
Federal Pathway To Address Missing And Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls And 2SLGBTQQIA+ People





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2ELGBTQQIA+ autochtones disparues et assassinées.*





Section 1: Introduction

The Federal Pathway is the Government of Canada's contribution to the National Action Plan. It outlines the Government of Canada's commitments to end violence against Indigenous women and girls and Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex and Asexual (2SLGBTQQIA+) people. The Government of Canada will work with Indigenous partners to develop an Implementation Plan, which will contain the details of this Federal Pathway.

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and honour the missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, who experience and have suffered from violence and who were, and continue to be, so cruelly taken from their loved ones.

We acknowledge the strength and resilience of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, family members, friends and survivors, and the communities who support them, including their central role in the ongoing fight for justice.

We thank and extend our appreciation to the Commissioners, staff, Elders, Grandmothers and family members of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and all who took part in this important work of truth-telling and bringing awareness to this Canadian tragedy.

We also extend our appreciation to the Truth and Reconciliation Commissioners, Indigenous and 2SLGBTQQIA+ activists, organizations and leaders who have raised awareness about the need to meaningfully address violence through an understanding of the diversity within and among First Nations, Inuit and Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, no matter where they live.

"The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls called upon all orders of government to build a National Action Plan to address the interrelated systemic inequities for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. The Federal Pathway is our contribution to the National Action Plan that will work to end the systemic racism, sexism, ableism, and economic inequality that has perpetuated violence against Indigenous women and girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people for far too long. It will guide current and future efforts by the Government of Canada to put in place concrete measures that will end this national tragedy. Together, with families, survivors, Indigenous partners, and provincial and territorial governments, we will continue to respond to the National Inquiry's Final Report in a way that is lasting, impactful, and accountable."

- The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada

"Substantial and transformative change by all orders of government is essential to ending the violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Today we are releasing the Government of Canada's ongoing contributions to the National Action Plan to end this national tragedy. The Federal Pathway represents a 'whole of government' holistic approach to address the systemic, interconnected root causes of this violence. The Pathway includes concrete commitments and actions to support languages and cultures, community safety and prevention, health and wellness, human safety and security, and justice. We recognize that colonization eroded the traditional roles of women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and the imperative of them reclaiming their power and place. Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, families, survivors, children and communities are at the heart of these commitments. As a government and as Canadians, we must do more and we vow to do better to end this national tragedy."

- The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations

"Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people deserve to be safe, and to be treated with respect and dignity. The Federal Pathway marks a new chapter in the struggle to address and prevent violence. Many thanks to all who contributed. The Pathway will focus our coordination with partners. We will continue to strengthen the relationships built over the past five years. To date, WAGE has invested in capacity and growth for over 200 organizations serving Indigenous women and two-spirit individuals. With the help of families and survivors, we've established 110 unique commemorations across every province and territory. With continued investments to improve mobile service, we will improve the safety of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people across Canada's highways, include B.C.'s Highway of Tears. The work ahead requires political will, keeping survivors and families at the centre, and the careful application of a distinctions-based feminist lens."

- The Honourable Maryam Monsef, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development

"All Canadians have the right to feel safe and secure in their communities. Our government continues to take concrete action to eliminate violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Central to this deeply important work are strong and lasting relationships where we all have a say in shaping the future."

- The Honourable Bill Blair, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

"We are confident that this Federal Pathway provides the needed principles and foundation to build a fairer, stronger, and more inclusive and representative justice system that respects the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and protects Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. All Canadians must have the confidence that the justice system is there to protect them, not to harm them. Indigenous Peoples have experienced, and continue to experience, systemic and individual acts of racism in Canada's justice system. We are committed to implementing new actions and policies that address those inequities, including law reform, support for Indigenous legal traditions, Indigenous-led programs in support of Indigenous victims and offenders, and training and new policies for criminal justice personnel."

- The Honourable David Lametti, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada

"We have heard from Indigenous partners that culture is at the core of healing, the heart of identity and self-worth, and the foundation of healthy communities. The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls calls upon the Government of Canada to empower Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals through the transformative potential of culture. Whether it be through ensuring access to Indigenous languages, cultural knowledge and practices, supporting Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals to share their stories and advance authentic depictions in the media and popular culture, or continuing the fight against anti-Indigenous racism, I look forward to working in collaboration with Indigenous partners to put an end to the tragedy of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals."

- The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Canadian Heritage

"All Indigenous children in Canada should have the opportunity to grow up in their communities, immersed in their Indigenous cultures and surrounded by their loved ones; for far too long this hasn't been the case. The inherent racism in existing systems has allowed Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA people to be targets of violence and abuse. Together with First Nations, Inuit and Métis, we are continuously working towards a system that protects, supports and celebrates Indigenous women and their families. This Federal Pathway is one component of the broad National Action Plan, providing the necessary space for Indigenous Peoples to take charge of their history and support substantial, immediate, and transformational change to end systemic racism and gender-based violence."

- The Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services

"This Federal Pathway is an important step forward in addressing the root causes of violence and socioeconomic injustices faced by Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people both in the North and across Canada. The Pathway lays the foundation of our Government's commitments, but we cannot end violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people alone. It requires all orders of governments, Indigenous partners, and indeed all Canadians, working together, to achieve this goal. Together, we can and will make the substantial and transformative change needed to end this national tragedy."

- The Honourable Dan Vandal, Minister of Northern Affairs

Federal Declaration

The Government of Canada received and respects the findings of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' Final Report, "Reclaiming Power and Place," and Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak's report, "Métis Perspectives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and LGBTQ2S+ People," and has used them as the basis for developing this Pathway in partnership with Indigenous Peoples.

The Government of Canada recognizes that a distinctions-based approach is needed to ensure that the unique rights, interests and circumstances of First Nations, Inuit, and the Métis Nation are recognized and implemented, no matter where they live.

The Government of Canada recognizes First Nations, Inuit, and Métis as the Indigenous Peoples of Canada, consisting of distinct, rights-bearing Peoples with their own histories, including their relationship with the Crown. The work of forming renewed relationships based on respect, partnership, and the recognition and implementation of rights must reflect the unique interests, priorities and circumstances of each distinct Indigenous people.

