



Native Women's  
Association of Canada

L'Association des  
femmes autochtones  
du Canada

Final Report on NWAC's  
National Roundtable on the  
National Inquiry into  
**Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women  
and Girls**

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## Executive Summary

This report overviews the key priority areas highlighted by the Native Women's Association of Canada's (NWAC) Provincial and Territorial Member Associations (PTMAs) to inform the Government of Canada's 2020 National Action Plan. NWAC held a National Roundtable with over 65 participants on January 18 and January 19, 2020. The objective of this Roundtable was to engage Indigenous communities so that they can identify key priority areas in response to the 231 Calls for Justice outlined in the final report of the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). Our report establishes the necessary steps to successfully implement a National Action Plan based on the Roundtable responses.

The findings from NWAC's National Roundtable with participants from across Turtle Island and Inuit Nunangat reveal numerous key priority areas. Some of the Roundtable groups' priorities align with the six priority areas outlined by NWAC's *Sisters in Spirit* Initiative and/or specific Calls for Justice in the Inquiry's Final Report. Other priorities emerging from the Roundtable add to the existing 231 Calls, revealing some gaps as well as providing important suggestions on how to ensure that the National Action Plan is implemented based on a comprehensive and appropriate framework.

The following are the **six** key findings highlighted in this report:

1. Priorities identified by PTMAs were not easily separated temporally (i.e., into short- and long-term priorities). Instead, PTMAs prioritized the Calls according to theme (e.g., policing, the education system). Most PTMAs saw the Calls as equally important and requiring both immediate and continued action.
2. The PTMA reports and Roundtable discussions reinforced the priority areas emerging from NWAC's *Sisters in Spirit* initiative as well as the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice.
3. A large component of addressing MMIWG involves creating the political, social, and cultural changes that would enable women to reoccupy the valued roles they had in their communities prior to colonization.
4. Holding federal governments accountable is critical to ensuring the National Action Plan and related activities are adequately implemented through community-driven consultation and implementation processes rather than through government directives and agencies.
5. There is a need to take into account Indigenous realities in the interpretation and application of laws and policies, particularly those that pertain to education systems and law enforcement.
6. The regions' priorities signal the need to change laws and policies across industries and service sectors (i.e. transportation, health care) while simultaneously educating the public (e.g., public awareness campaigns) in order to mitigate the impacts of racism, sexism, and homophobia on Indigenous communities.

In this report, NWAC makes six main recommendations concerning the implementation of the National Action Plan:

1. Build on the recommendations made by NWAC's *Sisters in Spirit* initiative, especially by taking a families-first approach and instigating widespread legislative and institutional changes.
2. Provide permanent, direct, and equitable funding for Indigenous initiatives that are already addressing MMIWG, and related issues, at the grassroots level.
3. Employ a human-rights based approach to ensure Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people's rights to life, liberty, and security of the person, as laid out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and international declarations such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
4. Develop an Action Plan that simultaneously addresses short- and long-term needs as well as those that reflect local, provincial/territorial, and national realities.
5. Interconnect, rather than prioritize or rank, each of the 231 Calls for Justice in the National Action Plan (e.g., grouping Calls together in sets, as already laid out in the Inquiry's Final Report).
6. Fund NWAC to monitor progress made on the National Action Plan, which will involve:
  - a. establishing a Secretariat with permanent NWAC staff mandated to monitor and evaluate the progress made to reduce systemic violence against Indigenous women and girls;
  - b. establishing an Advisory Committee to support the work of the Secretariat;
  - c. preparing an annual report on the work of the Secretariat, which will include the progress made on the National Action Plan and the recommendations moving forward; and
  - d. tabling the annual report to CIRNAC Minister and/or to Parliament.

Based on the key findings and recommendations in this report, NWAC puts forward several actionable next steps that can be taken to address the issues tied to the MMIWG in the short and long term.

Immediate steps include providing Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) with a copy of this report to help inform the National Action Plan; organizing and holding extensive meetings with key government ministers to discuss implementation priorities; developing an Advisory Committee mandated to make recommendations concerning the Government of Canada's response to MMIWG; and commissioning a paper on effective co-development strategies based on an Indigenous perspective.

Long-term steps include developing an evaluation framework that NWAC can use to determine whether the Government of Canada is following through on its National Action Plan and writing a critical reflection paper on how best to fold UNDRIP into the Canadian legislative context.

In closing, this report emphasizes that complex and systemic problems require comprehensive and adaptable solutions. While some issues can be addressed immediately, others may require sustained action. Any approach to addressing the issues related to MMIWG must respect Indigenous human rights. Such an approach must also incorporate the expertise of Indigenous women and girls with lived experience of violence and marginalization. As experts, they have a valuable and important perspective when it comes to advancing the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice.

# Background to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls released its Final Report, entitled *Reclaiming Power and Place*, in June 2019. The Final Report is embedded in a broader context of commissions and inquiries that have shone a critical light on the various origins and experiences of marginalization faced by Indigenous people across Canada.

## Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was established in August 1991, shortly after the Oka Crisis. Its mandate was to investigate and propose solutions to the difficulties characterizing the relationship between Indigenous people, the federal government, and Canadian society at large. The ensuing report, published in 1996, set forth a 20-year agenda for implementing widespread societal and legislative changes. Contained in this agenda were 440 recommendations, along with a new Royal Proclamation confirming Canada's commitment to a new relationship as well as companion legislation setting out a treaty process and formal recognition of Indigenous nations and governments.

## Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Between 2008 and 2014, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) travelled across Canada to hear from thousands of survivors and family members affected by the residential school system. The TRC held hearings over 238 days in 77 Indigenous communities. These hearings resulted in 94 Calls to Action, which were grouped into two themes: legacy and reconciliation. The intent of this work was to "redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation."

## NGOs and International Pressure

In response to calls for immediate action from Indigenous groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) seeking answers for the disproportionately high number of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people, the Government of Canada under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau established the National Inquiry in September 2016.

International frameworks have also been cited in order to ensure Indigenous rights are respected and upheld across Canada. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is the most cited international framework used to address systemic discrimination and violence facing Indigenous people. UNDRIP, which the United Nations General Assembly adopted by resolution in September 2007, describes both the individual and collective rights of Indigenous peoples from a global perspective. This document outlines and informs how to hold cooperative relationships "based on the principles of equality, partnership, good faith and mutual respect" between Indigenous peoples and states, the United Nations, and other international organizations.



The TRC referenced UNDRIP as the most appropriate framework for reconciliation by ensuring Indigenous rights are being observed by the Government of Canada. Since the release of the TRC's Calls for Action, Canada has endorsed the principles of UNDRIP by issuing a Statement of Support in November 2010. In May 2016, the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs announced Canada is a full supporter—without qualification—of the declaration. Most recently, the Government of British Columbia passed legislation in November 2019 to implement the UN Declaration.

Both UNDRIP and the TRC have been used to bolster efforts for a National Inquiry into the thousands of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people across Canada. UNDRIP and the TRC have since informed the data collection and reporting process used by the National Inquiry. International frameworks protecting Indigenous people's rights, such as UNDRIP, can be taken a step further by being used to pressure legislative changes. These frameworks can also be used as a basis to evaluate and recommend changes to the Canadian laws that failed to protect, and in some cases contributed to, murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls.

## National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)

The Government of Canada officially launched the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) in September 2016. A key goal of the two-year inquiry was to identify the systemic issues that led to socio-economic disparity and gender-based physical and mental violence among Indigenous women and girls. The National Inquiry outlined its findings and 231 Calls for Justice in *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*, and emphasized that "priority setting and the implementation that follows must be led by Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, and gender-diverse people." NWAC's important contribution to the Inquiry was *Sisters in Spirit*, a foundational research initiative that was undertaken to thoroughly and respectfully document cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people.



## NWAC's Role and Work on MMIWG

Given its community-based and widespread grassroots reach, NWAC is strategically positioned to co-develop and implement measures that will positively impact Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, and gender-diverse people. These measures include the 61 recommendations that NWAC provided to the National Inquiry during the Inquiry process—many of which are reflected in the Inquiry's final report.

These recommendations, which emerged from NWAC's *Sisters in Spirit* initiative, are grouped into six key priority areas:

1. Families-first approach to the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people
2. Child welfare system
3. Mental health and addictions supports
4. Legislative and institutional changes
5. Education, and education systems
6. Stable funding

The responses gathered during NWAC's National Roundtable discussions with our provincial/territorial member associations (or PTMAs) not only reconfirm these six priority areas, but also inform the findings and recommendations contained in the report that follows here.



## NWAC's National Roundtable Overview, Purpose, and Methodology

### Overview

With support for our proposal from Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), NWAC convened a National Roundtable on the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice on January 18 and 19, 2020. In keeping with NWAC's inclusive approach, the Roundtable brought together experts on the issue of gender-based violence as well as members of Indigenous communities (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit), including Elders, Knowledge Keepers, families, and youth from across Canada. Twelve of NWAC's PTMAs invited five representatives from their communities, including their PTMA president, an Elder, and a youth, and many other PTMAs brought family members who had a personal connection to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, as well as their own experts.

### Purpose

The overarching purpose of the National Roundtable was to provide an opportunity for Indigenous women, Two-Spirit, and gender-diverse community members to work together on developing concrete suggestions for the Government of Canada's National Action Plan, scheduled for release in June 2020. Members of the Roundtable set out their short-, medium-, and long-term priorities for addressing the MMIWG's Calls for Justice and established NWAC's role for the implementation phase. NWAC's concrete steps and recommendations for the federal government's National Action Plan are outlined in this report.

## Methodology

The priorities included in this report were determined using the following processes:

1. PTMA handwritten responses to the four discussion questions (see discussion questions outlined in the next section)
2. Analysis of the PTMA responses by NWAC-appointed researchers
3. Presentation of key findings to participants
4. Clarification of the initial PTMA responses and reiteration of key priority areas following a question-and-answer period
5. Production of provincial and territorial reports based on individual PTMA responses and content from the Roundtable Q&A period (see Annex section)
6. Development of a final report that reflects NWAC's findings and recommendations for the National Action Plan

NWAC posed four discussion questions to the PTMAs, which assigned a notetaker to record their individual responses. The questions focused on short-, medium-, and long-term priorities to be included in the National Action Plan; the role that NWAC should play in implementing the Calls for Justice with the Government of Canada; and the need for further community-level consultation in the prioritization of the Calls for Justice.

The PTMAs had 60 minutes to respond to each discussion question and submit their handwritten responses to the session facilitator. The facilitator and two researchers transcribed the Roundtable notes. Transcriptions were grouped by theme, using the 15 subheadings outlining the 231 Calls for Justice in the Inquiry's final report, and accuracy was verified by crosschecking against the original handwritten notes. Where possible, the facilitator and researchers connected the responses of each PTMA to specific Calls for Justice. The few responses that did not directly align with particular Calls for Justice were slotted into the theme that best applied. Researchers clarified any ambiguities with the respective PTMA.

The researchers adopted the same process to document and group all comments made by those who participated in the Roundtable Q&A session.

Using the PMTA responses and overall analysis, NWAC examined all the provincial and territorial reports to help determine priority areas. We developed a document to highlight common themes and distinctions across the 12 PTMA groups, divided by question, and used this document to inform the key findings and recommendations included in this report.

We then developed a separate document to highlight common themes and distinctions across the 12 PTMA groups, also divided by question. This overall document was used to inform the key findings and recommendations included in this report.



