



Government
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CANADA'S NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON WOMEN,
PEACE AND SECURITY
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**CROWN-INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND
NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA, AND
INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA**

Progress report for fiscal year 2017/18

CROWN-INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA, AND INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA

CROWN-INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA, AND INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA, AND WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

Indigenous women and girls continue to face disproportionate discrimination and violence in Canada. Since the publication of the Action Plan in November 2017, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) have been taking steps to promote the empowerment of Indigenous women and achieve gender equality in Canada. Here are some examples of steps that have been taken since the publication of the Action plan.

1. Including the voices of women in policy development

Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) is an analytical process used to help identify the potential impacts of policies, programs and services on diverse groups of women, men and gender-diverse people. The “plus” acknowledges that GBA goes beyond sex and gender differences to consider multiple identity factors that intersect to make people who they are (these include race, ethnicity, religion, age and mental or physical disability).

CIRNAC and ISC established a governance structure to advance GBA+ implementation across both departments. GBA+ will be applied to all relevant policy, program and service delivery initiatives.

The two departments will also work with Indigenous partners on the co-development of a culturally competent GBA+ toolkit. This will help leverage engagement mechanisms with Indigenous partners to define how best to include the voices of women, youth and other marginalized voices in policy-making.

2. Recognizing the rights of Indigenous women

In February 2018, the Prime Minister of Canada announced that the Government of Canada will develop a Recognition and Implementation of Indigenous Rights Framework to shape the Government’s approach to federal laws and policies. The Government launched an engagement process with First Nations, Inuit and Métis, as well as others, on how to best implement this approach.

The Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations began engagement in February 2018. As of June 30, 2018, out of a total of 1326 participants, 646 women had taken part. During consultations, participants underlined the importance of ensuring that Indigenous women’s voices were heard, recommended ways to improve women’s health on reserve, and stressed the importance of promoting Indigenous women’s rights. The Framework will be introduced in 2018 and implemented before October 2019.

3. Eliminating known sex-based inequities in Indian registration

In October 2016, the Government of Canada introduced legislation (Bill S-3) proposing several amendments to the *Indian Act* to address known sex-based inequities in Indian registration highlighted by a ruling of the Quebec Superior Court (Descheneaux). This decision followed a series of court decisions addressing sex-based discriminating provisions of the *Indian Act* which in certain cases prevented women to pass the right to registration to their children. The bill received Royal Assent in December 2017, effectively becoming law. Based on a demographic projection commissioned by the Government of Canada, it is estimated that approximately 28,000 to 35,000 individuals became entitled to be registered as an Indian under the *Indian Act*.

In addition, according to section 11 of Bill S-3, the minister must initiate consultation with First Nations and other interested parties in order to address, in collaboration with those First Nations and other parties, issues raised by the provisions of the *Indian Act* related to registration and band membership. This collaborative process consists of two phases: first, co-design of the consultation process and, second, consultation process. The co-design of the consultation process began on October 31, 2017, and ended on March 31, 2018. The collaborative process on broader issues related to Indian registration, band membership and First Nation citizenship was launched on June 12, 2018, and will last for approximately 12 months. A progress report to Parliament will be made in June 2019.

4. Building relationships with Indigenous women's organizations

On June 15, 2017, Canada signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada. Since the publication of the Action Plan, Canada has participated in activities and engagement through this agreement. The goal of the MOU is to facilitate engagement with government departments with mandates impacting the health, well-being, safety and socio-economic development of Inuit women, as well as to assist in addressing the systemic barriers that keep Inuit women and their children in precarious living conditions.

At the time of drafting this report, Canada is negotiating a memorandum of understanding with the Native Woman's Association of Canada (NWAC). The proposed agreement is the formalization of a relationship process that sets out how the Government of Canada and NWAC will work together to ensure the voices of Indigenous women in Canada are reflected in all policy, program and legislation in Canada. The agreement identifies areas for discussion across government departments, including strategies to address gender-based violence and economic and social empowerment.

5. Working with North American partners to prevent violence against Indigenous Women and Girls

An outcome of the 2016 North American Leaders Summit was the establishment of the North American Trilateral Working Group on Violence against Indigenous Women and Girls. The Working Group consists of representatives of Canada, the United States and Mexico. Its mandate is to analyze violence against Indigenous women and girls in a meaningful, constructive and forward-looking way in order to address the disproportionate level of violence and victimization they face in all North America.

The second meeting of the Working Group took place in Ottawa in November 2017. At this meeting, the Working Group committed to hold annual meetings to find solutions to violence against Indigenous women and girls in full collaboration with Indigenous women and leaders.

The Government of Mexico will be hosting the third Working Group session during the first week of October 2018. The objective of the event is to continue the fruitful efforts and discussions carried out by the Working Group to date on eradication of violence against Indigenous women, data collection and

sharing, criminal justice responses and economic empowerment. This year's event will also focus on the particular needs of Indigenous girls and youth and the importance of creating enabling environments for their empowerment both now and in the future.

6. Addressing the interim report of the National Inquiry into Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls

On November 1, 2017, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls published an interim report. The interim report included recommendations identifying changes to improve the functioning of the inquiry and better address the needs of survivors and family members going forward.

The Government of Canada is taking action in response to some of these recommendations, including by providing an extension of the time period for the completion of the Inquiry. Additionally, the Government of Canada is:

- increasing health support and victim services by providing \$21.3 million over three years to complement the health supports provided by the Inquiry;
- providing an additional \$5.42 million in 2019-2020 to extend the timeframe for the two Department of Justice Canada initiatives: Family Information Liaison Units and funding for community-based organizations to support families beyond the life of the Inquiry;
- establishing a commemoration fund by providing \$10 million over two years to honour the lives and legacies of Indigenous women, girls and LGBTQ2S individuals;
- providing up to \$1.25 million to organizations with expertise in law enforcement and policing to lead a review of policies and practices with regards to their relations with the Indigenous peoples they serve; and
- providing \$9.6 million over five years to support the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's new National Investigative Standards and Practices Unit.

The final report, anticipated for April 2019, will state the Inquiry's findings on the systemic causes of violence against Indigenous women and girls, and make recommendations on actions to address these causes and to increase the safety of Indigenous women and girls in Canada. It will also address ways to honour and commemorate missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Conclusion

Although challenges remain, the Government of Canada is committed to working in partnership with Indigenous peoples in Canada on improving the lives of Indigenous women, girls and families, and empowering women to promote their human rights and well-being.

As Canada learns from these experiences domestically, it will also continue to improve its capacity to respond to similar challenges faced by women and girls abroad.