



Native Women's
Association of Canada

L'Association des
femmes autochtones
du Canada

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NWAC TRACK RECORD ON MMIWG IN 2019-2020

1) Families and Healing

- **Two Resiliency Lodges (Quebec and New Brunswick):** NWAC is focusing on healing and a gender-based approach at our two Resiliency Lodges: one in Quebec and another in an as-yet-to-be-determined location. The first of their kind in Canada, the Resiliency Lodges will offer supports, services, and workshops tailored to meet the needs of Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people who are impacted by ongoing structural, institutional, and individual forms of discrimination, sexism, and stereotypical biases. They will also serve as an economic development platform by creating opportunities for Indigenous women entrepreneurs who wish to sell their products in “Originelle,” NWAC’s boutique. This approach is designed to remove barriers and ensure the well-being, socio-economic advancement, and self-sufficiency of Indigenous women and their families. **Calls for Justice 3.1, 3.2, 7.1, 7.2, 7.4**
- **COVID-19 Action Plan:** To respond to the needs of the communities that NWAC represents and services, we have developed a COVID-19 Action Plan. The plan has two key components:
 - a. A robust and targeted communications strategy involves daily updates about COVID-19 on NWAC’s website and social media channels (currently we have 18,000 Twitter followers and 31,000 Facebook followers), along with current resources for members, users, and visitors from across the country to access. Our COVID-19 information also comprises advice from Elders, key messages and videos from President Lorraine Whitman, and useful infographics. NWAC will also provide fact-based public service announcements (PSAs) in Northern Communities where broadband width is scarce, to reach and engage Indigenous women and their communities, as well as provide updates on COVID-19. **Call for Justice 6.1**
 - b. Direct delivery of Elder advisory support services through NWAC’s community outreach and Elder support program is a second component of our COVID-19 Action Plan. This involves a telephone call-in service to trusted community Elders, overseen by a National Elder who will head up the program. Elders will also conduct online video streaming of ceremonies and cultural activities, while community members participate from the safety of their homes. **Calls for Justice 3.5, 7.1, 7.2**
 - c. NWAC sits on the COVID-19 Immunity Task Force’s Indigenous Advisory Circle, which aims to ensure that Indigenous and non-Indigenous allies with the appropriate expertise and knowledge can provide timely advice to the COVID-19 Immunity Task Force. Diverse representation will encompass national Indigenous organizations, grassroots communities and organizations, the academic sector, and Elders and Knowledge Keepers, while ensuring language, gender, and geographical diversity. The Indigenous Advisory Circle will provide input to the COVID-19

Immunity Task Force through Dr. Carrie Bourassa, who is a member of the Task Force Leadership Group and is the Indigenous engagement lead. **Calls for Justice 7.1, 15.4, 15.6**

- **Commemorations**

- **Faceless Doll Campaign to Federal MPs:** this project brings awareness to, honours, and keeps the memory alive of the thousands of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG). The dolls are faceless, meant to be a representation of the thousands who have gone missing or been murdered. Kits for creating their own dolls were sent to every Member of Parliament serving in the House of Commons. The second phase of the project includes making dolls with faces to represent the push to identify and address the systemic factors that led to the MMIWG crisis. These dolls will serve as a reminder that those who are missing or murdered are real people with families and communities. **Calls for Justice 2.6, 11.1**
- **Erect an Art Installation at NWAC's Social and Cultural Innovation Centre:** At our 120 Place du Portage location, NWAC plans to commission an Indigenous artist to create an art installation to commemorate the missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people across Turtle Island and Inuit Nunangat. **Calls for Justice 2.6, 11.1**

