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**Présentation des 8<sup>e</sup> et 9<sup>e</sup> rapports périodiques regroupés du Canada au Comité des Nations Unies chargé de la Convention sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination à l'égard des femmes (CEDEF)  
le 25 octobre 2016**

**Introduction**

Madame la présidente et membres du comité, le Canada est heureux de pouvoir vous présenter aujourd'hui ses 8<sup>e</sup> et 9<sup>e</sup> rapports périodiques regroupés en vertu de la *Convention sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination à l'égard des femmes (CEDEF)*.

Je m'appelle Linda Savoie. Je suis directrice générale principale de Condition féminine Canada. Des collègues de divers ministères fédéraux et de gouvernements provinciaux m'accompagnent aujourd'hui. Permettez-moi de les présenter :

- d'Affaires mondiales Canada : l'ambassadrice **Rosemary McCarney**, **M<sup>me</sup> Catherine Godin** et **M<sup>me</sup> Lorraine Anderson**;
- de Sécurité publique Canada, **M<sup>me</sup> Kimberly Lavoie**;
- d'Affaires autochtones et du Nord Canada, **M<sup>me</sup> Margaret Buist** et **M<sup>me</sup> Sandra Laughren**;
- d'Emploi et Développement social Canada, **M<sup>me</sup> Gail Mitchell**;
- de Justice Canada, **M<sup>me</sup> Erin Brady**;
- de Condition féminine Canada, **M<sup>me</sup> Suzanne Cooper** et **M<sup>me</sup> Krystal Novak**;
- d'Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada, **M. Bruce Scoffield**;
- représentant le gouvernement du Québec, **M<sup>me</sup> Lily Pol Neveu**;
- représentant le gouvernement de l'Ontario, **M<sup>me</sup> Lisa Priest**.

Tous les gouvernements — fédéral, provinciaux et territoriaux — se sont concertés pour produire ces documents et pour préparer cette présentation. La société civile et des organismes autochtones ont aussi joué un rôle de premier plan pour cerner et faire progresser des dimensions importantes de la mise en œuvre de la Convention par le Canada.

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Le Canada accorde une grande valeur aux travaux et aux recommandations du Comité des Nations Unies sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination à l'égard des femmes, qui renforcent notre capacité de nous attaquer aux violations des droits de la personne et de mieux protéger les femmes et les filles vulnérables. La façon dont on aborde le fédéralisme au Canada témoigne de la diversité du pays, que ce soit sur le plan géographique, historique ou démographique. Pour nous, le fédéralisme est décentralisé et non hiérarchique. Il est caractérisé par la coopération, la responsabilité et, surtout, un engagement partagé à obtenir des résultats. Les gouvernements fédéral, provinciaux et territoriaux ont des engagements communs, y compris nos obligations internationales en matière de droits de la personne. Les gouvernements provinciaux et territoriaux ont des responsabilités et des pouvoirs distincts en vertu de notre constitution; c'est pourquoi ils sont représentés au sein de notre délégation.

Comme vous le savez, depuis la présentation par le Canada de ses 8<sup>e</sup> et 9<sup>e</sup> rapports regroupés à la CEDEF, il y a eu une élection fédérale qui a entraîné un changement à la direction du gouvernement du Canada. Notre premier ministre a fait état d'un engagement renouvelé en faveur de l'égalité des sexes, allant jusqu'à se déclarer féministe et nommant la toute première ministre à part entière chargée de la condition féminine. Il a aussi nommé, pour la première fois de l'histoire du Canada, un cabinet fédéral composé d'un nombre égal de femmes et d'hommes.

Le Canada a montré qu'il appuyait pleinement les objectifs de développement durable des Nations Unies, qui intègrent bon nombre des valeurs fondamentales canadiennes, y compris l'égalité des sexes. Nous sommes résolus à prêcher par l'exemple en poursuivant l'objectif suivant des Nations Unies, soit « parvenir à l'égalité des sexes et autonomiser toutes les femmes et les filles », en veillant à ce que personne ne soit laissé pour compte lors de cette démarche ou une fois l'objectif atteint. Par conséquent, Condition féminine du Canada a élaboré un cadre de résultats détaillé, qui cerne des résultats concrets, conformes aux objectifs de développement durable de l'ONU en matière d'égalité des sexes. Ce cadre fournira au Canada une feuille de route pour que nous puissions coordonner nos efforts, tirer parti de nos partenariats et mobiliser les

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collectivités et les institutions afin d'atteindre le but ultime, c'est-à-dire l'égalité des sexes dans toutes les dimensions de la vie canadienne.

