



October 6, 2022

Ms. Karen Vecchio, M.P.  
Chair, Standing Committee on the Status of Women  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Colleague,

Pursuant to Standing Order 109 of the House of Commons, I would like to respond, on behalf of the Government of Canada, to the recommendations made by the Standing Committee on the Status of Women (the Committee) in its report, entitled, *Towards a Violence-Free Canada: Addressing and Eliminating Intimate Partner and Family Violence*, tabled in the House of Commons on June 22, 2022.

I would like to thank the members of the Committee, the Chair, the Clerk, and staff for submitting this report. I would also like to thank them for listening, showing empathy, providing a safe space for people to speak and persevering through this heavy work. I am also especially grateful for the numerous thoughtful witnesses who shared their time, expertise or lived experience, through testimony and written submissions. Sharing your trauma or your story is never easy in any situation and requires so much courage. I cannot begin to express my gratitude that survivors, witnesses, and advocates would come forward to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women and contribute to this important work. Your bravery has not gone unnoticed. The proceedings in this report will continue to help inform the implementation of the forthcoming and eagerly anticipated National Action Plan to End Gender Based Violence.

Our Government has considered the 28 recommendations in the Committee's report. Please find attached the *Government Response to the Report of the Standing committee on the Status of Women - Towards a Violence-Free Canada: Addressing and Eliminating Intimate Partner and Family Violence*, which addresses the Committee's recommendations by highlighting ongoing efforts to prevent and address intimate partner violence (IPV) and family violence, and gender-based violence (GBV) more broadly. These efforts are grouped according to the following five themes: Implementing National Action; Support to Survivors; Training and a Responsive Justice System; Preventing and Addressing the Root Causes of Intimate Partner Violence; and Research and Data Collection on Intimate Partner Violence.

Building on the work over the last seven years, and the sobering experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, our Government is committed to continue listening and responding with compassion to victims and survivors, and to turn the vision of ending GBV and promoting gender equality – globally, nationally, locally and in our personal spaces of influence – into a reality. We recognize that there are people across this country that face additional challenges when seeking support. We see them and acknowledge them, and we will continue to work with provinces and territories, Indigenous partners, service providers, victims and survivors, and experts to ensure that

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anyone facing any form of GBV, including IPV and family violence, has reliable and timely access to protection and services, no matter who they are or where they live.

Sincerely,



The Honourable Marc Len, P.C., M.P.  
Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth

Enclosure: Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women: Towards A Violence-Free Canada: Addressing and Eliminating Intimate Partner and Family Violence

CC:

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance

The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health

The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Health

The Honourable Carla Qualtrough, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion

The Honourable Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Indigenous Services

The Honourable Francois-Phillipe Champagne, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Innovation, Science, and Industry

The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion

The Honourable David Lametti, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada

The Honourable Marco E. L. Mendicino, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Public Safety

The Honourable Marc Miller, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations

The Honourable Sean Fraser, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

**Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of  
Women:  
TOWARDS A VIOLENCE-FREE CANADA:  
ADDRESSING AND ELIMINATING INTIMATE PARTNER AND FAMILY VIOLENCE**

**Introduction**

Everyone has the right to live free from violence.

As noted by the Committee, “Intimate partner violence (IPV), family violence and gender-based violence (GBV) are non-partisan issues and anyone can be a victim or perpetrator of these kinds of violence.” This violence is among the most pervasive, deadly and deeply rooted human rights violations of our time.

GBV is a multi-faceted and complex issue that requires cross-sectoral approaches, with responses from education, health, justice, and social service sectors. Working in partnership across orders of government, with victims and survivors, Indigenous partners, Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex plus (2SLGBTQI+) organizations, direct service providers, experts, researchers, advocates, and the private sector is essential.

Since 2015, the Government of Canada (the Government), in close collaboration and through engagement with stakeholders, has taken a strong stance against GBV, including IPV and family violence. Highlights include:

- June 2017 - *It's Time: Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence* (federal GBV Strategy) was launched. The federal GBV Strategy is a whole-of-government approach that encompasses federal initiatives to prevent and address GBV. Its implementation has been bolstered by investments from Budgets 2017, 2018, and 2021.
- December 2019 - The Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth was mandated to build on the federal GBV Strategy and develop a National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence (GBV NAP).
- Since April 2020 – Provided approximately \$300M in emergency COVID-19 funding to more than 1,400 women's shelters, sexual assault centers, and other organizations providing critical supports and services to those experiencing GBV. Because of this funding, more than 1.3 million individuals experiencing gender-based violence had a safe place to turn and access to critical supports and services.
- January 2021 - The Federal, Provincial and Territorial (FPT) Forum of Ministers responsible for the Status of Women endorsed the *Joint Declaration for a Canada Free of Gender-Based Violence* (Joint Declaration), thereby confirming their common vision, principles, and goals for the development of the GBV NAP.
- April 2021 - Budget 2021 provided \$601.3 million over five years to Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) to advance towards a GBV NAP.
- Fall 2021 - The Speech from the Throne (November 2021) and the Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Youth's mandate letter (December 2021) both reiterated the Government's commitment to a national action plan. FPT Ministers responsible for the Status of Women also reiterated their commitment and collaboration to advance towards a GBV NAP (December 2021).
- April 2022 - Budget 2022 provided \$539.3 million over five years to WAGE to enable provinces and territories to supplement and enhance services and supports within their jurisdictions to prevent gender-based violence and support survivors.

