in Ottawa.

Could you talk a little about that? If it's something you support, do you think it's a good move?

Chief Roberta Joseph: The indigenous rights framework, from our understanding, does not fully apply to modern-day treaty and self-governing first nations.

We already have our agreements in place under section 35. It speaks to delegation of lands, law development and those kinds of things, which we already have the ability to do, as Chief Smith mentioned earlier. They developed the language act, and that's probably not the only act they have.

As well, it was mentioned this morning that we also pay property taxes. The Yukon first nations probably have the highest property taxes of all of the municipalities and villages in the Yukon. We own our lands outright, out there in the wilderness and in municipalities and villages. We have not had the opportunity to fully implement our agreements due to inadequate financial and capacity resources. That's been an ongoing issue in the implementation of our agreement.

I also wanted to touch on the new fiscal policy that Chief Dickson spoke about. That has been negotiated between CIRNAC and modern-day treaty holders, and it's been a long and rigorous process.

Mr. Michael McLeod: I'm totally expecting that the funding forgiveness process will expand into the settled claims areas. I'm hoping that the discussion regarding that extinguishment of rights will also be part of it—that's something you could talk about—because that was forced on you, on everybody who signed.

I have one last question. You haven't been able to draw down on the \$189 million, which is disappointing to hear. There have been commitments, in the first round of discussions at the national indigenous organizations table, of over \$1.5 billion for housing. How does that impact you? I understand that AFN has been the lead for the first nations. I know that the Métis National Council didn't include the northern Métis. I believe ITK did include the Inuvialuit, so they're quite pleased.

Is that money that you're looking to draw on to help you with some of the shortages you've talked about?

• (1155)

Chief Robert Dickson: Quite often the funding set aside for indigenous governments is not available to modern treaty holders. KFN sees this with budget 2017-18 and the allocations for housing and infrastructure that we don't have access to. We continually go to the Assembly of First Nations and advocate for the Yukon.

The problem I see in the Yukon is that YTG is the middleman. It's probably the same in the other territories. The funding goes to the territorial government, and then the first nations have to go the YTG

to get their portion of the funding. YTG continues to do the things they want to do without the involvement of first nations. In the Yukon we don't have reserves, so we don't have on-reserve schooling. We don't have RCMP policing or tribal policing. We don't have a bunch of those programs that are common south of 60. Our biggest problem is trying to get the funding that the south of 60 folks enjoy. YTG is still the....

We want to encourage Canada to include modern treaty holders when discussing funding with other groups, such as AFN, the Métis council, etc.

The Chair: Michael probably understands this, but I don't. What's the difference in terms of the modern treaty holder?

Chief Robert Dickson: With regard to modern treaty holders, we have an agreement with government that sets out our funding arrangement already. That has a different recognition in the Government of Canada. We have a land claim agreement. We have a self-government agreement, which is different from first nations south of 60. They all have reserves, and we don't have those up here.

The Chair: Okay.

Did you want in, Chief Smith? Go ahead.

Chief Steve Smith: To answer your question specifically, in layman's terms it's basically the definition between settlement lands and reserve lands. In the Yukon, only a very few first nations have reserve lands that are of the typical definition in the south. When we signed our land claim and self-government agreements, ours were settlement lands, so they were land claim settlements. That, a lot of times, is really....

We get stuck in the bureaucracy when people try to provide us the funds and such. We get hooked up on it because there's just a simple definition that states we're settlement land versus reserve. They sit there and go, "Well, this was a program for indigenous reserve lands", yet we do the same services, if not more.

The Chair: Thank you very much. That does clear it up a lot for me.

Mr. Kelly.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Thank you.

I have a few questions. I'll see what I can get to in the time I have.

Chief Smith, you gave a very clear budget ask around language revitalization. You spoke also about the community needs in terms of housing and infrastructure. On your third point, on energy, I was struck by the way you put the need to be a “partner” in energy development. Many non-indigenous people in the south continually assert that indigenous leaders oppose energy development projects. Some indigenous leaders indeed do oppose some specific projects, but in general, partnership is something that I think most leaders would desire. Energy needs for northern residents are vital. A key to reducing poverty is having access to affordable and reliable energy.

