Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Independent Officers and Other Entities' Review of the 2014-15 Annual Report of the Representative for Children and Youth Iqaluit, Nunavut September 15, 2016

# **Members Present**:

Tony Akoak
Pat Angnakak, Chair
Joe Enook
David Joanasie
Pauloosie Keyootak
Simeon Mikkungwak
Paul Okalik
Emiliano Qirngnuq
Allan Rumbolt
Alexander Sammurtok
Tom Sammurtok

#### Staff Members:

Stephen Innuksuk Siobhan Moss

## **Interpreters**:

Andrew Dialla Allan Maksagak Mary Nashook Philip Paneak James Panioyak Blandina Tulugarjuk

### Witnesses:

Sherry McNeil-Mulak, Representative for Children and Youth Christa Kunuk, Child and Youth Advocacy Specialist Sharon Reashore, Director of Child and Youth Advocacy Services

>>Committee commenced at 9:00

**Chairperson** (Ms. Angnakak): Good morning, everybody. I hope everybody

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I would like to start off first with the prayer, so Mr. Mikkungwak, would you be able to say the prayer for us.

>>Prayer

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Before we begin, I will make my opening comments as the Chair in English.

(interpretation ends) Good morning, everybody. Before proceeding, I would like to ask all Members, witnesses, and visitors to place their cellphones, BlackBerrys, and other electronic devices on silent mode.

I would like to formally welcome everyone present to this meeting of the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Independent Officers and Other Entities.

I would first like to introduce my Standing Committee colleagues:

- Tony Akoak, Member for Gjoa Haven;
- Joe Enook, Member for Tununig;
- David Joanasie, Member for South Baffin;
- Pauloosie Keyootak, Member for Uqqummiut;
- Simeon Mikkungwak, Member for Baker Lake;
- Paul Okalik, Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa;
- Emiliano Qirngnuq, Member for Netsilik:
- Allan Rumbolt, Member for Hudson Bay;

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- Alex Sammurtok, Member for Rankin Inlet South: and
- Tom Sammurtok, Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet.

The terms of reference for this Standing Committee include the mandate to review the reports of the independent officers of Nunavut, including those of the Representative for Children and Youth.

We are meeting today on the occasion of our Standing Committee's televised hearing on the very first annual report of Nunavut's Representative for Children and Youth.

The responsibilities of the Representative for Children and Youth are established by territorial legislation, the *Representative* for Children and Youth Act which was passed on September 17, 2013 by the third Legislative Assembly of Nunavut.

Ms. Sherry McNeil-Mulak was appointed as Nunavut's Representative for Children and Youth on June 2, 2014 and she assumed her duties on June 16, 2014. Her first annual report for the 2014-15 year was tabled in the House on May 30, 2016.

This is Ms. McNeil-Mulak's first appearance before a standing committee of the Legislative Assembly and I would like to welcome her and her staff here today.

The Office of the Representative for Children and Youth has a number of areas of responsibility relating to the rights and interests of children and youth, including advocacy, advice, and assistance regarding government services for children and youth, as well as the administration of the office.

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Today, the Standing Committee is pleased to have the opportunity to discuss issues relating to the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth's mandate and its activities during the first year of its establishment. I would note that a full fiscal year has gone by since the period covered by the annual report we will be reviewing and the office did not officially open to the public until September 30, 2015. Members look forward to hearing updates on the office's activities and ongoing plans.

In keeping with parliamentary practice, the Standing Committee anticipates reporting its findings and recommendations to the Legislative Assembly during the upcoming fall sitting.

I would like to conclude by addressing some housekeeping matters.

This hearing is being televised live across Nunavut on local community cable stations and direct-to-home satellite service. Transcripts of the hearing will be posted on the Legislative Assembly's website.

For the benefit of our recording system, I ask witnesses to always go through the Chair when responding to Members' questions and interventions and to wait until I invite you to speak before activating your microphone.

Members of the Standing Committee have been provided with documents for their ease of reference during this hearing. For the benefit of our witnesses and interpreters, I ask Members to be precise when quoting from or making reference to these documents.

With that, I will again welcome today's

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witnesses to this hearing and would ask the Representative for Children and Youth to introduce her staff and then proceed with her opening comments. Thank you. Ms. McNiel-Mulak, you have the floor.

Ms. McNiel-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson, and good morning. Today, I have with me Sharon Reashore, Director of Child and Youth Advocacy Services, and also Christa Kunuk, a child and youth advocacy specialist with our office.

As you know, I was appointed Nunavut's first Representative for Children and Youth (RCY) in June 2014. Since then, our office, as a completely new organization in Nunavut, has experienced many exciting firsts. Today marks another one: the office's first ever appearance before this Standing Committee. I am so pleased to be here and to share with you what the office has accomplished over the 2014-15 fiscal year.

Our first annual report was an anomaly for two reasons. The first is that it does not cover an entire fiscal year, but rather the nine-month period between my June 2014 appointment and March 31, 2015. The second is that during this period, the office was not yet open to work with Nunavummiut. Instead, only those parts of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* that supported office development were in force. As a result, we anticipate that future annual reports will look quite different in terms of reportable content.

Our first annual report really tells the story about the beginning a new venture, a venture that required in excess of 200 tasks to be completed for our opening in 2015. Our annual report highlights a few key development pieces, such as:

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- Filling four of the office's original five positions by 2014-15.
- Researching and planning for an intensive staff training program for 2015-16, recognizing that once the office's staffing was complete, our new team would require specific training and professional development.
- Creating our office's logo with the direct involvement of young Nunavummiut.
- Signing a memorandum of understanding with the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates to ensure young Nunavummiut receive seamless advocacy services when they move between provinces and territories.
- Completing a first draft of the office's policy and procedure manual to ensure staff would have clear processes to refer to in their advocacy work. Since opening, this manual has been vitally important to ensuring we provide advocacy services in a timely and consistent manner to young Nunavummiut and their families.
- Researching and selecting a case management software program that now serves as the information backbone of our office's individual advocacy work and is also contributing to the development of our systemic program.

The list goes on.

Having time to dedicate....

Chairperson: I'm sorry. I think the interpreters would like you to slow down a little bit, please. Thank you. Okay, go ahead.

**Ms.** McNeil-Mulak: Having time to dedicate to the office's foundation has

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Preparing for today's appearance has given me an opportunity to take pause and reflect back on those first nine months of office development. It seems as though it was only yesterday that I walked into an empty office space holding the sole document that existed to support the work I was about to embark on: the Representative for Children and Youth Act.

The RCY Act has been touted by UNICEF Canada as a model in many respects for other jurisdictions in Canada and worldwide. It has served as the foundation for what was built in those early months and it continues to provide strong guidance to our work on a daily basis.

In essence, the RCY Act allows our office to ensure the Government of Nunavut (GN) is providing children and youth with the quality services they need to support their well-being and their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

All of our work is guided by the RCY Act, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Inuit societal values, national advocacy standards, and the voice of children and youth. Our work is never to replace that of government, but instead its intent is to ensure that government services, programs, policies, and legislation that affect children and youth are working as intended.

The RCY Act has given our office a very broad mandate, which translates into four

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main areas of work for our office: individual advocacy, systemic advocacy, reviews of critical injuries and deaths, and public awareness.

Individual advocacy is when our office works one on one with or on behalf of a child or youth. As we know, the Government of Nunavut provides many programs and services to support children and youth. However, despite best intentions, sometimes problems occur: a child can't access a program he needs; a youth finds a government service isn't supporting her in the way it was intended to. In such cases, our office can provide a child or youth individual advocacy support.

What this looks like depends on a young person's unique needs and their situation. We can provide information; coach a young person to advocate for his or herself; and work with a child who needs advocacy intervention.

Advocacy intervention involves one of our staff working directly with government service providers to ensure a young person's rights are supported, their opinions are heard, and ultimately their needs are met. Some cases are easily and quickly resolved. Other cases involve an advocacy specialist working with many service providers from multiple departments over several months.

Systemic advocacy is another key area of our work. It begins when our office identifies a broad issue involving a Government of Nunavut service, program, policy, or law that is affecting many young Nunavummiut.

Systemic advocacy can be informal or formal. Informal mainly uses discussion

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and collaboration to bring about change. Formal systemic advocacy work tends to be more in-depth and often results in written reports to government departments. Our office can then choose to issue these reviews as public reports. Our office also has the ability to investigate when a child or youth receiving government services dies or experiences a serious injury. This is our office's reviews of critical injuries and deaths program. Such reviews provide opportunities to understand what went wrong and to initiate changes to prevent similar events in the future. They are often highly sensitive and require the proper knowledge and capacity to conduct thoroughly. For these reasons, we are currently developing this area of our work with particular care.

Lastly, the RCY's office has a very clear duty to raise Nunavummiut's awareness with respect to child rights and the office's mandate. Our public awareness work takes many forms. Some examples include presentations and outreach activities with children, youth, youth-serving organizations, and government service providers in communities across Nunavut; the development of resources and contests that help promote child rights; and the maintenance of the RCY website.

Our office has now been open to work with children, youth, and their families since September 30, 2015. Given the breadth of our mandate combined with the newness of the RCY's office, we continue to apply a deliberate, phased-in approach to these four areas of work. In 2014-15, we focused on our foundational pieces. In 2015-16, we continued this work while prioritizing the development and launch of the individual advocacy program as well as the public awareness program. In 2016-

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17, we are working to reinforce our foundation by strengthening our individual advocacy and public awareness programs while building and launching our systemic advocacy program. We will also begin preliminary research and development this year for our critical reviews and injury program.

It is not always easy to maintain a phasedin approach due to the sheer volume and gravity of issues that we know are facing young Nunavummiut in this territory. As an office championing children's rights, we feel an enormous sense of responsibility each and every day. Our work does not leave our minds or our hearts at 5:00 p.m. At times, it can be quite difficult not to rush ahead. However, a phased-in approach is a responsible approach. It allows us to ensure the office launches each area of its work in an effective manner and is well positioned to provide quality advocacy services that young Nunavummiut and their families rightfully deserve.

Our efforts and accomplishments in 2014-15 will ground our office's work for years to come. As such, we have been mindful that the foundation we began building in 2014-15 required proper planning and thoughtful rollout in order for the future structure to hold. We look forward to discussing our 2014-15 annual report with you today and we welcome your questions and feedback as the day progresses. Thank you.

**Chairperson**: Thank you very much for your opening comments. I'm going to open up the floor to general comments. Who would like to begin? Mr. Joanasie.

**Mr. Joanasie** (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Good morning and

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welcome, Ms. McNeil-Mulak and your officials who are here.

My first question on your opening comments is just for clarification and it's on page 3. I will read it in English. (interpretation ends) I just want to get some clarification on how... You state on page 3 of your opening comments, "Systemic advocacy is another key area of our work. It begins when our office identifies a broad issue involving a Government of Nunavut service, program, policy, or law that is affecting many young Nunavummiut." Does it mean that only when someone comes to your office, you start looking at your investigation or do you initiate your investigations prior to someone coming to you? Are there areas where the GN's policies, programs, services or laws that you're going to be looking at without someone going to you? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Joanasie. Ms. McNeil-Mulak

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you. The sources of information that lead into our systemic program are many. So for instance, a lot of the systemic issues that come to our attention come to our attention through our individual cases so that's one source. The other source that you mentioned is someone coming, not related to an individual case, but just because they want to come to talk to us about what they think is a systemic issue. This is absolutely another source. Any person can come to us either with an individual matter or to talk to us about a systemic issue.

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such as auditor general reports related to Nunavut as key sources of information for systemic issues to our office so issues can come to us in many different ways. Each issue that comes to us regardless of the source then gets carried over into systemic database. Each issue is documented there and they share our focuses on developing the systemic program in terms of how then from this list; to date I believe we're up to approximately 24 systemic issues from different types of sources, how then as an organization with limited resources do we then choose what systemic issue we're going to focus on?

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Part of the development of the program this year entailed the development of the tool help guide, a selection process for .... That's where we're currently at right now and that is working through the final touches of that tool. What that tool will allow us to do is two things. I also mentioned in opening comments that the investigation can be formal or informal so the tool actually helps guide us in terms of the categorization.

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Is this issue resolvable through informal means or is it more fitted for a formal review? It helps with that. It also helps us prioritize and that's a challenge because every issue that comes to our attention regardless of the source is important to someone and they're all very important issues for the people that are raising them. So in order to help guide that decision-making process with us, we have a component of our tool that does help us with prioritization of those issues.

Ultimately, according to the Act, it is at the discretion of the Representative to select so we're developing the program in a way with tools, and in a way that recognizes that every issue raised is LCU% C°Q LC°DJ C°Q PUD%NP°D%UAC° Δ/L%/iN%MA%b%TUL σ74%U°C°D%U, C°DQ ΛCM\*4NCP9/4°DJ 4D95%CN°D%, 4"LD ΔL°Q® ΔCCMG%B%DT® Δ/LDNCL° ΦΔCP4Δ° important to someone and we're really going to lean heavily on that process to guide us. It will also involve the discretion of my position and we also will be looking at getting feedback, as we move forward into that, from Inuit organizations and other groups, in terms of their take on what issues are important to them and to the territory.

We have to make some hard decisions when we get into that work. Like I said, there are a lot of issues for us to look into and our resources are limited so we're going to look to good guidance of the tools that we're developing, and on our own level of expertise. At times we will be tapping into the expertise of others, as well, to help us.

Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. When you're finished, if you could just say "thank you" then we know that you're done and the guy doing the mic will know that you're finished. Mr. Joanasie.

Mr. Joanasie: Thank you, Madam Chairperson and thank you for that very informative response. I just want to go back to when you mention about formal and informal. How do you differentiate between those two when does an informal become a formal, that sort of thing? Can you just clarify that? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Joanasie. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

**Ms.** McNeil-Mulak: So in developing the systemic program; in the Act itself, it gives us authority to do reviews. Typically, those reviews tend to be, when we look other jurisdictions, very formal reviews.

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When we looked at it and we had that period of time where we could transform our Act into, how this is going to work for us, how this is going to work for Nunavut, we really wanted to differentiate between two types of reviews, two ways that we can approach it. We wanted to respect Inuit societal values and the values coming together and working together for a common cause. Putting our heads together on things without always having to shift into this formal mode. That gave birth to the concept that systemic reviews, other than being formal with reports and whatnot; there are other ways too, that we can go about that.

We look at such things in that tool. We look at the severity of the issue. We look at if there's opportunity and openness to work together on a certain issue, which we hope, always exists. We're always looking to see, when we look at an issue, how we can foster change quickest, fastest, to get us to where we want to be for kids. If we can get where we need to be through collaboration and use a less formal approach, then we support that. We absolutely run each issue through that categorization tool and there are 12 questions in that tool that help guide the fit in terms of the categorization. Is it something that is suitable for informal or is it more a formal type issue? We will rely on those questions and that tool to help guide that process.

The issues that we have now and we look at; we're just in the process. I mentioned we have 24 documents to date on systemic issues. We're actually just on the cusp of that process of starting to run all 24 of those issues through that tool to see where they land in terms of their categorization, and then where they fall in terms of their

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**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Joanasie.

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for the response. I would like to commend you for giving us your first annual report and it looks very good. In your opening statements, you've also stated that the office is just starting off and this is your first annual report. I'm sure your future reports will not be the same as this report.

In your opening comments, you stated, at the beginning of your comments, that your work is growing every day, the things you have to do are growing every day, and you don't leave your work behind at 5:00.

I would like to know what do you do in regard to this work. It's going to be very mentally difficult. It's going to be very hard work. We want to make sure that you don't get too tired and you need to rest when necessary or when your workload becomes too big, you have to remember to take care of yourself. You have very important work ahead of you for the people of Nunavut. What I would like to know is: what are your plans in taking care of yourselves in the office? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Joanasie. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. That's an excellent question. The work that we do is quite challenging and there are several things that we deal with. Our team is very important to us. Their well-being is very important to us. I fully recognize the type of work and the issues that we are helping support

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children, youth, and families with are difficult issues.

One thing that we do in our office is the obvious. We promote the use of the employee assistance program on a regular basis. We also have brought in additional resources for our staff in terms of training on vicarious trauma, burnout, stress, and those types of things. We also make it known to our staff that if they seem overwhelmed, there's always someone in the office for them to talk to and we encourage debriefing on difficult cases with colleagues and supervisors.

We also remain very open as an entire team. We meet monthly as a full team and it's something we explore with our staff in terms of what they need for us to support them. One of the national advocacy standards that we adhere to involves our team and what they need to do their job. It's a discussion that we have together on a regular basis. We allow the team to provide input and feedback on that in terms of what they need. As the Representative and the person responsible for the administration of the office, it's my responsibility to put those key supports in place when they're identified.

We have created a very open and safe environment for our staff. When I say that they can debrief, our staff do debrief. They take full advantage of the availability of their co-workers and we talk on a regular basis about how important it is for our team to stay healthy in order that we can do our jobs effectively. Thank you.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. No more? Okay. Mr. Mikkungwak.

