



Ottawa, Canada K1A 0M5

Ms. Marilyn Gladu, M.P.
Chair, Standing Committee on the Status of Women
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

JUN 15 2017

Dear Ms. Gladu:

Pursuant to Standing Order 109 of the House of Commons, I am pleased to share with you the Government's response to the Seventh Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, *Taking Action to End Violence Against Young Women and Girls in Canada*, tabled on March 20, 2017.

The Government appreciates the important work undertaken by the Standing Committee and extends gratitude as well to the numerous witnesses who contributed to enhancing understanding of gender-based violence in Canada. The results of this study will be important for future work on this issue. The resulting recommendations the Standing Committee has provided will help to inform the federal government as it considers measures that can be implemented to prevent and address gender-based violence, including on violence against young women and girls across Canada, the focus of your report.

The Government is committed to strengthening federal efforts to prevent and address gender-based violence with a response that is coordinated and evidence-based. Around the world, gender-based violence remains a significant barrier to gender equality, even though it is preventable. As you are aware, I have been mandated to implement and monitor a strategy to address gender-based violence in Canada. To support this work, Budget 2017 included an investment of \$100.9M over five years, starting in 2017-18, and \$20.7M ongoing. This will help to boost Canada's capacity to address this issue. We anticipate releasing the GBV Strategy shortly.

Again, on behalf of the Government, I thank you for your important work and for your commitment to ensuring the Government considers the experiences and needs of diverse populations in its decision making.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Maryam Monsef', written in a cursive style.

The Honourable Maryam Monsef, P.C., M.P.

Enclosure: Government Response to the Seventh Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE 7TH REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

1. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Standing Order 109 of the House of Commons, this report outlines the Government's response to the recommendations made by the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women (known as FEWO) in its Seventh Report, "Taking Action to End Violence Against Young Women and Girls in Canada," which was tabled on March 20, 2017.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based Violence (GBV) is a form of violence against someone based on their gender, gender identity, or perceived gender. Around the world, GBV remains a significant barrier to gender equality, despite the fact that it is preventable. The Government is committed to strengthening federal efforts to prevent and address GBV through a comprehensive approach that is coordinated and evidence-based.

The Minister of Status of Women has been mandated to implement and monitor a Strategy to Address GBV (the GBV Strategy) in Canada. To support this work, Budget 2017 included an historic investment of \$100.9M over five years starting in 2017-18, and \$20.7M ongoing. This will help to boost Canada's capacity to address this issue. The GBV Strategy, which is planned for release shortly, will be based on three pillars that will improve the Government's overall response to GBV: prevention, support for survivors and their families, and a responsive justice system.

Budget 2017 also included a series of additional investments that will assist in preventing and addressing GBV, including:

- \$118.5M over five years to support the Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples, which could support family violence programs;
- \$5B over 11 years for a National Housing Fund to address critical housing issues and prioritize support for vulnerable populations, including survivors fleeing family violence;
- \$2.7M over five years to support programming on judicial education, ethics and conduct, including gender and diversity training for judges and \$0.5M ongoing;
- \$55.5M over five years, starting in 2017-18 and \$11.1M ongoing, to provide long-term and stable investment in the Indigenous Justice Program, which provides funding for

community-based programs that use restorative justice approaches as an alternative to the mainstream justice system and corrections;

- \$200M over five years to increase mental health supports for First Nations and Inuit communities; and
- Proposed changes to the *Canada Labour Code* to provide federally regulated workers with new unpaid leave to seek care if they are victims of family violence.

ADDRESSING GBV IN CANADA: A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY (RECOMMENDATIONS 7, 8, 9, 21, 38)

Preventing and addressing violence is a shared federal and provincial/territorial (PT) responsibility. Currently, all PT governments have initiatives or actions underway that are related to GBV.

Several federal departments and agencies, including Status of Women Canada (SWC), the Department of Justice Canada (DOJ), Public Safety Canada (PS) and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) have existing mechanisms to support engagement and collaboration with PT colleagues on issues related to GBV. Aligned with the FEWO recommendation, the Minister of Status of Women will share this report at the next meeting of the Federal /Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women. Additionally, SWC, DOJ and PS have agreed to discuss particular recommendations at upcoming meetings of their respective FPT tables, including the FPT Ministers Responsible for Justice and Public Safety. These specific recommendations are addressed further in this report.

THE GOVERNMENT'S STRATEGY TO ADDRESS GBV (RECOMMENDATIONS 1, 2, 3, 4)

During the summer and fall of 2016, the Government, through SWC, heard from Canadians, experts, advocates, survivors, PTs and service providers from across the country to help inform the development of the GBV Strategy. Canadians with diverse experiences and perspectives participated in the engagement process through various forums (e.g., a Minister's Advisory Council, roundtables, meetings, an expert panel, and an online survey to which 7,600 Canadians responded). Participants included Indigenous women, individuals from LGBTQ2 (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, two-spirited) and gender non-conforming communities, young women, women with disabilities, men and women working to end GBV, and newcomers to Canada.