I'd invite you to speak more on that, if you'd like.

Chief Steve Smith: Thank you.

First I'll start off with Aishihik Lake.

Champagne and Aishihik basically has been a forced partner in energy production for 40-odd years. We have seen a massive erosion in our environment with regard to Aishihik Lake. The Aishihik Lake hydro facility has enabled growth within the Yukon. The Faro mine, the Minto mine, any mine that was built within the grid, draws energy, especially in the winter months, from Aishihik Lake.

We've been a forced partner, and what we look at is what our elders have said. Going into the future, we want to see the lake stabilize so that we're not seeing these huge swings in the lake levels that really affect our water and the fish and animals that utilize the lake and that we utilize.

How do we do that? We do that in terms of partnerships. We look at other projects that will not have such a great environmental impact on specific areas. The Aishihik Lake is home to one of the listed groups within our name, the Champagne and Aishihik people, so we look at these partnerships as a way to stabilize what has already occurred and been built, and we look to build upon those.

What we're looking for then from the federal government is the ability to take part in these projects, whether they be biomass projects, additional hydro development projects or other energy-producing projects. We need the capacity. Certainly we're stretched, and that's the reason we've come to ask you for what I think, in federal terms, is a paltry sum of a million dollars a year to do language.

What happens if we are able to utilize the resources that are gained from any partnership moving forward to actually turn back and build upon what we have planned for our people?

Our struggle is always about having the financial and human capacity to be able to take part in these projects.

•(1200)

Mr. Pat Kelly: I'm going to ask Chief Dickson to elaborate on something a little further.

When you spoke, you talked about governance funding and the challenges—if I understood your remarks correctly—around governance.

Could you expand on what some of the very specific needs are and whether you have a very specific ask in that area?

Chief Robert Dickson: When we're talking governance, I'm speaking from the experience of a small first nation that has 250

members. Our community, the Kluane First Nation, is the only game in town, if you want to call it that.

I have capacity issues that we have to deal with. We have an annual budget of \$6.1 million to run our whole government. With regard to housing and infrastructure, we're trying to attract people. We're trying to build capacity.

Regarding the governance department, Lisa is here with me. She's our governance director. She has two staff working for her, and that's the entire governance department. These three guys plus all of us have to spend a lot of our time dealing with these issues.

All these first nations here can tell you the same story. The money we're getting is not enough to run the complete government department with all of the services we have to provide to our people. We have three people doing the job that YTG could have 500 people doing.

Other first nations, bigger first nations, have more people. Bigger first nations have the capacity. We don't.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Thank you.

I have one last question that I'm going to ask Ms. McInerney.

You said a couple of things, and I'm not sure I even understand why this would be the case. You spoke of the indigenous women needing to provide a band number to access services.

Why is that?

Ms. Barbara McInerney: It is billing between the territorial government and the federal government.

Mr. Pat Kelly: So it's for billing purposes...?

Ms. Barbara McInerney: For billing purposes, they want band numbers, and with those band numbers, YTG bills the feds.

What I was told is that it's \$380 a day per first nation woman who gives a band number, which the feds give back to YTG. The indigenous women are not seeing that money.

•(1205)

Mr. Pat Kelly: It would seem to me there surely must be a better way to protect people's privacy when they are accessing your services.

Ms. Barbara McInerney: Yes. One of the ways is that we just shorten the band number. We give the number that identifies the band or the government and not the last four digits that identify the person.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Some of these communities are so small that even identifying oneself presents a—

Ms. Barbara McInerney: And you don't know if the one doing the billing for YTG is the brother of the abuser.

The Chair: While we're on that subject, can you give me the process for the women's rent cheques that are late?

