



2023 to 2027 Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy

Canadian Human Rights Commission

2023 to 2027 Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy

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Canadian Human Rights Commission
344 Slater Street, 8th Floor
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1E1

Telephone: 613-995-1151
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TTY: 1-800-465-7735
Fax: 613-996-9661
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2023 to 2027 Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy

SECTION 1

Introduction to the Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy

The [2022 to 2026 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy \(FSDS\)](#) presents the Government of Canada's sustainable development goals and targets, as required by the [Federal Sustainable Development Act](#). This is the first FSDS to be framed using the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and provides a balanced view of the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development.

In keeping with the purpose of the Act, to make decision-making related to sustainable development more transparent and accountable to Parliament, the Canadian Human Rights Commission supports the goals laid out in the FSDS through the activities described in this Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy (DSDS).



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The [Federal Sustainable Development Act](#) also sets out [7 principles](#) that must be considered in the development of the FSDS as well as DSDSs. These basic principles have been considered and incorporated in the Commission's DSDS.

In order to promote coordinated action on sustainable development across the Government of Canada, this departmental strategy integrates efforts to advance Canada's implementation of the 2030 Agenda National Strategy, supported by the Global Indicator Framework (GIF) and Canadian Indicator Framework (CIF) targets and indicators. The strategy also now captures SDG initiatives that fall outside the scope of the FSDS to inform the development of the Canada's Annual Report on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

SECTION 2

The Commission's Sustainable Development Vision

The Canadian Human Rights Commission operates independently from government. As Canada's national human rights institution, the Commission is responsible for representing the public interest and holding the Government of Canada and federally regulated organizations to account on matters related to human rights.

The Commission is a small organization with about 350 people. Most of our employees are located in its Ottawa office, but the Commission also has small offices in Vancouver, , Toronto and Montreal. We also have a few employees who work remotely from other cities in Canada. Reporting requirements, while undoubtedly crucial for transparency, accountability, and regulatory compliance, can inadvertently put a disproportionate strain on the limited resources of smaller organizations such as the Commission. Unlike our larger counterparts, we lack sufficient personnel to undertake the necessary data compilation and analysis.

As Canada's national human rights institution, we are also responsible for monitoring Canada's fulfillment of its human rights obligations as found in the many international human rights treaties Canada has ratified. Although there is no particular Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on human rights, human rights are part and parcel of every SDG. We cannot make progress on the SDGs without progress on implementing those treaties and vice versa.

The SDGs provide a complementary and useful addition of measurable progress when monitoring Canada's domestic implementation of its human rights obligations. As such, we will continue to explore the use of SDGs when monitoring progress and determining gaps in Canada's implementation of its international human rights obligations.

While overall not directly linked to our mandate, environmental racism affects the people that the Commission seeks to protect and who are disproportionately impacted by environmental destruction. Achieving sustainable development necessitates recognizing and promoting human rights for all individuals, without discrimination. Indigenous, Black and other racialized communities are in disproportionate proximity and at a risk of greater exposure to environmentally hazardous activities in Canada. These communities also lack the political power to fight back against this proximity. Racialized minorities are also more likely to live in areas with environmental dangers

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where cleanup of contaminants and pollutants happens at slower rates. Recognizing the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation on vulnerable communities, we seek to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples, minorities, and marginalized groups, who often bear the brunt of environmental harm.

By the nature of its work, the Commission contributes to various sustainable development goals related to international human rights instruments such as no poverty; good health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; decent work and economic growth; and reduced inequality. By promoting environmental justice, inclusive growth, gender equality, access to justice, and fostering partnerships, the Commission aspires to contribute to a more just, equitable, and sustainable Canada for present and future generations.

The new Pay Equity mandate, led by the Commission's Pay Equity Commissioner aims directly at advancing the following UN Sustainable Development Goal and target:

SDGs Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth.

Target 8.5: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.

Proactive pay equity also advances goals tied to No Poverty (Goal 1), Gender Equality (Goal 5), and Reduced inequalities (Goal 10).