2) Information Gathering and Distribution

- **Social Media:** NWAC uses social media to collect and distribute important information to Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people. Through social media, NWAC has effectively communicated to Indigenous women information about the COVID-19 virus, promoted opportunities for skills training and entrepreneurship, and keep Indigenous people up to date on the actions of government and NWAC's position on issues facing Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in this country. **Calls for Justice 2.6, 2.7, 3.5, 11.1**
- **Online Survey / Partnership with NANOS Research:** Through Indigenous women working at the grassroots level, NWAC has been made aware of the increasing rates of violence against Indigenous women in Canada due to COVID-19. To better understand the rising rates of violence against Indigenous women during the pandemic, NWAC, in partnership with NANOS, conducted a national on-line survey with Indigenous women. One of the most startling results from the survey was Indigenous women were overwhelming more concerned about violence against women than the pandemic itself. **Call for Justice 2.6**

3) Overarching Strategy

- **10-Point Action Plan:** NWAC released an Action Plan in 2019 in response to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The overarching objective of the action plan is to keep a spotlight on the critically important issue of missing and murdered women, as well as to advance national and international dialogue and ensure the Inquiry's findings are implemented. **Calls for Justice 1.1, 1.3, 1.4**

- **NWAC’s National Roundtable Final Report:** This report provides an overview of the key findings and recommendations from NWAC’s National Roundtable on the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). During this Roundtable, we engaged Indigenous communities in identifying key priority areas in response to the National Inquiry’s 231 Calls for Justice. Our National Roundtable Final Report provides concrete recommendations concerning MMIWG that will help to inform the Government of Canada’s 2020 National Action Plan. **Calls for Justice 1.3, 1.4**

4) International Work

- Over the 2019 year, NWAC has repeatedly raised the subject of the National Inquiry and the Final Report at numerous forums, including those held by UN bodies and the Organization of American States. For example:
 - 63rd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, New York, March 11-15
Calls for Justice 1.2, 2.1
 - 12th Session of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Geneva, Switzerland, July 15-19, which included a meeting with the then United Nations’ Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz **Calls for Justice 1.2, 2.1**
 - In UN meetings in New York, September 17-19, when NWAC CEO Lynne Groulx met with Adama Dieng, Special Advisor of the UN Secretary General on the Prevention of Genocide; Felice Gaer, Director of the Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights and Vice-Chair of the UN Committee against Torture; Houry Geudelekian, Ivy Koek, and Devan Zingler, Committee on the Status of Women/NY (CSW/NY); and Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women **Calls for Justice 1.2, 2.1**
 - International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples at UN headquarters, New York, August 9 **Calls for Justice 1.2, 2.1**
 - Within the context of the *Women, Peace and Security Agenda (Calls for Justice 1.2, 2.1)*:
 - Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network Meeting, Windhoek, Namibia, April 10-11
 - Meeting with Ambassador Mara Marinaki, European Union External Action Service’s Principal Adviser on Gender & Women, Peace & Security, Brussels, Belgium, July 22
 - Women Deliver 2019, Vancouver, June 3-6, where NWAC made a significant contribution through its stewardship of a side event, *Indigenous Women: Peace, Security and Inclusion*, which took place on June 5 **Calls for Justice 1.2, 2.1**
 - National Inquiry Chief Commissioner 49th General Assembly of the OAS, Medellin, Colombia, June 26-28, during which NWAC CEO Lynne Groulx met the OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro and the OAS Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Antonia Urrejola Noguera
 - Inter-American Week for Indigenous Peoples, Washington, DC, August 6-10

- Before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights hearing *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada*, Washington, DC, September 24 **Calls for Justice 1.2, 2.1**
- During an NWAC-sponsored study-visit of the OAS Secretary General, Luis Almagro, to Canada, December 4-6, during which he was provided with a compelling view of the everyday reality faced by tens of thousands of Indigenous women and girls in the country **Calls for Justice 1.2, 2.1**
- NWAC has succeeded in fostering excellent cooperation with the Organization of American States, shining a bright spotlight on the National Inquiry's Final Report. For example (**Calls for Justice 1.2, 2.1**):
 - NWAC has highlighted its many concerns about the treatment of Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse persons at international forums, such as:
 - G7 Gender Advisory Council Meeting – the 'W7 Summit', Paris, May 9-10, at which NWAC was the only Indigenous women's organization invited to speak
 - Women Deliver 2019, Vancouver, June 3-6