Ms. Barbara McInerney: The women are required to go into INAC. I'm guessing a date here. I can get you a formal submission with the proper dates, but I'm just guessing off the top of my 60-year-old memory, which is not good. They have to be in the office in between, I believe, the 12th and the 16th. We work with these women every single day. We see them every day, so we know when they go in. They go in at the allotted time and we get the cheque maybe the 16th of the next month, so it's more than two weeks late.

For one of the women who has been staying with us for two months, they sent the cheque to Yukon Housing. After about two weeks, we were trying to find where this cheque went. They had gotten the cheque right for two months in row, so I'm not sure what was going on. I am forwarding all of these cases.... First of all, I have to get consent from the woman, because again we're doing this on the backs of women who are fleeing violence. I have to get her permission and then I forward it to Tammy Bazylinski. I think that's her name. She is the director. We've met with INAC and it seems as though they are hearing us and want to work on it, but something is not working because it's still happening and it contributes to people not wanting to rent to indigenous people.

The Chair: If you can send us further information on that, we'd appreciate it. We don't mind talking to whoever we have to, because that's just absolutely unacceptable.

Mr. Julian.

Mr. Peter Julian: Thank you to all. It's very compelling testimony.

[Translation]

I will start in French and address the representatives of the Association franco-yukonnaise first.

In my riding of New Westminster—Burnaby, the population is very diverse. The francophone community has grown considerably as a result of immigrants from African and Asian countries, the Caribbean, and even Oceania. This weekend, I attended a meeting for new francophone Canadians in my riding, with hundreds of people from a wide range of professions and talents that are useful for Canada. That is why I think the issue of immigration is important for the entire francophone community in western Canada.

First, Mr. Nolet and Ms. Beaudoin, how important do you think it is to expand the francophone community and bring in all those talented people?

Second, what is your priority? You talked about funding in the arts, media, health care and education. I note that the *Aurora Borealis*—an excellent newspaper, by the way—is talking about funding for the media, which is minimal compared to what the web giants in Canada receive. So what is your top, most pressing priority for the Yukon francophone community?

Ms. Jeanne Beaudoin: I would say that it is to obtain access to services in French from governments. We have a number of priorities because we are active in a number of sectors, so I find it difficult to pick one.

We would like to have better funding from our organization that is our voice. The Association franco-yukonnaise is sort of like a federation, because we have chosen to bring together all the associations related to culture, youth, seniors and communications under one roof, in order to avoid the waste that would otherwise result from the duplication of administrative expenses. We think it is smarter to spend the funds in this way.

Our priority is really for both levels of government to provide services in French and listen to what we have to say. As I said earlier when I was talking about agreements between the various levels of government, we want the Official Languages Act to be enforced and those agreements to contain clauses that allow the community to provide services to francophones.

It is difficult to choose one priority in particular because we have them in all our areas for action. So I invite you to go online and see who we are and what we do, because we deliver great results.

• (1210)

Mr. Peter Julian: I would be happy to do that.

Thank you very much.

[English]

I'd like to go now to Chief Smith, Chief Dickson, Chief Joseph and Chief Sidney.

You have been very eloquent in terms of where investments need to be made by the federal government to push back and eliminate, as you mentioned Chief Dickson, the legacy of colonialism. These are investments in loan forgiveness, indigenous languages, trades training and education, health care, infrastructure and housing.

Are you really not speaking to a sea change in how we conceive the federal budgets? Rather than having relatively small amounts to deal with the legacy of colonialism that requires significant investments, we should be looking at this next budget in 2019 as a budget that is really for reconciliation and that adequately finances some of the needs that indigenous communities have right now.

I'll direct that first to Chief Smith, and then if you have comments down the....

Chief Steve Smith: The simple answer is yes. We have been in our FTA negotiations for a number of years. We were just notified again by our federal negotiators that they're looking to extend the FTA negotiations another year. This is several years of us just talking about the actual numbers we have in front of us now.

