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Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Seventh periodic report submitted by Canada under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, due in 2021* ** ***

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- * The present document is being issued without formal editing.
 - ** The present document was submitted pursuant to the simplified reporting procedure. It contains the responses of the State party to the Committee's list of issues prior to reporting (E/C.12/CAN/QPR/7).
 - *** The annex to the present document may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



I. Introduction

1. Canada is pleased to submit to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights its Seventh Report on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). This report focuses on key measures adopted in Canada to enhance implementation of the ICESCR since Canada's last appearance before the Committee in February 2016 through to September 2021 and responds to a list of issues provided by the Committee.¹
2. The report addresses most of the Committee's questions while respecting the word limit and refers the Committee to additional information recently provided by Canada to this and other human rights treaty bodies as well as in Canada's Common Core Document.
3. This report is on implementation by all orders of government. Any reference to "the Government of Canada (GC)" is a reference to the Canadian federal government, while a reference to "Canada" is generally a reference to the federal, provincial, and territorial (FPT) governments. Any reference to a province or territory (PT), for example, Quebec or the Yukon, is a reference to its government.

II. Issues of particular relevance

Reply to paragraph 2 of the list of issues prior to reporting (E/C.12/CAN/QPR/7)

New legislative measures

4. At the federal level, new legislative measures within the reporting period that advance the implementation of the Covenant include the following:
 - Bill C-97, which received Royal Assent in June 2019, enacted the National Housing Strategy Act (NHTSA). Section 4 of the NHTSA sets out a declaration of housing policy in which the GC recognizes that the right to adequate housing is a fundamental human right affirmed in international law and commits to the progressive realization of the rights recognized in the Covenant. The NHTSA requires the GC to develop and maintain a national housing strategy to further its housing policy, considering key principles of a human rights-based approach to housing.
 - In June 2019, the GC adopted the Poverty Reduction Act (PRA) as part of its Poverty Reduction Strategy (2018). For the first time in Canada, the PRA established in law an official measure of poverty, the Official Poverty Line. The PRA also legislated poverty reduction targets, specifically a 20 percent reduction in poverty by 2020 (reached) and a 50 percent reduction in poverty by 2030 relative to 2015 levels.
 - The Pay Equity Act, introduced as part of Bill C-86 in 2018, entered into force in 2021. The Act and its supporting regulations establish a proactive pay equity regime to ensure that women and men in federally regulated workplaces receive equal pay for work of equal value. The Act seeks to close the gender wage gap that adversely affects women in federally regulated workplaces by addressing systemic gender-based discrimination in the compensation practices and systems of employers.

Training for judges

5. The National Judicial Institute is an independent, judge-led organization that provides educational programs and resources to Canada's judiciary. The Institute collaborates closely with the Canadian Judicial Council, which establishes the professional development requirements for superior court judges. The Council recognizes that effective judicial education calls for a three-dimensional approach encompassing substantive content, skills development and social context awareness, which includes an understanding of circumstances related to gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, children and family

¹ E/C.12/CAN/QPR/7 (dated April 7, 2020).

violence. GC lawyers with expertise in international human rights law provide training to other GC lawyers and officials on the Covenant specifically.

Review of litigation strategies

6. The Principles Guiding the Attorney General of Canada in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms Litigation (2018) guide counsels for the Attorney General in Charter cases. These Principles include constitutionalism and the rule of law, parliamentary democracy, adjudication, continuity, consistent application of the Charter, and access to justice. They ensure that the Attorney General, as guardian of the rule of law, upholds the public interest and ensures that the Crown transcends transitions between governments.

7. In January 2019, the Attorney General released the Directive on Civil Litigation Involving Indigenous Peoples to implement the Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples. The Directive represents the GC's guide on how our litigators will conduct civil litigation involving Indigenous and treaty rights, and Crown obligations towards Indigenous Peoples. It promotes an approach to conflict resolution that is consistent with the goal of achieving reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

Effective recourse

8. During the period under review, new institutional mechanisms have been established at the federal level that are intended to further the effective implementation of Canada's obligations under the Covenant and provide additional avenues of recourse for individuals who claim that their rights under the Covenant have been violated. For example:

- The federal Pay Equity Commissioner, whose mandate includes facilitating the resolution of disputes relating to pay equity, may be notified of matters in dispute and receive objections and complaints relating to pay equity plans. The Commissioner is empowered to investigate, and issue decisions and orders regarding matters in dispute, objections or complaints.
- The NHSA provides accountability mechanisms through the creation of a Federal Housing Advocate and a National Housing Council. The Advocate, whose mandate includes receiving submissions from the Canadian public on systemic housing issues, is authorized to conduct a review into submissions received and issue a report that may include recommendations on measures to be taken by the federal government. The Advocate may also request that the National Housing Council establish a Review Panel to hold a hearing into any systemic housing issue within federal jurisdiction that is raised in a submission received from the public. Under the NHSA, the designated Minister must respond to the Advocate's reports and review panel reports.

Reply to paragraph 3 of the list of issues

Participation of Indigenous Peoples in the decision-making process

9. All governments in Canada recognize the importance of Indigenous Peoples participating in decision-making in matters that affect their rights through their own representative institutions, and the need to consult and cooperate in good faith.

- In November 2019, British Columbia passed the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act recognizing in law the human rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Act establishes the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as the provincial framework for reconciliation. The government is currently working with Indigenous Peoples to implement the Act.
- In June 2021, the GC's United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act came into force. It includes requirements to develop an action plan to contribute to achieving the objectives of the UNDRIP, and to take steps to ensure consistency between federal laws and UNDRIP, including articles related to free, prior and informed consent, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples.

10. A number of laws or policies have been enacted or amended to provide further opportunities for the meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples in decision-making processes in relation to development projects that have an impact on their lands and territories:

- The GC's Framework Agreement on First Nation Land Management was amended in 2018 to reflect UNDRIP;
- The GC's Canadian Energy Regulator Act was passed in 2019 to ensure Indigenous participation through recognition of the GC's duty to consult;
- The GC's Bill C-68 amended the Fisheries Act in 2019 to be consistent with UNDRIP;
- The GC's Bill C-69 amended the Impact Assessment Act in 2019 to expand the scope of assessment for designated projects;
- Alberta's Policy on Consultation with Metis Settlements on Land and Natural Resource Management was amended in 2020, to help ensure that Metis Settlements have the chance to benefit from economic development opportunities and to enjoy Alberta's prosperity.

Site C dam

11. British Columbia mandated BC Hydro in 2017 to support reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples by incorporating UNDRIP principles into BC Hydro's business, including the ongoing construction of the Site C dam. Consultations with Indigenous Peoples by British Columbia, by the GC, and by BC Hydro have satisfied all legal and regulatory requirements for the project to proceed, as confirmed by Canadian courts. BC Hydro continues to advance reconciliation by upholding the principles of UNDRIP through ongoing engagement and dialogue, cultural recognition, and project opportunities.

Coastal Gas Link pipeline (CGL)

12. British Columbia, the BC Oil and Gas Commission, and the Environmental Assessment Office have statutory responsibility to ensure the CGL is compliant with all legislation and requirements. British Columbia has negotiated pipeline benefit agreements with Wet'suwet'en bands that include payments during construction as well as ongoing payments for the life of the project.

13. In 2014, the CGL Project received an Environmental Assessment Certificate under the BC Environmental Assessment Act (2002) in 2014. The certificate includes 32 conditions required by British Columbia. The conditions were developed following consultation and input from government agencies, the public and Indigenous Peoples, including the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs and elected bands.

Reply to paragraph 4 of the list of issues

Workers in non-standard forms of employment

14. Since 2017, the GC has modernized federal labour standards under the Canada Labour Code, which apply to about 6% of all Canadian employees. Some of the legislative and regulatory changes are expected to improve protections for employees in non-standard forms of employment. These changes promote work-life balance, give employees the right to request flexible work arrangements, introduce new leave provisions such as personal leave and leave for victims of family violence and require employers to provide employees with information about labour standards requirements, conditions of employment and promotion opportunities.

15. Further, self-employed workers may now opt into the Employment Insurance (EI) program on a voluntary basis to pay EI premiums and obtain access to EI special benefits, including maternity, parental, sickness, compassionate care, and family caregiver benefits for adults and children. The benefits offered to self-employed persons mirror, to the extent possible, the special benefits available to insured persons under the EI program, with adaptations as required.

Youth employment

16. FPT governments have measures in place to facilitate youth employment, particularly for those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET):

- The GC’s Youth Employment and Skills Strategy prioritizes helping youth who face barriers to employment, including NEET youth. The Strategy provides enhanced supports for skill development and work experience needed to successfully enter and remain in the labour market. Funding is provided to organizations for this purpose.
- Ontario’s Youth Job Connection program serves persons aged 15 to 29 who experience multiple and/or complex barriers to employment by providing more intensive supports beyond traditional job search and placement opportunities. Between October 2015 to March 2020, over 28,000 participants were employed upon exiting the program and over 7,500 participants have continued with more education and training.

Access to the labour market by equity-seeking groups

17. FPT governments have taken measures to address barriers in access to the labour market for Indigenous Peoples, racialized people, and immigrants:

- In 2021, the GC established a taskforce to conduct a review of the Employment Equity Act which aims to remove systemic barriers for Indigenous Peoples, racialized people, including people of African descent, women and persons with disabilities.
- In 2021, the New Brunswick government appointed an independent commissioner on systemic racism to consult and study the nature and impact of systemic racism in the province.
- In 2021, Newfoundland and Labrador established a Ministerial Committee on Anti-Racism to develop the necessary tools to stop racism in the province.
- Following the tabling of the report “Racism in Quebec: Zero Tolerance” in December 2020, Quebec made a commitment to implement the 25 actions recommended in this report, some of which relate to employment. In fact, the Groupe d’action contre le racismisme (Action Group Against Racism) has proposed actions in three areas to put an end to racism in access to employment: making jobs in the construction sector more accessible; better recognizing foreign experience and diplomas; and ensuring that the State plays an exemplary role in jobs or responsibilities under its direct authority.

Reply to paragraph 5 of the list of issues

Affordable rental housing

18. Several initiatives under the federal National Housing Strategy (NHS) increase the availability of affordable rental housing. As of June 2021, the NHS has supported the creation of 80,300 new housing units and the repair of over 205,300 units and has provided affordability for over 227,200 households.