Finally, NWAC's participation in the World Indigenous Business Forum, Vancouver, BC, October 8-10, resulted in the establishment of the **Indigenous Women Entrepreneurs and Businesswomen's Network of the Americas**. At the forum, we joined forces with the World Indigenous Business Network and UN Women Chile to create a historic partnership that will empower Indigenous women entrepreneurs, both in Canada and throughout the Americas. This partnership will not only give Canada's Indigenous women access to information, resources, and knowledge-sharing, but will also encourage participants to exchange ideas, make investments, conduct market research, and create sustainable partnerships. Our participation in this and other meetings ultimately resulted in an agreement being reached on the key document *Protocol 2020 Indigenous Women Entrepreneurs and Businesswomen's Network of the Americas*, which laid the foundation for this exciting new Indigenous business network. **Calls for Justice 1.2, 2.1**

5) Provincial and Territorial Member Associations (PTMAs)

- **Extensive Grassroots Network:** NWAC, together with its PTMAs, work together to support Indigenous women across the country. Through this extensive network, we know and understand the issues that Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people face from all four directions in this country. This strong and vibrant network works to arrange engagement sessions where Indigenous women provide their lived experience on the issues they are facing in their daily lives and what action governments must take to overcome these issues. **Call for Justice 1.4**
- **Ribbon skirts project:** One of our most recent projects involves a call to Indigenous women to submit a design for red skirts to commemorate MMIWG. We received over 150 designs from Indigenous women from across Canada. Our Elders will select the winning design, which will be showcased at our Resiliency Lodge in Quebec. The recognition of the suffering by Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people is an important part of the

healing and reconciliation process and must be done through commemoration. **Call for Justice 7.1**

6) Monitoring

- **Regular report cards:** Moving forward, NWAC will monitor the progress of the implementation of the 231 Calls for Justice. It is important that all governments be accountable to Indigenous people by taking action to address the issues identified in the MMIWG national inquiry's report. Through the Sisters in Spirit initiative, NWAC played an important role in spearheading the creation of the MMIWG Inquiry. It is therefore only fitting that NWAC continue with its mission to not only support and advocate on behalf of Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people but to hold all governments to account by reporting to Indigenous people on the progress the federal government is making in implementing the 231 Calls for Justice. **Call for Justice 1.10**

7) Policy Research

- Submission to International Organizations

Over the past year, NWAC's **International Unit** has submitted various documents to UN entities, including the following (**Calls for Justice 1.2, 2.1**):

- *Submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: A Proposal to Revisit the Crime of Genocide in International Law* (July 2019)
- *UN Committee on the Rights of the Child - Canada's Joint 5th/6th Periodic Review - Submission to the List of Issues Prior to Reporting* (March 2020)
- *Reparations & Remembrance in Canada for Indigenous Women, Girls & Gender-Diverse Persons* (April 2020)
- *'The Gender Perspective in Transitional Justice Processes': Submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion of Truth, Justice, Reparations and Guarantees of Non-recurrence* (May 2020)

Our report *Reparations & Remembrance in Canada for Indigenous Women, Girls & Gender-Diverse Persons* offers a useful insight into Canada's international legal obligation to ensure an effective remedy and reparations for past human rights violations of Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse persons. The right is enshrined in various international legal sources. All told, if reparations programs have been poorly implemented in different national contexts globally, then it behooves Canada to learn from these shortcomings and fully act on its international legal obligation to provide victims of past violence and abuse in the country with an effective remedy and reparations in practice. **Call for Justice 5.6**

Webinars on MMIWG / Domestic Violence

NWAC is working with the National Collaborating Center for Indigenous Health and Dr. Carrie Bourassa, Scientific Director of the CIHR Institute of Indigenous Peoples' Health, to deliver two webinars on MMIWG and racism, sexism, and violence against Indigenous women. **Call for Justice 6.1, 11.1**