The Commission continues to contribute to the achievement of SDG Target 16, and specifically target 16.A on ensuring the existence of independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles. The Commission has been accredited with A-status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions — denoting full Paris Principles compliance — since 1999.

The Commission's Sustainable Development Strategy is to take small but effective steps to contribute to the greening of government. Although the strategies are primarily focused on greening our workplace, our hope is that they will instill a culture in our organization to "think green".

We encourage Canada to use the SDGs to make measurable progress in realizing Canada's human rights obligations.

SECTION 3

Listening to Canadians

As required by the Federal Sustainable Development Act, the Commission has taken into account comments on the draft 2022-2026 FSDS made during the public consultation held from March 11 to July 9, 2022. During the public consultation, more than 700 comments were received from a broad range of stakeholders, including governments, Indigenous organizations, non-governmental organizations, academics, businesses, and individual Canadians in different age groups and of various backgrounds. The draft FSDS was also shared with the appropriate committee of each House of Parliament, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, and the Sustainable Development Advisory Council for their review and comment.

What We Heard

Across the submissions received, the Commission recognized sustainable development priorities and issues that affect us. As noted in the [FSDS Consultation Report](#), respondents “also wanted to see greater acknowledgment of socio-economic challenges such as inequality, poverty, and the rising cost of living in Canada.”

While human rights are part and parcel of every SDG, the Commission does hold the view that more progress is needed on tackling inequalities and realizing the economic, social and cultural rights of people in Canada. We support the increased focus on socio-economic challenges such as inequality, poverty, and the rising cost of living in Canada’s strategy.

The [FSDS Consultation Report](#) also noted that “[r]econciliation and respect for Indigenous rights and self-governance were also strong themes in the consultations. Comments highlighted the importance of a distinctions-based approach, which means going beyond a “one size fits all” perspective and accounting for the unique history and lived

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experience of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. Consultation feedback also emphasized themes of Indigenous self-governance, sustainable management of traditional lands and waters, and intergenerational equity.”

We are also supportive of the call for a focus on reconciliation and respect for Indigenous rights and self-governance. The Commission has long been of the view that Indigenous human rights issues are the most pressing human rights concern in Canada. The Commission’s SDG priorities detailed further below are in line with both of these areas. The Commission continues to be determined to be a strong voice for human rights in Canada, but also is a leader in advancing anti-racism, equality and inclusion across our various roles – as a human rights advocate, a human rights service provider and regulator, and as a federally regulated employer.

What We Did

Through the nature of its operations, the Commission plays an instrumental role in advancing an array of vital sustainable development goals closely intertwined with international human rights principles. These goals capture the shared aspirations for a more just, equitable, and accessible Canada.

The Commission’s contributions to the sustainable development goal of "no poverty" are deeply rooted in our commitment to protect and promote the rights of marginalized communities. By actively engaging with the voices and stories of people and communities affected by economic and social inequality, we gain a profound understanding of the multifaceted challenges they face. This awareness translates into initiatives that aim to address the underlying factors that perpetuate poverty, while fostering sustainable change and empowerment.

“Good health and well-being” is not possible without the realization of economic, social and cultural rights. By addressing social and economic inequalities of marginalized communities, societies can better promote good health and overall well-being for all individuals, thus upholding human rights principles.

The Commission’s impact in the area of gender discrimination and inequity is realized through our efforts to dismantle barriers to equality, challenge stereotypes, and foster an environment where everyone's voice is heard and

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respected. These actions go beyond numerical parity; they endeavour to address the systemic imbalances that hinder true equality.

Lastly, in the Commission's fight to reduce inequalities, we translate the stories of marginalized and excluded populations into initiatives that promote human rights justice. Through engagement and partnerships with affected groups, we seek to bridge gaps in access, representation, and opportunities. The Commission's work is informed by the stories and lived experience of those who have long been unheard. We use different platforms to amplify the voices of those equity-seeking groups, to challenge systemic discrimination and to foster the principles of equity and inclusion.