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Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Good morning. Welcome, Ms. Mulak and your officials. I first want clarification on your opening comments on page 2. In the last paragraph, it indicates, "Individual advocacy is when our office works one on one with or on behalf of a child or youth." The first question I have is: when you work that way, is the director or management always involved or does the management sign off on the work when you need to do advocacy work for a child or youth? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Our individual advocacy work is led by three individual advocacy specialists. That's Christa's position and two others. They are very much empowered to fulfill the duties and responsibilities under their position. That being said, there is key support provided by their director as well as myself when it's required. For instance, as a new organization, if it's a new situation and an advocate isn't quite sure which approach is best, then there's a lot of consultation with the advocate and his or her director.

Also I think it's important to note that in our early days; we're approaching our first year anniversary and when we first started and that first case came in, it actually came in on the day we opened when the first person sought out our services. Before we opened, we had identified a period of time that there would be kind of a co-share on file between the advocate and the director. There was an intense period of coaching when files were managed collaboratively, and then the plan was, with time, with experience, and

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when the advocate was comfortable, and when the supervisor was comfortable, for them to take on or for that to kind of splinter a little bit and come apart. That's just a natural progression that's occurred as more files have to come to our office and people feel more comfortable in their new roles in that less support needed but support is always there.

If there's a situation, if there's advice that's needed; and there's still a lot of collaboration that exists because these files tend to be quite complicated, it's always good to have a second view on things that are so complicated. So that's our approach, working with each other on these individual advocacy files. Thank you.

Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. I think the question Mr. Mikkungwak would probably like to reask again because I think it didn't quite go through what his original question was so I'll pass it to you.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much Madam Chairperson. What I was asking for clarification on was your office of child and youth advocacy and you explained the authorizations for empowerment.

My question is, if a child or youth is too young, and they need their parent's approval if you're going to be talking with a child or youth: is the parent always present or do you let them sign off a letter before you do the actual work with a child? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam

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Chairperson. Thank you for that clarification. It depends. Our office can work directly with children and youth without their families present. It's always our preference to work with the family unit when and where we can.

There are certainly circumstances where it can't happen because of the nature of the issue that's being presented to us.

There's also a provision in our Act with respect to age and children that seek out our services. The provision states that with any child less than 12 years old, we must notify the parent that they've come to us, and there's another element to that, unless of course, it's not in the best interest of that particular child to notify the parent. Thank you.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you. It's clear. You added however, that the parent doesn't necessarily have to be involved. With that being that, do you work with the Department of Family Services? Is that the case or are you independent? Do you independently deal with it? It states here that you work with other government departments and the understanding that they're trying to provide benefits to the youth; you seem to have a lot of government programs in there. That's my question, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

**Ms. McNeil-Mulak**: Thank you. Our office is fully independent from government. Our role is to ensure that the government is providing the services and delivering them and making them

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We also would, in our individual cases, like I said, we would be working with departments on a regular basis. At times on the individual advocacy side of things it might mean that it might simply, depending on the nature of the issue, be us referring a child, youth or family to a particular program or services within the department. Thank you, Ms. Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page three, the second paragraph in your opening remarks, I would like further clarification on what it indicates. We as Inuit think of ourselves as strangers but you have written out you can provide individual counselling because you have to be proud of a youth lifestyle. How do you further identify that?

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. (interpretation ends) Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

**Ms. McNeil-Mulak**: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I'm not quite clear on the question. Could we get a little bit of clarification, please?

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mulak. Mr. Mikkungwak, can you clarify your question, please?

Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you, Madam

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Chairperson. On page three of your openers, the second paragraph, it states, "what this looks like depends on young person's unique needs and situation." I'm presuming you have a criteria or some kind of protocol. Can you elaborate a little bit on that so that I can have clarity on that particular paragraph? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for the clarification. What that means is every child, every youth, and every person who comes to us, that they come to us under such a unique set of circumstances. How our individual advocates respond depends on those circumstances and that situation, so a very important front-end piece of our work is to identify and assess what that situation is.

Once we have that conversation and make that determination of what the individual is coming exactly for, and what their circumstances are and what the issue is they need support on, then we can make the determination of what type of advocacy support they need.

Sometimes for instance, a child, a youth or a family may come in and they just need more information. They're struggling with an issue. They don't know where to turn and they're finding the web of government services that are available to them just a little difficult to navigate. Once we have that conversation and understand that that's what their needs are, the advocate connects them to the right service or the right individual. It could be something like that.

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It could also be that someone comes to us and they just want to learn more how to advocate for themselves. They have this issue, they need help with it, but they might not want Christa to come in and speak on their behalf. They might not even need Christa to attend a meeting with them. They just want to develop some skills in terms of "How can I better do this myself?" Those unique circumstances would lead one of our advocates to work with the child or youth and family, coach them, provide information, and work with them to build up their own advocacy skills so then they can go off, if that's what they want, and sort out their issue.

It can also be where a child or youth or a family may come to us and they might be having challenges with the service provider or with a particular service.

Maybe it's not just one service, but maybe the child needs are that they need two services. They need assistance from Family Services and Health, and maybe they're finding that the response they're getting is not satisfactory. Maybe it's not coordinated, so they're not getting a good plan forward from both of these departments.

If that's what we see, then our response then is tailored to their specific circumstance and then, for instance, you would see one of our advocates work with that family and the service providers. You could see a phone call made on behalf of the family. You could see a request for a meeting with the different service providers, one of our advocates, and the family to help facilitate their discussion and resolve the issue.

What that means is that everyone who comes to us for individual advocacy support presents with a different story and

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they're very unique and very different. A big part of our job when people come in is to listen carefully to understand the nature of the issue and, when we understand the nature of the issue, to decide what type of individual advocacy support that child, youth, or family may need, and then to work with them to develop that plan forward. Thank you.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Akoak, you're next.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Good morning, Ms. McNeil-Mulak and officials. My question is on your opening statement, page 2, third paragraph from the bottom. You state, "Our work is never to replace that of the GN, but instead its intent is to ensure that GN services..." I'm thinking of the social services department and they handle children a lot. In reading that, are you saying that you oversee how the department handles a child? Thank you.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Akoak. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for that question. Although your question does relate to social services and I will certainly address that, the good part about our Act is that it's quite broad and so it applies to social services, education services, as well as to health services. It applies to any service related to a child and youth.

No, we don't oversee. The departments still have their authorities and mandates. We're here to make sure, on behalf of children and youth, that those are being followed as they should. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With that, if you do see a problem, you would advise the department that they're doing something. If things aren't right would you advise them and give them suggestions? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Akoak. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. That's correct. Typically, when people come to us, kids or families, they come to us because they're at a point where they tend to be pretty frustrated and things aren't working for them. So it's correct.

Depending on the situation, our involvement is tailored but what it often means is us entering into discussions and meetings, on behalf of or with that child and family, with those departments that are impacted and involved in that issue. That's a big piece of our work on a daily basis. It's interacting with departments, letting them know that there's an issue, letting them know that we want to work together, and that we need to resolve the issue. Working together to come up with solutions to resolve the issue is a key piece of what we do on a day to day basis on behalf of kids and their families. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Next on my list, Mr. Qirngnuq.

**Mr. Qirngnuq** (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I have three questions from your opening comments. Welcome Ms. McNeil-Mulak Mulak and

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My first question is in your opening comments. On June 2014, since you were appointed and your office was empty at that time, I'd like to get clarification. I know that it's very difficult to start something new now that you've settled down in your office.

What was the most challenging issue that you've faced as a child and youth advocacy representative? Are you collecting legislation from other jurisdictions? I believe your office is in Iqaluit and I know that your office is quite new. With regard to Iqaluit residents, you represent Inuit. Do you visit Inuit people and consult with them and get their suggestions as to how you can improve your services? Have you consulted with the Inuit of the community of Iqaluit? Thank you.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Qirngnuq. Ms. McNeil-Mulak Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson and thank you for that question. Yeah, it definitely was a big undertaking, walking in, being alone, and developing everything from scratch. That's for certain. As I mentioned, there were in excess of 200-plus tasks which that entailed but it was also an opportunity. It was a unique opportunity to create something from the ground up, and like I said in the opening comments, to tailor it to the needs of this jurisdiction.

In terms of other challenges, I think now that we're open, one of the challenges is the sheer volume of work for a small office that has to be done, so we fully acknowledge that.  $J_{C_0} \supset_{C_0} J_{C_0} J_{C$ 

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In terms of consultation with Inuit, part of our work, we are Iqaluit based, and we recognize that presents some challenges because we have responsibility for the entire territory. So a part of our plan is to visit communities on a regular basis to make sure that we understand the issues that communities face because, while there are some universal issues affecting children and youth in Nunavut, there are some very some distinct issues depending on the community. So absolutely, since opening we've been to 11 communities so far with plans to complete the remaining communities in this fiscal year pending staffing and weather, of course, but it's very important to us to work very closely with communities and to be there on a regular basis.

What we've done in fact, even though all of our staff is responsible for community travel, it is a key responsibility of our three advocacy specialists so we've actually assigned each of our advocacy specialists a region because we want them to start to build relationships.

So Christa for instance is the advocate responsible for Qikiqtani. When Christa does her initial communities like she did when she visited Clyde River recently, then the next community visit will be by Christa. It's very important to us that we build those relationships. When we're on the ground in communities as well, we look for opportunities. Of course when we're there, we're very much focused on the youth in the communities so we're in the schools or meeting with every class or meeting with service providers who we often we work with on the phone on a regular basis letting them know what we do and how they can contact us. We're also very interested in looking for opportunities to meet the community.

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When we go into a community and we have opportunities to meet with people and they identify issues, we take those issues back here to Iqaluit and they go into our database and then they go through that tool for consideration and whatnot. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. My second question, on September 30, 2015, your office officially opened. I know that the public is aware of that. I know that your work will be completed. It will just be starting and it will be the beginning of your full work since your office is new.

Can you clarify to me or to us, how, in the future, would you be developing your office? When will the smaller communities get advocacy representatives in the communities or will there be advocacy representatives only be situated in Iqaluit? Will they also be spread out to the other communities? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Qirngnuq. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you. Yes, we're approaching our big first year anniversary date in a couple of weeks and the year has been very busy. The first year has very much focused in terms of what we plan to do. The first year has very much focused on individual advocacy and public awareness. This year, we continue to build and strengthen those areas while completing the systemic program and launching into that. We will also begin the preliminary research and development on the critical injury and death component of our office. It's a very deliberate, phased-in approach.

Even though we opened, development continues because we are an organization that is absolutely committed to continuous quality improvement. Things might have been done before we opened and then when we opened, we learn and not the things we thought before we opened. Now that we're open, we may need to tweak and change. We're always going back and updating policies and procedures to make sure they're in alignment with how people should receive good advocacy service. That's the plan of where we are and where we're going into the future. That phasedin approach is very clearly articulated in our business plan as well. The commitment is there in terms of how we roll this out over the upcoming years.

In terms of whether there will be offices like this in communities in the future, it's hard to say at this point in time. When we go to communities, we certainly hear community members ask that same question. It's something that as a new office, it's definitely on our radar screen **Δ৬/ペレር%**: ʿdታ°௳广், Ӷʹር ʿየ≏ኄ'ۥ Ӷʹ Lьσ்-⅃ℂം.

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that we have definitely discussed. As a new office trying to establish ourselves in Iqaluit first, it's not something at this point in time that we have thoroughly explored.

Perhaps in the future, if we hear interest and what that looks like too, "Does it look like there needs to be the same type of office in different communities or can there be some other type of model to improve outside of our community visits, to improve the presence in communities?" It's on our radar screen. I appreciate the question. It's definitely something that we have heard before directly from communities. Given where we're at currently, it's certainly noted, but it hasn't been something as of yet that we have been able to explore fully. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. That's it? Okay. At this time, we're going to take a 15-minute coffee break. Thank you.

>>Committee recessed at 10:03 and resumed at 10:23

Chairperson: Welcome back, everybody. I would just like to note that for the record that our colleagues, Mr. Paul Okalik MLA for Iqaluit-Sinaa and Mr. Emiliano Qirngnuq, MLA for Netsilik are also here with us today. I'm sorry I failed to mention your names when I did my opening statements.

We're going to go onto Mr. Okalik but before I give the mic over to Mr. Okalik, I do want to say that your questions don't just have to pertain to the opening comments of Ms. McNeil-Mulak. You can also ask any specific questions and I'm going to open the floor to any specific questions as well. Okay, Mr. Okalik.

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Mr. Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson and I would like to thank you also for recognizing me for my presence. I would like to welcome the Representative for Children and Youth and her officials.

Sometimes it's quite hard when you're setting up an office from scratch as I've gone through that in latter years and I do feel compassion for you because of all that you had to do to set up your office. Of course you have your role and responsibilities as a representative.

First of all, in your annual report, you made an indication that you're going to be following the five Inuit societal values and in your opening comments, you indicated that there's an international organization but I didn't hear anything about Inuit societal values, which I would like to see implemented in your office. I'm sure that the majority of the children and the youth that you will be working with are mostly Inuit.

What is your office doing regarding the implementation of Inuit societal values and what plans you have regarding the implementation of those values in your office?

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Okalik. Ms. Mc-Neil Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson and thank you for that question. To start, I think it's important to share that the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* itself includes Inuit societal values in the preamble and in the Act's stated principles. It also goes one step further in that it supports the Representative in her work to consult with

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In terms of the values and our office, I did say in the opening comments that it is one of the guides. Those values are one of the key things that guide our office so right from the onset it was important that the staff in the office received training with respect to these values and Inuit history. That training was provided to our team from QIA.

In terms of the future, for us that training and that learning doesn't stop. We're now, in terms of future training and for new staff coming on board and those staff that already received the first training initiative that took place, we're exploring future training. We're consulting with our team through our staff meetings. Inuit societal values are actually a standing agenda item on our monthly team meetings for staff to discuss what they mean, what they mean to your work, how they apply, what additional training do you require, what do we need, as a team, with respect to Inuit societal values and history in terms of the work that we do as an office. So we cover those discussions. We're exploring more training and more learning in that area for our team through Piruvik here in Iqaluit.

Also I mentioned the RCY Act allows and encourages the representative and her staff to work with elders so over the past year, we have issued formal nomination for elder advisors for our office and I'm happy to report to the committee that as of this past June, we now have five elder advisors who will be working with our office starting this fall.

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We had our first meeting with them actually in June where we spent two days together to orientate the elders to our work and to do some joint training and exchange of information in terms of how we work together. Going forward we'll rely on the good support from our elder advisors as we move forward and it is not just myself, but any position in the office is encouraged, through their work, to consult with elder advisors to support their work when they feel that it is necessary.

Also through our training, we spent time looking at the values, talking about Inuit history and then as a team we really sat back after that and we said, "well what does this mean to the work that we do? How does that translate into the work that we're about embark on?" So we took each of those values that the Government of Nunavut has adopted and we looked at those collectively and you'll see that in your annual report what it means to our office to be welcoming and inclusive from our lens in terms of the work we do.

Also in our policy and procedure and manual, we look at our workflows, how we do our work, and how we conduct ourselves at our work. We've taken those values and we've actually applied them and embedded them right into our policy and procedure manual in our office. For instance, when we look at this section in our policy and procedure manual related to intake and the procedures of how to handle someone, how to deal with someone, how to interact someone when they come in to the office.

In the policy and procedure manual, you'll see the value that's connected there, explained and noted. It's right in the policy and procedure manual. That it is an

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C∆<sup>6</sup>dNja<sup>6</sup> a\_a∆<sup>6</sup>CPrL<sup>6</sup>Nd<sup>6</sup>D<sup>6</sup> D<sup>6</sup>6NdP<sup>6</sup>a<sup>6</sup>d45°C ∆c~PPrL<sup>6</sup>Nd<sup>6</sup>DCD opportunity to practise being welcoming and inclusive. Those values appear in their rightful places, where they connect to the work that we do, right into our policy and procedure manual, as they do in the RCY Act, and in the quality assurance measures.

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I also mentioned that Inuit societal values are a standing agenda item that we talk about on a regular basis at our team meetings. Just to give you some examples of what that looks like when we meet: we talk about our elder advisors before they came and trained and we did the orientation; we talked about what that work is going to look like to help prepare us for that training and work with them; we talk about exploring other ways that we can improve our knowledge base in the office with respect to Inuit societal values, which led us to a conversation and exploration with Piruvik, in terms of what they have to offer our team.

We also work with RIAs and identify when we meet youth in regions, to connect them to projects in other jurisdictions such as the important work related to truth and reconciliation. We talk about Inuit language month and make sure we just don't talk about it, but then we implement in our office that month. I think the focus this past year was on clothing and we had staff take initiative to share words with us and to learn more words and meanings and whatnot. So there's been quite a bit that's been done in that area.

That being said, it's not an area for us like development that has an end date, so it's something very much ongoing in our office. With discussions we're really trying to push ourselves and our team to better understand the values, how they relate to our work, and what we can do to

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improve our understanding of how those values apply to our work. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Okalik.

**Mr. Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson and I would like to thank the representative for her response.

I'm an Inuk but I'm not a counsellor. I've had a bit of training or counselling by elders on how to improve lifestyle.

There's even some who are not elders who are very capable of counselling others.

