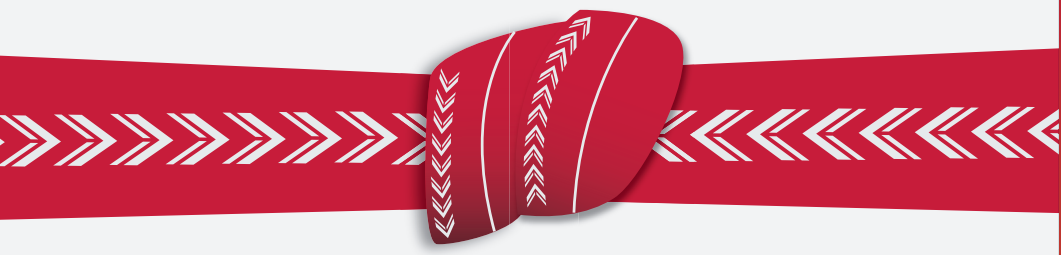


MMIWG2S+



Report on The Roundtable of
Indigenous Leaders
and Representatives
and Federal-Provincial-Territorial
Ministers on **Missing And Murdered
Indigenous Women, Girls And
2SLGBTQI+ People**

JANUARY 10th 2023



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Catalogue: R118-3/2023E-PDF
ISBN 978-0-660-47841-8

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Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, 2023.

This publication is also available in French under the title: Rapport sur la table ronde des
dirigeants et représentants autochtones et des ministres fédéraux, provinciaux et territoriaux
sur les femmes, filles et personnes 2ELGBTQI+ autochtones disparues et assassinées

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The first ever Roundtable of Indigenous Leaders and representatives and federal and provincial, territorial Ministers on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2LGBTBTQI+ People took place in a virtual setting on January 10, 2023. More than 250 Indigenous women, survivors, family members and members of a wide cross section of Indigenous organizations took part along with key Ministers from federal, provincial and territorial governments whose mandates include accountability for missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ persons.

The purpose of the meeting was to have an initial national dialogue on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, (MMIWG) and 2SLGBTQI+ people, with a focus on how to improve cross jurisdictional collaboration, discuss areas of success, highlight areas of future focus related to MMIWG, including the perspectives from Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people, family members and survivors.

The virtual setting enabled broad participation from families and survivors, grassroots organizations, Indigenous women's organizations, National Indigenous organizations, regional service delivery organizations, regional advocacy groups and others. The meeting was facilitated by Jennifer Moore Rattray, Chief Operating Officer of the Southern Chiefs' Organization in Manitoba and Lisa Koperqualuk, President of the Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada. The agenda was developed through dialogue between the federal government, the National Families and Survivors Circle, provincial and territorial officials and

other key Indigenous partners. During the meeting, participants spoke about their lived experience and offered concrete solutions to accelerating implementation of the Calls for Justice, including investments in education, the need for greater recognition of, and respect for, Indigenous and human rights; improved oversight and accountability; and the need to prioritize programs and services for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people.

Federal ministers representing Crown-Indigenous Relations, Northern Affairs, Justice, Women and Gender Equality and the Parliamentary Secretary of Canadian Heritage were in attendance, as was the Deputy Minister of Indigenous Services Canada. In addition, Provincial and Territorial Ministers responsible for Indigenous Affairs, public safety, community programs, housing, gender equity and others provided perspectives and progress updates from their jurisdictions while acknowledging that much more needs to be done to ensure the safety and security of Indigenous, women, girls and gender diverse people.

The Roundtable provided a first opportunity to showcase the implementation of key actions relevant to addressing the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQI+ persons. This report acknowledges the courageous voices of families and survivors in their quest to continue prioritizing these key implementation efforts, to find truth and to ensure justice for their loved ones.

VOICES OF ELDERS

ELDER ANNIE SMITH ST-GEORGE
ELDER JEANNIE OKALIK

The Roundtable opened and closed with four Elders, each with their own unique message. A brief snapshot of their teachings is included below.

“Our Aboriginal women and our young girls should be brought back to their culture and their teachings as I was taught as a young girl at 11 years old, the Elders taught me. We have to bring the culture back to the grandmothers and to the medicine people so that we work in joint efforts with others.”

“It is now the time to take action all of us. We are all together in a big circle here to work together in harmony not for only us, but for the future generation of our people, the Indigenous People, we are on our lands, we here, the original people of this land...”

