



Commissioner's Opening Address

6th Nunavut Youth Parliament

The Honourable Nellie Kusugak, O.Nu.
November 24, 2016

Good afternoon and welcome to you all.

I am delighted to be with you today to deliver the Opening Address for the 2016 Nunavut Youth Parliament.

I would like to congratulate each and every one of you on your hard work this week.

You have demonstrated your commitment to improving the well-being of your territory and I am certain that your communities, families and friends are very proud of your accomplishments.

As Members of the 6th Nunavut Youth Parliament, you will have the opportunity to express the needs of your communities and to highlight the successes of your constituents.

Everyone who is in attendance today and everyone who is watching your proceedings on TV will have the opportunity to see your hard work in action.

During today's proceedings, you will have the opportunity to make statements, announce new government initiatives, and ask questions of the Premier and Ministers.

Nunavut's Representative for Children and Youth will also appear before you, the Members of the Youth Parliament, to discuss her office's roles and responsibilities.

Today, you will have the unique opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns directly with the office, whose mandate is to ensure that the rights and interests of children and youth are protected and advanced.

Each of you are an expert on the needs of Nunavut youth. With your expertise, you will provide an invaluable perspective on matters affecting Nunavut youth to those offices whose responsibilities are to serve **you.**

I encourage you to speak with confidence during today's proceedings. I assure you that the Members whose seats you are filling were as nervous on their first day as you may feel right now.

As representatives of your constituencies, you will demonstrate your ability to effectively express the needs of your communities, which is not an easy task.

Know that being a leader is not easy.

Leaders contribute their time and effort to improve the lives of others. Through their work, all leaders inevitably face and overcome a number of challenges.

Some of you have wrote on what you envision Nunavut to look like in 10 years. Remember that it is your responsibility to bring these visions into reality.

Empower yourselves and your communities through lifelong learning and higher education.

Fuel your visions for a brighter territory by setting your own goals for its future, and **never** stop working to achieve these goals.

Your future opportunities are limited only by your imagination, determination and commitment.

There are numerous opportunities available to Nunavummiut who wish to pursue further education and new careers.

Nunavut Arctic College offers a variety of programs for Nunavummiut who wish to pursue careers in health care, education, environmental science, language services and business.

The Nunavut Trades Training Centre offers programs for Nunavummiut who wish to pursue careers in skilled trades.

Today, you all take a step in fulfilling your responsibilities as citizens by committing time and effort to improve your communities, territory and nation.

There are options that allow you build a career around this civic duty, either in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canadian Armed Forces, or the public service.

Many of you have travelled from your home communities to participate in today's event. In doing so, you have demonstrated courage and commitment to your goals.

There can be as much to learn at home as there is abroad, so I encourage you to explore the variety of programs available to each of you, whether here in Nunavut or abroad.

If you seek a thrilling tour over the Arctic waters, you may be interested in the Students on Ice expeditions.

If you would like to develop work and volunteer experience, you may wish to spend a summer in the south with Northern Youth Abroad, and consider taking part in this organisation's trades or international programs.

Those of you who will be graduating soon may wish to challenge yourself and enroll in the Nunavut Sivuniksavut college, which prepares Inuit youth for education, training and career opportunities in Nunavut.

Take advantage of the support provided by your family, teachers and even the friends you have made this past week.

If you choose to pursue any of these programs, or other college or university studies, there are also a number of programs accessible to you to help support you financially.

Remember that your generation has grown with the world's technological advances. You have the opportunity to use your skills with technology to your advantage, in your pursuit of higher education, your future careers and in your communities.

Remember that you are mentors to your peers and ambassadors for your community.

It is important to remain focused on your studies and invest time and energy into volunteering and community work.

Consider spending an hour a week helping out at an Elder's facility, participating in a Youth Council, or tutoring students in younger grades. Enroll in recreational activities, including Junior Rangers, cadets, sports competitions or community events.

I encourage each and every one of you to take advantage of the opportunities that you have before you, and help to create stronger communities and a stronger Nunavut.

Today, you are all leading your peers by example. In the future, you will lead your territory by your achievements.

After this week's experience, some of you may even end up here in the future, as elected MLAs.

It is important to remember that Nunavut's non-partisan, consensus style of government relies on respectful deliberation, 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 very much.