

# 2020 MMIWG SUMMIT: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

CONGRESS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In response to the release of the 2019 final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (NIMMIWG), the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples held the 2020 MMIWG Summit in Ottawa, Ontario on January 13-14, 2020. The Summit brought together membership representation from across Canada to discuss the 231 Calls for Justice featured in the Final Report.

The intent of these discussions was to give preliminary direction for the development and design of an implementation strategy of the Calls for Justice. Due to the short timeframe of the Summit, it was evident from the onset that it was of great importance to the CAP membership that these discussions were not their final chance for input into the strategy design.

For many of the CAP membership who are also MMIWG family members and survivors, the NIMMIWG final report had a very personal impact on them. The highly emotional nature of the National Inquiry process itself, also played a role in the discussions of the Calls for Justice. It was said more than once that, it was nearly impossible to prioritize one call over another. However, there were Calls for Justice that were of more immediate concern for the CAP members in attendance. These included the Calls for Justice regarding Health and Wellness, Human Security and Child Welfare. The intense discussion of these topic also touched on the interconnected nature of all the Calls to Action including Policing, Justice and Corrections.

The CAP membership also highlighted the issues that were missing in the Calls for Justice, including the need to address sensitive and highly political issues around identity to ensure they do not cause further exclusion of Indigenous women and girls and all who identify as women. It was recognized that the Human Rights concept of Substantive Equality as a report objective and the decolonized methods used in the data analysis and Final Report writing needed to continue in the design and implementation of the Calls for Justice.

Ultimately, the 2020 MMIWG Summit was a success as a first step of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples participation and contribution to the design and implementation of an MMIWG strategy. The CAP membership is looking forward to further engagement and clearly recognized that these next steps would be a key deciding factor in whether or not the NIMMIWG was a success.



# MAY 1, 2020

# 2020 MMIWG SUMMIT

## 1. INTRODUCTION

On June 3, 2019 the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (NIMMIWG) was released. The comprehensive report was released after completing a three-year nationwide investigation into the causes and effects of violence against Indigenous women and girls and all who identify as women.

The report includes 231 Calls for Justice and was presented to the federal government of Canada, National Indigenous Organizations and the Canadian public for review and to begin planning the next phase of implementation.

In January 2020, National Indigenous Organizations including the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP), were mandated to consult with their membership on the Final Report and provide the government of Canada with feedback on priorities for an Implementation Strategy.

In response to the request, CAP organized a two-day MMIWG Summit on January 13-14, 2020 bringing together CAP representation from across Canada to review and provide feedback on the Final Report. During this two-day intensive Summit, participants divided into seven working groups and reviewed and discussed the report and identified and presented their priorities. This summary report outlines the priorities identified and the direction given by CAP membership to the executive of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples.

## 2. SUMMIT OVERVIEW

On January 13-14, 2020, approximately five representatives from each regional body of CAP gathered in Ottawa at the Albert at Bay for two-days of emotional and intense discussion.

On the morning of January 13, the Summit was opened with welcoming remarks from National Chief Bertrand. The National Chief's welcome was followed by Chief Lorraine Augustine and Chief Lisa Cooper, who provided a brief overview of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, its three-year process, and a summary of its findings.

Chiefs Augustine and Cooper then outlined the CAP MMIWG Summit origin, processes and desired outcomes. It was also expressed that this was not a final discussion on the NIMMIWG's Final Report and the future implementation strategy, but rather a beginning to help find a place to start.

Following their presentation, Chief Lorraine Augustine and Chief Lisa Cooper introduced the

Summit's co-facilitators, Jude Gerrard and Waneek Horn-Miller. The co-facilitators provided a summary of the format of the two-day Summit.

### **Summit Design**

Participants were divided into seven breakout discussion groups and a note recorder was identified. Due to the immensity of the report and with the objective to get as much feedback as possible in this short timeline, the discussion was divided into seven sessions that grouped together similar themes from the Final Report's Calls for Justice. Participants were directed to review the points of each theme, prioritize them and provide their feedback.

The seven-breakout sessions were:

1. Health & Wellness / Human Security / Human Trafficking & Sexual Exploitation
2. Human and Indigenous Rights & Government / Distinctions-Based Calls
3. Justice / Correctional Services Canada / Policing
4. 2SLGBTQIA+ / Culture
5. Media & Social Influencers / Education / Calls for All
6. Canadians
7. Child Welfare
8. Extractive and Development Industries

## **3. SIX KEY UNIVERSAL CONCERNS AND THEMES**

It was clearly evident from the onset and throughout the two-day summit that the CAP membership understood the gravity and importance of their reason for being present and to give their input on the Final Report's Calls for Justice. They committed immediately to in-depth discussions on each of the topics. As can be expected, due to the highly personal and emotional nature of the issues surrounding MMIWG, it was not an easy task to prioritize any one point within the 231 Calls for Justice.

As the Summit unfolded, there were some key issues that continued to be discussed throughout the two days and reaching across multiple topics. Following is a summary of the universal concerns and themes that were identified.

### **A. Recognition of Human Rights, Indigenous Rights and Inclusion**

The Final Report's Calls for Justice are grounded in the objective of upholding the human rights concept of substantive equality. The Final Report defines substantive equality as:

*"A legal principle that refers to the achievement of true equality in outcomes. It is required in order to address the historical disadvantages, intergenerational trauma, and discrimination*

*experienced by a person to narrow the gap of inequality that they are experiencing in order to improve their over- all wellbeing.”*

Substantive equality is identified throughout the Final Report as a key desired outcome for the Calls for Justice. The authors of the Final Report also provided a description of the decolonized approach taken in their writing of the Final Report. They defined it as:

*“A decolonizing approach aims to resist and undo the forces of colonialism and to re-establish Indigenous Nationhood. It is rooted in Indigenous values, philosophies, and knowledge systems. It is a way of doing things differently that challenges the colonial influence we live under by making space for marginalized Indigenous perspectives. The National Inquiry’s decolonizing approach also acknowledges the rightful power and place of Indigenous women and girls.”*

The objective of substantive equality and the decolonized approach of the Final Report, provide the lens through which the readers of the Final Report are to understand the findings and the desired outcomes in the Calls for Justice.

When reading the final report, the first question that comes to mind is “who is considered an Indigenous women and girl?” For the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples this question must be answered as a primary step in the development of an implementation strategy. It is through the same human rights approach and decolonized lens of the Final Report that the fundamental issue of identity must be discussed. The answer to this question will fundamentally affect who is included and who is excluded, the processes through which the Calls for Justice are implemented, and how the associated resources and services are directed.

