



Gender Equality
Network Canada

Réseau d'égalité
des genres Canada

Discussion Document for a Pan-Canadian Strategy to Advance Gender Equality

Gender Equality Network Canada

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1. CONTEXT FOR ACTION

We acknowledge the communities, the land, and all other animal and plant nations whose territories we gathered on - who nourished our bodies to allow us to do this work. Without these opportunities, the Discussion Document for a Pan-Canadian Strategy on Gender Equality - and so importantly the work that has occurred beyond the Discussion Document that is impacting communities across Turtle Island - would not have had the opportunity to come into being. Specifically, we extend our sincerest gratitude to the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinabeg, the Haudenosaunee and Wendat nations whose spaces we occupied in Tkaronto; to the territory of Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People - a territory covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which was signed by the Mi'kmaq Wəlastəkwiyyik (Maliseet) and Passamaquoddy Peoples in what is commonly known as Halifax; the Coast Salish nations whose spaces we occupied in Vancouver, including the Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwiltulh (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations; to the nations in Treaty six (6) territory - home of the Cree, Dene, Nakota, Saulteaux and Ojibwe peoples whose spaces we occupied in Saskatoon; and to the Mohawk and Algonquin nations who govern the territories occupied by Montreal.

We acknowledge, extend gratitude, and honour those in our communities who have supported, informed, and inspired the dialogue and endeavor that has contributed to this document and the initiatives that may come from its creation. We acknowledge the survivors of gender-based violence, as well as the spirits of those lives that gender-based violence has claimed. We acknowledge the knowledge keepers, grandmothers, and truth tellers who graciously supported our gatherings. Most importantly, we apologize to those whose voices and identities have been excluded, forgotten, or ignored by the contents of this work.

When we use the word women throughout this document, it is an inclusive one that includes Two-Spirit, genderqueer, trans and non-binary people - and includes the diverse experiences of all people who identify as women or girls including non-binary people and people of all marginalized genders. We want to recognize that gender is not defined by biology. We understand the role gender diversity has always played in the feminist movement and of the similar experiences of gendered oppression shared between people of all marginalized genders; this includes trans and cis women, non-binary and gender diverse and Two-Spirit people. The term 'people of marginalized genders' describes the ways that all of these people experience marginalization due to their genders; not in all the same ways, but always in ways that heighten our risk of experiencing violence, oppression and exclusion. People of marginalized genders are made unsafe because of gender, and it's this oppression that we speak to as a feminist movement.

We also want to distinguish between women's movements and feminist movements. While acknowledging the general central tenets of feminism, the Gender Equality Network of Canada privileges the truth that feminism has and continues to exclude non-status peoples, Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC), those who have come to Canada as immigrants and refugees, 2SLGBTQIA peoples, and people with disabilities. As writers of this Discussion Document for a Pan-Canadian Strategy to Advance Gender Equality, we affirm a commitment to intersectionality in the acknowledgement that we carry immense power and privilege as composers of such a document, and have undoubtedly excluded the stories, experiences, and expertise of many groups and individuals who are affected by gender-based violence and systemic discrimination in our dialogue, representation, and expression of the Discussion

Document. Because of this, we affirm that the Discussion Document is a living document and will continue to be reviewed, improved, and updated to ensure the inclusion and diversity of all who continue to be targets of structural and systemic oppression across the country.¹ It is important to mention that this document is not presented as representative of the Canadian women's movement and the provinces as a whole.

The Discussion Document for a Pan-Canadian Strategy to Advance Gender Equality of the Gender Equality Network of Canada² is a culmination of the experiences, stories, expertise, and aspirations of over 150 leaders³ from across what is commonly known as Canada, nominated by local, federally funded, gender equality projects. The Discussion Document was developed out of three years of dialogue, learning, and knowledge sharing of the Gender Equality Network of Canada and is our collective response to a pandemic of gender-based violence, inequity, and the perpetually operationalized patriarchy which informs, directs, and administers our lives as women and people of marginalized genders.

We would like to encourage those reading this document to position it within the context of other complimentary gender-based violence frameworks and centre survivor voices.

The Discussion Document for a Pan-Canadian Strategy to Advance Gender Equality recognizes, incorporates, and implements all international declarations, conventions, and treaties to which Canada is a signatory including and UN Beijing Declaration and Sustainable Development goals of the United Nations.

It must be stated that the Discussion Document for a Pan-Canadian Strategy to Advance Gender Equality is not, will not, and cannot be a contributor to decolonization. The Discussion Document was not initiated, facilitated, or guided by Indigenous people(s), and therefore while it - in some circumstances - may be appropriate to define a shared understanding of what decolonization can and should look like - as informed by the experiences and expertise of Indigenous peoples, the Discussion Document is an initiative of the government of Canada and should be understood as such.

We urge the readers of this document to commit to confronting the realities of gender-based and colonial violence and systemic discrimination in all forms, recognizing the extensive reach and impact of their modalities in our every-day lives. We call on you to recognize the inherent connection between gender inequality and environmental degradation - crises that requires urgent and immediate action. The Arctic is the canary in the mine in regards to environmental degradation and gender inequality. Access to food security and healthy nutrition for families has been affected by unprecedented climate change. We call on you to come together - to enliven the pages that follow - and honour all of our truths spoken to power.

¹ Although we recognize structural and systemic oppression drives our society, we acknowledge that individuals create the system and have agency for transformation.

² The Gender Equality Network Canada (GENC) was a three-year project to create a national gender equality network and explore the development of a national action plan to achieve gender equality funded by the federal Department for Women and Gender Equality and convened and facilitated by the Canadian Women's Foundation. Funding for the project was part of the nation's 150th celebration of Confederation. GENC, was quickly reorganized to reflect the complexities of colonization as much as possible in the constraints of the initiative.

³ We must acknowledge that GENC lacked explicit meaningful representation and contributions from Two-Spirit, trans, gender queer, and non-binary individuals. The inclusion of Two-Spirit, trans, gender queer, and non-binary people should be a goal and priority of future work of the leaders identified by Gender Equality Network of Canada, to ensure that all analysis and endeavors towards "gender equality" are truly inclusive of and contributory to reducing experiences of gender-based violence.

Definitions/Glossary

Ableism:

Ableism is a term that describes discrimination towards people with disabilities, including physical and intellectual disabilities, mental health, and illness. Ableism can take the form of ideas and assumptions, stereotypes, attitudes and practices, physical barriers in an environment and/or oppression on individual and systemic levels.

Anti-Black Racism:

Policies and practices embedded in Canadian institutions such as, education, health care, and justice that mirror and reinforce beliefs, attitudes, prejudice, stereotyping and/or discrimination towards people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and colonization here in Canada.⁴

Cisnormativity:

The assumption that all human beings are cisgender, i.e. have a gender identity which matches and corresponds their sex assigned at birth.

Colonialism:

Colonialism is the ideology advocating colonization. The process of colonialism is ‘the attempted or actual imposition of policies, laws, mores, economies, cultures, or systems and institutions put in place by settler governments to support and continue the occupation of Indigenous territories’⁵ and removal of Indigenous people from their homelands. It involves the race and gender-based subjugation of Indigenous individuals, communities and Nations, and the resulting internalized and externalized ways of thinking and knowing that support this occupation and subjugation.⁶

Decolonizing:

“Decolonizing” is a social and political process aimed at resisting and undoing the multi- faceted impacts of colonization and re-establishing strong contemporary Indigenous Peoples, Nations, and institutions based on traditional values, philosophies, and knowledge systems.”⁷

Margaret Kovach (is Plains Cree and Saulteaux) states: “the purpose of decolonization is to create space in everyday life, research, academia, and society for an Indigenous perspective without it being neglected, shunted aside, mocked, or dismissed.”⁸

“Decolonization, which we assert is a distinct project from other civil and human-rights-based social justice projects, is far too often subsumed into the directives of these projects, with no regard for how decolonization wants something different than those forms of justice.”⁹

“...[W]e want to be sure to clarify that decolonization is not a metaphor. When metaphor invades decolonization, it kills the very possibility of decolonization; it re-centers whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future. Decolonize

⁴ Canadian Race Relations Foundation. *Glossary of Terms*. <https://www.crrf-fcrr.ca/en/resources/glossary-a-terms-en-gb-1>

⁵ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Volume 1a*, 2019, p.77. https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1a.pdf

⁶ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019.

⁷ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019.

⁸ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019.

⁹ Tuck, Eve & Wayne Yang, K.. Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, vol.1, No.1, 2012, p.2, <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/staff-profiles/data/docs/fjcollins.pdf>

(a verb) and decolonization (a noun) cannot easily be grafted onto pre-existing discourses/frameworks, even if they are critical, even if they are anti-racist, even if they are justice frameworks. The easy absorption, adoption, and transposing of decolonization is yet another form of settler appropriation. When we write about decolonization, we are not offering it as a metaphor; it is not an approximation of other experiences of oppression. Decolonization is not a swappable term for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools. Decolonization doesn't have a synonym."¹⁰

“decolonization
requires
acknowledging.
that your
needs and desires
should
never
come at the expense of another's
life energy.
it is being honest
that
you have been spoiled
by a machine
that is not feeding you freedom
but
feeding
you
the milk of pain.”

Nayyirah Waheed, *the release*¹¹

Disabilities and Multiple Disabilities:

Our definition of disability is broad, intended to be inclusive, and encompasses both visible and invisible disabilities while also acknowledging the changeable nature of disabilities. What we mean by multiple disabilities includes, but is not limited to, people living with/with learning disabilities (dyslexia, dyscalculia...), visual disabilities (blindness, loss of vision...), loss of or reduced mobility, disabilities linked to mental health (anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, PTSD and other forms of trauma ...), intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, speech disorders (stuttering, aphasia, dysarthria, apraxia...), eating disorders (bulimia, anorexia, orthorexia...), chronic and episodic illness and/or pain (diabetes, epilepsy, migraines...), environmental hypersensitivities, allergies, brain injuries, people living on the autism/neurodiverse spectrum and more. While acknowledging that many Deaf people do not identify as persons with disabilities, we promote and are also working on the inclusion of Deaf and hearing-impaired people while respecting their identities.

Invisible Disability:

We base our understanding on the definition established by the Invisible Disability Project, in that this means a disability that is hard to see, is often not recognized as a disability and not seen as a disability within the disabled community and society at large. The Invisible Disability Project also notes the changing nature of invisible disabilities and the effects of context and environment. For example, invisible disabilities can include chronic illnesses such as renal

¹⁰ Tuck & Yang 2012, p.3. <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/staff-profiles/data/docs/fjcollins.pdf>

¹¹ Waheed, Nayyirah.. Salt. *CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform*, 2013.

failure, diabetes, and sleep disorders if those diseases significantly impair normal activities of daily living.

First Nation, Inuit and Métis:

The following definitions are a reflection of coloniality and aboriginal discourse - they are a lexicon of legal terminology formulated by the Canadian state to exclude, define, and administer the lives of Indigenous peoples' confined by the boundaries of "Canada":

First Nation: "First Nation is a term used to identify Indigenous Peoples of Canada who are neither Métis or Inuit... and applies to both status and non-status Indians"¹²

Inuit: "Inuit (meaning "people") are an Indigenous circumpolar people found across the North. The Inuit are one of three recognized Aboriginal peoples in the Constitution Act, 1982."¹³

Métis: "Métis are included as one of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982...The Métis emerged as a distinct people or nation in the historic Northwest during the course of the 18th and 19th centur[ies]...The historic Métis Nation had recognized Aboriginal title" which the Government of Canada attempted to extinguish through the scrip system in the late 19th and 20th centuries."¹⁴

Heteropatriarchy:

A socio-political system where (primarily) cisgender men and heterosexuals have authority over cisgender women and over other sexual orientations and gender identities. The term emphasizes that discrimination exerted both upon women and 2SLGBTQI+ people has the same sexist and misogynist social principles. Heteropatriarchy creates an environment of oppression and inequity for racial, gender, and sexual minority groups.

Inclusive:

To live an inclusive life means to belong, participate and be valued on an equal basis with others in all aspects of personal, social, spiritual, cultural, economic and political life. To achieve an inclusive society means the conditions are established for all persons to live an inclusive life, without discrimination based on disability, gender, race, indigeneity, sexual orientation, religion or other grounds on which people are so often systematically devalued and disadvantaged. Inclusive strategies are those which aim to support people, communities and societies to achieve this vision.

Intersectional Feminisms:

A branch of feminism asserting that all aspects of social and political identities (gender, race, class, sexuality, disability, etc.) discrimination overlap (or "intersect"). For example, race with gender in the case of a Black trans woman. Intersectionality aims to separate itself from white feminism by acknowledging the fact that all women, trans and gender diverse people have different experiences and identities. It is a qualitative analytic framework that identifies how interlocking systems of power affect those who are most marginalized in society. Another example is the acknowledgment that disabled people living with disabilities can be oppressed because of class, race, gender, sexual identity, immigration status, etc. Intersectional feminism does not create hierarchies between these different identities and experiences of oppression. Our intersectional feminisms are political and the goal is the social emancipation of groups that are most marginalized.

¹² National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. *Lexicon of Terminology*. 2019, p.26. https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/MMIWG_Lexicon_FINAL_ENFR.pdf

¹³ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019.

¹⁴ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019.

Intersectionality:

Kimberlé Crenshaw's definition of "intersectionality" was "an integrated approach...to expose the reality of sexism and racism pervasive in Black women's encounters with the people, systems, and institutions supposedly developed to help them."¹⁵ "...[I]n an intersectional analysis, researchers are interested in what the intersections of systems can tell us about power: who holds it, how it is used, and how it impacts various groups."¹⁶

Islamophobia:

Fear, hatred of, or prejudice against the Islamic religion or Muslims.¹⁷

Marginalized genders:

The term 'people of marginalized genders' was created in order to describe a shared experience of gendered marginalization under patriarchy and other interconnected systems of oppression such as homophobia, transphobia and misogyny, colonialism and racism - the longer version of it might read: trans and cis women, as well as all trans, Two-Spirit, and nonbinary/ gender diverse people. It's used to describe the ways that all of these people experience marginalization due to their genders.

Racialized:

This term refers to people who have historically and socially had the process of racialization imposed on them. This process has allowed for the construction of (physical, physiological) social differences between people and the establishing of a hierarchy of systemic privileges. These privileges vary according to social and political context. We also acknowledge that systems of oppression exist between different racialized groups and that this is a tenet of racism.

Reconciliation:

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission mandate describes reconciliation as "an ongoing individual and collective process, [which] will require commitment from all those affected including First Nations, Inuit and Métis former Indian Residential School students, their families, communities, religions entities, former school employees, government and the people of Canada."¹⁸ In the context of residential schools, "reconciliation" is about coming to terms with events of the past in a manner that overcomes conflict and establishes a respectful and healthy relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people moving forward.¹⁹ In its simplest definition, "reconciliation" is the re-establishment of a conciliatory state. However, many Indigenous peoples assert that this state has never existed between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples.²⁰

Systemic Discrimination:

Systemic discrimination refers to discriminatory mistreatment of an individual or group of individuals by a society and its institutions as a whole, through unequal selection or bias,

¹⁵ Crenshaw, Kimberlé () "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," University of Chicago Legal Forum: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8.
<http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>

¹⁶ Crenshaw, Kimberlé, 1989.

¹⁷ Canadian Race Relations Foundation. *Glossary of Terms*. <https://www.crrf-fcrr.ca/en/resources/glossary-a-terms-en-gb-1>

¹⁸ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future: Summary of the final report of the truth and reconciliation commission of Canada*, 2015, p.16,
http://www.trc.ca/assets/pdf/Honouring_the_Truth_Reconciling_for_the_Future_July_23_2015.pdf

¹⁹ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015.

²⁰ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015.

intentional or unintentional. For example, in Canada “Systemic discrimination dominates political and policymaking spheres, creating massive discriminations against Aboriginal persons, whether as groups or as individuals... It operates through inaction, silence, neglect, and indifference to the aboriginal, human, and treaty rights, stifling the talents and opportunities of individuals while sustaining poverty and malaise and affecting diverse social, cultural, political, economic, spiritual, and physical outcomes among Aboriginal peoples.”²¹

Systemic or institutional discrimination can also refer “to attitudes, patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that are part of the social or administrative structures of an organization or sector, and that create or perpetuate a position of relative disadvantage”²² for groups of people based on one or more grounds typically protected by human rights codes such as disability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity and citizenship.

Systemic Racism:

According to Alexandra Pierre from the Ligue des droits et libertés, “the basic definition of racism refers to the belief in biological, hierarchical races. This has led to the mistaken belief that racism no longer exists or is no longer influential since the existence of biological races has been disproved. Yet the contempt and hostility experienced by racialized people, their limited access to resources and lesser living conditions persist.”²³ So, by systemic racism we mean the (institutional, legal...) systems that obstruct the rights, liberties and dignity of persons according to their (socially constructed) races.

Transmisogyny:

Transmisogyny is the confluence of transphobia and misogyny - the negative attitudes, expressed through cultural hate, individual and state violence, and discrimination directed toward trans women and trans and gender non-conforming people on the feminine end of the gender spectrum.

Trauma-informed Approach:

“A trauma-informed approach recognizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery.”²⁴ “A trauma-informed approach recognizes the signs of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system and it responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices.”²⁵ The goal of a trauma-informed approach is to not re-traumatize people, but to support healing in a manner that is welcoming and appropriate to the needs of those affected by trauma.²⁶

Violence:

“Violence involves the intentional or threatened use of power or force that is likely to cause harm against someone else (for example, interpersonal or sexual violence), against a group or community (for example, armed conflict and systemic violence), or against oneself (for example, suicide or self-harm). These types of violence can take many forms: colonial, cultural, institutional, physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, spiritual, verbal, financial,

²¹ Marie Battiste, *Systemic Discrimination Against Aboriginal Peoples*, Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2018,

<https://www.crrf-fcrr.ca/en/component/flexicontent/item/24056-systemic-discrimination-against-aboriginal-peoples>

²² Ontario Human Rights Commission, *Racism and racial discrimination: Systemic discrimination*, 2016, <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-ableism-and-discrimination-based-disability/6-forms-discrimination>

²³ Alexandra Pierre, “Mots choisis pour réfléchir au racisme et à l’anti-racisme”, *Droits et libertés*, Volume 35, numéro 2, automne 2016. https://liguedesdroits.ca/wp-content/fichiers/revue_racisme_automne_2016_final_201612.pdf

²⁴ Mental Health Organization. *Trauma-informed approach and trauma-specific interventions*, 2015, <https://www.mentalhealth.org/get-help/trauma>

²⁵ Mental Health Organization, 2015.