## Roundtable Discussion Question Overview

All National Roundtable participants received a short information document highlighting the 231 Calls for Justice, organized under the major headings and subheadings used in the Inquiry's final report (e.g., Calls directed at all governments, including human and Indigenous rights; Calls directed at industries, institutions, services, and providers, such as health and wellness providers; and Calls directed at all Canadians). Based on this document as well as a comprehensive presentation on the background of the Inquiry and NWAC's role, we posed four questions to Roundtable participants:

**Question 1:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the short term (1 to 2 years)? What measures would have the most significant impact?*

**Question 2:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the medium and long term (more than 2 years)? What measures would have the most significant impact?*

**Question 3:** *How should NWAC work with the Government of Canada to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people? What role should NWAC and its PTMAs play in the Action Plan activities and the implementation of the Calls for Justice?*

**Question 4:** *Is additional community-level consultation required on the Action Plan to implement the 231 Calls for Justice or other-related issues?*

## High-level Findings

The Roundtable participants collectively identified numerous key priorities in implementing the National Action Plan to address the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Some of these priorities align with the six priority areas outlined by NWAC's *Sisters in Spirit* initiative and/or specific Calls for Justice by the National Inquiry. Other priorities reveal gaps in the Inquiry's Final Report or offer recommendations on how to ensure that the implementation of the National Action Plan is based on a comprehensive and appropriate framework.

### Findings that Overlap with Existing MMIWG Calls and Recommendations

Many of NWAC's findings reinforce the priority areas identified by our *Sisters in Spirit* initiative as well as the areas outlined in the Calls for Justice, particularly those dealing with Indigenous rights and governmental obligations. For example, a priority of most regions is core, permanent funding, particularly funding for Indigenous women-led initiatives. Written and verbal responses repeatedly emphasize that reinstating Indigenous women's governance in their own communities is critical for meaningful and lasting change. A large component of addressing MMIWG involves creating the political, social, and cultural changes that would enable women to occupy once again the valued community roles they had before colonization. As one PTMA stated, "We as women ensure everyone is safe. When women are in power, everyone is safe."

Most regions also highlight the importance of holding the federal government accountable for ensuring the National Action Plan and related activities are adequately implemented. Mandating that consultation and implementation processes be driven by Indigenous communities rather than by governmental directives and agencies is critical.

Another common theme is the need to change laws and policies, particularly those that pertain to education systems and law enforcement with a focus on restorative justice. The regions' priorities, which overlap with NWAC's priority areas, signal the value of changing laws and policies across sectors and industries.

Educating the public about the impacts of racism, sexism, and homophobia on Indigenous communities, especially through media campaigns, is also critical.

## Findings that Extend Beyond Existing MMIWG Calls and Recommendations

Despite being quite comprehensive and reflective of many of the recommendations made by Roundtable participants, the Calls for Justice do not fully capture the issues.

First, several regions indicated that the wording used in the Final Report reflects westernized thinking as well as power dynamics between those involved in writing the Calls for Justice and the Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people who are directly impacted. For example, using the phrase "child recruitment into the sex industry" (Call #12.14) implies a degree of choice, and lessens the heinous reality of forcing children into the sex industry. Roundtable participants suggested that stronger language should be used in reports and other documentation in order to reflect the power imbalance between perpetrators and victims or survivors of violence.

Second, multiple groups noted a lack of attention to lateral violence and its role in shaping the issue of MMIWG. Indeed, only one Call for Justice (#1.8) mentions the term, and this Call is directed at "all governments." By contrast, Roundtable participants noted that *Indigenous women*, rather than governments, must play a central role in addressing lateral violence. Whether it is concerning violence between women, between men, incest, sexual abuse, or gang-related activity, many Roundtable groups stressed that Indigenous women need to make a stand to end such violence. On a related note, in the question-and-answer period, several PTMAs stressed the need to involve men and boys in order to break the cycle of violence. Participants discussed the ways in which men and boys also suffer from the impacts of intergenerational trauma and explained how such trauma underpins numerous forms of lateral violence. Consequently, a comprehensive and effective National Action Plan must involve men and boys in its activities, programs, and policies.

Third, Roundtable groups pointed to several Calls for Justice that explicitly mention Indigenous-led initiatives (#2.5, #2.7, #4.7, #7.2, #7.3). Many groups discussed the transformative potential of having true two-way yet Indigenous-led dialogue. The Roundtable groups echoed frustrations with "over-consultation" at the expense of implementation noted in the Inquiry's Final Report and discussed the federal government's role in the consultation process. In line with dynamic, Indigenous-led conversations, the groups concluded that any reports or other documentation on MMIWG must also be dynamic and reflect the genuine dialogue between NWAC, its PTMAs, and the Government of Canada.



## Emerging Themes for the National Action Plan Implementation

Overall, three themes emerge from the key findings for the successful Implementation of National Action Plan. These include the role of indigenous women and girls; rights-based approaches and regional/distinction-based approaches as stated below.

### Role of Indigenous Women and Girls

There is emphasis for a role for indigenous women and girls in the implementation of several areas of the national action plan including reclaiming their traditional roles, role in governance and a central role in implementation plans, and indigenous women in the being a watch dog for as well as a role in leading national action plan activities. The role of men and boys in addressing violence against indigenous women and girls was also emphasized.

### Rights Based Approaches

The rights-based approach has been consistently raised throughout the roundtable discussions including constitutional rights under section 35 in relation to language and culture and the rights to indigenous women and girls protection, security and safety as provided under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. In addition, human rights norms including the rights provided for example under the *United Nations Declaration in the rights of Indigenous Peoples* frameworks. A human rights framework is emphasized as appropriate in addressing the violence against indigenous women and girls. The groups emphasized that this approach keeps the focus on indigenous women and girls in the implementation of a national action plan.

## Regional Approaches

Consistent with the Distinctions Based Approach-Roundtable distinctions-based approaches reflected in the Inquiry's Calls for Justice, many PTMAs noted the inability of pan-Indigenous approaches to address systemic inequalities faced by Indigenous communities. While the PTMAs agreed that distinctions-based approaches are crucial to targeting the specific needs facing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse people, they also indicated the importance of paying attention to the provincial, territorial, and regional specific needs *within* these three distinctions-based groups. Roundtable participants' recommendations for the National Action Plan highlighted the Inquiry's shortcomings, such as its failure to include territories and provinces in its terms of reference, to explicitly mention the role of policing, and to address the problem of pre-emptively closing criminal cases or not reopening unsolved cases.

Furthermore, regional specific initiatives and the revising of regional laws in addressing MMIWG issues was stressed. Participants also raised community level consultations to address concerns of community and family members and for purposes of understanding community needs.



## Complex Problems Require Complex Solutions

The PTMAs' responses to our discussion questions as well as subsequent conversations during the Roundtable highlighted one central truth: MMIWG is a complex issue that results from and persists due to colonialist, racist, and sexist systems and institutions. Violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people is rooted in these systems and is exacerbated by the intersecting forces of discrimination; social, economic, and political marginalization; intergenerational trauma; and lateral violence. Adding to this complexity is the contention of the PTMAs that any effort to address MMIWG, including the National Action Plan, must respond to and reflect provincial and territorial realities. Consequently, any successful Action Plan must consist of contextualized actions, and not a one-size-fits-all, top-down approach that "trickles down" from federal to community levels. The measures to address such an enduring and systemic issue are complex and multifaceted (see the following summary of Roundtable participants' responses to questions 1 and 2). Often, the measures for short-term action overlap with those for medium- and long-term measures.



## Key Findings from Question 1

***On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the short term (1 to 2 years)? What measures would have the most significant impact?***

In contrast to expectations, responses to questions 1 and 2 were less temporal and more thematic, with a focus on those key priority areas that require both immediate and continued action.

The PTMA responses to Question 1 stressed the following key short-term priorities:

- a. An immediate and critical need for secure and permanent funding for Indigenous-led, culturally relevant, and distinctions-based services
- b. Increased public awareness of the issues faced by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women, girls, and gender-diverse people across Turtle Island and Inuit Nunangat

The need for distinctions-based approaches was raised multiple times, with the Roundtable participants identifying the unique contexts and needs of their own regions. For example, PTMAs in rural and/or Northern communities often cited long wait times for service delivery and lack of infrastructure for support services, particularly support for families after official investigations have ended. For regions located in the West, particularly British Columbia, Calls for Justice tied to human security would have the most significant impact in the short term. Specifically, this group highlighted Call #4.8, which states that measures should ensure safe and affordable transit and transportation for Indigenous women in rural/remote areas. The British Columbia group's prioritization of reliable, safe, and affordable public transit likely emerges from direct experiences with the *Highway of Tears*, a corridor of Highway 16 between Prince Rupert and Prince George that has been the site of a devastatingly high number of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Roundtable participants' responses cited the need to challenge the normalization of violence, with multiple regions citing Call #2.6: "We call upon all governments to educate their citizens about, and to confront and eliminate, racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia." These PTMAs noted the need for further research to understand who commits these acts of violence and, more importantly, *why*. This two-step approach, which combines an awareness of the perpetrators as well as an understanding of their motivations, is crucial if the systems and structures of oppression that normalize violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people are to be eliminated effectively.

The revitalization of language and culture and the empowerment of Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in their revitalization efforts were also a shared short-term priority. The responses also align with Call #2.1, which "call[s] upon all governments to acknowledge, recognize, and protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples to their cultures and languages as inherent rights, and constitutionally protected as such under section 35 of the Constitution." More broadly, the groups' stated priorities concerning the right to language and culture reflect some of the key points made in the Inquiry's Final Report.

Many of the short-term priorities identified by the PTMAs were also identified as long-term priorities. For example, many PTMAs noted the need for secure and permanent funding for services, and for transformative change in the criminal justice system to prevent further criminalization and victimization of Indigenous people. These two measures must be implemented immediately and continue as long-term priorities.





## Key Findings from Question 2

*On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the medium and long term (more than 2 years)? What measures would have the most significant impact?*

The PTMA responses to Question 2 focused on the need to fundamentally change the ways in which primary institutions (e.g., judicial, education, policing, and corrections systems) address systemic issues (such as racism, sexism, and discrimination) confronting missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people. Responses emphasized the following medium- and long-term key priorities:

- a. Secure and permanent funding for Indigenous-led, culturally relevant, and distinctions-based services
- b. Accessible, affordable, safe, and secure housing
- c. Distinctions-based approaches to tailor measures to the unique realities facing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse people
- d. Continued dialogue across Indigenous communities and with the Government of Canada to ensure that plans for interventions are consented to by the community, are Indigenous-led, and are not “top-down”
- e. Additional cultural safety and competency education across institutions, especially for the child welfare system, the correctional system, and the education system
- f. The appeal to International bodies (e.g., the UN) to ensure that international human rights conventions are being upheld in the Canadian context

Notably, many of these priorities were also identified as short-term priorities, iterating the difficulty of separating those measures that must be implemented immediately from those that require long-term, continuous work. As noted by the PTMAs, the historic absence and/or inconsistency in funding for Indigenous-led services creates service provision gaps—and, thus, severely limits the ability of Indigenous communities to address the systemic barriers facing their community members.

The absence of accessible, affordable, safe, and secure housing was a widely cited concern. Without adequate housing, Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people are at heightened risk of violence. The Nova Scotia PTMA, in particular, stressed the need for safe housing for vulnerable and marginalized people, calling for the implementation of Indigenous-led low-barrier shelters, safe spaces, and transitional housing and services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people who are homeless, near homeless, in poverty, dealing with food insecurity, fleeing violence, or have been subjected to sexualized violence and exploitation.

This priority is tied to the continued need for distinctions-based approaches: an effective housing strategy must consider the distinct housing realities and needs across First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. To address these distinct needs, the Nova Scotia PTMA called for culturally competent crisis response teams in every region as a strategic intervention. While local in focus, these response teams would be a part of a broader national response team, united by the common goal of preventing and addressing traumatic events.