The Commission's impact across various sustainable development goals is a testament to our commitment to honouring the experiences and aspirations of the people and communities that we serve. Through our actions, the Commission strives to contribute to a world where human rights are respected, opportunities to thrive are equitable, and people are empowered to speak out, realize their rights and participate fully in society.

Please find more information on the FSDS public consultation and its results in the [FSDS Consultation Report](#)

SECTION 4

The Commission's Commitments



GOAL 10: Advance Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and Take Action on Inequality



FSDS Context:

As Canada's national human rights institution, the Commission is dedicated to meeting the highest standards of equality, non-discrimination, inclusion, dignity and respect within an anti-racist context. This includes efforts to advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. As evidenced through our [Anti-Racism Action Plan](#), the Commission is committed to addressing the effects of societal systemic racism and discrimination across our three roles: employer, service provider and regulator, and human rights advocate.

As an employer, we are committed to creating an open, healthy, safe and inclusive workplace including for Indigenous peoples that has at its core the principles of anti-racism and equity.

As a service provider and regulator, we are committed to safeguarding equity and inclusion, and providing access to justice for Indigenous peoples in Canada. This includes continuous improvement of our systems, and ongoing identification and elimination of barriers to the human rights programs we deliver including through meaningful engagement with stakeholders and rights holders. In protecting and upholding human rights in our role as a regulator, we are committed to helping and supporting federally regulated employers and service providers to proactively identify and remove barriers to accessibility, equity and inclusion.

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As a human rights advocate, we are committed to being bold in speaking out on human rights issues, and in amplifying the voices of people in marginalized and vulnerable situations in Canada. This work includes raising awareness of the systemic inequalities and barriers facing Indigenous peoples. It also means being an ally and a valued partner and collaborator with the strong community of Indigenous organizations, human rights organizations, anti-racism experts, stakeholders and rights holders in Canada. We continue to call for the meaningful engagement of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis people in Government of Canada in reconciliation efforts.

Target theme:
Advancing reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit, and the Métis communities

Target:
Between 2023 and 2026, and every year on an ongoing basis, develop and table annual progress reports on implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada)

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Implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act	<p>AS AN EMPLOYER: Increasing diversity and removing barriers in the workplace for Indigenous people.</p> <p>Program: Employment Systems Review</p>	<p>Performance indicator: Percentage of staff who have identified as Indigenous.</p> <p>Starting point: Baseline not available. The percentage of Indigenous people at the Commission cannot be disclosed. Details are not presented in this report due to confidentiality considerations given the small numbers.</p>	<p>In 2020/21 the Commission met its employment equity targets for Indigenous people; however, vulnerabilities were identified with regard to falling below targets given the size of the organization.</p> <p>This action provides an in-depth assessment of all employment systems, policies and practices, and the manner by which these are implemented, to identify barriers to the full employment and participation of members of</p>

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			<p>underrepresented designated groups, including Indigenous people.</p> <p>By understanding where employment barriers exist and why, we are better positioned to address them and develop a process to ensure new policies and practices are inclusive and address gaps in representation of Indigenous people at all levels of the organization.</p> <p>Where gaps exist, we have implemented measures to share all appointment opportunities – whether they are advertised internally (to the federal public service) or externally (to people in Canada at large) – with a wide range of stakeholder groups, including public service employee networks, and public and private sector organizations.</p> <p>This action supports the government's Action Plan commitment to “deploy necessary efforts to support Indigenous peoples’ and communities’ right to self-determination on socio-economic issues including access to post-secondary education, skills training and employment.”</p> <p>Relevant targets or ambitions: <i>CIF Ambition/Target:</i> 10.1 Canadians live free of discrimination and inequalities are reduced <i>GIF Target:</i> 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome,</p>

