



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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against Women**

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**Activities of the Committee under the Optional Protocol to
the Convention**

**Inquiry concerning Canada under article 8 of the Optional
Protocol to the Convention**

Follow-up report submitted by Canada*

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Response of Canada to the Chair of the Working Group on Inquiries of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Introduction

1. The Government of Canada welcomes the opportunity to submit a report on progress made to implement the recommendations of Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women's (CEDAW) 2015 inquiry report on the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada ([CEDAW/C/OP.8/CAN/1](#)).
2. In Canada's 2019 interim report to the CEDAW ([CEDAW/C/CAN/CO/8-9/Add.1](#)), Canada provided examples of federal, provincial and territorial measures undertaken to prevent and address violence against Indigenous women and girls that addressed issues raised in the CEDAW inquiry recommendations.
3. Canada's 10th report on the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* ([CEDAW/C/CAN/10](#)), submitted to the Committee on 30 June 2022, contains information on Canada's measures to implement the recommendations contained in the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) and Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex plus (2SLGBTQI+) people in Canada. This information also addresses issues raised in the CEDAW inquiry recommendations.
4. This document will address progress on the CEDAW inquiry's recommendations by referencing federal progress outlined in the Government of Canada's 2022 Federal Pathway Annual Progress Report.

Progress on CEDAW inquiry recommendations 217 a-y: Combating violence against Indigenous women

5. The Government of Canada acknowledges that substantial, immediate, and transformational change is required to end systemic racism and gender-based violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQI+ people.
6. The Government of Canada has implemented substantial investments in the areas of human safety and security. These investments have promoted the human safety and security of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people by recognizing the many facets that comprise human security and their interconnectedness; being people-centered and appropriate to local realities where communities and individuals have control over their well-being and livelihoods, and drive solutions; striving to proactively prevent human security violations; and, providing safe spaces and transitional housing for Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQI+ people experiencing and fleeing violence. Altogether, these actions support several key thematic objectives from the *Federal Pathway to Address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQI+ People* (Federal Pathway), including:
 - (a) Supporting safe and healthy communities;
 - (b) Addressing socio-economic barriers to education, training and employment;
 - (c) Supporting safe communities during resource extraction projects;
 - (d) Fostering a cultural shift and supporting allies;

- (e) Addressing human trafficking and exploitation; and,
- (f) Supporting inclusive governance.

7. Key actions that have been taken by the Government of Canada include:

(a) Work on 12 new cell towers along Highway 16, also known as the Highway of Tears. The project will provide an additional 252 km of cell coverage along this remote stretch of highway, which has been the site of many murders and disappearances over the last several decades;

(b) As part of the Rapid Housing Initiative Round 2, close to \$1.5 billion has been committed to support the creation of over 5,400 new affordable housing units to help address urgent housing needs of vulnerable Canadians, especially in the context of COVID-19. Of these units, over 2,400 are for Indigenous Peoples;

(c) Reaching Home provided \$92,098,509 in funding to 24 organizations to support community-based approaches to Urban, Rural, and Remote Indigenous homelessness under the Indigenous homelessness funding stream;

(d) As of December 31, 2021, the National Housing Strategy has committed an estimated \$7.1 billion towards meeting the housing needs of women and their children, which includes funding for the construction, repair and support of approximately 340,000 housing units;

(e) The federal department of Women and Gender Equality Canada was provided \$55 million over five years to bolster the capacity of Indigenous women's and 2SLGBTQI+ organizations to provide gender-based violence prevention programming;

(f) Through the Elementary and Secondary Education Program, funding is being provided in southern Canada to First Nations on reserve for the provision of menstrual products for students. In support of First Nations control of First Nations education, First Nations and First Nations-designated education organizations will make decisions on how to purchase and distribute menstrual products to their students;

(g) The Government of Canada is investing \$14.9 billion over the next eight years in reliable, fast, affordable, and clean public transit. This funding includes \$3 billion per year in permanent, predictable federal public transit funding which will be available to support transit solutions beginning in 2026-27. The Rural Transit Solutions Fund is the first federal fund to target the development of transit solutions in rural and remote communities. It is making \$250 million in federal funding available over five years, beginning in 2021, to support the development of locally-driven transit solutions that will help people living in rural communities get to work, school, appointments, and visit loved ones. The Rural Transit Solutions Fund also supports reconciliation by improving the safety of Indigenous women, girls and two-spirited individuals who live in rural and remote areas. A minimum of 10% of the total \$250 million funding envelope for Rural Transit Solutions Fund will be allocated to projects that benefit Indigenous populations and communities.