When it comes to implementing the Calls for Justice, some PTMAs want to see stronger involvement from the Government of Canada while other PTMAs want Indigenous communities to be autonomous, expressing the view that community-based interventions and service delivery are integral to preserving Indigenous culture, minimizing colonial sources of power, and promoting capacity development. Overall, however, most PTMAs emphasized the importance of continued and meaningful dialogue, coupled with action, at the grassroots level.

There is a critical need for large-scale and long-term cultural safety and competency education for people working within the child welfare and law enforcement systems, which have played a large part in ongoing colonial violence against Indigenous individuals, families, and communities. Furthermore, roundtable participants identified the need for increased education and awareness around Indigenous issues in the school systems; integrating Indigenous content into curricula was suggested.

Comparing the responses to the first two questions, it appears that despite the amount of overlap, short-term priorities focus on protection, while medium- and long-term priorities focus on systemic, inter-sectoral change. In other words, the need to implement measures that protect Indigenous women and girls from violence is immediate. Only once their safety is ensured can the focus shift to undertaking long-term systemic and institutional change by lobbying and working with the government at national and international levels.



## Key Findings from Question 3

*How should NWAC work with the Government of Canada to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people? What should the role of NWAC and its PTMAs play in the Action Plan activities and the Implementation of the Calls for Justice?*

Most groups agreed that NWAC (and the PTMAs) should work with all levels of government. However, the PTMAs differed on whether the shared concerns and priorities across Turtle Island and Inuit Nunangat concerning its activities and the implementation of the Calls for Justice should be reflected in a single National Action Plan or multiple regional-based or even community-specific Action Plans.

One group arguing for a single Action Plan expressed concerns about the risk of community-specific Action Plans leading to a fragmentation of Indigenous women's voices: if every community and region determines its own priorities, the possibilities for viable solutions may contradict one another, letting the Government of Canada "off the hook" in its pursuit of a tenable solution. Perhaps more insidiously, differences in viewpoints and priorities across communities in distinct regions may intensify the risks of "divide and conquer" (i.e., creating a situation in which the federal government may maintain the status quo because of the mistaken belief that distinctions across Indigenous communities signal fundamental disagreements concerning the Action Plan).

Numerous groups asserted that NWAC must continue advocating for victims of colonial violence through its involvement in the National Action Plan. The central way in which NWAC can be involved in the Plan is by being a watchdog and monitoring any program or policy within the National Action Plan (see Figure 1 for a detailed explanation of what monitoring would entail). Specific suggestions by some participants were that NWAC continue to

lobby for more core, permanent funding for all PTMAs; provide infrastructure for services and programs; as well as work on implementing a human rights plan specific to Indigenous people (analogous to UNDRIP, and as seen in the recent legislative developments in British Columbia). An important distinction is that we must work to ensure the North, and its need for unique services given its remoteness, is considered at all levels.

Overall, any Action Plan activities and implementation processes must be led by Indigenous women. In a similar vein, participants' responses made it clear that in any partnerships between NWAC and the Government of Canada, NWAC must be in the driver's seat and take ownership of the project. These priorities and suggestions connect with Call #1.10, which calls for the creation of "an independent mechanism to report on implementation of these Calls." PTMAs participating in the Roundtable emphasized that an ideal "independent mechanism" would comprise Indigenous women who hold positions of governance in their own communities. As one group stated, "The voices of the women have been silenced for far too long. It is now time for the women to take the lead on this road to healing. All of the Calls for Justice need to be implemented. As mothers and grandmothers, we should have a huge say over social workers and those implicated in child welfare."

## Key Findings from Question 4

*Is additional community-level consultation required on the Action Plan to implement the 231 Calls for Justice or other related issues?*

While most regions responded with a resounding “yes!” to this question, not all groups shared this sentiment, with one region taking issue with not only the question but the use of the word “consultation.” This non-answer may highlight a concern that consultation processes can, and often are, one-way conversations between government representatives and Indigenous communities—becoming simply a “box to check” rather than a meaningful dialogue led by Indigenous groups and individuals. Another region felt it is time to move past the consultation stage and focus our energies on tangible and effective actions in implementing the Calls and related issues.

The diverse responses highlight the importance of adopting distinctions-based approaches as well as being sensitive to the context and meaning behind the language we choose as a national advocacy organization.

Of those regions that answered “yes” to this question, several groups stressed that further community-level consultation is necessary in order to reach every family and community member affected by the Inquiry. One group wrote: “Yes, [additional community-level consultation is required], because that’s where the work begins and the whole point is to protect the women, the grassroots women, because we are all grassroots before anything else.”

Further, additional community-level consultation would enhance understanding of individual communities’ needs and priorities. During the question-and-answer period, several groups suggested that equitable funding should be directly distributed to each PTMA for further community consultation, as each region would know the needs of their respective community.

One region reinforced the need for distinctions-based consultation and stated that non-governmental Inuit organizations (e.g., QIA, KIA, NTI, ITK, Pauktuutit, and municipal governments) and the Government of Nunavut should be required to consult and implement the 231 Calls for Justice. However, as in responses to Question 3, not all regions called for separate representation: some called for an amalgamation of community-level consultations, where the priorities shared by all PTMAs would provide the foundation for a cross-regional strategy, which NWAC would propose to the Government of Canada. A cross-regional strategy would signal a united front to the federal government. Yet, during the question-and-answer period, it was noted that in an effort to simplify the solution to the MMIWG issue, a “single strategy” approach to a problem with deep contextual, regional-specific aggravating factors runs the risk of not addressing the needs of grassroots communities. For example, one region pointed out that those communities that are more isolated require more resources for consultation and implementation (e.g., funds to cover airfare costs, accommodation in areas without hotels).

## NWAC's Recommendations

The feedback and insights NWAC received from its PTMAs, family members, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, youth, community, and issue experts are invaluable in putting forward recommendations for the Government of Canada's 2020 National Action Plan.

### Build on NWAC's *Sisters in Spirit* Initiative

Roundtable participants echoed many of the original 61 recommendations NWAC made following its *Sisters in Spirit* initiative. These align with the six key priority areas NWAC initially identified:

1. Families-first approach to the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people
2. Child welfare system
3. Mental health and addictions supports
4. Legislative and institutional changes
5. Education, and education systems
6. Stable funding

Of these six priority areas, the families-first approach was particularly pronounced in the PTMA reports. Such an approach would spur legislative and institutional changes (especially regarding police and correctional services, social workers and child welfare services, and education systems) and ensure stable and permanent funding for communities and families.

### Fund Indigenous Initiatives Directly and Equitably

Based on the priorities emerging from our Roundtable and in line with Call #18.7, NWAC recommends increased funding and support for existing Indigenous grassroots initiatives by all governments and service providers. Such funding should be equitable and be provided immediately to Indigenous communities—one avenue would be distribution to each PTMA—experiencing crisis situations, to enable them to address the MMIWG issue at a grassroots level (e.g., public transportation in B.C., emergency response teams in Northern and rural areas without that infrastructure, and direct and coordinated responses to gang violence in the Prairies).

### Resiliency of Indigenous Women and Girls Enhance the Role of Indigenous Women and Girls

An enhanced role for indigenous women and girls in the implementation of a National Action Plan would reinstate their role in governance and enable women to reclaim their role in their communities they had prior to colonization. This enhanced role contributes to the long-lasting effects of addressing violence against indigenous women and girls. Further, NWAC must be recognized as playing a major role in the implementation of a National Action Plan including the creation and being part of an "independent mechanism" to report on the implementation of the MMIWG's Calls to Justice.

## Human Rights-based Approach

The federal government's National Action Plan must recognize that women are the heart of their communities. Consequently, any implementation processes must be rooted in a rights-based framework that recognizes the right of Indigenous women to culture, health, security, and justice. Further, as Indigenous women have the answers to the complexity surrounding the MMIWG issue, meaningful change can occur only when the valued community roles and responsibilities Indigenous women occupied in pre-colonial governance structures are reinstated and revalued. Basing the Action Plan on a human rights framework also ensures accountability, since it includes utilizing international human rights norms to evaluate and recommend changes to the Canadian laws that failed to protect, and in some cases contributed to, murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls (Gunn, 2017). A human rights-based approach would also include international human rights principles such as Canada's duty of due diligence to prevent, investigate, prosecute, punish, and compensate for murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls. As Rauna Kuokkanen, Associate Professor of Political Science and Indigenous Studies at the University of Toronto, explains, a "human rights framework is the most appropriate way of addressing violence against indigenous women because it avoids the victimization of women." An Action Plan rooted in a human rights-based approach would also keep Indigenous women's needs at the centre of its activities, ensuring that solutions emerge from *within* Indigenous communities.

A two-pronged approach would ensure the Government of Canada's accountability in implementing the National Action Plan in both the short and long term:

1. First, international declarations such as UNDRIP should be used to ensure Canada's compliance with international norms as it relates to the issue of MMIWG. UNDRIP, particularly its definition of Indigenous people as a "special group" entitled to specific protections and rights (see Section 32), must become the standard against which any existing or proposed domestic legislation is measured when undergoing judicial review.
2. Second, the rights to life, liberty, and security of the person laid out in the Canadian Charter should continually inform and guide the development and implementation of the National Action Plan.

## Regional/Distinction Based Approach

A regional approach would provide indigenous women's and girls and their communities the opportunity to implement the National Action Plan in an effective manner that addresses and is responsive to the specific issues and needs of their respective community and region. Such an approach enables communities and regions to drive the implementation process.



## Develop a “Both/And” Action Plan

Additional PTMA recommendations that were not fully captured by the recommendations emerging from NWAC's *Sisters in Spirit* initiative include context-specific approaches to consultation and implementation actions. First, an effective Action Plan must respond to regional realities while recognizing that distinct needs do not preclude shared struggles. Such a response entails *both* region-specific strategies *and* cross-regional strategies that address underlying concerns faced by most Indigenous communities (e.g., socio-economic marginalization). Second, the Plan must consider a community's desire for either further consultation in order to gain clarity on actionable measures or for immediate resource allocation to a particular initiative/program. For example: in Saskatchewan, trespassing laws are a region-specific barrier to effectively investigating the MMIWG issue and must be rewritten; and in Northern regions, the lack of accessible transportation is a barrier and must be addressed (through the use of mobile apps that female hitchhikers can use to vet drivers, for example). Where communities desire further consultation, an Action Plan must allow enough time for appropriate consultation, recognizing that these processes must be iterative, dynamic, and Indigenous-led if they are to be meaningful and contribute to lasting change.

## Interconnect, Rather than Rank, the Calls for Justice

Although the Roundtable groups focused on specific priority areas, other areas are equally important. All the Calls for Justice are interrelated. For example, a Call that addresses all Canadians will overlap with those Calls that address specific segments of the population (e.g., social workers); a Call that addresses Correction Services Canada will overlap with a Call that addresses policing, given the numerous inter-sectoral relationships that shape a federal response to the issue of MMIWG. The difficulty in prioritizing certain Calls over others parallels the difficulty in isolating short-, medium-, and long-term measures to address this complex problem.



## Monitor, Evaluate, and Keep the Issue Alive

A problem plaguing past commissions, inquiries, and reports has been the short-lived attention granted to Indigenous rights and the safety, health, and well-being of Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people. This challenge is partly due to four-year limits on parliamentarians, which preclude long-term strategies that extend beyond these limits. The National Action Plan must be capable of weathering a change in government and be structured in such a way as to ensure that knowledge of all completed activities, including those conducted by past governments, are easily accessible to any staff of existing or subsequent governments.

