

Government of New Brunswick

Introduction

Hon. Tammy Scott-Wallace, Minister responsible for Women's Equality

New Brunswick is committed to improving the safety, security and well-being of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. Through collaborative work and engagement, we have created a foundation for working in partnership with Indigenous peoples and Indigenous communities to end violence and envision a future where survivors, families, and all of those affected by violence have the opportunity to heal and move forward. We recognize there is much more work to be done. To achieve improvements that are sustained over time will require ongoing focus and attention from all partners and our government is committed to doing its part.

Progress and Key Highlights from June 2022 – 2023

The government of New Brunswick has focused on the development of *Weaving Our Voices Together: New Brunswick's Path to Safety for Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ People*. This report is based on collaborative engagement across the province with the *New Brunswick Advisory Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women*, the Wabanaki Nations (Wolastoqey Nation, Mi'gmaq Nation, and the Peskotomuhkati Nation) and Indigenous organizations. It is rooted in reflection and learning with a view towards advancing reconciliation and ending violence.

On its own, the government of New Brunswick cannot implement the actions within the report nor affect the desired outcomes, but by working with partners in all levels of governments and striking new working relationships with the



Weaving Our Voices Together

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

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Image Credit: Special thank you to Wolastoqiyik artist Natalie Sappier- Samaqani Cocahq (The Water Spirit) for providing her artwork titled Drumming Circle that is featured on the cover of this report.

Wabanaki Nations and with all Indigenous peoples in the province, we can begin to build lasting change. Our response will evolve over time as new priorities are identified and we will continue to incorporate Indigenous-led and government supported actions as we move forward to improve the safety and lives of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in New Brunswick. We acknowledge that this will be a long-term effort requiring all of us to work together.

New Brunswick will focus on the following five goals and outcomes that reflect the needs and priorities identified by Indigenous people in the province:

- **Safety and Security**, Outcome: Indigenous women, their children, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are safe.
- **Health and Well-Being**, Outcome: Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people attain full health, healing, and wellness that is self-determined. Health disparities and inequities are eliminated.
- **Justice and Policing**, Outcome: Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people have access to culturally safe police and justice response.
- **Education and Employment**, Outcome: Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people have economic security and receive education that reaffirms their nationhood, language, knowledges, and heritages.
- **Culture and Rights**, Outcome: Wabanaki cultures, languages, knowledges, and heritage are protected and promoted. New Brunswick's population is accurately knowledgeable of the Wabanaki people.

These goals and outcomes have guided government's actions in its renewed commitment and response to ending violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, as well as its partnerships with communities, organizations, and other levels of government.

Progress has already been made in key areas, including;

- Expanding Indigenous domestic/intimate partner violence outreach services to four regions of the province.
- Creation of a video awareness series on the topic of mental health and wellbeing of Indigenous people that will be released in Fall 2023.
- Enacting provincial missing persons legislation.
- Developing Indigenous cultural awareness training modules that will be rolled out to government of New Brunswick public servants, including those under the Regional Health Authorities, Justice and Public Safety staff, as well as court staff, and all who participate in the provincial justice system.

To reflect the diversity required to thoroughly address the calls for justice in the National Inquiry's final report, in early 2023 the *New Brunswick Advisory Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women* was reformed as the *New Brunswick Advisory Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People* to support and advise the work on New Brunswick's response.

Priorities June 2023 – 2024

Weaving Our Voices Together: New Brunswick's Path to Safety for Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People is set to be publicly released along with the launch of a dedicated website that includes background information on the National Inquiry's final report, New Brunswick's response, statistics, and updates on the status of actions. The *New Brunswick Advisory Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People* along with the provincial Interdepartmental Working Group on the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice will work together to finalize an implementation and accountability structure to measure progress on New Brunswick's response as we move forward together.

Linkages to National Action Plan Priorities and Calls For Justice

- In Fall 2022, New Brunswick enacted missing persons legislation which address the Call for Justice 5.8 - *We call upon all provincial and territorial governments to enact missing persons legislation.*
- The development and roll out of Indigenous cultural awareness training modules to government of New Brunswick public servants under the Regional Health Authorities addresses Call for Justice 7.6 - *We call upon 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; and local health and healing practices.*
- The implementation of Indigenous cultural awareness training modules across Justice and Public Safety staff, court staff, and all who participate in the provincial justice system addresses part 1 of the Call for Justice 10.1 - *We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, and Canadian law societies and bar associations, for mandatory intensive and periodic training of Crown attorneys, defense lawyers, court staff, and all who participate in the criminal justice system, in the area of Indigenous cultures and*

histories, including distinctions-based training. This includes, but is not limited to, the following measures: All courtroom officers, staff, judiciary, and employees in the judicial system must take cultural competency training that is designed and led in partnership with local Indigenous communities.

- New Brunswick also engaged Indigenous communities, organizations, and service providers to ensure that their voices are heard and supported in the development of Indigenous-led approaches to addressing violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, corresponding to goal 3 and short-term priority a of the *2021 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People National Action Plan* and aligning with our response to pillar 4 of the *National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence*.

Closing Statement

The Calls for Justice are broad and complex. Addressing them requires action and commitments by many provincial government departments, financial and human resources, collaboration with other levels of governments, community-based partners, the Wabanaki Nations (Wolastoqey Nation, Mi'gmaq Nation, and the Peskotomuhkati Nation), Indigenous organizations, Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. New Brunswick's approach to their implementation, and more importantly to improved outcomes, relationships, and equality for Indigenous Peoples, are first and foremost informed by Indigenous Peoples. New Brunswick is committed to improving the safety, security and well-being of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. *Weaving Our Voices Together: New Brunswick's Path to Safety for Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People* is a testament to that commitment.