Même si le Canada a renouvelé son engagement en faveur de l'égalité des sexes, nous savons fort bien que l'on nous jugera sur nos gestes, et non sur nos paroles.

### **L'égalité des sexes au Canada**

À mesure qu'approche le 150<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de notre pays, que nous célébrerons l'année prochaine, les Canadiennes et les Canadiens peuvent être très fiers des progrès accomplis pour améliorer la situation des femmes et des filles au Canada. Nous n'ignorons pas pour autant que la pleine égalité des sexes nous échappe toujours. La violence fondée sur le sexe demeure un obstacle de taille à la pleine réalisation de l'égalité des sexes, l'écart salarial entre les femmes et les hommes persiste, les femmes se heurtent toujours à des obstacles qui les empêchent d'accéder à des postes de direction, et des disparités inacceptables subsistent entre des femmes et des filles aux antécédents divers, notamment les femmes autochtones, les femmes handicapées, les femmes de minorités visibles, ou les femmes qui appartiennent à une minorité sexuelle ou à une communauté de genre atypique.

Le Canada fait actuellement face à un défi, à savoir bâtir sur ses succès et s'attaquer aux mentalités sexistes et racistes profondément ancrées dans bon nombre de nos systèmes et institutions. Pour que nous puissions atteindre de façon crédible nos objectifs en matière d'égalité des sexes, il nous faut non seulement faire preuve de leadership, mais aussi investir de façon appréciable dans des programmes d'action étendus. Le gouvernement s'est fermement engagé à s'attaquer à des problèmes d'égalité de longue date, y compris l'écart salarial entre les femmes et les hommes, le manque de femmes à des postes de direction et la violence faite aux femmes et aux filles; mais il n'en demeure pas moins que ces problèmes perdurent en grande partie parce que les progrès exigent d'importants investissements à long terme. Nous savons que pour transformer ces systèmes et institutions, et pour s'attaquer à cette discrimination profondément ancrée, il faudra adopter une démarche cohérente, concertée et intergouvernementale. Le gouvernement fédéral collabore avec les

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gouvernements provinciaux et territoriaux, les peuples autochtones et des organisations non gouvernementales pour poursuivre ce travail exigeant.

## **KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

I would like to turn now to some key developments under the Convention since our last review in 2008. Canada has instituted a number of programs and measures that seek to further address the persistent inequalities experienced by women and girls in Canada, including those that seek to address the underlying factors associated with the gender wage gap.

Several new initiatives are aiming to address these issues, including the Canada Child Benefit, which helps families with the cost of childcare and the development of a poverty reduction strategy. The Government of Canada has also committed to negotiating with provinces, territories and Indigenous people on a new Early Learning and Child Care Framework. These are being developed in partnership with the provinces and territories to deliver affordable, high-quality, flexible, and fully inclusive child care for Canadian families.

Most jurisdictions in Canada have pay equity legislation, provisions or policies in place that address gender wage gap discrepancies within their public service. Some have legislation which requires equal pay for work of equal value in the private sector (such as Ontario and Quebec). The Government of Canada supports substantive reform of pay equity in the federal jurisdiction and is committed to making tangible progress on this issue within its current mandate. The Government intends to move forward with proactive pay equity legislation by late 2018, that includes, among other things, robust and independent oversight as well as meaningful roles for employers and employees in implementing pay equity.

Canada takes the issue of violence against women and children very seriously and is committed to ensuring the safety and security of all women and children in Canada. We recognize that violence against women and children, including intimate partner violence and child maltreatment, is a serious public health issue, with both immediate and long-term health and social consequences for individuals, families, communities, and society.