Looking at Ilisaqsivik, the cultural school in Clyde River that teaches Inuit about how to improve one's lifestyle by way of counselling and other avenues, they know a lot about Inuit and their values and they can participate in improving the implementation of Inuit societal values in your office. How are you going to include them? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Okalik. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I appreciate that feedback. We're always open to exploring new ways to strengthen our knowledge base in this area. To date, that wasn't an organization that was on our radar screen. I'll certainly carry that back to our team meetings and discussion with our team to explore that a little bit further. I know there has been some recent interaction between our staff that was recently in Clyde River and the director there. The relationship has certainly been well-established and we will carry that good feedback back to our team. We appreciate it. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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**Lυσ΄-Ιω** (Ͻʹͱλησ): ʹͼͿϧͼͺͼʹͼ, ΔͼϯϭϷϲʹͼ. ʹͼͿϧͼͺϲʹͼ϶Ͻͼͺ ϹΔϹͼͺ ϷʹϧϷϧϷͿͿ. LϽΔͼυͼηϤͼ϶ϽͿ ϷϲϽΔͼͼͼ, ͼ ͼϷͼϽϪͼͼ϶ CLͼ ϽϷͰͼϧͼ϶ͰͿϲͼͼ Δϼδε Ϸͼλλεξε Λέληρε Γε. ΕΔͼͿ ͼ αμαδάγιμες ϤͼͼͿηͼϧͼ Αμασικές Ευτος σͼς Ευτος Ευτος Ευτος σες Ευτος Ευτος Ευτος Δεραδμές Ευτος Ευτος Ευτος Δεραδμές Ευτος Ευτος Ευτος Ευτος ΘΕΡΑΙ Ευτος **Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Okalik.

Mr. Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It would be good to make some plans. Of course, as a new office, we have to make some recommendations in order to improve the services that you provide. Looking from the outside, we are being left behind as aboriginal people. In British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Ontario, they are trying new things to make improvements for any aboriginal child. With all those new developments, are you going to be looking at those new developments in the other jurisdictions? That's one of your responsibilities as an office and I'm sure that it's going to improve the services that are being provided by your office. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Okalik. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Yes, most certainly. The office is part of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates, which is an alliance of advocates across the country. We rely heavily on the support of those advocates in other jurisdictions in our development phase and as a new office, they have offered and been a tremendous source of support for us.

When we get into our systemic work and start to dive into some of those systemic issues, as part of the systemic work, even as part of our individual advocacy, we rely on the expertise of those organizations and our partners across Canada. It's very much part of the work that we do on a regular basis to consult with other jurisdictions and to see if there are any "learnings" that we can take from their experiences. Thank

**ΠΓΡΚ** ΦĊIJΦΨΡΨσς CΔĹ<sup>β</sup> ϽΫΡΠΥΛσ<sup>β</sup> Δυτίσης Εδής Είνας Αιθολίο ϽĠ"ՐՍ。᠊ᡏ᠋ᠺᡎᠺ<sub>ᠹ</sub> C٩٫ᡦᡧᠫᡫᠵ ᡪᠸᢕᡕᢕ。᠌ᢅᡆ  $^{\circ}P_{P}CDC_{$ לבחיחיה. כΔL ۶Δחי 6בימסרי, ליטיססירי, d°ηρνρις αγγίωνις ρεουλώς αγγίων لحكور عورور، والمراب ور المحرور المحرو Φ
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you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Okalik.

Mr. Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. We have the freedom to ask any questions about the annual report, so I would like to turn to page 13 about the systemic issues and Inuit societal values, the part that says, "Avatittinnik." The office is mainly geared towards counselling and advocating for youth. It doesn't really have anything to do with the environment.

Whenever you try to put something together and you put too many things into it, you sort of lose perspective. This part where it says, "Avatittinnik," why is it there and part of the work that you have to do? I feel that you should be turning more towards advocating for youth instead of the environment. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Okalik. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for that comment. Yes, on these pages, we have taken all of the Inuit societal values adopted by the Government of Nunavut. This is where, when I spoke out before, that we looked at each of those and we said, "Well how does this relate to our work?" You're correct, where the other ones may seem to have a little bit more of a direct relationship to the actual work that we do.

We also looked at this value and we looked at it through the lens of a child and a child's culture and how important the relationship is between people and the land. When we look at a child and their

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best interest, in our work, in our job, we must consider those ties. Often times we have to look at many factors. If we take a holistic approach to the child, one very important piece is a child's cultural ties, in this case, to the land.

This is what we wanted to highlight for you, how important that is, particularly when we talk about youth programming and land-based programming and whatnot, so that's why we included it. We really wanted to acknowledge the importance of the respect and care for the land and the child's and family's connection, from a cultural perspective, to the land. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak, Mr. Okalik.

Mr. Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It's like it was just implanted there. If you had mentioned healing in regard to the inclusion of the environment, then it would look better. It looks like they were just taken from the government and just put there. I really would like you to concentrate on your advocacy work and really consider the culture, not just implant words you found somewhere and put them into a package.

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Okalik. There is no real question but did you want to further respond, Ms. McNeil-Mulak?

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for your feedback. I appreciate it and I do understand your point. It certainly wasn't our intention. It was the opposite of what we were trying to do actually.

What we typically see is a listing of these values and name only. We wanted to bring

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life to these names in terms of our work. It is something, what we did here, that we definitely want to share with our elder advisors just to get this type of good feedback. If we've missed the mark in certain places, we're definitely open to that and I appreciate it and you make a very good point and it's something that we'll carry back to our team because we don't want to seem as though these very important values are just implanted into a document. We want them to be present and we want them to serve, to have meaning for the type of work that we do, so I thank you for your feedback.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. (interpretation): Are you done, Mr. Okalik? Mr. Okalik.

Mr. Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Yes. I'm trying to support your effort as well because I know the work that you have in front of you is not light work and it won't stop so I'm here to support you along with the work that you have to do. I will try to support that as well. I encourage you to embrace or use Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit because it can help you a great deal. Because we continue losing parts of our culture, we have to utilize it and it can be very useful. That's all for now. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson and please feel welcome. Before I get to my actual question, I'd just like to request clarification on what was said earlier. This morning there were some questions posed and I'd just like some clarification on some of your responses.

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Although I sort of understand what your task is and what your job is, if I had misunderstood, I'm sure you will help me understand. One of the things that one of you said was some of the legislation for services for children and youth services and you were going to make sure you follow proper procedures and if there's a difference of opinion in what other departments see and what you see in services ... who's opinion prevails?

**Chairperson**: Ms. Sharon Reashore.

Ms. Reashore: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. As we've mentioned earlier, we help children and youth if they have concerns with government services. There are two ways that we can advise government with respect to those services. One is with the individual professional, the service provider, to help and collaborate with them to sort out the issue. Then, there's also, as was mentioned earlier, the systemic program where we are looking at policies, procedures, and legislation of other government departments under our Representative for Children and Youth Act. We can then go back and make recommendations to government departments on if the policy is meeting the needs of children and youth. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Reashore. Mr. Enook.

**Mr. Enook** (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Let me clarify my question. So this policy and the way I understand it from the way you read it so the provider understands it a certain way and then you understand it another way – who's right?

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you,

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Mr. Enook. Ms. Reashore.

Ms. Reashore: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for the clarification of the question. When there is a disagreement on how a policy is being implemented, the first thing we do is look at the rights of the child or youth and whether they're being supported and whether their needs are being met. That's always the focus and we work with the provider until those rights are supported and the needs are met. The disagreement may come about because of, for example, insufficient training that the provider has and once the training happens then the process goes more smoothly. It may be that there are a variety of reasons why the policy isn't being implemented. When we talk about who's right, who's right is the child or youth and what they need. In the end we work together to make sure that happens. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Reashore. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) For the third and final time, if there's a disagreement between the program provider and yourselves, your office, on a policy statement or an interpretation of a policy, what happens? Where does it go? Do you agree to disagree and leave it? (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Oh no. We never leave an issue when it affects the child or youth. Typically what happens; we haven't, to date, been to a place where there's a real difference in interpretation once we're

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sitting down and looking at something together.

It may be, as Ms. Reashore indicated, that maybe someone that was involved was misinterpreting it. Generally, we're able to get on the same track with respect to that interpretation. Sometimes that means we need pull in other people in a department. So, for instance, if we're dealing with the service provider that was having the difficulty, for instance, with the interpretation and we're not able to resolve that at that level then we may see that get elevated. We may then see the advocate that's working on that file flag that to the director, and then the director flag it to the supervisor of that individual. We keep having the conversation but the players at the table then may change.

If we're working on an issue and there cannot be resolution in terms of the interpretation, which we haven't encountered to date, we have legal counsel in our office that we rely upon. If need be, if we're working on an issue for a child or youth and we just can't agree on interpretation then we would seek out the services of our legal counsel for support on that. Thank you.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Another thing that was said earlier that there are areas of responsibility divided into different expertise's and Christa Kunuk is the Baffin representative for the Qikiqtaaluk Region. So, if there are three representatives, three main experts, how do you differentiate between all three? Which responsibility that they'll fall into?

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**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Enook. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you. There is one position of Representative in the office and then there are eight other positions in the office. All of those positions have been delegated key authorities to match with their job descriptions under the Act. That means staff can fulfill their roles by taking on some of the powers and duties that are under the Act and that's done through a very formal delegation of authority process.

So what that means is that, in essence, it allows the staff to do their jobs effectively and it means that Christa, as a child and youth advocate, can go into a community, can meet with service providers, can work on individual cases on behalf of the office, and can also do community outreach on behalf of the office. So, that delegation of authority that's in place allows all the good things that are outlined in Christa's job description to come to life and give her the proper authority to do so. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I don't think anybody can understand me today. If I can restate, my question was, you seem to state this morning that a specialist that you've divided into the three Nunavut regions. Ms. Kunuk for the Qikiqtani Region, I don't know who for the Kivalliq and another one for the Kitikmeot.

My only question was: what did you base your decision on? If Ms. Kunuk is for the Baffin region and other positions are for **Δ<sup>6</sup>/«ΡC°** (Ͻ<sup>ʹ</sup>, 2Λ) (): የ<mark></mark> የታ° α Γ΄ Γ΄ Γ΄ Δ Δ°. Γ΄ L<sup>6</sup> σ˙ - - J <sub>C</sub> <sup>6</sup>.

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the other regions, what did you base your decisions on who goes where? Hopefully I'm finally understandable. Thank you.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Enook. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for the clarification, I appreciate it. In terms of the files that come in, there are two different pieces. When files come into our office, it's done on a rotational basis to make sure that the caseload is managed well. They're not assigned per region.

The regional assignment is for the community outreach work. How that was determined was it was determined in consultation with the three advocates and their director. Some things they considered were familiarity with the region. For instance, good, healthy discussion took place. Christa was familiar with some communities in the Baffin. Another advocate was more familiar with the Kivalliq and Kitikmeot.

What we decided to do was to assign based on some relationships that have already been established by the team with certain regions over time. That was pretty much the basis of it. The purpose, of course, is to make sure we continue to build on good relationships that existed and then we provide consistency in terms of community visits and community outreach program. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Enook.

**Mr. Enook** (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I must have been understood, so I finally got a good

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Madam Chairperson, I know you've had a lot of work because you had to start from nothing. As my friend would say, zero, nothing. To date, I commend you and I'm happy for you that we can have this set up. With the job that you're going to do, MLAs and the public believe in you and it has to have proper use for children and youth.

Your office's five main objectives are listed on page 5 of your annual report. During the initial stages of setting up your office, some of these objectives were likely more important than others. Can you describe how you prioritized your objectives? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Enook. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Yes, on page 5, it outlines the five objectives that we began with and these five objectives then are the priorities of our office that are identified in our business plan and we support, reflect on, and are guided by these five objectives.

For instance, objective No. 1 is to establish the office in a manner that supports the provision of good quality advocacy services. That entails a lot of tasks and a lot of priorities. I'm dedicated to that, which is why having the development period was so important. Things that would fall under there in terms of what that translates to in terms of tangible work would be the development, selection, and implementation of a case management system, which I indicated is the backbone of our ability to provide good, key advocacy services, and the

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development of a policy and procedure manual. There are some examples of some projects or tasked priorities that fit under that objective to help bring that to light.

Similarly, when we look at objective No. 2, which is to build the office's capacity by investing in our staff through their training and development, that's an objective because this is a new organization with staff in new roles so it's very important to us to identify as an objective that we needed to ensure our staff, when we opened, was able and well positioned to provide solid advocacy services to children, youth and their families. That's where you then see in the annual report, the extensive staff training plan for 2015-16, which we've now completed, right in the investment and all those important key training areas.

This morning we spoke a little about Inuit societal values, Inuit history, training on the RCY Act, training on child rights assessment, investing in our team, and enrolling them in Mount Royal University for a child rights extension certificate. I'm happy to report that eight out of nine staff in our office completed it. That's the objective and there are some of the tangible things and what went behind us.

Objective three is very important and is to increase Nunavummiut's awareness of the office. Behind that was the development of a communication plan which initially targeted the information needs of government and government service providers that we were going to work with. What that translates to is individual phone calls to every service provider that works with the children and youth in Nunavut. We called them to tell them about us and then we sent them follow-up letters and follow-up packages.

It also meant starting to engage with the public and youth and really set forth a good communication plan to help build the territory's awareness of our office and what we do.

The fourth one is very important to our work and is the objective to build a good relationship with the Government of Nunavut. A significant investment went into that. In this development year in terms of working with the main four departments: Health, Family Services, Education and Justice, and to spend time to meet and talk about what we do, how it's going to change what they do, and how we're going to work together once we open and continue to try to foster that good relationship as we move forward.

The fifth one of course is related to the office's presence on the national advocacy scene and just building those networks and supports that we need so that we can be supported as a new office from our counterparts across the country. So we are signing memorandums of understanding, obtaining them, and those sorts of things. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Can I just remind everybody please that we have interpreter/translators so just slow down a little bit? Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I think there are eight of you in your office, if there are not nine. You don't have to go through all of the detail but can you tell us what exactly are the roles of those separate positions? And, out of those positions, how many Inuit are there able to speak Inuktitut, if I can ask two questions? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Enook. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. For the total of nine positions, there's my position and then we have three child and youth advocacy specialists who mainly deal with the one-on-one advocacy support provided to children, youth and their families. They're also responsible to do public awareness work as part of their role.

There is an intake specialist which is a key position in our office because that's the face and voice of our office. That's where all calls and all contacts come in. The intake specialist then makes the determination, they kind of direct traffic of where the calls go. Do they go to me; do they go to a specialist and whatnot.

We also have a manager of communications and public awareness whose primary responsibility is the development of solid communication planning and execution of that.

We also have two senior systemic investigators who are dedicated to the systemic aspect of our office and the development of the critical injury and death component of our office.

Then there's the director position and the director is responsible for the oversight of the systemic and individual advocacy program. We've also, for the past two summers, had summer students with us as well. It's very important and to our office to employ summer students and, of course, give them an opportunity to learn about our office and hopefully see it as a viable career choice.

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Currently of the nine positions, there are seven that are staffed and two are beneficiaries. We have one beneficiary who speaks Inuktitut that being the intake specialist. There's a bilingual imperative on that position. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Besides those permanent positions, are there consultants or specialists from outside of those positions? For instance, if you need additional help temporarily or casual work, do you have those positions? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Enook. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Currently, we're not relying on any external support other than a little bit of support for the maintenance from our case management system and then, of course, legal services support. We have a contract in place for them that's on an asneeded basis.

The initial days of 2014-15, when the office was under development and there was less staff in place there were more contracts that we had to depend on at that point in time for outside assistance. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, I would like to ask my question again. The majority of children and youth of Nunavut  $\dot{C}$   $\dot{C}$ 

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How will you be implementing this so that Inuit can be provided services using their mother tongue? How will you be providing that service to those people? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Enook. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for the question. We fully recognize that this is an issue for our office. Our number has recently dropped with the departure of staff in terms of the number of staff in our office able to provide services in Inuktitut. We currently have a few positions that are out to competition. We're very hopeful with that recruitment, we will be successful in attracting candidates that will be beneficiaries and allow us to increase the language capacity in our office because it is an issue for us.

Given that right now, we only have one person in our office who speaks Inuktitut, we do a couple of things. First of all, that position, in addition to being the intake specialist, requires under their job description to help support our staff when needed in terms of translation or interpretation. We also recognize that it's not ideal, but at times, we need to rely on interpreters to help support our work. We also have identified language training as a priority for our own team and have enrolled some of our staff in language training with Pirurvik for the winter/spring

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sessions.

What we have done recently with some of our competitions, one competition in particular in 2014-15, is we cancelled it due to Article 23 considerations. We cancelled it because we recognized that it's an issue in our organization and that we want a more representative workforce to help serve our population well. When we cancelled it, we then met with the Department of Finance with their human resources staff to get their expertise on how, through the competition process, we can do things differently and better to help our recruitment efforts.

When working with them and relying on their expertise, we changed how we advertise our jobs, with a little tweak as to how the advertisement was written and how we advertise. The result from that was successful. We had more interest and we were able to increase the number of Inuit within our team.

We will continue to do those things. However, your point is well taken. It is a challenge for the office and one that we're very much aware of and trying through cancelling competitions and working with the Department of Finance to try to find better ways to increase interest in our positions.