19. All PTs have residential tenancies acts that outline the legal protections offered to tenants and detail how often the property owner can increase rent, and how much notice they must provide tenants. Any rent increase that does not comply with the requirements is considered void and tenants have the right to recover any excessive rent they have paid. Over the reporting period, PTs have implemented changes to improve access to affordable housing:

- Quebec has allocated new resources to accelerate the delivery of 15,500 new dwellings under the AccèsLogis (access housing) program. The Canada–Quebec Housing Agreement has provided funding for the increase of affordable housing units since October 2020.
- Saskatchewan sets social housing program rents according to household income, using 30% of the gross household income, up to an established maximum rent for the unit type and community.

Renovictions or demovictions

20. Actions taken by PTs to curb renovictions or demovictions include:
- In 2021, British Columbia amended Residential Tenancy Act to require landlords to apply to the Residential Tenancy Branch for permission to end a tenancy for renovations of repairs.
 - In 2020, Ontario passed the Protecting Tenants and Strengthening Community Housing Act to make the rental housing system fairer for tenants and property owners by enabling balanced and accessible adjudication of disputes. The act also enhanced several tenant protections against bad faith evictions.
 - In 2016, Quebec has restricted renovictions in cases where tenants are over 70 years of age, have a low-income, and have occupied the unit for at least ten years.

Homelessness

21. FPT governments recognize the importance of reducing homelessness and have taken steps to improve services for people experiencing homelessness:
- In April 2019, the GC launched Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy, which provides funding to urban, Indigenous, and rural and remote communities to address local homelessness needs, with the goal to reduce chronic homelessness by 50% by 2027-2028. Between April 2019 and June 2021, Reaching Home has invested in 4,213 projects.
 - Nova Scotia's homelessness plan provides funding to service providers who support families with children experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, including an emergency eviction prevention support to provide one-time interventions administered by community agencies.
 - In May 2021, Prince Edward Island passed the Poverty Elimination Strategy Act, establishing homelessness reduction and elimination targets.

III. Ongoing implementation of the Covenant**Reply to paragraph 6 of the list of issues****Coordination of efforts in the delivery of services**

22. The GC maintains bilateral relationships with PTs and participates in FPT forums, such as:
- The Housing Forum and the Open Forum on Homelessness where FPT governments discuss opportunities for collaboration, gaps in programming, funding and initiatives to prevent and reduce homelessness within their respective jurisdictions.
 - The Forum of FPT Ministers Responsible for Social Services is a platform for collaboration and partnership to address social services issues to improve the quality of life for Canadians, and in particular, for the most vulnerable Canadians. This includes issues related to income support for financially vulnerable populations, persons with disabilities, poverty, social innovation and social finance, and data and information sharing to support intergovernmental cooperation on social services issues.

Regional disparities in the enjoyment of essential public services

23. FPT governments are taking measures to reduce regional disparities in the enjoyment of essential public services:
- In 2019, the GC released the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework after two years of extensive engagement with northern partners. The Framework's goals will guide investments and activities for the GC through 2030 and beyond. In 2019 and 2021,

the GC announced investments supporting the Framework that address northern priorities including nutrition and food security, post-secondary education, infrastructure, and housing.

- In 2020, New Brunswick implemented a province-wide 211 service (telephone helpline) providing access to information and navigation of government and community programs and services, and established Mobile Crisis Units to provide access to intervention outside of the usual hours of community health care providers, and without having to go to hospital.
- Since 2017, Nova Scotia has funded Rural Transportation Associations to provide low-cost or free rides to address financial barriers that prevented people from accessing rural transit services. Based on results achieved since 2017, this initiative became a permanent part of the province's Transportation and Active Transit programming in 2021.

Reply to paragraph 7 of the list of issues

Businesses respect for economic, social, and cultural rights

24. FPT governments have taken measures to ensure that businesses respect economic, social and cultural rights and apply human rights due diligence principles throughout their operations:

- The GC amended the Customs Tariff Law to include a prohibition on the importation of goods that are mined, manufactured or produced wholly or in part by forced labour. The forced labour prohibition took effect on July 1, 2020, and applies to all imports, regardless of their origin.
- British Columbia's Accessible BC Act (2021) complements the Accessible Canada Act and was informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Act provides a framework to create standards to improve the lives of people living with disabilities by removing physical, technological, and attitudinal barriers.

Judicial remedies for victims of human rights violations committed by Canadian businesses abroad

25. In recent years, some civil actions have been launched in Canadian courts against Canadian companies with operations abroad, in which the plaintiffs have alleged that the companies concerned have been responsible for human rights violations in their operations outside Canada. The GC has not been a party to or otherwise participated in these cases. While Canadian courts have issued preliminary rulings in some of these cases allowing the cases to proceed, none of the cases thus far has been the subject of a final court decision involving a finding of liability against Canadian corporate defendants.

Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Business Enterprise (CORE)

26. Established in 2019, the CORE is a business and human rights ombud that operates arm's-length from the GC.

27. The CORE has a mandate to promote the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises; advise Canadian companies on their practices and policies with respect to Responsible Business Conduct (RBC); review allegations of human rights abuses arising from the operations of Canadian companies abroad in the garment, mining, and oil and gas sectors; offer informal mediation services; and provide advice to the Minister of International Trade on any matter relating to CORE's mandate.

28. The CORE complement's Canada's National Contact Point (NCP) for RBC. As a member of the OECD, Canada is required to maintain a NCP to promote the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and to facilitate the resolution of disputes

concerning observance of the Guidelines by multinational enterprises operating in or from Canada. The NCP can address issues across all sectors, on the wide range of issues covered by the OECD Guidelines, including labour issues, human rights, and environmental issues. Canada's NCP is an interdepartmental committee established in 2000.

29. The CORE builds upon the work of the Extractive Sector Corporate Social Responsibility Counsellor, an office which sunsetted in May 2018.

Reply to paragraph 8 of the list of issues

Climate change and Indigenous Peoples

30. FPT governments are committed to working with Indigenous and Northern communities to support climate action that strengthens community and climate resilience:

- In 2021, the Canadian Net Zero Emissions Accountability Act created legislative requirements for the GC when establishing a greenhouse gas emissions reduction plan, to consider UNDRIP and Indigenous knowledge, and to provide Indigenous Peoples with an opportunity to make submissions.
- Released in 2020, the Yukon's Our Clean Future Strategy, informed by three years of collaboration with First Nations, transboundary Indigenous groups, and municipalities. It sets out objectives shared with partners across the territory, along with the steps the Yukon will take to address the climate emergency. The Yukon is focusing on renewable energy projects in government buildings and has updated its emissions reduction target to 45% by 2030.
- Prince Edward Island is working with L'nuey (Epekwitk Assembly of Councils) to ensure the social and cultural rights of the Abegweit, and Lennox Island First Nations are recognized and protected while it pursues innovative solutions to adapt to climate change. The province also works closely with L'nuey on bridge construction to modernize bridge designs to ensure infrastructure can withstand forecast increases in coastal erosion, rising sea levels and storm surges.

Paris Agreement

31. Canada has taken an important step towards achieving its 2030 target under the Paris Agreement with the implementation of the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change and in December 2020, built on its commitment through its strengthened climate plan – A Healthy Environment and A Healthy Economy.

32. Canada's Pan-Canadian Framework, developed with PTs and in consultation with Indigenous Peoples, aims to drive innovation and growth by increasing the development and adoption of technology to ensure Canadian businesses are competitive in the global low-carbon economy. It includes a pan-Canadian approach to pricing carbon pollution, measures to achieve reductions across all sectors of the economy, and actions to advance climate change adaptation and build resilience to climate impacts countrywide.

Clean and renewable energy

33. Many governments have undertaken clean and renewable energy projects:

- The GC and Ontario are working in partnership with remote First Nations communities in northern Ontario to connect them to the provincial electricity grid. Wataynikaneyap Power is a transmission company owned by 24 First Nation communities that will connect 16 remote First Nations to the grid and end their dependence on costly, emission-intensive diesel. This initiative provides clean, safe, and reliable energy that will positively impact the health and safety of community members and expand infrastructure and economic development opportunities for the communities involved.
- The Northwest Territories introduced a carbon tax to increase the cost per tonne of greenhouse gas emissions by 2022 as part of its commitment to the Pan-Canadian

Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. Revenues from the carbon tax will support efforts towards the conservation and adoption of renewable energy while mitigating the effects of the carbon tax on the cost of living and doing business in the territory.

- In Quebec, 99% of electricity produced is clean and renewable. Since 2018, the Energy Transition Master Plan is self-financing thanks to its ecological taxation system, which generates revenues that are reinvested to reach targets set by the province regarding hydrocarbon use and greenhouse gas production.

Development assistance

34. Canada places a high priority on the quality and effectiveness of its assistance, and on advancing development innovation to achieve better results. From 2019 to 2020, Canada's overall Official Development Assistance (ODA) increased from 4.7 billion American dollars (US\$) to 5 billion US\$, and its ODA/Gross National Income ratio has increased from 0.27 to 0.31.

Reply to paragraph 9 of the list of issues

35. Measures taken by FPT governments to address the root causes of violence, poverty, inadequate housing and homelessness, barriers in accessing employment, healthcare and education, and to eliminate the socioeconomic disparities between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population, include:

Violence

36. The co-developed and Indigenous-led Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual Plus (2SLGBTQQIA+) People National Action Plan was released on June 3, 2021.

37. The Federal Pathway to Address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people is a key part of the larger national action plan and outlines the GC's commitments to combat violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. In 2021, the GC proposed investments to help build a safer, stronger, and more inclusive society, and prevent and address gender-based violence (GBV) that will help deliver on the commitments outlined in the Federal Pathway.

38. Ontario's six Pathways to Safety (Safety and Security, Culture, Health and well-being, Justice, Identifying and addressing anti-Indigenous racism and Indigenous gender-based analysis, and Collaborative responsibility and accountability) is Ontario's strategy in response to the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. It includes an array of 118 initiatives organized under six pathways that will help create the changes required to eliminate the root causes of violence and advance meaningful reconciliation.

39. In 2021 Ontario launched the Support for Indian Residential Schools Burials Funding program and committed to support the identification, investigation, protection and commemoration of burials at former Residential Schools across the province. Ontario's role is to support survivors and communities leading burial investigations at each of the Indian Residential Schools in the province.

Poverty

40. In 2018, the GC launched Opportunity for All – Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy which aims to reduce poverty by 50% by 2030, relative to 2015 levels. Canada is working with Indigenous partners to co-develop indicators of poverty and well-being from First Nations, Inuit and Métis perspectives that will help to better measure poverty among Indigenous populations in a way that is culturally appropriate.