Webinars on trauma-informed care

NWAC has developed and delivered a series of three webinars on providing culturally safe and trauma-informed care to Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people. These webinars, delivered in partnership with the Canadian Public Health Association, reached a wide array of service providers working with Indigenous people in the health and social service sectors. These webinars directly support two Calls for Justice:

- **7.2:** Ensure that health and wellness services for Indigenous people include supports for healing from all forms of unresolved trauma
- **7.6:** Ensure all persons involved in the provision of health services to Indigenous people receive ongoing training, education, and awareness in areas including the history of colonialism, anti-bias and anti-racism, local language and culture, and local health and healing practices

RED Path Project

To respond to the identified needs of incarcerated Indigenous women and to help close gaps in access to culturally safe programs, NWAC designed and implemented the RED Path Project. RED Path is a five-year Public Health Agency of Canada-funded project that aims to develop sustainable, evidence-based, and culturally safe sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections (STBBI) interventions for Indigenous women. RED Path currently works with women incarcerated at three federal correctional institutions: the Fraser Valley Institution for Women, Edmonton Institute for Women, and Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge for Aboriginal Women, as well as the Section 81, Buffalo Sage Wellness House, to deliver a three-day workshop designed by and for Indigenous women. The workshop aims to increase knowledge about STBBI testing and interventions, harm reduction, and building healthy relationships.

This project directly aligns with the following Calls for Justice:

- **7.3:** We call upon all governments and health service providers to support Indigenous-led prevention initiatives in the areas of health and community awareness, including, but not limited to programming:
 - for Indigenous men and boys
 - related to suicide prevention strategies for youth and adults
 - related to sexual trafficking awareness and no-barrier exiting
 - specific to safe and healthy relationships
 - specific to mental health awareness
 - related to 2SLGBTQQIA issues and sex positivity
- **14.8:** We call upon Correctional Service Canada to ensure its correctional facilities and programs recognize the distinct needs of Indigenous offenders when designing and implementing programming for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women. Correctional Service Canada must use culturally safe, distinctions-based, and trauma-informed models of care, adapted to the needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

Hearing Our Voices

NWAC partnered with the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, Lakehead University, the University of Toronto, and the Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute to develop the

“Hearing Our Voices: An Indigenous Women’s Reproductive Health Curriculum.” This curriculum is designed to communicate the experience of Indigenous women in their own voices to residents and other health care and allied health care practitioners who care for Indigenous women in a reproductive health capacity. These online modules aim to improve the ability to care for Indigenous women in Canada by increasing cultural intelligence and knowledge of Indigenous women's social determinants of health and by learning how to incorporate culturally appropriate care into practice. This project directly aligns with the following Call for Justice:

- **7.6:** Ensure all persons involved in the provision of health services to Indigenous people receive ongoing training, education, and awareness in areas including the history of colonialism, anti-bias and anti-racism, local language and culture, and local health and healing practices

Cannabis Project

Our Community-Informed Approach to Cannabis Public Education and Awareness project aims to identify the cannabis needs and priorities of Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people through community engagement and to develop public education and awareness resources that not only meet these needs, but are also culturally safe, distinctions-based, gender-based, and trauma-informed. This directly aligns with the following Call for Justice:

- **7.1:** Recognize that Indigenous people are the experts in caring for and healing themselves, and that health and wellness services are most effective when they are designed and delivered by the Indigenous Peoples they are supposed to serve.

Our cannabis public health education initiative follows this ideology.

Dementia Project

Our *Supporting A Circle of Care: A Culturally-Informed Support Group and Toolkit for Indigenous Caregivers of People Living with Dementia* is a four-year project funded under the Public Health Agency of Canada’s Dementia Community Investment Fund. This project aims to optimize the health and well-being of Indigenous people living with dementia and their caregivers. This directly aligns with the following Call for Justice:

- **7.4:** Provide necessary resources to support the revitalization of Indigenous health, wellness, and child and Elder care practices.