The Government of Canada acknowledges that substantial, immediate, and transformational change is required by all Canadians to end systemic racism and gender-based violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

We acknowledge that colonialism, racism, sexism and ableism have created systemic inequities for Indigenous Peoples, contributing to the loss and extinguishment of Indigenous languages, cultures and traditional practices, and have directly impacted the rightful power and place of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

We recognize that for too long, this situation has not been named as a systemic problem, and instead has been treated as the responsibility of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people – to deal with trauma, to heal, and to seek justice. Despite many initiatives to address violence, we did not seek to understand, recognize or respond to the systemic, intersectional factors that contribute to violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

The Government of Canada recognizes that a new comprehensive approach must be taken to address the root causes of violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

As a government and as Canadians, we must do more and we vow to do better. Together, we will move forward in a good way by committing to:

- › Acknowledge the leadership of Indigenous families, survivors, women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people at decision-making tables on issues that impact them, their families and communities;
- › Respect and uphold the inherent and human rights of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in a dignified way;
- › Work toward ending all forms of violence, particularly all forms of systemic racism, sexism, ableism and gender-based violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people; and,
- › Improve socio-economic conditions to provide an opportunity for a good life and a safe, stable environment for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, no matter where they live.

In doing so, the Government of Canada will uphold the honour of the Crown, and act with respect, integrity, good faith, and fairness.

The Government of Canada will ensure that families and survivors, Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people remain at the centre of this work. We will honour and uphold their courage and we will be fully accountable to them, and all Canadians, in the implementation of the Federal Pathway.

The Government of Canada will take a leadership role, alongside families and survivors, Indigenous partners and provinces and territories, to advocate for transformative change, rooted in the recognition of the importance of the lands and waters, cultures, languages, and Indigenous-led approaches.

Partners and Contributors

The Federal Pathway is a key component of a much broader effort to end the national tragedy of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, so that they are safe and free from violence, no matter where they live, work or travel.

Families and survivors are at the heart of this initiative. Their lived experience provides critical insight, perspectives and solutions for transformative change.

To ensure Indigenous families, survivors, women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people's voices, perspectives, worldviews, and lived experiences are at the centre of this work, the Government of Canada has brought together over 100 Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ partners from a range of government and non-government organizations to contribute to the development of a National Action Plan. They include a National Family and Survivors Circle and a Core Working Group (CWG). The CWG is primarily comprised of the Chairs from First Nations, Inuit, Métis, Data, 2SLGBTQQIA+, Urban, and Federal Sub-Working Groups – who together with provinces and territories are developing the National Action Plan. Other Indigenous partners and grassroots service organizations were and continue to be engaged through the National Action Plan structure and by federal departments.

Partners and contributors include but are not limited to:

- › Families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people
- › Survivors of gender-based violence
- › Indigenous women
- › 2SLGBTQQIA+ people
- › Community activists
- › Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Spiritual Leaders
- › Indigenous youth
- › Indigenous women's organizations
- › Urban service providers and organizations
- › Indigenous rights holders
- › Indigenous Governments
- › Government of Canada
- › Provincial and Territorial Governments
- › Non-Governmental organizations

Section 2: Changing the Relationship

“No relationship is more important to Canada than the relationship with Indigenous Peoples.”

– Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

Any violence is unacceptable. Based on annual data from Statistics Canada, Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people continue to experience higher rates of violence. Despite only making up 4 per cent of the Canadian population, Indigenous women and girls represent 28 per cent of homicides perpetrated against women in 2019¹ and are 12 times more likely to be murdered or missing than non-Indigenous women in Canada.² Indigenous women are also more likely to be affected by all types of violent victimization.³ Data from Statistics Canada's Homicide Survey show that the rate of homicide among Indigenous women in 2019 was more than 7 times higher than among non-Indigenous women, at 4.01 per 100,000 population compared with 0.55 per 100,000 population⁴ —a number that is even higher for Inuit women and Indigenous women in the North.⁵ Additionally, the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability's annual report into femicide noted that in 2020, approximately one in five female victims killed by a male accused was an Indigenous woman or girl.⁶

In addition, data from Statistics Canada's Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (2018)⁷ demonstrates that Indigenous women with a disability are approximately 2 times more likely than Indigenous women without a disability to have been sexually assaulted since the age of 15; and about 1.5 times more likely than non-Indigenous women with a disability to have been sexually assaulted since the same age. A 2019 study also shows that Indigenous women and women living with a disability experience gender-based violence in public settings, while online, as well as sexual assault at higher rates.⁸

A recent study published in 2020 has also shown that women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people were more likely to be sexually assaulted than men and non-2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and found a

¹ Statistics Canada. Number, percentage and rate of homicide victims, by sex and Aboriginal identity <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=3510015601>

² https://www.mmiwg-fada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1a-1.pdf (p. 4), derived from: <https://www.takenhseries.com/infographic/>

³ https://www.mmiwg-fada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1a-1.pdf (p. 4), derived from: <https://www.takenhseries.com/infographic/>

⁴ Moreau, G., Jaffray, B. and A. Armstrong. 2020. "Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2019." Juristat. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X

⁵ Status of Women Canada, About Gender-Based Violence. <https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/violence/knowledge-connaissance/about-apropos-en.html#fn8>

⁶ Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability. <https://femicideincanada.ca/callitfemicide2020.pdf>

⁷ Statistics Canada. 2018. Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (SSPPS) <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=5256&dis=1>

⁸ Cotter and Savage. 2019. Gender-based violence and unwanted sexual behaviour in Canada, 2018: Initial findings from the Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2019001/article/00017-eng.htm>

higher prevalence of violent victimization among Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ people than those who were not Indigenous.⁹

The National Inquiry concluded that the violence it heard about “amounts to a race-based genocide of Indigenous Peoples, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis, which especially targets women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA[+] people.”¹⁰ In 2019, at the Women Deliver Conference in Vancouver, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated, “we accept their [the National Inquiry’s] findings, including that what happened amounts to genocide.”¹¹

The Government of Canada recognizes that the legacy of federal policies, programs, regulations and laws, such as the Indian Act and residential schools, created and perpetuate systemic inequities for Indigenous Peoples, including marginalization, higher rates of illness, disability, suicide, food insecurity, poverty, and violence. These inequities have also impacted the rightful power and place of many Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, who were once treated with dignity and respect and who held important community roles as matriarchs, teachers, Knowledge Keepers, spiritual leaders and midwives.

