



SEPTEMBER 2023

Weaving Our Voices Together

NEW BRUNSWICK'S PATH TO SAFETY
FOR INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS, AND
2SLGBTQQIA+ PEOPLE

Weaving Our Voices Together

Province of New Brunswick

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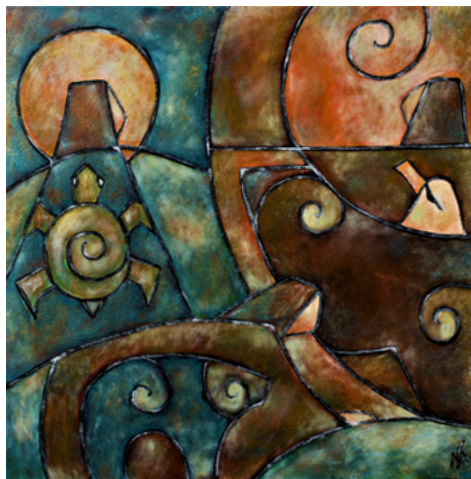
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**WE WOULD LIKE TO GIVE
A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO**

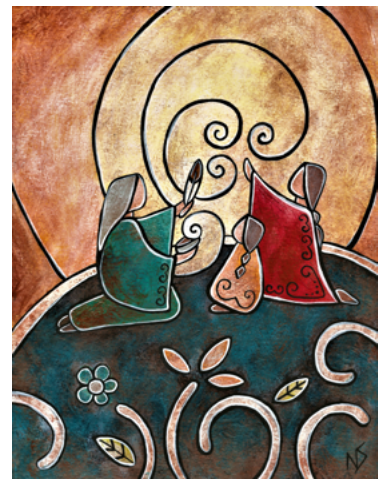
Wolastoqiyik artist Natalie Sappier- Samaqani Cocahq (The Water Spirit) for providing her artwork that is featured throughout the report (Drumming Circle, Spirit Animals, and Smudging Ceremony).



Drumming Circle



Spirit Animals



Smudging Ceremony

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Acknowledgement

The government of New Brunswick would like to acknowledge and thank the New Brunswick Advisory Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People, the Wabanaki Nations (Wolastoqey Nation, Mi'gmaq Nation, and the Peskotomuhkati Nation), and all of those who took the time to participate and share their knowledge and wisdom during the community engagement sessions and throughout the development of this report.



Preamble

This is New Brunswick's response to *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (Final Report)*. This work recognizes the diversity of the Indigenous populations in New Brunswick regardless of where they reside in the province and respects the distinct cultures of the Mi'gmaq, Wolastoqey, and Peskotomuhkati Nations. Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people (two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and additional sexual and gender diverse identities), families, and survivors are at the center of this work. Our response will evolve over time and continue to incorporate Indigenous-led and government supported actions as we move forward to improve the safety and lives of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in New Brunswick. We acknowledge that this will be a long-term effort requiring all of us to work together.

Our journey began in 2020, when Women's Equality chaired a meeting of the New Brunswick Advisory Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women and the Interdepartmental Working Group on the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice to discuss the *Final Report* from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The objective of the meeting was to seek advice from the Advisory Committee on how we might best respond to the Calls for Justice. One of the recommendations from this meeting was to speak with Indigenous people and leadership across the province.

The first round of engagement sessions with the New Brunswick Advisory Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women and Indigenous communities were held between July and November 2020 and co-hosted by several Indigenous communities and Women's Equality. Invitations were extended to all Indigenous communities and Indigenous organizations in New Brunswick, but COVID-19 restrictions made it impossible to hold all of the sessions during this time. A report on the results of these engagement sessions was compiled and is included in the appendix of this report.

Women's Equality shared the results of the engagement sessions with several provincial government departments and discussed the concerns and priorities that were raised by community members. The departments committed to the development of actions that would begin to address key priority areas identified at the engagement sessions.

Women's Equality presented and shared the draft report with Indigenous leadership of the Wolastoqey Tribal Council Inc., Wolastoqey Nation in New Brunswick, and Mi'gmawé'l Tplu'taqnn Inc. during the winter of 2022. Invaluable feedback was provided by the Chiefs and was incorporated into the report. The Indigenous leadership also recommended that the document be shared with the Indigenous community members. Women's Equality also recognized the importance of updating the communities and this provided opportunities to engage those that we could not initially meet with due to COVID-19 restrictions, including the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, the urban and rural Indigenous community, and the Peskotomuhkati Nation at Skutik. Engagement sessions were held with the communities and organizations whose leadership expressed interest in co-hosting the sessions.

In early 2023, the New Brunswick Advisory Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women expanded its mandate and membership to reflect the diversity required to address the Calls for Justice in the National Inquiry's *Final Report*. It is now known as the New Brunswick Advisory Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People in order to support and advise the work on New Brunswick's response.

We appreciate the concerted efforts of all those who made this evergreen document a reality and now we begin our journey together to make New Brunswick a place where Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people will feel valued, respected, and safe.



Minister's Message

HON. SHERRY WILSON
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR
WOMEN'S EQUALITY

New Brunswick is committed to improving the safety, security, and well-being of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. *Weaving Our Voices Together: New Brunswick's Path to Safety for Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People* is a testament to that commitment.

None of this important work would be possible without the courageous testimony of the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. I wish to express to them my profound appreciation for sharing their truths.

New Brunswick will forever honour the memory of all missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. They will not be forgotten. Their truths will live on through the deliberate and thoughtful steps we take together to end violence.

This report lays out the government of New Brunswick's commitment to make change and stop the violence. It lays the foundation for working in partnership with the Wabanaki Nations (Wolastoqey Nation, Mi'gmaq Nation, and the Peskotomuhkati Nation); Indigenous organizations; Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people; the New Brunswick Advisory Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People; and the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Through this partnership we will work to prevent violence, and envision

a future where survivors, families, and communities can heal and move forward.

The actions outlined in this report represent a renewed commitment toward this goal. We recognize there is much more work to be done. Achieving improvements that are sustained over time will require ongoing focus and attention from all partners, and government is committed to doing its part.

I wish to thank all those involved in co-creating New Brunswick's path forward. I especially want to thank and acknowledge the wise counsel of the New Brunswick Advisory Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People; Indigenous communities and organizations; and those who participated in engagement sessions, shared their stories, and contributed in other ways. We have heard you, we have listened to you, and we are committed to continuing to walk this path forward together.

Hon. Sherry Wilson

Introduction

In 2016, the Government of Canada launched the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls to investigate all forms of violence against Indigenous women and girls. New Brunswick supported the call for a National Inquiry since 2013, along with the other provinces and territories. New Brunswick further supported the Inquiry through participation of family members in New Brunswick via the New Brunswick Family Information Liaison Unit.