Through this process, Canadians shared their experiences, and identified key issues, promising practices, and gaps in preventing and addressing GBV. Consistent with FEWO's recommendations, stakeholders identified prevention, engaging men and boys in a dialogue to

prevent GBV and promote gender equality, and support for survivors as priorities for action. Some participants called for tailored supports for diverse groups of survivors, training for service providers on trauma-informed practice, and improvements to the justice system response to GBV. Comprehensive data collection on GBV, research on promising programs, and practical, evidence-based resources for policy makers and service providers were also called for. This feedback will continue to inform the GBV Strategy as it is implemented. The GBV Strategy will respect FPT jurisdiction by complementing and building on the significant efforts underway in the PTs. In line with the FEWO recommendation, moving forward, SWC will work – through the Centre of Excellence (CoE) – to align actions of the GBV Strategy with those of other Government commitments as they roll out, including the recommendations of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Similarly, and further to the Minister of Status of Women’s mandate, SWC will continue to engage with PTs to align federal and PT initiatives related to GBV.

2. PREVENTING GBV

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT (RECOMMENDATIONS 11, 26)

The Government agrees with the Committee that there is a need to create awareness and commence a dialogue among youth, including young men and boys, in order to reduce societal attitudes that de-value women and/or condone violence. Guided by what was heard during the GBV engagement process, the Government will engage youth on awareness related initiatives on GBV as part of the GBV Strategy. The Prime Minister’s Youth Secretariat is one example of an initiative already being undertaken by the Government in this area. Other actions the Government is taking to address violence against young women and girls are described below.

The Department of National Defence (DND) is responsible for the largest federally sponsored youth programs in Canada: the Cadet Program and the Junior Canadian Ranger Program, which include training and education programs for the prevention of violence against young women and girls. This includes:

- Mandatory education for all adult instructors in topics such as online safety and bullying, as well as briefings to cadet and Junior Canadian Rangers leadership so they are able to recognize, prevent and provide assistance to those who may be suffering from violence;
- Mandatory training for Cadets and Junior Canadian Rangers, which includes subjects such as recognizing and dealing with inappropriate behaviour, dealing with interpersonal conflict, accepting personal responsibility for actions and choices, and seeking help from available resources when needed.

ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES (RECOMMENDATION 22)

The Government also agrees with the need to prevent and address GBV among vulnerable populations. The engagement process for the GBV Strategy underscored the need to tailor initiatives to the needs of diverse populations. Specific responses will be outlined in the GBV Strategy.

Regarding current actions, SWC initiatives seek to advance equality for all women in Canada. As a result, diverse groups of women (e.g. indigenous women, women living with disabilities, immigrant women) benefit from SWC initiatives. While not the primary focus of projects funded through SWC's Women's Program, projects that include improved conditions for women living with disabilities are eligible for funding. In the last five years, SWC has provided close to \$1M to the DisAbled Women's Network of Canada in support of two projects to address the needs of women with disabilities and deaf women experiencing violence.

Furthermore, the Government recognizes the unique challenges faced by women with disabilities. Every department in the federal government has a role to play in ensuring that individuals with disabilities are well served and included in policies, programming and services. The Office for Disability Issues, within Employment and Social Development, is mandated to work with all sectors of society to ensure the equitable access and effective participation of Canadians with disabilities in all activities within federal jurisdiction.

ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS (RECOMMENDATIONS 19, AND 25, 26)

SWC agrees with FEWO that engaging men and boys is critical to preventing GBV. The GBV Strategy will build on SWC's history of supporting engagement of men and boys in preventing GBV.

Through the Women's Program, SWC supports projects that bring about equality and the advancement of women in Canada by working to address or remove systemic barriers impeding women's progress and equality. Ending violence against women and girls is one of three priorities of SWC. In recognition of the importance of engaging men and boys in ending violence against women and girls, SWC funded nine projects to that end from 2013 to 2015. For example, the organization White Ribbon Campaign received funding from 2013 to 2016 to facilitate a Community of Practice with these nine organizations, which resulted in the development of a "made-in-Canada" online toolkit of promising practices for engaging men and boys in preventing GBV. The toolkit profiles promising practices, case studies, evaluation tools, resources and workshop activities geared to promote healthy masculinities and prevent GBV. It was launched in the fall of 2016 and is available at canpreventgbv.ca.

Additionally, as demonstrated in a recent off-reserve call for proposals, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) is also engaging men and boys in ending violence against women through its Family Violence Prevention Program. Aligned with the related FEWO recommendation, INAC will continue to prioritize such programming for men and boys, particularly where it is focused on the concept of respectful relationships.