8. Personal and community safety are linked, and a number of investments related to improving the safety of the communities in which Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQI+ people live have been implemented. The Government of Canada supports Indigenous-led community safety and wellbeing approaches through the expansion of the Aboriginal Community Safety Planning Initiative (ACSPI) and its coordination with the Northern and Indigenous Crime Prevention Fund (NICPF). The ACSPI is a tailored and responsive program designed to address the safety concerns, priorities and unique circumstances of Indigenous communities through the

development of Community Safety Plans (CSPs) which identify community strengths, assets, and safety and wellness goals.

9. Support for Indigenous victims, survivors and families of MMIWG and 2SLGBTQI+ people is an essential part of this work and the Government of Canada is committing to moving forward. Throughout 2021-22, Canada's Federal Victims Strategy supported awareness raising, public legal education, knowledge sharing and training in support of Indigenous victims and survivors of crime, in addition to the design and delivery of specialized victim services and supports such as Family Information Liaison Units (FILUs). Established in 2016, FILUs teams across Canada continued to work together in 2021-22 to overcome the systemic and structural barriers that families of MMIWG and 2SLGBTQI+ people face in accessing up to date, accurate information about their loved one, as well as in accessing culturally grounded supports and services to assist them in their healing journey.

Progress on CEDAW inquiry recommendations 218 a-d: Improving the socioeconomic conditions of Indigenous women

10. The Federal Pathway outlined that federal efforts focus on increasing education, training and economic opportunities for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people. Through initiatives such as, Youth Employment and Skills Strategy, which includes the First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy, the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training program, the Women's Employment Readiness Pilot and the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy, the Government of Canada will enhance and expand support for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people. This will contribute to enhancing access to child care, information about career options, the opportunity to develop skills, participate in the economy and overcome the multiple barriers to employment.

11. The Federal Pathway acknowledged that it is integral to collect Indigenous data in all areas of socio-economic indicators, such as poverty, employment, education, criminal justice, social support networks, housing and homelessness, physical environments, and early child development.

12. The Government of Canada is developing the Canadian Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS). CCWIS will be a national public health information system based on case-level child welfare (child and family services) data, aiming to gather disaggregated, distinctions-based data about Inuit, First Nations and Métis children, and non-Indigenous children. Child welfare involvement is a key determinant of health and a missing data piece, essential to implementing evidence-based interventions to mitigate harm to children. Carefully built partnerships with data holders are necessary to the success of CCWIS. Data holders are provincial and territorial ministries of child and family services as well as Indigenous organizations.

Progress on CEDAW inquiry recommendations 219 a-f: Overcoming the legacy of the colonial period and eliminating discrimination against Indigenous women

13. The Government of Canada acknowledges that colonialism, racism, sexism and ableism have created systemic inequities for Indigenous Peoples, contributing to the loss and extinguishment of Indigenous languages, cultures and traditional practices, and have directly impacted the rightful power and place of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people.

14. In 2021-22, the Government of Canada made key investments to work toward supporting Indigenous cultures across Canada through the support of languages, cultural spaces, and Indigenous content production. Altogether, these actions supported the key thematic objectives from the Federal Pathway, including:

(a) Supporting the efforts of Indigenous Peoples in the retention, preservation, revitalization, maintenance and strengthening of Indigenous languages, cultures and cultural spaces;

(b) Strengthening opportunities for Indigenous cultural expression, participation, promotion, and representation in the arts, cultural industries and media; and,

(c) Addressing systemic racism experienced by Indigenous Peoples in the public and policy spheres.

15. Key action taken by the Government of Canada in 2021-22 include:

(a) The Indigenous Languages Component of the Indigenous Languages and Cultures Program supported more than 410 projects from First Nations, Inuit, Métis and organizations serving urban Indigenous populations;

(b) Canadian Heritage's new Indigenous Screen Office Program invested \$13 million in Indigenous creators and organizations;

(c) The first call for proposals under the Cultural Spaces in Indigenous Communities Program (CSICP) was launched in 2021-22. Over 340 applications were received amounting to close to \$1 billion in funding being sought. 14 projects were funded in 2021-22;

(d) Library and Archives' Listen, Hear Our Voices program distributed \$739,000 to support digitization of records in Indigenous organizations, and also digitized 568 recordings on behalf of several communities;

(e) The Centre on Diversity and Inclusion at Treasury Board Secretariat amended the Public Service Employment Act and made efforts to address systemic barriers for Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQI+ people, in addition to other equity-seeking groups, in public service staffing;

(f) Through its Indigenous Learning Series, the Canada School of Public Service has delivered training to more than 93,884 participants from the public service and 36,000 public servants took part in virtual events on topics related to Indigenous realities;

(g) Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) has trained approximately 5,000 public servants as part of their Circle of Nations training and learning program. Of note, the Circle of Nations invited Indigenous women to participate in two roundtable sessions on International Women's Day. During Mining Week, a female Indigenous author will be sharing her experiences in mining; and, during International Day for Women in Mining, NRCan has secured a panel of Indigenous women who have experience in the Mining sector in Canada and internationally.