The mandate of the National Inquiry was to:

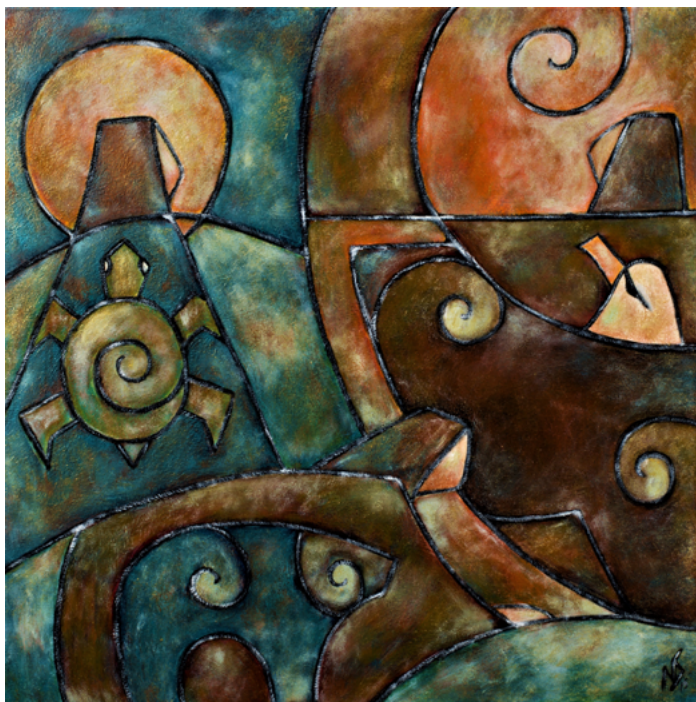
- Recommend concrete actions to remove systemic causes of violence and increase the safety of Indigenous women and girls in Canada.
- Recommend ways to honour and commemorate missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.
- Provide its recommendations to the Government of Canada through an interim report by November 1, 2017, and a final report, released on June 3, 2019.

More than 2,380 family members, survivors, experts, and Knowledge Keepers participated in hearings and gatherings across the country over a two-year period, including here in New Brunswick. Their painful truths were the lifeblood of the Inquiry and informed *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*, including 231 individual Calls for Justice directed at governments, institutions, social service providers, industries, and all Canadians.

The *Final Report* concludes that human and Indigenous rights violations and abuses are the root cause behind Canada's high rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. The two-volume report calls for significant legal and social changes to resolve a crisis that has affected Indigenous communities across the country.

The report concludes that the steps required to restore the safety, security, and human dignity of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people must be no less monumental than the combination of systems and actions that has worked to maintain colonial violence for generations.

The report explores four issues that must be addressed and recommends that the daily encounters with individuals, institutions, systems, and structures that compromise security must be addressed with a new view toward relationships.



These issues are:

- Historical, multigenerational, and intergenerational trauma.
- Social and economic marginalization.
- Maintaining the status quo and institutional lack of will.
- Ignoring the agency and expertise of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

The *Final Report's* 231 Calls for Justice are framed thematically with action and accountability assigned to governments, industries, institutions, services, partnerships, and all Canadians.

The government of New Brunswick appreciates the testimony of Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and communities, values the work of the Commission, and is committed to taking action in response to the Calls for Justice and supporting meaningful change towards ending the tragedy of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

On its own, the government of New Brunswick cannot implement all of these calls nor affect the desired outcomes, but by working with partners in all levels of governments and striking new working relationships with the Wabanaki Nations (Wolastoqey Nation, Mi'gmaq Nation, and the Peskotomuhkati Nation) and with all Indigenous Peoples in the province, we can begin to build lasting change.

We will do so by building on the key themes outlined by the Commission; addressing human and Indigenous rights, culture, health and wellness, human security and justice. These themes have served as the basis of our engagement with Indigenous Peoples, communities, and organizations and have led to the establishment of measurable goals for improving the safety of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in New Brunswick. These shared goals are rooted in the cultures, experiences, and realities of their lives and communities.

Finally, we echo the call of the Commissioners for all Canadians to help lead change by reading the *Final Report* and helping to hold governments accountable; learning about Indigenous history and culture; denouncing violence and speaking out against racism, sexism, ignorance, homophobia, and transphobia; and being a strong ally.

Principles for Change in New Brunswick

The following principles for change were articulated as part of the community engagement sessions and are guiding the provincial government's work, together with the Wabanaki Nations (Wolastoqey Nation, Mi'gmaq Nation, and the Peskotomuhkati Nation), the New Brunswick Advisory Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People (representatives from Indigenous communities, Indigenous organizations, and the provincial government), Indigenous organizations, Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People Centered: Elevate their voices and prioritize their knowledge, perspectives, along with those of Elders and grandmothers.

Valuing Culture: Respect for the values, culture, and traditions of Indigenous Peoples will guide our work, leading toward greater cultural awareness, sensitivity, and safety, with measures of success and priority areas of focus defined together.

Working in Partnership: Progress will be made when governments and all partners come together to address the Calls for Justice and act on them by supporting the expertise of Indigenous organizations, communities, Elders, women, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Building Trusting Relationships: Partnerships and progress will flourish in a culture of mutual trust with the Wabanaki Nations (Wolastoqey Nation, Mi'gmaq Nation, and the Peskotomuhkati Nation), Indigenous organizations, and all Indigenous people in New Brunswick.

Family Participation and Peer Support: The voices of those we've lost and ongoing sharing of truths, and the necessary associated supports, are what will ensure a light continues to shine on ending violence and that governments, partners, and service providers are held to account.

Respect, Dignity, and Compassion: These values will drive dialogue and will be felt at every touch point in the process by ensuring that Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and the Wabanaki Nations (Wolastoqey Nation, Mi'gmaq Nation, and the Peskotomuhkati Nation) are heard, valued, and are at the center of meaningful change.

Interdisciplinary Systemic Approach: Evident in government's initial response is the fact that every department, agency, and service provider has a role to play in creating change. Interdepartmental collaboration will continue to be key at every turn, with a goal of first identifying the root causes and changing the systems that have contributed to where we find ourselves today.

How is New Brunswick Responding?

The breadth and depth of the Calls for Justice stemming from the National Inquiry are significant and will take time to properly address. The National Inquiry's *Final Report* raises several important and complex questions for all governments to consider and resolve, including those concerning the impacts of colonialization, ongoing colonialism, and the resulting racism and discrimination that has impacted the way in which Indigenous Peoples are seen and treated. Many of these same issues have been previously raised by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.



Indigenous people across Canada, the Wabanaki Nations (Wolastoqey Nation, Mi'gmaq Nation, and the Peskotomuhkati Nation), the Native Women's Association of Canada, and the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls have advocated and worked for many years for structural change that would eliminate gender-based violence and they continue to do so. This document represents the initial response of the government of New Brunswick, which is poised to respectfully support and participate as a partner with the Wabanaki Nations (Wolastoqey Nation, Mi'gmaq Nation, and the Peskotomuhkati Nation), Indigenous organizations, Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls to enable dialogue and progress towards ending violence.

New Brunswick has not waited to take action on addressing violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. There are many initiatives and projects currently underway or planned. These represent positive initial steps and actions toward addressing and implementing the Calls for Justice and are considered a priority focus by Indigenous partners.

The Calls for Justice are broad and complex. Addressing them requires action and commitments by many provincial government departments, financial and human resources, collaboration with other levels of governments, community-based partners, the Wabanaki Nations (Wolastoqey Nation, Mi'gmaq Nation, and the Peskotomuhkati Nation), Indigenous organizations, Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. New Brunswick's approach to their implementation, and more importantly to improved outcomes, relationships, and equality for Indigenous Peoples, are first and foremost informed by Indigenous Peoples. Continued dialogue, partnership, and engagement are critical.