WORDS OF WELCOME: THE
HONOURABLE MARC MILLER, MINISTER
OF CROWN-INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

The Roundtable opened with Minister Miller giving thanks and offering tobacco to Elders St-George and Okalik and welcoming participants to the meeting.

“As a nation we need to strengthen jurisdictional cooperation and coordination and dismantle the silos within our governments stand in the way of meaningfully supporting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women and girls. Those continued silos continue to have devastating effects on your people today...”



“Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ People need to feel safe in their communities wherever they are, and their rights be recognized and respected. To the Indigenous women, girls, survivors and 2SLGBTQI+ people around the people today I’m grateful for your participation, your experiences. Your perspectives are invaluable and will inform our path forward...”

AGENDA ITEM #1: INDIGENOUS WOMEN’S AND 2SLGBTQI+ PEOPLES’ WISDOM: GRASSROOTS AND FAMILIES AND SURVIVORS’ VOICES

Session Objectives:

- » Hear the lived experiences from families and survivors to help frame approaches based on principles of respect, reciprocity, and accountability that protect the interests and needs of families and survivors; and,
- » Discuss the importance of including the collective knowledge and lived experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQI+ people, families, survivors and grassroots organizations in the implementation of the work to end the violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NATIONAL FAMILY AND SURVIVORS CIRCLE

Hilda Anderson-Pyrz, Chair of the National Family and Survivors Circle (NFSC), provided brief context on the NFSC, as well as a brief introduction to the NFSC and its work. She shared the vision of the NFSC:

“Our vision is for all Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people to live dignified lives where we are all free to fully assert and exercise our Indigenous rights, including inherent and treaty and our human rights, where we will continue to regain our power and place within our lands, territories within our nations, peoples and communities where we are valued and respected and live with dignity and substantive equality in Canada.”

She introduced the members of the Circle: Bernie Williams (British Columbia), Anne Maje Raider (Yukon), Janet Pitsiulaaq Brewster (Nunavut), Myrna LaPlante (Manitoba), Tanya Debassige (Ontario), Charlotte Wolfrey (Newfoundland and Labrador), Melanie Morrison (Quebec), and Denise Pictou Maloney (Nova Scotia).

1. LIVED EXPERIENCES FROM SPEAKERS

Janet Brewster, Member of the National Family and Survivors Circle described her personal experiences and the northern experience. She shared statistics of how Nunavut has among the highest levels of violence towards women in the country, and conveyed how the history of trauma and violence stemming from colonization and related policies have contributed to intergenerational violence that puts Inuit women at a greater risk.

“We know that the history of trauma and violence stems from colonization and related policies have contributed to that intergenerational violence of placing women at a greater risk of growing up in abusive households where violence becomes a normalized part of interpersonal relationships and maybe even expected or perceived as acceptable...”

“Every, person who becomes more aware of Indigenous women, girls and gender - or the issues that Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse people face, every new shelter built, and every piece of legislation passed brings us closer to ending the genocide and creating safer communities. Terry Fox’s Marathon of Hope...began with a single step and over \$850 million dollars has been invested in cancer research. And that started with one small step.

I think it’s really important for those who have the power to make change and to create change - who are here today - take the small steps that, that you’re able to take and celebrate those steps towards lasting change...”

Delilah Potts, Cultural support worker for MMIWG LGBTQ individuals, Métis Settlements General Council, shared what it was like to work in Métis settlement communities. She conveyed the importance of everyone being aware of the challenges faced by women and girls and reminded that women go missing every single day. She also encouraged everyone of the need to remain vigilant:

"...my cousin one day was in Edmonton with her mother ... and she said, "Oh, I'm going for a drive." And we asked, "Where are you going?" She said, "I'm going for a drive with that guy in that truck." And we asked her if she knew him, she said, "No, I met him on the internet." So, the mother went and chased the guy away. So, that was the end of that..."

In addition, she shared that the safety concerns that people she works with are facing including living in very remote communities and travelling in tour bus settings which is a culture shock. Delilah also raised awareness to the interconnectedness between loss of language and culture. She conveyed that Indigenous Peoples, as a solution, needed to go back to their past, to know their present to work on their future. She called specifically for land-based teachings for Indigenous Peoples and children as well as viable, accountable, transparent funding for individuals living in remote communities as opposed to pilot projects.