Despite these inequities, Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people’s voices remain strong in their efforts to lead, promote, and advance the health, safety, security and well-being of their families and communities. Nowhere is this truer than in the work of Indigenous families, survivors and grassroots organizers, who, for decades, have called for an end to violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Since 2015, the Government of Canada has remained committed to advancing reconciliation and forging a new relationship with Indigenous Peoples based on self-determination and the recognition and implementation of rights, respect, trust, cooperation, and partnership. The federal government is also committed to upholding the rights of Indigenous Peoples in international human rights instruments, notably the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), the [Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#) and the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women](#).

Additionally, the Government of Canada has committed to the implementation of Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) in federal government policies, legislation and regulations. This includes working with Indigenous partners to develop culturally competent GBA+ frameworks and ensuring the inclusion of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people’s voices in the government-wide process toward reconciliation.

Ending violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people is a top priority for the Government of Canada and is critical to advancing reconciliation and achieving equity for all Indigenous Peoples.

⁹ Perreault, S. 2020. “Gender-based violence: Sexual and physical assault in Canada’s territories, 2018.” Juristat. Statistics Canada Catalogue No. 85-002-X. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2020001/article/00012-eng.htm#r22>

¹⁰ 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*, p. 50

¹¹ Tunney, C. 2019. Trudeau says deaths and disappearances of Indigenous women and girls amount to ‘genocide’ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/trudeau-mmiwg-genocide-1.5161681>

¹² Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) is an analytical tool to support the development of responsive and inclusive initiatives, including policies, programs, legislation, and services, that are tailored to the different needs and experiences of various groups of people. The “Plus” highlights that all dimensions of diversity and their interactions must be considered as part of a rigorous and intersectional GBA Plus, including: age, disability, indigeneity, economic status, education, ethnicity, geographical location, gender, language, race, sex, sexual orientation. See: <https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-analysis-plus/what-gender-based-analysis-plus.html>

Building the Federal Pathway

For decades, Indigenous grassroots activists and organizations, the Sisters in Spirit Campaign and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission called for a public inquiry to examine and report on the systemic causes behind the violence that Indigenous women and girls experience.

During the **pre-inquiry** phase, 18 meetings were held across Canada with families and survivors, as well as national and regional Indigenous organizations, provinces, territories, service delivery organizations, former Commissioners, and others to seek their views and input on the design and scope of the inquiry between December 11, 2015, and February 15, 2016.

Following the pre-inquiry process, the Government of Canada launched the **National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls** in Fall of 2016. The National Inquiry held extensive hearings with communities, Knowledge Keepers and institutions, consulted with experts and heard the voices and truths from over 1,400 family members and survivors from coast to coast to coast. In 2016, **Family Information Liaison Units** were established to provide specialized services to families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and to help families access information about their missing and murdered loved ones.

In response to the National Inquiry's interim report, **Our Women and Girls are Sacred**, the Government of Canada announced \$50 million in investments for healing and health supports for survivors, family members, and others affected by the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. These investments provided a starting point for change, including supporting community-based organizations that deliver culturally responsive services for families; the **commemoration of the lives and legacies of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people**; and supporting the establishment of a national investigative oversight body at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

On June 3, 2019, the National Inquiry released its Final Report, **Reclaiming Power and Place**, with 231 Calls for Justice, including Inuit, Métis and 2SLGBTQQIA+ specific Calls for Justice. The Final Report called upon the federal, provincial, territorial, municipal and Indigenous governments, social service providers, industry, the media, and all Canadians to make changes to end all forms of gender-based violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Call for Justice 1.1 specifically calls upon all governments to develop and implement a National Action Plan to address violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. The Government of Canada committed to develop and implement the National Action Plan with Indigenous partners, and provinces and territories. Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak also released 62 Calls for Miskotahâ (change) specific to the Métis Nation in their report **Métis Perspectives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and LGBTQ2S+ People**.

Since the release of the National Inquiry's Final Report and the report of Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak, ongoing engagement sessions conducted for the National Action Plan have informed the development of the Federal Pathway. They include engagement on the identification of priorities with Indigenous organizations across the country with, among others, the Assembly of First Nations Women's Council, **Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada**, **Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak**, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, **Native Women's Association of Canada**, **National Association of Friendship Centres**, 2Spirits in Motion, Newfoundland

Aboriginal Women's Network, Femmes Autochtones du Québec, [Ontario Native Women's Association](#), and [the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women](#). This engagement also included provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous governments, grassroots organizations, Elders, and most importantly families and survivors. Canada acknowledges the [efforts, reports and recommendations](#) undertaken by Indigenous partners, provinces and territories that will contribute to ending racism and violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Federal Action

The Federal Pathway is one component of the National Action Plan to address the systemic racism, sexism, ableism and gender-based violence that Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people experience in Canada. Prior to the release of this Federal Pathway, the Government of Canada has been actively working with partners to address some of the systemic inequities that Indigenous Peoples face in this country.

The following actions are an important step toward achieving transformative change.

On June 21, 2019, the Government passed key legislation to promote, protect and uphold the rights of Indigenous Peoples through [An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families](#). The Act affirms the inherent right of self-government and Indigenous jurisdiction in relation to child and family services. On June 19, 2019, [An Act respecting Indigenous Languages](#) received Royal Assent. It supports the reclamation, preservation, revitalization, maintenance and strengthening of Indigenous languages in Canada. In addition, in 2017, the [Canadian Human Rights Act](#) and the [Criminal Code](#) were amended to add "gender identity or expression" to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination, and to include as a hate crime, violence motivated by a person's gender identity or expression. In 2019, the Government of Canada brought into force [Bill S-3, An Act to amend the Indian Act](#), to remove all known sex-based discrimination against First Nations women and their descendants from the provisions regarding entitlement to status. These amendments had the effect of reducing a long legacy of discrimination against First Nations women and their descendants.

Key investments were also made in the [First Nations Child and Family Services Program](#) and to support access to health and wellness services. In 2019, a new funding approach was co-developed and implemented with First Nations to support First Nations-run elementary and secondary (K-12) schools on reserve. The Government of Canada also launched distinctions-based post-secondary education strategies for Inuit and Métis students in addition to ongoing investments in First Nations post-secondary strategies. The Government continues to support Indigenous Peoples' efforts to reclaim, preserve, revitalize, maintain and strengthen Indigenous languages, and is creating the Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages, as part of the implementation of the [Indigenous Languages Act](#).