Government of New Brunswick's Current Work and Success

Indigenous Peoples are seeking transparency on what is happening to address the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous, women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in order to foster dialogue on further improvements to their safety, security, and well-being. An inventory of current government of New Brunswick initiatives was completed and informs this document. The New Brunswick government has shared a number of successes with Indigenous Peoples. The following are some selected key areas of accomplishment:

- Developed in partnership with the New Brunswick Advisory Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women, the *New Brunswick Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Aboriginal Women and Girls* has action items under five main areas: awareness, education and training, intervention and support, sexual violence, and research and data collection.
- Supports, programs, and services available to or specifically for Indigenous women and girls living with violence. Among them:
 - Youth programs to raise awareness and eliminate teen relationship violence.
 - Training in the areas of prevention and intervention for women experiencing violence.
 - Woman Victims of Abuse Protocols provides information to both government and community on services and supports in the province.
 - The Indigenous Domestic Violence Outreach Pilot Program improves women's access to community services and service providers, provides help and information to women in need, and works to increase awareness of the issue of domestic violence in the community.
 - A New Brunswick Family Information Liaison Unit for families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls provides a liaison service for families and provincial agencies and services, including the criminal justice system, social services, and policing in New Brunswick.
 - The New Brunswick Silent Witness Project, committee, and the video documentary *Silent Witness Journey: Two Women's Stories*.
- Progress in implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

- The New Brunswick Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Centre of Excellence has developed and launched a unique model called *Dreamcatcher*, which ensures a culturally appropriate delivery of services to Indigenous clients and families.

SOCIAL SUPPORTS

- The federal legislation *An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children, Youth and Families* was implemented in collaboration with First Nations Child and Family Services directors and other partners to ensure that implementation efforts were Indigenous-led.
- Social Development provides subsidized housing for Indigenous Peoples living outside Indigenous communities through various programs, including: Public Housing, Rent Supplement Program, Persons with Disabilities Portable Rent Supplement Program, Emergency Home Repair Program and Homeowner Program, Home Completion Loan Program, Canada – New Brunswick Housing Benefit, and programs offered and delivered through Skigin-Elnoog Housing Corporation.

JUSTICE AND SAFETY

- The Department of Justice and Public Safety has contracted with the John Howard Society of New Brunswick to provide the Awakening Cultural Identity and Spirit (ACIS) Program through the First Nation Affiliates. This program connects Indigenous justice-involved clients (offenders) with Elders to provide healing, spiritual, and cultural teachings.

CULTURE

- The Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour New Brunswick Public Library Service has established *A Strategic Plan for Indigenous Library Services 2019-2022*. The goals are to: 1) Build vibrant collections that are shaped by Indigenous voices; 2) Share stories and build knowledge of local Indigenous histories, cultures, and languages; 3) Create welcoming and trusted places for Indigenous Peoples; and 4) Reach out and support Indigenous community development. Examples of activities include: the development of public library collections (e.g., books, films, music) written by or about Indigenous Peoples, and those written/spoken in Indigenous languages; incorporating Indigenous materials into library facilities (welcome signs, reading circle carpets, library brochure in Mi'gmaq and Wolastoqey languages); delivery of Indigenous-themed story times and drum circles; and celebration of National Indigenous Peoples Day.
- Education and Early Childhood Development partnered with the University of New Brunswick to create a language component within the Wabanaki Bachelor of Education.

EMPLOYMENT

- Supported by the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, the Future Wabanaki initiative, for experiential education, works to ensure that Indigenous university students have equal access to meaningful and valuable experience with local employers, while connecting employers with top New Brunswick talent.



What We Heard: Indigenous Community Engagement Sessions

Through the work of the New Brunswick Advisory Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women and the Indigenous community engagement sessions held between July and November 2020, these key issues emerged:

Youth: Young people in Indigenous communities are not properly supported and are at risk of falling through the cracks if the cycle of intergenerational trauma is not stopped.

Lack of recognition for collective, pre-existing, and inherent Indigenous and treaty rights:

It was expressed that government is not recognizing Indigenous rights and treaties as well as critiques of specific areas of government policy. In another community session, participants said “it feels like we are forcing government to do things” when it comes to seeking help with issues facing Indigenous communities. Participants spoke of their desire to see government take action.

Lack of culturally safe and appropriate support:

The need for culturally safe justice, health, mental health, and addictions services was most acutely heard in the areas of intervention and response to violence, both for victims and perpetrators.

There are too few programs and services for Indigenous women and girls experiencing violence within Indigenous communities in New Brunswick. Although there are services available outside of their communities, there are often cultural and other barriers associated with accessing them. These include:

- **Transportation:** Traveling to and from services was often noted as a barrier when these services were not available within the community, as well as timeliness of services and intervention.
- **The need for enhanced training, awareness, and public education:** This was repeatedly identified throughout the Calls for Justice for all levels of

governments, service providers, and the public – which include resources targeted for professional service training and development, cultural and historical awareness training, and public education campaigns. This was identified during engagement sessions with communities, as well. It was recognized that New Brunswick’s public and civil service need to improve their cultural awareness and understanding in order to work with Indigenous Peoples in an appropriate and respectful way.

Gender: It was pointed out that government is, and always has been, a male-dominated world. This means that men, more often than not, are making the rules and policies that affect the lives of women. Women need to be empowered in many ways, not the least of which is having a safe place to go and talk, and someone to talk to.

Mental health and addictions: A lack of understanding, awareness, and sensitivity to the realities of Indigenous Peoples leads to people with mental health or addiction issues, or both, not getting the help they need and deserve. There remains ongoing mistrust with Western systems that are viewed as insensitive and not attuned in a culturally aware or safe way. The timeliness of services that are available was often noted as a barrier. The immediacy of the need for services was often not matched by the response available.

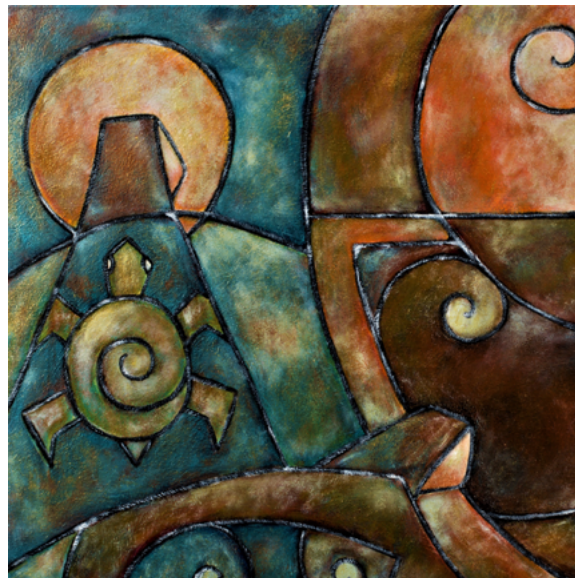
Meaningful opportunities and Indigenous culture:

There was a recognition that Indigenous Peoples do not have equity in accessing meaningful educational, economic, and social opportunities. This issue is in many ways an outcome of a Western system that puts Indigenous Peoples at a disadvantage and does not view their experience, knowledge, and culture as valuable or equitable. The government of New Brunswick can lead the way when it comes to creating more opportunities for professional employment and training.