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			including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.
Implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act	<p>AS AN EMPLOYER: Continued education and sensitization for Commission employees related to the experience and history of Indigenous peoples.</p> <p>Program: Internal Services</p>	<p>Performance indicator: Percentage of employees who have completed unconscious/implicit bias training.</p> <p>Starting point: Mandatory unconscious/implicit bias training was delivered to all staff and commissioners by March 31, 2020.</p> <p>Target: 100% of new employees (including term employees and, when possible, students and casuals) complete unconscious/implicit bias training within their first year of employment with the Commission.</p>	<p>This action encourages Commission employees to increase their cultural competency skills and awareness of issues related to First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada.</p> <p>This action contributes to the development of necessary cultural competency knowledge and skills to implement the UN Declaration.</p> <p>Relevant targets or ambitions: <i>CIF Ambition/Target:</i> 10.1 Canadians live free of discrimination and inequalities are reduced</p>

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<p>Implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act</p>	<p>AS A SERVICE PROVIDER: Continue to seek to understand the needs of Indigenous clients by expanding and integrating the collection and analysis of disaggregated data, to improve access to human rights justice for Indigenous people.</p> <p>Program: Protection Program</p>	<p>Performance indicator: Percentage of demographic data surveys completed</p> <p>Starting point: Baseline not available. Initial roll out of Disaggregated data strategy in 2022-23</p>	<p>The Commission is committed to improving the collection of disaggregated data as identified in the Commission's Anti-Racism Action Plan. As part of this commitment, we launched an integrated data collection strategy focused on disaggregated demographic data.</p> <p>Integrating a demographic data survey to the Commission's newly launched online complaint form will allow for dynamic monitoring and reporting on issues related to access and procedural fairness throughout the complaints process by collecting the data at the onset of the complaint process</p> <p>This action will provide the Commission with important data. This data will help us enhance the cultural responsiveness of the complaints process and help us improve access to our services for Indigenous people, through understanding how intersecting identities affect the user experience for Indigenous clients, thereby providing more meaningful access to justice.</p> <p>Relevant targets or ambitions: <i>CIF Ambition/Target:</i> 10.1 Canadians live free of discrimination and inequalities are reduced</p>

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<p>Implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act</p>	<p>AS A SERVICE PROVIDER: Provide mandatory Indigenous Considerations in Procurement training to all new Procurement and Material Management specialists. This mandatory training allows procurement and material management specialists in better understanding a variety of ways to inform clients on how to further support economic growth for Indigenous businesses, people and communities within their procurement requests.</p> <p>Program: Internal Services</p>	<p>Performance indicator: Percentage of employees who have completed the Indigenous Considerations in Procurement training provided by the Canada School of Public Service</p> <p>Starting Point: In FY 2022/23, all members within the Commission's Procurement and Material Management team successfully completed the mandatory Indigenous Considerations in Procurement training prior to March 31, 2023.</p> <p>Target: 100% of new Procurement and Material Management employees (including term employees and, when possible, students and casuals) complete training within their first year of employment with the Commission.</p>	<p>The Commission has integrated Indigenous considerations into the departmental planning function for procurement and the Commission exceeded this target for 2022-23, reaching over 27%.</p> <p>The mandatory Indigenous Considerations in Procurement training is always available for all new employees joining the procurement team for completion and a better understanding of the Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Businesses initiative.</p> <p>This action encourages Commission employees to increase their cultural competency skills and awareness of issues related to First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada through additional training about the initiative and promoting procurement with Indigenous businesses.</p> <p>To support the Government of Canada's commitment that a mandatory minimum of 5% of the total value of contracts to be awarded to Indigenous businesses annually across all departments will help procurement specialists and clients enhance Indigenous cultural awareness within federal government procurement.</p> <p>These mandated initiatives will help our procurement team and clients in developing and delivering more responsive and culturally relevant procurement strategies, reducing barriers</p>