Throughout the Summit discussions the concerns of exclusion, due to colonized legal based identity, was often brought up in conjunction with the use of distinction-based approaches in the Final Report and how they could cause further division and exclusion.

Therefore, the CAP membership calls for an authentic discussion around and an understanding of who these Calls for Justice are aimed to help. It is CAP’s perspective that the Calls for Justice are intended to ensure the inclusion and benefit of all who identify as an Indigenous woman.

CAP membership also recognizes that in order fully understand and address the specific needs of the First Nations, Inuit and Metis populations, there is a need for strategies that respond to the unique diversity of identities of Indigenous peoples and the associated issues within each group. However, the CAP membership stressed that during the design of an implementation strategy, a delicate sensitivity must be maintained regarding realities and requirements of the non-status, rural and urban Indigenous populations to ensure distinction-based strategies do not create further barriers and block access to the services, programing and preventative strategies designed to help the very women and girls they are designed to keep safe.

Recognizing identity issues and the potential to create barriers and cause harm from onset of the design process of a national strategy, is consistent with a decolonized writing method and the human rights focus of the Final Report, and its desired outcomes based in substantive equality. This approach also supports the CAP membership’s longstanding position of an inclusive and decolonized approach to Indigenous identity, also reflected in decisions such as Daniels v. Canada, which must be respected and remain consistent during the planning and

activation of the implementation strategy.

## **B. Mobility of Rights**

After a history of having the right to travel and live where they choose greatly violated by the colonial reserve system, the right to freedom of movement is extremely important to Indigenous peoples. There are a multitude of effects of this historical violation and the imposed reserve system, namely on access and inclusion.

These negative effects did not disappear when Indigenous people were allowed freedom of movement beyond their reserve borders. Unfortunately, that freedom is still not reflected in the way in which their rights are currently respected and funded. The legacy of the reserve system is still being experienced in the way Indigenous peoples are highly impacted in accessing funding and services associated with their Indigenous rights and “*Status*” if they choose to live off reserve.

## **C. Access**

For Indigenous peoples, identity, mobility of rights and access are closely associated. In particular, the rural and urban Indigenous populations, whose lives have been greatly impacted by colonization and its effects on their identity, cultural knowledge and sense of belonging, access is an issue on all levels. Access to services already complicated by geographic location and the requirement to legally prove identity, is further impacted by funding being concentrated largely in the colonial reserve system. CAP membership identified all issues limiting access in urban and rural settings as a primary concern in meeting the needs of some of the most vulnerable Indigenous populations.

## **D. Inter-Governmental Coordination**

It was a theme throughout the CAP membership discussions that all levels of government including Indigenous communities and organizations work in partnership in the NIMMWIG Calls for Justice implementation strategy. The historical issues and fights surrounding jurisdiction have had a longstanding impact on the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous people. This came to light in startling manner during the NIMMIWG on wide range of issues and jurisdictional lines continue to impact heavily on the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous women and girls. CAP membership reinforced the need for a rapid resolution of jurisdictional issues between all levels of government when addressing the health, wellness and safety issues for Indigenous women and girls.

## **E. Insuring Accountability**

Rebuilding trust will be an important part of the process in creating a country where Indigenous women and girls can expect their human and Indigenous rights to be respected and to live in safety. To rebuild trust on all levels, the CAP membership expressed a need for the following oversight and accountability measures put into place for the processes and policies of government and Canadian institutions:

- a. Indigenous tribunal for Human Rights cases independent of government;

- b. Ombudsperson position, independent of government to ensure the Calls for Justice are being implemented;
- c. Independent bodies to oversee policing, justice and investigations;
- d. Independent bodies to be developed to oversee Child Welfare.

#### **F. School and Public Education**

How Canada and the Canadian society supports the NIMMWG Calls for Justice will depend on how they understand and perceive the issues surrounding MMIWG. Therefore, CAP identified as a priority for all levels of government and educational institutions to create centers for the study of MMIWG, a national MMIWG data base, and school and public education programming. These efforts must also target those who will be carrying out the calls for justice, in particular services providers working directly on issues impacting the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous Women and Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+.

### **4. PRIORITIES**

#### **Session 1: Health & Wellness / Human Security / Trafficking & Sexual Exploitation**

##### **A. HEALTH & WELLNESS**

##### **Access to and Quality of Health Care (3.2, 2.6)**

During the breakout sessions point 3.2 and 3.6 were identified as a top priority. CAP constituents identified as a priority access to adequate, stable, equitable, and ongoing funding for Indigenous-centered and community-based physical and mental health and wellness services. Access and quality of care is an urgent priority and of the utmost importance as foundational part of the prevention strategy to address at-risk behaviors and lifestyles.

##### **Redefining of Terms**

To meet the needs of the CAP membership, accessible, as defined in point 3.6, should be expanded to **universal access**. Universal access is defined as: All Indigenous women and those who identify as women, regardless of location or status, will have health care that is equal to national standards, and designed and delivered in a culturally sensitive process.

**Locations** must be inclusive of “all” places Indigenous women reside and work, including within the corrections system. The concept of “**Community-based**” must also be expanded to include the Indigenous urban and rural multigenerational communities that are not legally defined as “reserves”. To ensure these services are delivered barrier-free, funding must not be hindered by federal and provincial jurisdictional disputes or be distinctions-based to ensure that no Indigenous women will be excluded because of location or legal status.

##### **Problems with Distinctions-Based Funding for Health**

Throughout the final report, the concept of distinctions-based is defined to include First Nations, Inuit and Métis. When funding is based upon these delineated and often legalistic terms and applied in off reserve rural and urban settings, it can become the very thing that bars



access for some Indigenous peoples.

It is CAP's mandate to advocate for a membership with unique needs. Most Indigenous people live off reserve and have a complicated family history as a result of the impacts of colonization, leaving identity verification by colonial methods to be problematic. Thus, with the safety and security of Indigenous women and girls as the objective of the Final Report as the primary objective, it is paramount we recognize that the legal proving of one's identity in order to gain access to critical services is the very thing that blocks many from accessing those services that will keep them safe. Further, requirements for funding have forced services providers to enforce this discriminatory practice which has proven time and again to alienate a high-risk population and negatively impact an already fractured sense of belonging and community. It is a CAP priority that substantive equality be embedded within health and wellness care and service delivery models and within funding processes.