There is room for more Indigenous professionals in the justice and health systems, and leadership positions within the government of New Brunswick. To begin, accurate data is required on the number of Indigenous people working for the government of New Brunswick and at what levels, departments, and professions within government. There must also be initiative to assess the quality of work environments for Indigenous Peoples within these institutions. Indigenous Peoples will not remain within environments that remain complacent to anti-Indigenous racism, tokenize Indigenous employees, and fail to respect Indigenous knowledges and ways of being. There is a need to recruit Indigenous people in different professional capacities, e.g., policing. Overall, there is a need for more educational opportunities in professional fields for Indigenous Peoples. For recruitment of Indigenous Peoples to be successful, there must be meaningful steps to create working environments of cultural safety and respect for Indigenous Peoples. Otherwise, whatever “opportunities” that arise are highly likely to become a revolving door.

Other areas of focus included domestic and intimate partner violence support, justice and policing reform, an education system that reflects and honours Indigenous knowledges, history, and experiences, and an overall need for partnership among all of those involved in the process. Funding in New Brunswick for Indigenous communities and organizations has been largely grant- or project-based, versus core or permanent. Several Calls for Justice are related to providing permanent funding. The need for sustainable funding was also echoed in engagement sessions. There was a strong consensus that communities best understand the solutions required to affect change but need the resources and funding to make that happen.

Finally, there was an acknowledgement that each Wabanaki Nation (Wolastoqey Nation, Mi’gmaq Nation, and the Peskotomuhkati Nation) and each Indigenous community in the province is unique and has their own realities. Furthermore, the needs of Indigenous people, depending on whether they live in community or in rural or urban areas, come with different realities. These need to be addressed in moving forward.



Moving Forward Together: Phase 1

Weaving Our Voices Together: New Brunswick's Path to Safety for Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People is an early step in our collective journey to improve the safety, security, and well-being of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

This document has been developed based on reflection and learning, and with a view to advancing reconciliation, righting historical wrongs, and ending violence. It has been rooted in the sharing of personal truths, with Elders, communities, and family members representing the voices of those lost.

The government of New Brunswick is taking an interdisciplinary systemic approach to leading change. New partners, priorities, and actions will undoubtedly be identified and added as we move forward together. While this response documents our initial priorities for change, the work and commitment must and will continue.

To that end, in reflecting the priorities and needs identified in engaging with Indigenous communities and the Advisory Committee, we are committing to the following goals:

Goal 1: Safety and Security

Outcome: Indigenous women, their children, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are safe.

Goal 2: Health and Well-Being

Outcome: Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people attain full health, healing, and wellness that is self-determined. Health disparities and inequities are eliminated.

Goal 3: Justice and Policing

Outcome: Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people have access to culturally safe police and justice response.

Goal 4: Education and Employment

Outcome: Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people have economic security and receive education that reaffirms their nationhood, language, knowledges, and heritage.

Goal 5: Culture and Rights

Outcome: Wabanaki cultures, languages, knowledges, and heritage are protected and promoted. New Brunswick's population is accurately knowledgeable of the Wabanaki people.

The government of New Brunswick is committed to the pursuit of these goals and outcomes. They are guiding government's actions in its response to this issue. Initial priorities have been identified and will be acted on in the next two years. As progress is achieved, initiatives and actions will be measured as to how they are fulfilling outcomes and will be used to help identify future work. We also recognize the need for transparency and accountability in this work. We will work to develop the necessary measurement tools and report on progress towards the implementation of these goals, actions, and outcomes.

GOAL 1	OUTCOME
Safety and Security	Indigenous women, their children, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are safe.
ACTIONS	
<p>1.1 Expand Indigenous Domestic Violence Outreach Program.</p> <p>1.2 Provide training sessions on intimate partner violence, the danger assessment tool, and the <i>It's Your Business: A Domestic & Intimate Partner Violence Workplace Toolkit</i> with Indigenous communities, organizations, and service providers.</p> <p>1.3 Work with Indigenous communities to identify and designate assisters for the <i>Intimate Partner Violence Intervention Act</i>.</p> <p>1.4 Renew and seek resources to implement the <i>New Brunswick Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Aboriginal Women and Girls</i>.</p> <p>1.5 Identify and seek resources to implement specific areas of work with Indigenous communities and organizations as part of <i>Preventing and Responding to Sexual Violence in NB: A Framework for Action</i>.</p> <p>1.6 Continue to provide stable funding (within existing budget) to Gignoo Transition House.</p> <p>1.7 Work with partners to discuss new or continued funding opportunities for necessary supports and services relating to adults with a disability (including those aging out of Jordan's Principle) as well as adult protection.</p> <p>1.8 Continue to work with Indigenous communities and the federal government collaboratively to address gaps in adult protection services in Indigenous communities.</p> <p>1.9 Participate in trilateral coordination agreement discussion tables to support the implementation of Indigenous child welfare legislation.</p>	
GOAL 2	OUTCOME
Health and Well-Being	Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people attain full health, healing, and wellness that is self-determined. Health disparities and inequities are eliminated.
ACTIONS	
<p>2.1 Collaborate with Indigenous communities and Indigenous organizations to co-create, fund, and support Indigenous-led initiatives that are culturally safe, trauma-informed programs and services that will improve access to primary health care and addiction and mental health services.</p> <p>2.2 Facilitate basic mandatory training for all health-care staff on intergenerational trauma, anti-Indigenous racism, cultural safety and competency, and Indigenous ways of health and healing, and cultural awareness, sensitivity and realities.</p> <p>2.3 Create culturally safe policies and supports within provincial hospitals.</p> <p>2.4 Increase access to mobile crisis units within Indigenous communities.</p> <p>2.5 Partner with private sector to create an Indigenous mental health awareness video that will help provide information and awareness of mental health services and supports for Indigenous Peoples in New Brunswick.</p>	

GOAL 3	OUTCOME
Justice and Policing	Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ have access to culturally safe police and justice response.
ACTIONS	
<p>3.1 Determine the success and access to Awakening Cultural Identity and Spirit program for possible expansion based on an evaluation of the program.</p> <p>3.2 Pursue and facilitate training on conflict resolution and cultural safety training with police services as a means to strengthen the relationships between the communities and policing services.</p> <p>3.3 Support Indigenous communities in New Brunswick to develop restorative justice programs and enhance restorative justice capacity in New Brunswick.</p> <p>3.4 Use of Pre-Sentence Report with Gladue factors included is used for both Indigenous youth and adults instead of a Gladue Report in New Brunswick. Justice and Public Safety will continue discussions with Indigenous organizations who are leading on establishing Gladue writers in New Brunswick.</p> <p>3.5 Implement mandatory and periodic training of Justice and Public Safety staff, court staff, and all who participate in the justice system, focused on areas of Indigenous cultures, current realities and histories, including distinctions-based training.</p> <p>3.6 Conduct an assessment of the Indigenous Community Program Officer Program and raise community awareness of positions within the communities and the following duties linked to the positions: police community relations and cross-cultural programs.</p> <p>3.7 Enact missing persons legislation.</p> <p>3.8 Justice and Public Safety will continue discussions with Indigenous organizations in New Brunswick who are leading the work on establishing Indigenous court workers in New Brunswick.</p>	
GOAL 4	OUTCOME
Education and Employment	Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people have economic security and receive education that reaffirms their nationhood, language, knowledges, and heritage.
ACTIONS	
<p>4.1 Conduct labour market research focused on the Indigenous population base in New Brunswick. Identify, a) labour market barriers, b) areas of labour market demand, and c) areas for training to meet demand.</p> <p>4.2 Collaborate on focused tech and trades information sessions and opportunities, specifically for Indigenous youth.</p> <p>4.3 Explore opportunities for the creation of culturally safe workplaces within the government of New Brunswick and potential for private sector employers.</p> <p>4.4 Implement a Skills Trades Exploration Program (STEP) focused on Indigenous women.</p> <p>4.5 Increase employment opportunities for Indigenous people in both public and private sector utilizing the Future Wabanaki Program.</p>	