We have also recently, in one of our positions, under the advisement and working with the Department of Finance, advertised it as a term only if an Inuit beneficiary was not hired, with a plan behind that to apply for an intern position with EIA's Sivuliqtiksat program. An application has been successful. Right now, the position is currently held by a non-beneficiary, but it's for a term period. We're at the final stages of interviewing

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for an intern so that they can come in and train into that position.

Thank you for your comment. It is a challenge. It's one we fully acknowledge. It's one we are trying to work on and seek advice on from the Department of Finance. We're certainly open to any feedback and recommendations that come from this Committee in this area. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Just before I go to... I just want clarification when you said about the number of PYs that are beneficiaries. You said two. Is that after you re-advertised the one you were talking about, Article 23? Do you currently have two right now? Thank you. Ms. Mulak.

**Ms. McNeil-Mulak**: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. My apologies for the confusion; we are straddling three fiscal years here.

If I go back to 2014-15, at the end of 2014-15, we had four of our original five positions hired and there was one beneficiary and that's when we cancelled the other competition. Then we go into 2016-17 and in 2016-17, as a result of that cancelled competition, we increased the number of Inuit beneficiaries working in our office to two, and then we had another competition for another position, so then it went up to three Inuit beneficiaries in our office. In the current fiscal year, from the number of three beneficiaries that were working in our office, we had a resignation due to relocation of one of those three individuals so now the current number is two Inuit beneficiaries employed at our office.

Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-

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Mulak, Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. This annual report has been established because as their Representative for Children and Youth, and as you will be aware, section (5) of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* establishes a number of principles that are to be applied. When performing your duties under the legislation, even though you don't go into detail, can you describe how you ensure these principles are appropriately applied in the course of your office's activities? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Enook. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson and thank you for that question. Yes. Section (5) of the RCY Act outlines the principles to be applied and there are a total of seven principles indicated there. The first is that decisions and actions concerning children and youth must be made in accordance with their best interests and so how we do that is we apply a holistic approach when we consider the best interest of children and youth. We also need to consider their unique circumstances and situation.

The culture and traditions play a vital role in strengthening the resiliency of children and youth and families so when we apply that holistic approach in the determination of best interest; culture, tradition and families are the key elements under consideration with the application of the preceding principle.

It also is important that our staff understand culture, tradition, and principle of the main population that we serve, Γ'C ΔΔ6.

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which is why there has been and will continue to be an investment in training and increasing the knowledge base in this area of our team. Inuit culture must be respected and supported in respect of decisions and actions concerning Inuit children and youth.

Again, it follows suit with the comment I made that this is an important consideration when we are looking at, and have our conversations with our stakeholder departments, children and youth and their future. The issue is currently on the table and we bring that to the forefront and in that conversation and also that as a team, we rely on the good guidance of elder advisors in this area when we need to.

The families are the primary source of care and guidance for children and youth. This is something that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*, Inuit societal values, all of those key pieces that guide us, stress the important and vital role of families in a child's life and we recognize that given the good guidance from all of these pieces of important documents and values that pertain to our work. When we can, as I mentioned before, when we're able to, we work with family when we work through these issues.

Relationships between children, youth and their families must be respected and wherever possible, supported and strengthened. Absolutely, it goes to the point before it. The primary source of support for children and youth should be from their family. There are times when things get difficult and things need to change but there still needs to be good family support in place and offered by

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government to support families and their reunification, when appropriate, with children and youth. Again, this is something that is clearly outlined in the Act in how we conduct our work, involve families in our work when we can and when it's in the best interest of the child or youth to do so, and support our families in decisions and actions concerning children and youth. Again, we see a very strong theme within the principles with respect to the family and again, it aligns with all the guiding documents behind our office and how the staff in our office are expected to conduct their work.

The last one, concerns respecting children and youth, must be resolved through processes that demonstrate cooperation and respect. When we work with government departments on issues with respect to children, youth, and their families, we always enter into those very difficult conversations at times in a respectful and collaborative manner. It's challenging sometimes because we're talking about difficult issues, but if we want to accomplish what we need to accomplish on behalf of an individual child or youth or a group of children or youth, then we need to all recognize that we're working towards a common cause and we need to work on that together.

That's a little bit of an explanation of those principles and how we see them guiding our work on a daily basis. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Mr. Enook.

**Mr. Enook** (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I would like to recognize an individual in the gallery. I would like to welcome Charlie Innuaraq,

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Madam Chairperson, all the principles listed under section 5 of the Representative for Children and Youth Act fully supported the family and strengthening the family relationship. Most of them are stating, "supporting and strengthening family relationships." Do you anticipate encountering situations where you're supporting the rights and interests of families? Since you're the Representative for Children and Youth, how would you deal with that? Do you anticipate encountering situations where supporting the rights and interests of families will make it difficult to address the rights and interests of the individual children and youth? If they differ so much, how do you propose to resolve these conflicting rights and interests?

You said that your priority is to use Inuit traditional knowledge and societal values and you believe that the family has to stay together. You also work to address the rights and interests of individual children and youth. If there was no agreement between the two, how would you resolve these conflicting rights and interests? Perhaps you can't respond, but that might occur. I know that you have considered this ahead of time, so if you can explain further on that. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Enook. Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for that question. It's a difficult question. You're right; it's one we have talked about quite a bit at our office. It's not one that we have encountered to date. The approach to what

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we do is very pro family. Will we encounter a situation like this in the future? It's quite a possibility.

One thing I want to state is that our Act doesn't give us jurisdiction to interfere with private family matters. How we apply the rights and a child's rights relates specifically to the provision of government services. Not all times but most times, a child and their family tend to be on the same page in terms of what the issue is, their needs, and what they're hoping for from a particular government program or service.

The concept of child rights is different and new for Nunavut and many countries and places and cultures across the world. It shifts us away a little bit from what we're used to in terms of kids and how they're viewed in society. It recognizes that kids being kids are vulnerable and are in a vulnerable position due to their age and their dependence on adults, so it sets forth a specific set of rights to guarantee their protection and their wellbeing in society.

In recognition of this very valid concern, although we haven't come across it yet, we have absolutely spoken about it and we've created space, for instance, on our website that addresses this type of thing for parents that might have concerns about child rights versus parental rights. We encourage people to take a look at that information because, in fact, a child having rights and what it is does for the child and the family can really serve as a source of empowerment for that family; to know their rights, to understand their rights, so they can advocate for themselves with respect to government programs and services. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. A lot of people from Nunavut also say, especially today, that family services should be responsible for individuals and people of Nunavut and the services that are provided. They provide services for families or for anybody who needs access to these services.

I know that your office representing children and youth and what rights the child and the youth have, and that you're also available to the public who would like more information on the rights of the child.

You indicated that Inuit societal values are going to be a priority in your office, which is very nice. Our government keeps saying that they have implemented Inuit societal values but it is not practised. They have that in writing because it looks very good to the public out there but they don't practise it as a government.

Since this government was elected, Mr. Shooyook has been very vocal about how the Inuit societal values can be implemented within the government. They are in writing but we keep saying that it's not being practised or put to use or it's always placed as a last priority. We have read all government documents and officers papers saying that their foundation is based on Inuit societal values but it's not in practice. It's not being practised in the offices. We hear of children being apprehended and families being broken up. You indicated here on No. 5 that you're basing your principles on the family staying together.

Something that I would not like to see is

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Family Services approaches your office to make a complaint or ask for further information. Of course, the Department of Family Services has their own policies, regulations, and other laws. For example, if the youth rights were violated, you would use the policies of your office. How do you determine whether Inuit cultural and societal values are being practised, supported, and applied in your duties and responsibilities? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Enook. Ms. Mulak.

**Ms.** McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. There's a provision in our Act that allows us to actually report just on that, the government's application of Inuit societal values with respect to the delivery of child and youth services.

As a new organization and this being our 2014-15 annual report where we weren't opened, we haven't offered any comment on that, but it is something that we could offer comment on as an organization in the future, offer comment on and recommendation in terms of asking that very question to government departments how, outside of a listing on a page, do government departments bring these values to light through their work.

Although we have that provision in our Act that we can report on that, in future annual reports, you likely will see comment from us in this report. We haven't been in a position to do that just yet. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you,

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Madam Chairperson. I'm sure that there will be an improvement in your next reporting timeline. You're currently just setting up an office from scratch. Now I'm even asking questions about Inuit societal values and so on that I'm sure have not been implemented in your office yet, but I look forward to seeing next year's report. I try to keep my focus on the 2014-15 annual report, but I keep asking questions that are based on the future.

I'm sure your office hasn't applied it yet, but I believe that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is one of your foundations in your office. I do know and I can say I'm quite sure that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child doesn't contain anything about Inuit societal values. I don't even know if there's an Inuk representative on that United Nations entity. It's one of the foundations of your office. I'm not saying whether or not I like that.

What if there's an Inuit societal value that is totally opposite on the rights of the child? There is the *Inuit*Qaujimajatuqangit and the United Nations convention where there might be conflict in their beliefs.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Enook, Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for that comment. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*, and Inuit societal values are very much pro-family documents and there are key rights outlined in the convention that support the key role family plays in a child's life and how governments should support that so

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that's a very important right under the convention.

There's also key rights outlined in the convention with respect to the importance of a child's culture in their life. In that regard, the convention, RCY Act, and Inuit societal values are very much in alignment with each other which is a very good thing in terms of a potential conflict or clash with all these things that guide us. We certainly haven't encountered any so far. That's not to say it might not happen but the articles, the rights, the values, the provisions, and the Act are, overall, very much in alignment and support of what each piece says.

If there is ever to be a conflict or a clash, which there's a potential for, that then our office would really need as we do on a daily basis with all of our work, go back to each of those pieces, look at the intent and the meaning, look at the child, the unique circumstances of the child, and also take advantage of the good advice of our elder advisors and whatnot. So overall, all of these things are very much in alignment, very supportive of family, very supportive of culture, and the importance of culture in the child's life. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak, Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The reason why I'm asking questions on Inuit societal values and the application of it in the office is that you would know that the people of Nunavut, on more than one occasion have stated that Inuit societal values, I believe there's nine guiding principles, are to be applied in the office.

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The reason why I'm asking questions on this subject is that whenever anything is created, an entity is created, and the government when it was created, stated that the Inuit societal values would be the guiding principle of the government and then when a piece of legislation is implemented, Inuit societal values always gets taken out if there's a clash or a dispute on the meaning of the legislation and when it comes to applying Inuit societal values. If there's a conflicting legislation enacted, then the legislation always wins and Inuit societal values is taken out. It always happens as Mr. Shooyook has indicated on more than one occasion in the House.

Inuit societal values always take the backburner. I keep asking questions on that because your office is brand new, just recently established, and you have an opportunity to apply Inuit societal values in your office as a representative of children and youth. This, as a government, Inuit societal values is one of the basic foundations. It's something for you consider it and to apply it. Thank you.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Enook. According to my list, Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. This morning, I asked some questions and I'd like to expand on those questions to get it clearly. Now you will help the people of Nunavut understand what your role is as child and youth representative and their rights.

My question is: what have you done to that end before you've had a full staff complement in your office and there are 25 communities in Nunavut? That is my first question. Thank you, Madam ΔLΔ%ib'sbcCrowlog 

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**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I'm not certain if the question is translating 100 percent so could I get some clarification on it, please?

**Chairperson**: Mr. Mikkungwak, clarification please.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): I understood my question but I'll try and make it clearer. In Nunavut, there are 25 communities in total. As a child and youth advocate, you're going to be trying to teach the people of Nunavut about their rights. What have you done to that end even before you've had a full staff complement in your office? What have you done to teach the people of Nunavut that you have an office? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson and thank you for the clarification. It's a big task to reach the entire territory and we fully recognized that there's barrier that we face being Iqaluit based.

With respect to getting that important message out about our office that we're here, what we do and how you can seek out our services. We have barriers such as geography access to communities, time zones, internet speeds, all that type of stuff, so we've taken all that into consideration in the development of our communication plan. Some things that we have done, especially in that initial

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development period, is a targeted information campaign. That was first and foremost and that's where we reached out across the territory to every service provider. Our team at our office, the staff that we currently had on board, and new staff when they come in; they join on to that campaign.

It was about reaching out to every service provider across Nunavut that provides a program or service to children and youth. There were a great number of phone calls made. It was about sharing information but it was about starting to build a relationship as well so those phone calls entailed us introducing ourselves, talking a little bit about our office, what we do, and what changes that meant for the service provider on the frontline.

What followed as well was a mail-out campaign where every person that we talked to representing every organization then received an information package. The information package contained a letter and the letter re-stated all of the good points we made during that phone call, and that included things like questions and answers for service providers. It included information for them to start to share with the public, the members in their community, for instance, posters, pamphlets, and that type of thing.

Our campaign focused beyond just service providers as well because we recognize the important role that hamlets play in communities and regional Inuit organizations and whatnot. It also extended to those organizations as well, the mail-out component of that campaign and the encouragement to start to disseminate some of our information. That's what we focused on in those early days before our office opened. It also

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meant meeting with key stakeholder groups.

Since we opened and we have staff, the next step is to get out into the communities and to have a presence in communities. Our staff has been very busy with communities. It's 11 to date and the plan is to try to visit the remaining communities within the current fiscal year. There are plans extending for fall travel and then we have to look beyond that for winter travel to complete the rest of the communities. Ideally, we would like to have one of our staff in each community once a year. That's ambitious and we recognize that, but that's the target right now for us to get back once a year to the communities for our staff.

In terms of our organization recognizing the challenges we have in terms of geography and that we're Iqaluit-based, we made sure.... Our phone number is a toll-free phone number, so you can contact us regardless of your community, inside or outside of Canada. There's a lot of thinking about how we reach just beyond the borders of Iqaluit in the upcoming years. It's definitely high on our priority list.

There's also a lot of follow-up when visits happen in terms of maintaining those relationships. When we're in communities, we're also available, our advocates, to take intakes and work with children and youth individually. Sometimes it means that our office is contacted by a community to extend our business hours. At times, we have our advocates working after hours to offset the time zone differences and accommodate the needs of a family. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Before I go to Mr. Mikkungwak, we're going to take a lunch break. We will be back at 1:30 and we will continue with further questioning by Mr. Mikkungwak. Thank you.

>>Committee recessed at 11:47 and resumed at 13:30

**Chairperson**: Good afternoon, *unnusakkut*. (interpretation) Mr. Mikkungwak, you can now ask questions.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson. My first question on your annual report will be on page 9. It states that you will be working on systemic issues. If there are any policies or procedures that need to be changed, you will be identifying them. My question on that is: with that being in your report, do you have full authority to be able to urge or get different departments to do what you're asking of them? Do you have the full authority? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Yes, under the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*, our office does have authority to make recommendations to Government of Nunavut departments that pertain to changes that are necessary to policies, programs, services, and legislation for children and youth. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank

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you very much, Madam Chairperson. You said that you have authority. When you make a recommendation, how long do you give them to implement the recommendation? How long would you wait for government entities or departments to implement those recommendations? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. We haven't yet launched into the systemic advocacy component of our office, so there haven't been any formal systemic recommendations that have resulted to date and therefore no specific timelines that I can speak to.

What I can say is that each recommendation and the timeline that will be associated with it will be specific to that recommendation. There won't be a defined period of time that will apply to every recommendation that we make. It will be very specific to the issue and to the recommendation that is being made. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson. I already asked a question on your opening comments, but I would like to ask a question on page 4, middle paragraph. It is obvious that you have a difficult job ahead of you and some will take time and there are many issues to deal with in relation to our youth and children in Nunavut. With that being the case, right now, your office is settling in and you will be hearing concerns regarding children and youth.

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How will you identify priority areas or areas that are not so much a priority?

For example, in the news, education is a real concern right now, but as regular MLAs, the children who are sent down south and they use a lot of money, will you be identifying where that area will be concentrated on? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. It was touched upon this morning. You can respond to that if you want, Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. For those issues that have been classified as systemic issues, we're currently in the process, as I mentioned, in just finalizing a tool that will help guide the selection and prioritization process of those issues. That, combined with the expertise of the office staff and other input from other organizations, like I mentioned this morning, like Inuit organizations will help guide the selection process in terms of the priority of all those important issues that we have noted in our current database. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. (interpretation) Anything else, Mr., Mikkungwak?

Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Moving along. Social media is an important means of reaching the public, especially with today's children and youth. Having a website that is accessible to anyone with a computer is a key communication tool. What is the current status of your website's development and what features are in place to measure how often it is accessed? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Our website is fully launched. We actually launched that on November 20, 2015, to coordinate that with National Child Day. Our website contains a significant amount of information, and you'll see on it two features that we think are quite unique. There is a portal where we direct children and youth, and there is a portal for families and the public.