The human right of access to good health and wellness care must be a priority. This requires a human rights approach and continued efforts to dismantle bureaucratic barriers, internal Indigenous discrimination, marginalization and unequal distribution that currently hinders and often blocks access.

### **Design and Delivery of Health and Wellness Programs and Services**

Regardless of location, the CAP membership highlighted the need for all health and wellness services to be Indigenous designed and led and provided in a manner that is culturally and socially relevant and sensitive to community location. With a mandate to represent and advocate for urban, rural, and remote Indigenous populations, CAP identifies the need for Indigenous specific health and wellness programs with consistent programming and level of care for both on and off reserve populations. However, CAP also recognizes that a one-size fits all blanket approach to health and wellness programming is not appropriate; program designs must be customizable, adaptive and responsive to the changing needs of the populations they serve.

These programs include but are not limited to:

- An Indigenous wholistic model inclusive of the mental, spiritual and physical aspects of wellbeing of individuals and families including:
  - Family support,
  - Increased urban Elder supports and housing,
  - Pre- and post-natal support such as Doula training, to help support young parents,
  - Land based therapy,
  - Traditional teachings and learnings,
  - Traditional medicinal teachings,
  - Unhindered access to mental health supports and counseling including online and tele-counseling.
- All models of health and wellness must be inclusive of Elders knowledge and support.
- Consistent quality services both on and off reserve as well as in the north and in

- urban settings.
- Preventative, accessible, holistic, wraparound services, including mobile trauma and addictions recovery teams.
- Trauma and addictions treatment programs, including land-based therapies.
- All services must be paired with other essential services such as mental health services and sexual exploitation and trafficking services.
- Crisis response teams in all communities and regions, to meet the immediate needs of an Indigenous person, family, and/or community after a traumatic event (murder, accident and violence).

### **Access to Healing (3.7)**

With a fluid and linear understanding of health and wellness and as a part of the foundation for a preventative strategy of health and wellness care, CAP membership identified the need for continual and accessible healing programs and support for all children and other family members of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQA+people.

There must be a permanent establishment of a fund akin to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation independent from government. If this fund is to be distinctions-based with monies allocated for First Nations, Inuit and Métis specific funding stream, there needs to be specific monies allocated in a Healing Fund structure that is specifically earmarked for status blind urban and rural community programming.

### **Health Care Providers (7.1)**

The quality of health and wellness care is largely based upon the quality of the service providers who deliver it. The Calls for Justice for health care providers (7.0) work in conjunction with the Calls for Justice for health and wellness (3.0). The CAP membership highlighted the need for the quality of the health care providers be addressed in multiple ways.

This begins with the recognition that Indigenous Peoples – First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, including 2SLGBTQQA+people – are the experts in caring for and healing themselves, and that health and wellness services are most effective when they are designed and delivered by the Indigenous Peoples they are supposed to serve. The programming must be consistent with and grounded in the practices, world views, cultures, languages, and values of the diverse Indigenous communities they serve. This recognition must be the basis for the design and delivery of all health and wellness services.

### **Training of Health Care Providers (7.6)**

The CAP membership highlighted that there is a growing off reserve and urban Indigenous population at varying stages of cultural and identity awareness and understanding. When this population interacts with the health care system, many face racism, insensitivity and indifference for a variety of reasons including physical appearance, and a lack of knowledge of their culture and identity.

Therefore, the CAP membership recognized the importance of all health care providers receiving foundational and ongoing cultural sensitivity and awareness education and training. CAP calls upon universities, colleges, health institutions and health service providers to ensure that all persons involved in the provision of health services to Indigenous Peoples receive ongoing training, education, and awareness in areas including, but not limited to:

- The history of colonialism in the oppression and genocide of Inuit, Métis, and First Nations Peoples;
  - anti-bias and anti-racism,
  - local language and culture,
  - local health and healing practices.

### **Creating Capacity (7.8)**

Building on the concept that Indigenous people are the best leaders in their own health and wellness care, the development of opportunities for Indigenous peoples to be educated and trained to deliver care is a priority.

With a growing off-reserve population, this is a very important priority in the urban and rural landscape where there is a chronic problem with underfunding of health and wellness programs and services for Indigenous peoples, that negatively impacts the ability to retain health care workers. CAP calls upon all governments, educational institutions, and health and wellness professional bodies to encourage, support, and equitably fund Indigenous people to train and work in the area of health and wellness.

CAP calls upon all governments and health service providers to create effective and well-funded opportunities, and to provide socio-economic incentives, to encourage Indigenous people to work within the health and wellness field and within their communities. This includes taking positive action to recruit, hire, train, and retain long-term staff and local Indigenous community members for health and wellness services wherever Indigenous people live and work.

### **The Role of Practitioners in Healing 7.2**

Healing from trauma has been identified by the CAP membership as a priority and must be part of the foundation within the Calls for Justice implementation strategy. CAP also recognizes the role of healing as an important and foundational part of Indigenous cultural worldviews and approaches to health and wellness. This concept must be woven throughout health and wellness services and made available to all who require these services, for as long as they are required.

During the roundtable discussions, CAP membership recognized healing as a significant priority in urban and rural settings. The call for a Healing Foundation (3.7) was identified as an important part of the healing component of the implementation strategy. However, this is only one piece of a larger role of healing. Health care providers hold an important role as informed frontline advocates and CAP calls upon all governments and health service providers to advocate for the inclusion of supports for healing from all forms of unresolved trauma, including intergenerational, multigenerational, and complex trauma.

CAP highlights the importance of health care providers working in collaboration with Indigenous communities and leadership to ensure health and wellness programs addressing trauma are Indigenous-led, or in partnership with Indigenous experts and Elders, and are inclusive of local healing practices and community priorities.

## **Health Care Providers; Prevention Services and Programing 7.3 &7.8**

As previously stated, the growing urban Indigenous population requires an increase in the availability and diversity of prevention programing. CAP has identified this as a high priority and calls upon all governments and health service providers to support Indigenous-led prevention initiatives in the areas of health and community awareness, including, but not limited to programming with a focus on:

- Indigenous men and boys.
- Suicide prevention strategies for youth and adults.
- Sexual trafficking awareness and no-barrier exiting.
  - Awareness and education programs for Indigenous children and youth on the issue of grooming for exploitation and sexual exploitation specific to safe and healthy relationships.
- Mental health awareness.
- 2SLGBTQQIA+ issues and sex positivity.

