



To: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau PM@pm.gov.ca

From: National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) presncwc@gmail.com

Re: Ministerial Mandate Letters

The National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) offers our sincere congratulations to you on your election as Prime Minister and for successfully electing sufficient Liberal candidates to form the 44th Canadian Parliament, which will convene in the next few weeks. It has been our pleasure to work with many of your Ministers in the past Parliament, and we look forward to continuing our work together for a more equitable and fair society.

The NCWC was founded in 1893 as a non-profit and non-partisan organization representing Canadian women of diverse occupations, languages, origins, and customs and reflecting a cross-section of public opinion.

We were incorporated by an Act of Parliament and have received our own Coat of Arms. The NCWC is a non-governmental organization (NGO) currently composed of Local Councils in cities from Halifax to Vancouver, Provincial Councils in Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta, and British Columbia, along with several Nationally Organized Societies.

The NCWC is a federate of the International Council of Women (ICW), which was founded in 1888 and composed of National Councils in seventy-four countries. The NCWC holds Consultative Status (Category II) with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations, enabling us to bring a Canadian perspective to the work of the Commission for the Status of Women. The NCWC also participates as an Observer Non-Governmental Organization with the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States.

The NCWC's local, provincial, and national organizations are closely connected with issues at all levels while also having a firm grasp of international issues and Canada's commitment to them. For this reason, the NCWC is uniquely qualified to approach the Government with suggestions and recommendations which are based on carefully researched and democratically approved policies for improving the quality of life of Canadians, a task we have taken seriously for the past 128 years.

Therefore, in the spirit of working together in a positive, open, and collaborative way, the NCWC membership respectfully offers to you our suggestions for inclusion in the ministerial mandate letters.

Health

- Enact national standards for long term care.
- Support seniors aging in place and being in their homes longer.
- Increase COVID testing, tracking, and data capacity.
- Ensure all Canadians have access to a primary health care team.
- Ensure all Canadians have access to mental health resources and critical health services.

- Focus on the analysis and response to increasing rates of depression and suicide among children.
- Achieve a national universal pharma care program.
- Address the opioid epidemic.
- Advance discoveries of vaccines and therapeutics.
- Consider options for further targeted measures for personal support workers.

Children and Youth

- Initiate a National Strategy Plan for Canada's Children and Youth:
 - Establish an office lead by a Principal **Commissioner of Children and Youth** as well as Assistant Commissioners who could be tasked to focus on specific groups, such as First Nations, Métis and Inuit's peoples or immigrant and refugees.
 - Push to meet all our obligations for compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child that Canada has signed on December 13th, 1991, 30 years ago.
 - Ensure compliance with subsequent addendums as well as ratification of the related Optional Protocols.
 - Investigate and determine actions as to why Canada has yet to sign the OHCHR Optional Protocol to the Convention as a communication procedure.
- Ensure the National Housing Strategy addresses youth homelessness.
- Address racialized violence against aboriginal youth.
- Advance measures directed to fighting gang-related violence and expand diversion programs that keep at-risk youth out of the criminal justice system.
- Enact the Rights of the Child in the Digital Age:
 - Protect children and youth from harm online.
 - Implement third party age verification measures.
 - Enforce laws protecting children from online grooming.
 - Ensure the swift removal and response to CSAM (Child Sexual Abuse Material).
- Accelerate the connectivity timelines and ambitions of the Universal Broadband Fund to ensure that all Canadian students in elementary and secondary schools, no matter where they live, have access to affordable high-speed internet.
- Push forward on the Canada-wide early learning and childcare program including the creation of a before and after-school program for children under 10.
- Ensure the full implementation of the *Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families*, and provide long-term predictable and sufficient funding to support the implementation of the Act.
- Implement the entirety of Jordan's Principle to ensure that Indigenous children have access to the health, social and educational supports, and services that they need, when and where they need them.
- Ensure that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students have the support they need to access and succeed at post-secondary education.
- Implement a pan-Canadian Concussion Strategy and raise awareness for parents, coaches, and athletes on concussion treatment.

Environment

- Seek solutions to eliminate the release of microplastic residues and the breaking down of plastic in the environment.

- Require mining waste and mining industries to report their toxic waste pollution from their total mining operations to the National Pollutant Release Inventory.
- Ensure radioactive substances released into the environment or generated as waste by nuclear facilities are included in the National Pollutant Release Inventory.
- Inspect development projects and enforce the Endangered Species Act.
- Pursue a program of constant surveillance of bio-systems to ensure the preservation of natural biota.
- Reduce the use of fossil fuels.
- Disallow any new gas or oil projects.
- End the subsidization of current oil and gas projects.
- Promote the development of renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, hydro, and geothermal.
- Refrain from supporting nuclear infrastructure expansion, including so-called small modular nuclear reactors (SMRs).