Housing and homelessness

41. The GC's NHS helps Indigenous partners construct new housing, repair existing housing stocks and protect affordability for Indigenous Peoples living in urban, rural and Northern areas. Since 2016 and as of September 30, 2021, the GC supported 23,294 homes being built, renovated and retrofitted in Indigenous Communities. As part of the Strategy, the National Housing Co-investment Fund, launched in 2018, supports new construction, repair and renewal of affordable housing, shelters and transitional housing, including for Indigenous Peoples and survivors of GBV.

42. The GC's Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy provides funding to urban, Indigenous, and rural and remote communities to address local homelessness needs. It supports Indigenous Peoples living off-reserve who are experiencing homeless or who are at risk of homelessness, addresses Indigenous homelessness on a distinctions basis (First Nations, Inuit and Métis), and supports projects in Canada's three territories in recognition of their unique homelessness challenges.

43. In Quebec, the Plan d'action interministériel en itinérance 2015-2020 – Mobilisés et engagés pour prévenir et réduire l'itinérance (interdepartmental action plan on homelessness – mobilization and commitment to preventing and reducing homelessness) provides for concrete actions to prevent and reduce homelessness, particularly among First Nations and Inuit Peoples. Measures in the Plan are designed to implement actions adapted to Indigenous reality and to acquire better understanding of Indigenous homelessness to ensure better coordination of services.

Employment

44. Launched in 2019, the GC's Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program is a distinctions-based program designed to support First Nations, Inuit, Métis and Urban/Non-affiliated Indigenous Peoples improve their skills and meet their long-term career goals. It aims to help reduce the employment gap by 25% and the skills gap by 50% between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people over a 10-year period. In 2020-2021, the program served 35,504 clients, of which 50% were female: 14,535 clients were employed (46% were female); and 5,392 clients returned to school (60% were female).

Healthcare

45. Alberta's Indigenous Patient Navigator and Indigenous Cancer Navigator programs aim to improve patient outcomes, and address health inequities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations by helping Indigenous Peoples navigate the complex array of programs and services offered by Alberta Health Services.

46. Nova Scotia's Department of Health and Wellness established an Equity and Engagement Division in May 2021. Part of the division's mandate is working with Indigenous leaders and communities to understand systemic health barriers, foster respectful conversations and administer programs aimed at improving long-term health equity outcomes within Indigenous populations. Engagement findings will help determine specific health and other social determinants of health priorities within the jurisdiction of the Department of Health and Wellness.

Education

47. Saskatchewan's Inspiring Success: First Nations and Métis PreK-12 Education Policy Framework is an umbrella policy and guides strategic directions for all actions related to First Nations and Métis education at the provincial, school division and school levels. Inspiring Success supports the infusion of Indigenous content, perspectives and ways of knowing into renewed curricula to benefit all learners; teaching Indigenous cultures, languages and histories in the classroom; building positive relationships; reconciliation; and mandatory treaty education.

Annual budget allocated to Indigenous Peoples

48. Federal investments dedicated to Indigenous priorities in general approximated \$12.9 billion CAD in 2016-2017, \$15.4 billion CAD in 2017-2018, \$17 billion CAD in 2018-2019, and \$20.5 billion CAD in 2019-2020. This represents a 59% increase from the 2016-2017 to 2019-2020 fiscal year. In 2021, additional investments of more than \$18 billion CAD over the next five years were announced to improve the quality of life and create new opportunities for people living in Indigenous communities. Of note, these figures do not capture additional, general investments through other federal initiatives that may benefit Indigenous Peoples and communities (e.g., Investing in Canada Plan; Universal Broadband Fund).

Reply to paragraph 10 of the list of issues

Population below the poverty line

49. Canada has made significant advances in poverty reduction in recent years. Between 2015 and 2019, the proportion of Canada's population living below the poverty line declined by 4.2%, from 14.5% to 10.3%.²

50. Inequality, as defined in the Committee's question, has improved slightly over this period:

- The share of adjusted after-tax income accruing to the richest decile of the population declined from 23.5% to 22.6%.
- The share of income accruing to the poorest 40% slightly increased from 20.2% (2015) to 21.0% (2019).

Proportion of public revenue that is financed through taxes

51. Over the past ten fiscal years, the proportion of public revenue consisting of taxes (i.e., income taxes and excise taxes and duties) has increased, from 82.4% in 2009-2010, to 84.1% in 2019-2020.

Tax rates

52. Federal tax rates have undergone various changes between 2009 and 2019:

- Statutory corporate income tax rates declined from 19% to 15% for general businesses, and from 11% to 9% for small businesses.
- Over this period, with respect to personal income tax rates, the rate for middle-income earners (the second-lowest bracket) was lowered from 22% to 20.5%, and a new threshold was added for their highest income earners, increasing the tax rate from 29% to 33%.
- The federal value-added tax, or the goods and services tax (GST), has remained the same at 5%.
- The GC charges an excise tax at a flat rate of 10 cents per litre on gasoline (in effect at that rate since 1995) and 4 cents per litre on diesel (in effect at that rate since 1987).³

53. Overall, 54% of FPT personal income taxes were collected from the highest earning decile of the population in 2018, just one percentage point less than the 55% collected in 2008.

54. For information about the public budget that is dedicated to social priorities and inflation-adjusted absolute levels of social spending please see tables 1 to 3 in Annex 1.

² Estimates presented for the proportion of Canada's population living below the poverty line are based on the Market Basket Measure (MBM) 2018-Base.

³ Furnace oil is exempt from this tax and there is no federal excise tax on natural gas or propane.

Reply to paragraph 11 of the list of issues

Impact of the austerity measures

55. In recognition of the adverse impacts of austerity measures on marginalized and disadvantaged individuals in their enjoyment of rights to social security, health and education, FPT governments have implemented measures to mitigate those impacts:

Social Security

56. In 2018, the GC introduced the Canada Workers' Benefit (CWB), a refundable tax credit that supplements the earnings of eligible low- and modest-income workers, thereby improving their work incentives. In 2021, the threshold of eligibility for the CWB was revised to make it available to about one million more Canadians. This change helped lift nearly 100,000 more people out of poverty.

57. In 2021, the GC introduced legislation to permanently increase the Old Age Security (OAS) pension by 10% for seniors 75 and older to help address the increased financial vulnerability seniors face as they age. As a first step towards implementing this measure, the GC issued a one-time taxable grant of \$500 in August 2021 to meet the immediate needs of OAS pensioners who were aged 75 or over as of June 30, 2022. In addition, OAS pensioners who receive little to no income other than the OAS pension, are also eligible for the Guaranteed Income Supplement, a monthly, income-tested, non-taxable benefit to low-income OAS pension recipients across Canada.

Health

58. Since 2017-2018, Ontario provides direct funding to 125 First Nations communities to expand access to home and community care services, including at-home nursing visits, personal supports and community supports, such as transportation for people with mobility challenges, and to expand access to these care services at over 20 delivery sites across the province to support access to care for Indigenous Peoples living in urban areas.

Education

59. In 2021, Newfoundland and Labrador announced a new tuition offset grant in 2021 for students attending the Memorial University to assist eligible students to offset university tuition increases in fall 2022. The University's decision to increase tuition was in response to the reduction of its operating grant from the government.

Reply to paragraph 12 of the list of issues

Transparency and accountability in the conduct of public and private affairs

60. FPT governments have measures in place to combat corruption in the public and private sectors. For example, in 2018, amendments to the Criminal Code were introduced to create a new tool – a remediation agreement for use by prosecutorial authorities to address corporate criminal wrongdoing, including corruption offences. It is an agreement approved by a judge, between an organization accused of committing a listed corporate offence and a prosecutor, to stay the proceedings related to that offence if the organization complies with the terms of the agreement. A remediation agreement holds organizations accountable for their wrongdoing and provides an incentive to rectify their wrongdoing, while avoiding some of the negative consequences of a criminal conviction, in particular for employees who did not take part in the offence.

61. FPT governments have measures in place to strengthen transparency and accountability in the areas of public procurement, land administration and tax administration:

- In August 2021, the GC's Code of Conduct for Procurement was amended to better align with the GC's National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking. The updated Code includes expectation for contractors to ensure compliance with international human rights and labour standards. The Code is included by reference into federal

procurement contracts, and supports the government in fulfilling its commitment to ensure transparency and standards of ethical conduct in procurement.

- Manitoba's Procurement Administration Manual includes procedures and guidelines for embedding a commitment to transparency and accountability throughout procurement activities. This includes an ethical procurement code that outlines a framework of principles that Manitoba uses in its procurement to ensure that contracts are awarded in a rational and transparent manner while promoting the achievement of Manitoba's broad objectives.
- In Alberta, due to provisions in the Land Titles Act, the government may be left liable in the case where the Land Titles Office accepts a fraudulent document for registration. For title owners, financial risk due to fraud is mitigated by these provisions and other sections of the Act covering compensation for owners who have been deprived of their interests due to mistakes by the Registrar, or who are prevented by the Act from suing to recover those interests.

Reply to paragraph 13 of the list of issues

Anti-discrimination provisions

62. As explained in Canada's 2020 Core Document at paragraph 128, FPT human rights acts prohibit discrimination based on many grounds, including, in many instances, political belief or opinion and source of income or social condition. In the last five years, governments in Canada have modified their human rights acts by adding new grounds of discrimination such as gender identity or expression. Further, in the same period, genetic characteristics was added to the prohibited grounds of discrimination of the Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA) while family status was added as a prohibited ground of the New Brunswick Human Rights Act.

63. Under the CHRA, discrimination complaints may be filed with the Canadian Human Rights Commission about discrimination that occurred in Canada where the victim of the practice was at the time of the act or omission either lawfully present in Canada or, if temporarily absent from Canada, entitled to return to Canada. In 2018, the Federal Court of Appeal affirmed that "lawfully present" includes persons who do not have immigration status but who are serving a term of imprisonment in Canada pursuant to law.

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The refugee status determination procedures

64. A claim for refugee protection can be made at a port of entry by completing an eligibility interview, or inland at certain federal government offices. All eligible claims receive a fair hearing before the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), an independent quasi-judicial administrative tribunal. Within the IRB, the Refugee Protection Division (RPD) is responsible for deciding if a person qualifies for refugee protection, under the law. Each claim is assessed on its individual merits, in accordance with IRB rules and the principles of fairness and natural justice.

65. The IRB has more than doubled its capacity to process claims and accelerated the introduction of innovative digital measures to ensure that refugee claimants continue to have access to protection in a timely manner. These measures include the launch of a virtual hearing model, new digital infrastructure to allow for the electronic sharing of information, and the expansion of its streamlined process for less complex claims, which allows for certain claims to be granted a positive decision without the need to hold a hearing.