²⁶ Mental Health Organization, 2015.

and neglect.”²⁷

Gender-based violence, commonly referred to by its acronym GBV, is violence that is committed against someone based on their gender identity, gender expression or perceived gender. This violence is disproportionately directed at women and gender diverse persons. When it comes to GBV, a person may experience more than one form of violence or abuse. Here, these words are often used interchangeably, or the broader term ‘abuse’ is used.

Structural violence can be understood as the gap between a person’s or community’s potential well-being and their actual well-being, when that difference is *avoidable*.²⁸ Structural violence is a process of concealment where marginalized spaces are naturalized as “degenerate;” they become conceived of as spaces of expected violence, meaning structural violence is a spatio-legal production of a state of exception where violence is disguised as rationality, rendering it legitimate.²⁹

Women:

An inclusive term that includes Two-Spirit, genderqueer, trans and non-binary people and the diverse experiences of all people who identify as women or girls including non-binary people and people of all marginalized genders. We recognize that gender is not defined by biology.

2. PRINCIPLES

Women’s rights are human rights. Women’s inequity is a violation of human rights. This document recognizes that without the recognition, incorporation and implementation of all international declarations, conventions, and treaties to which Canada is a signatory, gender equality in Canada will not be achieved. Feminism is advocacy for all women’s rights, and we recognize that there are many feminisms. The feminism that grounds this document is anti-oppressive, anti-racist, inclusive and intersectional. Fulfilling women’s rights and attaining gender equality are inextricably intertwined with building a sustainable environment and a just society. Women must be equal participants in all decisions related to them and their environment.

This Discussion Document is grounded in the following principles:

Decolonizing:

- Resist, reconcile and repair the impacts of historical and ongoing colonization while working to strengthen and enhance the prosperity of contemporary Indigenous Peoples, Nations, knowledge and institutions
- Commit to distinction-based inclusion of Indigenous women
- Recognize and implement the inherent rights of First Nation, Métis and Inuit women
- Commit to listening to and centering Indigenous women’s knowledge, teachings and experience.

Inclusive, Intersectional, Feminist:

- Recognize feminisms are multidimensional principles, not singular

²⁷ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. *Reclaiming Power and Place: Volume 1a*, 2019, p.76, https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1a.pdf

²⁸ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019.

²⁹ Holmes, Cindy, Hunt, Sarah., and Piedalue, Amy, Violence, Colonialism and Space: Towards a Decolonizing Dialogue. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 14 (2), 2015, p.550, <https://acme-journal.org/index.php/acme/article/view/1102>.

- Have a central commitment to a holistic feminism
- Centre, without appropriation, the lived experience of women historically marginalized, including the mobilizing efforts of Indigenous and Inuit peoples and the work of Black women, women of colour, Muslim women, poor women, immigrant and migrant women and those without status
- Ensure inclusion, equity and visible recognition of women with disabilities, Two-Spirit, 2SLGBTQQIA and gender non-conforming and non-binary people is centered on the principle of “nothing about us without us”
- Recognize and actively include voices and wisdom of all ages
- Ensure full inclusion of feminist organizations in every province and territory, in rural and urban areas, in planning, development, implementation, and evaluation (including provincial and national feminist organizations).

Systemic:

- Acknowledge privilege and oppression are complex, intersectional and function on a structural and systemic level
- Commit to a focus on measurable systemic change, measured by progress towards eliminating structural and systemic oppression and barriers, and to transform institutional systems to advance gender equity
- Successful, sustainable, coordinated implementation across all levels of government, the private sector and community including demonstrated comprehensive implementation of Gender-based Analysis+ (GBA+).

Educational:

Lifelong transformative education to raise awareness about all aspects of equity and equality is essential to achieve the cultural change necessary for systemic and structural transformation:

- Ensure equity, respect, diversity, and inclusion in addressing gender privilege and all gender identities, bias, oppression and violence in all environments are initiated in early childhood and fostered through a commitment to lifelong learning
- Foster the development and growth of allies for women’s and gender equity regardless of gender
- Centre Indigenous perspectives in the teaching of Canada’s colonial history
- Value the lived experience of all women in Canada as a tool in the learning process.

Trauma and Violence-informed:

- Honour, acknowledge and be informed by women’s -individual and collective - experiences of trauma and violence, including sexual violence
- Acknowledge GBV is occurring at epidemic proportions in society
- Acknowledge and respect that colonization is a form of violence that is ongoing and affects all of society
- Address all aspects of trauma and gender-based violence including structural and systemic violence, cycles of trauma that re-traumatize and vicarious trauma and institutional violence
- Believe and support survivors.

Accessible:

- Ensure equal and equitable access, meeting women and gender diverse people where they are at
- Facilitate broad and inclusive access to the development and implementation, including

equal and equitable access and equity of access, to the living Pan-Canadian Strategy to Advance Gender Equality

- Recognize that accessibility is intersectional, and can include, for example, geography, physical and social location, income, status, language, ability, access to technology and culture.

Democratic, Accountable and Sustainably Funded:

- Fund the full engagement, authentic consultation and access to resources within women's and gender equality and professional organizations at all points in the process of finalizing, adopting and implementing a Pan-Canadian Strategy to Advance Gender Equality
- Engage in respectful, inclusive, well-funded consensus-reaching approaches in all aspects
- Include an articulated mechanism for accountability that applies to all principles
- Enables grassroots organizations to work in tandem with national organizations
- Commit resources from the Government of Canada and implement a mechanism for ensuring accountability. In spite of jurisdictional issues, it is expected that the federal government lead, support, and provide resources to lower jurisdictions directly tied to implementing the recommendations and asks through incentive programs.

Focus on Physical and Mental Health, Body Sovereignty and Wellness

The health and wellness of girls, women and society as a whole needs to be woven throughout as an essential component of prevention, healing and transformation.

- Incorporate health and wellness as an outcome of any program or service impacting women, families and society as a whole
- Ensure health and wellness practices become an integral part of programming for girls and women to help build self-esteem, resilience and confidence (e.g. through sport, physical activity, recreation, healthy eating, mental health support and leadership training)
- Promote and support access to health and wellness programs, services and education
- Advocate for health and wellness to become a mandatory component of any initiative impacting girls, women and families
- Ensure the sexual and reproductive rights of all. The right to access sexual and reproductive health is a right for all.

3. VISION

All women, girls, trans, non-binary/gender diverse and Two-Spirit people in Canada have equitable access to a safe environment, healthy conditions, and the full ability to realize their potential and exercise their rights on a sustainable Mother³⁰ Earth.

³⁰ There is an ongoing historical connection between resource extraction and violence against women. By honouring the traditional representation of the planet as Mother Earth, we intend to highlight the important role the rights of women play in the protection of the environment.

4. GOALS

Goal 1: All women, girls, trans, non-binary/gender diverse and Two-Spirit people live in a society that meets their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health and wellness needs and actively promotes their ability to aspire to more than the exercise of basic rights by supporting their ability to dream and to achieve the things they dream of through:

- Equal rights and the means to enforce their rights
- Equitable access to safety, health care, housing, education, sport and physical activity, employment, child care and economic security
- Lives free from gender-based violence
- Lives free from all systems of oppression and discrimination.

Goal 2: People of all marginalized genders in all their diversity are represented equally in leadership and governance roles across all sectors. Governing bodies leverage research and evidence-based policies and practices, including Gender-based Analysis plus (GBA+), to enable organizations, communities, and individuals to identify and challenge biases, both conscious and unconscious, and measure yearly success toward the goals and recommendations of any national strategy to achieve gender equality.

Goal 3: The roles, responsibilities, and knowledge of people of all marginalized genders to care for Mother Earth are acknowledged, supported, and resourced.

Goal 4: People of all marginalized genders have access to unbiased, responsive legal and justice systems to enforce, promote, and advance their rights.

Goal 5: People of all marginalized genders have access to sustainably funded, autonomous, member-based regional and national organizations that are inclusive of and accountable to all women, collaborative in nature and informed by voices of women across the country and intersectional research and data. Organizations lead the setting of targets to advance gender-equality, measures attainment, and recommends actions to ensure the continued success of a Pan-Canadian Strategy to Advance Gender Equality.

Goal 6: People of all marginalized genders are able to confirm that these goals have been achieved and they are safe, healthy and empowered to fully realize their potential and exercise their rights on a sustainable Mother Earth.

5. PRIORITY ISSUES

Structural factors and systemic discrimination that have impeded women's equality in Canada and remain in place in our country, include but are not limited to: colonialism, racism, ableism, heteronormativity, capitalism, and heteropatriarchy. For people of marginalized genders, these lead to poverty, unequal/inequitable pay, violence, including sexual violence, racism, discrimination, precarious work, and lack of access to adequate housing, justice, healthcare and health

services, child care, financial investment and advancement.³¹ Canada needs a strategic plan to achieve gender equity and equality, coordinated among governments, all of whom bear responsibility for and have roles to play in ending inequality.

The work of the Gender Equality Network Canada has identified four priority issues to ensure progress on gender equality:

- Decolonization and Reconciliation
- Violence Against Women/Gender-based Violence
- Accessibility, Equity, Equality and Inclusion
- Economic Security and Prosperity.

Applying an intersectional lens is essential to addressing all of these issues.³²

Priority: Decolonization and Reconciliation

Indigenous women in Canada face targeted discrimination due to intersecting impacts of colonialism, gender inequality and racism. While the legacy and current context of colonization shapes and informs the lived experiences of First Nations, Inuit and Métis women, their history, experiences and leadership in addressing issues that have shaped their lives and broader global issues - such as environmental protection - and in providing holistic, culturally-based responses, offer understandings and approaches to addressing equality. First Nations, Inuit and Métis women experience a fundamental risk to safety due to ongoing racialized violence, which the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls identified as a genocide that targets women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people empowered by colonial structures evidenced notably by the Indian Act, the Sixties Scoop and residential schools.³³ These historical events are not solely indicative of the experiences of Indigenous women and in fact, minimize it. Additional areas highlighted for immediate attention in these recommendations are the disproportionate number of Indigenous children in the child welfare system, gender and incarceration and social determinants of health.

Recommendations:

- Indigenous Women
- Gender & Incarceration
- Education on Indigenous Histories.

Priority: Violence Against Women (VAW) / Gender-based Violence (GBV)

Canada has taken crucial and important steps to address violence against women and gender-based violence. But the 2019 report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women on her visit to Canada reminds us that responses must acknowledge the depth, extent and gravity of the crisis.³⁴ Effectively addressing violence against women and other gender-based violence will require bold and robust responses with commensurate investment, not piecemeal actions fueled by project funding. Our recommendations rest on a broad demand for serious

³¹ Katherine, Scott. The Best and Worst Places to be a Woman in Canada. *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives*, 2019, <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2019/03/Best%20and%20Worst%20Places%20to%20Be%20a%20Woman%202019.pdf>

³² Gender Equality Network Canada. Women's Equality in Canada: An Environmental Scan, *Canadian Women's Foundation*, 2018, <https://www.canadianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/GENC-Environmental-Scan- Executive-Summary-Final-EN.pdf>

³³ The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019, p. 50, https://www.mmiwgffada.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2019/06/Supplementary-Report_Genocide.pdf

³⁴ Dubravka, Šimonović. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences*, A/HRC/41/42/Add.1[Advance, unedited version], Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2019, https://www.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/Documents/Issues/Women/SR/A_HRC_41_42_Add.1.docx&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1

government commitment of resources, mechanisms and legal reform related to national action plan on gender equality and violence, including sexual violence against all women using an intersectional and trauma-informed lens and drawing on grassroots and Indigenous women's leadership. Priorities include:

- Justice System Responses to Sexual Assault and Violence
- Violence Against Women and Family Law
- Girls and Women in Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity
- Cybermisogyny
- Child welfare responses to Family Violence.

Priority: Accessibility, Equity, Equality and Inclusion

To achieve gender equality we must increase accessibility, promote inclusion, ending systemic discrimination and addressing barriers to issues of access and inclusion for the most marginalized in Canada, including Indigenous women, women with disabilities, Deaf women, racialized women, trans women and gender non-conforming people. It is also important to recognize that these issues and experiences which are complex and interconnected.

Intersectionality is “a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It's not simply that there's a race [issue] here, a gender [issue] here, [a disability issue here] and a class or LGBTQ [issue] there. Many times that framework erases what happens to people who are subject to all of these things.”³⁵ Intersectionality supports advances in integrating an understanding of colonialism as it affects Indigenous women and the institutional racism embedded in our immigration system, police force and criminal justice system.

- Access and Inclusion
- Gender Based Analysis+ (GBA+) and Research
- Leadership
- Youth.

Priority: Economic Security and Prosperity

Canada's failure to achieve gender equality prevents women from reaching economic security. Many of the structural factors, such as capitalism, cited that preserve gender inequality in Canada, such as capitalism, do so by enforcing women's economic inequality and insecurity. People who cannot access paid employment have a right to income security. Discrimination against people with disabilities, Indigenous, racialized, and newcomer women blocks access to employment and results in higher unemployment. Inadequate access to affordable child care also blocks women's access to employment, while failure to implement pay equity ensures the gender pay gap continues, a gap that is exacerbated for First Nations, Métis, Inuit and racialized women. The rise of precarious work has reduced economic security and increased poverty for women who makeup three quarters of part-time workers and almost 60% of minimum wage workers, with high impact on immigrant, refugee and newcomer women of colour.³⁶ Though women are as likely as men to have post-secondary education, and more likely to have a university degree, systemic discrimination remains a barrier to advancement in growing sectors like Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), and high-wage trades.³⁷ Ensure

³⁵ Crenshaw, Kimberlé. Kimberlé Crenshaw on Intersectionality, more than Two Decades Later. *Columbia Law School*, 2017, <https://www.law.columbia.edu/pt-br/news/2017/06/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality>

³⁶ McInturff, Kate & Lambert, Brittany. Making Women Count: The Unequal Economics of Women's Work, *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives*, 2016, https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2016/03/Making_Women_Count2016.pdf

³⁷ McInturff, Kate. The Best and Worst Places to be a Woman in Canada 2016: The Gender Gap in Canada's 25 Biggest Cities. *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives*, 2016,

https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2016/10/Best_and_Worst_Places_to_Be_a_Wo

support for under-represented and women-led businesses needs to be ensured through secured investment opportunity and barrier-free procurement processes supporting supplier diversity.

Our recommendations to increase economic security for women focus on addressing these well-documented long-term issues: to increase economic security for women.

- Child Care
- Economic Security and Pay Equity
- Housing
- Environment
- Immigrant and Undocumented Women
- Women in STEM & Women in Trades
- Women in Sport Leadership and Coaching
- Women's Entrepreneurship.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations Supporting All Priority Areas

- Provide Sustainable, stable long-term core funding, not short-term grant or project funding for women and gender equality organizations across Canada
- Implement an intersectional National Child Care Strategy
- Create a Commissioner of Gender Equity, by amending the *Auditor-General Act*, empowered to receive petitions on gender equity and require Ministers to respond³⁸
- Fund a women-led mechanism or committee to follow-up and support the implementation of the recommended policies
- Fund a permanent, independent Pan-Canadian women's rights and gender equality network that works collaboratively with existing provincial, territorial, and national organizations to continue to develop a Canada-wide action plan to advance gender equality
- Fund mandated education on gender equality across the education system, public service, and healthcare.

Priority: Decolonization and Reconciliation

Indigenous Women

Our policies will align with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People. We will build support on what is already out there.

Issue: Relationship with Canada

Ask:

1. The relationship that Canada has with Indigenous peoples (First Nation, Métis and Inuit) has to start with the recognition of the strengths of Indigenous women and that those strengths

man2016.pdf

³⁸ Similar to the role of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development outlined in the Auditor-General Act, as proposed, the Commissioner of Gender Equity would be an aide to the Auditor-General of Canada with offices within the same precinct. Office of the Auditor General of Canada. *Getting Answers-A guide to the Environmental Petitions Process, 2019*, http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/pet_lp_e_930.html

are rooted in rights.

Issue: Treaties and Rights

Based on those rights, all government policies need to facilitate Indigenous people returning to and establish systems and processes that exist to support Indigenous peoples. To shift away from colonization we have to shift to restoring Indigenous decision-making systems.

Ask:

2. That the foundation is based on inherent rights and is embedded in existing legislation including:
 - Treaties
 - UNDRIP
 - Traditional Indigenous laws
 - Indigenous governance.

Issue: Safety

Safety is fundamental need to realizing other needs in life. If we not safe we are not able to do anything else in our life. It is a fundamental right that has not been realized for Indigenous people in Canada. The violence that is happening to Indigenous women and girls is not going away.

Asks:

3. We have to find ways to have conversations about what is happening in our communities.
4. Have to find supports for men.

Issue: Relationship with Federal, Provincial and Territorial Governments

Government must establish respectful relationships with the Indigenous communities to honour inherent rights of Indigenous people. “Nothing is decided without us.”

Asks:

5. Establish an Indigenous Women’s Circle in each Federal Department.
6. Establish an Indigenous Women’s Circle in each province and territory.

Issue: Indigenous Communities

Asks & Actions:

Invest in building and rebuilding Indigenous communities, recognizing Indigenous women’s key roles.

7. Indigenous women need to be able to come together and share space and learn together (In our provinces, in Canada, in nation and territorial knowledge, and internationally).
8. Share our collective knowledge to support Indigenous women and communities.
9. Learn language and our culture and the new aspects of our culture through our shared identities.
10. Develop an accessible resource (e.g. hot line) to increase the capacity of support Indigenous women and girls to support their capacity to access funding and resources from government.

Issue: Policies and Programs

Ask:

11. Policies and programs need to be developed through an Indigenous gender-based analysis lens and co-created with Indigenous women.

Issue: Systemic Change on Social Determinants of Health

Have to address the systemic issues that are embedded in all existing systems that continually harm and create vulnerability for Indigenous women, our children and our families need to be addressed. We have recommendations for the different social determinants of health: child welfare, housing, food security, water, health care system, justice system, economic development, environment.

Asks & Actions:

Child Welfare

The current child welfare systems are set up to fail and work against Indigenous people. The only way to change the system is to shift the power of what happens to Indigenous children to Indigenous people.

12. In the short term: if a child is coming into the system, the family and community are immediately involved.

13. Shift the focus to support of to the family as children are in relationship to their family.

Food Security

14. Food Security is culturally-based and communities need to be supported to learn about the original sustenance. (Berry Picking, hunting, fishing, gardening, from the oceans)

Water

15. Address all boil water advisories and elevate to a national standard of water quality.

Housing

16. Build houses that are culturally appropriate, reflect the family size and are built in all communities, including and in urban communities.