## **B. HUMAN SECURITY**

### **Recognition of the Right to Human Security 4.1**

One of the most immediate needs identified by the CAP membership was human security. There is an urgent need for all levels of governments to uphold the social and economic rights of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and their right to security of the person by ensuring well-funded long-lasting services and infrastructure to meet their social and economic needs.

During CAP membership discussions there was a particular spotlight on the security and wellbeing of the Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ population. Often described as the most marginalized population in the country, their human security should be of the upmost priority. The CAP membership identified the need for basic rights to human security including, but not limited to:

- Access to safe housing.
- Access to safe transit.
- Clean water.
- Adequate food.
- Access to education and training.
- A livable income.
- Funding for culturally appropriate and sensitive programming and supports to ensure the safety and security of Indigenous women and girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+who are working in the sex industry.

### **Housing (4.6, 4.7)**

In particular the CAP membership highlighted as a priority access all forms of housing in

points 4.6 and 4.7. With a largely off reserve and urban / rural population, CAP membership identified access to affordable, safe and secure housing as an immediate top priority and vital to ensure human security.

CAP membership identified the need for both the construction of new housing and the provision of repairs for existing housing to meet the housing needs of the Indigenous community, including Elders, women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQA+ people. To meet the most basic human right to safety and security, CAP highlights the importance of ensuring safe and appropriate housing that meets the geographic realities and cultural needs of Indigenous women, and available wherever they reside, whether in urban, rural, remote, or Indigenous communities.

### **Emergency Housing (4.7)**

Urban and rural Indigenous populations often face complicated situations when escaping life threatening situations and seeking safe immediate alternate short-term housing. They are often met with very limited availability, layers of bureaucracy, and culturally insensitive services that can have a devastating effect on their personal safety.

This is why CAP's membership identified as an immediate priority, the establishment of long-term sustainable funding of Indigenous-led low-barrier shelters, safe spaces, transition homes, and second-stage housing. Universal access must be a priority with regards to housing and support services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQA+ people who are homeless, near homelessness, dealing with food insecurity, living in poverty, and fleeing violence, sexualized violence and exploitation. All levels of government must ensure that the basic human right to safe housing is met and that shelters, transitional housing, second- stage housing, and services are appropriate to meet cultural needs, and available wherever Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQA+people reside.

### **Transport (4.8)**

It was made very clear during the NIMMIWG that the lack of safe transportation methods has led to many Indigenous women becoming victims of violence for decades. Transportation is a vital key to human security and the reason why CAP's membership highlighted it as an immediate priority for the implementation strategy. Point 4.8 calls upon all governments to ensure that adequate plans and funding are put into place for safe and affordable transit and transportation services and infrastructure for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQA+people, particularly those who are living in remote and rural communities. Transportation should be sufficient and readily available to Indigenous communities in urban and rural settings in all of the provinces and territories in Canada. These plans and funding should take into consideration:

- Ways to increase safe public transit;
- Ways to address the lack of commercial transit available; and
- Special accommodations for fly-in, northern, and remote communities.

## **C. HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

### **Protection of Sex Industry Workers (4.3)**

The CAP membership identified the safety and wellbeing of all Indigenous women and girls and in particular the most vulnerable of the highest priority. Some of the most vulnerable Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQA+are those working in the sex industry. Therefore CAP calls upon all governments to support programs and services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQA+people in the sex industry to promote their safety and security. These programs must be designed and delivered in partnership with people who have lived experience. CAP calls for stable and long-term funding for these programs and services.

### **Guaranteed Livable Income (4.5)**

CAP membership also identified point 4.5 calling for a guaranteed livable income as an immediate priority, to ensure a woman's safety which calls on all governments to establish a guaranteed annual livable income for all Canadians, including Indigenous Peoples, to meet their social and economic needs. This income must take into account diverse needs, realities, and geographic locations.

### **Access to Education and Training (4.4)**

CAP also calls upon all governments to provide supports and resources for educational, training, and employment opportunities for all Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQA+people. These programs must be universally accessible and available within all Indigenous communities both on and off reserve.

## **Session 2: Human and Indigenous Rights & Government / Distinctions-Based Calls / Accountability**

### **A. HUMAN AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS AND GOVERNMENTAL OBLIGATION**

As Canada embarks on the process post NIMMIWG and into the creation of a strategy for implementing the Calls for Justice, CAP calls for the recognition of Indigenous rights as a foundational part of all aspects of this process, strategy and future preventative programming. The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples has been at the forefront of the Indigenous rights movement for over half a century. CAP's mandate to advocate for and highlight the unique rights and circumstances of the growing off-reserve and rural and urban populations, has enabled them to gain a wealth of experience and knowledge on these issues. Representing the fastest growing demographic of Indigenous peoples, CAP is a valuable resource and partner in the design of a NIMMIWG Calls for Justice Implementation Strategy.

### **Recognition of Human Rights and International Covenants (1.1&1.2)**

CAP membership would like to re-affirm the concepts on which the Calls for Justice were written. The introduction to the method in which the authors wrote the Final Report calls for a shift in the way in which we view the Calls for Justice. This includes shifting how the rights and roles of Indigenous women and girls are viewed and described from a victim lens to a "rights holder" lens. From this perspective, Indigenous women's lack of safety and wellbeing are due to

systematic issues that deny them their human and Indigenous rights. Canada's foundational beliefs and policies that Indigenous peoples are not entitled to enjoy the same human rights protections as regular Canadians has for generations plagued how Indigenous peoples have been negatively viewed and treated by Canadian society and its institutions.

CAP understands that these beliefs and norms, found in all sectors and aspects of society, will not be unlearned overnight, but strongly believes that the NIMMIWG Calls for Justice and its human rights approach must be a turning point. The CAP membership supports the concept of Seven Generations, as way of looking at how we prepare the country for future generations. CAP further understands the critical need to always keep in mind, during any negotiations, program planning and implementation, the impact of these processes on the needs and hopes of future generations both Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

The human rights approach taken in the writing of the Final Report and the Calls for Justice highlights the concept that, the safety of Indigenous women and girls is not just a societal issue, but a human rights issue. CAP's membership stresses that if the Calls for Justice are to achieve the intended outcomes, it is important that the attitudes, underlying how Indigenous women have been treated and their rights denied, be understood and changed. A human rights perspective must be carried through into the design and implementation of a national strategy for the NIMMIWG Calls for Justice. The CAP membership views this as an important act of reconciliation as a basic pillar of Canadian society and would constitute a significant step towards the implementation of Canada's obligations enshrined in international human rights conventions and declarations.

