



**The Honourable Edna Ekhivalak Elias
Commissioner of Nunavut**

Commissioner's Opening Address

3rd Nunavut Youth Parliament

Legislative Assembly

November 25, 2010

Good afternoon and welcome to you all.

I am very pleased to be with you today to deliver the Commissioner's Opening Address for the 2010 Nunavut Youth Parliament.

This is the third youth parliament that has been held since the creation of Nunavut in 1999. The Legislative Assembly is proud to be able to again host this event and I would like to congratulate all of you on your efforts this week. Your families, schools and communities should be very proud of you.

As Members of the Youth Legislative Assembly, you represent Nunavut's nineteen constituencies. As MLAs, you will do your best to effectively express the needs of all of our communities, large and small. You will raise the concerns of your constituents, both young and old. During the proceedings today, you will have the opportunity to make statements, move motions, announce new government initiatives and ask questions of the Premier and Ministers. You will also be asked to consider an important piece of proposed legislation.

It is often said that the youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow. For that to become a reality you will have a number of challenges to face and responsibilities to meet.

I encourage all of you to dedicate yourselves to your studies, and to look ahead to the choices that you will make after you graduate from high school. Higher education and life-long learning are the keys to a bright future.

There are tremendous opportunities available to Nunavummiut who wish to pursue their education. Your future career opportunities are limited only by your imagination and determination. Nunavut Arctic College offers a number of

programs that can lead to fulfilling careers. Health, teaching, and business management programs are just a few of the options available to you there.

Trades training such as carpentry, mechanics, and equipment operation are also exciting options, as are careers in the RCMP or armed forces. As you may know, the government recently opened Nunavut's new Trades Training Centre. The Nunavut Sivuniksavut training program offers a unique opportunity to undertake post-secondary studies in southern Canada and to develop your skills and knowledge in that environment. A number of programs are in place to help support you financially while you pursue further education, including college and university studies.

It is important to remember that you are mentors for your peers and those who are younger than you. You are already leading by example. You are never too young or too old to make your communities a better place. Your hard work and dedication to your studies is important. You can also invest your time and energy into volunteering and community work. Your future is what you make of it.

As today's proceedings get underway, I expect that many of you are nervous. Don't be! Regular, newly elected MLAs feel this way too on day one!

It is important to remember that Nunavut's consensus style of government relies on respectful debate and discussion and I encourage you to participate in today's proceedings with the confidence that you have a voice and what you say can make a difference. I look forward to a productive sitting today and wish all of you the best.

Thank you.