The Department of Justice (DOJ), through its Victims Fund, is also facilitating programming to engage men and boys in ending violence against women and girls, including through the development and delivery of community-oriented and culturally-appropriate education programs that engage men and boys on issues of violence against women. Funding is also available to enhance public legal education and information initiatives, including those that promote public awareness and education for men and boys, about issues related to GBV.

PREVENTING ONLINE VIOLENCE (RECOMMENDATIONS 5, 16, 24 AND 25)

The Government is a global leader in efforts to combat online child sexual exploitation. Efforts include:

- The National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation on the Internet (National Strategy) is a horizontal initiative involving the RCMP, PS, DOJ and the Canadian Centre for Child Protection (C3P) to provide a comprehensive, coordinated approach to enhancing the protection of children from online child sexual exploitation.
- The RCMP's Canadian Police Centre for Missing and Exploited Children/Behavioural Sciences Branch (the Centre) is the national law enforcement arm of the *National Strategy*, and functions as the central point of contact for investigations related to the online sexual exploitation of children. In addition to its many services provided to support law enforcement, which are further described under the Promoting Responsive Legal and Justice Systems section of this report, the Centre works with C3P to educate youth on the risks of online child sexual exploitation.
- Through its Contribution Program to Combat Serious and Organized Crime, PS funds educational initiatives implemented by the C3P. For example, the "Kids in the Know" program is a national interactive safety program for increasing the personal safety of children and youth, and reducing their risk of victimization online and in the real world.

The RCMP's Centre for Youth Crime Prevention (CYCP) also offers evidence-based information and resources to front-line police officers and the Canadian public to educate youth on crime and victimization issues. Front-line police officers use CYCP resources to deliver informative sessions within schools across Canada that educate youth about consent, healthy relationships, GBV and intimate partner violence.

Additionally, PS will consider FEWO's recommendation to create an e-Safety Commissioner or similar role, as it advances efforts to prevent and address online violence. Related to this, PS leads the Government's Crime Prevention Strategy, and is responsible for providing national leadership on effective and cost-efficient ways to prevent and reduce crime. Through the National Crime Prevention Strategy, PS is currently supporting the development of school-based projects to prevent bullying and cyber-bullying with a focus on developing knowledge of effective strategies, promoting awareness and implementing programs to assist youth, parents and educators in addressing bullying and cyber-bullying.

The DOJ Victims Fund makes funding available to PT governments, municipalities, First Nations Bands and non-government organizations to develop and enhance public legal education and information initiatives that benefit young survivors of GBV, including online harassment.

3. SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS AND THEIR FAMILIES

While PTs have responsibility for direct service provision, the Government has some existing mechanisms that can help to support survivors and their families.

SHELTERS AND RELATED SUPPORTS FOR SURVIVORS AND FAMILIES FLEEING VIOLENCE (RECOMMENDATION 23)

The Government is committed to growing and maintaining Canada's network of shelters and transition houses for individuals fleeing violence. Federal programs provide capital funding to build new or to repair and integrate accessibility features in existing shelters for survivors of violence.

Most recently, Budget 2017 announced \$11.2B over eleven years, starting in 2017-18, for an inclusive National Housing Strategy. As part of this investment, a \$5B National Housing Fund will address critical housing issues and prioritize support for vulnerable households, including survivors fleeing situations of family violence. Also as part of the National Housing Strategy, Budget 2017 proposes a total investment of \$2.1B over the next 11 years to expand and extend funding for the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) beyond 2018-19, when current funding is scheduled to end.

Over the next year, guided by the efforts of an advisory panel of homelessness experts, chaired by Parliamentary Secretary Adam Vaughan, the Government will consult with stakeholders, PTs and Indigenous partners on how federal homelessness-related funding programs can be redesigned to better reduce and prevent homelessness across Canada. In particular, the advisory panel will examine how to better support the needs of specific homeless populations such as young women and children, including those who may be fleeing situations of violence.

This series of investments build on Budget 2016 announcements related to critical supports for specific populations, including women and children fleeing family violence, including:

- Increased investments in the HPS with incremental funding of \$111.8M over two years (2016-17 and 2017-18);
- \$89.9M over two years (2016-17 and 2017-18) to support the construction and renovation of over 3,000 spaces in shelters and transition houses off reserve;
- \$10.4M over three years which will create five new shelters for victims of family violence in First Nations communities; and
- Up to \$33.6M over five years, beginning in 2016-2017, and up to \$8.3M in ongoing additional funding to support the existing network of shelters on reserve.

VIOLENCE ON POST-SECONDARY CAMPUSES (FEWO RECOMMENDATIONS 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 26, 34)

The Government shares the Committee's concerns about the incidence of GBV on Canada's post-secondary campuses. The PTs are primarily responsible for the delivery of victim services as part of their responsibility for the administration of justice, and are also responsible for the establishment and administration of schools and universities.