## **B. DISTINCTIONS-BASED CALLS**

CAP membership highlighted the need to ensure the human and Indigenous rights of the urban and rural Indigenous populations must be included in the Calls for Justice implementation strategy. It is recommended by the CAP membership that if a "distinctions-based" approach is to be part of the development and delivery process of a strategy, then a fourth group of "off reserve, urban and rural" must be included alongside First Nations, Inuit and Métis. This will ensure the rights of CAP membership and urban and rural perspectives on Indigenous rights are respected and addressed within the design and implementation of a national strategy.

## **C. ACCOUNTABILITY AND ENSURING COMPLIANCE (1.9)**

CAP membership identified the need for oversight within Canadian governments, institutions and businesses. We also identified the need Indigenous peoples to have avenues to seek justice. CAP membership calls for independent oversight to be developed in multiple areas:

- **Human Rights (1.7)**
  - The development of an independent body to address human rights complaints and a permanent position of an Indigenous and Human Rights Ombudsperson and Human Rights Tribunal.
  - The ombudsperson and tribunal must be independent of governments and have the authority to receive complaints from Indigenous individuals as well as Indigenous communities in relation to Indigenous and human rights

violations, and to conduct thorough and independent evaluations of government services for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people and compliance with human and Indigenous rights laws.

- **Policing and Corrections Services (5.4, 9.6, 9.0)**

There must be civilian oversight bodies inclusive of Indigenous representation, with jurisdiction to audit police and corrections services. They must have the power to investigate all conditions within the corrections facilities and claims of officer misconduct, including incidents of rape and other sexual assaults, within those services:

- Police services to establish an independent, special investigation unit for the investigation of incidents of failures to investigate, police misconduct, and all forms of discriminatory practices and mistreatment of Indigenous peoples within their police and corrections service. This special investigation unit must be transparent in practice and report at least annually to Indigenous communities, leadership, and people in their jurisdiction.
- We call upon all police and corrections services to establish and engage with a civilian Indigenous advisory committee for each police and corrections division, and to establish and engage with a local civilian Indigenous advisory committee to advise the police detachment and corrections facility operating within or close to an Indigenous community.

### **Session 3: Justice / Policing / Correctional Services Canada**

#### **A. JUSTICE SYSTEM AND THE CRIMINAL CODE**

##### **Changes to the Justice System and Criminal Code**

CAP membership echoes the voices and opinions of many Indigenous organizations and institutions for fundamental changes to the Canadian justice system and criminal code founded in Eurocentric concepts of justice and fairness. To achieve the goals of creating a country where Indigenous people are safe and can expect fair and safe treatment under the law, there is a need for changes to the criminal code and a system that is inclusive of Indigenous worldview and concepts of justice.

##### **Justice System (5.1)**

How law is enforced and the impacts on the communities they service, must be based in a fair and transparent criminal code and justice system. CAP membership identified a need to have the changes to the Canadian justice system recommended in *Bridging the Cultural Divide: A Report on Aboriginal People and Criminal Justice in Canada*, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996); and the *Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba: Public Inquiry into the Administration of Justice and Aboriginal People* (1991).

##### **Criminal Code (5.2, 5.3)**

CAP calls upon the federal government to review and amend the Criminal Code to eliminate



definitions of offenses that minimize the culpability of the offender. We also call upon the federal government to review and reform the law about sexualized violence and intimate partner violence.

### **Victim and Family of Victim Support (5.6)**

The CAP membership highlights the call on provincial and territorial governments to develop enhanced, holistic, crime-prevention funding and programming that reflects community needs, including, but not exclusive to:

- Guaranteed access to financial support and meaningful and appropriate trauma care for victims of crime and traumatic incidents, regardless of whether they reported directly to the police, if the perpetrator is charged, or if there is a conviction.
- Adequate and reliable culturally relevant and accessible victim services must be provided to family members and survivors of crime, and funding must be provided to Indigenous and community-led organizations to deliver victim services and healing supports.
- Legislated paid leave and disability benefits for victims of crime or traumatic events.
- Guaranteed access to independent legal services throughout court processes. As soon as an Indigenous woman, girl, or 2SLGBTQIA+person decides to report an offense, before speaking to the police, they must have guaranteed access to legal counsel at no cost to them personally.
- Culturally educated victim services, that are independent from prosecution and police services.
- Provision of support to Indigenous victims of crime and families and friends of Indigenous missing or murdered persons.

### **Culturally Appropriate Justice Practices (5.11)**

CAP also calls upon all governments to increase accessibility to meaningful and culturally appropriate justice practices by expanding restorative justice programs and Indigenous peoples' courts.

### **Gladue Principals**

The CAP membership calls upon federal, provincial, and territorial governments to thoroughly evaluate the impacts of Gladue principles and section 718.2(e) of the Criminal Code on sentencing equity as it relates to violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+people.

## **B. POLICING**

### **Recruitment and Cultural Education of Services (9.2,9.3)**

One of the fundamental building blocks of creating a safe environment for Indigenous women and girls is ensuring there is a trusting and reliable relationship between the Indigenous community and police services. In order to address the safety needs of a growing urban Indigenous population it is important for the Indigenous population to be able to see themselves within those services in order to begin the processes of building trust and improved relationships with police and victim services. CAP membership calls for all police services to:

- Increase recruitment of Indigenous peoples working within all components of policing and victim services.
- Develop and deliver cultural and sensitivity training relevant to the Indigenous population of that area, for all working within these services.

### **Relationship Building and Understanding (9.5,9.7,9.9)**

For the CAP membership, police–community relations have been a long-standing priority. An improved relationship with the Indigenous community must be a priority of all police and victim services. To better facilitate trust and understanding, this must be done by partnering with the Indigenous community to increase continued engagement with all aspects of the Indigenous community including Elders, youth, and 2SLGBTQQA+.

Relationship and trust building is also an integral part of building relationships between Indigenous communities and the justice and police services. The processes and services must be transparent, easy to understand and navigate. CAP membership calls for the standardization of protocols, and policies and practices to ensure that all cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQA+ people are thoroughly investigated.