"Why can't we have something that is viable, accountable, transparent, that families have something to wake up to every day and want to wake up to? Once you have a healthy community, you get healthy people, and your community will start to thrive."

And I noticed when people do ceremonies to say, you got a new building in your community, they cut ribbons, so my take on that, why are you cutting something when [holding up her Metis sash while tying a knot in it] you should be binding it together to keep us together."

Proposed Action Items:

- » Address housing and food security issues for Inuit as violence towards women happen in concert with these issues.
- » Help Inuit children break the cycle of intergenerational violence through education and developing tools and opportunities to work through trauma.
- » Continue to build allyship with Canadians so that they better understand the issues Indigenous peoples are facing.
- » Acknowledge the work urban Inuit groups to do keep Inuit safe outside of Inuit Nunangat.
- » Support viable, accountable, transparent funding for individuals living in remote communities as opposed to pilot projects.

2. OPEN DIALOGUE

Hilda Anderson-Pyrz, Chair of NFSC, began the open dialogue by emphasizing the importance of the Roundtable meeting and having provincial, territorial, and federal partners all at the table. She emphasized the role of everyone at the table in implementing the 231 Calls for Justice, to make sure that Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people can live full lives, in safety and security.



“Each and everyone of you have a responsibility to act and to implement the 231 calls for justice as Canadians, as participants, as service providers you know, we all have a responsibility to act.”

Carol McBride, President of the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC), provided two examples of the work done by NWAC, including the Safe Passage Project and its own plan to create positive results to MMIWG and 2SLGBTQI+ issues. She also highlighted NWAC’s promotion of resiliency lodges, which are used as culturally safe places for trauma-informed healing. She raised the challenges that urban Indigenous women are facing and the need to address those.

Gerri Sharpe, President of Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, echoed Janet Brewster’s point that most Inuit need to travel for education, health care and employment, which often means leaving communities and travelling to a place outside Inuit Nunangat which places Inuit women at-risk. Gerri conveyed how there needs to be an emphasis on educating the rest of Canada on cultural safety for Inuit women outside their communities and argued it falls on the Federal Government to ensure this.

“...for most Inuit, we need to travel for education, we need to travel for health care, we need to travel to advance our education, to advance employment and this often means leaving our communities, outside of Inuit Nunangat and that places us at risk. Our home communities are where we are surrounded by Inuit, that we are accustomed to being around, that we know who they are, we know their families, we know, their grandparents, their parents, their cousins, their sisters, their daughters, their children, their grandchildren. This is the way that Inuit live.

When you move to an urban setting that’s no longer the case because you are surrounded by people that have no clue about your culture despite the fact that we live in Canada.”

Cora McGuire-Cyrette, Executive Director of the Ontario Native Women’s Association, thanked the speakers for bringing forward their perspectives, and pointed out how we need indicators for measuring progress for safety.

Sylvia Maracle, Chairperson of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Committee, brought forward how the 2SLGBTQI+ group is not included in the work in provinces and territories. She acknowledged that while some provinces and territories have provincial committees with 2SLBTQI+ people on them, she felt that they do not ask 2-Spirit LGBTQI+ groups that may be available for direct representation. Sylvia requested that Indigenous organizations, the federal government and provinces and territories ask the 2SLGBTQI+ community to be involved and make space for them to have their own conversations so that they can help transfer information.

“We can tell you as [2SLGBTQ+] members of the community with lived experience, both with violence, having relatives go missing, having relatives who legal systems insist on calling them their brick names as a way that they live their lives, continue to become larger barriers.

But one of the biggest barriers is that we have been systemically robbed of our own teachings and our own role in our communities and we’re asking you to stop that...”

Marjolaine Étienne, President of Femmes Autochtones du Québec (FAQ), conveyed how FAQ is trying to work on Indigenous women’s leadership. She pointed out how Indigenous women in Québec are hurt in two ways: in their home communities, and in urban environments. In both areas, Indigenous women have been killed or have undergone violence. Marjolaine highlighted the importance of the work on the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and emphasized the need for Indigenous organizations to work together to develop a strategy regarding what has been done.

“...I think we could effectively bring together each organization across Canada and work on real issues...in a way that from year to year we can, yes, actually think about working on action but evolve over time...”