Economics and Employment

- Implement a basic income guarantee (BIG) to address income inequality and decrease poverty.
- Replace Social Assistance (an egregious and punitive 'welfare system'), which tends to keep people in poverty instead of lifting them up and out of the system by implementing a basic income guarantee.
- Ensure housing is available and affordable for those who will never own their own home and those who are struggling to pay rent even while working.
- Assure those who are homeless or leaving abusive relationships of supportive services that they will have access to support services such as emergency shelters, transition houses, second-stage housing, and then stable affordable housing.
- Ensure there is an adequate supply of affordable housing across Canada for those who are forced to spend more than half their income on housing, the disabled who have special needs, Indigenous persons, and single, low-income, and/or senior persons.
- Apply a gender-based analysis to ensure women, who often have more difficulty accessing affordable housing, will have their needs met.
- Hear and listen to the experiences of 'first voice' persons.
- Ensure changes to the EI system so it will be there for employees when it is needed, with shorter wait times and fewer stringent (and often punitive) rules.
- Address the need for benefits for those in the gig economy.

Housing

- Ease the CMHC restrictions for home ownership.
- Ensure the National Housing Strategy addresses the dire need for safe, affordable, accessible housing for all those living at, or below, the poverty line.
- Coordinate your goals with those of Campaign 2000.
- Implement the recommendations and updates from Campaign 2000.
- Encourage national and provincial builders to supply a larger number of affordable homes.

- Create 'villages' of cottages/bungalows that are specifically designed for seniors.
- Encourage provincial and municipal governments to change their zoning bylaws to allow for prefabricated and mobile homes.

Seniors

- Ensure seniors have sufficient income to meet their needs, particularly regarding medical and dental issues.
- Introduce services to address the safety and mental health concerns for seniors who live alone.
- Ensure high quality end of life care so Canadians can die with dignity.
- Work with health professionals to design and deliver a nation-wide dementia strategy.
- Provide refundable tax credits for those who provide care for their elderly relatives.
- Take the lead in ensuring that adequate respite care is available to provide relief for the family caregiver on a regular basis and in emergencies.
- Adopt a national transportation strategy so seniors who no longer drive have affordable accessibility to travel within Canada.
- Enact national standards for long term care facilities throughout Canada.
- Enact legislation with stiff penalties for those who physically, emotionally, or financially abuse elders.

Justice

- Ensure that appropriate measures and funding are available to focus on the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls.
- Ensure the appropriate allocation of funding for housing, and mental health services for survivors of domestic violence, sexual abuse, human trafficking, and prostitution.
- Ensure that these survivors have an equal opportunity to either pursue higher education or specialized training schools to enter new careers of their choice.
- Ensure full application of the *Criminal Code* and *Judges Act* that address judicial continuing education.
- Seek appointments to a provincial superior court from individuals who agree to participate in training on matters related to sexual assault law and social context, including systemic racism and systemic discrimination.
- Extend judicial education on sexual assault law to the incumbent Judges of the day and police officers as they are the first responders a survivor of sexual assault encounters.
- Enact legislation to control the possession, acquisition, storage, and circulation of handguns.
- Bring Canada's solitary confinement laws into correlation with the United Nations call on all countries to ban the solitary confinement of prisoners except in very exceptional circumstances and for as short a time as possible, with an absolute prohibition in the case of juveniles and people with mental disabilities.
- Update the situation where federally sentenced women must undergo the same process as men in establishing their potential for release.
- Define what constitutes an assault style weapon.
- Examine and rectify the imbalance of Indigenous persons in Canada's prison system in relation to census data.

- Introduce legislation, in collaboration with the provinces and territories, to ensure that Sexual Assault Forensic Exams, commonly known as 'rape kits', and medical personnel trained to administer this tool which is vital for law enforcement, be available in all hospitals and remote clinics in Canada.
- Ensure the murders of sex workers receive the same attention as other homicides without prejudice as to their work.