66. Most rejected asylum claimants can appeal to the Refugee Appeal Division, which considers decisions rendered by the RPD to allow or reject claims for refugee protection. All failed refugee claimants have the option of filing an application with the Federal Court for leave and judicial review of a negative decision. Canada further demonstrates its commitment to the principle of non-refoulement via the Pre-Removal Risk Assessment (PRRA) process

for persons under a removal order, which assesses risk of return to persecution based on the same protection grounds as the IRB.

67. The number of applications submitted and their outcomes, from 2016 to June 30, 2021, may be found in tables 4 to 6 in Annex 1.

Legal aid

68. Legal aid services are the responsibility of PTs. The GC supports provinces, which provide this assistance to recipients, by providing funding through the Legal Aid Program to help them carry out legal aid responsibilities in areas closely tied to federal jurisdictions, including immigration and refugee proceedings. Provinces offer legal aid to asylum claimants to have representation at a hearing before the IRB and at other stages of the asylum process, including PRRA applications.

Stateless persons

69. Under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, stateless persons can access protection or permanent resident status through Canada's Resettlement Program, Canadian asylum system, the humanitarian and compassionate grounds process, public policies, and PRRA, if they are subject to an enforceable removal order.

70. In exceptional cases, the Citizenship Act provides the federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship with discretion to grant citizenship to any person to alleviate cases of statelessness, of special and unusual hardship or to reward services of an exceptional nature to Canada. Statelessness was added as a stand-alone ground that can be considered for a discretionary grant of citizenship in 2017.

Key social supports for refugees and asylum claimants

71. PTs are primarily responsible for providing key support services to refugees and asylum claimants, including emergency housing, social assistance, education, temporary health services, and legal aid. Most services available to asylum claimants and appellants are also available to PRRA applicants. The GC supports asylum claimants awaiting a decision from the IRB by providing temporary coverage for health care services through the Interim Federal Health Program and issuing work permits so they can work and be self-sufficient while their claims are pending at the IRB. The GC has also helped offset PT costs related to the provision of temporary housing for asylum claimants through the Interim Housing Assistance Program.

- People seeking asylum in Canada are eligible to access Ontario's provincially funded services while waiting for a determination to be made on their claim for asylum, including social assistance, employment services, assistance with finding housing, public education from kindergarten through grade 12, and settlement services and language training.
- In Prince Edward Island, all government-assisted refugees are eligible to access provincially funded programs toward employment support, mental health, employment skills training and retraining, and employment-related language trainings.
- Newfoundland and Labrador provides annual project funding to organizations serving newcomers – including resettled refugees, asylum seekers, and temporary residents – to support their settlement and integration. The Newfoundland and Labrador Settlement and Integration Program and the Labour Market Integration of Newcomers Program facilitate annual funding to organizations to support the social, cultural, and economic needs of newcomers to the province.
- In 2019, the Quebec government adopted an order-in-council decreeing the Regulation respecting situations that give certain persons the right of free access to educational or learning services. This regulation ensures that free access to public education is provided to minors with precarious immigration status.

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Minimum wage

72. General minimum wage per hour is regulated by PTs in their respective jurisdiction.

Table 1

General minimum wage per hour as of September 2021 by jurisdiction in Canadian dollars

<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>General minimum wage per hour as of September 2021</i>
GC	\$15.00
Alberta	\$15.00
British Columbia	\$15.20
Manitoba	\$11.90
New Brunswick	\$11.75
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$12.50
Nova Scotia	\$12.95
Northwest Territories	\$15.20
Nunavut	\$16.00
Ontario	\$14.25
Prince Edward Island	\$13.00
Quebec	\$13.50
Saskatchewan	\$11.45
The Yukon	\$15.20

73. The level of compliance with these minimum wages is generally high, for example:

- Between January 2016 and September 2021, Manitoba's Employment Standards Branch received 9,442 claims regarding non-compliance with minimum wage requirements. Of those claims, officers determined that only 12 were found to be in violation of minimum wage requirements.

74. In recognition of the importance of adequate standards of living, FPT governments strive to ensure that minimum wages meet the needs of workers and their families:

- New provisions of the Canada Labour Code that came into force on December 29, 2021, established a freestanding federal minimum wage of \$15 per hour and ensure that should a PT minimum wage be higher, that wage will prevail. To keep pace with inflation, on April 1 of each year, the minimum wage will be adjusted based on Canada's Consumer Price Index for the preceding calendar year.
- Newfoundland and Labrador's Labour Standards Act requires periodic review of the minimum wage rate and the rate-setting mechanism. The 2020 minimum wage review engaged stakeholders from labour and business to determine the appropriate minimum wage rate and considered standard of living.
- In Saskatchewan, an increase in the minimum wage is calculated based on a formula that gives equal weight to the percentage change in the provincial average hourly wage and the consumer price index for Saskatchewan for the previous year as published by Statistics Canada. The use of the average hourly wage and the consumer price index are intended to ensure workers' wages keep pace with the cost of living in the province.
- Since 2017, Quebec has adopted a new minimum wage policy. It is part of a progressive increase in the ration between the minimum wage and the average hourly wage, raising it from 47% to 50%. The minimum wage increases of recent years have contributed to achieving this objective. By maintaining this ration at 50%, Quebec is

preserving the purchasing power of wage earners, while respecting the ability of Quebec businesses to pay.

Pay Equity

75. In addition to the federal Pay Equity Act (see question 2), PTs also have legislation that incorporate the principle of equal pay for work of equal value:

- The Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code prohibits employers from paying employees doing the same work substantially at a different rate of wages based on gender. The Code prohibits employers from banning employees from discussing their wages in the workplace. As well, it prohibits prospective employers from requesting a prospective employee's wage history or requiring a prospective employee's wage history meet any criteria, including maximum or minimum levels.
- Ontario has two laws that address the issue of equal pay between women and men, the Pay Equity Act (PEA) and the Employment Standards Act, 2000 (ESA). The PEA has been in force since 1988 and aims to redress systemic gender discrimination in how employees in predominantly female job classes are compensated for the work they perform. It applies to private sector employers in Ontario with 10 or more employees and all public sector employers, including broader public sector employers. The ESA has provisions that address equal pay for equal work. Under these provisions, an employer cannot pay one employee at a rate of pay less than another employee on the basis of sex when they perform substantially the same kind of work in the same establishment, the work requires substantially the same skill, effort and responsibility, and the work is performed under similar working conditions.
- In 2019, Quebec will adopt the Act to Amend the Pay Equity Act, primarily to improve pay equity assessments. The Act also remains to promote employee participation in pay equity assessments, provide a framework for handling complaints and improve the Implementation of the Act.

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Mechanism for complaints relating to health and safety

76. While in Canada, Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) have the same rights to workplace protections under applicable FPT employment standards as Canadians and permanent residents. Complaint mechanisms apply equally to migrant workers, immigrants, permanent residents and Canadian citizens employed in any regulated sectors.

77. In addition to existing FPT labour norms and laws, employers hiring foreign workers under employer-specific work permits are subject to a federally operated employer compliance regime which include employer compliance inspections. Its conditions and consequences are laid out in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations.

78. Canada's two programs for hiring TFWs, the federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program and the International Mobility Program benefit from federally managed mechanisms through which anyone can file a complaint, including but not limited to occupational health and safety of TFWs. It answers queries through employer contact centres, online and in-person, and a multilingual tip-line is also available to TFWs who wish to raise concerns, including reporting issues pertaining to their personal safety and reporting instances of abuse, illegal activity, or instances where their employer is breaking the terms of their contract. All tips and allegations are reviewed and assessed by the TFW Program, and the appropriate actions are taken, including employer compliance inspections and referrals to enforcement partners.

79. There are also mechanisms in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, the Northwest Territories, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec, where health and safety concerns can be reported to various commissions and work site committees, or to government regulators through phone and online means, often with an option for confidential and anonymous reporting. In British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario, such

reporting mechanisms also provide accessible translation services for those reporting concerns.

Measures to address systemic issues

80. The GC monitors workplace compliance of companies and organizations under GC jurisdiction with labour legislation to protect workers' health and safety, and responds to all complaints received through various communications channels. Moreover, workplace data is collected and reported on annually, which allows the GC to identify priority sectors of activity within its jurisdiction. A management review of the strategic operations plan is undertaken annually to update actions needed to address systemic issues in priority sectors through meaningful, proactive intervention to enforce compliance with the Canada Labour Code and its pursuant regulations.

81. In Alberta, data is reviewed to identify systemic trends, which informs the allocation of educational, and enforcement resources. Previous employer- and industry-level compensation and compliance data is used to determine which employers and industries are considered high risk for proactive enforcement.

82. In British Columbia, the occupational health and safety provisions of the Workers Compensation Act are administered by WorkSafeBC, an agency independent from government which, among other things, identifies and addresses systemic issues affecting workplace health and safety.

Measures to enhance Occupational Health and Safety

83. In 2019, the National Occupational Health and Safety Reconciliation Agreement, which aims to harmonize health and safety protection standards across jurisdictions, was signed by all FPT ministers responsible for labour in Canada. Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick have already begun to update standards and guidelines in accordance with the agreement.

84. In 2018, the GC enacted An Act to Amend the Canada Labour Code (harassment and violence), the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act, and the Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No. 1. This legislation seeks to ensure that workplaces under federal jurisdiction, such as the federal private sector, public service and Parliament of Canada are free from harassment and violence. The Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations also came into force in January 2021.

Measures taken to strengthen labour inspections

85. Since 2016, GC has continually increased the number of occupational health and safety inspections in federally regulated workplaces. The TFW Program administers a robust compliance regime, which includes inspections of worksites to maintain program integrity and protect foreign workers. The compliance regime also outlines consequences for employers found non-compliant.

86. As part of its 2020–2023 Multi-year Planning for Prevention-Inspection, Quebec has prioritized interventions with regard to people starting a new job, in particular through workplace inspections. Programming includes annual inspections throughout Quebec, in workplaces in which workers with immigrant backgrounds can be found. In addition, since January 1, 2020, following the reform of the Act Respecting Labour Standards, several legislative measures have framed the work of agencies recruiting foreign workers, including the obligation to hold a valid permit issued by the competent authority.

87. For the number of inspections carried out in federally regulated sectors of activity, occupational health and safety hazards by industry, and occupational accidents and diseases, disaggregated by industry, please see tables 7 to 15 in Annex 1.

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Rights to strike and to form or join trade unions

88. At the federal level, the following categories of workers do not have the right to strike:

- Employees whose position is excluded from the bargaining unit under the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Act (FPSLRA) Section 59 (1): These are generally managerial or confidential positions.
- Employees whose positions are essential under the FPSLRA (Division 8): These are denied the right to strike in order to ensure the health and safety of Canadians.
- Employees who are not represented by a union under the FPSLRA, such as employees in the management and personnel administration group.