Elmer St. Pierre, National Chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP), spoke about how they worked with families, survivors and communities to develop CAP’s action plan and they have identified pathways to safety and well-being. They have asked to

be at the heart of CAP’s work and to ensure their rights are protected, regardless of status and where they live. They asked for equitable access to resources and to work together, across governments and organizations, and for governments and organizations to remain accountable to them. CAP emphasized the need to amplify the voice of grassroots people, communities, and families and survivors and to support boys and men. National Chief St. Pierre also requested Minister Miller to make next Roundtable a whole-day event as opposed to half-day.

“We have remembered – we must remember the voice of our grassroots people, our communities, and our families and survivors.”

Margaret Nakashuk, Minister of Family Services for the Government of Nunavut, conveyed how her government expects to make measurable progress in the next year on MMIWG2S+, and looked forward to presenting their initiatives during upcoming roundtables and to participate in more meetings in the future.

Proposed Action Items:

- » Create indicators for measuring progress for safety of Indigenous women.
- » Provinces and territories should make space for 2SLGBTQ+ persons in decision making.
- » Make the Roundtable a whole-day event as opposed to a half-day.

AGENDA ITEM #2: INDIGENOUS
WOMEN'S AND 2SLGBTQI+ LEADERSHIP:
THE URBAN CONTEXT

Session Objective:

- » Highlight the complexities of the urban reality that Indigenous communities face and identify priority areas for focus to end the violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ peoples in urban settings.

**1. LIVED EXPERIENCES FROM
SPEAKERS**

Jocelyn Formsma, Chief Executive Officer of the National Association of Friendship Centers (NAFC) articulated the challenges Indigenous Peoples face to access resources off-reserve as well as what is needed from governments to address some of these challenges.

"...we need to think about how we ensure that the rights that we hold as Indigenous Peoples travel with us and aren't inaccessible to us because of where we reside..."

Jocelyn described the struggle grassroots organizations often face: grassroots organizations are doing the work, but they do not have the same access or opportunity to do the national-level or even provincial-level advocacy because they are so busy on the ground. However, urban Indigenous organizations and people doing the work on-the-ground have crucial information that we need to make proper choices and policies related to funding, programming, and decisions, and urban organizations need to be engaged in the process.



"Actions cannot be limited or frustrated by jurisdictional wrangling, it just simply cannot. People's lives are literally on the line."

Jocelyn commented that the Calls for Justice or the TRC Calls to Action will not be realized without an urban strategy. She acknowledged that while provincial, territorial and federal governments and Indigenous organizations come together during emergency situations, they need to get better at being proactive.

"Our people on the ground don't care about jurisdiction. All they care about is if there's a call, is it answered? If I call for help, is it provided? Do I need housing? Is it provided? Do I need childcare? Do I have it? I need healing. Are there options? If I have a loved one that's been murdered or is missing, who can I call and I can rely on somebody to help me look and to help me find the answers that I need? Those things aren't bound by jurisdiction, in fact, that's what gets in the way a lot of times..."

Nakuset, Executive Director of the Native Women's Shelter of Montréal, shared examples of the work her team does in Montreal. She discussed the results of a successful project with the Montreal Police that started in 2015. The Iskweu project, which was funded by Justice Canada, enabled the Native Women's Shelter to hire an Indigenous

coordinator to go between the Montreal Indigenous community and the police. This coordinator supported families affected by missing Indigenous women, helped to do paperwork for initial inquiries, gave additional resources, helped women who had to go to court, and gave toolkits so when people came to Montreal they could be guided to Indigenous resources. The best practices that emerged from the work with the Montreal Police will be discussed with other communities, to see if they are interested in having a similar model with the police near them.

A 1-800 number also exists, where people can leave messages about missing persons they may have seen, or concerns about someone that has gone missing. This information is also shared with police, to help find missing persons.

Proposed Actions:

- » Ensure that the rights of Indigenous Peoples are recognized wherever they reside.
- » Engage with urban Indigenous organizations and people doing the work on-the-ground to make proper choices and policies related to funding and programming.
- » Develop an urban strategy to realize the Calls for Justice and the TRC Calls to Action.

2. OPEN DIALOGUE

Aly Bear, Vice-Chief of the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations, conveyed the need to discuss funding for FILUs: Family Information Liaison Units. She asked whether this funding would be extended, stating that her organization has only one FILU worker and 123+ families they serve, therefore requiring more support to serve families and providing them the healing and support they need.