17. Link the establishment of housing to other policy goals (e.g. energy through solar and green energies).

Education System and Curriculum

The Education system has to include the true history of Canada so that we are able to give each child the experience of being included and belonging to this country (include the history of Indigenous people, of people of Chinese and Japanese origin in Canada, and the history of our rejection of Jewish people).

18. Need to know our own history of our own country. First Nations, Inuit and Métis develop their own curriculum to tell their own stories.

Health Services

19. Health Services need to provide quality, culturally- safe health services including:

- Training
- Professional Development
- Each child to having their cultural Identity from birth.

Justice System & Law Reform

All police forces and all parts of the justice system need to change their practices and protocols to reflect the needs of Indigenous people and shows respect for Indigenous people. Laws have to change to have better outcomes for Indigenous peoples.

20. Ensure police forces and all parts of the justice system record all information down accurately.

21. Ensure police forces and all parts of the justice system are providing culturally specific services and supports.

22. Indigenous people lead that process to change that will have better outcomes for Indigenous peoples.

Economic Development and Infrastructure Projects and Transportation Decisions

23. Decisions on economic development projects, infrastructure projects and transportation decisions to consider the impact on safety for Indigenous women through an intersectional gender-based analysis (IGBA) and have ways to mitigate the risk to Indigenous women.

Issue: Indigenous Governance Structures

24. Support Indigenous women to increase their roles in own and non-Indigenous governance structures.

Gender & Incarceration

Issue: Inclusion

It is important to first state that we do not advocate for criminalized, and in particular criminalized Indigenous women, to be forced into the labor market (this is not a call for entrenchment in colonial capitalism). We are advocating that there is a paradigmatic shift of the narrative from one that focuses on criminality, to an understanding of criminalization and its barriers to social inclusion. This may come in the form of a campaign to push the broader public to shift perceptions around the realities of incarceration and social exclusion. Sustained core funding for grassroots organizations to participate in ongoing efforts to shift the narrative would be most ideal.

Allow Indigenous peoples to define what a consultation process is; provide Indigenous communities with agency and resources to develop reasonable Section 84 implementation abilities. Criminalized women, of course, are the experts on this issue and would need to be consulted with and appropriately compensated.

Asks:

25. Develop organizational policies within the social service sector that promote social inclusion of criminalized women.
26. Develop policy and provide resources to First Nations communities which allows them to assess and accommodate requests for Section 84 releases under *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (S.C. 1992, c. 20).

Issue: Economic Security

Opportunities for economic security and inclusion vary by region and institution. Typically though, areas that are easiest to access for incarcerated women are the trades. While some women are interested in this area of work, many are not and this provides significant challenges. Further to this, many women are not interested in working. However, they are constrained by the expectations of their release and of welfare which removes their agency in this area. Indigenous communities need the opportunity to develop environmentally friendly solutions that allow for independence. Criminalized women should not be forced into a labour market immediately upon or as a condition of their release.

Ask:

27. Develop policies and economic programs that are informed by and responsive to the specific needs of women who have experienced incarceration (i.e. opening the employment sector beyond trades and into sectors relevant to women's interests).

Issue: Housing

Reintegration programs are typically regulated and designed by federal Parole. Though there are cultural spaces for women, these are still considered to be and are designated as prison space (even when existing in community such as a section 81). Green infrastructure solutions need to be demanded to provide safe and accommodating housing solutions. Indigenous women, both provincially and regionally, must be offered alternative land-based healing to ensure and promote decarceration - Indigenous systems of living and being to move outside of the colonial capitalism modalities of housing.

Asks:

28. Provide culturally supportive transitional housing that is informed by successful

reintegration programs.

29. Develop policy that ensures women who have been incarcerated maintain affordable housing.

Issue: Sexual Violence

Women are strip searched at varying points of contact within and relating to provincial and federal institutions. Alternatives must be immediately implemented to ensure that inmates (regardless of gender) are not affected by state-sanctioned sexualized violence. If body scanners can be funded as a matter of security in airports, they can be funded and utilized in prisons.

Ask:

30. Ensure policies and standing orders regarding strip searching of inmates are replaced with non-invasive alternatives in acknowledgement of the prevalence of experiences of sexual violence among incarcerated women.

Issue: Solitary Confinement

Ask:

31. Abolish the use of the management protocol and use of prolonged and indefinite solitary confinement.

Issue: Gladue Principles

Ask:

32. Conduct a national review of the use and implementation (or lack thereof) of Gladue principles in sentencing and judicial interim release, and allow Indigenous women to develop a policy framework to ensure that Gladue is understood and applied evenly across jurisdictions (as informed by Indigenous protocol regionally).

Issue: Over incarceration of Indigenous Women

Ask:

33. Conduct a national review on the overrepresentation of Indigenous women who are incarcerated or involved in the justice system, paying particular attention to the Prairie and Northern regions. Allow Indigenous women to develop a national strategy for the de-incarceration and reintegration of women who have been incarcerated for non-violent offences.

Issue: Deficit and Loss of Indigenous Languages and Culture

Asks:

34. Provide funding for Indigenous women who are incarcerated to have access to learn and sustain their languages from community grandmothers who represent the regional nation/language.
35. Provide funding for Indigenous women and their children to access land-based reintegration programming as an alternative to incarceration.

Issue: Access to Children

Ask:

36. Develop policy that allows children in First Nations communities to remain in the home if a parent becomes incarcerated.

Issue: Health

Asks:

37. Increase the availability of mental health supports and programming that are culturally relevant - with priority being given to supports and developments outside the prison.
38. Review policies on giving birth in-custody, and develop a gender-based approach and dismantle the policy of shackling women who give birth in custody.

Issue: Lack of Gender-based+ Analysis

Asks:

39. Conduct and implement a Gender based+ Analysis of all Correctional Service of Canada policies and programs, especially regarding the incarceration of Two-Spirit, trans, and gender non-conforming individuals.
40. Conduct a review of the experiences of sexual violence within institutions - whether between corrections officer and 'inmate' or inmate on inmate sexual violence.
41. Develop or update GBA+ to include experience and impacts of sexual violence.

Issue: Environmental Degradation

Ask:

42. Conduct a national review and environmental impact assessment on the prison industry and immediately implement any and all recommendations of that report with an advisory circle of Indigenous women.

Issue: Recommendations from the “Master List of Report Recommendations” of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls³⁹ (report attached)

Ask:

The following recommendations from the “Master List of Report Recommendations” of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls relate to the above noted policy asks for Gender and Incarceration and should be noted broadly. Specific excerpts from numerous reports and commissions are listed and should be consulted in detail:

From Part One: Immediate and concrete activities:

43. “The need for a national inquiry into violence against Indigenous women and girls
44. The need for a federally-coordinated, cross-jurisdictional national action plan to address violence against Indigenous women and girls”

From Part Two: Addressing the root causes for the disproportionate violence, the need for preventative action:

45. “The need for properly resourced initiatives and programming to address root causes of violence against Indigenous women and girls, including:
 - a) The need for responsive, accountable, and culturally appropriate child and family services
 - b) The need to bridge education (primary through to post-secondary), skills training, and employment gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people the need to address disproportionate rates of poverty among Indigenous people, and women
 - i. specifically;
 - c) The need to improve access to safe housing (across the housing spectrum);
 - d) The need for accessible and culturally appropriate health, mental health, and addictions services for Indigenous women;

³⁹ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. *Master list of report recommendations*. 2019. <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/National-Inquiry-Master-List-of-Report-Recommendations-Organized-By-Theme-and-Jurisdiction-2018-EN-FINAL.pdf>

- e) The need to support the continued retention and revitalization of Indigenous cultures, lifeways, and languages”

From Part Three: Failures of the justice system to respond to the disproportionate violence, the need for improved reactive measures

- 46. “The need for better community-based first response
- 47. The need for more responsive, transparent, and accountable policing: investigations and oversight
- 48. The need for culturally appropriate and equitable judicial processes and supports
- 49. The need for alternatives to Euro-Canadian judicial mechanisms
- 50. The need to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous women in correctional facilities, and ensure culturally appropriate programming and services for Indigenous women.”

Priority: Violence Against Women/Gender-based Violence

Violence Against Women/Gender-based Violence

Issue: Funding

Funding is the basic foundation and should be a condition for being able to effectively fight violence against women. It is therefore strongly recommended that the structures, organizations and institutions working in this sector have sufficient funds to function properly in a permanent and continuous way and that essential preventive, legal and social measures to reduce violence are funded.

Asks and Actions

- 51. More sustainable, stable funding, not just grant or project funding.
- 52. Provided according to need, not on a per capita basis in rural and remote areas: policing, access to safe housing, equitable access to services.
- 53. Financing should be commensurate with the needs of women who face multiple forms of discrimination based on immigration status, language proficiency (need for translation), capacity, Indigenous women, etc.

Issue: Education

Education on respect and gender equality is at the root of any healthy relationship and is therefore a key pillar in fighting violence against girls and women. It is essential to start this education from a very young age and to introduce it in all schools, but also to adapt the educational programs in Canadian academic and work environments.

Asks and Actions

- 54. National, widespread, general, public education campaign on GBV (ministries or departments that are/could be responsible: Public Health, Justice). Work with those knowledgeable about this issue: Grassroots public educators in sexual assault centers and shelters across Canada; feminist social marketing firms.
- 55. In schools and sport; as part of the curriculum, from a young age, teach about: healthy relationships, gender equality, domestic violence, sexual assault.
- 56. Training in all workplaces on awareness and prevention.
- 57. Mandate Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence Training for all government agencies: Police (RCMP and Municipal), Probation Services, Prosecutions and all federal committees and organizations funded by the federal government.
- 58. Mandatory training for all government employees, federal committees and all organizations funded by the Federal Government of Canada.

Issue: History

Considerable work has been done in the past. Many formal recommendations have been made by feminist groups, researchers and various community and institutional professionals who often had many years of recognized expertise in the issue. In order to honour, value and recognize the skills of professionals but also to put into practice the various essential recommendations formulated in the past, priority requests are included here.

Asks and Actions

59. Review all gender-based violence provincially-led Inquest recommendations and actually apply them.
60. Review World Health Organization recommendations on how to end gender-based violence and apply them.
61. Review the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action and apply them.
62. Review the recommendations from DAWN Canada (DisAbled Women's Network Canada) and apply them.
63. Review the United Nations Human Rights Council Special Report on *Violence against women, its causes and consequences* by Dubravka Simonovic and apply her recommendations.⁴⁰
64. Access resources that already exist including Statistics Canada, medical and judicial cost of GBV in Canada, Public Health, Canadian Women's Foundation.
65. Review and respond to the findings of a nation-wide survey of athletes on maltreatment in sport. Update Canadian Sport policies on Abuse and Harassment in Sport and enforce policies. Withhold funding to non-compliant National Sport Organizations.⁴¹

Justice System Responses to Sexual Assault

Canada has made little progress on implementing the international human rights obligations that relate to the issue of violence against women and sexual violence. These recommendations must be set into a national strategy on gender equality and violence, including sexual violence, with an intersectional lens, developed with grassroots and Indigenous women's leadership.

Issue: Integrated Access and Consistent National Implementation

There is a lack of an integrated access point for frontline advocates to feed information, make coordinated asks, and get coordinated answers from the federal government on issues related to the justice system response to sexual violence. There is also a need to ensure that what is happening federally is implemented consistently across the country at the provincial/territorial level.

Asks:

66. Coordinated inter-ministerial (Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE), Public Safety/ Department of Justice) leadership at the federal level and Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) leadership that includes a structured and transparent process for collaboration and consultation with feminist community-based advocates from across the country to advance policy and practice in the justice system response to sexual assault and violence.

Issue: Specialized Sexual Assault Services

⁴⁰ Dubravka, Šimonović. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, A/HRC/41/42/Add.1*[Advance, unedited version], Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2019, https://www.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/Documents/Issues/Women/SR/A_HRC_41_42_Add.1.docx&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1

⁴¹ Kerr, G and Stirling, A. 2019. *Prevalence of Maltreatment Among Current and Former National Team Athletes* https://athletescan.com/sites/default/files/images/prevalence_of_maltreatment_reporteng.pdf

Lack of capacity to deliver specialized sexual assault services to all survivors across Canada

Ask:

67. Adequate, consistent, operational funding for feminist, community-based sexual assault services across Canada that is not reliant on reporting to police.

Issue: Community-Based Advocates and Service Providers

Increased attention to the issue of the justice system's response to sexual violence is positive and leading to more government and law enforcement interest in supporting innovation in this area. It is also leading to increased demand for the expertise and input of community-based advocates and service providers who are already overstretched in their service delivery role.

Ask:

68. Dedicated funding to support community-based advocates to share their expertise and participate in justice system responses to sexual violence, including advocate case review processes, policy development, training for law enforcement and justice system personnel and other consultation and collaboration.

Issue: Reporting Options

There is an abundance of social and systemic barriers for survivors of sexual violence to report the crimes committed against them to the police. It is estimated that 5% of sexual assault survivors report to the police.

Ask:

69. A cross-ministerial commitment to support communities across Canada to enhance access to reporting options for survivors of sexual assault. Reporting options include but are not limited to: Third Party/Anonymous Reporting, Third Option Reporting and online reporting.

Issue: Reporting Rates

One of the many reasons identified for survivors of sexual violence choosing not to report their sexual assault to the police is a lack of confidence or trust in the legal system. This fear is well founded given high attrition rates and low conviction rates for sexual assault crimes in Canada, due largely to embedded attitudes, beliefs and misinformation that surround the issue of sexual violence.

Ask:

70. A cross-ministerial commitment to support communities across Canada to deliver training and education to law enforcement, prosecutors, and others within the justice system on sexual assault myths and stereotypes; sexual assault trauma and communicating with survivors of sexual violence. Any training on sexual violence should be in consultation with front line sexual assault advocate expertise and should be sexual violence specific.

Issue: False Stereotypes in the Judicial System

In recent years, sexual assault cases have revealed that some judges still hold false stereotypes about women and sexual violence. These biases create barriers for survivors seeking justice through the legal system and discourage them from coming forward in the first place. Front line advocates can confirm that judicial biases negatively impact survivors of sexual violence in Canada's court rooms on a daily basis.

Ask:

71. Mandatory sexual assault training be instituted for all federally appointed judges.

Issue: Monitoring

There is a lack of monitoring related to sexual violence and the criminal justice system

response. While advocate case review can address a lack of monitoring for law enforcement, not all law enforcement agencies have or intend to implement the model, and there exists no monitoring and reporting of the conduct of officers of the Court and Judiciary in sexual assault proceedings.

Ask:

72. A cross-ministerial commitment to support communities across Canada to implement law enforcement and Court monitoring models.

Issue: Research and Data

There is a lack of research and data related to sexual violence and the criminal justice system. We need research on international approaches to legal standing for survivors of sexual assault. There is a need for better disaggregated statistics related to sexual violence as opposed to overall stats related to violent crime. We need more consistency in how data is gathered, coded and reported by police and Crown so it can be compared. Currently there is no way to discern how many homicides involve sexual violence. Further, there is a wealth of information on the local and community level that is not being recognized as “research”.

Ask:

73. Create a sexual assault and criminal justice system research committee, comprised of cross-Ministerial representatives (with leadership from Justice Canada and Statistics Canada) and community based sexual assault advocate coalitions, to determine research priorities and develop a plan for knowledge generation.

Violence Against Women and Family Law

Issue: Lack of funding for family law legal aid

Family law is widely regarded as one of the most significant gaps in access to justice for women. When the Canadian government replaced the Canada Assistance Plan with the Canada Health and Social Transfer, it removed the obligation on provinces and territories that funding targeted for legal aid plans must be spent on them. Today, women’s access to legal aid assistance varies dramatically across the country. Recent experiences in BC demonstrate that when legal aid funding is cut, the programs most accessed by women, including family law, suffer disproportionately. As a result, in jurisdictions like BC where sustained funding cuts have become entrenched, and Ontario, where full recovery from deep funding cuts in the 1990s has still not occurred. Women frequently walk away from rights claims, such as to property since there is almost no support for this issue through legal aid programs. This and is one contributing factor to women’s poverty. Legal rights and protections are meaningless if women cannot access them because they cannot obtain legal representation.

The federal government provided an example of this funding structure in 2016 when it provided a \$3-billion infusion to health care funding that was tied to federal priorities like home care and in the past has tied transfer payments to specific obligations through legislation such as the Canada Assistance Plan that preceded the Canada Health and Social Transfer. This is the model that will give effect to women’s legal claims and meaning to women’s legal rights throughout Canada.

Asks & Actions:

74. The Government of Canada provide targeted and sustained funding for legal aid programs across Canada, which is only available to provinces who commit to spending these funds on family law services. The scope of family law services must enable women to exercise all rights and entitlements, wherever situated in Canada, including property division and other economic entitlements as well as all other rights guaranteed by the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and human rights legislation throughout Canada.

75. The Government of Canada establish minimum standards for legal aid services and scope of services across all provinces and territories which take into account the complexity of the issues being resolved.
76. Family law services should be available in both official languages.

Issue: Lack of training and education for family lawyers and judges

According to the Government of Canada, of all reported violent crime in 2016, more than one quarter (26%) resulted from violence in the context of intimate relationships.⁴² However, experts agree that all forms of family violence are underestimated. Women are more likely to be victims of abuse than men.

Family lawyers, judges, and other family law professionals routinely work with individuals who have experienced or are experiencing violence but receive no mandatory training to equip them with the skills to screen for violence, identify risk factors, ensure safety, or determine the best interests of the child where violence against women in intimate relationships is present.

Judges must rely on the evidence that lawyers choose to place in front of them, and it is critical that lawyers have the skills to identify and present evidence of violence against women in intimate relationships. To understand and appropriately interpret this evidence, judges must have an understanding of how violence including coercive control and resistance to violence works.

Asks & Actions:

77. All family lawyers participate in mandatory ongoing training to identify and understand the dynamics of violence and how to work effectively with clients who have experienced violence. Existing piecemeal requirements such as those in BC which require family violence training before a lawyer can qualify as a family mediator and those in Ontario which require such training to be accepted on the domestic violence legal aid panel must be formalized and extended throughout the country so that lawyers wherever situated throughout Canada can be relied upon to deliver effective and competent family law advocacy that keeps women and children safe during what is often the most dangerous periods they face. Such mandatory training should be delivered and monitored by Law Societies across Canada via Continuing Professional Development reporting requirements that confirm the satisfactory complement of training.
78. All judges being assigned to family law cases be required to participate in training on the dynamics of violence against women in intimate relationships through the National Judicial Institute or another organization providing judicial education.
79. Training for both lawyers and judges be developed in consultation with the autonomous women's movement, front-line feminist anti-violence organizations committed to intersectional approaches to this work including those delivered by and serving Indigenous, racialized, newcomer and other marginalized communities, and frontline workers and survivors.