These protocols must include:

- Increased and improved relationship and communication with the Indigenous organizations and community on policies, practices and programs and services that work to ensure community safety.
- Improved relationship and communication protocols with the families of MMIWG and providing a consistent quality of care and understanding during and after investigations
- Creation of better reporting of missing persons, including a national hotline, and the creation of a national data base of MMIWG cases to help with the investigation of trends and geographic areas of concern
- Creation of highly skilled and well-funded special investigation units:
  - To provide an investigative lead and support where needed in all cases regarding violence towards Indigenous women and girls.
  - To look into cold cases.
  - To lead in relationship building with the Indigenous community.
- National Task Force:
  - To look into cold cases,
  - To monitor and study national trends regarding MMIWG and cases of violence against Indigenous women and girls,
  - To advise and assist local police services.
- Indigenous Civilian Oversight and Accountability:
  - To observe and oversee investigations in relation to police negligence or misconduct, including but not limited to rape and other sexual offenses.
  - To observe and oversee investigations of cases involving Indigenous peoples.

- To publicly report on police progress in addressing findings and recommendations.

## **C. CORRECTIONS**

### **Facilities (14.1, 14.2, 14.11)**

As identified in the Final Report, the high percentage of incarcerated Indigenous women is an important issue that needs to be addressed in the implementation strategy of the Calls for Justice. The CAP membership identified as a priority, the call for Correctional Service Canada to take urgent action to establish equitably funded facilities described under sections 81 and 84 of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* to ensure that Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+people have options for decarceration. Such facilities must be strategically located to allow for localized placements and mother-and-child programming.

### **Gladue Factors (14.5)**

During discussions on the Calls for Justice regarding corrections, CAP membership highlighted as a priority that Correctional Service Canada apply Gladue factors in all decision making concerning Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA+people and in a manner that meets their needs and rehabilitation.

### **Access to Education (14.9)**

In the Final Report it was identified that the lack of education and training of incarcerated women, leads to a high percentage falling back into pre-incarceration, often involving illegal and unsafe methods of making an income. Many of the Indigenous women who are released from prison often come to urban areas, post release. Thus, the responsibility for their welfare and ability to support their continued rehabilitation efforts falls on the urban Indigenous community and services. To support their reintegration efforts, CAP calls upon Correctional Service Canada to support these integration efforts prior to release, by working in partnership with urban and rural Indigenous organizations to increase the opportunities for meaningful vocational training, secondary school graduation, and post- secondary education.

## **Session 4: Culture and 2SLBGTOQIA+**

### **A. CULTURE**

#### **Rebuilding Cultural Understanding and Identity in Urban and Rural Communities (2.3, 2.4, 2.5)**

Access to Indigenous cultural education and practices must reflect the realities of where indigenous people live. This access must respect an individual's right to mobility and choice of where they work and reside. CAP membership reflects those who have been historically denied access to these vital cultural resources due to identity politics and their location. This denied access has been a key contributor to identity fracture and continued harm. The lack of cultural knowledge due to historical impacts of colonization, has been proven to lead to a lack of self-confidence and self-worth and has negatively impacted an Indigenous woman's need to seek out unsafe work, lifestyle and living conditions.

Therefore, from the perspective of the Seven Generations teachings of looking forward and preparing the foundation for future generations of strong, confident and culturally knowledgeable Indigenous women and girls, the CAP membership identified access to culture as a key priority. CAP calls upon all governments to ensure that all Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+people are provided with safe, no-barrier, permanent, and meaningful universal access to their cultures and languages in order to restore, reclaim, and revitalize their cultures and identities.

All levels of government must provide the necessary resources, permanent no-barrier funding and any and all special measures required to preserve and promote Indigenous knowledge and languages.

These should include but not be limited to:

- Permanent Empowerment Fund for universal cultural access.
- Off reserve and urban opportunities and spaces for cultural practice.
- Urban indigenous cultural educational institutions and schools including:
  - Land based learning,
  - Access to language programs from elementary school to post-secondary.

## **B. 2SLGBTQIAA+**

It is recognized the most marginalized and vulnerable segment of Canadian society is the Indigenous 2SLGBTQIAA+ community. Many members of this community leave their home community to escape persecution and they struggle to find safety and belonging in urban and rural settings. It is of the utmost importance for CAP membership to advocate for the safety and wellbeing of the 2SLGBTQIAA+ populations in urban and rural settings. This must be kept in the forefront of the strategy to implement the Calls for Justice.

### **Awareness and Support (18.1)**

The safety and wellbeing of the 2SLGBTQIA+community must begin with awareness. CAP membership calls on governments and service providers to fund and support greater awareness and understanding of 2SLGBTQIA+issues. Awareness and education also need to coincide with the provision of programs, services, and practical supports for 2SLGBTQIA+people that take into account the unique challenges to safety for 2SLGBTQIA+individuals and groups.

### **Belonging and Education (18.15, 18.16, 18.17, 18.18, 18.19)**

Impacts of colonization and the Eurocentric and religious based views on gender construction and morality have had intense negative impact on the Indigenous 2SLGBTQIA+identity and sense of belonging, and most importantly their safety and wellbeing. To ensure the long-term safety and wellbeing of the 2SLGBTQIA+community, it is important that society relearn their importance and place in Indigenous societies, re-establishing space for the 2SLGBTQIA+in an inclusive community.

The CAP membership calls upon all governments, educators, and those involved in research to fund, support and conduct research on pre-colonial knowledge and teachings about the place, roles, and responsibilities of 2SLGBTQIA+people within their respective communities as a

way to begin to rebuild support and a sense of belonging, safety, and wellbeing. The CAP membership also calls upon all governments, service providers, and educators to fund and support the re-education of communities and individuals who have learned to reject 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, or who deny their important history and contemporary place within Indigenous communities and in ceremony, and address transphobia and homophobia in communities.

All governments and service providers must provide 2SLGBTQQIA+ designed and supported education to service providers and the public on the realities of 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and their distinct needs. Mandatory cultural competency training must include topics from a 2SLGBTQQIA+ lens including:

- Indigenous studies,
- Cultural awareness training,
- Trauma-informed care,
- Anti-oppression training, and training on 2SLGBTQQIA+ inclusion within an Indigenous context (including an understanding of 2SLGBTQQIA+ identities and Indigenous understandings of gender and sexual orientation).