Key policies have also been developed and adopted to promote the health, safety, security and well-being of Indigenous Peoples. Notably, the **Comprehensive Violence Prevention Strategy** was announced in November 2020. This Strategy will support new shelters and transitional (second stage) housing for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples across the country, including on reserve, in the North and in urban areas. Additionally, support will be provided for Indigenous organizations and communities to enhance services and undertake ongoing prevention and early intervention activities, including supports to enhance child safety and combat exploitation and trafficking among Indigenous girls, youth, women and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. The Comprehensive Violence Prevention Strategy will complement the whole-of-government approach taken to address human trafficking in Canada and abroad through the **National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking** launched in 2019.

The Government of Canada has also committed to develop a National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence (GBV) which will address the root causes and systemic barriers that perpetuate GBV and ensure that everyone in Canada is safe, healthy and has equitable access to supports, services and protections, no matter where they live. The National Action Plan to End GBV responds directly to calls from victims and survivors, experts, advocates, Canadian and international organizations for Canada to take stronger action against GBV and provide national leadership and coordination to enhance efforts across the country. This national approach builds on the achievements of the 2017 Federal Strategy, **It's Time: Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence**, and aligns with and complements government responses to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice.

The Government has also supported initiatives that advance self-determination and the recognition of rights, for example, through the proposed **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People Act**, which was introduced in Parliament in December 2020. The Government is also engaged in developing Administration of Justice Agreements with Indigenous communities.

In support of victims of violence, **An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and other Acts**, which became law in June 2019, emphasizes the need to give proper consideration and weight to the increased vulnerability of Indigenous women and girls to violence, including violence by intimate partners and family members. Such reforms aim to strengthen the ability of the criminal justice system to protect Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people from violence, and positively impact and reduce systemic barriers for Indigenous youth and adult accused persons and offenders.

The Government of Canada acknowledges that these actions lay the foundation upon which to further build our response.¹³

¹³ For further information on actions taken by the Government of Canada, please see: <https://www.rcaanc-cimac.gc.ca/eng/1559566331686/1559566355192#chp4>

Section 3: Federal Pathway

The Federal Pathway aims to end violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people by recognizing the complexity and interrelated nature of the causes of violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

The federal approach is intended to be inclusive and holistic – to incorporate partnerships with distinctions-based groups, and to include the perspectives of urban communities and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and communities in our work to develop the Federal Pathway and the National Action Plan. As such, some elements of this Federal Pathway may focus on joint priorities for specific distinctions-based groups, as well as on the diverse needs within distinctions-based groups. Implementation of this work through federal action will address the diverse needs across the distinctions-based groups.

Implementation Principles

The Federal Pathway will be anchored in principles that build on the National Inquiry's Principles for Change, and were developed in cooperation with the working groups and Indigenous partners. These principles will guide our commitments to concrete and preventative action throughout the implementation of the Federal Pathway. They include:

Respect for the human rights of Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous Peoples hold international and domestic human rights, including inherent rights, Treaty rights and constitutional rights, and governments have legal obligations to ensure that the individual and collective rights of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are fully respected, promoted and upheld.

Leadership of Indigenous families, survivors, women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people

Acknowledging the decades of leadership by Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, grassroots organizers, families and survivors, honouring their loved ones, and committing to continue supporting their leadership so that they remain at the heart of government action, and are partners with respect to the implementation of the Federal Pathway.

A holistic approach

Acknowledging that the violence suffered by Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people is a result of systemic anti-Indigenous racism, colonialism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia and other forms of discrimination. Therefore, a holistic, enduring, comprehensive and multifaceted approach to ending violence will be required to create positive change.

Self-determined, Indigenous-led, grassroots solutions and services

Restoring, respecting, upholding and promoting self-determination of Indigenous Peoples, which will support the process of decolonization and the development and implementation of Indigenous-led solutions and services.

Cultural safety and humility

Cultural safety and humility emphasize partnership and reciprocity, cultural competency (including having knowledge of the history of Indigenous Peoples and the colonial history of Canada), and take into consideration power imbalances and apply a social justice lens.

Trauma-informed approach

Taking a strength-based, individual, family and community-centred approach that will support healing, and take into account the lasting effects that trauma and violence have on survivors, families, and communities.

A focus on dignity and supporting power and place

Honouring the strength, expertise, agency and diversity of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and restoring their central role in political, economic, social and cultural life.

Thematic Goals of the Federal Pathway

- › Create an environment and opportunities that support Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, no matter where they live, to revitalize their cultures, restore their traditional roles and strengthen their identity; and where their strong sense of family, community and belonging can thrive, be celebrated and honoured, and passed on through their leadership, teachings and resilience.
- › Support healthy and safe Indigenous communities and foster health systems free from racism and discrimination where Indigenous Peoples are respected and safe, and where access to culturally relevant mental health and wellness services is improved.
- › With partners, work to address the discrimination and violence Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are experiencing to ensure Canada is a place where they are respected and their human security is safeguarded.
- › Address racism and discrimination throughout the policing and justice systems and improve access to justice to provide a fairer, stronger, more inclusive and representative justice system that respects the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and protects Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Federal Commitments

Initiatives proposed under the Federal Pathway are aimed at ending violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. The federal government will work toward this goal through four interconnected thematic areas: culture, health and wellness, human safety and security, and justice.

The Government of Canada recognizes that Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people's leadership must be supported in order to successfully implement the initiatives laid out below. Stable, longer-term funding will be provided to Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ organizations to ensure that voices of Indigenous women and gender-diverse people are reflected in all aspects of decision-making that impact their lives, as well as to inform the inclusion of a Culturally-Competent Gender-Based Analysis (CCGBA+) in all federal undertakings.

The federal government recognizes that Canada currently lacks the detailed statistical data that governments, public institutions, academics, and advocates need in order to make fully informed, evidence-based policy decisions and effectively address racial and social inequities. The Government of Canada is committed to implement a Disaggregated Data Action Plan to fill data and knowledge gaps, such as through Indigenous-led data strategies for First Nations, Inuit and Métis. There will also be funding for improved collection and use of disaggregated data as part of ongoing efforts to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples and racialized groups in the justice system, and funding for academic research into systemic barriers facing diverse groups.

| Theme: Culture

Government policies and laws that prevented the ability to practice and to pass on cultural knowledge and languages have created conditions in which the significant roles and identities of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are less valued. These conditions contribute to racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, discrimination and violence faced by Indigenous Peoples.