The FEWO recommendations related to the implementation of sexual assault policies in Canadian post-secondary institutions, including sexual violence intervention and sensitivity training for employees of post-secondary institutions, are a matter of PT responsibility. However, in line with the FEWO recommendations, DOJ and PS have agreed to discuss the issue with PT counterparts through the table of the FPT Ministers Responsible for Justice and Public Safety. Additionally, some federal departments are helping to support efforts to address this important issue; specifically:

- SWC is currently synthesizing promising practices and lessons learned from a suite of projects funded under the Women's Program to address campus violence. Dating back to 2011, SWC has provided funding to support various organizations to reduce GBV on campuses. Twenty-one organizations were funded for a total of close to \$4M to work with 30 post-secondary institutions across Canada. This investment was instrumental in bringing visibility to campus violence and created momentum for change and future action. It resulted in increased physical safety measures, policy/procedures reform, and service improvements.
- The CAF's two postsecondary institutions, the Royal Military College of Canada and the Royal Military College St-Jean, educate their students through training and education programs to create a culture of mutual trust, respect, honour and dignity among all students. These mandatory programs include information on what constitutes harmful and inappropriate sexual behaviour, as well as supports available.

Additionally, DOJ's Victims Fund will support projects such as the one led by the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, which will work with St. Francis Xavier University and other community partners to develop and implement a bystander intervention program and training videos for students and teachers. Projects will also assist in the development of trauma-informed training for criminal justice professionals, the exploration of external oversight mechanisms for police, and enhanced public legal education and information about sexual assault law.

ACCESSIBLE SUPPORTS (RECOMMENDATIONS 19, 20, 21, 23, 36, 42 AND 43)

Supporting survivors and preventing the re-victimization of those who have experienced GBV is of paramount importance to the Government. The Government shares the Committee's view of the need to increase the availability and accessibility of supports for survivors of GBV and will keep the needs of those with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in mind when implementing the GBV Strategy.

Supporting Survivors

Aligned with the FEWO recommendation, the FPT Working Group on Victims of Crime, which has representation from all Canadian Directors of Victim Services, will discuss the issue of accessibility to services and supports for victims and survivors of sexual assault and other forms of GBV at its next meeting in the fall 2017.

Additionally, through the DOJ Victims Fund, funding is available to PT governments, municipalities, First Nations Bands and non-government organizations for projects that benefit vulnerable populations of women and girls, including those with disabilities who are survivors of sexual violence, new immigrant and refugee survivors of GBV and survivors who are at risk of homelessness. In 2016, DOJ issued a call for proposals under the Victims Fund for projects that help to address gaps in support and services, awareness-raising, or research to benefit victims and survivors of crime with disabilities – including survivors of sexual violence. Victims Fund funding is available to:

- Develop specialized victim services, services designed to be trauma-informed and culturally sensitive, to benefit new immigrant and refugee survivors of GBV;
- Develop and enhance legal resources that benefit women and girls who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and who are survivors of GBV; and
- Support various projects and activities that seek to address priority issues for victims and survivors of crime, including young women and girls who have experienced GBV. This is in addition to the \$12M set aside for the above mentioned funding calls for proposals.

Furthermore, in 2013, SWC launched a call for proposals to build collaboration between sexual assault centres and their community partners to identify promising practices and coordinate implementation efforts to improve service responses. As a result, 22 projects across Canada were funded and activities completed in 2016. SWC is currently analyzing the results of these projects.

Regarding newcomer populations, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) recognizes that some newcomer women may face heightened vulnerability when immigrating to Canada. Through its Settlement Program, IRCC provides funding to nearly 500 service provider organizations in communities across Canada to deliver settlement services to newcomers, of which more than half are women, including young women. Many of these organizations deliver settlement programming in the area of violence prevention and have strong community partnerships in place to ensure holistic programming for those newcomers facing family violence. Supports include activities to mitigate the risks of exposure to GBV by strengthening knowledge of Canadian laws, social cohesion and community connections to important resources (e.g., support groups, assisting clients in developing safety plans, and supports to help navigate the legal system).

Additionally, PHAC's Family Violence Prevention funding supports the development and testing of interventions to improve the physical and mental health of survivors of family violence. Projects represent a range of new trauma-informed approaches to health promotion, including specially-designed sports, peer support, arts and culture, and parenting programs. Research and evaluation findings will support the implementation and uptake of evidence-based programs in the future.

Additionally, the RCMP, through its Victims' Services Program, seeks to enhance the safety of victims, reduce the risk of further victimization, increase the level of participation in the criminal justice system of victims, and to prepare and support victims for the court process by providing assistance which could include support, monetary compensation, and access to counseling.

Supporting Indigenous Survivors and Families

In First Nations communities, the Government works closely with PT governments, and supports First Nations shelters and their representatives, to deliver services that address the unique needs of the communities which they serve, and may include the provision of service in Indigenous languages. In its funding role, INAC encourages First Nation service providers to develop programming that incorporates the specific needs of individuals living with disabilities, with mental illness, identifying as lesbian, bisexual and transgender, and those who are sex

workers, through the prioritization of funding for projects that demonstrate these considerations.