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Canada's publicly-funded universal health care system is a source of pride for Canadians. The principles governing our health care system are symbols of our underlying Canadian values of equity and solidarity. We recognize the importance of ensuring that all Canadian women, irrespective of age, race, ethnicity, abilities, gender identity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic background, have access to health care and health services, including sexual and reproductive health care, health services and information that are relevant and sensitive to their needs as crucial to improving overall health and quality of life.

The Government of Canada is currently working on a number of commitments relevant to reducing gender-based violence. For example, the Minister of Status of Women is currently working with other Ministers to develop a federal strategy against gender-based violence which will align with provincial/territorial efforts and strengthen federal efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls, including Indigenous women and girls. Many provinces and territories also have strategies and actions that they are pursuing to end and address the underlying causes of violence against Indigenous women and girls., as well as violence against women and girls more generally. It is expected that the Federal Strategy will be released in 2017.

The Government of Canada is also in the process of developing a National Housing Strategy in order to re-establish the federal government's role in supporting affordable housing. Consultations on the National Housing Strategy have included discussions on homelessness, shelters and on new approaches to developing housing options for victims of domestic violence. The Government of Canada has invested \$89.9 million over two years for the construction and renovation of shelters and transition house for victims of family violence in province and territories. The federal government has also committed to supporting Housing First initiatives that help homeless Canadians find stable housing

Other relevant commitments include a review of our criminal justice system and sentencing reforms, which will help address legal and criminal justice responses, particularly for victims of violence. We are also working to address gaps in services to

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Indigenous Peoples and those with mental illness throughout the criminal justice system.

This renewed commitment to gender equality has also provided an opportunity for the Government of Canada to develop and implement more robust processes to ensure gender-based analysis is applied more systematically than in the past on all cabinet proposals.

I would now like to turn it over to my colleague, Margaret Buist from Indigenous and Northern Affairs, to speak specifically about the issue of violence against Indigenous women and girls in Canada.

### **Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada**

Thank you. I am pleased to address the Committee and speak to the issue of Indigenous women and girls in Canada, particularly the high rates of violence perpetrated against them and the steps Canada is taking to end this violence.

Canada's Prime Minister has indicated that there is no relationship more important than the nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples, a relationship that is based on recognition, rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership, and to making real progress on issues like community safety, policing, housing, employment, health, child welfare, and education.

Reaffirming its commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, the Government of Canada has accepted the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and is working with key partners, including leaders of First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, to design an engagement strategy for developing a national reconciliation framework. Some provinces and territories have also formally accepted the recommendations and have developed responses. The province of Ontario, for example, has committed to investing more than \$250 million over three years in new initiatives by understanding the legacy of residential schools, closing gaps and removing barriers and creating a culturally relevant and responsive justice system.

In addition, in May 2016, the Government of Canada announced that Canada is now a full supporter, without reservation, of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights

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of Indigenous Peoples and committed to full implementation of the Declaration. We will engage with and work in full partnership with First Nations, the Métis Nation, and Inuit, as well as provinces, territories and stakeholders, on the path forward.

In June 2016, federal, provincial and territorial Ministers responsible for Indigenous Affairs as well as Indigenous leaders agreed to establish the framework for a new Federal/Provincial/Territorial and Indigenous Forum (FPTIF). The Forum will help to strengthen the partnership among members and address issues of importance to Indigenous peoples in Canada, including violence against Indigenous women and girls. In response to numerous calls to action, including from this committee, Canada established a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada.

The Canadian government acknowledges the important work of the CEDAW Committee in studying the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada, and its resulting report and recommendations.

Canada would also like to acknowledge the advice provided by human rights experts from the United Nations and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on how to structure the Inquiry.

Families, loved ones, and survivors' experiences were central to the design of the National Inquiry. There were 18 face-to-face meetings that involved one or more Ministers of the federal Government during the pre-inquiry engagement. More than 2,100 survivors participated in these sessions, and we received another 4,100 responses online.

There are a few key elements of the terms of reference for the National Inquiry that I would like to outline:

- The mandate of the Commission is to examine and report on systemic causes of all forms of violence that Indigenous women and girls experience and their greater vulnerability to that violence. The Commission will be looking for patterns and underlying factors that explain why the higher levels of violence occur. It will be up to the Commission to determine what issues to examine.