Issue: Community of Practice

Opportunities to mentor and be mentored, to work together for common purpose and to provide and receive support to do the challenging work of providing family law advocacy for women and children fleeing violence are lacking for family lawyers working on the issue violence against women. Moreover, family lawyers working on this issue are often separated by both geography and time zones, as well as chronic underfunding, resulting in a siloing of

⁴² Burczykca, M. 2017. Statistics Canada. *Police-reported intimate partner violence in Canada*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2018001/article/54978/02-eng.htm>

knowledge and experience.

Ask:

80. The Government of Canada address GBV and Family Law in a national strategy by establishing a working group of diverse, representative, community-based grassroots GBV and feminist legal experts (in consultation with the existing self-identified, self-organized women's groups / feminist legal groups) to establish pilot women's legal centres in several jurisdictions across the country where expertise is built upon and multiplied.

Issue: Unified Family Courts are not available in all jurisdictions

The unified family court (UFC) model, which combines provincial and superior (but not criminal) courts, streamlines family law matters by unifying them into a single court, thereby simplifying access to family law services. UFCs are specialized courts with a range of services and are designed to be easy to navigate. In some jurisdictions in Canada UFC's have already provided "better access to a specialized bench of judges and on-site dispute resolution and family justice services" in comparison with non-UFC jurisdictions.⁴³ The development of UFC's is in line with the National Action Committee's Roadmap for Change, which recommends specialized judges for family law.⁴⁴ However, where they have been implemented they have been implemented in many different ways which leads to inconsistency. A specialized bench equipped to provide the skilled, knowledgeable and consistent responses women and children fleeing violence need in order to safely escape violence will require allocation of the resources necessary to develop and sustain this promising model.

Ask:

81. Transition all jurisdictions in Canada to unified family court system with adequate resources to train and support judges to develop the specialized knowledge and skills required to deliver this model effectively to women and children fleeing violence. A standard model for Unified Family Courts should be developed for implementation across the country and sufficient resources be made available for this purpose. This model must take into account regional concerns such as those raised by the BC Provincial Court in response to the Justice review Task Force Background Report on Unified Family Courts. Indigenous communities must retain control of implementation of any models of access to justice.⁴⁵ Judges sitting in unified family courts must have training to allow them to develop the depth and expertise to be able to respond to GBV and family violence against children in a socially just and informed manner.

Issue: Inconsistent and Improper Offence Coding

Police are not consistently properly coding offences that fall under mandatory charging policies for Violence Against Women in intimate relationships and sexual assault, further contributing to the invisibility and disappearance of this violence.

Asks & Actions:

82. Mandatory training for all police in Canada on all forms of GBV including sexual assault, including dominant aggressor analysis and risk assessment so that they are better able to identify situations where women have been subject to abuse and to respond and lay charges as warranted, including with respect to breach of release and probation and parole conditions as well as restraining orders.

⁴³ Department of Justice. *The unified family court summative evaluation, final report*. 2009. p.iii. <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cp-pm/eval/rep-rap/09/ufc-tuf/ufc.pdf>

⁴⁴ Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters. *Access to civil & family justice, a roadmap for change*. 2013. https://www.cfcj-fcj.org/sites/default/files/docs/2013/AC_Report_English_Final.pdf

⁴⁵ Department of Justice. *The unified family court summative evaluation, final report*. 2009. <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cp-pm/eval/rep-rap/09/ufc-tuf/ufc.pdf>

83. In consultation with grassroots, front-line GBV workers, feminist legal experts and survivors of violence, develop mechanisms to ensure that this information flows more readily between criminal and family courts.
84. The governments of Canada and the provinces and territories develop a structure for civilian oversight of all structures of policing, including municipal, provincial and territorial and Indigenous police and RCMP, to monitor and make transparent police response to GBV survivors, especially Indigenous women and girls, drawing on the expertise of the autonomous women's movement.
85. Under the existing leadership of the front-line, grassroots violence against women and feminist legal advocates who have implemented Violence Against Women Advocate Case Review (VACR), the governments of Canada and the provinces and territories cooperate to launch a nation-wide review of police investigations, and that a wide sampling of police files be reviewed by external, grassroots front-line violence against women organizations and feminist legal experts in gender-based violence, in accordance with the Violence Against Women Advocate Case Review model (Philadelphia Model) being piloted in Ottawa.⁴⁶

Issue: Protection and Restraining Orders

Family law restraining orders are often hard to obtain, judges often inappropriately order mutual restraining orders, and police often do not enforce them.

Ask:

86. Establish a system to track and publicly disclose statistics regarding family law restraining orders sought and issued, reports/complaints of breaches, charges and outcomes resulting from breaches and oversight by Violence Against Women Advocate Case Review (VACR).

Issue: Disproportionate negative impacts of inadequately regulated and poorly completed Custody and Access Assessment Reports

Custody and access reports, as they are currently used, frequently fail to adequately identify or appropriately respond to allegations of violence against women in intimate relationships. The failure to take violence in all its forms into account has serious consequences for the safety of women and children and women are frequently caught in a “gendered trap” where allegations of abuse lead to accusations of parental alienation. There is no evidence demonstrating the benefit of these reports and there is little to no accountability.⁴⁷

Asks & Actions:

87. All provinces and territories be asked to immediately suspend the use of Custody and Access Reports written by private individuals for profit.
88. The Government of Canada, in consultation with the provinces, territories, Indigenous women's leadership, the autonomous women's movement and community organizations serving particular communities of women such as racialized, immigrant and refugee women, 2SLGBTQQIA women and women with disabilities, develop model guidelines respecting whether custody and access reports be conducted at all, and if so outline the specific methodology and requirements that will promote the safety of women and

⁴⁶ Trinh, Judy. Ontario police to turn over sexual assault cases for outside review. *CBC News*. 2017.

⁴⁷ Schmidt, Samantha. 'A gendered trap': When mothers allege child abuse by fathers, the mothers often lose custody, study shows. *The Washington Post*. 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/social-issues/a-gendered-trap-when-mothers-allege-child-abuse-by-fathers-the-mothers-often-lose-custody-study-shows/2019/07/28/8f811220-af1d-11e9-bc5c-e73b603e7f38_story.html?noredirect=on;

Lindsay, Bethany. 'Not one shred of scientific evidence': Critics say psych reports in custody cases can hurt kids. *CBC News*. 2019. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/bc-psychological-evaluations-child-custody-1.5278483>;

Neilson, Linda C., Parental alienation empirical analysis: Child best interests or parental rights? *The FREDACentre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children*. 2018. <http://www.fredacentre.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Parental-Alienation-Linda-Neilson.pdf>

- children considering the particular circumstances faced by some communities of women.
89. The Government of Canada immediately engage in research as to the utility and efficacy of custody and access reports as well as models of delivery such as Ontario's Office of the Children's Lawyer which provides services at no cost to the parties and takes into account violence against women in intimate relationships and the gendered impacts of such reports.

Issue: Insufficient Protection in the *Divorce Act* and provincial Family Law statutes

The *Divorce Act* and provincial family law statutes do not include sufficient protection for women and children who have experienced violence in intimate relationships. Recent changes to the *Divorce Act*, while positive, did not fully incorporate a gendered anti-violence lens and retain provisions that will continue to harm women and children experiencing such violence.

Asks & Actions:

90. The *Divorce Act* should incorporate the recommendations set out in Joint Brief on Bill C-78 developed by the National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL) and Luke's Place. These recommendations were developed after consultations with women's organizations across the country and were endorsed by 31 national and provincial women's organizations.
91. Until the Joint Brief recommendations are implemented, the Department of Justice and the Department for Women and Gender Equality should monitor the impact of changes to the *Divorce Act* which failed to account for the concerns raised by women's groups to see if the anticipated problems occur and if so, what changes are required to address them.
92. Provincial governments amend their family law statutes to bring them in line with the recommendations set out in the Joint Brief.
93. The Government of Canada implement recommendations of the UN Rapporteur on Violence Against Women in her report following her first visit to Canada in 2018 as follows:
- (h) Review family laws and the *Divorce Act* (R.S.C., 1985, c. 3 (2nd Supp.)) to ensure that domestic violence is taken in primary consideration when a decision about child custody occurs and that protection orders are easily enforceable across all provinces and territories while guaranteeing freedom of movement to survivors.⁴⁸

Issue: Women's Organizations and Development of Family Law

Women's organizations have insufficient input into the development of Pan-Canadian priorities on family law.

Asks & Actions:

94. The Government of Canada facilitate and provide financial support for attendance of a working group of diverse, representative, community-based grassroots organizations, GBV and feminist legal experts at the Family Law Sub-Committee to the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers of Justice and Public Safety.
95. The Government of Canada reinstate consultations between the Minister of Justice and the autonomous women's movement as occurred in the 1990s with the agenda and guest lists controlled by the autonomous women's movement who were able to meet alone for two to three days and with the Justice Minister on the third day.

Issue: Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

Despite an early ratification of the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), its provisions are not fully incorporated and given full force and effect within

⁴⁸ Šimonovic, Dubravka. Report of the special rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, *The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*. 2019

Canada. Further, the Department of Women and Gender Equality's (WAGE) "It's Time: Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence" is mainly project oriented, focusing on specific areas and lacking a human rights based holistic legal framework and comparable data collection for all forms of violence against women in all jurisdictions.

Ask:

96. Sustainably operationalize recommendations made in the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) particularly #19 and #35 and other international instruments and implement recommendations from the report of UN Rapporteur on Violence Against Women flowing from her first-ever visit to Canada in 2018.⁴⁹

Issue: Intersections of Immigration and Family Law

Women leaving abusive relationships are negatively impacted by the intersections of immigration and family law.

Asks & Actions:

97. The Government of Canada review immigration law in Canada in order to take into account the impact of family law processes and to ensure mechanisms to protect women and children fleeing violence.
98. The Government of Canada provide training for both Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) and Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) officers so that they can better recognize and respond to violence against women and to train them to take into account intersecting family law issues.

Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation

We recognize diverse views that this complex topic elicits within the women's movements and propose the following asks hoping it represents working towards building common ground.

We would like to start with some definitions. Status of Women Québec indicates that "Sexual exploitation, which may take many forms, generally involves a situation, context or relationship in which an individual takes advantage of the vulnerability or dependence of another person, or an unequal balance of power between them, to benefit from the person's body for sexual purposes."

There is no consensus about what to refer to adult people who are in the sex industry by choice or whether they are part of a system that is oppressive.

Canada's definition of Human Trafficking is "Human trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, harbouring and/ or exercising control, direction or influence over the movements of a person in order to exploit that person, typically through sexual exploitation or forced labour. It is often described as a modern form of slavery".

Asks & Actions:

The following asks are designed to be inclusive of sexual exploitation and human trafficking:

99. Ensure the basic needs of all people to enable them to make free and informed choices.
100. Provide improved services and programs that support prevention of sexual exploitation and all forms of sexual violence and improve their adequate funding.
101. Promote improved access to services and supports for persons in the sex industry and those who want to exit.
102. Stop criminalization of persons offering sexual services.

⁴⁹ Šimonovic. *Report of the special rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences*. 2019. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women [CEDAW]. *General recommendation 19: Violence against women*. 1992. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/INT_CEDAW_GEC_3731_E.pdf; CEDAW. *General Recommendation 35: Gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation no.19*. 2017. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/CEDAW_C_GC_35_8267_E.pdf

103. Improve compensation for victims of sexual exploitation and human trafficking.
104. Provide funding, support and specific training to front-line workers (judicial, medical, social, etc.) on sexual exploitation and human trafficking to reduce prejudice and improve response to the needs of persons.
105. More work to be done to bring people together to build common ground on these issues.

Priority: Accessibility, Equity, Equality and Inclusion

Access and Inclusion

We want to acknowledge that all the issues and policy asks below are complex and interconnected. It is also important to recognize the role of intersectionality and the impact that ableism, racism, sexism, colonialism, homophobia, transphobia, etc. have on the issues below. Trauma-informed supports, services provided in multiple languages, intra-governmental dialogue, as well as collaboration between government and community are needed to promote inclusion and ensure effective response to issues impacting the most marginalized in Canada.

Issue: Economic Security

Asks & Actions:

106. Develop economic programs which recognize that economic security reduces a person's risk of experiencing violence and/or makes it easier for women, trans, and gender non-conforming people with disabilities to leave violent situations. Note: When talking about violence, we are using a broad definition of violence that includes experiences such as: intimate partner violence, family violence, abuse by caregivers, child abuse, and trafficking.
107. Develop economic programs (employment, education, training) which recognize that economic security promotes increased health and wellness for women, trans, and gender non-conforming people with disabilities by providing financial support that makes it easier for them to: engage in their communities, participate in recreation and physical activity, build their social networks, increase their self-esteem, and reduce social isolation.
108. Develop economic programs that provide personal care, holistic, and trauma informed psychosocial supports to help women, trans, and gender non-conforming people with disabilities to retain and advance in their jobs. This includes increased opportunities for mentorship.
109. Develop economic programs that support women, trans, and gender non-conforming people in redefining what productivity, meaningful employment, and success means to them.

Issue: Safe, Affordable, and Accessible Housing

Asks & Actions:

Municipal-Provincial/Territorial:

110. Rent control.
111. More housing programs geared to women.
112. Prioritize housing for all abused women that uses a broad definition of violence that includes experiences such as: intimate partner violence, family violence, abuse by caregivers, child abuse, and trafficking.
113. Realistic Income supports that take into account the increased health and community support costs of women with disabilities.
114. Policies that dedicate accessible units.
115. More flexibility and choice in location for social housing.
116. More flexibility and choice of attendant care providers in supportive housing for people

with disabilities.

117. Link transportation planning needs to affordable housing.
118. Provide Anti-Oppression/Feminist training for staff that work in social housing
119. Include people with lived experience in work with housing providers.
120. Increased funding for holistic and trauma informed supports: trauma counselling, addictions, employment etc.

Federal:

121. Special incentives to make housing more affordable, i.e. what is being done with student housing.
122. Speed up refugee hearings.
123. Include people with lived experience of housing precarity in policy development processes.
124. Immigration policy - should fast track housing needs for refugees.
125. National Housing Strategy.

Issue: Education

Asks & Actions:

126. Include holistic, mental health, and trauma informed supports throughout all levels of education, including special education and physical education.
127. Include holistic, mental health, and trauma informed supports in post-secondary education programs to ensure retention and that students graduate.
128. Provide mandatory sexual education and GBV prevention throughout all levels of education, including special education and physical education.
129. Create transitional programs for students moving from secondary school to adult life where they are provided with support to learn life skills necessary to promote financial and emotional independence. These types of programs are especially needed by those with intellectual disabilities and autism.
130. Increase access to physical education for students with disabilities, including leadership and coaching opportunities.
131. Provide education grants and low-interest loans as an interim measure towards free universal post-secondary education.

Issue: Reproductive Justice (see appendix 1)

132. Establish laws and policies that promote the autonomy and self-determination of girls, young women, women, trans and gender non-conforming people with disabilities, and Indigenous women within the full spectrum of reproductive justice. This includes pregnancy termination, as well as violations that disproportionately affect them such as: forced abortion, contraception and sterilization.
133. Ensure that all girls, young women, trans and gender non-conforming youth with disabilities are provided with support and access to comprehensive sexual education and reproductive health services that are properly funded and available nationwide.

Issue: Medical Assistance in Dying (see appendix 2)

134. Establish laws and policies that ensure women, trans, seniors and gender non-conforming people with disabilities have access to accessible medical care, home care, and community-based supports without attempts to force or persuade women and girls with disabilities to make 'end of life' decisions because of economic constraints and the assumption that a disability is 'a drain on the system' and not a 'life worth living'.
135. Ensure that the above supports are properly funded and implement protections to

challenge and respond to systemic barriers disproportionately affecting them, such as forced and coerced decision making related to medical and legal directives such as DNR (Do Not Resuscitate) Orders, etc.

Issue: Health Care

Asks & Actions:

136. Establish policies that ensure women, trans, seniors, and gender non-conforming people with disabilities are provided with access and support to universally designed medical/dental tests and procedures that could reduce their risk of experiencing life threatening illness.
137. Develop a range of supports that adhere to the principles of autonomy and self-determination of girls, young women, trans and gender non-conforming people with disabilities and allow for greater engagement in the community.

Issue: Universal Design

Ask:

138. Establish policies and laws that ensure principles of universal design are included in all aspects of housing, transportation, education, healthcare and social services and recreation facilities; including buildings, programs, websites, documents, and sensitivity training.
139. Ensure services are available in the language(s) of the person accessing services.

Issue: Knowledge Sharing

Ask:

140. Develop accessible tools for the sharing of grassroots community knowledge and access to sport, recreation, coach education, and leadership development activities within communities.

Issue: Increased Access to Technology

Ask:

141. Increase access to technology for various marginalized people, including those in rural areas, seniors, women with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, etc.

Appendix 1: Reproductive Justice

Girls, young women, trans and gender non-conforming youth with disabilities are not provided with comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and services because they are often not seen as sexual beings by their parents or health care providers. They lack basic information needed to enter their adult lives prepared to safely navigate sexual relations in a way that promotes bodily autonomy, pleasure, choice, privacy, confidentiality, and consent, leaving them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

According a report published in July 2017 by the Special Rapporteur on the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of girls and young women with disabilities⁵⁰, around the world, many girls, young women, trans and gender non-conforming youth with disabilities are sterilized because other people think that this is the right thing to do. We know that they often do not give permission and that this goes against their human rights and the United Nations says this is considered a form of torture.

Recognizing that ableism is widespread and that girls, young women, trans and gender non-

⁵⁰ Devandas-Aguilar, Catalina; UN. Secretary-General Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2017. *Sexual and reproductive health and rights of girls and young women with disabilities*. UN Human Rights Council.

conforming youth with disabilities face diverse forms of discrimination in many aspects of their lives, we ask that laws, policies, and practices related to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) do not perpetuate stigma and discrimination against persons with disabilities. This means more concretely that laws and policies should prohibit the forced sterilization of girls, young women, trans and gender non-conforming youth with disabilities, as well as other compulsory or involuntary practices affecting their sexual and reproductive health and rights, and ensure adequate procedural safeguards to protect their right to free and informed consent.