- 4.6** Further employment prioritization of Indigenous employees across all areas of government.
- 4.7** Continue reform of the Social Assistance Program. During the initial phase, Social Assistance indexation of rates was introduced under the Transitional Assistance Program and the Extended Benefits Program, along with rate increases.
- 4.8** Develop a process for including mandatory training on Indigenous cultural awareness, sensitivity, and safety training as part of public sector staff workplace performance evaluations.
- 4.9** Begin the process of focused recruitment for Indigenous Peoples to work within the government of New Brunswick and explore and address barriers that may exist for them seeking and obtaining employment in the government of New Brunswick.
- 4.10** Francophone sector: Revision of the First Nations themes in the curriculum of the 4th grade social studies programs and the creation of a learning resource to support them.
- 4.11** Francophone Sector: Systemic racism - creation of a survey for school staff and students in grades 6-12. These surveys will be administered by January 2023.
- 4.12** Anglophone Sector: Co-construction of the Wabanaki Holistic Learning Framework to ensure that curriculum meaningfully includes Wabanaki ways of knowing, being, and doing.
- 4.13** Anglophone Sector: Offering of hands-on, experiential opportunities in trades in Indigenous communities..

GOAL 5	OUTCOME
Culture and Rights	Wabanaki cultures, languages, knowledges, and heritage are protected and promoted. New Brunswick's population is accurately knowledgeable of the Wabanaki people.

ACTIONS

- 5.1** Establish a dedicated grant specifically for Indigenous Peoples on projects related to culture and heritage.
- 5.2** Collaborate with Indigenous partners on the promotion of business, culture, and heritage on websites, social media, and other forms of advertising for New Brunswick.
- 5.3** Initiate analysis of the federal *Indigenous Languages Act* to determine provincial implications.
- 5.4** Collaborate to develop and deliver mandatory Indigenous cultural awareness modules to all government of New Brunswick employees. Coordinate cultural awareness training for ministers and members of the Legislative Assembly. Training must include a component on violence against Indigenous women and girls and missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Implementation

New Brunswick is committed to making progress in improving the safety of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people living in this province. We recognize that solutions need to be led by Indigenous people and that we need to work with the Wabanaki Nations (Wolastoqey Nation, Mi'gmaq Nation, and the Peskotomuhkati Nation), Indigenous organizations, Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and other levels of governments to achieve success. There are actions that the provincial government will lead, and others where we will lend support or be a contributor to others who are leading the work. To reach our shared goals, working in partnership will be critical.

Governments recognize the importance of Indigenous data sovereignty as a key principle of the partnership approach and in supporting Indigenous self-determination. Indigenous data sovereignty is about ensuring Indigenous Peoples design and manage their data that is needed to tell their stories and to ensure that high-quality, culturally relevant, distinctions-based data is created. The provincial government acknowledges this principle as well as the importance of co-sharing data to assess the progress of our work.

The shared implementation of the New Brunswick plan will follow the principles and core values identified in the development of the first set of actions in New Brunswick's response. Thus, the implementation approach will value the following principles:

- Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people centered
- Valuing culture
- Working in partnership
- Building trusting relationships
- Family participation and peer support
- Respect, dignity, and compassion
- Interdisciplinary systemic approach

To respect these principles, the following approach to implementation will be adopted:

1. **Maintain a cross-government focus within the government of New Brunswick on improving the safety of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.**

Reaching the outcome of improved safety requires a government-wide approach and, often, a single action will require the input and participation of multiple provincial departments and service providers to have an impact. To ensure results are achieved, Women's Equality will coordinate a horizontal government of New Brunswick approach with the participation of relevant provincial departments poised to affect change.

This *One Team One GNB* approach will focus on:

- a. Working with all partners.
- b. Tracking implementation of actions and initiatives.
- c. Ensuring we are measuring the progress, impact, and results.
- d. Exploring, promoting, and securing partnerships with the federal government and other partners in support of the achievement of the goals and actions under *Weaving Our Voices Together: New Brunswick's Path to Safety for Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People*.

- e. Identifying new actions and opportunities to drive results and outcomes of improving safety for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

2. Develop a co-implementation model with Indigenous People in New Brunswick.

Honouring the strength and commitment of the New Brunswick Advisory Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People, the provincial government will work with the Committee to finalize an implementation and accountability structure to measure progress on the plan. In its role, the committee will:

- a. Provide guidance, Indigenous expertise, and grassroots perspectives to the work of implementing government action.
- b. Meet regularly to discuss progress on implementation of actions and provide advice for further actions to the Interdepartmental Working Group on the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice and the Minister responsible for Women's Equality.
- c. Provide regular updates on work within their communities and organizations.

3. Maintain focus on improving outcomes for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

In order to support ongoing improvement in outcomes for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, the provincial government commits to being accountable and transparent for the work under this plan and reporting regularly on its progress. This will include improving the availability of data to ensure that work is based on the best information available, and that we are able to measure success and redirect course when initiatives are not reaching expected outcomes. To that end, the government of New Brunswick commits to:

- a. Working with Indigenous partners to improve the availability of data and research which is Indigenous-led.
- b. Establish a partnership approach to data development that respects co-development and addresses the need for standards to ensure the information collected is relevant and meets the needs and priorities of Indigenous Peoples.
- c. Design an indicator framework to allow for monitoring progress in reducing violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people which includes the establishment of relevant performance indicators, baselines, and targets that account for the diversity within and between Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, for all initiatives.
- d. Prepare annual progress reports to monitor the implementation of *Weaving Our Voices Together: New Brunswick's Path to Safety for Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People*, and include an overview of actions taken during that year.

APPENDIX 1

Indigenous Community Engagement

What We Heard Report: How Government Should
Respond to the Calls for Justice

May 2021

Purpose

The *Final Report* of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was released in June 2019. The report was informed by the testimony of over 2,000 family members, survivors of violence, and experts. The report outlined 231 Calls for Justice “directed at governments, institutions, social service providers, industries, and all Canadians.” The government of New Brunswick conducted a preliminary analysis of these Calls for Justice.

The Calls for Justice are guided by the following Principles for Change:

- A Focus on Substantive Equality and Human and Indigenous Rights
- A Decolonizing Approach
- Inclusion of Families and Survivors
- Self-Determined and Indigenous-Led Solutions and Services
- Recognizing Distinctions
- Cultural Safety
- Trauma-Informed Approach

In July of 2020, a report from a meeting with the New Brunswick Advisory Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women captured discussions between the Committee and the government of New Brunswick Interdepartmental Working Group on the Calls for Justice and the recommended next steps. In those next steps, it was agreed that Women’s Equality would travel to the Indigenous communities and speak to the people and leadership, especially the women, to engage them in discussions.

To seek guidance and input from Indigenous people in New Brunswick, a series of community engagement sessions were held throughout 2020. The results of these sessions are outlined in this report, along with key themes and specific insights. They were designed to seek feedback and facilitate dialogue on working together on the Calls for Justice. They also had as a goal continued engagement with communities and organizations and the identification of priorities for New Brunswick Indigenous women, girls, communities, and organizations.