So there's quite a bit of information contained on that website and some of it, certainly, overlaps between those two portals. Some was written distinctly for the needs of those two different audiences and user groups. Our website is also updated by our communications manager on a very regular basis to keep it up-to-date and relevant to our users. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With social media being worked on and completed, and maybe from time to time, being updated, have you notified the Department of Education, or all the respective schools across the territory so that more of the youth and the children could be aware of that particular website? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

**Ms.** McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I do believe that when we issued a statement on National Child Day

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in November, it also contained information about the launch of our website at that point in time. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you. One of your major projects for 2014-15, was to begin to create a comprehensive inventory of child and youth services, programs, and facilities provided by the government. Can you describe how you initially proposed to collect this inventory information, and what specific challenges you faced? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Yes, that was one of the projects that took place in 2014, when we were under a period of development. It was a very important foundational piece of work for us, because we needed to get an overview of what programs and services existed for children and youth in the territory. In order to collect that information, a few different things happened.

First and foremost, a letter of introduction, which included a request to government of Nunavut departments, with respect to detailing their programs and services, and providing that information back to us, was sent. Secondly, it was under one of the contracts that we had underway, to also do a scan of what was out there, in terms of programs and services, and to feed that information back to us to then compare it to the information we received from the departments.

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Additionally, our staff found when all that information was provided, there were gaps in information. So that work also consisted of our own team doing work to fill in those gaps. It's something that we're continuously actually working on. What we thought was completed project; we're constantly, now that we're open, and working on cases, always discovering new bits and pieces of information that we feed into that.

One of the biggest challenges was the collection of information. It was the first request our office had made to government departments. So we experienced some delays along the way. That wasn't a challenge, that was a surprise to us and we worked our way through that nicely with those departments.

The other challenge is that it's just challenging to collect that type of information in Nunavut. Like I said, we collected it through three different avenues, and still it's something that we continuously needing to work on. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It is noted that when inquiries were made to your office in 2014-15, you weren't then in a legal position to provide services. Since your office opened in September of 2015, what efforts have been made to revisit those inquiries that were made to your office in 2014-15? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

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Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It was very important to our office, even during that development phase in 2014-15, where we didn't have legal authority to provide service that we captured all the information that was coming into our office and took each and every one of those calls. The information related to some of those requests that we would define as systemic advocacy. That group, that information was then fed over, where it was captured in the temporary database, and then fed over into the systemic database, so none of that information has been lost. That was a key message when we spoke to people that were raising those issues to us. At that time, we guaranteed even though we weren't open, that the information would be well documented and would be revisited at a later date.

Other requests pertained to events, presentations, and that type of thing, where we could attend. We did at the time, but there were other ones that we weren't able to attend at the time. The time has passed for those and it wasn't an opportune time, during the development phase, to take part in, say, a research request, and whatnot. So those requests had to be denied.

Individual advocacy cases were all of a nature that they were time sensitive, so that work didn't carryover. It wasn't necessary to carryover those cases when we opened. Even though we didn't have legal authority to request information to really engage with departments, on the individual advocacy files that came across, we did what we could do for people, given our limitations. For instance, we would share information, make referrals, and whatnot. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. When we're talking about systemic advocacy, whether it be informal or formal or individual advocacy, and with the number of inquiries that your office has received, is there a timeline when you feel you have satisfied that inquiry or is there a protocol timeline for each, whether it would be informal or formal or individual advocacy? Is there a timeline when you feel the inquiry has been satisfied? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: When it comes to individual advocacy, it's very situation specific and so the timeline is very situation specific and we're not satisfied as an office until the issue that's presented itself has resolved itself. So we don't say after 30 days if it hasn't resolved then it's closed. It remains opened until it's resolved. We do have some quality assurance measures that we have set for ourselves in our policy and procedure manual, in terms of our individual advocacy work in terms of our systemic work.

They were all set prior to the office opening. Now that we're open and we see what this work actually entails as an operational office, all those quality assurance measures do need to be reexamined but what they give us is they set times, for instance, around individual advocacy. I'll just give an example. If you're a child or youth that contacts our office, you receive a call back within 24

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hours from one of our staff. If you are a parent or a family member, then the standard is two business days. That's in terms of responsiveness. In terms of completion, it very much depends on the nature of the issue and the success point for us in terms of closure or issue resolution. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Just before I hand it back over to Mr. Mikkungwak, I just want to ask a quick question about your 24 hours. So if a child calls on a Friday night, is there somebody manning the phones during the weekends, Ms. McNeil-Mulak?

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. No. Our office is open Monday to Friday during regular business hours. It's not an emergency service that we offer and if a call comes to our attention and someone happens to be working late Friday night and takes the call, then they absolutely will stay to deal with it. If a call comes in and someone is working Friday or even on a Saturday for another reason, they will assess the issue. If it's of an urgent nature and requires a duty to report to kick in or something of that nature, then there is the expectation that prompt follow-up is to occur but the normal business hours for us are Monday to Friday 8:30 to 5 p.m. Thank you.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson and thank you for that question which gave me another question in mind. When you look at your hours of operation and when we're talking about children and youth across Nunavut, we really want them to be aware of your

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office and the services that you provide. But, during your hours of operation, we surely expect our children and youth to be in school so how do you reach out further to the children and youth in Nunavut when your hours of operation are during school hours? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. That's an excellent question, I think. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: First of all, when we're working on a file and if it requires us to work after hours, like I mentioned earlier this morning because of different time zones at the Iqaluit office and a child in a community, then we're absolutely working after hours at our office.

Another key point that I want to make when I said that we're not an emergency service, we need to remember that all those emergency services that exist for children and youth in Nunavut are required to have emergency hours and we need to rely on them for after hours in emergencies for children and youth, such as child protection services and whatnot. We don't replace those services through our office.

Your point about children and youth and being in school, a couple of things that I will add with respect to that very good point is we work closely with schools and we share a lot of information with school administrators and to tell them about our office and the duties that they have as an operator of a child and youth facility under our Act. One is that they share information with children and youth in their care and they share it with their parents.

If a child expresses the desire to contact

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our office, then operators of child and youth facilities such as schools are required to make a space available and to facilitate that phone call, that email, a letter being written to our office. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In addition to an operational policy and procedures manual, a case management system and a system to track incoming requests and enquiries, has any specific system been established by your office to measure, track, and monitor the office's progress in achieving its objectives? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. A couple of things. In the upcoming year, our advocacy team, when working with clients, will be asking their permission to conduct a survey once the file closes to measure the level of satisfaction with the advocacy service that they received. That very much feeds into one of our key objectives in providing quality advocacy services to children, youth, and their families. Plans for that are underway.

In terms of measuring, another key objective of ours, which is the effectiveness of our public awareness work, when I mentioned earlier all that initial contact with service providers before we opened to tell them about our office, they have all been re-contacted over the past little while. We're now in the process of working through all the

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information from those follow-up calls. During those calls, we ask them, "Were the information packages helpful? What areas can we improve in with respect to our communications with service providers?"

We also ran a child and youth writing contest last year on National Child Day and we followed up with a sample of principals from across the territory to get information on how that worked for everyone. Actually their good feedback will now help advise and change a bit the type of contest that we launch this November 20 for children and youth.

There are definitely some things that have happened and some future plans to measure our progress against the stated objectives, along with seeing how we're doing in our individual cases in terms of our response rates. The case management system helps us track a lot of really good information that we can then go back to and look at and compare against the quality assurance measures that we have established in our policy and procedures manual. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Looking back, would you say that your first year of operation in setting up your office for the years to come has provided you with a solid foundation from which to work and evolve over the remainder of your term? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam

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Chairperson. Overall, yes. We had 15 months of development before September 30, 2015. During that period of time, the whole goal was to establish a very strong foundation for this office and create a structure that would hold for the future. That being said, developments will continue.

There remains a lot of work to do as a new office both in terms of our future planning and phasing in the remaining components of our office, but also going back to those components that we initially launched, such as individual advocacy, communication, and public awareness. By doing the surveys and by comparing, now that we're open, the data from our case management system compared to the standards that we assessed, we're going forward. It's important for us to continue to invest and strengthen that foundation. It requires continuous work and investment

Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. (interpretation) Mr. Mikkungwak, any more?

in order to make sure that what we created will serve us well, and well into the future.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. You attended the Legislative Assembly's Youth Parliament in November of 2014, and had the opportunity to hear firsthand some of the issues raised by youth from across the territory. How did that experience help to inform you, as you began to establish your office? In addition to that, do you anticipate being in attendance in the next Youth Parliament? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

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In terms of the upcoming Youth Parliament session, we, very much look forward to it, and we'll be, hopefully, having an active role and participating in that, in collaboration with the Office of the Legislative Assembly.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. A number of jurisdictions across Canada have offices dedicated to providing advocacy services and programs for children and youth. As you have begun to establish your office in Nunavut, as you indicated, you have a website now. In the remote communities, in the other parts of Nunavut, I'll use Baker Lake as an example; we have a drop-in centre and a youth group. How has your office contacted them to be aware of the programs and services that you provide, or to any of the other communities in Nunavut? Thank you, Madam

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**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

**Ms. McNeil-Mulak**: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I'll go back to the targeted information campaign, where we contacted all the service providers in every community.

This was followed up with information packages and materials, and follow-up calls again to all the service providers in all those communities, and community visits. Like I mentioned this morning, now that we're open, it is key to get into the communities and now put a face to the voice and a signature that went behind those calls and letters.

When we're in communities, we meet with students. We go class to class. We meet with all government service providers. And very importantly, we look for key partners in the communities. So we will meet with hamlets. We will meet with youth committees, if one exists in the community. We will hang out at youth centres. When we're there, we're very much engaged with the community, not just from a Government of Nunavut service perspective, but the community, as a whole. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Compared with other jurisdictions across Canada, are there any ways in which you consider Nunavut's legislation with respect to child and youth advocacy to be inadequate or in need of amendment, as we are unique in Nunavut? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Nunavut is, you mentioned earlier, there are lots of jurisdictions across Canada that have this type of independent advocacy office for children and youth. There is one in every jurisdiction now, except Prince Edward Island and Northwest Territories. So Nunavut is the newest kid on the block. The good part about being the newest kid on the block is that we had an opportunity in developing the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* to review all the pieces of legislation from all those jurisdictions.

In doing that review, we could take all those bits and pieces that were agreeable to Nunavut. So I would say the result is a very strong piece of made-in-Nunavut legislation that we have behind our office. There is certainly an opportunity to review that five years after the opening of the office. Our office has actually identified our submission for feedback into that process as a priority for our office when that time comes due. That's reflected in our business plan.

So we will have input in terms of how to strengthen or change the Act in certain areas. We're starting with a very, very firm piece of legislation that will serve children and youth in the territory very well. Now that the Act is in place, and it's actually being used, we will absolutely have some feedback when that time comes. Right now, it's a little premature, but it's something on our radar screen, as identified in a business priority for upcoming years to feed into that process. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. (interpretation ends) Mr. Mikkungwak, any more? Mr. Joanasie.

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Good afternoon. First of all, on page 4, if we can go to your annual report, I would like to ask a question in regard to that page where you have a square there under Our Mission and Our Vision. Let me read the vision, "All children and youth in Nunavut know their potential value, their identities, and feel supported and empowered to express their views in matters that affect them."

I just want to get clarification on what is your vision. Have you started working on that? How did you set this vision up? Can you elaborate on how this vision was developed and what it means for children and youth in Nunavut? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Joanasie. Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Both the mission and vision statements are reflecting back, taking feedback from communities into consideration before the Act was even established. It took into consideration history. It took into consideration those early views that we heard during office development of what mattered most to children and youth, some of which surfaced through the model parliament discussion.

We then took all that great information and we came together as a team at the office and we spent two days at our retreat talking about these things, talking about our mission statement, talking about our vision, talking about how we translate **Δ৬/ペレር%**: የժታ°ሲ广, Γ\C ረላሲረ. Γ\ L७奋-Jር.

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Essentially in terms of how we see this vision coming to be, one important thing is the respect of children's rights in the delivery of government programs and services. That's key to the success of our vision. That's a key job of our office. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Mr. Joanasie.

Mr. Joanasie: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for that response. I also wanted to ask, because it has been nine months since your establishment, and looking back on the structure of how the organization has panned out, are there changes that you want to see moving forward? It's early on in your organization's life, but just looking back, are there any changes that you would want to see? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Joanasie. Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Building a new office that came with five positions, when I walked in that office on my first day, there were five empty blanks and so there had to be a thorough assessment done right away on the mandate of the office. There had to be consultations with other similar organizations in terms of their mandates, their organizational structure, and their position type. I think what resulted works well for us.

We identified in our annual report that as an office, we identified early on that it wasn't enough positions and so the office **Δ•/<>C'•** (ጋጎ/ትበሀና): 'dታ° ሲቮ•, Γ' L•ፚ·-Jc.•. Γ'C ረላሲ.

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asked for additional positions, which was identified here. We recognized that with a total of five positions, that we were initially allocated six, including my own position, that that would not carry this mandate and therefore would not serve children and youth in this territory well. There was that assessment early on, even before we opened, which resulted in three more positions. We're now at a total of nine positions in our office.

In this first year, we see a tremendous demand for our service on the individual advocacy file. We see a mounting list of systemic issues coming to our attention. As a result of that, now that we're open and we're seeing this, we've had to shift some resources around and we have done that. We're going to be taking a closer look at how this carries us forward into the future at the end of this fiscal year and even closer over the next fiscal year.

I think we're off to a good start if demand increases, and we anticipate the demand may increase as public awareness increases about our office. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Joanasie.

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for your response to my question. This morning after we heard the questions and responses by some Members and the representative, I just want to get clarification on the nine PYs in your office. If I heard correctly, one of the PYs has to be an Inuit beneficiary who can speak Inuktitut. They are required to be bilingual, according to the position.

Have you identified which position is

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required to be a bilingual position? Let me ask that question first. There are nine positions in your office. Have you identified one position required to be bilingual? Are there any other positions that require the position to be bilingual? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Joanasie. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Currently, that's the only position in our office that has a bilingual imperative on it. It's the intake specialist. So that's the first point of contact with our office. It's very important in the initial point of contact, that the position's holder, is able to speak Inuktitut, and able to identify with the rest of the team. If services in Inuktitut are necessary, then we can put the supports in place to endeavour to provide Inuktitut services for our client when they call. Right now it's the only position. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Joanasie.

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 16 of your annual report under child advocate offices, there are two offices that have been opened and the other one, Nunavut Resident Youth and Advocacy Specialist, we spoke to this issue. The positions in your office, for example, for Article 23, in order for the position to follow Article 23, will you be also using that? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Joanasie. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam

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Chairperson. I'm going to have to ask for clarification. I'm not quite sure clear on how the question came across. Thank you.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Joanasie, can you clarify your question please?

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I'm on page 16 of your annual report. I am looking at the staffing of original office positions. There are Nunavut Land Claim beneficiaries, Nunavut residents, non-residents, total applicants, and start date. There is one for the Director of Child and Youth Advocacy Services. I have a question regarding Article 23. In Article 23, do you currently have any plans in implementing Article 23 in your office?

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Joanasie. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson and thank you for the clarification. As I mentioned this morning, it's very important to us to have a representative workforce and we've realized we aren't there yet so part of the plan for our office has entailed things like cancelling competition, changing how we present our advertisements and how we advertise to try to increase our recruitment efforts.

It's also entailed in the plan, in addition to cancelling competition; it's also changed how we advertise in terms of advertising as a term position if an Inuit beneficiary was not successful. It has also entailed applying to the Government of Nunavut's Sivuliqtiksat program and creating a space in our office for an internship opportunity to train into a position. It's definitely something that has been noticed by our

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organization and it's definitely something that our organization is trying to work on with partners like the Department of Finance and EIA, to help increase interest and our recruitment efforts in our positions within our office. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak, Mr. Joanasie.

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson and I would like to thank you for your response. Moving on to another subject if I can go back to page 10 in your annual report. Some of your responsibilities include your office having to do some reviewing. For example, if a child or youth dies or is injured while under the care of the government, your office has the ability to review such cases. How will such reviews conducted by your office differ from medical professionals and what are you going to be doing before the *Representative for Children and Youth* Act comes into force and where can you turn to? Thank you.

**Chairperson**: Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The critical injury and death review component of our office is, when we talk about that phased-in approach, it will be the final component of our office that we phase in.

There has to be a lot of care taken in developing that area of our work because of the sensitive nature of the subject matter and because we are a new office which is why it falls in the order that it does in terms of the phases. We haven't yet begun our work in this area. It's a priority for our office to begin the

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preliminary research and development piece for that component of our office this year.

It would be a little bit premature for me to delve too far into our response. What I can say is that as part of the preliminary research and development phase, a key part of that is looking to what's currently being done in the territory, for instance, the Office of the Coroner and how that's going to be different than what we're going to do. There are some key differences. The *Coroners Act*, for instance, there are specific parameters around what the coroner must do. Our Act is a little bit different from that. Intent, at times, will be a little different.

The Coroner, in the *Coroners Act*, states the cause of death, and we won't be doing that type of thing. Our program is more aimed at looking at death or a critical injury that a child encountered while receiving government services and dissecting it, in terms of did anything go wrong with respect to the delivery of government service for this child or youth and taking what went wrong and learning from it, and making recommendations as a result for change.