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- The Commission is also directed to examine and report on institutional policies and practices implemented, in any jurisdiction, in response to violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls, such as policing.
- The Inquiry will be truly national. All provinces and territories agreed to legally adopt the Terms of Reference under their respective *Public Inquiries Acts*. The majority of provinces and territories have now passed Orders-in-council under their respective legislation, to support the National Inquiry. The remaining provinces and territories expect to do so shortly.
- Parallel to the Inquiry, Canada will provide new funding, \$11.67 million over three years for new Family Information Liaison Units in the victims' services offices of provinces and territories as well as an additional \$4.5 million over four years in enhanced funding for culturally responsive trauma informed services for families.
- These Family Information Liaison Units will work directly with families of missing or murdered Indigenous women and girls to gather the outstanding information they seek from government agencies and organizations related to the loss of their loved one. The Government of Canada is working with its provincial and territorial partners to set up Family Information Units within each provincial and territorial victim services unit as quickly as possible.
- In terms of how survivors, family members and loved ones and Indigenous groups could be involved, the Independent Commission is authorized to set up issue-specific advisory bodies composed of: Elders, youth, families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, experts and academics as well as representatives of national, Indigenous, local and feminist organizations. The Committee is also authorized to set up regional advisory committees.

The independent Commission began its work on September 1, 2016 and will be provided \$53.8 million over two years to complete its mandate. The Commissioners will not be starting from scratch; the terms of reference authorize the independent inquiry to review existing studies and recommendations such as this committee's 2015 CEDAW study.

The Commission's interim report is due November 2017, and a final report is expected in November, 2018.



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This Inquiry is one part of many steps that Canada is undertaking to address the ongoing inequalities experienced by Indigenous women and girls, including the high rates of violence.

Federal Budget 2016 proposed a historic \$8.4 billion for specific Indigenous investments. These new investments in education, safe water, housing, training, women's shelters, and child and family services will begin to address some of the underlying causes of violence against Indigenous women and girls, and promote opportunity and inclusive growth. They will also support a process to reform the federal government's Child and Family services program.

In terms of other action to end violence against Indigenous women and girls, the *Family Homes on Reserves and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act*, which came into force on December 16, 2014, provides on-reserve spouses and common-law partners with options, rights, and protections previously unavailable to them. It also may mitigate domestic violence by providing avenues for victims to seek protection.

The Canadian government is also working through the trilateral, Canada, U.S. and Mexico working group to combat human trafficking, and the newly established Trilateral Working Group on Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls to contribute to regional efforts to end trafficking.

Across the country, provincial and territorial governments, realizing that everybody has a role in ending violence, are taking action to combat violence against Indigenous women.

In February 2016, the Ontario government announced a commitment of \$100 million in new funding over three years to support *Walking Together: Ontario's Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women*.

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In the North, the Yukon Territory has provided \$200,000 in funding to five culturally relevant initiatives designed and developed by and for Indigenous women, as a key strategy in taking collective action on violence against Indigenous women.

While a lot of work to end violence against Indigenous women is underway, Canada understands that there is more work to do and looks forward to receiving the recommendations of the Independent inquiry to help us shape a better path forward for Indigenous women and girls.

I would now like to turn it back over to Linda Savoie for concluding remarks.

## **Conclusion**

Madame la présidente et membres du Comité, le Canada est fier des progrès qu'il a accomplis pour faire avancer l'égalité des sexes et mettre en œuvre la Convention. Bien qu'il reste des défis à relever, nous sommes déterminés à les relever avec un esprit renouvelé de coopération avec tous les ordres de gouvernement; nous croyons que la meilleure façon d'y arriver est d'adopter une approche inclusive, ouverte et transparente, qui tire parti des forces des divers points de vue de partout au Canada.

Dans un contexte très dynamique et en évolution, les gouvernements au Canada ainsi que les citoyennes et citoyens canadiens reconnaissent qu'il nous faut continuer de nous améliorer. Nos progrès se multiplient lorsque nous saisissons les occasions de dialoguer de façon constructive sur ces enjeux importants qui revêtent un caractère fondamental pour une société canadienne forte et pluraliste. C'est avec plaisir que je répondrai à vos questions et que j'écouterai les points de vue du Comité.

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