The Government of Canada commits to the following objectives and concrete action to support, honour, and respect Indigenous languages, cultural knowledge and diverse forms of cultural expression.

Support the efforts of Indigenous Peoples in the retention, preservation, revitalization, maintenance and strengthening of Indigenous languages, cultures and cultural spaces

Ensure Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, no matter where they live, have safe, no-barrier, permanent, and meaningful access to their cultures and languages as a foundation for culture, identity, and belonging. This will be achieved by accelerating the implementation of the Indigenous Languages Act, providing support for initiatives such as language and culture camps, mentor-apprentice programs and Indigenous languages resources and documentation. There will also be support and investments for the preservation of, and access to, Indigenous heritage records. It will include investments in the reestablishment and revitalization of Indigenous cultural spaces that are inclusive of

Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Having a dedicated, permanent space to share culture is a key component of building strong Indigenous identities. Support will also ensure that Indigenous women and girls can realize the benefits that sport can bring as a tool for personal and social development in Indigenous communities.

Strengthen opportunities for Indigenous cultural expression, participation, promotion, and representation in the arts, cultural industries and media

Support Indigenous creators by removing systemic barriers to accessing federal cultural programming, and promoting Indigenous cultural production to ensure that Indigenous Peoples, including women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, are accurately represented, and have opportunities to share their stories, such as through the [Indigenous Screen Office](#).

Address systemic racism experienced by Indigenous Peoples in the public and policy spheres

The Government will accelerate work on anti-racism through public education and awareness campaigns, and Indigenous-led training and events, including on cultural competency and cultural safety training for federal public servants. The federal government will also work toward ensuring Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are represented and included in the Public Service workforce, including in senior positions, through targeted efforts such as amending the Public Service Employment Act to affirm the importance of a diverse and inclusive workforce and avoid biases and barriers in hiring. In addition, the Government will explore options to support Indigenous governments and organizations in their rematriation efforts, including supporting them in their efforts to increase the representation of women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in their leadership.

| Theme: Health and Wellness

Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing, seeing, doing, and being are based in a holistic understanding of health and well-being, recognizing elements of spiritual, social, physical, and mental health and wellness within Indigenous individuals, families and communities. Health and safety are very much intertwined, as health is linked to the prevention of danger and harm to others, to the health of children and families, and to all aspects of physical and mental wellness. Because of the interconnection within communities, working toward health and well-being in a holistic way will have a positive impact on Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Specifically, work to address anti-Indigenous racism in health care will reduce the violence experienced by Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people within the health care system.

Indigenous Peoples in Canada experience a disproportionate burden of ill health, which is rooted in Canada's colonial legacy and in existing health and social services that fail to adequately meet needs, which is exacerbated for those persons with disabilities. These extreme health inequities and social disparities contribute to the violence experienced by Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. There are also significant challenges that Indigenous Peoples face when interacting with health systems and social services, including anti-Indigenous racism, a lack of cultural safety, and a lack of understanding and acceptance of Indigenous health and healing models.

In order to achieve real change and improve the health and wellness of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, Indigenous, provincial, territorial and federal governments must work together. Actions must be broadly based to address the social determinants of health, including poverty, employment, education, social support networks, housing, physical environments, and early child development. Solutions must be distinctions-based, partner-driven and respect the diversity of Indigenous Peoples in order to meet their unique needs, no matter where they live, whether it be in urban, rural, remote, or northern environments.

The Government of Canada therefore commits to the following objectives and concrete actions that will contribute to the creation of health systems free of racism and discrimination and better health outcomes for Indigenous Peoples, including Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Transform health service delivery to an Indigenous-led model

The government of Canada will recognize and protect the health of Indigenous Peoples on an equitable basis and support greater Indigenous control over the design and delivery of health services. This includes supporting Indigenous partners to address the specific health issues that Indigenous women and girls face such as those related to reproductive and sexual health, and to deliver gender-affirming health services for 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Distinctions-based Indigenous health legislation

Distinctions-based Indigenous health legislation and implementation will be co-developed with First Nations, Inuit, and the Métis Nation, backed with the investments needed to deliver high-quality health care for all Indigenous Peoples.

Health transformation

Health transformation will be advanced through supporting communities and organizations to develop new health governance models that increase control and responsibility over the design, delivery and management of federally funded health services.

Health services

Access will be improved to high quality, timely, stable and culturally relevant distinctions-based services, including a patient-centred approach to health service delivery. The number of nurses and other medical professionals in remote and isolated First Nations communities will be increased. These efforts focus on closing the gap in access to quality health services between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada.

As well, the Government of Canada will enhance funding for community-based organizations that help make sexual and reproductive health care information and services more accessible for vulnerable populations. A new National Institute for Women's Health Research will also be established to advance a coordinated research program that addresses under-researched and high-priority areas of women's health and ensure new evidence improves women's care and health outcomes. The new institute will ensure an intersectional approach to research and care to tackle persistent gaps for all women, including for racialized women, Black and Indigenous women, women with disabilities, and members of 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities.

Support Indigenous-led healing and mental wellness services, and strengthen protective pathways against violence

Distinctions-based mental wellness supports which provide community-based, culturally relevant, and trauma-informed wellness services for families and survivors will be funded. As well, the government will continue to support [crisis lines](#), expand community-based supports and capacity, increase substance use treatment and prevention, and support workforce development.

Indigenous children and families

Measures will be taken to prevent the abuse and sexual exploitation of Indigenous children, including Indigenous-led education and awareness activities for Indigenous children, youth, and families. Improve and expand support and services to Indigenous children, families and communities based on their particular histories, cultures, and circumstances to keep them mentally, spiritually and physically well. Work to keep families safely together and to support healthy outcomes for children. The government will also continue to support First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities in developing their own child and family services models that reflect their values and traditions under the [Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families](#).

Preparedness and response services

Preparedness and response services will be enhanced to address public health emergencies in a way that aligns with Indigenous priorities, builds local capacity, and is responsive and sustainable. For example, the Government will continue to support the ongoing public health response to COVID-19 in Indigenous communities, including support to hire nurses, help at-risk people to isolate, and distribute personal protective equipment. Additional funding will be provided to help First Nations, Inuit, Métis Nation communities, and urban and off-reserve Indigenous organizations serving Indigenous Peoples meet the unique needs of their population during the COVID-19 pandemic. There will also be support for provincial and territorial disaster response and recovery, to respond to catastrophic flooding, droughts, wildfires and other natural disasters, as well as disaster mitigation in small rural, remote, northern and Indigenous communities.