To keep this issue alive and to ensure that the National Action Plan has enduring impacts, we recommend that a Secretariat with permanent NWAC staff be set up to monitor and evaluate the progress made to reduce systemic violence against Indigenous women and girls. We also advise that an external advisory committee be established to support the work of the Secretariat. The evaluations that come from these activities will document the progress made on the National Action Plan and the recommendations moving forward. These evaluations will be included in an annual report that will be tabled to CIRNAC Minister and/or to Parliament.





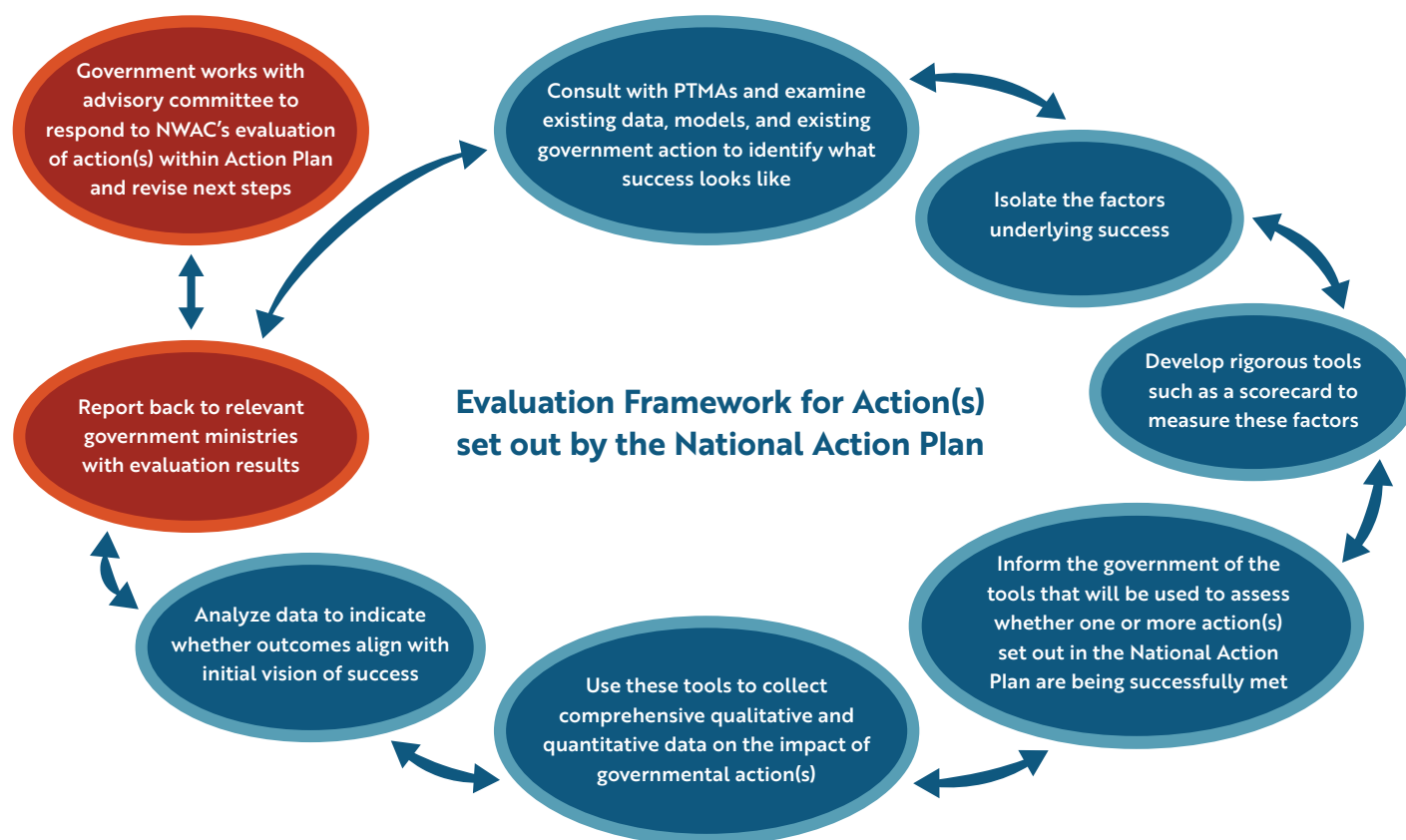
## Next Steps

NWAC has formulated the following steps:

1. Submit this report to Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada to inform the development of a National Action Plan.
2. Fund NWAC to monitor progress made on the National Action Plan, which will involve:
  - a. establishing a Secretariat with permanent NWAC staff mandated to monitor and evaluate the progress made to reduce systemic violence against Indigenous women and girls;
  - b. establishing an Advisory Committee to support the work of the Secretariat;
  - c. preparing an annual report on the work of the Secretariat, which will include the progress made on the National Action Plan and the recommendations moving forward; and
  - d. tabling the annual report to the CIRNAC Minister and/or Parliament.
3. Commission an Indigenous expert to write a paper on effective co-development strategies based on an Indigenous perspective and the priorities and needs identified by Indigenous communities.
4. Develop an evaluation framework that NWAC can use to determine whether one or more action(s) set out in the National Action Plan are being successfully met (see Figure 1 as an example of what an evaluation framework could look like).
5. Write a critical analysis on how best to integrate UNDRIP into the Canadian legislative context, using British Columbia as a case study for applying a human rights-based approach to addressing issues tied to the MMIWG (B.C. is the only Canadian province/territory to enshrine UNDRIP into law). This paper will be written within the next three years.



**Figure 1: National Action Plan Evaluation Framework**



**NOTE:** “Success” is determined by Indigenous communities and can take many measurable forms.

**NOTE:** This infographic will measure whether one or more action(s) set out in the National Action Plan are being successfully met.

**In closing, complex and systemic problems require comprehensive and adaptable solutions. While some MMIWG issues can be addressed immediately, others will require sustained action. Any approach to addressing these issues must respect Indigenous human rights and value the perspectives of those who have experienced violence and marginalization as the experts on how to advance the National Inquiry’s Calls for Justice.**

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## Annex

### Alberta PTMA Report

**Question 1a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the short term (1 to 2 years)?*

Any of the Calls directed at public awareness of MMIWG and its importance as a central issue of human rights and justice should be immediately prioritized in the National Action Plan. NWAC's 10-point Action Plan should be central to guiding these immediate priorities. This PTMA noted that all priorities should recognize the problem of MMIWG as genocide and should call for long-term funding of strategic response initiatives.

**Question 1b:** *What measures would have the most significant impact?*

This PTMA saw the measures that involve developing laws, policies, and education campaigns to challenge the normalization of violence as being the most impactful (e.g., #1.9). It also noted the need for educating citizens on the need to acknowledge and confront various forms of discrimination and oppression (#2.6). Lastly, measures that emphasize the need for greater support in revitalizing Indigenous health, wellness, and Elder and child care practices would have significant impact (#7.4).



**Question 2a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the medium and long term (more than 2 years)?*

Long-term priorities of the National Action Plan should focus on establishing better, long-term funding and other supportive resources to fully realize the priorities mentioned in Question 1.

**Question 2b:** *What measures would have the most significant impact?*

This PTMA noted the importance of adequate and long-term funding to preserve Indigenous culture, prevent violence toward Indigenous people, and empower Indigenous programs and initiatives. These initiatives should employ community-based models of funding and service delivery.

**Question 3a:** *How should NWAC work with the Government of Canada to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people?*

NWAC should be endorsed at all levels Canada-wide and include a spokesperson at the federal level (federal representation). This endorsement would give NWAC access to funding to ensure that Canada does not neglect responsibility for Indigenous rights, especially those that pertain to the protection of human security, Indigenous culture, and community awareness across Canada. This PTMA indicated that the Canada–NWAC Accord is the perfect political vehicle to secure a “seat at the table.”

**Question 3b:** *What should the role of NWAC and its PTMAs be in the Action Plan activities and the implementation of the Calls for Justice?*

NWAC and the PTMAs should be a watchdog to ensure that the Government of Canada is doing its part to implement the priorities in the National Action Plan. NWAC should work as a community liaison to ensure that all of the PTMAs know the federal government's commitments, the implementation process, and the timelines. These roles would give NWAC and its PTMAs a broader perspective on how they want to work with all levels to ensure that the activities and Calls for Justice are implemented in a way that works for Indigenous people.

**Question 4:** *Is additional community-level consultation required on the Action Plan to implement the 231 Calls for Justice or other-related issues?*

More community-level consultation is required. These consultations should be used to create a NWAC-wide strategy in which priorities are agreed to by all PTMAs and put forward to the Government of Canada (i.e., a united stance).



## British Columbia PTMA Report

**Question 1a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the short term (1 to 2 years)?*

The Calls for Justice directed at industries, institutions, services, and partnerships are a top priority for action in the short term. Specifically, this PTMA noted Call #6.1, which refers to the need for media and social influencers to take decolonizing approaches to educate all Canadians on issues about Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

Further, it highlighted the importance of promoting health and wellness across Indigenous communities, specifically noting that Call #7.2 stresses the importance of having Indigenous-led support for healing from unresolved trauma. This PTMA also noted the importance of making funds accessible to Indigenous-centred, community-based health and wellness services (#3.2).

In keeping with the theme of secure funding, this PTMA emphasized the importance of meeting human security needs by calling for the creation and funding of Indigenous-led shelters, safe spaces, and homes (#4.7). To ensure human and Indigenous rights, this PTMA emphasized that it is a government obligation to create funding for violence prevention programs and to disseminate education and awareness campaigns (#4.7).

Finally, Indigenous culture must be respected in its own right. A major part of this is to ensure that Indigenous languages are recognized as official languages and conferred the same status as French and English (#2.1).

**Question 1b:** *What measures would have the most significant impact?*

The Calls for Justice that would have the most significant impact in the short term are those tied to human security and justice. Specifically, this PTMA highlighted Call #4.8, which asserts that measures should ensure safe and affordable transit and transportation for Indigenous women in rural/remote areas.

This PTMA also emphasized that need to develop an enhanced and holistic approach to supporting victims and loved ones of MMIWG (#5.6), and to support the creation and funding of Indigenous-led shelters, safe spaces, and homes (#4.7).

It is important to have resources available for preventative, accessible, holistic services, mobile trauma teams, and addictions recovery (#3.4). Also, in line with human security, additional supports and resources for educational and employment opportunities should be made available to Indigenous women (#4.4).

Lastly, a significant measure in the short term would be to address Call #5.2, which calls for an amendment to the Criminal Code definitions that minimize culpability of the offender, particularly those offences involving Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

**Question 2a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the medium and long term (more than 2 years)?*

Medium- to long-term priorities of the National Action Plan should include education across all levels of society. Governments should facilitate greater public awareness of Indigenous history and challenge the normalization of violence toward Indigenous people. This PTMA also highlighted the importance of ensuring Indigenous people's meaningful access to their culture and language.

**Question 2b:** *What measures would have the most significant impact?*

Governments' efforts should be directed at developing policies and public education campaigns challenging the normalization of violence (#1.9). Media and social influencers should take a decolonizing approach to educate all Canadians (#6.1). Although not directly referencing a particular Call, this PTMA also highlighted the importance of a decolonizing approach to the public school system, which would include an Indigenous curriculum that is trauma-informed and developed by Indigenous people. Indigenous-owned education would make it mandatory for students to take Indigenous courses in order to graduate from Canadian schools.

Call #2.3 mandates ensuring that Indigenous people have access to safe, non-barrier, and meaningful access to culture and language. To do so, this PTMA highlighted the need for resources and permanent funds to preserve Indigenous knowledge (#2.4).