So there will be definitely some key differences in the work. Our program has no intention to duplicate efforts that are currently underway in the territory. Our resources are too scarce to use them in that way. Like I mentioned, a good chunk initially of the preliminary research and development work that we need to do is understand the current environment in Nunavut with respect to the coroner's work and, if there is any medical paediatric review committee that exists, what are the parameters around our work, and how do how we fit in with that and to

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not duplicate it. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Before I hand it over to Mr. Joanasie, I just want clarification again. When you say you don't want to duplicate, but the things that you were saying seems to me, and maybe I'm wrong, is exactly what a coroner would do. They would look at the programs and services. Can you get to me to understand that just a little bit better? Thank you. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The coroner has a clear duty under the *Coroners Act* and by us having this program, it doesn't supersede that. That still needs to happen. So the coroner and the work of the coroner's office, for instance, and I'm speaking a little bit in hypothetical terms here, our office would really look at the work resulting from the coroner's office.

We would look to see if there is anything through our view and lens, which is a childlike lens, that we feel was missed. Is there anything of significant value that we think we can add by taking another and a different look through a different lens at this particular situation?

Another part that I want to stress as well is that in the *Coroners Act*, the coroner reviews death. Our Act allows us to review both death and critical injuries. So that's another key difference that will eventually define our program as well. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you and for the raise too for being Speaker. << Laughter>> Thanks very much. Okay, Mr. Joanasie, over to you.

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<sup>1</sup>C<sup>1</sup>Κ<sup>6</sup><sup>2</sup>C<sup>1</sup>Κ<sup>6</sup>β<sup>6</sup> <sup>1</sup>C<sup>1</sup>Κ<sup>6</sup>β<sup>6</sup> <sup>1</sup>C<sup>1</sup>Κ<sup>6</sup>β<sup>6</sup> <sup>1</sup>C<sup>1</sup>Κ<sup>6</sup>β<sup>6</sup> <sup>1</sup>C<sup>1</sup>Κ<sup>6</sup>β<sup>6</sup> <sup>1</sup>C<sup>1</sup>Κ<sup>6</sup>β<sup>6</sup> <sup>1</sup>C<sup>1</sup>Κ<sup>6</sup>β<sup>6</sup> <sup>1</sup>C<sup>1</sup>Κ<sup>6</sup>β<sup>6</sup> <sup>1</sup>C<sup>1</sup>Κ<sup>6</sup>β<sup>6</sup> <sup>1</sup>C<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup>C<sup>1</sup>

**Løϭʹ·-Jϲ**• (ϽʹͱϒΛͿʹ): ʹϭͿϧʹʹϲͺϔϧͺ ΔϧʹʹϘϦϹʹͽ. ϽʹϭʹʹͰͿϲʹϲʹϲϧϒʹ *Lϲ·*ͰʹʹͰͿʹͼʹ ͼͺϫϭϪϧ·ʹϒͿϤʹͽͰʹͰϥʹͽ ʹϧϫϪϲϷʹϧͼʹϲͺͺϤʹϧʹϭϧʹͺͺͺͺͺϹϭϹͺͺϽʹϭʹϧ·Ͱʹϧ·Ͻʹͽ ϹϹϽΓʹʹϧͺͺͰʹϲͺͺͺϧϧϒϥʹϧϧʹͰͺͺϹϭϹͺͺϽʹϭʹϧϲϯϲͺϧ ϒϹͺϒͼϧͺͺͼʹϲͺͺϧͺͺͺϲʹϲͺ ʹϧϲϧͼʹϧͺϲͼͺͺ ʹϧϲϧͼͺͺͼʹϧͺ ʹϧϲϧͼͺͺͼϧͺ ʹϧϲϧͼͺͺͼϧͺ ʹϧϲϧͼͺͺͼϧͺ ʹϧϲϧͼͺͺͼϧͺ ʹϧϲϧͼͺͺͼϧͺ ʹϧϲϧͼͺͺͼϧͺ ʹϧϲϧͼͺͺͼϧͺ ʹϧϲϧͼͺͺͼϧͺ

 ላ/4′C▷¹º ▷¹b▷/ሲ≺Lጏ⁴⁰Cና Ͻʹⅆ³レላሮሲውና Ϳ

 LCU▷′ Δጏላσ, Ͻʹϭ⁰しላሮሲኦ ጎፆΓኘንሲ<<!Lና</td>

 ϽʹϭʹϧϹ▷ላσ⁰, LcuʿơlnʿnJʻ

 ጎዮፕንሀ°ሲጐበር▷≫Jʻ
 ϽʹϭͿϧϒϹ▷ՎΓ⁰
 Ϥ¹L

 ፈጐσንር▷ላσ⁰, C⁴ቃሲ ላፆኦጐቦጐσ′bሲ≫¹⁰

 ΛሮሲσՐበ°ፚሩ, ʹϭͿϧ°ሲΓ⁰, Δዮ/⟨ΦĊʹ⁰.

**Δ৽৴《ÞC**৽ (ጋጎ.ᲑᲘJና): 'd⊁°ഫ广்'. Ċ°ഫ Δ৽৴《ÞC৽ 〈I°dՈՐ'b°C'」J. 〈〈Δʰ᠘°Þ)〉 'd⊁°ഫ广'ᡶ〈ቫ·. Γጎር ᡶ〈Δሊ. Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for your response to my question. Moving on to another subject again referring to your annual report, on page 20 of the annual report, it indicates here that on August to November 2014, you worked with the council, the CCYA, to urge the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to immediately take actions to reduce the number of aboriginal children in care across Canada. I make reference to a paragraph in your annual report. How are you going to include that in your office so that actions can be taken to reduce the number of aboriginal children in care in Nunavut? What is your suggestion or recommendation so that we can reduce the number? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Joanasie. Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for that question. As I have mentioned throughout the day, the office is part of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates and this is a collection of independent advocates across the country that have responsibilities similar to mine to advocate for the interests and rights of children and youth. This has been a priority and a longstanding priority for the council is the overrepresentation of aboriginal children and youth in care. It has been a priority on their agenda before I entered on the scene and it remains a priority.

In terms of here in Nunavut, what I can comment on currently with almost a year of being open under our belts and with the observations that we have made with respect to our individual advocacy files is

**∀Φι**': 'db° Φ Γ'°. Δ C ν Θ Σ C'°». 'db° Φ Γ' Δ P P L C Δ°ĠJCŰ⁰γ▷⋂°ρ°σ, L⁰Λ∪°⁰ 20, Ċ⁰d 
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 P&の マルン 1014  $\Delta L \Delta C^{\circ} U d^{\varsigma} b \Delta$ , CCCYA, C C C Y A, C C C Y $\Delta \nabla^{+} \nabla^{-} \nabla^$ ውልምና ቦሬΓ<sub>6</sub>ዋህ  $\dot{C}_{\rho}$ ዋላ ላይላሪ ውር። $\rho \nabla_{\rho}$  $\Delta\dot{\omega}$ \`-CP4%CPU $\dot{\omega}$ \CPU $\dot{\omega}$ \C  $P^*Q^2$   $\Rightarrow$   $Q^*CD^*Q^2$ ᠘ᠫ᠋ᠯᢗ᠋᠐᠈ᢣᠣᢛ᠘᠖ᠮᠳᢛᠴᢗᢃ᠂᠒ᠻᢐ᠋ᢏᡶᢥ,᠌᠘ᠻᡳ᠖ᠺᠸᢤ.

CĹσ ΔαθίΓ ΔΔΑσθαθθί, Ĺθα Δίζθα Δλθιλιστο Λοπλισθρου. CΔθα Ρληλιλθο Λλησο Αρθοθολρηθο Δαθίς Δολθηθηθηθοθοσιαστο γλίο that families in this territory need more support. When we talk about a child protection system, it's in place and it's in place for a reason. There are times when a child does become a permanent ward and parental rights are relinquished. There are times that may be necessary and we depend on the good judgment of those professionals in that sector to make that determination.

However, there are lots of opportunities as well for family reunification in these circumstances. One thing that we see in our first year of operation is that the family support that is required to help with the reunification process isn't as strong as it needs to be. The result is a system oftentimes that removes children and rightfully so in many cases, but a system that is very weak in terms of providing families with the good support they need to be able to get things on track and move towards reunification.

If I had one message and one key observation from where I sit at this point in time with respect to the number of children in care in Nunavut, that would be it, that the Government of Nunavut absolutely needs to provide stronger, more robust services to families. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Mr. Joanasie.

**Mr. Joanasie** (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I also thank her for the response. The government is probably listening to what you're saying.

In closing, I would just like to thank you. With concerns in Nunavut about children and youth, you have a big responsibility and you will be providing a benefit. I

**Δ৬/«▶ር%** (ጋጎ,⊁በJና): የ<mark></mark>የታ<sub>°</sub> ሲቮ<sup>6</sup>, ୮<sup>1</sup>, Jር. Γ<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> ረላ<sub>0</sub>.

**ᠯϤΦᠯ**: 'dϧͼϼϳ·, Δናᠯ《ϷϹʹ·, 'dϧͼϼϳʹ·Ϣ ΡΡϤϤ. υ≪ͿϧϤ· ϽʹϧϟʹϧϷϟ· ϷʹϧϲϹʹ·ϭϪʹ.

ላ፡L ኴኈየጋሀሆንት የተመሰመ ነው። ለርጥፈጥትላ ምት. Ldd ኴው ልተ ልላ፫ጋው ምጋቪጭርጭበ ታጋቦ ኴርሪያና Γρዋጋና ለርጥፈጥትላ ላ∿ቦላ፫ና ላ፫ ርኦጋኒ Γቦዓርሪያ፦ would like to work with you and guide you, and you can also work with me in support of what you're doing. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Joanasie. (interpretation ends) Next on my list is Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Good afternoon. It is noted on page 8 of your annual report that individual advocacy involves a specialist from your office working directly with a child, youth, or family to address a child's or youth's needs. Can you describe how individual advocacy cases are typically handled? How do you allocate resources and personnel to each case? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Akoak. I think Ms. McNeil-Mulak did go over that this morning but she may still want to respond. I'll give it to you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

**Ms. McNeil-Mulak**: Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

It's a great question and I'm going to ask our director of child and youth advocacy services, Sharon Reashore, to give a picture of what it looks when a child or youth or family contact our office, from contact to working on a case with one of our specialist.

**Chairperson**: Ms. Reashore.

**Ms. Reashore**: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. First of all, I'll describe the process in general and then give an example.

In general, when something is brought to

Δbלናσ'b'σব'σ%υσ. C/P?L۶ነ/ 'bϼϽΔ°և<sup>®</sup> Δbל?°ዉ?L ব<sup>®</sup>d∩ቦንΡJ°ዉ'b'Cσব'Γל%υ Λ⊂ሊባሊን/ Δbל'ጔJ. 'd۶°ዉ፫<sup>®</sup>, Δ'/«ΡĊ<sup>®</sup>.

**Δ<sup>6</sup>/<bc<sup>6</sup>**: 'dታ<sup>6</sup>a, Γ'C ל<br/>(ጋጎትበjc<sup>6</sup>)'<sup>6</sup>) ላበ'dበ°σ, Γ'C ሳ'dላ<sup>6</sup>.

**ፈ'ժፈጭ** (ጋጎትበJና): 'dታ°α፫ጐ, Δጐ/ペρ፫ጐ. ኦ°ጔጎጐሪ. ር«ペσ Lጐለጭጋሁጐ 8-Γ ፈ'ናႆJር፫ጐ/ኦΓ ኦσጐ፟ጐዮዮσ ΔL°α 'bኦትL፦Lሲ°σ በበና'ልጎ/°σ ለ⊏ሲ'bበ'b'ϲ·ϲʹ፦ጋΓ /ʔ/'σ· ርጐժላ /ʔ/<sup>i</sup> Lጐሪን፦ኌጐ፝፞ ለታሲፈ'bጐርጐዮኇ. ኦ'bዖ°αጐለʹና 'bኌጐ ፈጋ፟ታጐሁረ୮ጐ በበና'ልጎ/ 'bኌኅຼ ለ⊏ሲ'ረበጎጎσጐ ጎσጐペΔ/ 'ህል/? 'dታ°α፫ጐ, Δዮ/ペኦርጐ.

**Δ•/«ኦር**% (ጋካትበJና): የ<mark>ປ</mark>ንዮሴቮኑ, Γነር ጳየ<mark>ປ</mark>ላ%. ሮሴ ኦየ<mark></mark>ኦኦሊቦ%ዕ%ኦኦነት ኦዮፎ%. ቪዮሴ የኦላLጋ∆°ሴ구ልኦኑ. Γነ ⅃ርኑ, Δሮ°ഛና ጋσርJ.

**Lºở-JC** (ϽϳϟϽϽϲ): ʹϭϧͼͼϳͼ, ΔϧϒϭϷϳͼ.

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**ሲ/ଏ** (ጋጎትበሆ): 'dታ<sub>°</sub>ሲቮ<sub>°</sub>, Δ<sup>6</sup>/ペÞĊ<sup>6</sup>°. Ċ<sup>6</sup>ሲ ÞԺ<sup>6</sup>ԵռԸÞԵ<sup>6</sup>ച ጋРСРПԺՎ<sup>6</sup>><sup>6</sup>6. СΔLС Þ<sup>6</sup>6<sup>6</sup>′–ጏቮረ<sup>6</sup>6 Þ«ናበ<sup>6</sup>Ժ በበናናልናበ<sup>6</sup>Ժ.

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our attention, our intake specialist talks with the person bringing the matter to the office, gets some information and decides which advocacy specialist will be assigned to the situation. Once that's decided, the advocacy specialist makes phone calls to start investigating, to figure out what the situation is. They talk to the child or youth at the heart of the matter, they talk to whatever service providers are involved, they talk to anyone that might be able to help them understand the situation, and then they start to figure out the next steps in figuring out a plan and what the child or youth needs.

So if I may, I'd like to give an example that the concerns of a very young child who, for eight months, was living in pain due to poor communication among health care professionals. This child had damaged teeth because of an accident and the dentist was in the community, saw the child, and made a referral for surgical treatment. It was the type of surgery that can only be done out of the territory so when this referral is made, there are four health care professionals that become involved: the regional dental coordinator, the medical travel coordinator, the clinic out of territory where the surgery is going to be for the child, and the health care centre in the child's community because an assessment needs to be made for the medical travel. All of these four coordinators have to speak with each other, pass information back and forth, and somebody also has to keep the parents in the loop. The parents need to know what's going on

 $C\Delta L \ DPCP'+J^{\bullet}aPL. \ C\Delta L \ dP'+Cb^{<}C' \ d^{i}$ C<sup>16</sup>Pσ<sup>1</sup> 8-σ<sup>1</sup> d<sup>16</sup>σd<sup>16</sup>D&σÞ\_σ ΔL<sup>1</sup>α ᡩᢐᡏᢠᡆᢞᡥᡳᠫᠸᡙᡷ  $PJN^{C}$   $Z^{C}$  $Cdb^{\circ}\sigma P\sigma D^{\circ}\sigma' dCD\sigma' D\sigma$ የረላው ለርሲላህረ°ውነጋው. CΔL በጎÞL<sup>i</sup>LC ظ<sup>ى</sup> تەركەركى كەركەركى كەركەركى كەركەركى كەركى كەركىكى كەركىكى كەركىكى كەركىكى كەركىكى كەركىكى كەركىكىكى كەركىكى ك  $A^{-1}$  APLAGO AUJUMP AVONGNA AUJUMP AVONGNA طیک تمکی بردرک ۷۲میکی طال تحدیک 4P°C%NCP4°D%Y4FG%. C'6d4 C°6 NYL° ۵۲۵۵cC>، ۵۴۲۲،۶۴۰۲۰ 

When this case was brought to our attention, four months had passed and the parents hadn't heard a word from anyone so they didn't know whether the surgery had been approved by Health Canada,

whether arrangements had been made, or whether there was a date. So our advocacy specialist started to talk to people to track it down and had to piece together this process of what happens when. The specialist found out that things had fallen through the cracks and the date hadn't been set yet for surgery. During the four months, at this point in the story, the child had been living with serious mouth pain, had not been able to eat solid foods, had developed infections, and hadn't done any teeth brushing at all because it hurts. Once the specialist pieced together the process and started to persistently follow up, let's get an appointment made, let's get this moved along; now eight months in, finally there's an appointment and there's going to be surgery. So all during this time, the child's right to timely, good quality health care was not being supported, but with persistent follow-up. now we consider that a success once the child gets the surgery that the child needs. That's an example of what our advocates do when the matter comes into our office. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you very much. It was very informative. I think it gives us a really good picture. It's a good example. I know it's a true example of what your work entails. Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for the answer. We always want the best for Nunavummiut. We all do. What would you do if your specialist is not able to help the child or youth in your office? Would you go out and ask someone? Or what would you do? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Akoak. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

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**Δ•/«ኦር**• (ጋጎትበJ•): 'dአ•ፚ፫፡∟ሊ•. ፫•ፚ ጋዮ/፦ለበናበላ«•. Cኦጋ•በላፚ•›ጋσጔ ጋዮሮኦበ•በላ«•. 'bኦት᠘৮ናጔላና ፖሮላ ለሮሊላሲቴ•ሮጐርጎዮ•σ. Γኑር ፈሳላ•.