Health and social infrastructure

Government will focus on enhancing efforts relating to the physical surroundings where people live, work and play to support healthy living and social connections. Improvements to and investments in the reliability of health and social infrastructure will be made, including on-the-land community-based initiatives, and physical activity and sport, as a foundation for improving quality of life and socio-economic outcomes for Indigenous Peoples and communities. The Government commits to making communities and workplaces more accessible through enhanced support to offset the costs of renovations, retrofits, and accessible technologies in workplaces.

Infrastructure and Housing

The Government of Canada is committed to addressing the critical infrastructure gap in Indigenous communities by 2030. In support of this effort the Government of Canada will work with Indigenous partners to co-develop distinctions-based infrastructure plans to address critical infrastructure needs and cover operations and maintenance costs of community infrastructure.

The Government of Canada is committed to addressing the urgent housing needs of vulnerable Canadians by providing adequate and affordable housing in particular housing that will help serve the needs of women and their children. Investments will be made in housing through directed initiatives such as through the **Rapid Housing Initiative**, the **Federal Community Housing Initiative**, and **Affordable Housing Innovation Fund**, and the Canada Housing Benefit, which would increase direct financial rental assistance for women and children in low-income situations fleeing violence. Together, these initiatives will help many low-income Canadians, including Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQIA+ people, find a safe and affordable place to take shelter and call home. In addition, the federal government will accelerate broadband development in rural and remote communities. The federal government will also continue to invest in First Nations communities' reliable access to clean water and ensuring food security in the North.

Address anti-Indigenous racism in the health care system

Immediate steps will be acknowledged and taken, in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and recognized or accredited persons, to address anti-Indigenous racism in order to achieve patient and cultural safety across health systems and improve the quality of care for Indigenous Peoples.

Improve cultural safety across the various stages of health service delivery

In collaboration with Indigenous, provincial, territorial, and health system partners, the government will take action to foster health systems free from racism and discrimination where Indigenous Peoples are respected and safe such as through the use of health system navigators, patient advocates, expansion of First Nations and Inuit midwives and doulas projects, and cultural safety training for medical professionals.

Support the advancement of Joyce's Principle

Joyce Echaquan, a 37-year-old mother of seven children from the Atikamekw Nation of Manawan, died at the Joliette Hospital after suffering degrading insults from two hospital staff. Joyce's Principle aims to guarantee to all Indigenous Peoples the right of equitable access, without any discrimination, to all social and health services, as well as the right to enjoy the best possible physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health.

Convene partners on a continued national dialogue on accountability and change

The federal government will exercise its role as convener and partner in Indigenous health services and continue the dialogue with provinces and territories, Indigenous and health system partners, on anti-Indigenous racism in health care systems to ensure that services are culturally safe and patients have the necessary support to report incidents.

Many of these actions will require collaboration between Indigenous, federal, provincial, and territorial governments. Ultimately, these actions will contribute to health and social systems free of racism and discrimination and will lead to better health and wellness outcomes for Indigenous Peoples, particularly Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and their children and families.

| Theme: Safety and Human Security

The high rates of violence experienced by Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people underscore the pressing need to ensure their safety and security. The Government of Canada recognizes that threats to wellness and personal safety are not just physical threats such as violence but also include poverty, lack of access to affordable, adequate and safe housing, environmental threats, political repression, social unrest, denial of cultural practices, disease, food insecurity, and human rights abuses. Canada must work toward becoming a place where Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are empowered, respected and their human security is safeguarded through the removal of socio-economic threats to wellness and personal safety.

The Government of Canada will promote the human safety and security of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people by recognizing the many facets that comprise human security and their interconnectedness; being people-centred and appropriate to local realities where communities and individuals have control over their well-being and drive solutions; striving to proactively prevent human security violations; and providing safe spaces and transitional housing for Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people experiencing and fleeing violence.

The Government of Canada commits to the following objectives and concrete actions that will promote the safety and security of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, no matter where they live.

Supporting safe and healthy communities

The Government of Canada will focus its efforts on supporting Indigenous-led solutions designed to improve social and economic security. Recognizing that well-planned and needs-appropriate crime prevention strategies not only prevent crime and victimization, but also promote community safety and contribute to sustainable development, initiatives will also focus on improving Indigenous-led safety planning and crime prevention approaches to achieve safer and healthier communities and enhance community safety and well-being outcomes. Additional efforts will include co-developing a legislative framework for First Nations policing that recognizes First Nations policing as an essential service, and a new Pathways to Safe Indigenous Communities Initiative to support Indigenous communities to develop more holistic community-based safety and wellness models.

In addition, the federal government will expand access to a continuum of culturally relevant supports for Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people facing gender-based violence; enhance sustainable and accessible transitional (second-stage) housing; increase the number of shelters to serve Indigenous women, children and families including on reserve, in the North, and in urban areas; enhance shelter services to provide a comprehensive and holistic approach to addressing client needs and challenges; through Indigenous partnerships, expand community reintegration supports for Indigenous women who are offenders; and make transportation services more accessible and affordable.

As part of the work to advance the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence, the Government of Canada will provide support to bolster capacity of Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ organizations to provide gender-based violence prevention programming aimed at addressing the root causes of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. This is in addition to federal efforts to prevent and address gender-based violence, including: supplementary funding for support to organizations providing critical and often life-saving services and supports to people experiencing gender-based violence; prevention initiatives for at-risk populations and interventions to support victims and survivors of human trafficking; initiatives that engage men and boys; support to crisis hotlines to offer robust services, resources and supports to prevent the escalation of gender-based violence; as well as gender-based violence research and knowledge mobilization.

Addressing socio-economic barriers to education, training and employment

Federal efforts will focus on increasing education, training and economic opportunities for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Through initiatives such as, **Youth Employment and Skills Strategy**, which includes the **First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy**, the **Indigenous Skills and Employment Training** program, the Women's Employment Readiness Pilot and the **Women Entrepreneurship Strategy**, the Government of Canada will enhance and expand support for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. This will contribute to enhancing access to child care, information about career options, the opportunity to develop skills, participate in the economy and overcome the multiple barriers to employment. Notably, through these initiatives, women entrepreneurs will have greater access to financing, mentorship and training. The Government of Canada also commits to enhancing federal initiatives to support Indigenous service providers, Indigenous entrepreneurs, Indigenous businesses and commercial entities.