89. Further, at the federal level, the following categories of workers cannot form or affiliate with unions:

- Deputy ministers and other senior officials appointed by the Governor in Council, the staff of ministers' offices, senior officials and certain diplomatic staff and staff engaged locally outside Canada;
- Part-time, casual workers or workers hired for less than 3 months;
- Persons employed in a program designated by the employer as a student employment program;
- Persons employed by the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada and providing or participating in the provision of mediation, legal or conflict resolution services to the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board.

90. At the PT level, the categories of workers who do not have a right to strike or that cannot form or join trade unions varies:

- In Nova Scotia, the Trade Union Act prohibits police officers and firefighters from striking. The Civil Service Collective Bargaining Act further prohibits the Provincial Civil Service from striking. And the Highway Workers' Collective Bargaining Act prohibits provincial highway workers from striking. When an impasse at collective bargaining occurs with any of these groups, it is resolved through Interest Arbitration. Further, the Trade Union Act does not allow the following individuals or employee groups to form or join a union – a member of the medical, dental, architectural, engineering or legal profession qualified to practise under the laws of the province and employed in that capacity.
- In Quebec, the police and fire departments, some categories of civil servants (e.g., those responsible for civil security and peace officers), some categories of health care workers (e.g., emergency services) and agricultural workers unless at least three such employees are ordinarily and continuously employed, do not have the right to strike, due to the essential nature of the services they provide. Since 2019, the Labour Code Act has empowered the Administrative Labour Tribunal to judge who is subject to maintaining essential services in the event of a strike. Particular provisions are generally in place to respect their freedom of assembly (e.g., arbitration mechanism). Workers who do not meet the definition of "employee" as set in the Labour Code cannot form a union since the collective representation mechanisms are designed to govern the employer/employee relationship. In order to avoid conflicts of interest, some categories of workers must create exclusive independent unions (e.g., municipal police, criminal and penal prosecuting attorneys). All other employees may create or affiliate with the union of their choice.

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Canada Pension Plan (CPP)

91. The GC is committed to helping Canadians achieve a more secure retirement. To this end, the GC worked with PTs to strengthen the retirement income system by enhancing the CPP.

92. The CPP enhancement began its seven-year phase-in on January 1, 2019. The enhancement works as a top-up to the base component of the CPP. It increases the replacement rate provided by the CPP from 25% to 33.33%, and also increases the upper limit of pensionable earnings by 14%. Together, these two changes will increase the maximum retirement pension by more than 50 percent. The enhancement also increases CPP disability and survivor pensions. However, as the enhancement is to be fully funded by contributions from employers and workers, increased benefits will grow slowly over time as Canadians work and make contributions, reaching full maturity in 2065.

Measures to expand the coverage of child, disability and unemployment benefits

93. FPT governments expanded the coverage of child, disability and unemployment benefits:

- Since 2016, the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) has provided tax-free support to about 3.5 million families. These supports have been indexed to keep pace with the cost of living. The CCB is having a positive impact: the poverty rate for children decreased to 9.4 percent in 2019 from 10.6 percent in 2018, and there were 450,000 fewer children living in poverty in 2019 compared to 2015.⁴
- The CPP Disability (CPPD) benefits provide partial income replacement to eligible contributors if they are no longer able to work regularly at any substantially gainful occupation due to a severe and prolonged disability. A disability pension is paid to eligible contributors until the age of 65, after which the benefit automatically transitions to a retirement pension. CPPD benefits are indexed annually.
- The GC's Children's Special Allowances Program provides payments to federal and provincial agencies and institutions that care for children, such as children's aid societies. The monthly amount payable for each child is equal to the maximum amount of the CCB.
- The GC's Child Disability Benefit is a tax-free monthly payment made to families who care for a child under age 18 with a severe and prolonged impairment in physical or mental functions.
- One of the main measures of Quebec's Government Action Plan to Foster Economic Inclusion and Social Participation (2017–2023) is to establish a Basic Income Program for people with severely limited capacity for employment. To a great extent, this program is for people with disabilities. Implementation of this measure has been evolving progressively since 2018.
- In November 2018, an independent expert panel was created to complete a comprehensive review on health and social services in the Yukon. The resulting report, *Putting People First*, includes 76 recommendations on health and social services in the territory, all of which were accepted by the government. This work is expected to contribute to the expansion of coverage of disability benefits and complement child and unemployment benefits to ensure beneficiaries are supported with an adequate standard of living.
- The Northwest Territories Income Assistance Program provides financial assistance to residents to help meet basic and enhanced needs. The Program provides a set amount, based on the size of family and community, for food, community cost adjustment, clothing, and furnishings. The Program aids with shelter and utilities, based on actual amounts and provides annual exemptions for Impact Benefit

⁴ Source: 2019 Canadian Income Survey.

Agreement, Land Claim, and Treaty Annuities assistance. In 2021, the Northwest Territories began conducting a review of its Income Assistance Program to ensure it is more effective and more responsive to the needs of its residents, including a dedicated program for seniors and persons living with disabilities.

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Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision in the case of the removal of Indigenous children from their families (2019 CHRT 39)

94. With respect to 2019 CHRT 39, the GC has been clear that it intends to compensate Indigenous children who have been harmed by the underfunding of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program and by the narrow interpretation of Jordan’s Principle. The GC worked with the parties to the Tribunal complaint to develop a Compensation Framework that was submitted to, and subsequently approved by, the Tribunal. The GC will be working towards a final settlement agreement.

95. An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families was co-developed with Indigenous partners with the goal of reducing the number of Indigenous children in care and reforming child and family services. The Act, which came into force in January 2020, affirms that the inherent right of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis to self-government includes jurisdiction in relation to child and family services. The Act also establishes national principles, such as the best interests of the child, cultural continuity, and substantive equality, which are applicable in the delivery of child and family services.

An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families (S.C. 2019, c. 24)

96. In 2020, the GC committed more than \$542 million over five years to support the implementation of the Act including through, among other measures, negotiating fiscal arrangements that are sustainable, needs-based, and consistent with the principle of substantive equality, to ensure resources that will enable communities to keep families together, where it is safe to do so, and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments, regardless of where they reside. Additional measures taken to implement the Act include funding for capacity building and for participation at coordination agreement discussion tables, plus an interim funding framework to meet the needs of “early adopting” communities seeking to exercise jurisdiction.

97. As of August 2021, under the Act, over 100 Indigenous communities had started to develop and implement policies and Indigenous laws based on their particular histories, cultures, and circumstances with regards to child and family services. Progress was also made towards having these Indigenous laws receive force of federal law through the negotiation of tripartite coordination agreements under the Act, with 17 coordination agreement discussions ongoing as of June 2021.

Table 5

Planned spending allocated to Indigenous Services Canada’s Child and Family Services Program, from 2020-2021 through 2023-2024

First Nations Child and Family Services

2020-2021 Actual Expenditures (Public Accounts)	2021-2022 Actual Expenditures (Public Accounts)	2022-2023 Authorities to date (year-end budget)	2023-2024 Authorities to date (budget to date)
\$1 503 544 590	\$1 720 417 611	\$3 066 821 830	\$3 020 123 220

*First Nations Child and Family Services**Implementation of An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families*

2020-2021 Actual Expenditures (Public Accounts)	2021-2022 Actual Expenditures (Public Accounts)	2022-2023 Authorities to date (year-end budget)	2023-2024 Authorities to date (budget to date)
\$15 360 026	\$69 251 922	\$79 028 722	\$126 491 452

Source: Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decisions in the cases relating to child and family services provided to Indigenous Peoples, including 2017 CHRT 14 and 2016 CHRT 2.

98. The GC has worked on various communications and marketing campaigns on an ongoing basis to raise awareness of Jordan's Principle among First Nations families, communities, professionals and other audiences. This includes posting information online on Canada.ca, issuing social media posts through departmental channels, retweeting and sharing from other parties, engaging with stakeholders and families through multiple rounds of the client satisfaction survey, sharing information about Jordan's Principle via other federal outreach channels, and implementing several paid advertising campaigns from 2017 to 2021.

99. This increased awareness, along with the broadening of the scope and eligibility for Jordan's Principle by CHRT Orders has resulted in year-over-year increases in requests for products and services and a corresponding increase in expenditures. From July 1, 2016 to July 31, 2021, over 1.1 million products and services for First Nations children requests were approved under Jordan's Principle.

Table 6

Number of approved products and services under Jordan's Principle, from 2016-2017 through 2021-2022

<i>Fiscal year</i>	<i>Approved</i>	<i>Growth (%)</i>
2016-2017	4 940	N.A.
2017-2018	76 891	+ 1 456 %
2018-2019	140 332	+ 83%
2019-2020	350 078	+ 149%
2020-2021	339 654	- 3%
2021-2022 (up to July 31)	212 286	N.A.

100. The implementation of 2016 CHRT 2 includes developing long-term reforms of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program to reduce the number of First Nations children in care, strengthen families and keep them together. This also includes working with the parties to the CHRT complaint to fund studies to provide options and recommendations on program reform, such as those conducted by the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy and another study that examined the impact of geographic remoteness on the funding needs of service providers. These studies are informing the development of a new approach for delivering First Nations Child and Family Services Program funding to First Nations agencies and communities.

101. In addition, and in response to a non-compliance motion brought to the Tribunal by the Caring Society and the Assembly of First Nations, the GC worked with the parties to devise an interim funding approach for First Nations not served by delegated First Nations child and family services agencies to support their delivery of prevention programming. The Tribunal issued an order for the implementation of this funding approach on consent of all the parties on March 17, 2021 (2021 CHRT 12).

Indigenous children and children of African descent in foster care

102. PT governments have undertaken several measures to address the high representation of Indigenous children and children of African descent in foster care, including:

- In July 2020, Ontario released the Child Welfare Redesign Strategy that focuses on services that prioritize safety and protection, are high-quality, culturally appropriate, and responsive to the needs of children, youth and families. The Strategy has three main goals: strengthening families and communities through enhanced early intervention approaches; continuing to improve the service experience and outcomes for children and youth that need protection services from societies and out of home care; and addressing disproportionalities and outcomes disparities in child welfare.
- In Newfoundland and Labrador, immediate and extended families of children and youth involved with the child welfare system are very important partners in the collaborative service process, along with Indigenous governments and organizations. The government supports culturally appropriate and sensitive approaches to the delivery of Indigenous child welfare services through legislation and policy development. For example, in 2019, the Children, Youth and Families Act came into effect. The Act is child and youth-centred, family-focused and culturally responsive and contains significant updates aimed at strengthening service delivery to Indigenous children, youth, and their families by recognizing the importance of preserving an Indigenous child or youth's cultural identity, providing for the involvement of Indigenous governments and organizations in decisions that will keep children safe, and where possible, at home with their families and culture.