As Mia Mingus states it: “the framework of reproductive justice provides an analysis grounded in human rights and collective social justice. “Justice,” rather than “right to privacy,” allows for a broader analysis and more complicated approach to the politics and challenges surrounding WWD [women with disabilities] and reproductive justice. For many WWD, the right to privacy is not a privileged experience in relation to one’s body. Disabled women and girls’ bodies have long been invaded and seen as the property of the medical industry, doctors, the state, family members, and care givers. The goal should not be to “cure the world of disabilities” or to do away with disabled people. The goal should be to work for communities that provide accessible opportunities and resources, human rights, and reproductive justice for WWD.”⁵¹

As such, we demand that the federal government in cooperation with other levels of government (provincial and territorial) as well as governments internationally, lead the way.

- Establish laws and policies that promote the autonomy and self-determination of girls, young women, trans and gender non-conforming youth with disabilities within the full spectrum of reproductive justice. This includes pregnancy termination as well as violations that disproportionately affect them, such as forced abortion, contraception, and sterilization
- Ensure that all girls, young women, trans and gender non-conforming youth with disabilities are provided with support and access to comprehensive sexual education and reproductive health services that are properly funded and available nationwide.

Appendix 2: Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD)

In June 2016, the Parliament of Canada passed federal legislation that allows eligible Canadian adults to request medical assistance in dying. Many disability activists were deeply concerned about the passing of this legislation which would leave many people, in particular, those most marginalized, vulnerable and at risk of being coerced into making a decision in favor of medical assistance in dying. On July 24, 2017, CBC reported a story about a 25-year-old woman living in Newfoundland who has many disabilities.⁵² While she was hospitalized for illness, the doctor made a suggestion to her mother that she could consider medical assistance in dying (MAiD) as a choice for her daughter’s future. Her mother was reminded that assisted suicide was legal in Canada. It is this case and many others that we don’t hear about that leaves disabled people, in particular, those of us who are women, afraid that we will be pressured to accept MAiD as a viable alternative to access to services because of ableist ideologies.

What is core to these ableist attitudes is the belief that living with disability is equated to a life that is tragic and not worth living. Many of us who are facing health care crises or chronic illness and are in need of additional supports, are given messages by physicians and health care providers that we are ‘better off dead than to be disabled’. It is because of the prevailing beliefs that frame our lives through the medical model that we are afraid to seek

⁵¹ Mingus, Mia. *Disabled Women and Reproductive Justice*.

https://www.law.berkeley.edu/phpprograms/centers/crrj/zotero/loadfile.php?entity_key=9DPI88WW

⁵² Barlett, Geoff. Mother says doctor brought up assisted suicide option as sick daughter was within earshot. *CBC News*. 2017.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/doctor-suggested-assisted-suicide- daughter-mother-elson-1.4218669>

services, which in turn, result in increased risk for longer-term health issues, on top of our existing disabilities or impairments. There is a long legacy whereby medicine has failed to ensure that all lives are valued. We need to be able to trust our doctors instead of being fearful of them. Disabled women need to know that when we go into hospital, our lives will be considered as valuable at the next patient who is faces the same illness and is non- disabled.

The case of the woman in Newfoundland is not unlike the experiences of many disabled women across Canada, in particular, women who are also marginalized because of poverty, racism, transphobia, colonialism, interpersonal as well as, systemic violence. While "[e]xtensive research shows that a wide range of factors related to social, financial, psychological and spiritual suffering can lead patients to request Medical Aid in Dying (MAiD)..." why are women the majority of people with disabilities choosing MAiD? To answer this we must look at that shift in emphasis both within legislation and practical applications which focus on one's 'right to die' to the 'duty to die' as suggested in an blog written by the late Carmela Hutchinson, President of DAWN Canada.⁵³ Women with disabilities are seen as burdens or objects of pity.

Hutchinson stated that "women with disabilities do not seek MAiD because they are disabled. It is because we lack access to suicide prevention services, trauma-informed treatment, addiction services, and are often trapped -- in isolation, poverty and abuse. We fall into despair because within society and sometimes within our own families we are not valued, and we lack the services and supports we need to lead safe and effective lives."⁵⁴ As such, we demand that the federal government in cooperation with other levels of government, (provincial and territorial) as well as governments internationally, lead the way to:

- Ensure that the range of supports adhere to the principles of autonomy and self-determination of girls, young women, trans and gender non-confirming people with disabilities; to allow for greater engagement that sees us as fully participating members of the community
- Ensure, through laws and policies, that laws and policies that girls, young women, trans and gender non-confirming people with disabilities have access to accessible medical care, home care, and community-based supports without attempts to coerce or pressure women and girls with disabilities to be seen and treated as if they are burdens and 'a drain on the system'
- Ensure that the above supports are properly funded and implement protections to challenge and respond to systemic barriers that disproportionately affect them, such as forced and coerced decision making related to medical and legal directives such as DNR (Do Not Resuscitate) Orders, etc.

Gender-based Analysis+ and Research

Issue: Funding for Research

Asks & Actions:

142. Recognize and fund research and knowledge transfer activities on gender equality and gender relations as priority research focuses.
143. Allow feminist women's and community groups to initiate and develop feminist research and knowledge transfer projects.
144. When it comes to projects led by academic researchers, put measures in place to financially compensate community and feminist partners for their contributions to

⁵³ Hutchinson, Carmela, Why are disabled women being given help to die, instead of help to live? *Rabble.ca*. 2017. <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/views-expressed/2017/08/why-are-women-disabilities-being-given-help-die-instead-help>

⁵⁴ Hutchinson, Carmela, 2017.

research and knowledge transfer project development.

145. Include admissibility requirements for partnership projects that contain mechanisms to ensure the effective involvement of partner groups and share practices that promote such involvement through reports and other records.
146. Increase funding that promotes an increase in pan-Canadian collaborations between researchers and feminist groups that produce and improve feminist policy.

Issue: Access to Data

Asks & Actions:

147. Allow access free of charge to sex-disaggregated data from Statistics Canada - current fees are prohibitive - and other departments that produce data on women and relations between the sexes and genders.
148. Share information through the various data-collection channels, with a particular focus on data affecting vulnerable and marginalized groups (e.g. Indigenous leadership and information organizations, salaries for women in STEM and Trades, sport and coaching and across the non-profit sector).

Issue: Intersectional Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+)

Asks & Actions:

149. Maintain, develop and promote intersectional and Gender-based Analysis (GBA+) in budget and departmental processes.
150. Mandate training and pursue knowledge transfer activities and the application of GBA+ in different government departments and maintain objectives when it comes to equity, diversity and inclusion in keeping with the concerns of feminist groups.
151. Mandate GBA+ training for all employees of federally funded sport and recreation organizations.
152. Share the results of GBA+ analysis with organizations working to improve conditions for women and affected by gender.
153. Foster a better understanding of the elements of gender-based analysis, particularly in intersectional strategies aimed at producing political demands.
154. Organize a consultation on indicators and how to choose them, particularly when it comes to GBA+ budgets and the different studies being carried out in this area.

Issue: Utilizing Feminist Knowledge

Asks:

155. Support the creation and consolidation of knowledge-sharing instances between Canadian universities and community and feminist groups in order to meet the challenges inherent to collaborative partnerships (interdisciplinary, intersectionality, inclusivity). These sharing instances would:
 - promote the conjunction of the various forms of knowledge (academic and experiential) and different research, analysis and knowledge evaluation methods in order to better account for the complexity of issues leading to inequality, systemic discrimination and instances of vulnerability
 - better articulate research projects being done with and by women so that researchers from various backgrounds can create stronger relationships with each other and the various communities and people affected
 - ensure the appropriate resources are solicited when it comes to GBA+ and support those responsible for applying this analysis at different levels of government
 - dedicate funding to research the experiences of women in sport, recreation, leisure and physical activity in Canada to inform the future development of

programs and services in sport, coaching and recreation.

Political Leadership

Issue: Under-representation of women at all levels of government

Women make up more than half of the Canadian population but are under-represented at all levels of government. Despite more women than ever before being elected to the House of Commons in 2019, the percentage of women Members of Parliament is only 29%.⁵⁵ Indigenous and racialized women, women with disabilities, women experiencing poverty and 2SLGBTQIA people remain even more under-represented than their white, middle class counterparts. Without any changes to the current system, it will take approximately 90 years to reach gender parity at the federal level.⁵⁶

International research indicates that increasing the number of women in government increases attention to issues such as violence, health care, child care and corporate accountability, areas of importance to all genders. Research has found that when gender parity is achieved women and men tend to work more collaboratively and, generate more creative ideas, and solutions to problems.⁵⁷ Without a doubt our government and society would benefit from greater diversity.

Women can only make a substantial difference to political discourse when they are present in more than token numbers. The United Nations identifies one-third (33.3%) as the critical mass needed to affect meaningful change.⁵⁸ History and examples show the number of women in government will not rise naturally on its own. A concerted and sustained effort is needed to increase the number of women elected and must include a combination of approaches that also address structural and systemic barriers.

Asks & Actions:

156. Provide and increase funding for feminist community-based organizations dedicated to advancing gender and diversity in leadership.
157. Implement a publicly-funded universal child care program.
158. Implement a publicly-funded universal basic income guarantee.
159. Elimination of violence against women.

Government

160. Ensure gender balance and diversity in Governor-in-Council appointments to commissions, boards, Crown corporations, agencies, and tribunals across the country.
161. Legislate quotas that require publicly-traded companies and public institutions in Canada to ensure at least 40% of board members are women.
162. Legislate gender parity in cabinet.

Parliament

163. Develop and implement sexual harassment policies, procedures, and training for MPs and staff that include a trauma-informed approach.
164. Fund an independent ombudsperson to review and respond to complaints.
165. Offer Anti-Oppression and Gender and Diversity training for all new MPs and staff.

⁵⁵ PEI Coalition for Women in Government. *Percentage of Women MP's Rises Slightly*. 2019. <https://www.peiwomeningovernment.ca/>

⁵⁶ Aiello, Rachel. It could take 20 election cycles, 'or 90 years,' before house reaches gender parity, says equal voice. *The Hill Times*. 2017. <https://www.hilltimes.com/2017/03/06/take-20-election-cycles-parliament-gender-parity-current-rate-equal-voice/98754>

⁵⁷ Armour, Margaret-Ann. "Women in Leadership Today: How to Keep Moving Forward." *University of Alberta*. A Bold Vision Conference, Brudenell, PEI. 2014.

⁵⁸ United Nations Equal Opportunities Commission. United Nations targets for proportion of women in leadership and decision-making positions. *Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*. 2003. <https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/ha/papers/ha0314cb2-1636-1e.pdf>

166. Create a multi-partisan women's caucus.
167. Adjust sitting times to better meet the needs of MPs with caregiving responsibilities and those who travel from rural and remote regions of Canada.
168. Implement electronic voting to accommodate MPs with caregiving responsibilities and those who travel from rural and remote regions of Canada.
169. Increase availability of child care spaces for MPs and House of Commons staff.
170. Eliminate gender-based heckling in the House of Commons.

Federal Elections

171. Administer party nomination rules and regulations through Elections Canada.
172. Establish financial limits for nomination races.
173. Reinstate the per-vote subsidy for federal political parties at \$1.75 per vote (indexed to the Consumer Price Index).
174. Introduce a per-vote subsidy incentive to encourage parties to nominate more women candidates.
175. Include child care, elder care and care for vulnerable adults and disability expenses under the Election Expenses Act.
176. Revise the Elections Canada Act to provide for a subsidy to all candidates running for election.
177. Shorter campaign periods.
178. Provide a merit-based subsidy to support women and diverse candidates to run.
179. Legislation to regulate social media companies and reduce online violence and abuse of women who are candidates and elected representatives.

Electoral System

180. Implement a Proportional Representation electoral system for federal elections.

Celebrate, Honour and Commemorate Women Leaders

181. Commemorate diverse women leaders through statues, building names, awards, and currency.
182. Develop a campaign to raise awareness about running for office and civility in office.

Youth

The issues facing Youth are often linked to the issues discussed throughout all the recommendations. These issues fundamentally impact the future and well-being of all our children and teens. A funding model that prioritizes youth-led organizations instead of organizations that engage youth should be introduced to involve youth in the decision-making that impacts their lives.

Issue: Overall Funding

Ask:

183. Sustainable core funding for youth and youth-led (prevention) programming coast to coast to coast, that is NOT per capita and, applies a GBA+ lens.
184. Accessible youth engagement and capacity-building and funding specifically for youth-led initiatives.

Issue: Marginalization, Policy and Funding

Ask:

185. Put marginalized groups with the highest needs at the center of policy formation and funding consideration, and center marginalized youth:
 - Youth with disabilities and mental health issues
 - Girls (+ intersections)
 - Language minority youth

- Immigrants and undocumented youth
- Trans and gender non-conforming (GNC) youth
- Incarcerated youth
- Northern and Rural youth
- Impoverished youth
- Youth of Color
- Indigenous Youth.

Issue: Rights of Children and Teens

Girls feel unsafe. There is a need for safe housing and other youth spaces that take into account the particular needs of girls: Sport and recreational facilities, Youth shelters and transitional homes. Homelessness can lead to situations of sexual exploitation. Social services for indigenous youth require an Indigenous perspective.

Asks & Actions:

- 186.** All Federal Programs integrate the respect of the rights of all children and youth in Canada, regardless of their origins, including:
- Intersectional gender-based analysis in all funding for youth programming
 - End detention of children and youth in "immigration centers"
 - Ensure anti-racist policies in all Federal services
 - Respect the rights of children and youth to their cultural heritage
 - Create resources that educate and promote benefits of physical activity for youth's physical and mental health and wellness.

Issue: Violence Prevention and Safety - Digital World, Healthy Relationships and Consent

While the federal government Youth Council did publish a Youth Policy and a Health and Wellness section exists, no specific mention for healthy relationships is made.⁵⁹

Resources (covering topics such as cyberbullying, online safety, etc.) from several credible sources and stakeholders exist, however there appears to be no clear policy on Youth, nor a focus to teach them about healthy relationships and consent, and issues such as:

- Social media
- How they relate to each other and to the world
- Digital world: Can it be positive? For example, connecting with a community that you don't have/haven't found in the "real world", asking for help, escaping the "real world" violence
- Education, prevention and intervention for Healthy Relationships and Consent: not only in school, in sport and recreation as well.

Ask:

- 187.** Greater education and focus on teaching youth about healthy relationships and consent.
- 188.** Trafficking prevention including culturally appropriate education around trafficking.
- 189.** Training and education for police around digital harassment.
- 190.** Look at restorative justice models for some behaviours as opposed to criminal charges; punishment that suits the crime.

Issue: Welfare of First Nations Children

Currently, federal First Nations child welfare is funded less than programs for non- First

⁵⁹ Government of Canada. *Canada's Youth Policy*. 2019. https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/y-j/documents/YP_ENG_FINAL.pdf

Nations children. Past sex discrimination in the *Indian Act* requires proper classification of First Nations people who lost status, or women who had no (known) father with status. Child welfare and education need to be addressed.

Ask:

191. We echo the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Report related to Child Welfare:⁶⁰

- “1. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care by:
- i. Monitoring and assessing neglect investigations
 - ii. Providing adequate resources to enable Aboriginal communities and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together where it is safe to do so, and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments, regardless of where they reside
 - iii. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools
 - iv. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing
 - v. Requiring that all child-welfare decision makers consider the impact of the residential school experience on children and their caregivers.
2. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the provinces and territories, to prepare and publish annual reports on the number of Aboriginal children (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) who are in care, compared with non-Aboriginal children, as well as the reasons for apprehension, the total spending on preventive and care services by child-welfare agencies, and the effectiveness of various interventions.
3. We call upon all levels of government to fully implement Jordan’s Principle.
4. We call upon the federal government to enact Aboriginal child-welfare legislation that establishes national standards for Aboriginal child apprehension and custody cases and includes principles that:
- i. Affirm the right of Aboriginal governments to establish and maintain their own child- welfare agencies
 - ii. Require all child-welfare agencies and courts to take the residential school legacy into account in their decision making
 - iii. Establish, as an important priority, a requirement that placements of Aboriginal children into temporary and permanent care be culturally appropriate.
5. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for Aboriginal families.”

Issue: Challenges faced by Northern and Rural Youth

Despite high rates of sexual assault including rape, there is no sexual assault centre in the territories. Gender-based violence is rampant, and there is need for youth-gender specific spaces and programming with core and sustainable funding that teaches healthy relationships

⁶⁰ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Calls to Action*. 2015. http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

and consent, and offers a safe place to gather.⁶¹ A gendered lens is needed to look at youth homelessness. Often the youth will couch surf or get into unhealthy relationships of convenience to have somewhere to stay, often leading youth to unsafe situations. Funded Youth Shelters with gender specific spaces would make the north safer for these youth.

Asks & Actions:

192. Start up and sustainable core funding for the establishment and continued operation of a sexual assault centre in Canada's northern territories, including the creation of funding specifically for a sexual assault centre and team, as well as on-going operations.
193. Sustainably-funded Youth Shelters with gender-specific spaces.

Issue: Lack of girls and gender non-conforming people, participating in sport and physical activity in schools, clubs and within communities.

There are many known benefits to participating in sport and physical activity including physical and mental health and wellness, having fun, making friends, learning new skills, building confidence and competence, a sense of belonging, and connection to people within communities.

194. Ensure safe spaces within communities and schools for girls to participate in sport and physical activity.
195. Ensure youth are represented on National level committees.⁶²

Priority: Economic Security and Prosperity

Caring for Our Children

Children and Youth have the right, not the privilege, to access a high standard of education Canada. Yet today, Canada remains in a child care crisis with children from coast to coast to coast, unable to access quality and consistent education. The crisis not only affects children, but it also limits women's ability to achieve economic security and to prosper in society.

A solid foundation for sustainable and successful gender equity and economic prosperity in Canada fully supports all families to have healthy and sustained access to their children. It also cultivates and ensures well informed, high quality, universal, fully accessible and non-profit driven Early Childhood Education in all communities and for all parents across Canada.

We recognize and value that caregiving, especially early childhood care and care for children with complex needs is often unpaid work. Issues around caregiving and early childhood education is a racialized issue and impacts disproportionality Indigenous women and women of colour across the country.

The recommendations laid out in this section must be read with the understanding that not enough research into the intersections and implications for folks being affected by the Indian Act or their Canadian Residency status has been cross referenced.

It is also to be noted that child care is essential to the economic prosperity of women and to gender equity in Canada and as such has been mentioned as a priority in many policy asks in this document.

The following issues need to be addressed immediately.