**Question 3a:** *How should NWAC work with the Government of Canada to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people?*

NWAC should work with the Government of Canada to develop an effective communication strategy across the provinces and territories.

**Question 3b:** *What should the role of NWAC and its PTMAs be in the Action Plan activities and the implementation of the Calls for Justice?*

To ensure that information is communicated effectively between NWAC and the Government of Canada, NWAC must develop an internal communication along with "Protocol Agreements and Memorandums of Understandings" across the PTMAs. NWAC should also work with the National Film Board and national TV outlets, and use social media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) to raise awareness of the MMIWG issue.

**Question 4:** *Is additional community-level consultation required on the Action Plan to implement the 231 Calls for Justice or other related issues?*

Additional community-level consultation is needed. This PTMA noted that British Columbia has the highest number of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people of all the provinces and territories. It is a very diverse region, representing 26 different language groups and 203 bands, each with its own unique barriers to addressing MMIWG. Therefore, equitable funding should be directly distributed to each PTMA for further community consultation, as each region would know the needs of its own community.



## Ontario PTMA Report

**Question 1a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the short term (1 to 2 years)?*

There is an immediate need for “cultural sensitivity in media and news outlets information to enhance awareness about violence against Indigenous women and girls.” This PTMA suggested adopting the following protocol to increase awareness: “If you see something, speak out.”

Participants in this group also noted the immediate need to establish mentoring services for young women entering adolescence and adulthood. These services could act as a guide for young Indigenous people who need a good role model (e.g., self-care, healthy relationships, and healthy boundaries).

Finally, participants from Ontario focused on the importance of “land-based learning, medicine gathering, making traditional foods, hunting together, and the basics of survival” in addressing violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people.



**Question 1b:** *What measures would have the most significant impact?*

The Ontario group felt that Calls for Justice that address educators, social workers, individuals involved in child welfare, and workers in extractive and development industries would have the most significant impact in the short term. Specifically, this group noted the importance of educating the public about the MMIWG issue and roots of violence (#11.1), and the importance of implementing education programs on sexual exploitation for Indigenous children and youth (#11.2). This group prioritized Call #12.2, which recommends that Indigenous communities be funded and given control over child welfare-related policies, programs, and decision-making. In terms of extractive industries, this group prioritized Indigenous women’s safety and their right to equitable benefit (#13.1) as well as government funding for studies on the relationship between industry activities and violence against Indigenous women (#13.4). Notably, this group felt that these two calls needed to be addressed in both the short and long term.

**Question 2a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the medium and long term (more than 2 years)?*

In order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the medium and long term, the National Action Plan should focus on the Calls for Justice that address extractive and development industries, health and wellness, and human security. Indigenous women’s safety considerations and studying violence against Indigenous women in the context of extractive industry activities were priority areas in both the short and long term. This group also felt that providing resources for preventative, accessible, and holistic services, as well as mobile trauma and addictions recovery, should be a medium- to long-term priority. The creation and repair of safe housing for Indigenous women was listed as a long-term priority.



**Question 2b:** *What measures would have the most significant impact?*

To best address systemic violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people, the focus should be on implementing Call #3.4, which provides holistic trauma and addictions recovery services, “because substance abuse issues are a prevalent issue that has ripple impacts on the livelihood of Indigenous people.” This priority is in line with the clear connections that current research has established between intergenerational trauma, substance use and abuse, and violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

**Question 3a:** *How should NWAC work with the Government of Canada to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people?*

NWAC should work with the federal government to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people and recommended several pathways. First, NWAC should ensure that Indigenous women have safe, non-barrier, permanent, and meaningful access to their culture and languages, particularly to ceremonial functions and roles (#2.3). Second, NWAC should play a role in educating citizens about and confronting racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia. Finally, NWAC—either in its capacity as a health and wellness service provider via its Resiliency Centre or in its work with other service providers—should support Indigenous-led prevention initiatives (#7.3) and should provide opportunities and incentives to get Indigenous people into health and wellness sectors (#7.8).

Noting that “many Indigenous people do not access local services because they don’t know what’s going on, and we miss girls and women that way,” this group felt that NWAC has a responsibility to promote groups serving Indigenous people—helping them “get the word out” since there is currently “no branding money or advertising money available to spread information.”

In sum, then, given its national scope and platform, NWAC should ensure meaningful access to Indigenous culture and languages; educate citizens about various forms of discrimination faced by Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people; and facilitate Indigenous-led health and wellness initiatives, either directly or through promotion.

**Question 3b:** *What should the role of NWAC and its PTMAs be in the Action Plan activities and the implementation of the Calls for Justice?*

Beyond the actions NWAC should take in its work with the federal government, the Ontario PTMA also felt that NWAC should utilize its federal scope and concomitant resources to fund Indigenous-led initiatives to improve the representation of Indigenous people in media and pop culture.

**Question 4:** *Is additional community-level consultation required on the Action Plan to implement the 231 Calls for Justice or other related issues?*

Participants from Ontario indicated the importance of applying distinctions-based approaches in implementation processes. This group argued for community-level consultation: “No PTMA or women’s group has the authority or knowledge to speak for every Indigenous woman and group in this nation. We need to have more variety and voices and do a meta-analysis of priorities.” This statement highlights the importance of starting consultation at the grassroots level and systematically collecting and analyzing the experiences, concerns, and priorities emerging from community-level dialogues in order to develop a big-picture understanding of the commonalities and differences in priorities related to the issue of MMIWG.

## Saskatchewan PTMA Report

**Question 1a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the short term (1 to 2 years)?*

The Saskatchewan PTMA stressed the importance of immediately addressing issues related to families who are still searching for their loved ones. For example, this group noted the ways in which trespassing laws endanger Indigenous families who are searching for missing family members (Saskatchewan's laws require those who want to cross farmland to obtain permission, a process that can waste precious time and even endanger family members if the landowners are hostile). There is a "need for clauses that allow search teams to search on land of farmers and isolated areas." Other ways in which Indigenous families and communities could be supported in their search for missing persons include potential software that would enable search parties to determine land boundaries, parks, farms, federal land, and Crown land; electronically updated and mutually agreed-upon maps; training for local community members to conduct underwater searches and related emergency response protocol; training of local dogs; and the provision of Northern-trained helicopter pilots to assist with searches. This group also noted the necessity of reviewing those search areas that cross jurisdictions and of ensuring that interpretation is provided in a timely fashion (same day or sooner). Taken together, this group's responses illustrated the importance of immediately ensuring that families and nations "have the resources to continue a search after the formal investigation has been called off."

Other short-term priorities in the Action Plan to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people include making it more difficult for sexual and violent offenders to change their name, which is relatively easy to do in the province.

Ensuring Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people's safety by expanding exit programs for women and girls, offering safe homes for youth, and providing community-based services that foster self-worth and provide opportunities for healthy transitions were also a key priority area for this group. Specific measures to protect vulnerable community members included 1-800 numbers for people to call in while hitchhiking, as well as 1-800 help lines for Indigenous people by Indigenous people.

**Question 1b:** *What measures would have the most significant impact?*

**Question 2a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the medium and long term (more than 2 years)?*

In the medium to long term, the National Action Plan should focus on self-care, awareness, and healthy relationships and how to "amplify and strengthen the voices of our girls." The group brought forward pressing issues in the province, including gang activity and human trafficking, and felt that working with other PTMAs is necessary to address these issues. Specifically, this PTMA discussed the connection between gang activity and violent assaults against children, noting that the last three cases of missing Indigenous children were connected to gang activity, which is moving from the southern areas of the province into the north, leading to a "huge negative impact on children and women." This group stressed that the response "isn't fast enough, so we need to act on this issue immediately." The National Action Plan should focus on addressing and curbing gang activity both immediately and in the long term, and NWAC's own Action Plan and this report should address lateral violence, particularly in the form of female gang leaders and women hurting and murdering other women.

This group also discussed addressing transportation issues as central to addressing the issue of MMIWG, focusing specifically on tougher criminal checks among taxi drivers and bus drivers and on implementing legal sanctions when assaults occur. “Transportation corporations need to be more accountable for their employees and clearly understand their responsibility [to ensure] safe passage of Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people.” Another solution proposed by this group is to create Indigenous-led driving companies that can grant licences to Indigenous women and girls.

In terms of violence prevention, this group suggested implementing a national program to teach age-appropriate consent to all Indigenous people; assertive skills training to women and girls (how to say “no”); self-defence, self-love, self-care, and self-esteem workshops; and tools to mothers to help prevent or end their daughters’ relationships to older men and/or pedophiles. Teaching tools, workshops, and seminars on social media about the dangers of luring and how to stay safe from sexual abuse and violence was another suggestion.

Other key medium- to long-term priorities listed by the Saskatchewan PTMA included monitoring medical institutions such as clinics and hospitals, especially monitoring the flow of alcohol and drugs and who is benefitting from this flow.

**Question 2b:** *What measures would have the most significant impact?*

**Question 3a:** *How should NWAC work with the Government of Canada to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people?*

The Saskatchewan group saw NWAC mainly as an advocate and noted that it would like to see NWAC do more work with the UN, bringing concerns to the international level, especially in light of inadequate and slow response to the issue of MMIWG from the federal government. The group felt strongly that over the next few years it will be critical to see what is happening throughout the country and speed up the process of addressing MMIWG, since people’s lives are at stake.

Specific suggestions were for NWAC to work with the federal government to set up new detox and treatment centres to deal with drug-related issues impacting Indigenous communities, and to develop trauma teams in reserves and communities. These teams would provide holistic help for people and their families.

**Question 3b:** *What should the role of NWAC and its PTMAs be in the Action Plan activities and the implementation of the Calls for Justice?*

NWAC and the PTMAs should work in partnership to deliver and foster a legacy of healing initiatives, starting with young people, as a way to bring safety back into Indigenous communities. The theme of working with youth and addressing issues of sexual abuse and violence at an early age emerged in this group’s responses to Question 2 as well.

**Question 4:** *Is additional community-level consultation required on the Action Plan to implement the 231 Calls for Justice or other related issues?*

The Saskatchewan group felt that consultation “should always be done” and that it is a continual process: “Things change, so information needs to be updated.” This feedback once again illustrates the importance of viewing consultation as a dynamic and ongoing process; it is not a box that can be checked off after one meeting or engagement session. Rather, proper consultation involves consistently and accurately capturing the complexity of the issue of MMIWG, and the ways in which both short- and long-term solutions evolve over time.

## Manitoba PTMA Report

**Question 1a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the short term (1 to 2 years)?*

In order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the short term, it is critical to acknowledge that the 231 Calls to Justice are all important, and that addressing them will be a lot of work and will take a long time. It is therefore necessary to “give appropriate time to consult with people regionally.” Further, this group stressed that work done now needs to consider successive generations, and that the current framework of addressing the MMIWG issue does not allow for informed or ongoing/continuous participation.

Given the limitations of the federal government’s plans, the Manitoba group continually stressed that the National Action Plan and specific Calls to Justice should be spearheaded by Indigenous women. The group contended that it does not want to contribute to this process, which the government has implemented, in part because the government has not officially admitted its responsibility in contributing to the MMIWG problem. Consequently, the Manitoba group argued for “a body to implement calls and to create new [non-governmental] structures. Indigenous women need to have a place at the table and need to have full say in what should be done. We should be an equal partner with government, and we should set the timelines.”

This group also highlighted families as a key priority area: First, it is important to recognize the significant amount of work that families have already done; second, any work that supports the wellness of family members and survivors should be a priority. Participants from Manitoba noted the importance of engaging and consulting communities and families as well as providing support for families who have not testified or come forward while respecting their reasons to refrain from participating in the Inquiry or related processes. Ultimately, there are still missing people, there are others who have not come forward, and their stories haven’t been captured, and any Action Plan needs to respect the need to support families in multiple ways.

