

**STATEMENT  
OF  
SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE  
CHAIRMAN  
COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS  
BEFORE THE  
MARCH 7, 2002  
OVERSIGHT HEARING  
ON THE  
PRESIDENT'S BUDGET REQUEST  
FOR  
INDIAN PROGRAMS  
FOR  
FISCAL YEAR 2003**

the Committee meets today to receive testimony on the President's budget request for fiscal year 2003 for Indian programs administered by the Indian Health Service, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs reports that as of 1999, forty-three percent of all adults living on or near Indian reservations were unemployed, and thirty-three percent of those who are employed were still living in poverty.

The Indian Health Service data indicates that compared to the general U.S. population, American Indians and Alaska Natives have a

mortality rate that is six times higher for alcoholism, four times higher for tuberculosis, three times higher for diabetes, and twice as high for unintentional injuries.

Most Indian Health Service hospitals are more than thirty-two years old.

In the area of housing, recent studies indicate that the highest rate of overcrowding and inadequate housing in the United States can be found in Indian country.

These are just some of the statistics that we must keep in mind as we examine the President's budget request for Indian programs, and as we call upon the federal agencies to help us understand whether we will be able to adequately address the overwhelming needs in Indian country with the funding that is proposed for fiscal year 2003.

In exchange for the cession of more than 500 million acres of lands by the Indian Nations, the United States has assumed a trust responsibility for Indian lands and resources, and the provision of health care, education and housing.

These legal responsibilities have their origins in treaties and the

United States' course of dealings with Tribal governments and their citizens.

And so we must examine the initiatives outlined in the President's budget with these legal responsibilities in mind.

Today, we will ask the agencies to advise us whether we are falling farther behind in carrying out our responsibilities, and inquire what resources are needed to fulfill our commitments, as a nation, to the sovereign governments of Indian country and the people they serve.