Aly also pointed out that, unlike offenders, families do not have the support to navigate the justice system, resulting in victims being left out. Aly recounted a personal story of lead investigators prevented from carrying out their investigation on the murder of a child, because of jurisdictional wrangling between child and family services and the justice department. Aly also relayed the need to consider kinship laws to protect children and echoed earlier comments about educating Canadians about the importance of Indigenous cultures.

“Women were always respected in our communities and why is it that we’re not? Colonialism and patriarchy...”

Melanie Omeniho, President of Les Femmes Michif Otiemisiwak (LFMO), conveyed her disappointment that there was not more information shared about where the Action Plan is at and where the commitments are. She stressed that it should not be on the shoulders of community members to demonstrate progress. She called on governments to come together and make action happen to address the ongoing crisis of Indigenous women and girls who go missing or are murdered.

Gertie Mai Muse, Member of the Urban Sub-Working Group for MMIWG2S+, remarked how she was tired of urban groups being seen as competition and as the “other.” She noted that urban communities are established, vibrant communities with infrastructure, and are, in and of themselves, kin networks. She called on the need to move beyond pilot projects and provide predictable, regularized funding, and properly fund and acknowledge the work happening in urban environments.

Sandra Montour, Co-Chair of the Indigenous Women’s Advisory Council (Ontario):



“Families deserve to be safe. Our Indigenous women need to be safe; our grandchildren need to be safe and that’s what we need to be focused on rather than that philosophy that jurisdiction, those barriers that keep us apart, those are, those, those fences are put up, are set up and have been forever by the government and they continue to still be...”

Rachelle Venne, CEO of the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (Treaty 6), conveyed the need to make sure the actions and recommendations that are put forward are acted on. In particular, she pointed to the lack of supports for women exiting the prison system, which is an area the Institute would like to work on together with the federal government to ensure that when groups are putting forward proposals or looking for support for funding they are connected with MMIWG2S+.

...“non-profits have picked up the slack of the governments in not addressing these issues. Edmonton is kind of a hub for release of women exiting the prison system, yet there’s really not any supports, and they don’t link anything to MMIWG work. And so, that is an area you know, working within the government to kind of identify how we can make sure that when groups like ourselves are putting forward proposals or looking for support for funding that it is connected to the MMIWG recommendations...”

Cora McGuire-Cyrette, Executive Director of the Ontario Native Women’s Association, echoed the need for equitable funding and investments into funding for Indigenous women’s safety.

Proposed Actions:

- » Increase Family Information Liaison Unit (FILU) support.
- » Support MMIWG victims and families to help navigate the justice system.
- » Understand how family services and justice departments intersect when it comes to Missing and Murdered children.
- » Give families and kin of MMIWG2S+ the financial support that foster parents are given.
- » Support families legally to be able to navigate family legal systems (ex. for adoption of Indigenous children whose mothers were missing or murdered).
- » Create physical safe spaces for families in urban centres.
- » Address the lack of supports for women exiting the prison system and link this issue to MMIWG.
- » Put an MMIWG ombudsperson and oversight committee in place.
- » Support Elders playing a larger role in addressing young girls to teach them about safety.

AGENDA ITEM #3: FEDERAL, PROVINCIAL, TERRITORIAL PERSPECTIVES ON MMIWG 2SLGBTQI+

1. FEDERAL LEADERS

The Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations acknowledged that governments working in silos present barriers to addressing MMIWG and 2SLGBTQI+ People.

The Minister reaffirmed his commitment to ensuring that work is as transparent as possible, that it contributes to a wider recognition of Indigenous rights, and that it rebuilds trust. The Minister shared that he is committed to continue to work hard together to make sure investments are working. The Minister announced the appointment of Jennifer Moore Rattray as the Ministerial Special Representative on Call for Justice 1.7 (Ombudsperson) and announced that Innovation 7, an Indigenous enterprise, would be engaging key partners on the establishment of an oversight mechanism.

“Indigenous women need to access supports and services wherever they reside and we have a responsibility to do whatever we can to make sure this happens and to forge meaningful relationships to achieve it...”

The Honourable Dan Vandal, Minister of Northern Affairs, conveyed the need to do a better job of investing in housing, food security, social determinants in health, and going back to past culture and traditional ways.