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Measures to address poverty

103. FPT governments take targeted measures to address poverty among children in single-parent families, migrants and refugees, Indigenous Peoples and persons with disabilities, and to address the working poor:

- The GC's Canada Child Benefit (CCB), introduced in 2016, provides income support to families raising children, including single-parent families. This annual tax-free support benefits about 3.5 million families. Most families receiving the maximum CCB amounts are single-parent families, with over 90% of them being led by single mothers.
- In 2021, the GC made changes to the Canada Workers Benefit (CWB), a refundable tax credit that supplements the earnings of eligible low and modest-income workers. With these changes, the CWB will be available to about one million more Canadians and help lift nearly 100,000 more people out of poverty.
- The GC's Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) provides support and services to government-assisted refugees and other eligible clients who are resettling to Canada from overseas. A key component of RAP is income support for the first 12 months or until the client becomes self-sufficient, whichever comes first. RAP income support rates are guided by social assistance rates in the client's province of residence.
- The GC provides funding for the Nutrition North Canada Program and to support food security in northern isolated communities by improving access to and affordability of market, country, and local food and essential items.
- Nutrition North Canada works to support Indigenous Peoples who face socioeconomic challenges and conditions of poverty. The program's metrics were redeveloped to focus directly on cost of living rather than food price, offering a clearer focus on the disparities within these communities.
- Nova Scotia expanded the Nova Scotia Child Benefit (NSCB) and made more families eligible. Both the annual income threshold for eligibility and benefit amount were increased. This adjustment resulted in an additional 6,100 new families and 10,000 new children being eligible for NSCB.
- The Yukon takes measures to address the working poor and the disproportionately high incidence of poverty among persons with disabilities by providing the Yukon Supplemental Allowance. The allowance provides an extra \$250 per month and

possibly other discretionary amounts on top of a recipient's social assistance. Eligibility is premised on being unable to work full-time for 12 months or more. A person seeking the Allowance, does not have to have a permanent disability. Approximately 42% of Yukoners in receipt of social assistance receives the Yukon Supplemental Allowance.

Social assistance

104. Many different social assistance programs are available in Canada:

- In Manitoba, the Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) program provides financial help to Manitobans who have no other way to support themselves or their families. Benefits include a basic needs component, a shelter component, and coverage of non-insured health benefits. Other special needs may be covered on a case-by-case basis. Eligibility and benefit levels in EIA depend on the size and composition of the household, any existing financial resources, including assets and income, and disability status. As of June 2021, approximately 37,000 households and close to 63,000 individuals received EIA.
- In 2020-2021, on average each month, approximately 30,000 people in Newfoundland and Labrador were in receipt of Income Support, accounting for 5.8% of the provincial population. Eligibility is determined through a financial needs assessment, comparing current financial resources with specific assistance rates available. Basic assistance provides amounts for shelter and a living allowance, and supplementary benefits, such as payment of the full amount of municipal taxes is provided.

The market basket measure (MBM)

105. The GC regularly conducts a comprehensive review of the MBM to ensure that the MBM reflects current prices, consumption patterns, statistical practices, and specifically that:

- The MBM “basket” continues to reflect a modest, basic standard of living in the current Canadian context;
- The cost of purchasing the MBM “basket” in specific geographic areas is estimated as accurately as possible; and
- The MBM accurately measures the resources available to families to enable them to buy the contents of the “basket”.

106. The Second Comprehensive Review of the MBM was completed in September 2020. Poverty statistics calculated with the new 2018 MBM base have officially replaced Official Poverty Line rates calculated using the previous 2008 MBM base. Changes applied to the MBM as part of the Second Comprehensive Review were the result of wide-ranging consultations and analysis, which brought together federal officials across departments, PT officials, academics, stakeholder organizations and the public to share their views on how to update the measure. It is expected that comprehensive reviews of the MBM will continue to be conducted every five years.

107. On April 1, 2021, Canada released the 2018 income estimates for the territories from the Canadian Income Survey (CIS), the key data source for annual poverty rate estimates. This marks the first-time income statistics for the territories were published as part of the Canadian Income Survey. The primary objective of the CIS is to provide information on the income and income sources of Canadians, along with their individual and household characteristics. The survey gathers information on labour market activity, school attendance, disability, unmet health care needs, support payments, childcare expenses, inter-household transfers, personal income, food security, and characteristics and costs of housing.

Deduction provisions in PT jurisdictions

108. Most PTs deduct amounts from Social Assistance benefits to reflect clients receiving certain federal benefits such as Employment Insurance and other federal emergency COVID-19 income supports. Collaboration between different orders of government has been a keystone of Canada's approach to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to recognize

that the PTs have full jurisdiction over how federal benefits are treated within their own programming, including social assistance.

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National Housing Strategy Act

109. The NHTSA provides strong accountability mechanisms through the creation of a Federal Housing Advocate and National Housing Council. The Advocate has a mandate to monitor the implementation of the GC's housing policy and assess its impact on persons who are members of vulnerable groups. The Advocate may review broad systemic housing issues and request that the Council, a body appointed by the designated federal Minister to promote participation and inclusion in housing policy and advise the Minister on ways to improve the effectiveness of the National Housing Strategy (NHS), establish a review panel to hold a hearing to review any systemic housing issue within the jurisdiction of Parliament. The Advocate monitors and reports annually on their findings related to systemic housing issues and associated recommendations.

National Housing Strategy – key initiatives

110. See Table 16 in Annex 1 for the list of key NHS initiatives that aim to improve access of low-income families to adequate and affordable housing.

Social housing to low-income families

111. Canada's community housing sector is made up of FPT and municipally delivered community housing units as well as units administered by co-operatives and non-profits. As of June 30, 2021, the NHS aided over 479,000 households in need through affordable and community housing, including:

- Commitments to create over 62,600 new affordable and community housing units; and
- Support for over 399,000 community and social housing units through the Federal Community Housing Initiative, Canada Community Housing Initiative, and other programs.
- In addition, the NHS supported over 28,000 households with direct housing affordability assistance through the Canada Housing Benefit, which is cost-matched and delivered by PTs.

Community housing on reserve

112. The GC supports community housing on reserve. Since 2016 and as of September 30, 2021, targeted infrastructure investments were supporting the construction of 10,652 homes in 517 First Nations communities, including 3,527 new unit constructions (2,133 complete) and 7,125 unit renovations and retrofits (4,470 complete). Targeted infrastructure investments were also supporting the construction of 64 new schools (40 complete) and the renovation or upgrade of 94 existing schools (76 complete), and 217 projects (201 complete) to design, replace, expand, repair or otherwise renovate First Nations health facilities, health professional accommodations, addictions treatment centres and other facilities.

Table 7

Funding allocated to First Nation housing, from 2016-2017 through 2020-2021

2016–2017	\$ 403 693 456.48
2017–2018	\$ 327 768 195.66
2018–2019	\$ 354 383 507.10
2019–2020	\$ 364 850 299.43
2020–2021	\$ 363 240 252.53

2016–2017	\$ 403 693 456.48
2017–2018	\$ 327 768 195.66
Total	\$ 1 813 935 711.00

113. The GC continues to support the co-development of the First National Housing and Related Infrastructure Strategy and related approaches to ensure its successful implementation, and to advance the transfer of housing and infrastructure programs and services to Indigenous institutions.

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Nutrition North Canada program

114. The Nutrition North Canada Program offers a retail subsidy with the objective of making nutritious foods and other essential items more affordable and accessible in 125 isolated communities across Canada's North.

115. 112 of those 124 communities are also eligible for the Harvesters Support Grant which provides funding support to hunting, harvesting, and food sharing activities in eligible communities in recognition of the importance of country foods to a healthy and culturally appropriate northern diet. The Grant is co-developed with Indigenous and northern partners and designed to be Indigenous-led with emphasis on local control and decision-making, as well as flexibility in funding.

116. The Harvesters Support Grant marks a fundamental shift by empowering communities to determine and action their own food security priorities. This initiative helps create less reliance on store-bought food, encourage the restoration of harvesting culture and traditions, and support local food production.

117. Despite Nutrition North Canada's recent successes, the GC recognizes that a long-term strategy to food security will require a whole-of-government approach that recognizes and addresses the key factors of income and employment. While Nutrition North Canada will not solve food security on its own, it is helping northern and isolated communities in advance made-in-the-North solutions.

118. Nutrition North Canada continues to work with Indigenous and federal partners to develop and implement strategies to further reduce the cost of food, provide better support to northerners, and particularly those most vulnerable. The program is also demonstrating that co-developed solutions with Indigenous and community partners are driving meaningful results.

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Healthcare services

119. PT governments are responsible for the delivery of health care for their residents, including determining which drugs are reimbursed and under what conditions for their eligible populations. FPT Ministers of Health have made the affordability, accessibility and appropriate use of prescription drugs a shared priority. Recent efforts to improve access to medicines include the federal government working with PT governments and stakeholders to build on the foundational elements of national universal pharmacare that are already in progress so that Canadians have the drug coverage they need. These foundational steps include ongoing work to establish a Canadian Drug Agency, a national formulary, and a national strategy for drugs for rare diseases.

120. The transfer of funds to PTs under the Canada Health Transfer is not automatic, but is conditional on PT health insurance plans meeting the Canada Health Act's requirements, including public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability and accessibility. The universality criterion requires that all insured residents of a PT must be

entitled to the insured health care services provided by the PT health care insurance plan on uniform terms and conditions. The accessibility criterion ensures that insured individuals in a PT have reasonable access to insured hospital, medical and surgical-dental services that require a hospital setting, on uniform terms and conditions, unprecluded or unimpeded, either directly or indirectly, by patient charges or other means (e.g., discrimination on the basis of age, health status or financial circumstances).

121. PTs provide a wide range of programs and services, in addition to insured health services, such as coverage for prescription drugs outside of hospitals, continuing care, ambulance services, and optometric services. The additional services are often targeted to specific population groups (e.g., children, older persons or social assistance recipients), with levels of funding and scope of coverage varying from one PT or another.