- Immediate implementation of the calls to action outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

⁶¹ Green, Julie. Hush hush no more - sexual assaults in the nwt. *Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories*. 2016. https://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/sites/default/files/td_219-182.pdf

⁶² The Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS). 2016. *Women in Sport: Fueling a Lifetime of Participation* https://www.caaws.ca/e/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/FWC_ResearchPublication_EN_7March2016.pdf

- Immediate implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Implementation of the 2018 Federal Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework
- Creation of a Universal Child Care Act
- Implementation of a National Child care Strategy
- Enactment of a Child Commissioner in Canada
- Standardization and increase in early childhood educators' (ECE) wages and training
- Empowering child care centres to provide extended hours
- Ensuring Early Childhood Education and Care centres are in purpose-built (or purpose-renovated) facilities
- Expand legislated parental leave provisions
- More publicly-managed ECECs
- Quantifying and valuing unpaid/invisible labour for informal caregivers through metrics approach
- Universal access to high standard post-secondary education and skills training.

Issue: Truth and reconciliation, UNDRIP and Indigenous Early Learning

Asks & Actions:

- 196.** Immediately implement the 94 calls to action within the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and transform the Government of Canada's commitment to achieving reconciliation through a renewed relationship with Indigenous peoples, based on the recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership. Canada's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and its implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples will require transformative change in the relationships with Indigenous peoples, but it will also break ground for the implementation of the 2018 Federal Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework.

Issue: Universal Child Care Act

Asks & Actions:

- 197.** An overarching vision and principles for Early Childhood Education and Care for all children and families across Canada, inclusive of First Nations, Métis, Inuit, immigrant, refugee and migrant worker families.
- 198.** Universal access to a high standard and holistic early education system.
- 199.** 1% of GDP designated to Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada.
- 200.** Expert opinion and public recognition which reflects that high-quality early childhood education is valued as a foundation for lifelong learning with long-term implications for societal prosperity.
- 201.** Full inclusivity.
- 202.** Access to culturally strengthening care and nutrition.
- 203.** Federal investment is universal but the implementation is localized and driven by local expertise.
- 204.** Standard educator to child ratios across the country.
- 205.** Inspection Standards enforced or there are consequences.
- 206.** Ensure all workers in the sector are trained to a high standard to empower them to serve *all* children's needs.
- 207.** Universal access to and coordination of diagnostic and assessment services beginning at 0-5 years.
- 208.** Integration of child care into the existing community infrastructure and including early

childhood and school-age children (0-5 for preschool and 6-12 for before and after school programming).

209. Implement safe and consistent transportation between schools and before/after school care.

Issue: National Child Care Strategy

Making affordable, high-quality early learning and child care (ELCC) available to all families will grow the economy, promote gender equality, increase women’s labour force participation and enhance children’s well-being. The federal government must play a leadership role to ensure that all children in Canada, regardless of where they live, their ability, family circumstances or culture have access to affordable high-quality child care.

The Affordable Child Care for All Plan focuses on addressing three elements simultaneously: accessibility (expanding service availability), making child care affordable and improving quality, largely by tackling child care workforce issues. The plan moves away from relying mostly on parent fees to cover the costs of operating child care services. This shift has two parts:

- Strengthening accessibility (expanding availability): the plan moves away from relying on private initiatives for creating child care services to a planned, public approach. Governments and communities will work together to determine where services are needed in urban/suburban/rural/remote communities; what kinds of services are needed (centres, full/part-day, home child care) and for whom (child age groups, language, parent schedules, etc.). Provincial/territorial “expansion strategies” will be developed based on demand forecasting and capital funding. Expansion will extend to various settings (residential communities, workplaces, schools, other public buildings, and other sites)
- Improving ELCC quality: fixing child care sector workforce issues is necessary both to improve the quality of child care and to allow service expansion. Under the plan, federal, provincial and territorial governments will work together, and with Indigenous communities and the child care sector, to develop a comprehensive strategy to develop and implement a workforce strategy.

This will include specific measures and timetables to address remuneration, educational requirements, training, recruitment and retention of early childhood educators and others who work in the sector. All such measures will help in bringing about pay equity for the mostly female child care workforce.⁷¹

Asks & Actions:

210. Deliver the long-promised national universal child care/early learning system.
211. Immediately increase the child care subsidy threshold to include everyone caring for children in Canada no matter their income. The education and care of our children and youth should not be dependent on the prosperity of their parent(s).
212. Revise low-income child care subsidy eligibility criteria to accommodate precariously employed parents.
213. Develop child care services for parents working irregular hours.
214. End diversion of low-income child care subsidies to home child care services.
215. End staffing of child care centres through temporary help agencies.⁶³

Issue: Early Childhood Educators’ Wages and Training

Asks & Actions:

216. Ensure there are early childhood educators (ECEs) with specialized training for children

⁶³ Child Care Now. *The Affordable Child Care for All Plan*. <https://timeforchildcare.ca/the-affordable-child-care-for-all-plan/>

with complex needs.

217. Include trauma-informed care and anti-oppression practices training.
218. Ensure early childhood educator training includes professional development in 2SLGBTQQIA and Indigenous histories and realities.
219. Pay equity for ECEs as per other educators working in the sector with the goal of reaching an indexed livable wage for educators by 2021.

Issue: Enactment of a Child Commissioner in Canada

Ask:

220. Enactment of a Child Commissioner in Canada, who speaks for Canadian children. A non-departmental public body responsible for promoting and protecting the rights of children as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.⁶⁴

Issue: Empowering child-care centres to provide extended hours

Based on the adoption of a Universal Child Care Act and enactment of a Federal Child Commissioner.

Asks & Actions:

221. Sustainable staff and infrastructure supports for early childhood education centres (ECECs) to ensure at least 20% of ECECs have the capacity to provide extended hours.
222. Recognize that the workforce has changed, and more people are working shift and contract work than ever before. An increase in precarious or shift-based employment lends itself to an increased capacity of need for ECECs to be able to service families in this situation.
223. Ensure that rural areas of the country are compensated adequately, in comparison to larger centres who may have larger clientele, to ensure all children have access to the care they need.

Issue: ECECs in purpose-built (or purpose-renovated) facilities

Based on the adoption of a Universal Child Care Act and enactment of a Federal Child Commissioner.

Asks & Actions:

224. Sustainable infrastructure supports for ECECs to ensure facilities meet national standards outlined in the Child Care Act.
225. Promotion and subsidization of retrofitting or renovating existing centres or publicly-owned spaces, and for new builds, to ensure all ECECs are in purpose-built spaces that are efficient and focus on environmental sustainability.

Issue: Universal access to a high standard of post-secondary education and skills training

Universal access to a high standard of post-secondary education and skills training is a right, not a privilege. Moreover, post-secondary education is part of Canada's treaty obligations to Indigenous peoples and a key focus for reconciliation.

⁶⁴ Young children are rights holders. The Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as "every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier" (art. 1). Consequently, young children are holders of all the rights enshrined in the Convention. They are entitled to special protection measures and, in accordance with their evolving capacities, the progressive exercise of their rights. The Committee is concerned that in implementing their obligations under the Convention, States parties have not given sufficient attention to young children as rights holders and to the laws, policies and programmes required to realize their rights during this distinct phase of their childhood. The Committee reaffirms that the Convention on the Rights of the Child is to be applied holistically in early childhood, taking account of the principle of the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights. Refer to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), *General comment No. 7: Implementing child rights in early childhood*. 2005. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5497ddcb4.html>

Asks & Actions:

- 226. Ensure college and university tuition is free for all Canadian students.
- 227. Forgive the portion of existing student debt held by the federal government.
- 228. Remove the two per cent cap on increases in funding for Indigenous students and ensure that all Indigenous youth have access to post-secondary education.
- 229. Restrict Provide more funding in federal-provincial transfers to universities, providing more to universities and colleges with a measurable focus on student-professor contact, mentorship, policies and procedures of inclusion and tenure track hires.

Economic Security

Issue: Employment Insurance (EI) Modernization

EI maternity and parental benefits must be reformed so they can better meet the needs of Canada's changing labour market and especially the needs of women, who rely on and access these benefits the most. A broader review of EI can ensure all benefit streams are modernized.

Asks & Actions:

For modernizing EI maternity and parental benefits⁶⁵:

- 230. Eliminate the EI benefit waiting period for maternity and parental benefit recipients.
- 231. Implement an incentive structure for employers to offer maternity and parental benefit top-ups.
- 232. Re-calibrate the EI Family Supplement low-income salary cut-off for claimants to reflect the newly established official poverty line in Canada.
- 233. Reduce the qualification for EI maternity and parental benefits from 600 hours to 300.
- 234. Increase the benefit rate for EI recipients on maternity and parental leave.
- 235. Coordinate between jurisdictions: For example, a municipal child care subsidy should not be stopped if the person not working is on EI and it needs to be maintained so she can job search.

For modernizing all other EI benefit streams:

- 236. Labour force attachment should be re-defined, taking into account the current labour market reality of precarious work.
- 237. Workers working at more than one job should receive benefits if one of their jobs is terminated.
- 238. Launch forensic audits of temporary help agencies (THA) to investigate Record of Employment (ROE) fraud and otherwise suppressing THA worker EI benefit claims; criminalize THA suppression of EI claims.

Issue: Modernization of Federally Regulated Employment Standards

National standards for strong employment protections are needed to address the rise of precarious employment, low wages and sub-standard working conditions.

Asks & Actions:

- 239. Adopt immediately a \$15 federal minimum wage.
- 240. Introduce Labour Standard protections for non-standard workers.
- 241. Address disconnecting from work-related e-communications outside of work hours with a 'right to disconnect' approach.
- 242. Address access and portability of benefits.
- 243. Provide for a collective voice for non-unionized workers.

⁶⁵ In Quebec there are no EI maternity and parental benefits, given the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan.

Issue: Pay Equity - Equal pay for work of equal value

Ensure there is an implementation plan including timelines and enforcement in place through regulations for the new pay equity legislation.

Ask:

244. Develop and approve regulations for implementation, timelines and enforcement as soon as possible.

Issue: Labour Market Information with a Gender Lens

Statistics Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada collect labour market information. Ensure adequate and timely labour market information for all sectors, including the nonprofit sector, has a gender lens and analysis.

Asks & Actions:

245. Collect labour market information on all sectors, including the non-profit sector, with a gender-based intersectional lens.
246. Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), Statistics Canada, and Department of Women and Gender Equality Canada develop a partnership to initiate labour market information programs.
247. ESDC to fund initiatives aimed at addressing under-representation of women in occupations, professions and sectors.

Housing

Issue: New Housing Supply

There is a desperate need across the country to build up the supply of housing that is affordable to people living with very low incomes. While many governments are investing in affordable housing, their definition of affordable often keeps housing out of the reach of many people. For example, the National Housing Strategy defines affordable housing as units with rents at less than 80% of median market rents. Among the most affordable definitions used by governments are those where housing has rents that are geared to income. For example, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation defines affordable housing as housing with shelter costs that are equal to or less than 30% of total before-tax household income. This is much more affordable to people with very low incomes, including those living below the poverty line. As women, trans, Two-Spirit and gender non-conforming people are over-represented in poverty and homelessness data, we prioritize the need to add to the supply of rent-geared-to-income housing across the country.

We support the commitment to ensuring that at least 25% of National Housing Strategy investments go to projects for women, girls, and their families. We offer the following recommendations to help ensure that these investments meet the unique housing needs of diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit and gender non-conforming people:

Asks & Actions:

248. Increase the supply of adequately-sized, good quality, culturally and demographically appropriate Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) housing across the housing continuum built with universal design by the public, non-profit, and co-op sectors with specific targets to meet the need for units that can accommodate extended family households.
249. Increase the supply of low-barrier, gender-specific, and responsive transitional and permanent supportive housing options for diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people.
250. For all new RGI units enhance connectivity by:
- Building new RGI housing in a variety of neighbourhoods that enhance connectivity to essential services including child care, schools, laundry and transportation services, and grocery stores, as well as employment opportunities. This should also include

enhanced connectivity to low-barrier services (either onsite or nearby) that assist with maintaining successful tenancies, rehousing, and connecting to other wrap-around supports

- Ensuring new RGI housing includes both indoor and outdoor spaces for enhanced social connection (eg. communal kitchens/dining areas, community gardens), and for cultural activities.
251. Ensure new housing is designed and built to meet the unique needs of Northern and remote communities taking into account changing climate. Priority should be given to ensuring new construction creates local economic opportunities for women, trans, Two-Spirit and gender non-conforming people.
252. Consult with diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people with lived experience of homelessness and housing insecurity when designing new housing to determine how to maximize safety and comfort in new and existing RGI housing across the housing continuum.

Issue: Maintaining Existing Housing Supply

There are a number of critical threats to our existing supply of Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) housing in Canada. This includes an aging stock that needs to be addressed to ensure housing is not just maintained but also more comfortable, safe, and energy efficient. It also includes expiring federal operating agreements with public, non-profit, and co-op housing providers that need to be addressed to ensure these housing providers can continue to operate with RGI rents.

Ask:

253. Ensure there is no net loss of RGI Housing in Canada by investing in:
- The maintenance, repair, and retrofitting of existing RGI housing.
 - A new rent subsidy and operational cost supplement program to address expiring operating agreements.

Issue: Homelessness and the Shelter System

Emergency shelters (gender-based violence and homeless shelters) must never be confused with permanent housing. Preventing homelessness requires ensuring everyone can be connected to housing that meets their unique needs. Until this can be achieved, the emergency shelter system will continue to play an important role within the broader system of organizations that work with people experiencing homelessness. We must ensure the shelter system feels and is inclusive for everyone who needs to access it, including men, women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people, and people with disabilities.

Asks:

254. Support gender-based violence and homeless shelters to meet the demand for separate and secure gender-specific spaces as well as family spaces.
255. Support gender-based violence and homeless shelters to strengthen anti-oppressive policy, practice and training, and to implement outreach and communications strategies that explicitly demonstrate how services are inclusive.

Issue: Preventing System Exits into Homelessness

Women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people continue to experience homelessness because of a lack of coordination between government systems, between community organizations, and between government and community organizations. Collaboration is particularly important when people are going through significant periods of transition such as exiting corrections, shelters, the child welfare system, and mental health facilities, as well as detox and addiction treatment facilities. We must ensure that the shelter system and other social services create pathways into safe and stable housing for all who access them.

Asks & Actions:

256. Ensure corrections, shelters, the child welfare system, mental health facilities, and detox and addictions treatment facilities partner with community-based organizations and other relevant stakeholders that use an intersectional gender-based analysis to ensure no women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people exit these services into homelessness.
257. Ensure all women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people:
- Have access to an on-site support worker that uses an intersectional gender-based analysis to connect them to housing and wrap-around services before, during, and after they exit corrections, shelters, the child welfare system, mental health facilities, and detox and addictions treatment facilities;
 - Receive income supports prior to exiting corrections, shelters, the child welfare system, mental health facilities, and detox and addictions treatment facilities when needed to secure housing.

Issue: Poverty

Housing insecurity and homelessness is a symptom of poverty and strong federal leadership is needed to end poverty among women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people.

Asks & Actions:

258. Apply an intersectional gender-based analysis to the federal poverty reduction strategy and establish national targets and timelines for reducing rates of poverty and social exclusion among diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people.
259. Ensure the Canada Housing Benefit can be used as a shelter benefit for those renting in the private market so that women and families aren't forced to use other income supports such as the Canada Child Benefit to pay their rent, and move toward replacing one-off, income-related benefits with a guaranteed annual income that will eliminate income poverty for all women and their families.

Issue: Canada Child Benefit at Times of Family Transition

Caregivers living with low incomes too often lose their housing because the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) is no longer available to them when their children are apprehended, and they often rely on the CCB to supplement their rent. In addition, caregivers cannot apply for the CCB until they are reunified with their children, but without the CCB they are often unable to afford housing with the appropriate bedroom size they need to reunify with their children, essentially preventing reunification. Changes to the way the CCB is delivered can help address housing insecurity during times of family transition.

Ask:

260. Change the way the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) is delivered to ensure that:
- Caregivers don't lose their housing as a result of losing the CCB when children are placed in care or incarcerated
 - Caregivers can access the CCB prior to family reunification for the purpose of securing housing and other caregiving-related items.

Issue: The Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Housing

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the UN in 2007 to enshrine (according to Article 43) the rights that “constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world.” While the Government of Canada adopted UNDRIP in 2016, it has yet to enshrine it in legislation which would promote greater accountability.

Asks & Actions:

261. Ratify and implement UNDRIP, in particular Articles 21 and 23 which relate to housing.

“Article 21

1. Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.

2. States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.

Article 23

Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, Indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programs affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programs through their own institutions.”

Issue: Centering the Voices of, and being accountable to, Women, Trans, Two-Spirit, and Gender Non-Conforming People

Women, Trans, Two-Spirit, and gender non-conforming people know best what they need when it comes to housing. To ensure these unique needs are met, these voices must be at the centre of the design and implementation of all National Housing Strategy initiatives. Furthermore, it is critical that the Federal government report to women, trans, Two-Spirit and gender non-conforming people on the progress they are making toward meeting their unique needs through the National Housing Strategy.

Ask:

262. Ensure diverse women, trans, Two-Spirit and gender non-conforming people:

- Make up at least 50% of the composition of the National Housing Council
- Are meaningfully involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of progress of National Housing Strategy initiatives (e.g. through groups like the Pan-Canadian Voice for Women’s Housing).

Issues: Housing Conditions in a Changing Climate

Women from marginalized communities often find themselves living in poor quality housing. Poor housing conditions are exacerbated by environmental hazards and housing that is substandard to the environmental conditions they are living in (e.g. First Nations communities with contaminated water, northern communities with mold and inadequate heating, Black and low-income communities near contaminated sites and low-income communities near highways and factories).

Asks & Actions:

263. Similar to annual reporting on the status of potable water in Indigenous communities, implement annual reporting to the Parliament of Canada on the status of housing in Indigenous communities. Climate change should be considered in the identification of potential indicators for reporting.

264. Encourage local and provincial public health authorities to report annually on the status of housing in low-income areas using a standard set of common indicators, including indicators specific to environmental conditions.

265. Encourage provincial authorities to stop displacing people from their housing and their communities and destroying the environment to build hydroelectric dams.

Environment

Issue:

Ecological crises, in energy but also social and economic, feed on each other. We are witnessing the exponential aggravation of the ecological situation. There is also a lack of sensitivity to the issue of gender in discourses on health and environmental issues that have the effect of obscuring issues specific to women.