Chris Bittle, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, reaffirmed the federal government’s commitments to supporting the retention, revitalization, maintenance, and strengthening of Indigenous cultures, languages, spaces; representation in the arts, media, and continuing to combat hate speech. He committed on behalf of Canadian Heritage to continue to work closely with Indigenous partners to implement the MMIWG National Action Plan.

The Honourable Marci Ien, Minister of Women and Gender Equality acknowledged the issue of MMIWG and 2SLGBTQI+ People is cross-cabinet, cross-government, and cross-jurisdictional. She also summarized WAGE's Plan to End Gender Based Violence, centered in organizations that serve Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQQI+ peoples. Minister Ien also announced how the government will be launching the 2SLGBTQ+ Action Plan—centering on the 2S.

“There are so many people in Canada who just never saw the stories, never heard the stories, never heard your stories and time’s up... this isn’t about jurisdictions it’s about humanity, it’s about doing the right thing, it’s about action and it’s about time”

Gina Wilson, Deputy Minister at Indigenous Services Canada, identified various initiatives Indigenous Services Canada is funding that support Indigenous women, MMIWG and 2SLGBTQI+ People.

Shalene Curtis-Michael, Associate Deputy Minister at the Department of Justice Canada, acknowledged the conversation related to violence and recognized that more funding needs to be given to more Indigenous-led organizations that are on the ground for people who interact with the justice system that has systemic racism embedded in it. She recognized that programming has not happened as quickly as it needs to and conveyed how her department is working on the Indigenous Justice Strategy and is facilitating Indigenous-led consultations so that we can develop this strategy. She also highlighted the

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act can support anti-racism.

Highlights:

- » Appointment of Jennifer Moore Rattray on Call for Justice 1.7 (Ombudsperson) (CIR).
- » Innovation 7 to engage on Call for Justice 1.10 (Oversight Mechanism) (CIR).
- » Ensure that work is as transparent as possible, contributes to a wider recognition of Indigenous rights, and rebuilds trust (CIR).
- » Continue to work hard together to make sure investments are working (CIR).
- » Do a better job of investing in housing, food security, social determinants in health, and going to back to past culture and traditional ways (NA).
- » Support the retention, revitalization, maintenance, and strengthening of Indigenous cultures, languages, spaces; representation in the arts, media, and continuing to combat hate speech (Heritage Canada).
- » Continue to work closely with Indigenous partners to implement the MMIWG National Action Plan (Heritage Canada).

2. PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL LEADERS

Jeanie McLean, Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equity, Yukon, highlighted Yukon's MMIWG2S+ Strategy; their first accountability forum, held May 2022; and the recent release of their implementation strategy for 12 priorities related to MMIWG2S+.



“...We're now continuing the work on the full implementation plan for the strategy, and we'll aim to have this done as soon as we can in Spring of 2023...”

Douglas Scott, Deputy Minister, Public Safety and Solicitor General, British Columbia, highlighted \$5.3 million in funding to focus on MMIWG prevention and \$10 million for stable funding for sexual assault centres and programs within BC, with one third of the funding earmarked towards Indigenous Peoples and supporting culturally safe and meaningful delivery.

Caroline Wawzonek, Member of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, and Minister responsible for the Status of Women, had to leave the meeting a little early, but Northwest Territories shared in the chat that they are looking forward to further discussions, and shared the Northwest Territories MMIWG action plan which can be found at <https://www.eia.gov.nt.ca/fr/priorities/les-femmes-et-les-filles-autochtones-disparues-et-assassinees/actions-du-gtno-pour>

Whitney Issik, Member of Legislative Assembly for Alberta and former Minister for the Status of Women, highlighted Alberta's Premier's Council on MMIWG, which has a 5-year mandate. Council members include experts, service providers, and family members of MMIWG and 2SLGBTQ+ people. Minister Issik also shared that guiding this council's work is Alberta's MMIWG Alberta Roadmap to reduce violence and increase safety and economic security for MMIWG and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People.

“Setting up the Premier's Council secures space for the voices of Indigenous women and girls and 2S+ People to reach decision-makers through all of government...”

Laura Ross, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Saskatchewan, reconfirmed Saskatchewan's commitment to the TRC and Calls for Justice. She highlighted the recently announced \$400 000 in annual funding for MMIWG to support projects that promote and enhance prevention and build safe conditions for women, girls 2S+ and their communities. Minister Ross also identified her realization that education, for example on gender based violence, is so important.