**፭'d፭'** (ጋኒትበJ<sup>c</sup>): 'dታ°ฉ广<sup>b</sup>, Δ<sup>b</sup>ተ<PĊ<sup>c</sup>.
'dታ°ฉ广<sup>c</sup> PP<sup>\*</sup>ተበ° Δ<sup>c</sup>. Δ<sup>c</sup>P<sup>c</sup>C APσ<sup>c</sup>C ALL<sup>i</sup>Ul<sup>c</sup>C. CΔLC 'bΔΔ<sup>b</sup>b<sup>c</sup>C C<sup>b</sup>dd
Λርሊት<sup>L</sup>ሲ<sup>c</sup> Δbተ2° գσ<sup>c</sup> የ<sup>c</sup>C ተ2ተ'σ
L<sup>b</sup>d<sup>c</sup>ጋσ ኌ<sup>c</sup> σ<sup>c</sup>. P<sup>b</sup>d<sup>c</sup> σ ላለ<sup>c</sup>P<sup>c</sup>l<sup>c</sup>Pተ
'bΔCPS<sup>c</sup>C AJ<sup>c</sup>C A<sup>c</sup>PC A<sup>c</sup>C.

**Δ৬/«ኦር**% (ጋጎ,১በJና): የժታ°血፫ﻩ, ୮५८ ፭፡የժ፭%. ୮५ Jc.». Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Our job is to never give up. So if for some reason a specialist that's assigned is encountering difficulty, there are support systems in place in our organization. There are policies and procedures. It's just the way we work that we rely on each other so that specialist would turn to their supervisor and seek advice and assistance. Then they would just try.

If one route was failing, they would try another route. We never give up. Our job is not to give up. Our job is not to give up. Our job is to find a solution and our job is not to close a case until a solution is found. Sometimes that's not always what people want when they come in. Sometimes what it means is finding and reaching the closure point. Sometimes it was just that bad communication was shared with people. While the person involved may still not get the outcome, they may understand why at least. They deserve that. That's a right to information.

There are always and mechanisms in our organization and it is our job, absolutely, not to give up on kids when they come looking for assistance. We elevate things. We work with different people. We have a lot of different tools in our toolkit that we rely on every day. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In remote communities we rarely have specialists visit our communities. How would you deal with that? Recommendations, or fixed date visits? Thank you, Madam Chairperson. **፭'d፭'** (ጋጎትበJ'): 'dታ° ሲቮ', Δ<sup>6</sup>/ 《PĊ<sup>6</sup>. CĹσ Δαሮናċ <sup>†</sup>ปσ<sup>66</sup>\σ Ρ<sup>6</sup>L/'<sup>2</sup>ጋσ Λϲሲት Lሲ<sup>6</sup>σ<sup>6</sup> >ċሲ፭<sup>66</sup>CΡレ<sup>26</sup> <sup>6</sup>Γα<sup>4</sup>C. 'b<sup>6</sup> CL<sup>6</sup>α bLΓυታና ነ/ P<sup>6</sup> ፭ጋሮ 'dታ P/ L<sup>66</sup> P<sup>6</sup> JΓ ፭<sup>66</sup>P/<sup>66</sup>/ L<sup>66</sup> (<sup>66</sup>) σ<sup>6</sup> > C<sup>6</sup>6<sup>66</sup> (<sup>66</sup>) 'dታ<sup>6</sup> ሲቨ<sup>6</sup>, Δ<sup>6</sup>/ 《PĊ<sup>66</sup>. **Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Akoak. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The issue that you raised was the lack of availability of specialty services, particularly in the communities, would most definitely be classified as a systemic issue. In fact, it's a systemic issue that's already noted in our database. Particularly, when we talk about specialty issues that have caught our attention is the lack of dental services, for which Sharon provided an example. The lack of ENT, ears, nose, and throat specialty, and audiology; those three definitely, in our early work over this first year, have stood out for us. So that's classified as a systemic issue. It's definitely noted in our database.

That being said, we need now, as an organization, to apply that prioritization tool. We have many competing priorities of issues in that database. That's why that tool was developed to provide some sound guidance to selection. Like I said earlier this morning, every issue in there is important and we have limited resources.

I can't say what my recommendation would be at this point. I can say that we've noted that there is clear lack of services on the ground for children and youth in Nunavut. That's stating the obvious, and the lack of specialty healthcare services is certainly one of the key areas that caught our attention.

If that became a systemic issue that we investigated, the recommendations that would result would result from the investigation. We haven't investigated that systemic issue or any systemic issue just yet, but the recommendations will be very

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much connected to the investigation and the story that has resulted from that investigation in terms of what we were looking into. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Pages 8 through 11 of your 2014-15 annual report provide an overview of your office's core services, individual and systemic advocacy, reviews of critical injuries and deaths, and communications and public awareness. Can you provide a rough estimate of how much of your office's resources were dedicated to each of these services in 2014-15? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Akoak. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Because we weren't open in 2014-15, it was strictly a development year. Things looked a little bit different in terms of resource allocations. The majority of our resources were very much focused on the development and pretty much evenly distributed, primarily focusing, of course, on individual advocacy and communications and public awareness because we knew that when we opened that they would be our first two key top priority areas. We knew that we opened we had made a commitment that would have our robust individual advocacy program in place so a lot of our resources really invested in the development of that piece. We also knew when we opened, people needed to know and have some idea of who we were and what we did. A lot of the resources were invested also in

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the public awareness and communication side of things.

Since opening, our resource allocation really followed suit with respect to our phase-in and how we're prioritizing the role out of our office overall. This year you see resource allocation supporting the individual advocacy component because that's in play. There is a continuation of resource allocation into the area of public awareness and now what you see are more resources being dedicated to systemic because we want to finalize that this year and launch that. Then comes the critical injury and death component so that's, I guess, kind of a snapshot of where we've been investing our resources over the past little while, but that being said, every area of our office is absolutely getting attention, some in a little bit different way in terms of resource allocation based on that roll-out of the entire office. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak, Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. This will be my last question. In the annual report on page 10, reviews of critical injuries and deaths, you state that, "our office also has the ability to review when a child or youth receiving government services dies or experiences a serious injury. These reviews provide meaningful opportunities to learn from mistakes". Are you talking about mistakes of the government or mistakes from your office? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Akoak. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

**Ms. McNeil-Mulak**: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It would relate to mistakes

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**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. I think that was your last one so we're going over to Mr. Alex Sammurtok.

## Mr. Alexander Sammurtok

(interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) In your opening remarks, you indicated that the individual advocate is when your office works one on one with a child or youth, but if you get the request from outside of Iqaluit, in a different community, how do you handle that? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Sammurtok. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. If a request for individual advocacy support came in from another community, it would be handled in the same manner as if one came in from Iqaluit. Surprisingly, most of our contacts that are from Iqaluit or from the communities are done by phone or by email, so then they get handled and managed exactly the same way.

Sometimes what that means, of course, is we have an opportunity in Iqaluit to meet face to face with clients here, although that's not always necessary, but when we can do that and people are comfortable, it's certainly something we want to do. We tend to do all of the management of the files with community members through phone and email.

Also, if there's ever a file that we're working on, an individual advocacy file in

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**Lºά--Jc** (Ͻʹ៶ληυς): ʹϭͿϧ·αͺΓ˙», Δεγ<βος΄ς.

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**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: *Qujannamiik*, Madam Chairperson. On page 26, on your travel budget in 2014-15, you used less than 1 percent of the budget. One of my colleague's questions this morning that if you want to go travelling once a year to the communities. You've got only six months now before the next fiscal year. Do you plan to do any travelling? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Sammurtok. Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Yes, and just to clarify the expenditure from 2014-15, it was during nine months of office development, so there was very little staff and we were very focused on case management system selection and writing policies and procedures. We weren't at a point yet of being open and really getting out into the communities. Now that all changed once we opened as of September 30, 2015. Our expenditures in travel that year were low and we anticipate a much different expenditure related to that line item in future years because community travel is such an important part of the work that we do.

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In 2015-16, we did travel to seven communities. In 2016-17 so far, we have travelled to five communities. I might have my numbers a little bit wrong. Sorry, six in 2015-16 and five in 2016-17. We have plans for upcoming community travel to five more communities for the fall months and, then over the fall months, planning for the remaining community visits will take place because the goal is to complete them all within the current fiscal year. In the first year and a half of opening, we have done a complete cycle of one visit per community and then starting the next fiscal year, we aim to get into every community once a year. There's lots of travel that has taken place since we have opened and certainly more plans for the fall and more planning to do for the winter months. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Page 26 of your 2014-15 annual report provides a summary of your budget and expenditures for that fiscal year. While it is noted that you expended less than 50 percent of your annual budget for 2014-15, the Standing Committee appreciates that your office had only been in existence for nine months and a number of staff positions had yet to be filled. In your view, is your office's budget adequate and, if not, in what expenditure areas would you like to see changes? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Sammurtok. Ms. Mulak.

**Ms. McNeil-Mulak**: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. You're correct and thank you for acknowledging that 2014-15 in terms

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**Lºở--Jcº** (ጋጎትበJና): የ<mark>d</mark>ታ-ፈተኑ, Δ<sup>6</sup>ተ የኦርጐ. Δ΄, ተርፈበና, የ<mark>d</mark>ታ-ሴርጐ ርጐር ጋየተሀልው 2014-15-Γ of our office's expenditures was an anomaly year in that we were just getting started. There was a significant surplus, as we expected, for that year.

The following year, which we have now completed, the following fiscal year, 2015-16, we still found ourselves in a bit of a unique situation in that exactly half of that year, we were still not open and under development and in the other half, we were open. Our expenditures for the 2015-16 fiscal year still won't truly reflect what our office's expenditures will look like as an office that has been open for a full year.

It will be actually this current year, 2016-17, the first full year that our budget gets put to the test as an open office. We're very interested to see how this budget is going to carry us. The plans and priorities that we have set have been set within the confines of the budget that we have been given. However, this is the first year, like I said, that we're really putting that to the test.

We anticipate that it will take about not just this year but a good three years at least to look at how our budget is carrying us and to provide some feedback in terms of the adequacy of that budget. We anticipate at this point in time that maybe there needs to be some shifting in terms of dollars attached to line items. It would be premature for me at this point in time to make an overall, general comment on the adequacy of the budget given that this is only our first true year being operational. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. (interpretation) Do you have another question, Mr. Sammurtok?

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Madam

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**\-'-'•')·•** (ጋ\-\-\)': 'dአ°α广், Δυ/«ΡĊ<sup>·</sup>•. Ċυd «'\$JCĹ<sup>·</sup>υγΡΩγ Ρσυρτος 2014-15-Γ Chairperson. Your annual report for 2014-15 was tabled on May 30 of 2016. When do you anticipate tabling your 2015-16 annual report? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Sammurtok. Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The *Representative for Children and Youth Act* outlines the provision in terms of when annual reports for the office are due. They are due six months after the end of the fiscal year, so that brings us to September 30, 2016 that our next one is due.

We have had now preparation of one annual report under our belts and we do find that timeline quite challenging. We find it challenging for several reasons. because of the demand on our office and that always remains our first priority, to deal with our clients. It also pulls off of writing at times. We also find it a challenging timeline due to some of the factors that we face in Nunavut in producing such reports, such as translation, proofreading, relying on cargo to ship product, and printing outside the territory. Those are all factors that definitely impact our timeline to have that available. We will get certainly underway on the next annual report.

We have noted our concern with the board with respect to the difficulty in achieving that timeline. We have also looked at the timelines that other advocacy offices across the country have in making their reports available and ours does tend to be one of the strictest in terms of producing it or turning it over rather quickly. All those things combined creates a bit of a challenge, we feel, for our office to

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produce within six months after the end of the fiscal year. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. I didn't quite hear a commitment to when you're going to be tabling the annual report. I know you noted all the problems about meeting your deadline, but are you meeting your deadline for September 2016, this month? Thank you. Ms. Mulak.

**Ms. McNeil-Mulak**: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. No, it would be difficult for us to meet that timeline for this month. It's very much underway, but it will not meet that timeline.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Do you have an idea of when you're going to be able to table the report, what month? Thank you. Ms. Mulak.

**Ms.** McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. We're hoping to have the annual report finalized by December. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Before I go to the next person on the list, we're going to take a 20-minute coffee break. Thank you.

>> Committee recessed at 14:56 and resumed at 15:19

Chairperson: Good afternoon. Welcome back after the break. I just want to remind everybody, looking at the clock and the number of people on my list, if we can keep the preambles and questions short and if we can get the answers a little shorter too. We don't have a lot of time left and I'm sure there are a lot more questions that people want to ask and we want to hear the answers. If you can all

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just keep that in mind and also that we have interpreters, just to try and not talk too fast. I know I'm really guilty of that.

The next person on my list is Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) My question is on the consolidation of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*. Under page 10, the first paragraph, 19(1), "The Director of Child and Family Services, appointed under the *Child and Family Services Act* shall report to the representative, the death or critical injury of a child or youth if at the time of the death or injury are within one year before the death or the injury." Can you clarify for me "within one year or before the death or the injury?" Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Qirngnuq. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. That provision specifically puts onus on the Director of Child and Family Services to report over to our office critical injury and death related to children and youth. So the timeframe means that at the current time, or within a one-year period prior to the current time. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. (interpretation) Mr. Qirngnuq, is that it? Mr. Tom Sammurtok.

Mr. Tom Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) This is a short follow-up to an item that one of my colleagues brought up earlier regarding specialists in your staff. I was wondering

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**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Sammurtok, Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It's currently a topic that's presented itself today. As I mentioned earlier this morning, it's a topic that's come up from community members in some of our community travels. As a brand new office, that's just in its infancy stages, trying to get established in Igaluit, it would be premature for me to say what the plans are with respect to that in the future. However, moving forward, it is something that we need to think about. We need to assess, as we move forward, and get more years under our belt, how effective we are being as an Iqaluit-based organization, and how well we're serving communities across Nunavut.

So it's a bit premature, at this point in time, to make any form of commitment with respect to response on that question. It's a very good question, and one that we will definitely be taking a look at, in terms of how we serve the entire community in the future. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) One of your key activities in 2014-15, as described in pages 18 and 19 of your annual report was to begin building your office's relationship with the Government of Nunavut and its various departments. What challenges did you

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**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Sammurtok. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Overall, the response and the interactions with our office have been quite positive with the Government of Nunavut. That's not to say that there haven't been challenges. The very nature of the work that we do is challenging. These are difficult discussions, at times, that we need to enter into. The type of information that we request and receive is a change for government departments to have to provide.

So we move forward in a very positive fashion. We don't look back and dwell on those challenges. Each one that we came across, we anticipated, given the newness of our office and the changes that our office being on the scene now in Nunavut entails and what that means for these departments. So overall, it's been quite positive. Definitely, some challenges, with respect to just the newness of our office. Like I said, most of those have been anticipated and, with good discussion and collaboration, have been easily navigated. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. A. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) Comparing with other jurisdictions across Canada, are there any ways in which you consider Nunavut's legislation with respect to child and youth advocacy to be inadequate or in need of amendment?

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Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Sammurtok. I think that was touched upon this morning but I'll give it to Ms. McNeil-Mulak to respond if she wants to.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. We did a draft of that question earlier on and I think the key point that I would highlight is that we have a very robust Act here in Nunavut. There will be an opportunity at the five-year mark to take a look at the Representative for Children and Youth Act and we have noted, as a priority for our office, to submit feedback into that process. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. A. Sammurtok: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. This may have been touched upon as well, however on top of page 19 of your report, it's noted that there's currently no national children's commissioner. Can you elaborate on how having such a position at the national level could impact Nunavut's Office of the Representative of Children and Youth? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Sammurtok. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. You're correct. Currently in Canada, there is no national representative or national advocate or spokesperson for children and youth. It is an issue that the Canadian council of child and youth advocates across the country has been quite vocal on over the years and continues to this day. The advantages in terms of Nunavut and all jurisdictions across the country is that without that, we

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have no national voice for our country's children. We each have our own jurisdictional voices and some jurisdictions like I mentioned before don't currently have a provincial or territorial advocate, so we don't have a national voice. We don't have a person in a position from a national perspective applying a child rights lens to national issues so it's certainly something that, as a council member, we will continue to advocate for.

With a national advocate position, it will allow all of us in our respective jurisdictions and the country as a whole, to promote a more enabling environment for children and youth, and child rights. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. McNeil-Mulak. Mr. Sammurtok, are you done? Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The legislation on your *Representative for Children and Youth Act* on page 2, 1(b)(2), (3) gives the Representative for Children and Youth the authority to provide support and services to children and youth who may be receiving services under the criminal code or the youth criminal justice Act. You have spoken about getting information to children and youth in schools.

How do you work with children and youth who may be in correctional facilities? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. McNeil-Mulak.

**Ms. McNeil-Mulak**: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. As part of our mandate on our public awareness work, it extends far beyond the reach of children in schools.

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**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson. I know that you are consulting with the communities to make sure that they know about the RCY Act. What about the young people from down south that have been apprehended and moved out of Nunavut? What about these children and youth who have been apprehended and are housed outside of Nunavut? Are you responsible for those children and youth too? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. That's an excellent question. First and foremost, children who are under the care of the director of child and family services and are placed out of territory, any administrator of a program, whether it's a principle, the director has a requirement to share information about our office with children and youth in receipt of their services. We share that obligation out with service providers. We would hope that information about our office gets to children and youth in Nunavut or outside of Nunavut.