Health Canada (HC) is working with First Nations and Inuit partners to improve the public health response to victims of family violence through an investment of \$3M annually over 10 years (2015-2025) through two funding streams:

- Stream 1: Short-term crisis intervention mental health counselling to victims of violence, provided through the Non-Insured Health Benefit Program (\$1.5M per year); and
- Stream 2: Community-based programming to improve and strengthen access to trauma-informed and culturally relevant programming (\$1.5M per year).

PHAC also supports projects that contribute to reducing violence against women and girls, including in Indigenous and Northern communities, through:

- Its Family Violence Prevention funding, which supports the development and testing of interventions to improve the physical and mental health of survivors of family violence, including Indigenous survivors; and
- The Innovation Strategy, for projects that promote healthy relationships among Indigenous youth and address risk factors for GBV, such as alcohol and drug misuse.

Supporting Service Providers

The Government also engages in actions to train those who provide support to victims of GBV. Through its Family Violence Prevention funding, for example, PHAC is increasing the capacity of health and allied professionals and organizations by:

- Developing and testing interventions to enhance the physical and mental health of survivors of family violence. Knowledge about effective programs and approaches can be used to guide and strengthen community supports and services.
- Supporting the use of trauma- and violence-informed approaches to ensure services are safe, effective and non-traumatizing for survivors of violence. For example, the Violence Education, Guidance and Awareness project is working with 22 national health organizations to develop curricula, training and practical tools to support professionals to work safely and effectively with survivors of violence. (www.projectvega.ca)

In addition, the Stop Family Violence webpages provide information and resources for professionals and the public about addressing and preventing family violence, including tools, guidance and promising practices which can help service providers deliver effective and appropriate services. PHAC manages the Stop Family Violence webpages on behalf of the federal Family Violence Initiative. (www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/sfv-avf/index-eng.php)

4. PROMOTING RESPONSIVE LEGAL AND JUSTICE SYSTEMS

Working to create more responsive legal and justice systems is a key component in the Government's approach to addressing GBV. The Government is taking action in a number of areas.

LEGISLATIVE RESPONSES (FEWO RECOMMENDATIONS 14, 18, 33, 37)

The Government has committed to several legislative changes related to GBV, including to a review of the Criminal Justice System to address gaps, ensure coherence throughout the system and increase community safety. The review will include consideration of FEWO's recommendation to strengthen the criminal harassment provisions in the *Criminal Code*. Additionally, as part of this review, DOJ is responsible for engaging with victims and survivors of crime stakeholders on issues of concern, including issues that impact women and girls who are survivors of GBV. DOJ will seek to engage stakeholders who are experts on a variety of GBV issues, such as family violence, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, child and youth sexual exploitation, human trafficking and violence against LGBTQ2 communities.

Budget 2017 announced \$107.8M over five years, starting in 2017–18, and \$21.1M per year thereafter for federal family justice activities and PT family justice services. This funding will help support family justice services including those that promote safety in family violence situations, such as supervised access programs. In addition, this funding will help ensure the financial well-being of family members, including children, through improved enforcement of family support obligations. Financial security is a critical support for survivors of family violence.

Other key Government mandate letter commitments regarding legislative amendments include:

- Amending the *Criminal Code* to strengthen the criminal law response to intimate partner violence and other forms of GBV, with the goal of keeping survivors and children safe; and
- Amending the *Criminal Code*'s hate crime provisions and the *Canadian Human Rights Act* to include gender identity and expression to increase protections of LGBTQ2 and gender non-conforming individuals to ensure all Canadians enjoy the same rights and freedoms.

On the issue of online violence, the *Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act* (enacted in 2014) amended the *Criminal Code* provisions related to criminalizing harassment by means of telecommunication (subsection 372(3)), which provides that "Everyone commits an offence who, without lawful excuse and with intent to harass a person, repeatedly communicates, or causes repeated communications to be made, with them by means of a telecommunication."

Providing false information (subsection 372(1)) and indecent communications (subsection 372(2)) also cover these activities by means of telecommunication. Subsection 4(8) of the *Criminal Code* was also amended to provide that for greater certainty, for the purposes of the *Criminal Code*, if the elements of an offence contain an explicit or implicit element of communication without specifying the means of communication, the communication may also be made by a means of telecommunication, which could assist in addressing concerns about applying section 264 to online communications.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND LEGAL AID (RECOMMENDATIONS 27, 31)

While not focused specifically on young women and girls, the following actions provide supports for survivors more broadly. Aligned with FEWO recommendations, the Government currently provides funding for immigration and refugee legal aid, including for women who may be fleeing violence from other countries. Budget 2017 provided \$62.9M over five years (2017-22) for immigration and refugee legal aid, followed by \$11.5M annually in ongoing funding thereafter. This funding is a renewal of the current \$11.5M annual allocation to Immigration and Refugee Legal Aid, plus \$2.7M annually in additional funds for 2017-18 and 2018-19 to address pressures.