Alan Lagimodiere, Minister of Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations, Manitoba, offered condolences to families and communities of victims Rebecca Contois, Morgan Beatrice Harris, Mercedes Myran, and Buffalo Woman, the fourth unidentified victim of the tragic Winnipeg murders discovered in December 2022.

Minister Lagimodiere acknowledged that the Roundtable was an opportunity to work together in collaboration, to dismantle silos, and overcome jurisdictional challenges, and conveyed his hope for more meetings to set goals and plans in order to better Manitoba's success moving forward.

The Minister committed to develop a plan to address MMIWG informed by the NAP, federal government, and a whole-of-Manitoba approach.

"We believe that any efforts by governments to address this national strategy, must be holistic, coordinated and inclusive of all areas of government..."

Rochelle Squires, Minister of Families and Minister responsible for Status of Women, Manitoba, acknowledged that a whole-of-province approach is important when talking about addressing MMIWG and committed to work on addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous women and girls who are sexually trafficked and exploited and who are experiencing intimate partner violence, and to stop the exploitation of children before it begins.

Marie-Lison Fougère, Deputy Minister Responsible for Women and Economic Opportunity, Ontario, yielded the floor to Cora McGuire-Cyrette, co-chair of the Indigenous Women's Advisory Council, who remarked that Ontario's strategy for addressing MMIWG and 2SLGBTQQI+ seeks to address systemic issues.

Margaret Nakashuk, Minister of Family Services, Government of Nunavut, conveyed the need for more resources

in the territory for housing, food, shelter, nutrition. She stated the need to ensure that services are provided in the language its recipients speak and that counselors speak the language and have the training to provide trauma-based programs. The Minister stated work must continue on how to provide services including medical services, as they are all outside the territory of Nunavut. She echoed the notion that when women are leaving the territory, that leads to MMIWG.

Ian Lafrénière, Minister Responsible for Relations with the First Nations and the Inuit, Quebec, shared initiatives Quebec was leading to support Indigenous organizations, families, and children. This included Bill 79, a 5 year social action plan, \$200 million for countering violence against women, a special committee on sexual violence against minors, a home for Indigenous women in Montreal, and student housing in Quebec. They are also looking to develop a bill on cultural security, respond to elements in Joyce's Principle, and promote Indigenous languages.

"As for countering violence against women, my various ministerial colleagues and I have put together an ambitious five-year action plan costing more than two hundred million dollars. This plan focuses on prevention, direct intervention and research for the next five years..."

Justin Huston, Deputy Minister, Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage, Nova Scotia, conveyed that the Nova Scotia government is working closely with Indigenous partners on a variety of issues: the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association's resiliency

center, the provincial Mi'kmaq language act to promote Mi'kmaq language in Nova Scotia, and work being done over past several years to transform education system so children are learning Mi'kmaq language and history so future leaders understand the importance of Mi'kmaq language and heritage.

Deputy Minister Huston also conveyed the need for more time during this event if it were to happen again.

Natalie Jameson, Minister responsible for Status of Women, Education, PEI reiterated her government's commitment to ending violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ People. She identified the key priorities her government is working on, including investing community supports for MMIWG to Indigenous organizations, raising awareness on the impacts of residential schools and MMIWG, providing navigators to support Indigenous communities, addressing housing and homelessness for Indigenous communities, and mandating cultural training for all provincial public servants.

Pam Parsons, Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality, Newfoundland and Labrador, acknowledged work done by Indigenous Women's Newfoundland and Labrador Steering Committee. She announced a commitment to a provincial Reconciliation Council, which will be composed of Women's Indigenous groups cross the province and officials. Natan Obed, President, Inuit Tapiriit

Kanatami (ITK), conveyed his wish to partner with the federal government and provinces and territories, but also recognized that, as an Inuit representative organization, ITK has obligations to the work themselves and to put an MMIWG lens on the way they implement their work. For 2023, Obed is hoping to work collectively to systematically implement the Calls for Justice and unlock the potential in the billions of dollars that are still unspent and unidentified from the federal government.