Also, we have a memorandum of

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understanding that is signed with the Canadian council, which allows us to work with other advocacy offices when children and youth are placed out of territory. While our law can't extend beyond borders, our children often do. They often move outside of the geographical boundaries of Nunavut, which is why we have that agreement in place.

We can go about that two ways. We can work with the departments here in Nunavut that are delivering services to children and youth outside of Nunavut, for instance, children in care. We can work with the departments on this end. We can also work with other advocacy offices in that jurisdiction and join forces, if you will, to make sure quality advocacy services are extended to children and youth outside of the territory. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson. If you can respond to my next question, I would appreciate it. In Nunavut, we are quite passionate about our mother tongue in Inuktitut. When you receive a phone call at your office from either a child or youth, which language do they use the majority of the time? I would like to have an understanding on that. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. Mulak.

**Ms. McNeil-Mulak**: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Most of our interactions that come in from clients are in English. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson. I'll ask another question. You have consulted with youth who are in correctional facilities or youth who are incarcerated on the roles and responsibilities of your office. What kinds of advocacy programs do you have to serve the youth who are incarcerated in regard to rules and legislation? How do you provide support to them? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Yes, we do visit those facilities. For instance, the young offenders' facility here in Iqaluit, we certainly visit there and share information with individuals who are in that facility. They are offered the exact type of advocacy service that any child or youth would be provided from our office. Our office does not have legal authority, however, to provide any type of legal services to children and youth who are incarcerated. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Mr. Mikkungwak.

Mr. Mikkungwak (interpretation): Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson. In order for Nunavummiut to get a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of your office, do you have any strategy or plan? If I heard correctly, there are two positions. The staff need vacation. Do you have vacations alternating between your staff?

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Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mikkungwak. Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Yes, vacation scheduling is something that is well thought out and discussed in advance. There's always adequate coverage at our office for children and youth at all times throughout the year. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. (interpretation) Are you done? Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I would like to get back to some questions that were posed to get clarification. We spoke about positions that are required to be filled by bilingual people because a majority of the population in Nunavut are Inuktitut-speaking people and a majority of the youth and children that you represent are Inuit.

With that, there are also French services. What if there was a request to provide advocacy services in French? Do you have a plan and strategy in place or do you already have a program where you can provide services in French? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Enook. Ms. Mulak.

**Ms.** McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Yes, our office is able to provide services in French. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Mr. Enook.

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**Lºፚ՟-Jc•** (ጋጎዶበJና): ˤd⊁°a广ʰ, Δዮፖ《ÞĊጐ. Å, ʿPÞn, Ϥጐጋʻbʻcርጐጋና CLŀdd ΔፖL՝\¬ጐፖÞዖበՐናበՎʻbʻናርጐርዎና ▷ʻbÞር▷ʻbʻናርጐጋበ՟ጔ ፖዎኁጐሀሀና. CΔL°ጐሀ፫ ፫ጐ ዮህ՞ልጐበርጎbናበՎʻbʻናርጐጋጐ CΔL°ጐሀ ʻPbn, ፈጐጋጐጋጐዕናጐሀ. ʿd⊁°a广ʰ, Δዮፖ《ÞĊጐ.

**Δ<sup>6</sup>/<β>(**Ͻ<sup>ί</sup>λληυ<sup>c</sup>): <sup>6</sup>d۶<sup>6</sup>α Γ<sup>6</sup>, Γ<sup>7</sup> Γ<sup>6</sup>σ<sup>c</sup>-JC<sup>6</sup>. Γ<sup>7</sup>C ΔΔ<sup>6</sup>.

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**Δυ/«▷ርና»**: <sup>ና</sup>d৮°αΓ˙°, ΓʹC ΔΔ°. Γ΄ L°σ˙°-JϹ°.

**Lºፚʹ-Jᡄº** (ጋጎትበJና): ʿdታ°屯广ʰ, Δዮፖペ▷Ċጐ. ᠘, በበናኄልዎና ▷Δልበጋና ለትናበናን°ሲጭጋጐ Cናርኈጋበጋና. ʿdታ°屯广ʰ, Δዮፖペ▷Ċጐ.

**Δ৬/«▷ር·**ʹၑ (Ͻʹ៶ϟ∩ህ<sup>ϲ</sup>)։ 「dϧ··α广<sup>ι</sup>, Γ΄ Lισ΄-Ϳϲ<sup>ι</sup>. ΓʹC Δ.Δι. Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you. The description for the receptionist says that it is required to be bilingual. Can you consider that these advocacy representatives for youth and children, either all or some of them, are required to be bilingual or to be able to speak Inuktitut? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Enook. Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for that comment. I would have to explore that with the Department of Finance and get some expert advice from Human Resources on that. I know there are some Inuit beneficiaries who don't speak Inuktitut, so I don't know how applying that across the board to multiple positions in a small office would impact recruitment efforts, but it's certainly something that I take note of and I can certainly explore and ask the question. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Through you as the Chairperson, perhaps I could urge the representative. We have been saying from this morning on that you have to include Inuit societal values. If that's the belief of your office, then you automatically think that there has to be some Inuktitut language being used in the office. Madam Chairperson, I would like to make sure that this is considered by your office.

Ms. Mulak, you indicated in one of your responses that you are looking at the Department of Family Services and their

ΔΦ<sup>6</sup>: 'dϧ·αϳ·, Δʹϒ<βρϲʹͱ, ϹΔ·αͺϳ·ͱ ΡΡΑΓϧϒ Δ·ͼνοαΔϳϧϧσ Πης·ͼνΤκσͼ Ρ·ϧ·ͼνΤκονδοσροα ͼͼ, Δ΄ Εὐδα Ριμονομητιαρισορκο Δοιρος Γρορος Ετισος Δενροσος ΑωραΔερης Πηςιοργισος Δοιρορος Ανγορος ΔΙΔς υκτορος (15 σκο Δ΄) Ανγορος (15

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**L'b-'-Jc-** (ϽʹϧΛηJ): 'dϧ°αΓ', ΔυΥΘΡΟ΄ 

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ΔΦ\*: 'dy°ai'\*, Δ'γ
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easy way of apprehending children. I'm sure that it best applies in certain cases, but one thing I noticed was that when a child is apprehended and you also indicated that you wanted to see the children go back to their family. We have talked about this issue in the House and it seems like it's very easy to apprehend the children, but it seems almost impossible to bring them back to their family.

This is just for clarity. You noticed that it was easy to apprehend a child. It's very hard to get them back to their family. You indicated that you noticed that and you see a need so that there would be proper services provided to their children. I know that's a little bit out of your responsibilities, but you said that you did notice it, so I'm asking the question. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Enook. Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. First of all, I think maybe some of it might be getting lost in translation, but I want to clarify that the apprehension of a child is never an easy decision that social workers have to make. There are absolutely times where that is required for the safety and well-being of a child.

What we have noticed from our cases to date is that oftentimes, with respect to child protection services, there is a lack of family support services in place to help support the reunification of those families that can and should be reunified. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Mr. Enook.

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**L\*σ--1c\*** (ϽϞληυς): 'dϧ°αϳ<sup>\*</sup>, Δ°ν<βρό<sup>\*</sup>.

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Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you. You said that there seems to be no services so that the child can reunite with their family. As the children and youth representative, could you make recommendations or make a directive to make it easier for the children to reunite with their parents? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Enook. Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you. One of the representative's roles is to make recommendations. This type of recommendation is really touching on what we would consider a systemic issue. It's an issue that we already have noted in our database, which is that services and supports to families in Nunavut are inadequate. There is absolutely that potential.

I do want to caution though that, like I said, there are many issues on our table for consideration. I hear this issue today as being resurfacing and so we take that back with us. When we consider that issue and we apply that tool, we take this source of information that is provided to us today into our consideration. It certainly is a systemic issue. It's certainly an issue that has already been flagged and noted by our office. I hear the importance that it signifies to this Committee and our deliberations today.

As an organization just getting into that area of our work, we need to apply a good tool to help us select what we're going to focus on. We haven't done that just yet. Is there potential for this systemic issue and other systemic issues for us to make very strong recommendations to government and public recommendations to

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government on certain key issues that are really impacting the lives of children and youth? Yes, that's a big part of our job and what we do. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I believe you said that there are three child and youth advocacy specialists in your office. I now realize that you're just in the beginning of your planning process so that you have a properly functioning office. Looking at the work plan of the three advocacy specialists, have you already done that type of work before? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Enook. Ms. Mulak.

**Ms.** McNeil-Mulak: Thank you. I'm going to request a little bit of clarification on the question, please.

**Chairperson**: Mr. Enook, can you clarify your question, please.

**Mr. Enook**: But it's already clear.

(interpretation) You stated that there are three advocacy specialists working in your office. I believe that's what you stated. I know that to date, you are in the planning stages so that you have a properly functioning office. Your office has been open for a little over a year, but regarding these specialists and following their job descriptions, have they already done that type of work? Have they already provided those types of services to the children and youth? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Enook. Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you. Thank you for the clarification; I appreciate it. There is a representative, which is me, and then three advocacy specialists. They are very different roles. The advocacy specialists in our office have a diversity of background and skills that they bring. They have experience working in different fields related to children and youth, such as social work, education, and public health.

From day one, when we opened close to a year ago, because we focused on the advocacy specialists first and their positions on the individual advocacy program, they took on case files from day No. 1, which is when the first people contacted our office. They were well equipped to do so, given their qualifications for the positions and their past experiences in different sectors working with children and youth.

We also recognized that for the entire team, there was some training that needed to take place given we're talking about a new subject matter. It's a new office. In conjunction with the skills and qualifications that they brought to the table when they arrived, we supplemented that with a pretty intensive staff training schedule. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. If you can allow me, Madam Chairperson, we have the Representative for Children and Youth here and I would like to ask her what **Δ<sup>6</sup>/<Β/>/** (Ͻ<sup>ί</sup>\2∩J<sup>c</sup>): <sup>6</sup>dአ<sup>6</sup>α Γ<sup>6</sup>, Γ<sup>6</sup>C Δ.Δ<sup>6</sup>. Γ<sup>6</sup> J.Δ.<sup>6</sup>.

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types of cases she has taken on. I know that your office is new and you just started, but that's my question to the Representative for Children and Youth. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Mr. Enook. Ms. Christa Kunuk.

Ms. Kunuk: As a specialist, I can say that before being a specialist.... I would like to focus on the word "advocate" rather than "specialist." I know that it's frilly. Before I was a specialist, I feel like I need to speak and let you know that for many years, I was a school community counsellor at Nakasuk Elementary School. I have done my education in mental health and also under George Brown's assaulted women's advocacy program. I am not a specialist. I am learning, just like our office has stated.

Presently, we are up to, I would say, 74 cases and those are various cases. We have ones that go from the basic "Who do I call to get a referral?" We work with them to get that information. Then we can go to the next step where "I'm not getting my hearing aids in and I have been waiting for over a year." We look at that as to why there is a wait and how we can get those services to the child quicker. We will work with the Department of Health, the family, and the child. Then it can get broader where we will have a child who is under, let's say, the care of the director but also has mental health and justice, having to work with those three departments, bringing those three departments together along with the child or youth and talking about what some of the issues are, what the youth needs, and what that youth wants.

I don't go forward with any case saying,

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"This is what you're going to do." For me, I listen. Sometimes I'll have to say to the youth or child, "I understand what you're saying, but that's maybe not in your best interest. Let's work together to find a better outcome for you." Sometimes youth want one thing and it's not always in their best interest. Working with them, keeping them at the table with, let's say for example, Justice, Mental Health, and Family Services, working with them so that at the end of the day, that youth goes away feeling like "Okay, I have been heard. The things that I wanted, I may not have gotten all of it, but at least I have been heard and people are starting to work with me."

A lot of my cases are not just quick and done with. There will be months of work, follow-up, ensuring that as the child or youth is growing, their services are being met and their families are satisfied and they're satisfied. Yes, there's a variety. We have pretty much a case within every department in terms of when people come to our door. It depends. We have children who want, like I said, help either with their hearing or with a referral to get an assessment.

We have situations where we will have a youth who requested more time with their family if they're under the care of the director or if they want to go home because sometimes, like one of the Members stated, out of territory or within territory in a group home, they want the option to go home to see their family and not understanding why or what's the hold-up.

With Justice, working with a young offender who sometimes can just kind of flip through the gaps and then just be put into BCC, working with them and

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working with the people that are surrounding them, that's the core group, working with them to get the services that they deserve and need. Education, having an assessment to find out what sort of delays or sort of what's going on with the child's life or what's lacking.

There's a variety and challenging, but it's rewarding work. We've had some very good, positive outcomes and we will continue to work for children and youth.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Christa Kunuk. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I also thank you for allowing her to respond. Thank you for clarifying that. There are three advocacy specialists. I think Ms. Mulak mentioned that they have different responsibilities and they have different knowledge requirements. When you came up with the job descriptions for the three positions or when you advertise them, do they have the same job description even though they have different types of duties? I just want that clarified. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Enook. Ms. Mulak.

Ms. McNeil-Mulak: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Yes, the three child and youth advocacy specialists all have the same job description and they serve the same role, which is different than mine. All three of those individuals are focused specifically on the individual advocacy component of our office. Based on Christa's experience in the education system, Christa doesn't necessarily get all the education cases. We work that on a rotational basis because we want to

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**Δ<sup>6</sup>/<6>** (ጋጎ/ትበሀና): <sup>ና</sup>dታ<sup>6</sup> ሲቮ<sup>6</sup>, dሲ<sup>1</sup>ር dሷ<sup>6</sup>. Γ<sup>1</sup>ር Δ<sub>4</sub>

**Δ৬/<βCና** (Ͻʹλληυς): የσΥσιζό, Γίο ΔΔό. Γίο Δοί. Γίο

**Lºσ--Jc.** (ϽʹͱϒΛͿʹ): ʹϭͿϧ·αΓʹ, Δνγ≪ϷϹʹͽ. Δ΄, ϹʹϧϤϤ ΛʹϧͺͿϲ, ϲϧϲ, ΕϧϥϲϽϫ, Αϲϲϧͱͺϲ, ϤϧͰʹΓ-ϫ ΛϧϧͺʹϧͼϧϽͿϲ. ϤϧͰϻͼϧͺϹͼϧϲ. ϹʹϧϤϤϹ ϽʹϛϧͺͿ·ϲͺϲʹϲͼϧϽͼ ΛʹϧͺͿϲͼ, ϹϭͺͰͼ ϤϹϷϒͼͿͼ ΔϫϽϤͼͿͼ ΛϲϲͼϧϹͼϧϯͿͼ, ϹΔͰͼα Ϥϲϧϲ Δϲͼϭϥͼϧͼ ΛϲϲͼϧϲͼϧͰͿϲͼϧ ΛͼϧϲϲϧͺϲϽͿϥͼ ϷϒϤϭͼ αϲϤͼϫͼ ϽϭϧϷϧϧϲϲϲϲͺ ϥϧϧϳͼͼϧϲͻϫͼ, ͼϥϧͼϧͼ, ΔϧϒϘϷϹʹͼ, increase the skill set and knowledge base of our entire team. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you, Ms. Mulak. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for that clarification. Madam Chairperson, I just want to mention to Ms. Mulak and her staff that as MLAs, we wanted to see this and it had to be established because the children and youth, who are most vulnerable, had no place to go and they can't really take care of themselves. In that case. I would like to repeat what Mr. Joanasie said. I would like to be here and support you and please keep that in mind. I would like to be involved with anything that will improve your services when you're advocating for children and youth. I probably will not always approve, but I would like to give you my support in identifying them. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Enook. (interpretation ends) I think that what you said, all of us would feel the same way, where we would want to support the initiatives of your office. I am very pleased that you're here today especially to talk about some of the work that you have already done in such a short time period.

I don't have anybody else on my list, unless somebody decides that they want to have a go at some questioning. No? Okay, with that in mind, I would ask you to do your closing comments, Ms. Mulak.

**Ms. McNeil-Mulak**: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I would like to thank everyone here for their time today and

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**Lºở--Jcº** (ጋጎትበሀና): 'dታ<sub>°</sub>وቮ<sub>°</sub>, Δረ<mark>የ</mark>ዾ፫<sup>°</sup>. 'dታ<sub>°</sub>وቮንLታΔ<sub>°</sub>ور-'<sub>2</sub> C°«ở-'ጋ<sub>°</sub>وናነረ ኦ-<sub>2</sub>୮ spending the full day with us. I certainly appreciate your questions. I appreciate your feedback. We have made some good notes of some very good points raised here today and we carry that back with our team.

It's clear that we share an interest in supporting Nunavut's children and youth, and my staff and I value the role that you play in connecting your constituents to our office. We encourage all of you to continue to share information about our office. Our door is always open to pay us a visit. We thank you for your time today. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

**Chairperson**: Thank you very much to you, Ms. Mulak, and your staff. Thanks for being here. With that, this meeting is adjourned.

>>Committee adjourned at 16:01

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