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			<p>to federal procurement via a better understanding of cultural practices on procurement strategies, as well as increase the participation of Indigenous businesses in federal government procurement processes.</p> <p>Relevant targets or ambitions: <i>CIF Ambition/Target:</i> 10.1 Canadians live free of discrimination and inequalities are reduced</p> <p><i>GIF Target:</i> 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcomes, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.</p>
<p>Implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act</p>	<p>AS AN ADVOCATE: Continue to raise awareness about systemic anti-Indigenous racism through public engagement and advocacy initiatives.</p> <p>Program: Promotion Program</p>	<p>Performance indicator: Number of public advocacy activities (engagements, interventions, public statements, and international submissions) related to systemic racism and discrimination, including anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination.</p> <p>Starting point: Ongoing</p> <p>Target: 5 engagements, interventions before Parliament, public statements, and international submissions.</p>	<p>The Commission is working to promote equality and inclusion in Canada by raising awareness of human rights, speaking out about human rights injustices, encouraging dialogue, and engaging with civil society, experts from Canada's human rights community and people with lived experience.</p> <p>This advocacy work includes appearances before, and submissions to, Parliamentary Committees; engagement and collaborative work with other human rights commissions across the country; the release of public statements and engagement with the media, when appropriate; submissions and statements</p>

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			<p>to United Nations bodies; and participation in other public engagement opportunities and advancement of strategic litigation before the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and courts.</p> <p>More than half of the public advocacy events in which the Commission has participated have been dedicated to the issue of systemic racism in Canada. In addition, a large proportion of our public statements, our social media engagement and our stakeholder engagement have been focused on this priority issue.</p> <p>This action helps promote awareness among the non-Indigenous public and parliamentarians of Indigenous human rights and experiences of colonization, racism and discrimination.</p> <p>Relevant targets or ambitions: <i>CIF Ambition/Target:</i> 10.1 Canadians live free of discrimination and inequalities are reduced</p>

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Initiatives advancing Canada's implementation of SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities

The following initiatives demonstrate how the Commission's programming supports the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, supplementing the information outlined above.

PLANNED INITIATIVES	ASSOCIATED DOMESTIC TARGETS OR AMBITIONS AND/OR GLOBAL TARGETS
Ensure a certain percentage of IT hardware procurement is directed to Indigenous businesses. Upon these purchases, Shared Services Canada IT portal has a feature for users to retrieve a prequalified list of suppliers for these types of purchases, and these lists include a range of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous businesses for selection and reference.	<i>GIF Target:</i> 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcomes, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.

GOAL 12: Reduce Waste and Transition to Zero-Emission Vehicles



FSDS Context:

As an employer and service provider, we are committed to consuming in a sustainable manner and we aspire to improve our consumption of resources and environmental footprint through the promotion of sustainable choices, education, reduction of waste, and green procurement. These improvements can be further explored through the offering of mandatory training in order to raise awareness of this initiative.

Target theme:

Federal Leadership on Responsible Consumption

Target:

The Government of Canada's procurement of goods and services will be net-zero emissions by 2050, to aid the transition to a net-zero, circular economy (All Ministers)

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Strengthen green procurement criteria	<p>AS AN EMPLOYER AND AS A SERVICE PROVIDER: Provide mandatory training on Green Procurement to all Procurement and Material Management specialists. This mandatory training allows procurement and material management specialists to have a better understanding of a variety of ways to incorporate environmental considerations into purchasing decisions.</p> <p>Program: Internal Services - Procurement and Material Management.</p>	<p>Performance indicator: Percentage of procurement and materiel management specialists trained in green procurement within one (1) year of being identified.</p> <p>Starting point: In 2022-23, 100% of procurement specialists are trained in the mandatory Green Procurement course offered by Canada School of Public Service.</p> <p>Target: 100% of procurement officers and specialists receive training within one year of being identified and this is a newly added criteria outlined in their performance review evaluation.</p>	<p>Green procurement incorporates environmental considerations into purchasing decisions, is expected to motivate suppliers to reduce the environmental impact of the goods and services they deliver, and their supply chains.</p> <p>Relevant targets or ambitions: <i>CIF Ambition:</i> Canadians consume in a sustainable manner.</p> <p><i>CIF Indicator:</i> 12.2.1 Proportion of businesses that adopted selected environmental protection activities and management practices.</p> <p><i>GIF Target:</i> 12.7 Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities.</p>