Finally, this group noted monitoring as another key priority area: articulating and monitoring acts of genocide regardless of its origins (e.g., corporations, medical institutions) and documenting anything that contributes to the ongoing genocide experienced by Indigenous women. An adequate Action Plan needs to assess perpetrators, make them aware of this, and hold them accountable if they deny their responsibility. This group also argued for documentation of ameliorative measures and noted that any work done in efforts to heal the traumas of genocide must respect traditional knowledge and ways of healing (e.g., beading groups). Ultimately, addressing this systemic issue will require restoring Indigenous women’s proper place in society and their roles within their community in a trauma-informed way.

**Question 1b:** *What measures would have the most significant impact?*

**Question 2a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people in the medium and long term (more than 2 years)?*

Having Indigenous women in positions of leadership to hold municipal, provincial, and federal governments accountable would go a long way to addressing violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the medium and long term. Women in these positions would conduct annual reports on Calls to Justice and any implementation gaps in all levels of government, thereby holding governments to their word. Other ways to ensure governmental accountability would be to hold regional consultations and have grassroots women decide if the Calls have been completed and if they meet the needs of Indigenous women and families.

The Manitoba group highlighted the double burden of being a victim and an advocate, noting “they [the government] get us to do the work for them. Why is the work always up to the oppressed?”

This group noted other ways in which to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people, including having healing centres, which would create culturally sensitive connections and as a result lead to lower incarceration rates for Native women and their families. This group also pointed out the following criteria for ensuring the success of a long-term plan: acknowledging different communities’ needs; providing adequate program funding, as well as time-related resources and infrastructure; paying Indigenous women for their time in consultation and other processes; addressing racism at all levels of government; working collaboratively in communities, grassroots organizations, and with family members, particularly when a lot of people have lost their family members; keeping families together (i.e., not separating Indigenous children from their families); and, finally, training First Nations women to deliver services. This last point connects with this group’s response to the first question about viable short-term solutions: Indigenous women need to lead, educate, and deliver programs and must be the watchdogs to ensure that the government remains accountable to Indigenous communities.



**Question 2b:** *What measures would have the most significant impact?*

Training Indigenous women to lead, evaluate, and deliver services would have the most significant impact in addressing violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the medium and long term. In other words, Indigenous women must receive funding in order to provide services and to be a “watchdog” to ensure that Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people are kept safe and that governments are held accountable.

Similar to its response to the most impactful ways to address MMIWG in the short term, this group felt that the most important component of addressing MMIWG in the medium and long term would be to “acknowledge that this work has been done by Indigenous women,” highlighting the role they played in the Inquiry in the first place and that it was not the federal government that took the initiative to conduct the Inquiry.

**Question 3a:** *How should NWAC work with the Government of Canada to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people?*

**Question 3b:** *What should the role of NWAC and its PTMAs be in the Action Plan activities and the implementation of the Calls for Justice?*

The Manitoba group argued that Indigenous women need to be a watchdog, educating communities to explain genocide, monitoring the ongoing genocide, sending reports to governments, and ensuring continued government acknowledgement of MMIWG as genocide.

**Question 4:** *Is additional community-level consultation required on the Action Plan to implement the 231 Calls for Justice or other related issues?*

Consultation processes must be community-led. The group felt that events such as the National Roundtable do not qualify as community-level consultation. Instead, going to families and directly consulting them and then re-inviting the PTMAs to a national roundtable with direct input from communities would constitute proper consultation.

Participants from Manitoba also felt that a five-year timeline with a proper budget is necessary and highlighted the time that proper consultation and subsequent implementation would take. This group felt that rushing the report is rooted in the government’s desire to minimize its workload and will result in a less effective plan. Consequently, this group’s overall contention was that any effective response to MMIWG must be Indigenous-led and removed from colonial government structures. The government needs to take direction from community members and acknowledge that it has contributed to harm and that its actions to date constitute genocide.

This group also noted the importance of Indigenous communities collecting their own data, because the existing data are not accurate, noting: “many families don’t trust the RCMP, because they believe they are involved in causing the harm.”



## Newfoundland PTMA Report

**Question 1a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the short term (1 to 2 years)?*

A key priority in addressing violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the short term, as per Call #4.7, is to support the creation and funding of Indigenous-led shelters, safe places, and homes. This group focused especially on Calls that address social workers and those implicated in child welfare, specifically those Calls that provide funds to families and communities of MMIWG to care for children left behind (#12.5); have child and family services hire Indigenous staff and train all staff members in issues affecting Indigenous children (#12.12); fund and give Indigenous communities control over child welfare (#12.2); develop and apply an Indigenous definition of “best interests of the child” (#12.3); establish a child and youth advocate in each jurisdiction (#12.9); ensure protection orders are available, accessible, promptly issued, and effectively serviced and resourced (#5.9); and support specialized intervention, healing, and treatment programs and services in Indigenous languages (#5.7).

**Question 1b:** *What measures would have the most significant impact?*

The Newfoundland PTMA believed the following calls would provide the most short-term significant impact, listed in order of importance: support the creation and funding of Indigenous-led shelters, safe places, and homes (#4.7); provide healing programs and support for children and families of MMIWG (#3.7); and prevent, investigate, punish, and compensate for violence against Indigenous women (#1.5).

**Question 2a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the medium and long term (more than 2 years)?*

Newfoundland listed changes in police services, justice, correctional services, and education as medium- and long-term priorities for the National Action Plan. This group focused on the need for standardized police investigation protocols for all MMIWG cases (#9.5). In terms of calls addressing the justice system, this group prioritized ensuring full culpability of offenders in the Criminal Code (#5.2) and reforming the law on sexualizing intimate partner violence from an Indigenous women’s lens (#5.3). With respect to calls addressing Correction Services Canada, this group felt that it was most important to increase training and education opportunities to support reintegration of incarcerated people (#14.9); establish facilities so that Indigenous women have options for decarceration (#14.1); and break the cycle of violence by providing programming for men and boys (#14.12). This group also focused on the need for educators to educate the public about MMIWG and root causes of violence (#11.1) and to implement education programs for Indigenous children and youth on sexual exploitation (#11.2).





**Question 2b:** *What measures would have the most significant impact?*

**Question 3a:** *How should NWAC work with the Government of Canada to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people?*

NWAC should work with the federal government on its National Action Plan for violence against Indigenous women (#1.1) and, most importantly, should hold governments accountable to act on the Calls for Justice (#15.8). For the ways in which NWAC should work with the Government of Canada, this group focused on the importance of NWAC becoming a strong ally (#15.4); confronting and speaking out against racism, sexism, ignorance, homophobia, and transphobia (#15.5); and protecting and promoting the safety of Indigenous women and their right to self-determined solutions (#15.6).

**Question 3b:** *What should the role of NWAC and its PTMAs be in the Action Plan activities and the implementation of the Calls for Justice?*

NWAC's main role is to hold governments accountable on the Calls for Justice, in line with Call #15.8, which mandates that all Canadians play a role in holding the government accountable. As per Call #1.7, one specific way that NWAC and its PTMAs can do this is by having clear measurements of progress provided by independent ombudsmen and tribunals that have authority in all government jurisdictions.

**Question 4:** *Is additional community-level consultation required on the Action Plan to implement the 231 Calls for Justice or other related issues?*

This group argued that no additional community-level consultation is required, because consultation has already been completed. According to this group, repeating these actions is preventing the 231 Calls for Justice from moving forward and that "valuable time will be lost revisiting" issues that are already well-known. Instead of consultation, this group felt that "time could be better used [by] implementing the suggestions already compiled in previous consultations, which have already been outlined in the summary guide." In other words, the work already outlined has to be done before adding more tasks. In closing, the Newfoundland group felt that NWAC has and is doing good work; it has the solutions. NWAC's task now is to move forward and put the solutions already developed into action.



## PEI PTMA Report

**Question 1a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the short term (1 to 2 years)?*

The PEI PTMA's focal point for short-term priorities was on human and Indigenous rights and on governmental obligations. This PTMA prioritized the development of laws, policies, and public education campaigns to challenge the normalization of violence (#1.9). It strongly contended that with funding for workshops and educating the public, a spotlight can be cast on violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people (#1.8).

**Question 1b:** *What measures would have the most significant impact?*

Legislative and policy changes, along with funded education campaigns and workshops, will have the most significant impact.

**Question 2a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the medium and long term (more than 2 years)?*

The PEI PTMA listed Calls addressing police services as medium- and long-term priorities in the National Action Plan. It stressed the importance of police officers being educated about Indigenous peoples and those who interact with Indigenous people receiving cultural sensitivity training (#9.3). This group also highlighted the importance of having Indigenous policing in rural municipalities and implementing cultural sensitivity training throughout the broader judicial system (#9.1, #9.2).

**Question 2b:** *What measures would have the most significant impact?*

Cultural sensitivity training for police would have the most significant impact in addressing MMIWG in the medium to long term.

**Question 3a:** *How should NWAC work with the Government of Canada to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people?*

NWAC should work with the government to enhance federal awareness of the central issues faced by Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people. In addition to becoming more aware, the government should be more accepting in answering any questions that Indigenous groups may ask in an effort to keep it accountable to act on the Calls for Justice (#15.8).

**Question 3b:** *What should the role of NWAC and its PTMAs be in the Action Plan activities and the implementation of the Calls for Justice?*

This PTMA saw NWAC as being the facilitator in implementing the Action Plan.

**Question 4:** *Is additional community-level consultation required on the Action Plan to implement the 231 Calls for Justice or other related issues?*

Additional community-level consultation is required on the Action Plan, because communities in P.E.I. have family members who are either missing or have been murdered and whose input needs to be incorporated.



## Nova Scotia PTMA Report

**Question 1a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people in the short term (1 to 2 years)?*

One Nova Scotia PTMA participant noted the difficulty of prioritizing Calls relating to an issue as complex and deeply personal as MMIWG: “When I read the question, I had a difficult time to try and put it in perspective in my mind. I had to stop, clear my mind. I had to focus on my role as a mother.”

Citing Calls #11.1 and #11.2, this group stressed the importance of education in addressing violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the short term: education about anti-violence initiatives and the effects of intergenerational trauma, education for law enforcement, and education for spiritual and holistic healers.

Referencing Call #5.25, the group also identified the need for research on and a better understanding of the perpetrators of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people, reflected in the question: “First of all, to end violence against women, we have to think of who is hurting us? Why are they hurting us? Why are they killing us?”

Participants from Nova Scotia also identified short-term ways to provide support for families of MMIWG, particularly those who have not testified or come forward, and to acknowledge that there are still family members whose stories have not been heard and whose loved ones are still missing. Secure and permanent funding is necessary for the needs arising from this crisis. The group also called for increased structural accountability and suggested a body to implement the Calls to ensure accountability, as well as the personal involvement of the prime minister. Finally, this group stressed the importance of a distinctions-based perspective and identified the need to recognize the unique situations and needs of rural and Northern communities.

**Question 2a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the medium and long term (more than 2 years)?*

Participants made an important statement about the National Roundtable itself: “These questions are so broad, you can put every call in every question.” Further, they referenced Call #3.6, which calls for all governments to “ensure substantive equality in the funding of services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, as well as substantive equality for Indigenous-run health services” and suggested that governments establish culturally competent crisis response teams for traumatic events. It would be ideal to have a national response team situated in every region, united by a common goal but embedded in local or regional/provincial contexts. However, it would take over a year to train a frontline trauma team.