If the government, as you said, had a sea change in terms of its policy to adequately fund land claims and self-government groups, which the 11 first nations of the Yukon make up, I think it would answer a lot of the questions we have with regard to economic growth and with regard to the social indicator improvements within all of society. We could then become, as I said, a partner within the whole framework, putting forward what we need to put forward to the rest of the make-up of the Yukon and help us all move forward. If we float the large ship, then we should all be doing better.

However, as said before, we are constantly in a battle over getting recognition that our FTA was an actual commitment from Canada to stop or staunch the tide that we were in of this underfunded, chronically marginalized group of society and now become a true partner within the whole framework.

If we can have Canada really look at the pressing issues of each of the first nations.... If you look at some of the smaller first nations, if it's 100% for Champagne and Aishihik, it's 150% for some of the smaller first nations, the more isolated ones. Champagne and Aishihik is in a position where our traditional territory encompasses a chunk of the city of Whitehorse, so we're close to infrastructure. We're close to an urban municipality, but if you look at Kluane First Nation, as he is saying, they're a stand-alone community. There's no sister municipality butted up against it. Their challenges are even greater.

If we have this shift from the federal government to adequately fund the deals that they make.... That's what I spoke about in my opening statement. Implement the land claim. Implement the deal that was made that was signed off by Canada and all of the 11 first nations. Let us do the work. Let us educate our kids. Let us teach our kids the language. Let us deal with the really horrible social indicators that were spoken about with regard to the violence against our women. Let us deal with that.

In 1973 we produced our document "Together Today for our Children Tomorrow". If we lived up to those ideals, we would see positive growth.

In closing, since Champagne and Aishihik signed its land claim in 1993, our median income on Champagne and Aishihik settlement land has grown at 50% of the rate of the rest, 50% more than the rest of the Yukon. Our self-government agreement is effective. Our land claim is effective in really turning the tide. That's the bottom line. Implement the land claim. Be true to that. Be true to the deal that we have. Then we can take care of our own, in effect.

•(1215)

The Chair: Does anybody else want in?

Chief Sidney.

Naa Sháade Háni Richard Sidney: It's pretty interesting when we hear some of the questions we heard this morning dealing with the modern treaties, for instance, and the whole essence of this fiscal relationship we have with the Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon. The whole essence of the final agreements and the whole notion of our entering into agreements with the Government of Canada was based on what Chief Smith described: our taking full responsibility for our people. The agreements that we

entered into actually created the process for how those financial resources will be transferred over to the self-governing first nations.

It's really difficult for me to come here and ask again for recognition, because we're one of the first nations that actually took the issue to court, the issue of the transfers. As Chief Smith described, the current agreement that we have in place with the Government of Canada expired in 2015. The agreement that we've managed to cobble together is essentially an extension of that old agreement, but that agreement really was insufficient.

Teslin Tlingit Council signed the agreement in 1993, and respective first nations have constantly strived to achieve own-source revenue. To that extent, we've made numerous investments elsewhere, but fundamentally once we have the resources that we require to make programs available for education, for adequate infrastructure.... Champagne and Aishihik council enacted its own language act. That's what I spoke to this morning. We understand what we require to ensure that one, two, three, four, five generations from now, we'll be in a better position than we all are right now. That's the objective.

The Chair: Chief Joseph.

•(1220)

Chief Roberta Joseph: I just want to point out that one of our biggest challenges in relation to implementing our agreements for modern-day treaty first nations across Canada is that the Interpretation Act of Canada does not recognize modern-day treaties, and is blanketed to the Indian Act first nations and bands. Today we speak a much different language. Twenty, 30 or 40 years ago, we would be asking to increase our social assistance budget, but today our language speaks to what we do. We contribute greatly to the Yukon economy just by paying our property taxes and income taxes. We pay income tax as well, so that goes back into our Yukon economy.

We are working toward fundamental change for self-determination, being able to provide better services to our citizens, advocating for better education for our children in the public schools here, and the list goes on—land management, collaboration and co-operation management of renewable and non-renewable efforts in our respective traditional territories.