Budget 2016 announced \$88M over five years (2016-21) for criminal legal aid in the provinces and for criminal and civil legal aid in the territories, and an additional \$30M annually commencing in 2021-22, supplementing the existing \$112M annual allocation. This funding is allocated among jurisdictions according to a formula that takes into account demographic factors that impact the demand for legal aid, including a jurisdiction's Indigenous population and its population below the low income measure, two segments of the population where women are more susceptible to come into contact with the criminal justice system.

Through the Justice Partnership and Innovations Program at DOJ, funding is provided to public legal education and information organizations across Canada for the development of accurate and accessible information on the law, which can include information relating to sexual assault and other forms of GBV.

Furthermore, as part of their mandate for criminal justice system issues, the FPT Ministers Responsible for Justice and Public Safety have tasked a Working Group to examine the issue of access to justice for adult victims of sexual assault, including young women. This working group, co-chaired by DOJ and Ontario, will report back to FPT Ministers with recommendations for legislation and mitigation strategies.

Additionally, resources from DOJ's Victims Fund will support:

- The development and delivery of specialized training on the legal frameworks and unique dynamics inherent to sexual violence and intimate partner violence, the neurobiology of trauma and trauma-informed services for victims of sexual violence;
- Projects, training or services designed to enhance access to justice for survivors of sexual assault, particularly in relation to reporting, testifying and providing victim impact statements;
- Projects or services available for survivors of sexual assault that fill identified gaps at various stages throughout the criminal justice process; and
- PTs to assess the feasibility of providing independent legal advice (ILA) to victims of sexual assault, and to pilot projects to provide ILA to victims of sexual violence. In Ontario, where there already exists a provincial pilot project to provide ILA to victims of sexual assault, the Victims Fund will provide funds to further enhance the existing project. These ILA projects operate separately and apart from Legal Aid in the PTs.

DOJ also provides contribution funding to the provinces to support the provision of criminal legal aid to economically disadvantaged persons facing serious or complex charges that could lead to incarceration, as well as to youth charged under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. DOJ provides contribution funding to the territories to support the provision of both criminal and civil legal aid services.

The Government also supports civil legal aid in the provinces through the Canada Social Transfer, through the Department of Finance. This is a block transfer for social services that provinces allocate according to their identified needs and priorities. PT governments also support civil legal aid, which may include legal aid in the family law context, survivor-centric services and other services of relevance to women.

TRAINING AND PROMOTION OF DIVERSITY (RECOMMENDATIONS 17, 28, 29, 35)

Aligned with the FEWO recommendations, there are a number of areas in which the Government is advancing efforts to support GBV training for professionals and promote diversity within law enforcement.

The Judiciary

The Government agrees with FEWO about the need for our judiciary to be sensitive to gender-equality issues within the courts. In order to respect the principle of judicial independence, training for judges is carried out by the National Judicial Institute (NJI), a judge-led institution affiliated with the Canadian Judicial Council (CJC). Budget 2017 announced \$2.7M over five years and \$500K per year ongoing to the CJC, which included funding for judicial education,

ethics and conduct. The DOJ provides the NJI with annual funding and recently announced nearly \$100K in additional funding to develop training for both federally and provincially appointed judges that will focus on GBV, including sexual assault and domestic violence.

Program funding is also available to PTs and to the National Judicial Institute to develop digital and media literacy and GBV training for prosecutors and the judiciary through DOJ.

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)

DND also engages in training of its own law enforcement officers to support victims of GBV. For example, at the Canadian Forces Military Police Academy, both prospective military police receiving initial training, and military police supervisors returning on advanced training, receive instruction on how to support victims of sexual offences. This training includes scenarios for first responders in which the victim's needs are prioritized and support is provided to the victim, while still meeting the requirement to collect evidence. In addition, investigators tasked with interviewing victims of sexual offences receive training in dealing with victims of trauma.

Law Enforcement

On the law enforcement side, the Government has committed to reviewing current gender and culturally sensitive training policies for federal front-line law enforcement officers to ensure that they are strong and effective. Given the provinces and territories' role in the justice system, having primary responsibility for enforcing the *Criminal Code*, prosecuting criminal charges, and administering trial courts, RCMP training on responding to family violence and/or sexual assault alerts RCMP employees to the potential risk factors that may be present in their Divisions and provides appropriate best practices and Divisional information related to managing victim safety.