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GOAL 13: Take Action on Climate Change and Its Impacts



FSDS Context:

As an employer and service provider, we are committed to improve education, knowledge and awareness of how to mitigate climate change and adapt to its impacts through training of our staff, enhancement of access to climate information, and through actions and choices that reduce the demand for energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Target theme:

Federal Leadership on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions and Climate Resilience

Target:

The Government of Canada will transition to net-zero carbon operations for facilities and conventional fleets by 2050 (All Ministers)

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<p>Implement the Greening Government Strategy through measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve climate resilience, and green the government's overall operations</p>	<p>AS AN EMPLOYER: Ensure staff have the necessary awareness to incorporate climate change considerations in their commuting options, and encourage transportation methods that reduce greenhouse gas emission in business travel.</p> <p>Program: Internal Services</p>	<p>Performance indicator: Number of staff communications and measures to raise awareness and share messaging, to ensure employees consider the climate impact when making decisions on transportation methods related to work.</p> <p>Starting point: The Commission is currently unable to provide a baseline on this indicator as this is a new initiative for 2023-24.</p> <p>Target: 1 to 2 staff communications yearly to raise awareness.</p>	<p>Informed staff can develop responses to increase the resilience of operations to impacts of climate change.</p> <p>Relevant targets or ambitions: <i>CIF Ambition / Target:</i> 13.3 Canadians are well equipped and resilient to face the effects of Climate change</p> <p><i>GIF Targets:</i> 13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.</p>

Integrating Sustainable Development

In its advocacy work, the Commission will continue to seek ways to integrate the sustainable development goals into its work. Human rights are integral to the SDGs and as Canada's national human rights institution, we will continue to advocate for the Government of Canada to uphold its international human rights obligations including economic, social, and cultural rights.

Around SDG goal 16 and specifically target 16.A on ensuring the existence of independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles, the Commission was re-accredited in March 2023 as operating in full compliance with the Paris Principles. We will continue to advocate for Canada's human rights institutions at all levels to be able to operate in compliance with these Principles, including by maintaining their independence.

Touching on a separate element of SDG goal 10 on reducing inequalities, the Commission will continue to advocate that environmental racism experienced by those in marginalized communities be addressed in Canada, including through the study of the links between race, socio-economic status and environmental risk.



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Related to SDG goal 6 on ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, the Commission will continue to advocate for ensuring all Indigenous communities have access to clean drinking water.

The Commission will also continue to advocate for the environmental rights and well-being of children and youth in Canada, particularly children in marginalized communities. All SDGs are relevant for children. Climate change puts children at significant risk, threatening their growth, overall health, access to food and water, and may even result in the destruction of their homes.

The Commission continues to make efforts to reduce inequalities and remove barriers to its services and to meet the commitments within its [Anti-Racism Action Plan](#). We offer training to staff on Indigenous issues and reconciliation, anti-racism, equality and inclusion, given by experts in those fields. We take a trauma-informed approach to ensure a safe and inclusive complaint process for all. In addition, we user-test our forms and changes to our processes with a diverse group of stakeholders.

The Commission will continue to ensure that its decision-making process includes consideration of FSDS goals and targets through its Strategic environmental assessment (SEA) process. An SEA for a policy, plan or program proposal includes an analysis of the impacts of the given proposal on the environment, including on relevant FSDS goals and targets.

Public statements on the results of the Commission's assessments are made public when an initiative that has undergone a detailed SEA. The purpose of the public statement is to demonstrate that the environmental effects, including the impacts on achieving the FSDS goals and targets, of the approved policy, plan or program have been considered during proposal development and decision-making.