#### **Understanding and Data Collection (18.3, 18.4)**

The CAP membership calls upon all governments, service providers, and those involved in research to change the way data is collected on 2SLGBTQQIA+ people to increase precision and recognize and capture the diversity of 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities. Data collection and study methods must include 2SLGBTQQIA+ controlled and led research.

This research will:

- Increase accurate, comprehensive statistical data on 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals.
- Record the experiences of trans-identified individuals and individuals with non-binary gender identities.
- Work towards the elimination of “either-or” gender options and include gender-inclusive, gender-neutral, or non-binary options – for example, an “X-option” – on reporting gender in all contexts, such as application and intake forms, surveys, Status cards, census data and other data collection methods.

#### **Policing (18.12, 18.13, 18.14)**

As one of the most vulnerable segments of the population, the need to increase safety and security for 2SLGBTQQIA+ people is of paramount importance. Therefore the 2SLGBTQQIA+ and police and victim service relationship must be improved to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ community. To begin this process, the CAP membership highlighted the need for:

- All police services to engage in education regarding 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and experiences to address discrimination, especially homophobia and transphobia, in policing.
- Safe police searches for 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.
- Improved investigation protocols for crimes against 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.
- Accountability for investigations and handling of cases involving

- 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.
- Police services to take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in the sex industry.

## **Session 5: Media, All Canadians, and Educators**

Negative stereotypes and lack of understanding has had long-term multi-generational adverse impact on the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples and must be addressed in the strategy to implement the Calls for Justice. CAP membership has identified this as key to the overall success in achieving the goals of safety and wellbeing of Indigenous women and girls.

Changing deeply held feelings and perspectives of Canadians about Indigenous peoples is not an overnight process, it will take multi-pronged approaches and long-term efforts in education, media, and all elements of popular culture.

### **A. MEDIA**

#### **Responsibilities of Media Industry (2.7, 6.1)**

The media will be a powerful tool in achieving the goals of the Calls for Justice. The media must play a central role to ensure authentic and appropriate representation of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, inclusive of diverse Indigenous cultural backgrounds, in order to address negative and discriminatory stereotypes.

It is for this reason that the CAP membership calls on all governments to adequately fund and support Indigenous-led initiatives to improve the representation of Indigenous peoples in media and popular culture. The media must take proactive steps to break down the stereotypes that hypersexualize and demean Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and to end practices that perpetuate myths that Indigenous women are more sexually available and “less worthy” than non-Indigenous women because of their race or background.

The CAP membership calls on the media to play a central role in the education of Canadians about Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. To do this, the media must take decolonizing approaches to their work and publications. Media includes all people working in the entertainment and information industry such as:

- Media corporations and outlets, and, in particular, government-funded corporations and outlets;
- Media unions, associations, and guilds;
- Academic institutions teaching journalism or media courses;
- Governments that fund such corporations, outlets, and academic institutions;
- Journalists, reporters, bloggers, film producers, writers, musicians, music producers,

All media must understand their role in the strategy to implement the Calls for Justice and support and advocate for Indigenous people within the industry and ensure an environment

where they can share their stories, from their perspectives. To achieve this, there must be an intentional effort to increase the number of Indigenous people in broadcasting, television, and radio, and in journalist, reporter, producer, and executive positions in the entertainment industry, including, and not limited to, by:

- Providing educational and training opportunities aimed at Indigenous inclusion,
- Providing scholarships and grants aimed at Indigenous inclusion in media, film, and music industry-related fields of study.

## **B. ALL CANADIANS**

### **Responsibility of All Canadians (2.6, 15.2, 15.6, 15.8)**

The CAP membership would like to highlight the important role Canadians and Canadian institutions need to play throughout the strategy to implement the Calls for Justice. Changing attitudes and behaviors must coincide with other efforts to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous women and girls today and into the future. This must be done through:

- Public Education
  - There must be a program to educate the public and public services about, and to confront and eliminate, racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia. To accomplish this, the federal government, in partnership with Indigenous peoples and provincial and territorial governments, must develop and implement an anti-racism and anti-sexism national action plan to end racist and sexualized stereotypes of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.
- Process to Decolonize
  - Learn the true history of Canada and Indigenous history in their local area. They must learn about and celebrate Indigenous peoples' history, cultures, pride, and diversity, acknowledging the land they live on and its importance to local Indigenous communities, both historically and today.
  - Develop knowledge and read the Final Report.
- Safety Promotion
  - Protect, support, and promote the safety of women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people by acknowledging and respecting the value of every person and every community, as well the rights of Indigenous women and girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples to generate their own self determined solutions.
- Holding Institutions Accountable
  - Help hold all governments accountable to act on the Calls for Justice, and to implement them according to the important principals set out in the Final Report.

## **C. EDUCATORS**

### **Role in Public Education (11.1)**

The CAP membership recognizes that educators play a central role in creating change in the

hearts and minds of Canadian society. The importance of how the Calls for Justice is taught to today's youth and to future generations cannot be minimized. Educators must be mandated to teach the Calls for Justice and be supported by policies, funding and curriculum to help uphold their role in implementing positive change.

In partnership with Indigenous peoples, especially Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, all elementary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions and education authorities must educate and provide awareness to the public about missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and about the issues and root causes of violence they experience. Such education and awareness must include historical and current truths about the genocide against Indigenous peoples through state laws, policies, and colonial practices.

### **Education in Prevention (11.2)**

CAP membership also recognizes the role educators play in prevention. CAP highlights the need for all educational service providers to develop and implement awareness and education programs for Indigenous children and youth on the issue of grooming for exploitation and sexual exploitation.

## **Session 6: Child Welfare**

The safety and wellbeing of Indigenous children plays a central role in the wellbeing of Indigenous culture and community. The impacts of genocidal child welfare policies still plague the Indigenous community and directly effects the lives of many of the CAP membership. These realities made the Calls for Justice relating to child welfare one of the most difficult areas for the CAP membership to prioritize with all of the Calls for Justice being viewed as equally important.

### **Indigenous Directed and Controlled (12.1, 12.2)**

CAP calls upon all federal, provincial, and territorial governments to recognize Indigenous self-determination and inherent jurisdiction over child welfare. It must be understood by all parties involved in Indigenous Child Welfare that there is a distinction between the rights of the child and the rights of the Indigenous child.

Indigenous governments and leaders have an obligation to assert jurisdiction in this area and play a central role in intervening, advocating, and supporting their members impacted by the child welfare system.