The federal government will continue to work toward removing barriers to education, training and employment through the **First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education Strategies**. Support will also be provided to ensure children on reserve can continue to attend school safely during the pandemic, and to improve and expand access to First Nations education on reserve, including for adult learners. Additional support will be provided for on-reserve income assistance, which will help cover the costs of daily life and provide access to employment supports.

The Government of Canada commits to continue the progress towards an early learning and child care system that meets the needs of Indigenous families, wherever they live. This includes establishing a Canada-wide [early learning and child care](#) system which includes supporting before and after-school care for First Nations children on reserve, providing additional funding to expand access to culturally appropriate Aboriginal Head Start and Day Care programs and services, repairing and renovating existing Indigenous early learning and child care centres, and building and maintaining new centres.

Supporting safe communities during resource extraction projects

Across Canada, many resource extraction projects are being undertaken, including the Trans Mountain Project Expansion. A comprehensive strategy for dealing with socio-economic impacts of temporary work camps located in proximity to Indigenous communities is needed. The Government of Canada will focus on establishing equitable benefits and community-led initiatives to ensure the safety and security of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people at all stages of major resource projects. Federal efforts will include co-developing a variety of activities aimed at mitigating impacts of temporary work camps and worker influxes. The Government of Canada will explore ways to improve the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data in order to develop targeted measures in support of safe resource worksites and communities. In addition, the federal government will also support community-led planning through the [Aboriginal Community Safety Planning Initiative](#).

Fostering a cultural shift and supporting allies

The Government of Canada will take an active role in creating positive change, by supporting programs that promote safe and healthy relationships and prevent family violence, including intimate partner violence, child maltreatment and elder abuse. The federal government will also raise awareness and educate the public about the impacts of colonization, racism, human trafficking, and gender-based violence on Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Through awareness campaigns as part of [Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy](#) and [National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking](#), as well as the modernization of the "I'm Not for Sale" campaign, the Government of Canada is working to highlight the history and issues experienced by Indigenous Peoples related to the abuse, human trafficking and sexual exploitation of children and youth, in order to raise awareness. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Department of Justice will provide training to front line Canadian police officers and will continue to expand delivery of this training.

Addressing human trafficking and exploitation

The Government commits to the protection of children, women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and other vulnerable persons from all forms of exploitation and abuse, including sexual and labour trafficking. The Government of Canada will also increase funding for initiatives to stop human trafficking, including support for at-risk populations and survivors. This will include supporting Indigenous-led and grassroots organizations to advance efforts to prevent and combat human trafficking; building capacity and training within Indigenous communities; and enhancing access to trauma-informed, culturally relevant services and supports for victims and survivors. In addition, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police will enhance its ability to pursue online child sexual exploitation investigations, identify victims and remove them from abusive situations, and bring offenders to justice.

Supporting inclusive governance

The Government of Canada will support the negotiation and implementation of fair and representative Indigenous governments, and the integration of the knowledge and perspectives of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in governance and community discussions.

| Theme: Justice

Indigenous Peoples face substantial barriers in accessing justice. The violence experienced by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people has been identified by the Inquiry as a violation of Indigenous and human rights. Transformational change is required to restore the rights of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Using a human rights lens, the federal government commits to taking concrete action with Indigenous partners, to create solutions that support self-determination, and facilitate systemic transformation. For decades, Indigenous Peoples have called for justice reform and for police, courts and correctional services to implement treatment and rehabilitation services to provide better protection and reduce recidivism. Culturally appropriate and accessible justice support services for victims and families, and trauma-informed programs, are among the justice system responses to violence required, in order to promote the safety and security of all. Indigenous-led and community-based responses are also needed, along with systemic changes, to reset the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the justice system.

The Government of Canada commits to the following objectives and concrete action under the Justice theme:

Recognize and uphold the rights of Indigenous Peoples

The Government of Canada remains committed to recognizing and upholding the Aboriginal and Treaty rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In 2019, the Government of Canada brought into force [Bill S-3, An Act to amend the Indian Act](#) to remove all known sex-based discrimination against First Nations women and their descendants from the provisions regarding entitlement to status. The Government of Canada is committed to accelerating the full implementation of this Act. The Government of Canada will leverage recent investments to provide timely, efficient and client focused

approaches to ensure those newly entitled are supported in their application process. In addition, we are committed to addressing the ongoing residual impacts that are experienced by First Nations women and their descendants, and removing remaining inequities in the Indian Act registration provisions.

The Government of Canada also remains committed to implementing Bill C-15, the proposed *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, and will develop an Action Plan in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous partners to implement this legislation and to achieve the objectives of the Declaration. Implementing the Declaration is a significant step forward on the shared path of reconciliation—one that will help build a better future for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike. The Government of Canada will also continue to support the revitalization of Indigenous laws and legal traditions, as important means for upholding Indigenous rights to justice.

Dismantle legislative barriers and improve access to justice

The Government of Canada will focus on dismantling barriers to justice for Indigenous Peoples, which include policy, legislative, and program reforms that acknowledge that Indigenous-led, multi-sectoral and healing responses are needed to support Indigenous victims and their families, as well as Indigenous people who are accused, and Indigenous offenders. The federal government will increase prosecutorial capacity in the territories to support victims of violence. Administration of Justice Agreements will continue to be negotiated with Indigenous communities to strengthen community-based justice systems, support self-determination, and to provide alternatives to the mainstream justice system.

Enhance prevention and community safety

The Government of Canada is investing in and implementing stable and sustainable long-term programs and community-led initiatives to reduce violence and counter the acceptance and normalization of violence against Indigenous Peoples. Investments will be made to support Indigenous communities currently served under the First Nations Policing Program and expand the program into new communities, as well as support the repair, renovation, and replacement of existing policing facilities in First Nation and Inuit communities.

Investments will also be made in Indigenous-led community safety planning to improve the safety and well-being of Indigenous Peoples, specifically, women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, including through the Aboriginal Community Safety Planning Initiative, and the new Pathways to Safe Indigenous Communities Initiative to develop more holistic community-based safety and wellness models. The Government of Canada will conduct a review of resources at the Correctional Service of Canada healing lodge for Indigenous women with a view to identifying the capacity required to effectively address rehabilitation and intervention needs.