Participants referenced Call #3.7, which calls for the provision of healing programs and support for children/families of MMIWG. In Nova Scotia, there is a high demand for supports and resources, yet there is only one employer in this area and therefore no supply. Increased support services was a prominent theme for this group, which identified a need for more shelters and program development for women, while ensuring that such programs and services include a culturally relevant gender-based analysis and recognize gender-diverse people and their unique needs in service delivery.

A need for the creation and funding for Indigenous-led low-barrier shelters, safe spaces, transition homes, second-stage housing, and services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people who are homeless, near homeless, dealing with food insecurity, or in poverty, and who are fleeing violence or have been subjected to sexualized violence and exploitation (#4.7,) was identified, as well as the need for support programs and services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people in the sex

industry to promote their safety and security (#4.3). These programs must be designed and delivered in partnership with people who have lived experience in the sex industry and be given secure and permanent funding. This group suggested developing educational workshops on human trafficking as a first step in creating these supports.

More support from government was needed to implement long-term goals. The group said there is a need to lobby the current top 10 Actions as presented, continue to stress the importance of women's rights and safety by all forms of government (i.e., Indigenous, provincial, federal, and international), and "lobby for more funding. This group also highlighted the centrality of structural change concerning the transformation of Indigenous policing "from its current state as a mere delegation to an exercise in self-governance and self-determination over policing" (#5.4). Participants also called for increased clan mother and/or grandmother input in these policies and programs. The need for increased Indigenous involvement in developing legislation that

prioritizes Indigenous rights to ensure the safety of women was also brought forward, as well as the need to address MMIWG on an international level by using the Jay's Treaty and Turtle Island approach.

Finally, participants identified the need for changes in existing mechanisms of dealing with perpetrators of violence against Indigenous women. A specific suggestion was to develop a screening mechanism (not a criminal record screen) for traditional healers, as they too can be perpetrators of violence who have not been publicly accused. Participants also suggested that NWAC develop a "redemption policy, to allow perpetrator to re-enter community" and encourage counselling and further healing throughout and after the criminal justice process.



**Question 3a:** *How should NWAC work with the Government of Canada to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people?*

It is important to mark Indigenous women as “sacred” like mother earth and write a “Clan Mother’s law” to protect and educate our women. NWAC must hold governments accountable for their actions so that they take responsibility and stop discriminating against our women.

The need for a distinctions-based approach to developing goals in the National Plan was stressed: “Develop fundamental basic needs outside programs specific to First Nations (i.e., emergency social housing, comprehensive justice system, measurement plan)” in order to determine how effective these implementations are.

NWAC should continue to lobby for more non-political funds as core funding for all PTMAs, as well as to advocate for victims of colonial violence, such as assisting in the aftermath of the Indian Day School, and to lead any government–NWAC joint initiatives to address policies, laws, and service delivery. NWAC should also work on developing policies and programs for the perpetrators of violence to intervene in the cycle of violence by addressing both abusers and survivors, which connects to Indigenous-led restorative justice approaches.

Finally, participants stated that we need to start trusting each other as women, caregivers, and healers, as this trust will hold us together and help us form a cohesive group to work with the Government of Canada.



**Question 4:** *Is additional community-level consultation required on the Action Plan to implement the 231 Calls for Justice or other related issues?*

Nova Scotia chose not to respond to this question due to its concern with the term “consultation.”



## New Brunswick PTMA Report

**Question 1a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the short term (1 to 2 years)?*

The New Brunswick PTMA focused on health and wellness, particularly on land-based healing. Specifically, the group wants to see resiliency centres created to provide preventive, accessible, holistic services, and mobile trauma and addictions recovery services to Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people (#3.4). This group also prioritized the need for funded Indigenous-centred, community-based services (#3.2), with an emphasis on equitable funding for health for Indigenous women (#3.6). The group wants the recognition and protection of Indigenous rights to health and wellness (#3.1) and supports calling all Knowledge Keepers to create community-based trauma-informed programs (#3.3). Finally, this group highlighted the need to establish culturally competent crisis response teams for traumatic events (#3.5) and provide healing support for families and children of MMWIG (#3.7).

Recognizing that Indigenous people are experts in caring and healing themselves (#7.1), health and wellness providers must offer and support Indigenous-led prevention initiatives (#7.3) as well as offer support for healing from unresolved trauma (#7.2). Health and wellness providers should receive ongoing training and education (#7.6), Indigenous people should be encouraged to work in the health and wellness sector (#7.7), and such services and programs should be provided in Indigenous languages (#7.5).

The New Brunswick PTMA wants the acknowledgement and protection of Indigenous rights to be inherent (#2.1) and for Indigenous languages to have the same official status as English and French in Canada (#2.2). The group highlighted the preservation of Indigenous knowledge (#2.4) and

the creation of a permanent empowerment fund for Indigenous-led initiatives (#2.5) as important. Indigenous women should have safe, non-barrier, permanent, and meaningful access to their cultures and languages (#2.3) and Canadians must be educated about and encouraged to help eliminate racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia in Canada (#2.6).

New Brunswick requested a reform of the law regarding sexualized and intimate partner violence, taking into consideration the perspective of an Indigenous woman (#5.3). There was even a suggestion for amendments to be made to the Criminal Code, to reflect violence against an Indigenous woman as an aggravating factor during sentencing (#5.18). Additionally, there is a need to transform the current Indigenous policing to an exercise in self-governance and determination (#5.4) and to expand the Indigenous peoples' court beyond the reserve system, as stipulated in UNDRIP (#5.11). Emphasis was placed on making Gladue reports as a right and to resource them appropriately (#5.15).

To address 2SLGBTQQIA issues, the New Brunswick PTMA stressed the need for government funding and support to raise awareness of 2SLGBTQQIA issues through programs and services (#18.1) targeted to both adults and youth (#18.6).

Lastly, the New Brunswick group called for the full implementation of the Spirit Bear Plan by the government and child welfare agencies (#12.13).

**Question 1b:** *What measures would have the most significant impact?*

New Brunswick emphasized land-based healing and that the creation of resiliency centres will provide preventive, accessible, holistic services, as well as mobile trauma and addictions recovery services to Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people.



**Question 2a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the medium and long term (more than 2 years)?*

As demonstrated by the aforementioned short-term priorities, the New Brunswick PTMA established a connection between rights, representation, and funding—a trend that also continued in its medium- and long-term priorities. Areas also noted in its medium- and long-term priorities were media and social influencers (#6.1); police services (#9.3, #9.4, #9.6, #9.9); attorneys and law societies (#10.1); educators (#11.1, #11.2); social workers and those implicated in child welfare issues (#12.3, #12.4, #12.5, #12.6, #12.9, #12.10, #12.15); Correctional Services Canada (#14.6, #14.8, #14.9, #14.10); all Canadians (#15.2, #15.3, #15.4, #15.6, #15.7, #15.8); and all governments with respect to 2SLGBTQQA-specific issues (#18.24, #18.25).

**Question 2b:** *What measures would have the most significant impact?*

Measures related to educational initiatives (particularly those that support Indigenous-led educational systems); strategic planning; and the development of a nation-to-nation political voice for Indigenous women would have the most significant impact in the medium to long term.

**Question 3a:** *How should NWAC work with the Government of Canada to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people?*

NWAC should work with the Government of Canada to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people. Specific emphasis was paid to NWAC's role in ensuring that all Calls related to governmental obligations on human and Indigenous rights are addressed and implemented (#1.1–#1.11); establishing and engaging with a civilian Indigenous advisory committee (#9.8); ensuring (or perhaps providing) mandatory

training of all involved in the criminal justice system on Indigenous cultures and histories (#10.1); educating the public about MMIWG and other issues and roots of violence (#11.1); and implementing education programs for Indigenous children and youth on sexual exploitation (#11.2). This group also saw NWAC as playing a role in all Calls addressing extractive and development industries (#13.1–#13.5) and those addressing social workers and people involved in child welfare (#12.1–#12.15).

**Question 3b:** *What should the role of NWAC and its PTMAs be in the Action Plan activities and the implementation of the Calls for Justice?*

NWAC and its PTMAs should play a central role in the Action Plan, with NWAC acting as a facilitator during the implementation phase. NWAC should occupy a seat at every governmental body involved in the implementation of the Action Plan and all funds allocated in response to the Calls for Justice should flow through NWAC.

**Question 4:** *Is additional community-level consultation required on the Action Plan to implement the 231 Calls for Justice or other related issues?*

New Brunswick would like to see further funding for ongoing community-level consultation in order to reach every member affected by the MMIWG Inquiry.



## Nunavut PTMA Report

**Question 1a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the short term (1 to 2 years)?*

Participants from Nunavut identified an opportunity for partnership between the criminal justice system and Indigenous organizations. Furthermore, the courts should collaborate with Indigenous bodies regarding facts concerning missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people before submitting information to the media (rather than the information coming directly from the courts of justice to the media).

More funding is needed to create and increase access to programs and services to prevent women and children from being exposed to violence and substance abuse. This group cited a lack of structure in Nunavut for treatment facilities and safe shelters for women and children.

Safe shelters are only available in some communities in Nunavut. Existing shelters have limited capacity, even in the communities where they operate, the shelter location is known by all, including abusers and their friends and families. Women and children are regularly turned away when shelters are full. New shelters have been announced, but monitoring will be ongoing by the Nunavut PTMA.

For women who need to access healing treatments in Nunavut, there can be a wait time of 8 to 10 months—a situation that demonstrates the critical need for increased availability and accessibility. Nunavut's new residential treatment centre, to be located in Iqaluit, was announced in August 2019. It is an example of initiatives that need to be supported in order to address this critical need for treatment services. It will be the first facility of its kind located in Nunavut. Nunavut's PTMA will be monitoring its success in addressing the needs of women and their families, especially with respect to the needs of women who live outside of Iqaluit.

Further, in line with treatments is The National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy (Call for Justice 16.13) which is of particular interest to the Nunavut PTMA.

There are cases where women have to leave their communities for access to services or for economic opportunities, often relocating to urban centres (normally Ottawa, Winnipeg, Montréal and Edmonton). This relocation leave Indigenous women and girls are particularly vulnerable to a broad range of risk factors, including poverty, social isolation and being preyed upon by others, including new abusers. A number of Nunavut Inuit women have gone missing or been murdered in the south. Understanding and reducing risks for Inuit women living temporarily or permanently in urban centres is a strategic concern for the Nunavut PTMA.

**Question 2a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the medium and long term (more than 2 years)?*

Nunavut participants identified a number of calls from across categories, illustrating the difficulty of prioritizing some calls over others. That said, the calls they focused on included those related to human and Indigenous rights and governmental obligations (#1.1, #1.8); culture (#2.2, #2.5); health and wellness (#3.2, #3.4); human security (#4.1, #4.6, #4.7); justice (#5.4, #5.5, #5.11); media and social influencers (#6.1); health and wellness providers (#7.5); transportation service providers and the hospitality industry (#8.1); police services (#9.5, #9.9); attorneys and law societies (#10.1); educators (#11.1, #11.2); social workers and those implicated in child welfare (#12.7); extractive and development industries (#13.5); Correctional Services Canada (#14.6, #14.9, #14.12); and all Canadians (#15.8).

Notably, the Nunavut PTMA was one of only a few groups to recognize the need for distinctions-based approaches in relation to Calls for Justice relating to Métis (#17.8, #17.25), all Inuit-specific Calls (#16.01, #16.26, #16.27, #16.28, #16.34, #16.45, #16.46, #16.32) (police services), and 2SLGBTQQIA-specific Calls (#18.1, #18.17, #18.20, #18.24).