122. PT governments have also expanded the scope and coverage of healthcare services:

- Pharmacists in several provinces have recently seen their assessment and prescribing roles expanded in an effort to improve access to primary care/treatment for common ailments (e.g., dermatitis, impetigo, Lyme disease prevention, cold sores, gastroesophageal reflux disease, urinary tract infections).
- In Ontario, the People's Health Care Act (2019) established Ontario Health Teams as a new model of health care organization, funding and delivery. This model encourages providers to improve the health of an entire population, reducing disparities among different population groups. Through this model, groups of health care providers work together as a team to deliver a full and coordinated continuum of care for patients, even if they are not in the same organization or physical location.
- Manitoba has improved access to primary care by implementing MyHealthTeams – collaborative networks that plan or improve access to new and existing resources for primary care, enabling providers to expand capacity by 43,756 patients.
- In 2021, in Nova Scotia, the income threshold for coverage for low-income cancer patients for prescription medications and travel expenses was increased to include those with incomes of up to \$35,000 a year.

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Mental Health Strategy for Canada

123. In 2015, the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) led consultations to lay the foundation for accelerating uptake of the Mental Health Strategy for Canada (2012) over the next five years, culminating in the launch in 2016 of Advancing the Mental Health Strategy for Canada: A Framework for Action (2017-2022). The main goal of this Framework is to outline ways in which the MHCC might accelerate the uptake of the Strategy by setting out achievable areas for actions that are likely to have the greatest impact over a five-year period. The Framework is based on the principle that families and circles of support must be at the centre of change for people living with mental health problems and mental illnesses. Its success hinges on the commitment of those who fund services and set policies, as well as those who regulate, accredit, monitor and deliver services.

124. In 2009, before the launch of the Strategy, three provinces had comprehensive mental health action plans or strategies in place - British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec. By 2019, all PTs had their own mental health strategies or action plans, all of which aligned strongly with the Mental Health Strategy of Canada.

Availability, accessibility, and quality of mental healthcare services

125. FPT governments have taken steps to ensure that mental health is integrated in primary health care and to address the disparities between physical and mental health care in terms of availability, accessibility, and quality of services:

- Through bilateral agreements with PTs beginning in 2017, the GC is providing \$5 billion over ten years to PTs to address shared FPT health priorities on mental

health and substance use health. The integration of mental health and substance use health with primary health care is one of the three key areas of focus for this funding.

- Since 2018, British Columbia has taken steps to integrate mental health in the primary health care sector through a transformational team-based primary care strategy. To address the disparities between physical and mental healthcare availability, accessibility and quality of services, team-based primary care is delivered through using several different models. All primary care providers in a defined geography are aligned together in local Primary Care Networks to coordinate and leverage existing and new providers and services to better meet the needs of local citizens.

High proportion of women with mental health conditions in maximum security prisons

126. The GC has taken measures to address the high proportion of women with mental health conditions in maximum security prisons. For example, the Intensive Intervention Strategy in Women Offender's Institutions was modified in 2019, in response to a recommendation by the Office of the Correctional Investigator related to the categorization of movement levels of the Secure Unit. Now referred to as the "Reintegration Movement Plan," review and oversight of movement levels for women housed on Secure Units were made more frequent. Another requirement is the ongoing assessment of inmates classified as maximum security. An interdisciplinary team with representatives from Security, Interventions, and Mental Health Services meets bi-weekly to discuss each case, ensuring the risks presented by each inmate are understood and manageable at all times. The interdisciplinary team reviews and determines the movement within and off the secure unit, interventions and programming, leisure activities, and escorts. This assessment is captured in the Reintegration Movement Plan.

Incidence of suicide in the State party

127. Between 2017 and 2019, there were approximately 4,500 people who died by suicide per year in Canada. This is equivalent to 12 suicide deaths, on average, every day. In 2019, suicide was the 9th leading cause of deaths among all Canadians, and the 2nd leading cause of death among individuals aged 15 to 34, behind unintentional injuries. Suicide rates are approximately three times higher among men compared to women.

128. Suicide rates are generally higher than the national average in PTs with larger Indigenous populations. For example, in 2019, the suicide rate was 82.8 per 100,000 persons in Nunavut, and 16.8 per 100,000 in the Northwest Territories, compared to the national average of 12.1 per 100,000 persons in Canada.

129. A federal report published in 2019 on Suicide among First Nations people, Métis and Inuit (2011-2016) noted that the rate among First Nations people (24.3 deaths per 100,000 person-years at risk) was three times higher than the rate among non-Indigenous people (8.0 deaths per 100,000 person-years at risk). Among First Nations people living on reserve, the rate was about twice as high as that among those living off reserve. Suicide rates varied by First Nations band, with just over 60% of bands having a zero-suicide rate. The rate among Métis (14.7 deaths per 100,000 person-years at risk) was approximately twice as high as the rate among non-Indigenous people. Among Inuit, the rate was approximately nine times higher than the non-Indigenous rate (72.3 versus 8.0 deaths per 100,000 person-years at risk). Suicide rates and disparities were highest in children, youth and young adults (15 to 24 years) among First Nations males and Inuit males and females.

Suicide among Indigenous youth

130. FPT governments are taking measures to address the high incidence of suicide among Indigenous youth:

- The GC has made investments to improve mental wellness in Indigenous communities including for suicide prevention and life promotion. The GC supports the implementation of the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework, Honouring Our Strengths, and the National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy, as well as initiatives such as the Hope for Wellness Helpline, which provides immediate,

culturally safe, telephone crisis intervention support for First Nations, Métis and Inuit, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in English and French, and upon request in Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut.

- Alberta's Honouring Life: Indigenous Youth Suicide Prevention Program provides community-based funding available to all First Nation and Métis communities to support resiliency, empowerment and holistic wellness approaches, which are culturally appropriate in addressing risk factors and protective factors and builds community capacity to support Indigenous youth to address issues such as suicide, suicidal ideation, mental wellness, life skills, and substance misuse.

National drug law and the National Anti-Drug Strategy

131. Since 2016, the Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy has guided the approach of the Government of Canada to addressing the harms of substance use. This strategy, which replaced the National Anti-Drug Strategy, takes a public health-focused approach and lays out a framework for evidence-based actions to protect the health and safety of Canadians. Recognizing the need for a comprehensive approach to save lives, the Strategy supports the full continuum of evidence-based actions to reduce the harms associated with substance use in Canada. It is based on four key pillars: prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and enforcement.

Addressing opioid-related deaths

132. The GC recognizes that substance use is a health issue, and is working with all levels of governments, the medical community, public health officials, law enforcement, Indigenous peoples, and other stakeholder groups, including people with lived and living experience, to strengthen Canada's public health-focussed approach to substance use issues.

133. In Canada, the PTs are generally responsible for funding and delivery of treatment services; and the GC has focussed on improving access to evidence-based treatment options through funding to PTs through bilateral transfers such as the Emergency Treatment Fund that provided \$150 million to directly support increased access to evidence-based substance use treatment. The GC also supports innovative community-level treatment initiatives through Health Canada's Substance Use and Addictions Program (SUAP), and has removed regulatory barriers to accessing medications for the treatment of opioid use disorder.

134. The GC is also working to ensure that a range of harm reduction services are available to Canadians who need them, including funding through SUAP to improve access to life-saving naloxone medication and providing exemptions under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to support the implementation of supervised consumption sites.

135. The GC is also working with stakeholders to reduce stigma directed at people who use drugs (for example through public awareness campaigns), which acts as a barrier to accessing critical health and social services and often leads to social isolation and further risk of harms. In addition, the GC is continuing to address illegal production and trafficking, with a focus on organized crime, and implementing additional surveillance and research activities that will further build the evidence base to support innovative solutions to this public health crisis.

Cannabis Act

136. The GC's goal for legalizing, strictly regulating, and restricting access to cannabis is to keep cannabis out of the hands of Canadian youth, and to prevent organized crime from continuing to profit from the illegal cannabis market. The Cannabis Act created a control framework to protect public health and safety through establishing a series of comprehensive controls governing the production, distribution, sale and possession of cannabis.

137. Early observations following the enactment of Canada's cannabis control framework suggests progress towards achieving the government's public health and safety objectives. Data from multiple sources indicate that since legalization, past-year cannabis use has increased among the general population, extending a pre-legalization trend, while the proportion of people using cannabis daily or almost daily as well as cannabis use among

youth has remained stable. Furthermore, both risk perception, and knowledge of the risks associated with cannabis use have increased since legalization. Data also show increasing displacement of the illegal market and a significant majority of adults accessing cannabis from the legal market.

138. The Cannabis Act requires that the Minister of Health cause a review of the Act three years following its coming-into-force (2018). Following the launch of the review, the Minister will table a report in both Houses of Parliament within 18 months. The review, led by an independent Expert Panel, will evaluate the Cannabis Act against its public health and safety objectives, and help identify priority areas for improving the functioning of the legislation.

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Health conditions of Indigenous Peoples

139. FPT Governments take a variety of steps to address health conditions in Indigenous populations through programs that specifically target their needs:

- Alberta established a First Nations Health Advisory Council and a Métis Health Advisory Council to help identify health gaps and improve access to health care services for First Nations people and Métis and provides funding to First Nations, Métis Settlements, the Métis Nation of Alberta, and other Indigenous-serving organizations to support the design and delivery of services on-and-off reserve and on-and-off Métis Settlements.
- Manitoba has invested in several initiatives and organizations including a new information sharing agreement, which enables 63 First Nations across the province to access the public health information management system. This allows healthcare professionals to collect, share and analyze critical health information to ensure continued quality care.
- In September 2019, Saskatchewan and the Meadow Lake Tribal Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together to achieve better health outcomes for residents in Northwest Saskatchewan. The agreement formally establishes a collaborative framework aimed at maximizing, through diverse and targeted initiatives, efforts to improve the health of First Nations people. This includes health promotion, tracking the determinants of health, and supporting efforts to access funds for new programs, services, and research.

Grassy Narrows First Nation

140. The GC is committed to ensuring that the residents of Asubpeeschoseewagong Netum Anishinabek (ANA), also known as Grassy Narrows First Nation, and Wabaseemoong Independent Nations (WIN) have access to their community mercury-related data and continues to offer free analysis of hair and blood samples to all residents of Asubpeeschoseewagong and Wabaseemoong, at their request.

141. In April 2020, the GC and ANA signed the Mercury Care Home Framework Agreement, which commits funding for the detailed design and construction of a mercury care home. Revision to the Framework Agreement further commit funding to support the operations, maintenance, and specialized service delivery of the Mercury Care Home in the community, along with a periodic funding review to ensure the goals of the home are fulfilled.

142. The goal of the Mercury Care Home is to provide healthcare services, programs, assisted daily living support, and other services to enable ANA to access the care they need while remaining in their community for as long as possible. Ontario is working with Canada to share materials and resources that will support ANA and WIN to further develop this care model.