Sessions and Invitees

The following seven sessions held between August and November 2020:

- Amlamgog (Fort Folly First Nation), August 20
- Neqotkuk (Tobique First Nation), September 2
- Natoaganeg (Eel Ground First Nation), September 24
- Bilick (Kingsclear First Nation), October 22
- Metepenagiag Mi’kmaq Nation (Red Bank), October 28
- Wotstak (Woodstock First Nation), November 18
- Matawaskiye (Madawaska Maliseet First Nation), November 26

The sessions were co-hosted by Indigenous communities and Women's Equality of the government of New Brunswick. Invitations to co-host an engagement session were extended to all Indigenous communities and organizations in New Brunswick, but COVID-19 restrictions made it impossible to hold all of the sessions.

Space at the sessions was limited due to social distancing requirements, but invitations were extended to all members of the community.

Online meetings and an online survey were used to extend engagement, but there was limited uptake. Participation was modest for the online survey; the highlights of those responses are also contained in this report.

To ensure consistency of approach and to make it easier to analyze responses, engagement sessions and discussions were built around the same core questions:

- What concerns do you have for your community?
- What's important to you?
- What's important to your community?
- Where do you want attention to be paid to now and the next two years?

Key Themes

No two engagement sessions were exactly alike, but a close review of the sessions' notes reveals common themes. Although these themes are listed separately, there is no doubt that they are all interconnected and cannot be viewed in isolation. There was a general recognition that the issues of systemic racism and oppression, developed over centuries, cannot be overcome simply by a call for "systemic change." Everyone has a part to play when it comes to change, across all levels of the private sector, public sector, and Indigenous communities.

YOUTH

Compared to the Canadian population, Indigenous communities are young, offering great potential for future growth and opportunity. Throughout the community engagement process, there was recognition that young people in Indigenous communities have limited support and are at risk of falling through the cracks if the cycle of intergenerational trauma is not stopped.

Indigenous Peoples are still healing from intergenerational trauma and they are doing so whilst navigating unequal access to services and support, the same types of services and supports that non-Indigenous people can access every day. Without culturally safe and appropriate support, young people who are struggling will turn to alternate means of coping.

At one community session, participants noted their concerns about a lack of mentoring programs for youth and supports and services for youth, outside of the formal channels of Child and Family Services. There was a general acknowledgement that the systemic problems of racism, intergenerational trauma, lack of appropriate services, and mental health and addictions issues will all continue to negatively impact Indigenous youth unless significant changes are made.

LACK OF CULTURALLY SAFE AND APPROPRIATE SUPPORT

A common refrain from almost all engagement sessions was the concern that the organizations that are supposed to be helping Indigenous Peoples, and women in particular, are not providing adequate support. It was expressed that government is not recognizing Indigenous rights and treaties as well as critiques of specific areas of government policy. In another community session, participants said “it feels like we are forcing government to do things” when it comes to getting the appropriate resources to address issues facing Indigenous communities. Participants spoke of their desire to see government take action.

There was a lot of concern around policing and the justice system. It was also noted at a couple of engagement sessions, where participants spoke of long delays in access to justice. The issue of Indigenous representation in the justice system was raised. The need for an Indigenous advocate was raised and the current system was described as one where Indigenous Peoples “are encouraged to plead guilty rather than providing support in the court system.”

Concern was also raised on culturally safe health services. People shared their stories of racism experienced at the ER and in doctors’ offices. There were concerns that this led to overprescribing of medications to Indigenous persons and often a reluctance to seek medical care, even when it was highly needed.

Linked to the theme of youth, there was a recognized need for safe houses in communities, places where mothers and their children can escape domestic violence. The need for a safe place for women to access services and leave the violence was highlighted. It was noted that in some communities there is simply nowhere for women and children to go when in crisis.

GENDER

Given the centrality of gender to the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, it should come as no surprise that it was a common theme across engagement sessions. At the sessions, it was pointed out that government is, and always has been, a male-dominated world. This means that men, more often than not, are making the rules that affect the lives of women.

Women need to be empowered in many ways, not the least of which is having a safe place to go and talk, and someone to talk to. Interestingly, at the sessions, there was an acknowledgement that, in some cases, more men were needed. The comment was made that counselling was not always helpful in cases where the counsellor was a woman, and that some men had difficulty opening up or relating to a female counsellor.

Related to the theme of a lack of culturally appropriate support, the sessions revealed a concern that single men have been given priority housing in the community over single women, exacerbating so many existing problems and gaps.

Finally, there was a general feeling that a lack of information and supports for women and their daughters was at the root of so many interrelated issues.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

With all sessions taking place during the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health and addictions were top of mind. The pandemic was not solely to blame, as these issues have long been prevalent in Indigenous communities in comparison to the rest of the country. This leads back to the intergenerational trauma that generations of Indigenous Peoples experienced through the efforts of colonization and assimilation. In the 19th and 20th centuries, and even prior to this, settlers and colonial governments worked to get rid of all Indigenous culture, a process that sought to end Indigenous languages, values, and beliefs. One way of getting rid of Indigenous culture has been removing Indigenous children from their communities and families and forcing them into federally funded residential schools where their ways of being (culture) were forbidden and they experienced severe abuse at the hands of those in positions of authority.

In one session it was noted that there was a persistent lack of interest from government in addressing these issues. Despite years of effort and requests for help, the sense was that the relationship between their community and the health care system needed to be improved.

This lack of understanding, awareness, and sensitivity to the realities of Indigenous people leads to people with mental health and/or addiction issues not getting the help they need and deserve. There remains ongoing mistrust with Western systems that are viewed as insensitive and not attuned in a culturally aware or safe way. Instead of holistic treatment, people who are suffering are either sent to the hospital and quickly released or, in some cases, taken into police custody.

Acknowledging the lack of safety that Indigenous women and girls experience, it was noted that this has led to very high anxiety and fear among mothers and grandmothers for their daughters and granddaughters. This fear and anxiety contribute to the mental health challenges and may also get projected down to the next generations, instead of empowering the next generations for positive change.

MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES AND INDIGENOUS CULTURE

At almost all sessions there was a recognition that Indigenous Peoples do not have equal access to meaningful educational, economic, and social opportunities. This issue is, in many ways, an outcome of a system that puts Indigenous people at a disadvantage and does not view their experience, knowledge, and culture as valuable or equal.

In a couple of community sessions, there was reference to a lack of meaningful opportunities for Indigenous Peoples, especially in areas of employment opportunities. It was also noted that colonial social work doesn't work for Indigenous communities. In a first-person account, it was shared that an Indigenous social worker with the same credentials as a non-Indigenous social worker does not have equal access to job opportunities in the field. This demonstrates that it is more than access to opportunities, but also equal consideration for meaningful opportunities.

There is also a belief that Indigenous culture needs to be included, welcomed, represented, acknowledged, and valued by all of society. There is a recognition that Indigenous culture needs to be protected and reflected in services and supports, in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous focused services and supports. Knowing that a focus on youth is of great importance, participants emphasized education for youth as a priority. It is important to communities that traditional knowledge and ways of knowing held by Elders are shared with Indigenous youth to keep culture, value, and beliefs alive.