The economic system, based on growth and accumulation, depletes our natural resources and our territories and exploits the free labour of women. Economic inequality between men and women and among women, increases women's vulnerability in general and that of some women in particular in the face of climate change and the degradation of our ecosystems. When it comes to climate change, "women are disproportionately affected by climate change impacts such as droughts, floods, and other extreme weather events. They also have a critical role in combatting climate change, but need to be better represented at all levels of decision making. Empowering women will be a significant factor in meeting the climate challenge."⁶⁶ Because of this, in all measures concerning climate change, a feminist approach must be taken.

The economic system based on growth and accumulation raises the issue of climate justice and our relations with the populations of the South and contributes to increasing migratory flows.

Finally, the eventual economic and energy transition will not be neutral and cannot be only technical and the prerogative of the scientific experts.⁶⁷ It calls for all of society and questions our modes of consumption and how we respond to our needs as well as ultimately asking: who is economic development for and why? The way forward must necessarily recognize, include and centre the expertise of Indigenous peoples around the world who are the knowledge keepers and the experts on how we live in balance in a manner that protects our Mother earth while also providing what we need.

Asks:

266. It is proposed that in consultation and collaboration with Canada's Indigenous peoples, environmental experts and activists, the Canadian government should develop a fair and ambitious economic and energy transition policy aimed at getting us out of our hydrocarbon dependency.
267. This policy should respect Indigenous peoples and be based on a gendered intersectional analysis.
268. Increased regulation should be put in place for polluting industries whose processes are detrimental to women's health and the degradation of ecosystems.
269. The cost of pollution and waste must be attributed to the producers and no left to others to deal with.
270. Advocate for and support the inclusion of Indigenous peoples' perspectives and decision-making in the health and environmental impact assessments throughout the lifespan of extractive sector operations, in accordance with the principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
271. Advocate for and support the inclusion of affected communities' perspectives and decision-making in health and environmental impact assessments throughout the lifespan of extractive sector operations.
272. Advocate for and support the development of just transition programs for affected communities and workers when extractives sector operations cease.

⁶⁶ Christina Figueres, former UNFCCC executive secretary. [A Feminist Approach to Climate Justice](#). AQOCI

⁶⁷ Ligue des droits et libertés. *Changements climatiques, transition et droits humains; quelques questions et pistes de réflexion*. December, 2016.

273. When it comes to mining developments, the Canadian government take into account the demands of the Permanent People's Tribunal (2014),⁶⁸ particularly the following:

“That it adopt legislative, administrative, investigative and all other methods necessary to ensure that businesses under its jurisdiction do not obstruct the fundamental human rights, whether in Canada or abroad, that Canada has committed to respect, protect and guarantee through various international treaties.

That the government not favor Canadian investment outside of host countries that have legislation requiring the mining industry to carry out independent and thorough environmental impact assessments that are open and accessible to the public and allow citizens, particularly indigenous communities, to know the short, medium and long term impacts of mining projects and to give prior, free and informed consent.

In terms of living conditions and well-being, ensure that the entire Canadian population has access to safe environmental conditions, including access to water and electricity.

Reform Canadian environmental law so that the law is based on the reversal of the burden of proof for all industrial procedures.

Increase governance rules in the territories so that their populations may give their consent for any industrial projects.”

Immigrant Women

Issue: An Inclusive, Fair and Just Immigration System

Canada's immigration system disadvantages and actively marginalizes women seeking to migrate to Canada. ~~OBJ:OBJ:~~ Women with intersecting identities related to factors such as gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, disability;⁶⁹ and class, among many others, experience multiple layers of discrimination while navigating Canadian immigration processes. Immigrants of colour, immigrants with disabilities, and trans, queer, and non-binary immigrants, in particular, experience discrimination.

Canadian immigration policy “prioritizes prospective migrant wealth (i.e. economic stability), ‘high skilled’ employment, official language fluency, and recognized credentials.”⁷⁰ The stated objectives of Canadian immigration law include: maximizing social, cultural and economic benefits; reuniting families; and promoting international justice and security by fostering respect for human rights.⁷¹ Similarly, Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Act outlines Canada's commitment to providing assistance to those in need,⁷² and to provide “fair consideration to those who come to Canada claiming persecution.”⁷³ With respect to gender, the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) of Canada introduced the Gender Guidelines in 1993 (updated in 1996) to assist with refugee protection for “women who demonstrate a well-founded fear of gender-related persecution.”⁷⁴ However, recent media reports demonstrate the divergence between the IRB's Gender Guidelines and the failure of judges to apply these protocols when hearing cases involving refugee claimants who have experienced gender-based violence.⁷⁵

⁶⁸<http://tpp.cdhal.org/wp-content/uploads/Verdict-TPP-Canada-FINAL.pdf>

⁶⁹ There is no accessibility support in the asylum process for people who are deaf or living with disabilities.

⁷⁰ Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic. *Migration Challenges and Opportunities for Canada in the 21st Century*. (2018), https://schliferclinic.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Migration.Challenges_and_Opportunities.Canada_21st-Century.pdf

⁷¹ Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (S.C. 2001, c. 27), s 3(1).

⁷² Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (S.C. 2001, c. 27), s 3(1).

⁷³ Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (S.C. 2001, c. 27), s 3(1).

⁷⁴ Canada, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB), “Chairperson Guidelines 4: Women Refugee Claimants Fearing Gender-Related Persecution”, 1996, available at <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/legal-policy/policies/Pages/GuideDir04.aspx>.

⁷⁵ Brian Hill and Jamie Mauracher. “Refugee judge asks woman why her husband wouldn't ‘just kill’ her”, *Global News*, November 27th, 2019.- <https://globalnews.ca/news/6214393/refugee-judge-asks-woman-why-husband-wouldnt-kill-her/>

The current flow of global human migration is a direct result of histories of racism, colonialism, and imperialism,⁷⁶ and instability fueled by extractive industries that Canada is connected to as an international actor. Indeed, the majority of people who migrate to Canada are racialized.⁷⁷ Specifically, China (14%), India (24%), and the Philippines (5.2%) were the largest sources of origin for new migrants to Canada in 2018 and together provide more a third of all Canada's incoming residents. For this reason, it is essential to centre the issues of racialized women, along with non-binary people, in formulating recommendations aimed at achieving gender equality in the Canadian immigration system.

Under the Canadian immigration system, women are able to enter the country through: student or work visas; one of the 'skilled worker' programs as primary applicants or as a dependent of the 'family class'; sponsorship from a Canadian citizen; as temporary foreign workers or as a refugee claimant. However, the system privileges and expedites 'skilled' workers according to a point system which prioritizes higher education, skills, language ability and work experience. Skills valued by our immigration system are often gendered and much of the work that many women do all over the world - such as unpaid caregiving work and other labour extracted at the family or community level - is not considered 'high skilled'. When women do possess recognized qualifications and after immigrating try to enter high skilled occupations in Canada, they face multiple barriers and are often forced into precarious, low skilled and low waged jobs that do not match their credentials.

Women who enter Canada under the 'family class' stream are more vulnerable to loss of immigration status if they are dependent on a spouse. Immigrant women who arrived as part of the 'family class' have been found to have significantly lower rates of full-time employment, and 62% of women who immigrated as either part of the economic or family class were employed in occupations which did not require a degree, despite the fact that they held one.⁷⁸ This is consistent with the experience of underemployment amongst racialized women and the systemic devaluing of their qualifications in various professional occupations in our labour market, despite racialized women being higher educated than their Canadian-born counterparts.⁷⁹

Permanent migration has remained steady in recent years but temporary foreign worker migration tripled between 2000 and 2018.⁸⁰ This massive increase in temporary foreign workers has led to heightened concerns about the nature and effects of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program.

Racialized women, in particular, temporary foreign workers and asylum-seekers, often have precarious immigration status; without pathways to permanent residence and citizenship.

Of the temporary forms of labour migration, the Caregiver program is a particularly gendered type of temporary work in Canada, done primarily by racialized immigrant women. In 2016, more than 90% of individuals in Canada's Live-in-Caregiver Program self-identified as women, and 88% were from the Philippines.⁸¹ Caregivers have been coming to Canada for more than a century, raising children and caring for the sick and elderly. The combination of employer-tied work permits and recruitment fees (despite being outlawed) place caregivers at

⁷⁶ Avtar Brah. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (London: Routledge, 1996.)

Sunera Thobani. *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada*. (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 71.

⁷⁷ "Migration flows", Canadian International Development Platform, November 28 2019. <https://cidpnsi.ca/migration-flows/>

⁷⁸ Aneta Bonikowska and Feng Hou. "Labour Market Outcomes of Immigrant Women who Arrive as Dependents of Economic Immigrant Principal Applicants", Statistics Canada, February 2017. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2017390-eng.htm>

⁷⁹ "Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistics Report", Statistics Canada, 2015. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14217-eng.htm#a28>

⁸⁰ "Migration flows", Canadian International Development Platform, November 28 2019. <https://cidpnsi.ca/migration-flows/>

⁸¹ Rhupaleem Bhuyan et al, "Responding to the Structural Violence on Migrant Domestic Work: Insights from Participatory Action Research with Migrant Caregivers in Canada." *Journal of Family Violence*. 33:8 (2018), 613-627.

risk for wage theft, long work hours, and exploitation⁸² with little recourse without fear of being sent back to their home countries.

Racialized asylum seekers from countries outside North America and/or Europe, who claim persecution on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, experience oppression in the refugee process. 2SLGBTQQA asylum seekers have disclosed being asked intrusive and homophobic questions in immigration hearings and from immigration lawyers.⁸³ These disadvantages are compounded by the frequent inadequacy of translation services.⁸⁴

Additionally, trans refugees may not be able to change their legal name and gender markers on passports and other identification documents. Indeed, the very requirement to 'prove' one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity to Immigration and Refugee Board officials is often based on stereotypes of what a gay person should act like, and does not account for the dynamic ways that gender and sexuality can be expressed or change over time.

Women engaged with the immigration system who are physically or psychologically abused may hesitate to leave, seek assistance, or report to authorities for fear of jeopardizing their status. This can also be the case for women who are economically insecure being unable to fully participate in the labour market at a level commensurate with their qualifications and experience. Many such vulnerable women fear deportation even if they have the right to remain in Canada. Their partner may keep them uninformed of their full rights, withhold financial information and hold hostage their immigration documents.

The coercive control that immigrant women face because of their status relative to their relationships with spouses, employers and/or families is further heightened by the isolation they face. This control could be lessened if newcomer women had the support of their extended families, but many newcomer women do not. It is difficult for them to sponsor their extended family members to come to Canada and impossible to bring in their undeclared or adopted children.

Special measures need to be taken to ensure that all immigrant women, regardless of their status, race, gender identity and sexual orientation, are supported by our immigration system and not ignored or rejected. This includes permanent residents, temporary residents, migrant workers, live-in caregivers and non-status women in Canada. The creation of permanent immigration pathways would protect migrants from precarious working and living conditions, exploitation, and abuse.

These recommendations address ways in which the immigration system can be improved to make it inclusive, fairer and more just.

Asks & Actions:

274. Conduct a gender-, race-, disability- and economic status-based analysis of all immigration policies and legislation and revise policies, legislation and regulations to ensure they promote inclusion.
275. Remove disability as grounds for inadmissibility in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.
276. Remove deportation based on criminality to eliminate any differential treatment based on a hierarchy of status.
277. Eliminate all immigrant detention particularly the detention of children and pregnant women and implement alternatives to detention, such as community release and supervision or tracking mechanisms.

⁸² Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic. *Migration Challenges and Opportunities for Canada in the 21st Century*.

(2018), https://schliferclinic.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Migration.Challenges_and_Opportunities.Canada_21st-Century.pdf

⁸³ David A.B. Murray. "Real Queer: 'Authentic' LGBT Refugee Claimants and Homonationalism in the Canadian Refugee System." *Anthropologica*. 56, no 1 (2014): 21-32.

⁸⁴ The Colour of Poverty, The Colour of Change. "Fact Sheet #8 Racialized Poverty in Immigration & Newcomer Settlement" 2019, <https://colourofpoverty.ca/fact-sheets/>

278. Decrease the waiting time and reduce the minimum income requirement in parent and grandparent sponsorship cases.⁸⁵
279. Allow undeclared biological or adopted children to be sponsored by their parent
280. Abolish the concept of "safe countries of origin" or "democratic countries with robust human rights records" for the purposes of fast-tracking the return of failed asylum claimants.⁸⁶

Work & Work Permits:

281. Develop a clear and specific pathway for all Temporary Foreign Workers to become Permanent Residents.
282. Live-in Caregivers:
 - Grant Live-in Caregivers Permanent Residency (PR) upon arrival in Canada
 - Provide all Live-in Caregivers with precarious status, including those who have fallen out of status, a process to become a Permanent Resident
 - Barring this, the transition from temporary worker to PR should not include requirements for additional language and education.
283. Issue open regional or sectoral work permits to migrant workers instead of tying them to a specific employer.
284. Issue Humanitarian and Compassionate applicants open work permits at the start of their application process.

Gender-based Violence

285. Define and implement a process for women trafficked for the sex trade, labour or forced marriage to become Permanent Residents if they so choose.
286. Stop investigating women for misrepresentation and fraud when a sponsorship breaks down due to gender-based violence.
287. In the case of gender-based violence, suspend the enforcement of the sponsorship undertaking.
288. For women without status fleeing gender-based violence, put in place an expedited Humanitarian and Compassionate process and an expedited temporary residence permit and issue an open work permit at the start of their application process. Waive all related fees.
289. On a regular basis, provide comprehensive, in-depth training on all forms of violence against women and its potential impact on immigrant, refugee and non-status women, including a focus on women from equity seeking groups, to all Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) officials and develop and deliver this training in collaboration with those who have front-line experience and expertise with abused immigrant, refugee and non-status women, including those from equity seeking groups.
290. Include in any training on new immigration or refugee legislation or policy, its potential impact on claimants who may be victims of gender-based violence and emphasize the importance of ensuring their safety.
291. Develop a detailed guideline applicable to all types of hearings for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) officers for dealing with cases involving women and their children, including a focus on women from equity seeking groups, who are victims of domestic or sexual violence.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Immigrant women, especially racialized women and women with disabilities, are more likely to be low-income than their male counterparts and white or able-bodied women.

⁸⁶ Countries otherwise considered "democratic" or "safe" may have poor records in terms human rights violations

⁸⁷ Guideline should be comparable to Guideline 4. Women Refugee Claimants Fearing Gender-Related Persecution Guidelines and should include procedural accommodations as well as substantive issues or, alternatively, should be cross-referenced with Guideline 8. Guidelines on Procedures with Respect to Vulnerable Persons Appearing Before the IRB should be revised to include specific reference to victims of domestic or

Issue: Access to Services and Benefits for all Immigrant Women irrespective of Status

Newcomer women and women with precarious immigration status face particular barriers to accessing justice and community services. This results in many newcomer women not receiving the services they need and not understanding their legal rights and recourse. There are many barriers to access to services including isolation, low English/French language skills, immigration precarity, poverty, etc. For example, a newcomer women's spouse or partner may prohibit her from learning English/French or from working, keeping her isolated in the home; threaten to take custody of the children; or alienate her from their cultural community by telling people she is a bad wife/mother, etc. Immigration status and gender create barriers to accessing various benefits. For example, gaps in Employment Insurance eligibility result in 50% of temporary foreign workers not accessing Employment Insurance benefits because of their "closed" work permit.⁸⁸

In addition, without access to a settlement worker or lawyer to assist in gathering evidence, preparing applications and guiding the process, women whose sponsorship is withdrawn while in process and women without status, both of whom have the right to apply to remain in Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds, are likely to face deportation. These recommendations below are directed at ensuring women have access to the services they need independent of their spouses and regardless of their status.

Asks & Actions:

- 292.** Provide access to all settlement and integration, and health and other public services including sport, recreation and physical activity opportunities and benefits, to women in Canada who were born outside the country irrespective of immigration status and, as needed, in first language or through professional interpreters.⁸⁹
- 293.** For migrant women workers, provide access to all settlement and integration, and health and other public services and benefits, including access to Employment Insurance.
- 294.** Provide access to the Canada Child Benefit to all children residing in Canada.
- 295.** Remove immigration qualification barriers from all income entitlements including Employment Insurance and Old Age Security.
- 296.** Increase federal contributions to provincial legal aid to ensure legal aid coverage for immigration cases impacting refugee, immigrant and non-status women and ensure immigrants, refugees and non-status women have access to legal aid services everywhere in Canada.
- 297.** Fund settlement and immigration, community and public services so that they are accessible to and appropriate for all women who require them.

Issue: Economic Equality and Commensurate Employment

Immigrant women in Canada and particularly racialized immigrant women, face greater employment barriers and earn less money than both male immigrants and Canadian-born women, with the exception of Indigenous people. Despite the fact that 38% of racialized immigrant women have a university degree, compared to 26.6% of their Canadian-born counterparts⁹⁰, they face a lack of recognition for their skills, employment discrimination, and

sexual violence. Any additional procedural guidelines developed should include reference to the need for interpreters, for all official IRCC matters.

⁸⁸ Edward Koning and Keith Banting. "Inequality below the Surface: Reviewing Immigrants' Access to and Utilization of Five Canadian Welfare Programs". *Canadian Public Policy* 39, no. 4 (2013): 581-601.

⁸⁹ Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity. *Supporting Inclusion of Newcomer Girls and Women*. <https://www.caaws.ca/programs/newcomer-girls-and-women/>

⁹⁰ "Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistics Report", Statistics Canada, 2015. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14217-eng.htm#a28>

the gendered wage gap. Immigrant women on average earn a median income lower than their Canadian-born counterparts and 19% below that of immigrant men in the same age group.⁹¹ A comparison of immigrants with university degrees revealed that racialized immigrant women make 48.7 cents for every dollar that non-racialized immigrant men make.⁹²

Women migrants in Canada often find themselves overwhelmingly impoverished, underemployed, and overworked in low paying, exploitative jobs.⁹³ Racialized immigrant women who are newcomers have also been found to be 4.5 times more likely to be employed in temporary help agencies.⁹⁴

The following recommendations are aimed at removing barriers to economic equality for immigrant women and addressing a unique barrier faced by all immigrants to Canada - the lack of recognition of their internationally-attained credentials and experience.