CAP membership calls upon on all governments, including Indigenous governments, to work to transform current child welfare systems fundamentally so that Indigenous communities have control over the design and delivery of services for their families and children. All governments must ensure that all child welfare workers and services are grounded and trained in appropriate cultural practices. These services must be adequately funded and resourced to ensure better support for families and communities to keep children in their family homes.

### **Independent Oversight (12.9)**

As improved child welfare continues as one of the central issues in the healing of Indigenous communities, independent oversight must be established. CAP membership calls for the



establishment of a Child and Youth Advocate in each jurisdiction with a specialized unit and the mandate of Indigenous children and youth. These units must be established within a period of one year of this report. We call upon the federal government to establish a National Child and Youth Commissioner who would also serve as a special measure to strengthen the framework of accountability for the rights of Indigenous children in Canada. This commissioner would act as a national counterpart to the child advocate offices that currently exist in nearly all provinces and territories.

### **Funding and Support (12.6)**

CAP membership calls upon all governments and child welfare services to ensure that, in cases where apprehension is not avoidable, child welfare services prioritize and ensure that a family member or members, or a close community member, assumes care of Indigenous children. The caregivers should be eligible for financial supports equal to an amount that might otherwise be paid to a foster family and will not have other government financial support or benefits removed or reduced by virtue of receiving additional financial supports for the purpose of caring for the child. This is particularly the case for children who lose their mothers to violence or to institutionalization and are left behind, needing family and belonging to heal.

## **Session 7: Extractive and Development Industries**

The resource extraction industry maintains a place as Canada's main source of revenue. The connection between extractive industries and the mistreatment and murder of local Indigenous women has always been spoken about within the Indigenous community and was finally brought to light during the NIMMIWG. It is the observations of many Indigenous peoples that the Eurocentric views of the land as a "thing" to be dominated and used and then left in ruins, is correlated with the way in which local Indigenous women are viewed and treated.

The CAP membership discussed how the Calls for Justice regarding extractive industries are not only a reckoning regarding the treatment of Indigenous women and girls, but rather it is a call for Canada to have an internal accounting and moral review of one of its foundational and historical practices and sources of wealth.

### **Safety and Benefit to Women (13.1, 13.3)**

The CAP membership identified as a priority the call for all resource-extraction and development industries to ensure that Indigenous women equitably benefit from projects and that provisions and policies are made for the continued safety and security of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people during all phases of project implementation.

### **Study and Understanding (13.4)**

CAP membership also calls upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to fund further inquiries and studies in order to better understand the relationship between resource extraction and other development projects and violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. CAP also supports the call of Indigenous women and leaders for a public inquiry into the sexual violence and racism at hydroelectric projects in northern

Manitoba.

**Impact Assessments (13.2, 13.5)**

The CAP membership highlighted the need to keep the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous women and girls in the forefront of all phases of resource development. They identified as a priority the calls upon all governments and bodies mandated to evaluate, approve, and/or monitor development projects, and to complete gender-based socio-economic impact assessments on all proposed projects as part of their decision making and ongoing monitoring of projects. Project proposals must include provisions and plans to mitigate risks and impacts identified in impact assessments, prior to being approved.

This also includes the assurance that resource-extraction and development industries and all governments and service providers anticipate and recognize the increased demand on social infrastructure because of development projects and resource extraction. CAP calls for mitigation measures to be identified as part of the planning and approval process and for the expansion of social infrastructure and service capacity to meet the anticipated needs of host communities in advance of the start of projects. This includes, guaranteeing fundamental services like policing, social services, and health services are adequately staffed and resourced.

Many CAP members who live in areas impacted by resource extraction also highlighted the need for a post-project plan to ensure the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the community. This is consistent with the Seven Generations teachings and must be part of all project planning and approval process.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The issues surrounding MMIWG carry an incredible emotional weight and are of great importance in the Indigenous community. For decades, thousands fought to bring awareness to the issue of MMIWG. Family members of MMIWG, political leaders and communities have all worked against great odds to bring these truths from the shadows into the light. This fight and the toll it took upon those warriors who fought it, played a central character in the NIMMIWG, and was present at every step of the process.

The National Inquiry was not without its faults and became one of the most controversial processes experienced in recent memory not just by the advocates, but by Canada itself. The National Inquiry felt the full tidal wave of the pain and trauma felt by the Indigenous community, who lived through generations of Indigenous women going missing and murdered without any resolution or justice.

The National Inquiry fought to balance expectations and withstood the anger of the Indigenous community enraged by the thousands of non-investigations, racist police actions and victim services and their policies, witnessed and experienced. Many participants spoke with equal anger at the resulting inter-generational trauma of these experiences unleashed on an already traumatized population.

The National Inquiry worked to and succeeded in providing a platform for the Indigenous community to speak their truths and finally bring forth to the Canadian reality, that there was and is an epidemic of Indigenous women and girls going missing and being murdered. However, an important question remains “Was the Inquiry a success?”.

On June 3rd, 2019 the National Inquiry’s journey ended with the release of their Final Report and the 231 Calls for Justice. On June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019 a new journey began for Canada. This journey will decide the success of the National Inquiry.

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples and their members have always been part of the MMIWG movement. They participated in the NIMMIWG and are intent on being part of the next journey and helping answer that question. Not for the sake of the National Inquiry itself, but rather in memory of the thousands of urban and rural, non-status marginalized Indigenous women and girls who have gone missing and murdered.

CAP knows that in order to ensure a future where Indigenous women and girls are safe, it is important to ensure the unique issues faced by urban and rural Indigenous women and girls are part of each step in the design and implementation stages. The two-day Summit in January 2020 was the beginning step of the CAP commitment to this process.

It was evident throughout the two-day Summit that there was not enough time to provide anything other than preliminary lists of recommended beginning points for a national strategy to implement the NIMMIWG Calls of Justice. The Seven Generations teachings reminds us that the work we do today will reflect the realities of the generations to come.

CAP and all the Indigenous organizations must remain engaged members of the design and implementation team, not because it is a particular political bargaining tool, but rather it is a reflection of, and respect for the hard work done in the MMIWG advocacy stage and during the NIMMIWG.

Our children, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous are looking to us to bridge the divides, look past our differences, master our fears and find our common humanity to a way forward. They are looking to us to positively answer the question “Was the Inquiry a Success?” and make the social experiment called Canada a reality, and truly the best place on earth for all to live.

That way forward begins now, and it begins with us.