We contribute greatly to the Yukon economy and will continue to do that as long as we can continue to be able to implement our agreements and work toward implementing them effectively. We just want the same fair treatment as other first nations. Canada has budgeted for first nations who have negotiated or are in the negotiation process to not have to repay their loans. We feel it's fair that we have that same treatment so we can put that toward better use.

Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Rudd.

Ms. Kim Rudd: Again, thank you very much for coming. I have so many questions and so little time.

I have a quick question for you, Jennifer, on your presentation. I noticed that you had youth engagement through training teachers, and that right now it's at zero but the anticipation is 375,000 hours. Is that correct? For next year...?

Ms. Jennifer Flanagan: Yes. That first baseline is not currently at zero. That's an average over the past couple of years, but that would be a significant ramp-up from where we are this year.

Ms. Kim Rudd: Would that be contingent on the \$45 million and the leveraged \$115 million?

Ms. Jennifer Flanagan: Yes...for that level of growth.

Ms. Kim Rudd: Okay. Thank you.

Barbara, you did a great job. As for your nervousness, I didn't even notice it.

I have a couple of things for you.

You raised the issue of audits. Having worked in this sector for many years where the audits were crippling, I note that we negotiated with those who required the audits. If you had a number of years of compliance, such as five years—pick a number—you indeed were eligible to do an engagement review. We all know that's much less intrusive and much cheaper, so that those very important dollars you have can go to front-line services or repairing the roof or whatever is needed. Has there been any discussion or negotiation about that?

Ms. Barbara McInerney: Yes. We've had people within government actually advocating for that to happen, so that you have reviews, or you have reviews until they say, "You're going to do an audit", and it's a surprise audit, which we're really okay with. There hasn't been any movement, because the feeling from government is that they have to comply with all the regulations within CMHC, and CMHC did require an audit every year. That's kind of where we're stuck.

Ms. Kim Rudd: Okay. That's good information, because I think there are some places where we can use some common sense on occasion.

Ms. Barbara McInerney: Yes.

Ms. Kim Rudd: You mentioned the labour shortage and said that people don't want to go into this field. I will just tell you that I have respect for the work that you and your team do. It is not easy work. It takes a special kind of person to work in that sector.

I understand labour shortages, and they're certainly here in the Yukon, but they are in other places as well. Burnout and PTSD are not uncommon in this field. We had a presentation this morning from Dechinta. I don't know if you were here for it. They're doing work on.... I'm seeing nodding from Chief Smith. Have you heard of them? They're an organization that is doing work to help provide those supports to get people into fields and post-secondary education in areas where it makes sense and to keep them in communities both for the education and for return to work. I think they'd be a really good organization for you to connect with, because I think that there could be some synergy there. I'm happy to provide the information to

you afterwards, and if they're still around I'm sure that they will be too.

Chief Dickson, you said something, and I apologize if some of the questions are a bit.... It's for clarity, because we get so much information, and in intense listening sometimes things start to cross after a while.

I would just like clarification from you. You said something about "disincentives" to becoming self-sufficient. What did you mean by that? What are those disincentives?

• (1225)

Chief Robert Dickson: What we're talking about is own-source revenues. We're talking about clawbacks.

First nation governments want to get into business—you heard this from the other chiefs—and we want to be a part of the economy in the Yukon. For first nation governments, the clawbacks from own-source revenue are hindering us from moving forward in a lot of cases. We have to always be careful of.... If we're trying to build, trying to be part of society in the Yukon and trying to be a part of the economy, we always have to be mindful that every dollar we make gets deducted off of our transfer agreements.

Ms. Kim Rudd: I'm sorry, but again, this is clarification for me. Is it dollar for dollar or is there a negotiated percentage?

Chief Robert Dickson: It's 50¢ on the dollar.

Ms. Kim Rudd: At 50¢ on the dollar, is there a threshold where it starts, or does it just start at ground zero?

Chief Robert Dickson: I think it just starts at ground zero.

Ms. Lisa Badenhorst (Governance Director, Kluane First Nation): There's a small threshold.