Asks & Actions:

- 298.** Strengthen federal pay equity and employment equity acts and incentivize employment and pay equity regimes at the provincial and territorial levels.
- 299.** Remove all regulatory barriers that contribute to the underemployment of immigrant women.
- 300.** Address the lack of Canadian work experience barrier by following the lead of the Ontario Human Rights Commission which indicated that denying an individual a job because of lack of Canadian work experience can be grounds for discrimination
- 301.** Create and fund programs such as paid internships that provide immigrants with Canadian work experience, education and credential transfer programs.
- 302.** In partnership with the Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM), do a Gender-based Analysis plus of the Pan-Canadian Framework and related Action Plan and implement recommendations in order to enhance labour market outcomes of internationally-trained women as a medium-term intermediate outcome.⁹⁵

Women in STEM and Women in Trades, Women in Entrepreneurship, Women in Political Leadership and Women in Sport

Several quantitative indicators identify areas of high or extremely high inequality for women in Canada including⁹⁶ STEM education, STEM occupations, managerial positions and entrepreneurship, women in sport leadership (Boards, Senior leaders, Coaches) are under-represented across all National, Provincial club, University and college programming and includes Olympic (and Paralympic coaching teams). These areas affect women in Trades as well as STEM fields.

⁹¹ "Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistics Report", Statistics Canada, 2015. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14217-eng.htm#a28>

⁹² Sheila Block and Grace-Edward Galabuzi. "Canada's Colour Coded Labour Market", *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives; The Wellesley Institute* (2011).

⁹³ Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic. *Migration Challenges and Opportunities for Canada in the 21st Century*. (2018), https://schliferclinic.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Migration.Challenges_and_Opportunities.Canada_21st-Century.pdf

⁹⁴ Sylvia Fuller and Leah F. Vosko, "Temporary Employment and Social Inequality in Canada: Exploring Intersections of Gender, Race and Immigration Status". *Social Indicators Research*, 88, no.1, (2007): 31-50.

⁹⁵ Pan-Canadian Framework currently has "enhanced labour market outcomes" as an ultimate outcome. A 2014 evaluation found that data to assess the results of projects was lacking and recommended renewing the performance management strategy, linking it to the program's logic model. The 2018 TRIEC Report (State of Immigrant Inclusion in the Greater Toronto Area Labour Market) found that women newcomers in the GTA who have a university degree earn on average half the amount of their Canadian-born counterparts and this ratio has barely changed in 15 years. Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council. *State of immigrant inclusion in the greater Toronto area labour market*. 2018. <http://triec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/TRIEC-State-of-Immigrant-Inclusion-Report-final-181123.pdf>; Employment and Social Development Canada. Joint summative evaluation of foreign credential recognition program/inter-provincial labour mobility initiative, final report. *Government of Canada*. 2015. publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2016/edsc-esdc/Em20-34-2015-eng.pdf

⁹⁶ Devillard, Sandrine; Vogel, Tiffany; Pickersgill, Andrew; Madgavkar, Anu; Nowski, Tracy; Krishnan, Mekala; Pan, Tina, & Kechrid, Dania. *The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's Equality in Canada*, *McKinsey Global Institute*. 2017 <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality/the-power-of-parity-advancing-womens-equality-in-canada>

To advance women's equality in Canada, stakeholders need to take action in a number of priority areas, including government action through policy tools to:

- Remove barriers against women in Trades and STEM and Sport - which includes removing barriers to training, employment and career advancement for women in these fields⁹⁷
- Enable more women to be entrepreneurs - particularly in areas of advanced technologies
- Reduce gender inequalities in child care and unpaid care work
- Reduce gender bias and reshape social norms.⁹⁸

A number of policy initiatives could be undertaken at the federal government level to effect positive changes for women in Trades and STEM fields. Gender equality will only be achieved by implementing initiatives across all the priority areas.

Issue: Accountability for Gender Equality

The Federal Contractors Program in place since 1986 is mostly ineffective as there is little oversight, accountability or resourcing by the government. In sport, a continued commitment from the Federal Government to achieve gender equity in sport by 2035.

Asks & Actions

- 303.** Mandatory reporting and consequences for not reporting (clear about who is responsible for reporting and for imposing consequences).
- 304.** Implement independent systems of accountability and take a longer-term view to set targets to drive improvement, don't set targets that simply demonstrate compliance but will not produce change.

Issue: Public Education

In addition to the formal education system (i.e. K-12 curriculum for STEM subjects), there is a need to use community education programs as a policy tool to raise awareness and affect behaviours (e.g. Canada's Food Guide and other public health tools are used to inform consumers and encourage healthy eating habits). We need similar approaches to ensure that young women and their parents achieve a basic level of STEM literacy, and physical literacy through school physical education programs that support the needs of girls. This includes awareness of opportunities in post-secondary education programs as well as careers in trades and STEM fields. Education programs must do more than simply provide information - they need to engage with young women and provide inspiration about opportunities in STEM, and trades and sport/coaching.

Asks & Actions

- 305.** Integrate targeted approaches into the elementary and high school system to educate parents, teachers and students about opportunities for girls/young women in STEM. While education is a provincial mandate, the federal government can offer incentive programs for provinces.
- 306.** Use women's equity seeking organizations (like YWCAs and the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport and Physical Activity) as key informants in supporting the development of strategies within the STEM and sport fields to address gender and equity barriers.
- 307.** Fund women's organizations to help promote and support initiatives at all levels - i.e. early education, employer education, apprenticeship programs, and leadership

⁹⁷ Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity. *Facts and Stats*. <https://www.caaws.ca/women-on-boards/facts-and-stats/>

⁹⁸ McKinsey Global Institute, *The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's Equality in Canada*, 2017 <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality/the-power-of-parity-advancing-womens-equality-in-canada>

development for women.

Issue: Barriers to training, employment and career advancement for women in Trades and STEM and sport/coaching fields.

Asks & Actions

308. Federal government should require that organizations participate in equality and diversity accreditation programs in order to qualify to receive money from the public purse (e.g. through procurement contracts or research funding).
309. Mandate GBA+ training, unconscious bias training, workplace culture and enforce proper unbiased hiring practices. In sport, mandate that all boards and teams have female representation. All boards of directors should have 40-40-20 gender diversity (40% men, 40% women and 20% other or either), and in sports, coaching for teams comprised of female athletes should include at least one woman coach.
310. Apply pay equity legislation (proactive pay equity legislation for the federal jurisdiction was introduced in late October 2018)⁹⁹ to all employers with 100 employees or more.
311. Provide greater access to training and retraining programs, to reintegrate women that leave work for maternity or other leave.
312. Fund on a sustainable basis research through tri-councils to address 1) increasing the participation of girls and young women in education and training programs that will provide them access to the Trades and/or STEM and sport; 2) develop frameworks to support economic security, equality and advancement of women working in sport/coaching, the Trades and/or STEM.
313. Provide funding to research pay equity in sport and coaching (no data currently exists within Sport Canada or other national level funders of coaches). Respond to research findings and implement applicable policies or practices to ensure pay equity or parity.

Issue: Enable more women to be entrepreneurs - particularly in advanced technology fields.

Asks & Actions

314. Provide female entrepreneurs with access to maternity benefits.
315. Universal child care will benefit all parents, but is essential for female entrepreneurs to be able to work and have children.
316. Provide tax incentives to encourage investment in women-led companies.
317. Early phase test with female entrepreneurs, e.g. eligible for women funded by the Business Development Bank of Canada, and then follow up and measure impact.
318. Better accountability in existing processes.
319. The Government of Canada should increase support to the Women's Enterprise Organizations established and experienced in working with female entrepreneurs in rural and remote communities.
320. Implement the following recommendations from *Women's Economic Security: Securing the Future of Canada's Economy*, report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women¹⁰⁰ The Government of Canada continue the programs outlined in Recommendation 66 of *Women's Economic Security: Securing the Future of Canada's Economy*, report of the

⁹⁹ Employment and Social Development Canada. Government of Canada introduces historic proactive pay equity legislation. *Government of Canada*. 2018. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2018/10/government-of-canada-introduces-historic-proactive-pay-equity-legislation.html>

¹⁰⁰ Standing Committee on the Status of Women, *Women's economic security: securing the future of Canada's economy*, *House of Commons Canada*, 2018, pp. 166-175, <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/FEWO/Reports/RP9974529/fewor12/fewor12-e.pdf>

Standing Committee on the Status of Women, based on a review of outcomes.

Recommendation 66: That the Government of Canada establish a coordinated national approach to support female entrepreneurs through dedicated funds to local organizations that fill gaps of economic and entrepreneurial development and increase access to centralized knowledge hubs.

Recommendation 67: That the Government of Canada work with the Business Development Bank of Canada to highlight to private venture capital firms the benefits of investing in female entrepreneurship.

Recommendation 68: That the Government of Canada apply a gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) to the recipients of federal grants and loans for entrepreneurs to ensure that all genders benefit equally from this financial support. [Recommendation 68 of *Women's Economic Security: Securing the Future of Canada's Economy*, report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, should be part of the accountability review.]

Recommendation 69: That the Government of Canada fund and promote initiatives that deliver networking and mentorship opportunities to female entrepreneurs.

Recommendation 71: That the Government of Canada collaborate with Crown corporations to invest in women's entrepreneurship, including in programs for female entrepreneurs living in rural and remote communities.

Issue: Reduce gender inequalities in child care and unpaid work.

Asks & Actions

321. Employment Insurance (EI) benefits for parental leave. Federal support to achieve the same level of parental leave benefits in all provinces as currently exist in Quebec. Increase benefit levels for 18-month leave (currently no additional benefits beyond level for 12 months). Need to find ways for single parents to benefit.
322. Greater access to child care. Universal child care program: Address number of spaces in licensed day care & costs. Shift work in STEM and Trades outside business (daycare) hours
323. Paid personal emergency leave days.
324. Value and pay for currently unpaid care work.
325. Help working women stay connected while on parental leave, e.g. onboarding and offboarding programs can be critical in keeping women engaged so they have an easier return to work. This is important for women in STEM fields because most of their male colleagues do not take parental leave.
326. Part-time work option of choice - Create policy to support and facilitate choices for part time employment (while maintaining job security) for those women who wish to work part time during part of their career.

Issue: Reduce gender bias and reshape social norms

Asks & Actions

327. Mandatory training and follow-up assessment to reduce/eliminate unconscious bias (including cultural biases), sexual harassment, and cyber violence including texting. Develop learning tools to raise awareness of these issues and to develop interventions to remove these problems from the workplace, universities, colleges and all other educational institutions including post-secondary and elementary. Example: Quebec's Bill 151: *An Act to prevent and fight sexual violence in higher education*¹⁰¹
328. Set and achieve targets for gender representation on key decision-making bodies within federal government (e.g. cabinet, national energy board, infrastructure bank, etc.)

¹⁰¹ David, H el ene. Bill 151: An Act to prevent and fight sexual violence in higher education, *National Assembly of Qu ebec*. <http://www.assnat.qc.ca/en/travaux-parlementaires/projets-loi/projet-loi-151-41-1.html?appellant=MC>

329. Establish a mandatory target of 40:40:20 gender representation on Canadian public bodies and significant committees by 2023 (40% men, 40% women, 20% either or other). Such as Canada Industrial Relations Board, Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunication Commissions, Canadian Accessibility Standards Development Organization, Renewable Resources Board, Sport Committees of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Governments, National Sport Organizations, etc.

Issue: Equality and diversity accreditation programs with accountability

Current programs (such as the Federal Contractors Program and the Legislated Employment Equity Program) are largely ineffective in increasing representation of women in STEM, sport and the Trades as there is little oversight, accountability or resourcing by the government. Organizations can be “in compliance” for many years without any change in gender diversity. Need meaningful metrics, mandatory reporting and penalties for non-compliance are needed.

Ask

330. Re-visit Recommendation 58 in the 2018 Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women: *“That the Government of Canada repeal changes to the Federal Contractors Program made in 2013, and examine ways to improve the Legislated Employment Equity Program.”*

Issue: Pay Equity Legislation - Equal Pay for Equal Work

The Pay Equity program for federally regulated employers should be more broadly applied. Examples of key industries that employ women in STEM fields and the trades are energy are Information Technology, Artificial Intelligence, Manufacturing, Health, Construction, Mining...

Asks & Actions

331. Expand the federal Pay Equity program beyond federally-regulated employers
332. Provide reasonable and substantially equal analysis of pay data.
333. Increase the level of collaboration and sharing of information between federal and provincial agencies and ministries

Issue: Greater access to training and retraining programs

Many training initiatives have failed to improve the economic security of women who have children because they cannot afford to pay child care and transportation costs to attend the program. They are forced to choose between the program or paying their rent or eating.

Ask

334. Child Care, transportation and food allowances need to be built into any training and skills upgrading programs that aim to help women gain access to employment in the Trades, sport/coaching and STEM fields.

Issue: Labour force data - disaggregated by gender, report number of hours worked and make publicly available

The issues that are outlined in this ask fit within the broad scope of the College and Community Social Innovation Fund so researchers can apply for funding to investigate these topics. Tri-councils should continue to support the College and Community Social Innovation Fund as a long-term program when the pilot phase is completed (or to develop an equivalent program).

Ask

335. Sustained research funding through the tri-councils (NSERC, SSHRC and CHIR) to address 1) increasing the participation of girls and young women in education and training programs that will allow them access to the Trades and/or STEM fields and 2) develop

frameworks to support economic security, equality and advancement of women working in the Trades and/or STEM, and sport/coaching

7. CONSULTATION

One outcome expected by the Department for Women and Gender Equality for this project was that GENC would produce a national action plan. This goal was intensely discussed by GENC members. Many noted the lack of representativeness of the GENC leaders, the lack of autonomy of GENC, the super tight schedule and insufficient resources. Many wanted to work on a pre-consultation document, not a final plan. As a result, GENC decided not to adopt a national action plan, but to instead:

- Complete a pre-consultation document within the expected timeframe
- Recommend the document be followed by extensive consultation and deliberation in the provinces and territories.

On April 1, 2019, GENC adopted the following motion:

“The results of the work of the Gender Equality Network Canada constitute a basis for discussion. The adoption of a national action plan must include a real process of consultation and deliberation in the provinces and territories.

For a national action plan to be democratically developed, the following conditions must be met:

- Representation of organizations according to a decolonized and intersectional perspective;
- Organizational independence of the Network;
- A realistic timeline;
- Sufficient material and financial resources.”

Four principles of the Consultation:

1. Representation of organizations based on an intersectional and decolonial perspective.

The provincial/territorial consultation process on the Discussion Document for a Pan-Canadian Strategy to Advance Gender Equality must seek out and highlight the voices of women and non-binary people using a decolonial and intersectional lens.

The decolonial perspective

To ensure that the consultation process is imbued with a decolonial perspective, we must place the voices, demands and multiple and diverse realities of Indigenous women at the heart of our processes. Indigenous women should take part in pre-consultation work and the consultation itself, if they want to, and should be compensated for their work.

A decolonial perspective should be reflected in the Consultation practices and evaluation of those practices. We must constantly be aware of, and recognize, the colonial practices rooted in feminist and white women’s organizations and culture. The needs, demands and criticisms of Indigenous women need to be at the heart of this consultation. Ensuring proper implementation of this decolonial approach means engaging in an ongoing evaluation process, rather than a single end-of-project evaluation.

The Discussion Document for a Pan-Canadian Strategy to Advance Gender Equality needs to include the recommendations made by commissions that have investigated the living

conditions and violence experienced by Indigenous people. Take, for instance, the 94 calls to action and recommendations issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada,¹⁰² the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples¹⁰³ and the final report of Canada's National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), *Reclaiming Power and Place*,¹⁰⁴ with the 231 calls for justice contained in it.

Additionally, it is critical to ask Indigenous women what their needs are, and to validate those. To accomplish this, it is necessary to conceive of the consultation process in a decolonial and universally accessible way:

- offer a variety of methods for participation, keeping in mind that internet access isn't universal;
- provide culturally appropriate support;
- consult Indigenous women and organizations in remote regions.

The intersectional perspective

Decolonial and intersectional perspectives go hand in hand. An intersectional consultation process, from the beginning, must centre the voices of women and non-binary people who are traditionally marginalized and in the crosshairs of multiple systems of oppression, in particular, racialized and/or immigrant women.

The consultation must be accessible. Ensuring the consultation process is accessible includes considering how a venue is accessible for individuals with limited mobility, considering people who are unable to attend consultations in person (e.g. detainees and prisoners) and also people who speak languages other than English and French (Indigenous languages, Quebec sign language, American sign language, languages of immigrants, etc.) and others.

As is the case with a decolonial perspective, an intersectional one needs to be reflected throughout our practices and the evaluation of our practices. We must always pay attention to and recognize discriminatory and oppressive practices, particularly those that “whiten” intersectionality. We must listen to the needs, demands and criticisms of women and non-binary people who find themselves in the crosshairs of multiple systems of oppression, and center the consultation process on these. In order to ensure intersectionality is at the heart of the work, we must develop an ongoing evaluation process, not only at the end of the process. We also need to modify the Discussion Document for a Pan-Canadian Strategy to Advance Gender Equality based on the ongoing evaluations, and to ensure that issues emerging from the intersectional approach do not become secondary.

2. The network's organizational autonomy

Currently, GENC doesn't have control of its members, finances, resources or even the frequency of its meetings and its goals. In essence, it has zero organizational autonomy. This is a direct outcome of the project-based funding model used to organise and fund GENC. This type of funding has long been criticized by community-based feminist movements precisely because it promotes a top-down, hierarchical structure.

¹⁰² National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. Reports. *University of Manitoba*, 2019, <https://nctr.ca/reports2.php>

¹⁰³ United Nations. *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. 2018, https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf

¹⁰⁴ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. *Reclaiming Power and Place*, 2019, <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>

It is important to think beyond GENC, think about a structure to implement the consultation process that provides autonomy to the organization guiding and designing the process. Organizational autonomy would give genuine control of resources, finances, work schedules and objectives to the participants (keeping in mind decolonial, intersectional perspectives).

3. A realistic timeframe

A realistic work schedule/timeframe would allow participants to:

- Make all consultation sessions accessible (language, vocabulary level, support needed, etc.)
- Understand and take ownership over issues
- Discuss with their communities
- Respond to our proposals and/ or make new proposals of their own.

Additionally, a realistic schedule would allow time for discussion and editing of the Discussion Document for a Pan-Canadian Strategy to Advance Gender Equality, considering participants feedback and new propositions. This is extremely important to avoid the consultation process becoming mere validation and/or engendering disengagement.

4. Appropriate material and financial resources

Adequate resourcing and funding of the consultation is required to:

- Ensure that our consultation sessions are universally accessible (include interpretation, recognize travel costs, respect debate culture, without presupposing, for example, that all have access to quality internet)
- Distribute resources fairly, including at the local level
- Provide transparency into where resources come from, and how they are being used
- Conduct a thorough consultation that includes the diversity of women in Canada.