In late 2016, the RCMP created a new Workforce Culture and Employee Engagement unit, to promote gender equality and culture change over the long term. This will include implementing the routine use of Gender-based Analysis + as a way of identifying barriers and developing strategies to promote the representation of women, visible minorities and Indigenous people in the RCMP. Going forward, the RCMP is committed to using Gender-based Analysis+ as a tool to examine existing training, in order to ensure it is gender and culturally sensitive. This will include piloting the use of a GBA+ tool developed by SWC specifically for instructional designers.

Additionally, the RCMP Training Academy (Depot) offers mandatory cultural awareness, human rights and gender diversity training as part of its Cadet Training Program (CTP). The CTP introduces cadets to bias-free policing to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to

demonstrate sensitivity and respect for diversity through Bias-free Policing. Related to GBV, cadets also receive training on child abuse, domestic violence, elder abuse and sexual assault.

Aligned with the FEWO recommendation with respect to promoting diversity within law enforcement, the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce remains a priority for the RCMP. Specifically:

- In recent years, the representation of women in senior positions in particular has continued to grow, with female Commanding Officers increasing 18.5% between 2011 and 2017, and successful female applicants in the Officer Candidate Program increasing from 24% to 62% (2011-12 to 2016-17).
- In order to attract more diverse groups, the RCMP undertakes proactive recruitment for Employment Equity (EE) groups, including through information sessions, career presentations, Physical Abilities Requirement Evaluation preparation sessions targeted at specific EE groups, and programming with designated Aboriginal Development Positions across various ranks, and promoting the development of Aboriginal Membership. Though there is still work to be done, there have been improvements, with EE representation meeting or surpassing Canadian Labour Market Availability.

ADDRESSING ONLINE GBV (RECOMMENDATIONS 12, 15, 30)

Regarding the FEWO recommendations related to online violence, the RCMP engages in a range of activities to keep up with ongoing developments in technology and social media aspects of GBV, including law enforcement responses. For example, the RCMP provides training on cyberbullying within the Canadian Police College's Cybercrime investigators course.

Additionally, the RCMP's Canadian Police Centre for Missing and Exploited Children/Behavioural Sciences Branch (the Centre) is recognized internationally for its technological expertise, engages in the sharing of lessons learned with other agencies, and promotes technological solutions that enhance law enforcement sharing across borders. The Centre has seen a 350% increase in reports between 2011 and 2016 and has found that girls make up 81% of identified victims depicted in online child sexual exploitation material. Among other responsibilities, the Centre:

- Receives reports of online child sexual exploitation from Canada's national tipline (cybertip.ca), national and international police agencies, industry and international non-government organizations;
- Works with partners to prevent violent and degrading sexually explicit material from being accessed by identifying and blocking on-line child sexual exploitation materials;
- Provides specialized training specific to online child sexual exploitation investigations;

- Provides specialized training and assistance to all Canadian law enforcement in operations and investigational techniques, in consultation with the Canadian Police College, as well as victim-centric training and support on victim identification nationally and internationally;
- Engages in operational research that examines the impact of violent and degrading sexually explicit materials (e.g. researching various technologies and forums that youth/children use to access some of the materials); and
- Immediately responds to a child at risk, coordinates investigative files and enhances victim identification investigations.

Additionally, the Committee's recommendation to create a National Cybercrime Coordination Centre to provide a coordinated Canadian law enforcement response to address cybercrime was echoed by stakeholders during the Fall 2016 Government of Canada Cyber Security Review consultations. Under the *RCMP Cybercrime Strategy*, the RCMP is examining various models for a national cybercrime coordination centre. Such a Centre would be well positioned to 'connect the dots' and coordinate the initial law enforcement response to technically sophisticated cases involving the same suspect targeting multiple individuals, such as certain complex cases of cyber bullying. It would also be in a position to provide law enforcement, including those investigating cybercrimes impacting women, with digital investigative advice and guidance.

ALTERNATIVE JUSTICE MECHANISMS (RECOMMENDATIONS 32)

The PTs are primarily responsible for the delivery of alternative or restorative justice mechanisms as part of their responsibility for the administration of justice. However, the Government remains committed to investing in the Indigenous Justice Program—formerly the Aboriginal Justice Strategy—which provides funding for community-based programs that use restorative justice approaches as an alternative to mainstream justice system and corrections. Budget 2017 proposes to invest \$55.5M over five years, starting in 2017–18, and \$11.1M per year ongoing, to provide long-term and stable investment in the program. DOJ is also examining options for the increased use of restorative justice mechanisms at all points of the criminal justice system and for a range of criminal matters, including in cases of sexual violence, where appropriate.

Additionally, in 2016, DOJ issued a call for proposals under the Victims Fund for projects intended to strengthen capacity to meet the needs of victims and survivors participating in restorative justice processes and promote local or regional partnerships between restorative justice agencies and victim-serving organizations.

5. DATA AND EVIDENCE

The Government shares FEWO's concerns about the existing gaps in data and evidence related to GBV, including violence against young women and girls.