Co-develop First Nations policing legislation

To further support the provision of policing services that are well-funded, culturally sensitive, and respectful of the communities they serve, the federal government will invest in the co-development of a legislative framework with First Nations partners that recognizes policing as an essential service.

Enhanced relationship between police services and Indigenous communities

Investments will be made to enhance the availability of tools and resources to foster culturally appropriate and responsive community safety and trauma-informed services. These investments will increase law enforcement training on Indigenous policing, including cultural awareness, gender-based violence and trauma-informed approaches toward addressing missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police will also take steps to combat systemic racism through: reforming recruitment and training processes; collecting, analyzing, and reporting of race-based data; establishing the RCMP – Indigenous Collaboration, Co-development and Accountability Office to improve community engagement; and enhancing the access, design and delivery of appropriate education and training using an Indigenous lens.

Address systemic racism in the criminal justice system

The Government of Canada has committed to co-develop an Indigenous Justice Strategy to address systemic discrimination and the over-representation of Indigenous Peoples in the justice system. Specific work will be done to implement *Gladue* principles that would contribute to addressing systemic barriers, increase the involvement of Indigenous communities in rehabilitating offenders, and reduce the risk of future harm.

In addition, the federal government will invest in research and data collection to better understand the role of different social systems in preventing involvement with the criminal justice system. This includes establishing national standards regarding missing persons reports and improving the collection and use of disaggregated data to address the over-representation of Indigenous victims, survivors and offenders in the criminal justice system and experiences with police, courts and correctional services.

The Law Commission of Canada will be re-established, as independent expertise is critical if Canada's legal system is to be responsive to complex challenges such as systemic racism in the justice system, and to effectively establish, rebuild and renew relationships with Indigenous Peoples.

Enhance culturally safe supports for victims and families

The Government of Canada will seek new opportunities to increase collaboration with Indigenous partners and organizations and with provincial and territorial partners to improve availability and access to Indigenous-led, culturally safe, and trauma-informed victim services and supports. The Government of Canada will continue to build on the success of the [Family Information Liaison Units](#) (FILUs) to ensure timely support to families. The federal government will also continue to support families and survivors through project-based programming and providing community-based, culturally relevant and trauma-informed wellness services.



Section 4: Achieving Results

The Government of Canada will work with Indigenous partners to ensure that appropriate monitoring mechanisms are in place to measure progress and keep the Government of Canada accountable, now and in the future. An implementation plan will be developed in order to effectively and clearly determine how the initiatives laid out in the Federal Pathway will be implemented, monitored and reported on. This will allow the Government to determine the success of the initiatives, as well as identify where there is a need to refocus and adjust our efforts in future iterations of the plan.

In order to do this, the Government of Canada will regularly report on its progress to implement the initiatives included in the Federal Pathway, establish a governance structure and develop data holdings and improve access to them.

Throughout implementation of the initiatives included in the Federal Pathway, the Government of Canada will continue to co-develop an implementation plan with families and survivors, Indigenous partners and the National Action Plan Data Sub-Working Group.

The Government of Canada is committed to a partnership approach to data development that respects co-development and addresses the need for national standards to ensure the information collected is relevant and meets the needs and priorities of Indigenous Peoples. The Government recognizes the importance of Indigenous data sovereignty as a key principle of the proposed partnership approach and in supporting Indigenous self-determination. Indigenous data sovereignty is about ensuring Indigenous Peoples have the opportunity to design and manage the data needed to tell their stories and to ensure that high quality, culturally relevant, distinctions-based data are available to support reporting on the National Action Plan.

Reporting on Implementation

The Government of Canada will prepare annual progress reports to monitor the implementation of the Federal Pathway, starting in fiscal year 2022-23 and will include an overview of implementation actions taken during that year. Full reporting, which will identify challenges and evaluate implementation progress against baseline indicators, will be undertaken every three to five years.

To support reporting efforts, the Government of Canada and Indigenous partners will continue to work to establish relevant performance indicators, baselines, and targets that account for the diversity within and between Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, for all initiatives. These performance measures will be analyzed regularly and revised as needed to align with emerging priorities and toward the goal of ending violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

To develop better data and enhance our monitoring and evaluation capability, the Government of Canada will continue to work closely with Indigenous partners and the National Action Plan Data Sub-Working Group.

Data Governance

The Government of Canada, with partners, will establish a data governance structure with other governments, and Indigenous organizations and/or communities to develop and analyze data that can inform decision-making. This means the full and active participation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis, as well as other groups including 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and urban Indigenous people.

Data Holdings and Access

Data is essential to monitoring, accountability and recognition of the importance of Indigenous data sovereignty, which reflects the right of Indigenous Peoples to govern the ownership control, access and possession of its own data. It is critical that we have the right data at the right time to take evidence-based actions that support reconciliation. The Federal Pathway will support the work of the Data Sub-Working Group and its progress toward the objectives outlined below:

1. Identifying new and existing data sources and the role they may play in decision-making, reporting and accountability, now and for the future;
2. Designing an indicator framework to allow for monitoring progress in reducing violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, as well as monitoring the effectiveness of legislation, policy, and programs intended to contribute to achieving the right to security and the objectives of the National Action Plan; and
3. Identifying data gaps that, if filled, may provide the full range of data necessary to assess progress in reducing violence and promoting safety and justice.

Federal departments will work with Indigenous partners, including the Data Sub-Working Group, to co-develop comprehensive data that is both quantitative and qualitative and disaggregated based on distinctions to the furthest extent possible (e.g. by First Nations, Inuit, Métis, gender, ability, etc.), as well as new research or foundational work required in support of these objectives. It is also integral to collect Indigenous data in all areas of socio-economic indicators, such as poverty, employment, education, criminal justice, social support networks, housing and homelessness, physical environments, and early child development. As part of the development of the data strategy, there is a need for ongoing research in order to better understand the root causes and factors that contribute to the improved safety, security, health and wellness of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.



Section 5: Closing

The Government of Canada acknowledges that the transformative change required to end violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people will require sustained efforts. Families and survivors will be central to this work and through the development and implementation of the National Action Plan. The Federal Pathway is a living document and will adapt over time to seek alignment with key partners – provinces, territories, First Nations, Inuit, the Métis Nation, Indigenous representative organizations and governments - who will have their own plans or strategies to support the National Action Plan. We look forward to developing an Implementation Plan for this Federal Pathway with our partners so that we may keep First Nations, Inuit and Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people safe no matter where they live, from coast to coast to coast.