Chief Robert Dickson: There's a small threshold, she says.

Ms. Kim Rudd: Thank you.

I'm not sure who mentioned a document called "Together Today for Tomorrow". Did I get it right?

Do you have something, Chief Smith?

Chief Steve Smith: It's "Together Today for our Children Tomorrow". It was actually mentioned in the previous group's panel discussion as well. That's what she was referring to.

Ms. Kim Rudd: You mentioned that if that document were followed, we'd be in a much better place. Is there anything specific in there that is part of this discussion we're having today?

Chief Steve Smith: I think it's the intent of the document.

When our chiefs in 1973 went to Ottawa and presented to Prime Minister Trudeau, they spoke about this very thing. We weren't coming for a handout. We wanted to be brought back from the margins of society, because when Canada started to really show up in Yukon around the gold rush, we were a part of the economy. We were the ones who actually showed the miners and the prospectors where the gold was.

When the Alaska Highway came through, it was our people who showed the trails. We were a part of the economy. We were immersed in it. As we went along, we became more and more marginalized. All of a sudden, in 1973, we found ourselves on the sides and Yukon was just forging ahead. It was doing its own governance at that time. It was doing its own economy at that time, and we were pushed aside. We saw that our people were degrading, year in and year out. Our place, our social standing and our social indicators were going down further every year.

That document spoke about how we could retake our place in Yukon. The intent of the document was to show the government—and Prime Minister Trudeau at that time read the document and he said....and this, I think, was the first non-conscious speaking about reconciliation. If you look at his presentation back to then Chief Smith, Prime Minister Trudeau said this was a great document for stepping forward. It wasn't a document about going in for litigation. We were talking about it as a partnership and working together.

I think the overall intent of it is where we want to go today, which is for that to continue. We have the ideas of where our people want to go, and when we're supported by Canada in that effort, then we're more capable of doing it.

● (1230)

Ms. Kim Rudd: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, all. I know we're substantially over time.

Mr. Jeneroux.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: I'll be brief, because I don't want to stand between my colleagues and lunch—that's a dangerous position to be in. I do want to thank everybody for taking the time to come here. Those of you who drove a far way and those who flew a distance as well, thank you for coming.

I have one quick question, which is perhaps more of a comment, but I'm hoping that you, Ms. Flanagan, can elaborate on some of the great stuff that you do. There's a statistic that I think is important. I can never remember it off the top of my head but I'm hoping you'll be able to help. It's about where young girls drop out of the STEM-related fields and it's in junior high. I think it's important for the committee to know that statistic or the relevance of it. As the dad of two little girls who are in grade 6 and grade 5 right now and who are very interested in science and math, I'm worried that this is their impending future, like that of so many girls before them.

Before I give you the floor, I just want to make two other quick comments. I note from your website that you've done terrific work with what looks like third partners—Google, Suncor, etc. It looks as though there's only one connection to the provincial governments. I'm hoping that you can comment on, perhaps, some of that. I'm from Alberta. I'd be curious as to whether there's any sort of connection there.

I've forgotten my last comment, so I'll open up the floor to you.

Ms. Jennifer Flanagan: On the first question around girls engaged in science and technology, you're very right, and for your daughters in particular, that is the danger zone in terms of the age for interest changes in science and tech.

In Canada, and in fact all of the OECD countries, girls and boys perform the same in science and math courses. It's not an issue of academic performance or ability. It's not an issue of interest, as you mentioned your daughters. We see thousands of girls and young women across the country who love science and technology.

We are incredibly concerned right now, because of the long-standing issue we've had in science and engineering with less than 20% of those fields being occupied by women. When we look at the changes that are happening within the technology sector, there are not enough computer scientists and engineers who are women. The rapid transformation of every single sector by technology means that girls are going to have to have those skills to participate in any future job, whether that is in the mining sector, the education sector or the business world. We are very concerned.