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Indigenous students and students of African descent

143. PT governments are undertaking measures to ensure the completion of primary and secondary education by Indigenous students and students of African descent:

- Alberta supports First Nations, Métis, and Inuit student success with a number of key strategies, including establishing collaborative partnerships with First Nations and Métis communities; supporting school authorities to build relationships and engage with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit parents and families; developing culturally relevant learning resources and program supports and increasing the number of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit professionals in the education workforce.
- In Ontario, the Graduation Coach Program for Black Students was first launched in September 2019 in 9 school boards. This program, in collaboration with Black community and education partners, is creating inclusive spaces that will help to dismantle systemic barriers, eliminate disparities and close the achievement gap for Black students. The Graduation Coach offers direct supports and mentorship to Black students and advice to school leaders to inform system change at the school and board levels so that Black students feel welcome, have a sense of belonging and a better school experience.

Quality of education and educational outcomes of schools on reserve

144. Between 2016 and 2018, the GC worked closely with First Nations to fundamentally transform funding for First Nations elementary and post-secondary education on reserve. In 2019, the new funding approach was launched supporting students ordinarily resident on reserve with funding comparable to provincial education systems. The new funding includes additional support for language and cultural programming, and full-daytime kindergarten for children aged four and five at First Nations schools and before and after-school programming. As a result, First Nations children on reserve are being better supported, with a 52.1% national funding increase during the time period of this report (2015-2016 to 2020-2021).

Availability, accessibility and quality of pre-school education

145. With new investments announced in 2021, the GC aims to ensure that families in Canada are no longer burdened by high child care costs – with the goal of bringing fees for regulated child care down to \$10 per day on average within the next five years. By the end of 2022, the government is aiming to achieve a 50% reduction in average fees for regulated Early Learning and Child Care to make it more affordable for families. These targets would apply everywhere outside of Quebec, where prices are already affordable through its own well-established system since 1997.

146. The GC is also working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation to advance the goals of the co-developed Indigenous Early Learning and Childcare (ELCC) Framework (2018), including increasing access to high-quality, affordable, and culturally appropriate ELCC programs and services. Incremental investments announced in 2020-2021 include funding to: build Indigenous governance and capacity in the ELCC sector and enable Indigenous participation in the development of a Canada-wide ELCC system; enhance Indigenous ELCC programs and services; repair, renovate or build Indigenous ELCC sites; and, provide before and after school care for First Nations on reserve.

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Indigenous languages and cultures

147. FPT governments have taken measures to promote the preservation and use of Indigenous languages and cultures, including by ensuring that Indigenous languages are taught and used at schools:

- The GC's Indigenous Languages Act came into force in 2019 to support the efforts of Indigenous Peoples to reclaim, revitalize, maintain and strengthen their languages. The GC funds projects focused on community-driven activities, including language instruction and the development of language resources. From fiscal years 2015-2016 to 2020-2021, funding to support Indigenous languages increased by 275%.
- The Northwest Territories Education Act allows for the provision of Indigenous language instruction through first language instruction, immersion and second language instruction, and for the delivery of culture-based school programs as part of the education program for the education district. In the 2021-2022 school year, 42 out of 49 schools offered Indigenous language programming as a second language; four schools were offering Indigenous immersion programming in the primary grades.
- Saskatchewan affirms the preservation and growth of First Nations and Métis languages in Saskatchewan schools through the Inspiring Success First Nations and Métis PreK-12 Education Policy Framework in which the first policy goal is to ensure that First Nations and Métis languages and cultures are valued and supported. Indigenous language courses already available provincially at the secondary level include, nēhiyawēwin (Cree), Nakawe, Dene, Nakoda and Michif.
- In 2017, New Brunswick signed a treaty education memorandum of understanding with seven First Nations communities to develop authentic and culturally inclusive resources. Foundational shifts in curriculum development have been taking place since that time.
- In 2017, the Canada Council for the Arts, a federal crown corporation, established the Creating, Knowing and Sharing: The Arts and Cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples program to support artistic activities that respect and encourage First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultural self-determination and the vitality of Indigenous artistic practices and communities. For example, the Program supported the Yukon-based film production company NahHO Productions to digitize its large collection of Indigenous language recordings to save them for future generations.

Art and culture of African-Canadians

148. FPT governments have taken measures to promote the art and culture of people of African descent, including in the context of the United Nations' International Decade for People of African Descent:

- The GC's Working Group on the International Decade for People of African Descent coordinates government-wide efforts to advance the aims of the Decade (2015-2024). It convenes over 18 federal departments and institutions to ensure that government actions effectively address the needs of people of African descent in Canada and explores further government action beyond 2024, the last year of the Decade.
- To recognize the Decade, and to take action to address systemic anti-Black racism, the GC provided funding to establish the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative (SBCCI). In 2021, Canada provided additional funding for the SBCCI to continue progressing toward its objectives to build capacity and foundational infrastructure in Black Canadian communities. With over 200 distinct Black Canadian ethnicities in Canada, SBCCI's support can help ensure the building up of community organizations that are dedicated to sustaining, memorializing, and celebrating Black Canadian arts and culture in all its varied forms.
- In February 2020, Manitoba officially proclaimed February as Black History Month, recognizing the significant contributions made by people of African descent to the development and prosperity of the province in areas such as education, medicine, art, culture, public service, economic development, politics and human rights.
- In 2019-2020, Ontario provided funding to Black History Ottawa to host artistic and cultural events, focusing on the Decade's theme during Black History Month.

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Benefits of scientific progress for everyone

149. The GC recognizes the importance of ensuring that scientific information, data and outputs be more widely accessible and more reliably harnessed through the active engagement of all stakeholders. It also promotes initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of Canadians in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), including among women and other underrepresented groups.

- Modernization of the GC's Citizen Science Portal which provides information and access to science projects and science experiments happening in various communities for Canadians to participate in.

Promoting culture

150. The GC has implemented policies and programs that promote an environment where Canadians can experience dynamic cultural expressions, celebrate its history and heritage and build strong communities. Examples include the Celebration and Commemoration Program, which funded National Indigenous Peoples Day events across Canada, as well as the Building Communities through Arts and Heritage Program, which provided support to encourage citizen engagement and social inclusion within communities across Canada.

Internet access

151. The GC, in recognition of the importance of digital equity, has introduced several initiatives that support high-speed Internet access for all Canadians, including those in rural and remote communities and for disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups:

- Launched in 2016, the Connect to Innovate (CTI) Program is bringing improved connectivity to 975 rural and remote communities in Canada, including 190 Indigenous communities. CTI is primarily focused on the construction of new "backbone" infrastructure to connect institutions like schools and hospitals. Backbone networks are digital highways that bring high-speed capacity to a community. A portion of the Program's funding is also being used to provide "last-mile" infrastructure to directly connect households and businesses that had service speeds lower than 5 Megabits per second (Mbps).
- In July 2019, the Accessible Canada Act was adopted. It includes new obligations for telecommunications service providers such as publishing accessibility plans and progress reports and instituting a feedback process in consultation with persons with disabilities.
- Published in 2019, Canada's Connectivity Strategy set national connectivity targets to provide high-speed Internet access (50/10 Mbps) to 95% of Canadian households by 2026 and 100% by 2030, while improving mobile cellular access across the country. The 2026 target was accelerated to 98% with additional investments in the Universal Broadband Fund.
- Established in November 2020, the Universal Broadband Fund (UBF) supports broadband infrastructure projects that will bring high-speed Internet to rural and remote households. In addition, UBF funding has been allocated to mobile Internet projects that primarily benefit Indigenous Peoples. The UBF builds on other federal initiatives that are bringing high-speed Internet and improved mobile services to Canadians such as the Canadian Radio-television Telecommunications Commission's Broadband Fund (CRTC) and the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program – Rural and Northern Communities Infrastructure Stream.

IV. Good practices

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Good practices in policy formulation and implementation

152. Since 2016, FPT governments have put in place good practices in the formulation and implementation of policies that have contributed to the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, in particular for marginalized and disadvantaged individuals and groups:

- The GC has been pursuing an overarching whole-of-government approach through Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus), which is an analytical tool used to support the development of responsive and inclusive policies, programs, and other initiatives. GBA Plus is a process for understanding who is impacted by the issue or opportunity being addressed by the initiative; identifying how the initiative could be tailored to meet diverse needs of the people most impacted; and anticipating and mitigating any barriers to accessing or benefitting from the initiative. GBA Plus is an intersectional analysis that goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences to consider other factors, such as age, disability, education, ethnicity, economic status, geography (including rurality), language, race, religion, and sexual orientation. GBA Plus has a long history within the federal government and has been required as part of the policy, program and other initiative process and in decision-making across federal government departments for close to 30 years.
- In 2018, the GC established a Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Unit to coordinate efforts, raise awareness, monitor and report on Canada's implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The same year, the GC also established the SDG Funding Program with a budget of \$59.8 million over 13 years to fund projects that help increase public awareness of the SDGs, facilitate improved social, economic and environmental outcomes for Canadians, and advance Canada's implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The SDG funding Program (2018-2021) provided funding to support 127 projects in the amount of approximately \$20 million. In 2018, Canada also presented its first Voluntary National Review to the UN's High-Level Political Forum showcasing its progress on the 2023 Agenda and the SDGs.
- Released in 2021, the GC launched Moving Forward Together: Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy, which focuses on widespread, collaborative partnerships to support everyone in addressing challenges faced by marginalized groups and those living in vulnerable situations. It also released Canada's Federal Implementation Plan for the 2030 Agenda in July 2021, which articulates how the federal government will contribute to advancing the National Strategy. The Plan also defines clear roles and responsibilities for departments in implementing the 20230 Agenda.
- In 2020, the Federal Anti-Racism Secretariat began developing an Anti-Racism Framework (ARF) in response to growing recognition of the existence of systemic racism in Canada and public expectation for necessary reparatory federal action. As a whole-of-government suite of analytical, design, and corrective resources, the ARF is crafted to help eliminate systemic barriers in policies, programs, services, and legislation. Ultimately, ARF seeks to affect systems change that can help generate better quality of life outcomes for diverse populations with lived experience of racism by closing the racial gap and helping to guarantee their human rights.

153. In 2020, Telefilm Canada, a federal crown corporation, launched its Equity and Representation Action Plan, which lays down seven action items and accompanying strategies. The plan aims to transform the Canadian audiovisual industry into one that reflects a culture of mutual respect, dignity, and inclusivity. It also supports the goal of formulating a framework for supporting further equity and opportunities for members of Indigenous, Black, racialized and gender-diverse communities. Actions taken include diversifying the workforce, prioritizing data collection, reviewing decision-making processes and programs to ensure support for creators of underrepresented identities, and engaging in ongoing dialogue with underrepresented communities.