THE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS GBV (CoE) (RECOMMENDATIONS 6, 13, 39, 44, 45)

As indicated in Budget 2017, a CoE will be established at SWC as part of the GBV Strategy.

As a key federal role, the Government currently supports research related to violence against women and girls. The CoE will work with service providers and policy makers to identify priorities for policy research which could include developing and sharing evidence on the issues recommended by FEWO, such as: hypersexualization; street harassment; cyberviolence; violence on post-secondary campuses; sex trafficking; engaging men and boys to prevent and address gender-based violence; groups at higher risk of experiencing violence; and the potentially harmful effects of algorithms as they relate to online violence against young Canadians. Building on existing relationships, FPT engagement will be central to informing the work of the CoE.

Additionally, the Government is committed to evaluating its programs and demonstrating results for Canadians. Aligned with the recommendations of FEWO, the Government – through the GBV Strategy – will work to fill existing gaps in its current approach to preventing and addressing GBV. It will also consider ways to address FEWO's recommendation to ensure that federal supports and programs related to GBV are accessible to Canadians.

DATA ON UNFOUNDED SEXUAL ASSAULTS (RECOMMENDATION 41)

Aligned with the FEWO recommendation, given the policing community's agreement to reinstate the standardized collection and provision of data on unfounded criminal incidents, Statistics Canada (STC) will once again collect and release data on unfounded criminal incidents, including sexual assaults. STC will provide standards and guidelines to police services to ensure standardized reporting of unfounded incidents to the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey. The implementation of these changes will be phased in over time. In July 2018, STC will publish the first set of results on unfounded criminal incidents for 2017, including sexual assaults.

Also related to this issue, the RCMP is conducting a review their unfounded sexual assault cases from 2016 to ensure that investigations were compliant with RCMP policy, and the reasonableness and propriety of decision making having regard for the evidence. The RCMP will also be reviewing a sample of historical cases. Should the review identify gaps in how sexual assaults are currently investigated, the RCMP will review additional cases and consider further policy updates and/or training.

Additionally, the RCMP will be undergoing consultations with government and non-government organizations to determine the best way to investigate sexual assault cases in a holistic way that incorporates a victims' lens. This will include discussions on how the RCMP can improve its sexual assault investigations, partner relationships and meet the needs of sexual assault victims. The RCMP is also reaching out to its international partners for best practices, training and policy.

Acknowledging the complexity of sexual assault investigations, the RCMP continually reviews and updates its policies, procedures and training to ensure it is using the most effective practices in law enforcement. In recent months, the RCMP has updated its national policy on sexual offences, which is awaiting publication to the RCMP's Operational Manual.

Like the RCMP, the Canadian Forces Military Police are also reviewing their unfounded sexual assault cases. The Canadian Forces Provost Marshal has implemented policy changes, in that decisions to conclude sexual assault cases as unfounded are centralized in a single senior manager to ensure consistent application of standards and to ensure such cases are reviewed by senior leadership. Finally, the Canadian Forces Provost Marshal is working with civilian policing partners to examine possible case review models.

VICTIMIZATION DATA (RECOMMENDATION 40)

Currently, one of the most significant sources of data on GBV is STC's General Social Survey on Victimization (GSS-Victimization). This survey is conducted once every five years; the most recent cycle was in 2014 and the next one is scheduled for 2019. The GSS-Victimization is designed to produce estimates of the extent to which persons report having been the victims of eight types of offences, including assault and sexual assault. The survey collects information on spousal abuse, stalking and harassment and cyberbullying, and examines risk factors associated with victimization, the rates of reporting these crimes to the police and evaluates fear of crime and public perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system.

Police-reported data on all criminal incidents that come to the attention of, and are substantiated by, police are collected annually. Data are available for offences such as human trafficking, prostitution, hate crime, cybercrime, sexual assault, physical assault, and sexual offences against children. Information on the nature of the crime, the victims, the accused and the relationship of the victim to the accused is also provided. Moving forward, STC will work with SWC to identify opportunities to strengthen data collection and fill known gaps.

Additionally, through the Canadian Incidence Study on Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS), PHAC collects data on cases of child maltreatment reported to child welfare agencies. The study collects sex-disaggregated information on five types of child maltreatment – emotional

maltreatment, neglect, exposure to intimate partner violence, and physical and sexual abuse. The next study cycle is planned for 2018.

6. CONCLUSION

The Government thanks the Standing Committee on the Status of Women for their report *"Taking Action to End Violence Against Young Women and Girls in Canada"* and for their commitment to ensuring that Canada's decision-makers consider the experiences of diverse groups of women and men.

Taking action to prevent and address GBV is a priority of the Government and is an important requirement in achieving gender equality. To this end, the Government is taking a multifaceted approach to reduce and prevent violence against women and girls. The recommendations that FEWO has provided will help to inform the development and implementation of the GBV Strategy and related efforts moving forward.