Participants identified a need to increase educational programs and suggested the creation of programs on traditional parenting, leadership skills, self-care/worth, decision-making, street smarts, self-defence, and life-skills to help educate and empower Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people. The need for increased education was also echoed in the suggestion to add a specific MMIWG component in high school curriculums and increasing anti-bullying initiatives. Such anti-bullying initiatives would teach youth how to treat everyone fairly and equally and how to be respectful and unrighteousness. This group also suggested supporting empowering programs such as those regarding cultural competence, language protection, and teaching Inuit languages.

Further, the Nunavut PTMA agrees with a 'families first' approach that involves men. The application of strategies to assess root causes, determine accountability, reduce harm, enable counselling, etc. to men is also needed to create safer and healthier Inuit communities.



**Question 3a:** *How should NWAC work with the Government of Canada to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people?*

NWAC should work with the federal government to create the National Action Plan (this group referenced NWAC's 10-point Action Plan). NWAC's role should involve representing Indigenous peoples to all governments. In desperate need of implementation were Call #2.2 ("recognize Indigenous languages as official languages, with the same status, recognition, and protection provided to French and English") and Call #2.5 ("create a permanent empowerment fund devoted to supporting Indigenous-led initiatives for Indigenous individuals, families, and communities to access cultural knowledge, as an important and strength-based way in which NWAC can support cultural rights and to uphold self-determined services").

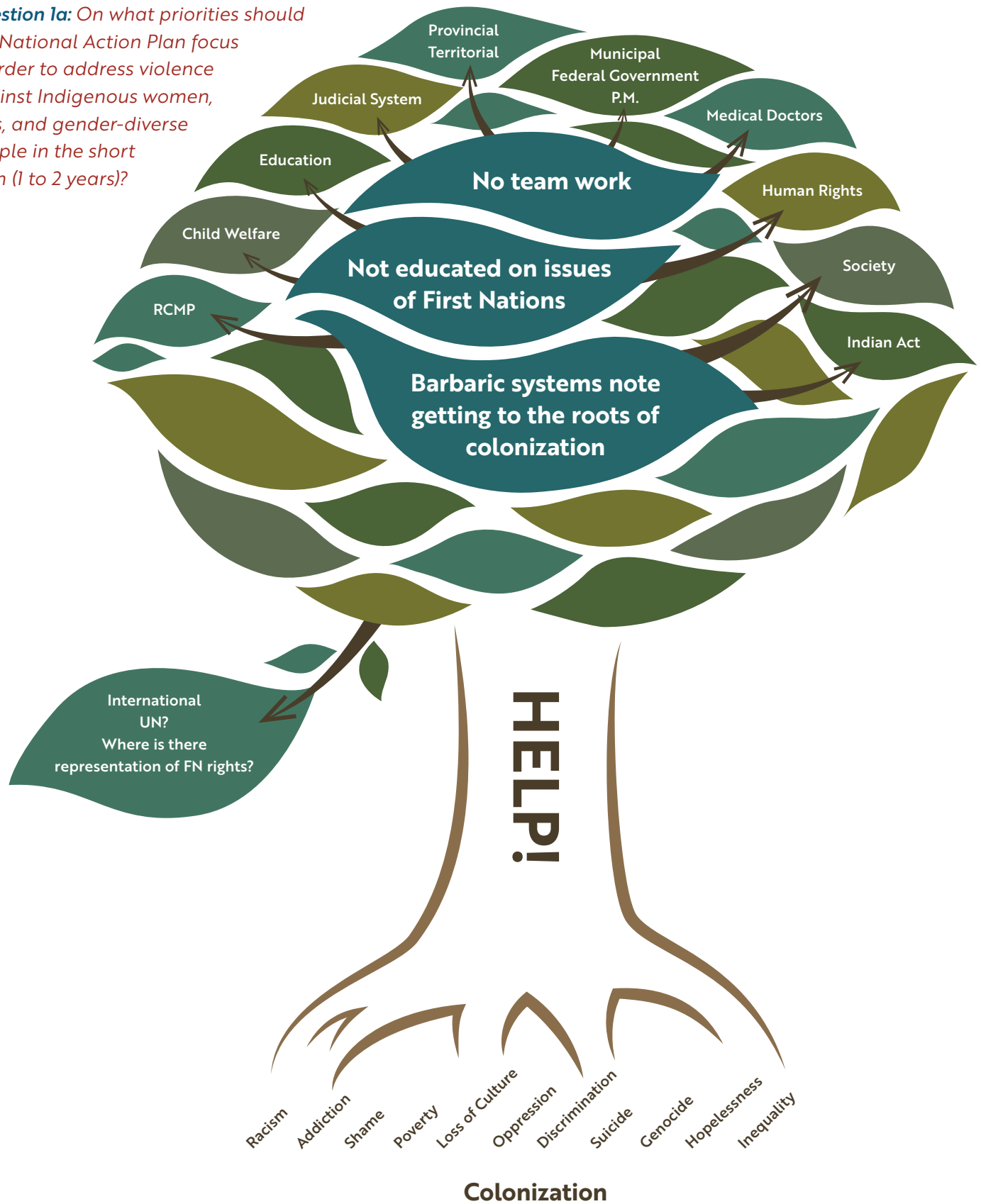
NWAC should develop a secretariat in order to monitor the progress made in addressing the systemic violence toward Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people.

**Question 4:** *Is additional community-level consultation required on the Action Plan to implement the 231 Calls for Justice or other related issues?*

Participants stated firmly "yes!" and added that NGOs and NIOs (QIA, KIA, NTI, ITK, Pauktuutit, municipal governments) and the Government of Nunavut should be required to consult and implement the 231 Calls for Justice, because these Calls centre on Inuit culture, socio-economic reality, well-being, education, self-government, and broader rights to self-determination.

## Yukon PTMA Report

**Question 1a:** On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the short term (1 to 2 years)?



Participants from the Yukon focused on a human/ Indigenous rights perspective with respect to short-term priorities and governmental obligations. They identified the need for education (a common theme across all groups) for both short- and long-term priorities and stated that all institutions, from RCMP to judicial to child welfare to health care, as well as society at large, should be educated through workshops, pamphlets, posters, social media and mandatory training. The NWAC-produced video on violence and child welfare was cited as an example. Since MMIWG is a systemic issue, systemic education is required. Additionally, participants recognized that a colonial system is at the root of the issue and impacts all institutions. This group also named prevention as a key issue, and that social media could be used to empower Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

The importance of calling out and bringing awareness to the racism underpinning this issue was highlighted. Anti-racism/hate laws should be strengthened to help protect First Nations nationally and internationally. This group also stressed the need to take the Inquiry into MMIWG and its findings of genocide to the international level to keep the conversation going. Finally, this group indicated the need for culturally appropriate services and support for victims of violence and their families.

**Question 2a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the medium and long term (more than 2 years)?*

Participants noted a need for sufficient funding to health and wellness initiatives, while prioritizing Indigenous-specific, culturally appropriate mental health services, especially programming for rural and remote communities and trauma counsellors. Yukon participants specifically highlighted the importance of local family counselling for trauma and addictions (i.e., intervention services for family members). A suggestion in relation to this priority and the need to develop culturally appropriate mental health services is to have liaison workers for each community connect all service providers, in order to prevent individuals and families from “falling through the cracks.” NWAC could support such an initiative by undertaking a gap analysis to find out where needs are not being met, especially in rural communities where additional programming is lacking. The group also called for 24/7 addiction services for the whole territory, along with culturally appropriate transitional housing and funding for training Dene Wellness Warriors.

Culturally appropriate education and training for law enforcement, from local police to the RCMP, and for all service providers, was cited. As with other groups, the need for an overhaul of government policies on child welfare, policing, education, and health care was identified; such policies must reflect the distinct needs and trauma experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

**Question 3a:** *How should NWAC work with the Government of Canada to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people?*

NWAC should negotiate long-term funding for PTMAs, provide infrastructure for services and programs, and work on an action plan on violence prevention and a human rights plan specific to Indigenous peoples (like UNDRIP).

It is critical that all levels consider the North's need for unique services. Participants suggested a treatment centre for addiction could be established to address gaps in service delivery.

This PTMA also stressed the importance of addressing the root causes of violence: poverty, addiction, abuse, etc. We must create opportunities for youth, like national youth training programs, which could help stop the cycle of violence.

The group raised again the need for transitional housing and culturally relevant programming for First Nations who are incarcerated, as well as tougher laws for drug dealers and human traffickers.

NWAC must advocate and liaise with government to prevent and educate on all forms of violence, and hold the government accountable for colonization and the violence and genocide that this has caused.

**Question 4:** *Is additional community-level consultation required on the Action Plan to implement the 231 Calls for Justice or other related issues?*

Yukon participants stated that additional community-level consultation is required. They stressed the importance of educating community stakeholders so that they understand the impacts of colonization, and that grassroots organizations and communities recognize the barriers they face and what needs to happen in order for healing to take place. More resources are required for those communities that are most isolated. Ultimately, both the government and NWAC should base their actions on the needs that have been identified at the grassroots/ community level.



## Northwest Territories PTMA Report

**Question 1a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the short term (1 to 2 years)?*

Participants from the Northwest Territories identified a number of critical short-term priorities that should be implemented, including: personal involvement of the prime minister; direct funding to PTMAs, including short-term funding; and the need for recognition of unique Northern situations (e.g., climate change, vast geography, 24-hour daylight, environmental issues, high cost of living, transportation, and food security). Participants also saw on-the-land collaboration, education, health, the economy, men's issues, and language training as key areas to address in the short term.

**Question 2a:** *On what priorities should the National Action Plan focus in order to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the medium and long term (more than 2 years)?*

Calls for Justice that must be prioritized in the long term include Call #1.9, which calls for the development of laws, policies, and public education campaigns to challenge the normalization of violence. This was a key finding across groups. NWT participants also called for support in implementing the following Calls for Justice:

- ◆ #2.7 – fund Indigenous-led initiatives in media and pop culture
- ◆ #3.2 – fund accessible Indigenous community- and land-based health and wellness initiatives
- ◆ #4.1 – ensure Indigenous people have services and infrastructures for their socio-economic needs
- ◆ #4.4 – provide education and employment opportunities for Indigenous women

- ◆ #11.1 – implement education programs for Indigenous youth and children on exploitation (especially sexual)
- ◆ #12.6 – keep children with family or community in the case of unavoidable apprehension (keeping families together was a common theme across several groups and directly relates to Bill C-92)
- ◆ #12.7 – ensure appropriate culture and language programs for children in care
- ◆ #12.11 – reform laws around youth “ageing out” in order to ensure that youth have access to supportive networks
- ◆ #12.14 – prevent youth’s recruitment into sex work
- ◆ #13.3 – include impacts of extractive industry projects on Indigenous women in Impact Benefit Agreements
- ◆ #13.5 – before any extractive industry projects start, expand social infrastructure and service capacity for host communities
- ◆ #15.2 – decolonize by learning and teaching the true history of Canada

This PTMA also stressed the need to “honour all socio-economic commitments as defined in land claims agreements and self-government agreements between Inuit and the Crown.” These commitments must be upheld and implemented. Articles 23 and 24 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, and commitments by governments to provide for the housing and economic needs of Inuit must be fully complied with and implemented (#16.1).

Discrimination within addictions and health care services must be prioritized and addressed, as well as the need to honour, support, and engage social workers and those involved in child welfare.



**Question 4:** *Is additional community-level consultation required on the Action Plan to implement the 231 Calls for Justice or other related issues?*

In response to this question, participants stated: "Yes, [additional community-level consultation is required], because that's where the work begins and the whole point is to protect the women, the grassroots women, because we are all grassroots before anything else."









Native Women's  
Association of Canada

L'Association des  
femmes autochtones  
du Canada