



## **Speaking Points**

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**Western Economic Diversification Canada**

**CANDO Conference**

**Day 2**

**Opening Remarks**

**Saskatoon, SK**

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## **Individuals to be recognised:**

Good morning,

- Thank you, Shaun [Soonias, MC] for that kind introduction. Good morning everyone, and thank you for having me here today.
- I would like to thank the counsellor for his blessings, as well as the drumming by the Eyabay Singers and our dancers, TJ Warren and Lacey Albert.
- I would also like to acknowledge that we are meeting here today Treaty 6 lands and the homeland of the Métis.
- Finally, a big thank you and congratulations to the Conference organizers who have worked hard to make this such a great gathering.

## **Remarks:**

- It is great to see so many organizations that are partnered with Western Economic Diversification

Canada represented on the conference agenda. It is even better to see so many representatives from those organizations here in the room.

- Building an inclusive economy, including creating opportunities for Indigenous people and Indigenous business, is a top priority of the Government of Canada – and it is one of the two strategic priorities of WD Canada.
- Over the last four years, WD has invested over \$40 million in Indigenous Economic Growth projects through our Western Diversification Program, or WDP.
- This includes almost \$28 million in 45 projects that were announced this past March by the Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and minister responsible for WD.

- Of those 45 projects, 13 were from Saskatchewan with a total funding of over \$7.5 million.
- What I found most exciting about these projects was the breadth of ideas they represented. They included projects in sectors ranging from clean technology to tourism, from energy services to education and training.

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- In addition to the Western Diversification Program, WD Canada supports Indigenous Economic Development through Indigenous Business Development Services and the Community Futures network.

- Indigenous Business Development Services is part of the Canada Business Network, and offers business advisory and training assistance to new and established Indigenous entrepreneurs.
- The Sagehills Community Futures office in Bruno coordinates IBDS delivery in Saskatchewan.
- Sagehills Community Futures is also one of 12 Community Futures offices in Saskatchewan that are supported by WD. Community Futures organizations provide support to start-ups and small businesses as well as community economic development support.
- If you want to hear more about WD programs and other opportunities from the Government of Canada, I encourage you to attend the presentation by my WD

colleague Deanne Belisle, along with Indigenous Services Canada and INAC this afternoon at 2:20 p.m.

## **Western Canada Growth Strategy**

- While the programs delivered by WD and our colleagues in other federal departments are, and will continue to be, important tools to support inclusive economic growth and development in the West, the Government of Canada recognizes that more needs to be done to build a competitive, diverse and inclusive economy in western Canada.

- That is why the Government is developing a Western Canada Growth Strategy. At its core, this whole of government strategy is aimed at growing the economy in western Canada in a way that is inclusive and creates opportunity and middle-class jobs for all Canadians, including First Nations, Métis and Indigenous people.
- On September 11<sup>th</sup>, Minister Bains announced the launch of an engagement period to seek the input of businesses, Indigenous Peoples, different levels of government, academia and the broader community on:
  - Identifying shared priorities to grow the economy;
  - Increasing collaboration; and
  - Engaging western Canadians to drive opportunities for economic growth.

- WD is coordinating this conversation with western Canadians, seeking answers to five key questions:
  - What does a stronger western Canadian economy look like 10 years from now?
  - What are the best ways to spur new growth in western Canada?
  - What will help the Indigenous economy continue to grow?
  - Our economy cannot thrive if it's not firing on all cylinders - How can we improve economic participation in the west of underrepresented groups, including women, youth and new immigrants?; and lastly
  - How can governments, industry and western Canadians work together to grow the regional economy?



- The engagement period is open until November 16, 2018. I invite and encourage everyone here to share your answers to these questions – through our online discussion forum, email, social media, postal mail, or by organizing your own group discussions.
- Access to the online forum and resources are available on WD Canada's website.

## **Conclusion**

- In closing, I would like to thank you once again for inviting me to join you today. I hope you take away some great ideas and information from the conference. I wish you all the best with your future work.
- Thank you