Highlights:

- » Recent release of implementation strategy for 12 priorities related to MMIWG and 2SLGBTQI+ people, with full implementation expected Spring 2023 (Women and Gender Equity, YK).
- » 1/3 of the \$5.3 million for MMIWG prevention and \$10 million for sexual assault centres and programs, is allocated for Indigenous Peoples (Public Safety, BC).
- » Creation of Alberta's Premier's Council on MMIWG and promise that it is guided by a workplan to reduce violence and increase safety and economic security for MMIWG and 2SLGBTQI+ People (Legislative Assembly for Alberta, AB).
- » Announcement of \$400 000 in annual funding for MMIWG to support projects that promote and enhance prevention and build safe conditions for women, girls, 2SLGBTQI+ people and their communities (Status of Women, SK).
- » Commitment to develop a plan to address MMIWG with a holistic approach involving the National Action Plan, Canada, and the province of Manitoba (Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Affairs, MB).
- » Ensure services are provided in the language its recipients speak and that counselors speak the language and have the training to provide trauma-based programs (Family Services, NU).

Highlights (Continued):

- » Introduction of new initiatives supporting Indigenous organizations, families, and children, which includes Bill 79, a 5-year social action plan, and \$200 million for the projects focused on countering violence against women. (Relations with the First Nations and the Inuit, QC).
- » Identification of key priorities including investing community supports for MMIWG to Indigenous organizations, raising awareness on the impacts of residential schools and MMIWG, addressing housing and homelessness for Indigenous communities, and mandating cultural training for all provincial public servants (Status of Women, Education, PEI).
- » Announcement of a commitment to a provincial Reconciliation Council comprised of Women's Indigenous groups across the province and officials (Women and Gender Equality, NFLD).

CHAT REMARKS

“Accountability, Action and Implementation.”

“The Northern Brotherhood of Men is a community-based grassroots movement raising awareness and offering practical support. These men acknowledge that in the true spirit of reconciliation and growing stronger, healthier communities that respect and value women as sacred, men have a responsibility to become changemakers in their homes and communities. It helps us all when we include our Indigenous men in this battle to fight violence against all women.”

“Substantive equity cannot happen without the centering of unbiased, non-partisan and grassroots lived experiences, expertise and agency of families and survivors who are directly impacted by all forms of gender based violence”

“Transformative change will happen when all of our communities are cared for, respected, and honoured. Our daughters, sisters, aunts, granddaughters should feel safe wherever they live and wherever they need to go or chose to travel, go to school, raise their children. Our urban organizations are strong but frustrated that we are forgotten in the colonial framework.”

“As a family member I wanted to share how important it is to create inclusive opportunities that are not entrenched or dependent on membership or being part of a group.

With isolated communities and systemic barriers, Indigenous Inherent Rights cannot be dependent on politics , budgets, short term solutions or lateral violence. The purpose of the National Inquiry was to address the systemic gaps that created opportunities for families and survivors to slip through the cracks that contributed to the disproportionate numbers of MMIWG and 2S individuals. I am an Urban Indigenous person and I speak from experience that inadequate funding and lack of an accountability mechanism have directly contribute to women and Girls and 2S people from accessing resources.”

“Funding programs like WAGE provided resources to build capacity (which runs out in March) but where is Canada’s investment for us to maintain this capacity? Provide ongoing Core Funding to Native Women’s organizations so we can work toward long term solutions that are sustainable.”

CLOSING

Minister Miller offered thanks for the very thoughtful and meaningful contributions, acknowledging that federal, provincial, territorial officials and Indigenous representatives would need to thoughtfully consider next steps. He acknowledged the voices and experience of those ‘on the ground’ and recognized that implementation of the Calls for Justice requires attention.

‘we’ve heard that loud and clear from you who are living this on the frontlines and really have the best advice for us going forward...’

VOICES OF ELDERS

ELDER KATHY BOSTON

ELDER ALBERT

“Let us pray that one day soon our daughters, our granddaughters will be able to enjoy the beauty of Grandmother Moon and be able to appreciate the beauty of the stars without being hurt. Every time one of our women or girls is murdered or goes missing, Indigenous women across these lands weep. Let us pray for the day when all the people of these lands will live together safely and in peace and harmony.”

“We struggle to be human, we struggle to be fair, we struggle to be moral and ethical, but we are only a small nation, a young nation. So, we have to rely on those entities, who are with us today to see us, to hear us, who have helped us in some way on the path forward. We will receive that knowledge maybe in the future, a month, a year. It’s up to us to recognize when we have received it because that is the role of the spirits to be benevolent to the humans.”