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

- Ensure the Ministry holds regular consultation meetings with Civil Society in all matters concerning issues affecting women and girls in planning for the upcoming UN Women sessions prior to and during the CSW session.
- Ensure that prior to and during CSW the Permanent Representative of Canada continues to work closely with women and girls' groups in attendance to the CSW.
- Ensure the Ministry works with CSOs to implement the agreed upon conclusion to the CSW.
- Continue to ensure there is sufficient space for members of CSOs in the official delegation of Canada during the negotiations of the official outcome of the session recognizing those representatives shall be the choice recommended by the participating CSO.
- Continue having a Rapid response team comprised of the government/CSO members.
- Ensure that the Minister be present during the CSW session in the UN Women NGO Regional Caucus of Women for Europe and North America, as Canada has elected representatives as part of the global advocacy feminist movement.

Sexual Misconduct in the Military

- Ensure the Honourable Louise Arbour has the necessary funding, personnel, and scope to adequately address this travesty affecting many men and women in Canada's Armed Forces.
- Ensure that proper cultural awareness, gender identification and psychiatric evaluations are completed on any officer or enlisted personnel before they are assigned to work with traumatized sexually abused/assaulted/harassed individuals on any project.
- Adhere to the fact that, at minimum, charges of any sexual type are made under the S. 129 National Defence Act as conduct to the prejudice of good order and discipline.
- Ensure that Military personnel who live an "Alternate Lifestyle" are not singled out for early or immediate discharge or refused high security clearances due to their sexual preferences.
- Address the issue of drug use within the forces and the ability of forces' members to grow their own marijuana.
- Determine if the legalization of marijuana has had any impact on the sexual abuse/assault/misconduct numbers.
- Ensure the protection of victims of sexual about/assault/misconduct within the Military from media inquisition and family intrusion.

Indigenous Issues

The NCWC firmly believes that the myriad of issues facing Canada's Indigenous population should be a part of each Minister's mandate. We have advocated for the following actions to be taken by the federal government to address these matters:

- 1993: New Programs for Native Peoples
- 1996: Support for the Elderly in First Nations Communities
- 1997: Toward a New Relationship Between Aboriginal Peoples and Other Canadians
- 2002: Protection of the Human Rights of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada
- 2006: Protection for Aboriginal Women and Children from Family Violence
- 2008: Call for Canadian Support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- 2010: The Urgent and Critical Need to Provide Safe and Adequate Housing and Infrastructure for Aboriginal People
- 2012: Aboriginal Youth Suicide and "Life Promotion"
- 2012, 2015, 2016, 2020: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
- 2017: The Right to Potable Water on First Nations Reserves
- 2018: Addressing Suicide of Aboriginal Peoples
- 2018: Reconciling with Canada's Aboriginal Peoples
- 2018: Eliminating the Indian Act
- 2019: Truth and Reconciliation: Historic Sites and Monuments
- 2020: Indigenous Peoples and Racism in Health Care

The NCWC Common Program for 2019 – 2023 is "**Listening to, Learning From, Acting on the Recommendations of the Commission on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**". These are our specific concerns that should be included in the mandate letters.

- Address the 231 recommendations of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
- Ensure all cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and persons who identify as 2SLGBTQIA be investigated thoroughly and immediately.
- Collaborate with the provinces, territories, and Indigenous governments to
 - enhance efforts on unresolved cases
 - increase public awareness
 - develop programs that address racism
 - strengthen and improve data collection, including DNA of unidentified bodies
 - include gender-based analysis of all legislation and programs related to missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and persons who identify as 2SLGBTQIA
 - focus on prevention efforts that include the provision of safe, secure, affordable housing
 - eliminate poverty
 - increase access to services for Indigenous women, girls, and persons who identify as 2SLGBTQIA
 - fund support groups for Indigenous women and persons who identify as 2SLGBTQIA
 - provide quality education within Indigenous communities

- support community capacity building
- develop and deliver antiviolence programs.

In this same vein, the NCWC strongly urges you to continue working diligently to develop and implement a national reconciliation framework to address the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as it is a crucial step in rebuilding Canada's relationship with our Indigenous peoples.

Please be in contact with us to discuss any, or all, of these suggestions as we are truly committed to working with you to advance our shared vision of a Canada that is a united, tolerant, accepting, and caring society.

Sincerely

Patricia Leson, President
National Council of Women of Canada

The National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) works in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, acknowledging Canada is the traditional territory of Indigenous and Metis People. We are grateful to join with others in peace and hope, advocating for an improved quality of life for women, children, families, and society.

C: Marci Surkes: Marci.Surkes@pmo-cpm.gc.ca; MSurkes@liberal.ca
Julie Savard Shaw: JSavard-Shaw@liberal.ca