Many of our proposals are focused on making sure that we're offering programs that engage girls both in a co-ed and an all-girl environment, but also that we're engaging their parents and other people who are around them that support them, because it's the context that is the issue. It is not the girls themselves.

We've been working really hard to change that narrative, so that it isn't an issue with the girls, and that the girls need to change to participate in these skills. It's the context around them that needs to open up and be more welcoming, and that has to start early. With the recommendations we're proposing, it's not enough to start in university or high school.

For the question around provincial investments, traditionally, as a national organization we've been very focused on the national level, so we've not had the capacity to do the development work at a provincial level. The Government of Nunavut has been very involved in the work that we're doing. In fact, combined with corporate supporters, it enabled us to deliver in all 24 Nunavut communities. That is something that we will look to in the future, but currently, up to this point, the majority of our funding has come from the private sector.

● (1235)

The Chair: Thank you.

I have just a quick question as well to you, Jennifer. I was actually surprised when we met in Ottawa that you operated in Whitehorse. I think you know that. You're asking for \$45 million over five years. Can you explain how you operate, what you do in this area, and what it would do for the country as a whole if the federal government were to invest that kind of money in the organization?

Ms. Jennifer Flanagan: The delivery model is that we represent and support 38 organizations across the country, located at universities and colleges. They are their own organizations within those institutions, and they hire undergraduate students to go out in communities and deliver programs.

Our role at the national level is to provide funding for those initiatives to provide support, training, and resource and content development. We do advocacy work to make sure there is understanding of why youth engagement is important, because often we get trapped in “K to 12 is a provincial jurisdiction issue”. We do work in schools to support what's happening, but this is skill development and workforce development outside of school. It's really filling the gap that exists within the formal school system.

In Yukon, for example, we would provide funding to Yukon College, who we've partnered with. Yukon College then sends teams out into communities—last year it was eight communities but they want to be in all 14—and they deliver programming in schools. They then go back in the summer and deliver summer experiences. The goal of Yukon College, of which we're very supportive, is looking at.... This is all done in partnership with community-based funds, the community leadership needs, and what they've identified as important.

We don't develop a program in Ottawa that then gets delivered in Yukon or in Nunavut, or in P.E.I. for that matter. It's very much a locally customized program that is delivered in partnership with communities. The funding we're asking for, which is essentially \$9 million a year for five years, is going to scale to all the programs across the country. We're doing programming in rural, remote communities, and with communities that are having major socio-economic issues. We're doing that at no cost to the community or to the parents.

That funding enables.... We have the network already to do this very quickly. We have the relationships, the trust, the credibility and the content. Our model is incredibly sustainable. More money in is a lot more youth engaged in building those skills.

You saw that we do a lot of work to quantify the impact of our programs both to provide accountability, and also so we know how to have the deepest possible impact. We wanted to quantify the economic impact as well, so that people in decision-making positions understand how important engagement is at a K to 12 level.

The Chair: Thank you.

That ends our formal witnesses. We do have one minute for an open mike presenter, if he could come forward. Then we'll adjourn.

Kyle Gasper, welcome. The floor is yours for a minute.

Mr. Kyle Gasper (As an Individual): Thank you.

My understanding is that this is to be restricted to economic issues.

I'm interested in whether or not the federal government will be committing to a form of basic income research. At the moment, the Ontario pilot project stands to be axed. It's still not clear exactly whether or not that will be salvaged in some way by the federal government, or replaced by a federal program.

One way or another, will there be research to clarify whether or not basic income is an appropriate instrument in Canada for both economic and social development?

• (1240)

The Chair: Now, that was short and to the point.

Yes, we're well aware of that project and what's happening with it in Ontario. You're talking about the basic income approach.

Thank you, and thank you to the witnesses.

As a long-term MP, I can't help but sit here and think—listening to the various first nations—why I was so long in learning the difference, in terms of the first nations situation in the north and the rest of the country. A lot of good information passed here, today. I really appreciate that.

From each and every one of the members, we thank you all for your presentations. With that, we will adjourn.

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