Key Themes Summary

As mentioned, the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls is incredibly complex and multi-faceted. The official inquiry took time to complete and produced an extensive report. Seven engagement sessions across New Brunswick will not provide answers or a complete analysis of the factors underlying the problem, but the themes mentioned above are instructive. There is no doubt that there is an interplay and relationship between youth, gender, a lack of organizational support, mental health and addictions, and meaningful opportunities. The analysis of that interplay will not be done here, but it is enough to say that these same themes were clearly articulated by different Indigenous communities across different parts of the province at different times.

Summary of Survey Results

In February 2021, the online survey about the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was distributed. There were 16 respondents to this survey. Of those who responded, three-quarters (75%) identified themselves as Indigenous Peoples living in New Brunswick, and two-thirds (63%) live in a New Brunswick Indigenous community. Of the 16 people who participated in the survey, two-thirds (62%) were between the ages of 31 and 50. The majority of respondents (88%) identify as female, and two-thirds (69%) identify as heterosexual.

While most respondents (94%) are familiar with the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, only one-third (31%) are familiar with the *Final Report's* Calls for Justice. Those who are familiar with the Calls for Justice believe topics such as health and wellness, police services, development of a national action plan, developing laws and policies, and specific Calls for Justice will have a positive impact in their community. For those unfamiliar with the report, respondents believe housing and safe housing options are needed, as is access to shelters, more communication, more outreach workers, and development of long-term programs to improve the overall social situations within their community.

We know that violence against Indigenous women and girls has led to the National Inquiry. For the respondents and their communities this means:

- Awareness will be brought to the issue.
- Justice and fairness for all, no matter their race, ethnicity, country of origin.
- Hopefully, an increase in safety services for women and families.
- The start of acknowledging the systemic, intergenerational trauma inflicted on Indigenous communities as a result of racism and misogyny.
- Keeping the dialogue open, keeping voices strong.
- The potential for future peace of mind – not having to let “my kids know what I’m wearing when I leave in case I go missing.”

When asked to identify which services, supports, or programs currently exist within their communities, the respondents provided examples. Examples include family violence counselling, access to a psychologist, anger management counselling, child and family services, education and awareness in policing, tribal security, government and community programs, mental health teams, and outreach workers. For others, they were able to identify organizations by name. These include a Women’s Transition House (Sussex), the Red Shawl Campaign, services through Women’s Equality, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, and enacting a land code that also implements the *Matrimonial Act*.

The survey also revealed how important it is to Indigenous communities that the public is educated on Indigenous history in Canada. This doesn’t mean just their history, but all elements of Indigenous history – how reserves were developed, hunting and fishing practices, voting, joining the military, and losing Indian Status, for example. Education also needs to include the systemic racism that they have faced, myths and stereotypes that need to be addressed, and how that history has led to where we are today.

When asked what’s important to your community, respondents identified their family, culture, language, respect, compassion, kindness, fairness, and equity of services. They feel victim-blaming and stereotypes need to go away, and there needs to be more federal funding for mental health and addiction services. Lastly, it’s important that justice is served for the missing and murdered women and girls.

Session Breakdown

The following points outline, at a high level, the key themes that were heard within each of the seven sessions hosted with New Brunswick Indigenous communities.

Session 1

- The gender lens applied to the conversation and understanding the role male leaders, community members, and decision makers have on the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and progress in addressing it.
- The role of police and their approach toward Indigenous communities, specifically with regard to Indigenous women and girls.
- Youth perspective on the issue, challenges and opportunities facing the next generation, the importance of knowledge sharing between youth and Elders and maintaining culture in communities.

Session 2

- Mental health and addictions impact (COVID-19, isolation, lack of peer support, addiction cycles in communities, supporting our children and youth to foster healing and strength, historical trauma).
- Increased/enhanced resources for women and girls.
- Improved communications in the communities, between government and Chiefs/Council, engagement with men and boys.

Session 3

- Historical trauma and abuse (familial abuse, police, foster homes, 60's scoop).
- Need for increased government support.
- Communities need improved essential services (poverty, mental health, health services, systemic racism, shifting with COVID-19).

Session 4

- Safe spaces for women and girls experiencing crisis (domestic violence, intimate partner violence, etc.).
- Mental health and addictions impact (providing culturally safe care, shifting with COVID-19, a need for trauma-informed care).
- Issues with policing, like fear for calling for help and not having a go-to liaison.

Session 5

- Safe spaces and programming for women and girls experiencing crisis.
- Increased/enhanced services for the communities like Adult Protection Services, better wait times (police/ambulance), community policing, mental health, and addictions.
- Intergenerational trauma and systemic racism as root causes to be addressed.

Session 6

- Self-determination: Indigenous communities know what is best for themselves.
- Safe spaces and programming for women and girls experiencing crisis.
- Increased/enhanced services for the communities like housing, food banks, social assistance, mental health, and addictions.
- Intergenerational trauma and systemic racism as root causes to be addressed.

Session 7

- Increased/enhanced services for the communities like housing, mental health, and addictions, etc.
- Safe spaces and programming for women and girls experiencing crisis.
- Intergenerational trauma and systemic racism as root causes to be addressed.

APPENDIX 2

Report and Key Themes from the Day

New Brunswick Advisory Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women and the government of New Brunswick Interdepartmental Working Group on the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

July 2020

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Why We Met: Share Space, Share Perspectives

In July 2020, Women's Equality engaged Innovation and Design Services (IDS) to co-facilitate the meeting of the New Brunswick Advisory Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women and the government of New Brunswick (GNB) Interdepartmental Working Group on the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice to discuss *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*. The *Final Report* comprises the truths of more than 2,380 family members, survivors of violence, experts, and Knowledge Keepers shared over two years of cross-country public hearings and evidence gathering. Members of the New Brunswick Advisory Committee met with members of GNB's Interdepartmental Working Group on July 9, 2020, in Fredericton. This report captures the discussion that occurred during that meeting and how it may inform future action on the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice.

Meeting Objectives

Share GNB's preliminary analysis of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice.

Facilitate Dialogue on working together on the Calls for Justice and continued engagement with Advisory Committee, communities, and organizations.

Seek Feedback from the Advisory Committee on the Calls for Justice – Calls most meaningful for New Brunswick Indigenous Peoples, communities, and organizations.

Provide Opportunity to GNB's Interdepartmental Working Group on the Calls for Justice to share what is currently happening within the provincial government.

To meet the day's objectives, the facilitation team (IDS and Women's Equality) developed an agenda to allow for meaningful participation by all. The agenda included a roundtable check-in, presentations by the Women's Equality Assistant Deputy Minister, Jocelyne Mills, and Senior Advisor, Sonja Perley, on GNB's role in the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and GNB's preliminary analysis of the Inquiry's Calls for Justice, followed by a roundtable with Minister Sherry Wilson, an afternoon of discussion with three guiding questions, and concluded with a roundtable check-in. The entire day's proceedings were documented visually in the room and are included here in this report. Only minor adjustments were made throughout the day, mostly to accommodate physical distancing guidelines.

What We Heard

To set a common intention for the day, the meeting opened with the question: “what motivates you to be here today?” in a roundtable format. The themes that arose from this roundtable included:

- An intention to be the voices for those who have been lost and for all Indigenous Peoples to feel safe on this land.
- A desire to learn about and support the work that is already occurring across the province.
- A need to advocate and work together for systemic change.