Progress on CEDAW inquiry recommendations 220 a-c: National public inquiry and plan of action

16. On September 1, 2016, the National Inquiry into MMIWG (National Inquiry), was launched to investigate and report on the systemic causes behind the violence that Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQI+ people experience.

17. Between September 2016 and December 2018, the National Inquiry conducted an in-depth study and analysis on the issue of MMIWG. The Inquiry heard a total of 2,386 persons who participated in the Truth Gathering Process, held 15 community hearings and nine Knowledge Keeper, expert, and institutional hearings.

18. On June 3, 2019, the National Inquiry released its Final Report, “Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls”, with 231 Calls for Justice that are directed at federal, provincial, territorial, municipal and Indigenous governments, social service providers, industry, the media and all Canadians. The Calls for Justice are presented under four themes: Culture, Health and Wellness, Human Security, and Justice.

19. Call for Justice 1.1. specifically calls upon all governments to develop and implement a National Action Plan to address violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people. After receiving the Final Report, the Government of Canada committed to developing and implementing a National Action Plan in collaboration with Indigenous partners and provinces and territories.

20. An Indigenous-led structure comprised of over 100 Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQI+ partners was established to develop the National Action Plan. It included a Core Working Group, the National Family and Survivors Circle – a group of women who are family members and survivors of MMIWG - and eight sub-working groups: First Nations, Inuit, Métis, 2SLGBTQI+, urban, data, provincial/territorial, and federal.

21. On June 3, 2021 the 2021 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ People National Action Plan: Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ People and a series of Partner Chapters was released. The National Action Plan includes: the umbrella national plan that includes the overarching vision, guiding principles and goals, as well as common, short-term priorities; full chapters from contributing partners (National Family and Survivor Circle, First Nations, Inuit, Métis, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, 2SLGBTQI+, urban, data and federal) with recommendations and priorities; a joint statement from Provincial and Territorial Ministers responsible for responding to the National Inquiry into MMIWG, as well as individual provincial and territorial contributions; and a data strategy.

22. The federal government’s contributing chapter to the National Action Plan is the 2021 Federal Pathway to Address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ People (“Federal Pathway 2021”) and was also released on June 3 2021. The Federal Pathway was developed with over 23 federal departments and agencies. It outlines the federal commitments to addressing violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people going forward along the four themes identified in the National Inquiry Final Report: Culture, Health and Wellness, Safety and Security and Justice.

23. On June 3, 2022, Indigenous families, survivors, organizations and partners, the 13 provinces, territories and the Federal Government released the 2022 Progress Report on the National Action Plan, which included a progress report on the federal commitments. Over 25 federal departments and agencies are actively contributing to the Federal Government’s efforts.

24. The first Annual Progress Report on the Federal Pathway provides the overview of work completed by the Federal Government between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022 on the various initiatives linked to MMIWG 2SLGBTQI+ to support transparency, communication, and accountability. It features reporting on the principles for Implementation, key highlights and updates per initiative and per theme,

information on efforts to improve the quality of data, and a look ahead to 2022-23. This report also acknowledges places where the government must do more and work to accelerate these initiatives.

25. On January 10, 2023, The Government of Canada announced the appointment of a Ministerial Special Representative to provide advice and recommendations, through engagement with families, survivors, partners and organizations in support of the National Inquiry's Call for Justice 1.7 to create an Indigenous and Human Rights Ombudsperson.

26. The Government of Canada also announced that an external Indigenous company has been chosen to develop recommendations for an oversight mechanism to enhance accountability and progress in ending violence towards Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people. This represents a tangible step in responding to the calls from families and survivors for greater monitoring and accountability, the National Inquiry's Call for Justice 1.10 as well as one of the short-term priorities of the National Action Plan.

Conclusion

27. The Government of Canada is committed to addressing this national tragedy and will continue to do what is right and necessary to honour MMIWG and 2SLGBTQI+ people and to foster the healing of families, survivors, and Indigenous communities.

28. For more detailed information on work being done by the Government of Canada see the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQI+ People webpage. For more details on the themes and initiatives mentioned in this report see Federal Pathway Annual Progress Report.
