

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

June 12, 2020



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The Honourable Carolyn Bennett
Minister of Crown-Indigenous
Relations
10 Wellington St, 21st floor
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0H4
Mail Stop 2100-BH
Via email:
carolyn.bennett@canada.ca

Deputy Minister Daniel Watson
Crown-Indigenous Relations
10 Wellington St, 21st floor
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0H4
Mail Stop 2101-BH
Via email:
daniel.watson@canada.ca

RE: Urgent need to advance a National Action Plan on MMIWG2S

Minister Bennett and Deputy Minister Watson,

The BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, working collaboratively as the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), were extremely disappointed and angered to hear that the release of an evergreen National Action Plan to address missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit individuals (MMIWG2S) in follow up to the National Inquiry was delayed without a timeline on the horizon. The truths bravely and painfully shared with the National Inquiry demand timely and committed action. The Calls for Justice are legal imperatives that must be enacted to secure the human rights of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals.

On June 1, 2020, the FNLC met with Senior Director Bruno Steinke to receive an update on the development of a National Action Plan. We were offered assurance that Canada is committed to this work, and understands it must be built from the ground up. We heard that coordination is ongoing between CIRNAC, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Women and Gender Equality, and the provinces and territories. We also understand that national organizations have been provided funding to engage on the development of the National Action Plan. Despite these assurances, we have ongoing and serious concerns regarding Canada's delayed approach to developing the National Action Plan.

We call on Canada to release a public pathways document outlining steps that will be taken to arrive at the National Action Plan, as well as a timeline for its launch.

It is critical that methods of engaging in the National Action Plan must be transparent, timely, and accessible. Development must build upon the work already done, as substantial engagement has already been done throughout the National Inquiry. The Calls for Justice provide a pathway to action. This work must also be Indigenous women-led.

Tragically, many survivors, families, and individuals and organizations who participated in the National Inquiry have been left in the dark over the past year because of Canada's silence around the development. Resources must be available for communities and organizations who would like to facilitate or participate in this work. Survivors, families, front line and women-led

organizations must also have direct access to the development of the plan in a trauma-informed way. Resources must also be made available for communities to develop their own community-based action plans.

A BC-specific regional approach that takes into account the unique contexts of rural and remote, and urban communities is needed, and will also require partnership with First Nations leadership in BC. First Nations governing bodies must be involved in coordination amongst the federal and provincial government in accordance with the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Provinces must also take a proactive role to support this work.

Going forward, Canada must adopt actions that reflect true partnership, transparency, and accountability. We welcome further discussion and expect to see full engagement with First Nations community members, families, survivors, as well as with First Nations leadership in BC on a nation-to-nation basis.

Sincerely,

FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

On behalf of the FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT



Cheryl Casimer



Robert Phillips



Lydia Hwitsum

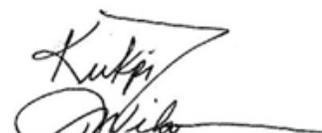
On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip



Chief Don Tom



Kukpi7 Judy Wilson

On behalf of the BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS



Regional Chief Terry Teegee

cc: Bruno Steinke, Senior Director, CIRNAC
Catherine Lappe, BC Regional Director General, ISC