WHAT ARE THE REAL CHALLENGES?

The dialogue touched on several topics, including:

- Intergenerational trauma and re-traumatization.
- The need for an inquiry into the death of Chantel Moore, training for police on Indigenous culture and values, and on responding to mental health and addiction issues.
- The need to indigenize programming.
- The need for political and institutional will.

Participants raised that GNB’s responses to the Calls for Justice should “value wellness,” “take an interdisciplinary, systemic approach,” “define cultural safety together,” and “build long-term, trusting relationships.”

WHAT INITIATIVES ARE UNDERWAY?

Indigenous communities across the province have a variety of educational and awareness programming related to safety planning, healthy relationships, prenatal health, intimate partner violence and abuse, human trafficking, how to protect yourself online, and other initiatives, including:

- The *Young Warriors Day Camp* was established for girls ages 11-14 to learn traditional activities, including smudging and drum making.
- A women’s wellness week was hosted through social media this year with over 500 participants.
- Multiple organizations and communities are now offering blanket exercises.
- The red dress campaign raises awareness on the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.
- A “Celebrating our Women” event is held annually in Neqotkuk (Tobique First Nation).
- *The Silent Witness Journey: Two Women’s Stories* is a documentary video of the creation of the Silent Witness silhouettes through the Silent Witness Project with two families from Sitansisk (St. Mary’s First Nation) who lost their loved ones to domestic homicide.

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs has developed training modules on the history of Indigenous Peoples and the impact of colonization in New Brunswick. The Department of Justice and Public Safety and the Office of the Attorney General are working with a community of Elders to introduce eagle feathers in courtrooms. They are part of a pan-Canadian strategy to reduce overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in the prison and justice system. They are also working with Women’s Equality to provide information to Indigenous communities on the Emergency Intervention Order under the *Intimate Partner Violence Act* and how they can help Indigenous victims.

WHAT ELSE NEEDS ATTENTION?

Through dialogue on the question of greatest opportunity to answer the Calls for Justice, participants identified several areas where improvements could be made. An overarching theme was that program development and implementation needs to be Indigenous-led. The following needs were mentioned:

Safe and Culturally Appropriate Services

- Indigenous victim services and Indigenous court workers.
- Enhanced equity of services.
- Increased access to primary care, mental health care on-reserve and off-reserve.
- Support to navigate complex bureaucracy to access services.
- Develop and deliver services in a culturally respectful manner and through collaboration.
- Focus on recruitment and retention of Indigenous health-care workers, and advocacy services, including representation on the board of directors of Regional Health Authorities.
- Improved rapid response programming for mental health and addictions.
- Hiring of Indigenous Peoples in provincial programming.

Institutions

- Cultural sensitivity training.
- Cultural competency training across all levels of government.
- Jurisdictional silos (“who is responsible to fund”).
- Red tape for accessing funding programs and services.

“Mainstream service providers are still judging community members.”

Rights and Human Security

- Recognition of Indigenous rights.
- Human security - water, food, and housing.

“It needs to be more than a token approach.”

“Create a new relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in this country.”

Education

- Prioritize student resources.
- The education system needs to teach intergenerational trauma and related issues.
- Education on mental health and wellness (how people are impacted by the use of drugs).
- Funding that goes beyond project-based.
- Ongoing education of men and women to understand different forms of violence.
- Educational resources to eliminate racism.

Policing

- Better training on de-escalation and drug use.
- Links to community people to be called upon to de-escalate situations.
- Establish Indigenous police forces.
- Political and institutional will to pursue inquiry into the deaths of Indigenous people in New Brunswick (Chantel Moore, Rodney Levi, Brady Francis).
- COVID-19 Impacts: COVID exacerbated drug and alcohol issues, and intimate partner violence.

How Do We Move Forward Together?

Someone once said, “we act as a system when we create problems, and act as individuals in trying to solve them.” Throughout the day, multiple calls for “a systemic approach,” “collaboration,” “partnership,” and “allyship” were made.

Principles for Moving Forward

- Peer support
- Interdisciplinary systemic approach
- Dignity
- Build long-term trusting relationships
- Define cultural safety together
- Cultural safety
- Family participation
- Valuing wellness

PARTNERSHIPS THAT COULD BE LEVERAGED

Participants identified the need to come together at all levels to address the Calls for Justice and act on them by matching the expertise of the Indigenous agencies, communities, Elders, and women with the resources offered by the government of New Brunswick to arrive at the actions needed and utilize best practices.

“More Indigenous-led and government of New Brunswick-allied partnerships.”

“Often the departments prepare something and take it to the communities for rubber stamping... this is not a partnership.”

Some of the areas for new or enhanced partnership identified:

- Partnerships across Indigenous communities and organizations that have the power to create real change, including institutional partnerships that can address systemic and structural issues.
- More Canadian institutions who are willing to make their Indigenous employees available to partner on specific issues.
- More front-line worker partnerships.
- More federal/provincial/Indigenous partnerships with a focus on provincial and regional issues.
- Provincial partnerships that aren’t limited to conversation or “table talk.”
- Social services and health services would be excellent partnerships, but they often feel like they operate in silos.
- Utilize community members more; they have the knowledge and the departments have the resources.
- Departments could help communities access federal resources.
- Need to develop partnerships with federal and provincial justice systems on policing, including meaningful involvement of Indigenous women and Elders.

“If no one takes those reports and acts on them...what are we doing here?”

“We don’t want to be studied anymore.”

Next Steps

The June 2020 convening of the Advisory Committee and Interdepartmental Working Group was designed to advance a systemic approach to answering the Calls for Justice by facilitating connections and broadening awareness of key initiatives across departments and communities. Moreover, to seek advice from the Advisory Committee on how GNB might best respond to the Calls for Justice.

In addition to the dialogue captured above, the Advisory Committee identified its wishes for next steps. Travel to the communities and speak to the people and their leadership, especially the women. Engage more Indigenous communities and organizations.

The New Brunswick Advisory Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women has a vision that all Indigenous women and girls are empowered to work together respectfully to ensure that:

- All Indigenous women and girls in New Brunswick live free of violence and abuse.
- Indigenous individuals, families, and communities are healthy, respectful, and supportive to one another; therefore, violence and abuse is no longer acceptable and commonplace among our people.
- The intergenerational cycle of violence is broken through effective, culturally appropriate initiatives grounded in traditional Indigenous values.

Recommendations from Advisory Committee Members:

- Improve our understanding of what programs and services are available in communities which could be similar to the analysis of GNB programs.
- Coordinate a larger symposium where we could include more voices in this conversation, hosted in regional locations that would ensure participation from members of each Indigenous community in the province.
- Have each of the departments look at the Calls for Justice and identify which Calls are already being addressed with existing initiatives and which Calls are not yet being addressed.

Shared Commitment:

- To learn more about what is happening in communities, organizations, and governments to address the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and share that information.
- To support each other in progress towards the shared goal of ending violence against Indigenous women and girls.
- To continue regular meetings between the Interdepartmental Working Group and the Advisory Committee to identify opportunities and make progress on the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

With a mandate to provide advice to the provincial government through the Minister responsible for Women's Equality on matters relating to violence against Indigenous women and girls, the Advisory Committee will be an important source to oversee the implementation of the strategic plan.