Human Trafficking Advisory Committee

NWAC is a member of the Human Trafficking Advisory Committee, a network of Canadian health providers and advocates working together to bring awareness to human trafficking. The vision is to have a cohesive network of health care providers across Canada working to raise awareness about human trafficking and its impact on the health of a person and our health care system. This directly aligns with two Calls for Justice:

- **7.3:** We call upon all governments and health service providers to support Indigenous-led prevention initiatives in the areas of health and community awareness, including, but not limited to programming for Indigenous men and boys; related to suicide



prevention strategies for youth and adults; **related to sexual trafficking awareness and no-barrier exiting**

- **8.1:** Undertake training to identify and respond to sexual exploitation and human trafficking, as well as the development and implementation of reporting policies and practices

8) Stakeholder engagements

- NWAC President and CEOs have engaged with a number of stakeholders, including Ministers from all levels of government, Senators, Members of Parliament, private-sector senior executives, and NGOs, both domestically and internationally, on ways to reduce systemic violence against indigenous women and girls. **Calls for Justice 1.3, 1.9**

9) Social and Cultural Innovation

- 120 place du Portage, Gatineau: Social and cultural innovation is a tool to empower Indigenous women and communities. When we give Indigenous women the tools they need to achieve economic stability, security, and independence, our communities and Nations thrive. **Calls for Justice 4.2, 4.2**

NWAC's Social and Cultural Innovation Centre is scheduled to open in 2020. The Centre will be a hub for indigenous resiliency and economic development. It will contain a retail store, a café, Indigenous-appropriate meeting spaces, and the offices of NWAC. Through the Centre, NWAC will offer year-round programming, supports, and education for grassroots Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people, as well as the local community. These essential supports will facilitate resiliency for future generations and build the strong relationships necessary for reconciliation.

The Social and Culture Innovation project is consistent with **Calls for Justice 4.1, 4.2, and 4.4**, which requires the government to support education, training, and employment opportunities for Indigenous people.

The strategic location of the Social and Culture Innovation Centre will also serve as a visible reminder to government that the violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people continues and that more must be done to stop the violence.

10) Co-development Achievements with the Government of Canada

- Canada – NWAC Accord: Following years of dedicated work by NWAC, the Government of Canada signed an accord with us on February 2019. This Accord provides a greater role for Indigenous women to play in policy development. It enhances our ability to achieve economic development and employment opportunities for Indigenous women, Two-Spirit, and gender-diverse people; to strengthen Indigenous cultural and language identity; and to advocate at the international level. The Canada-NWAC Accord represents a significant milestone in our ability to be a full and equal participant on key issues affecting Indigenous women and their families. **Calls for Justice 1.4, 4.4, 18.1, 2.3**

- Advisory Committee on Indigenous Women’s Health and Wellbeing: NWAC sits on the Advisory Committee on Indigenous Women’s Health and Wellbeing to provide Indigenous Services Canada with distinction-based advice, guidance, and direction on issues impacting the health and wellness of Métis, Inuit, and First Nations women, and to co-develop policy and service delivery recommendations and implementation approaches. The Advisory Committee identified five priorities, including the priority to address the root causes of violence against Indigenous women. **Calls for Justice 3.1, 7.3, 7.4, 16.7, 17.21**
- Over 40 policy projects with 15 federal departments: NWAC has worked in the past year with a number of federal departments to develop national policies that take into account the perspective of Indigenous women in a number of key areas relevant to MMIWG, including incarceration, transmitted blood disease, mental health, forced sterilization, poverty reduction, and housing. **Calls for Justice 4.6, 14.7, 15.6, 16.19, 17.19**
- Skills development for Indigenous communities across the country: Research shows that poverty and violence against Indigenous women are correlated. Increasing skills development and employability will help Indigenous women move toward good jobs and less economic insecurity. Empowering Indigenous women also sets the foundation for strong families and communities. Through NWAC’s agreement with Employment and Social Development Canada, we are providing supports such as tuition, living allowance, childcare, job starts, and other resources to help Indigenous women reach their employment and skills training needs. **Calls for Justice 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 17.19**