As outlined in this response, the Government agrees with the Committee's recommendations and continues to prioritize preventing and addressing GBV, including IPV and family violence, to make progress towards a Canada free of GBV. The recommendations have been grouped under the following five themes: Implementing National Action; Support to Survivors; Training and a Responsive Justice System; Preventing and Addressing the Root Causes of IPV; and Research and Data Collection on IPV.

## 1. Implementing National Action (Recommendations 13, 22)

### **A national action plan based on the 231 Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls:**

The Government agrees with the Committee's recommendations on implementing national action aimed at preventing and addressing IPV and family violence, and acknowledges that addressing the 231 Calls for Justice and **ending violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people** is a complex and sensitive issue requiring a comprehensive response, which addresses the underlying factors that contribute to this violence (such as food insecurity, education, health, mental wellness, community safety). The Government agrees with the recommendations under this theme, which fall within the federal jurisdiction, and recognize that progress in this area requires sustained and coordinated efforts across all jurisdictions and with Indigenous partners.

On June 3, 2021, the Government, alongside Indigenous families, survivors and partners, as well as Indigenous women's organizations and governments, and the provinces and territories (PTs), released the co-developed and Indigenous-led Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People (MMIWG2S+) National Action Plan. The Government also released the Federal Pathway, the Government's contribution under the MMIWG2S+ National Action Plan, outlining the Government's commitments. The Federal Pathway is supported by Budget 2021 investments of \$2.2 billion over five years and \$160.9 million ongoing, specifically to address MMIWG2S+ people. In addition, Budget 2021 and Budget 2022 investments for building strong Indigenous communities contribute to addressing the root causes of the violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

On June 3, 2022, Indigenous families, victims and survivors, organizations, and partners, the PTs and the Government released the *2022 Progress Report on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People National Action Plan*, which outlined progress on the commitments of all Contributing Partners. On the same date, the Government also released the first *Federal Pathway Annual Progress Report*. The report outlines progress on federal commitments and how the Government is taking action under four themes – culture, health and wellness, human safety and security, and justice – and highlights new policies and strategies that support important focus areas, such as community safety initiatives, justice and policing and GBV.

### **Work with PTs to continue to prioritize the implementation of the GBV NAP and the federal GBV strategy:**

Federal efforts towards ending gender-based violence in Canada started in 2017, with the launch of *It's Time: Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence (federal GBV Strategy)*. Seven departments and agencies received funding for specific initiatives under the federal GBV Strategy, including Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE); the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC); Public Safety; the Department of National Defence; the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP); Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC); and Justice Canada. Since 2017, over \$800 million in new investments have been committed to make progress to prevent and address GBV under the federal GBV Strategy.

Accomplishments to date include:

- Amending the Canada Labour Code to strengthen existing frameworks for the prevention of harassment and violence in the workplace – Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC);
- Developing training on cultural awareness and humility as well as trauma-informed approaches for all RCMP employees – RCMP;
- Launching the GBV Program, which has provided funding to over 60 projects to develop and test promising practices to support victims and survivors of GBV and their families – WAGE;
- Launching the GBV Knowledge Centre's online platform in December 2018 – WAGE; and
- Conducting three national surveys to establish baselines on the prevalence of different forms of GBV, provide a deeper understanding of GBV in Canada, and measure progress over time (WAGE and Statistics Canada).

The federal GBV Strategy has laid a strong foundation to build upon for national action. Through WAGE, the Government, in Budget 2021, provided \$601.3 million over five years to advance toward a GBV NAP. This included additional emergency COVID-19 funding.

In January 2021, at the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of FPT Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women, Ministers endorsed the Joint Declaration. The Joint Declaration is a historic milestone and represents a strong public commitment by FPT governments to work together to prevent and address GBV for all people across Canada. The Joint Declaration highlights five key pillars:

- Support for survivors and their families
- Prevention
- Promotion of responsive legal and justice systems
- Support for Indigenous-led approaches and informed responses
- Social infrastructure and enabling environment

The Joint Declaration also noted that jurisdictions<sup>1</sup> are committed to a GBV NAP grounded in, among other things, an intersectional approach, promoting a multi-sectoral, cross-departmental / ministry approach, being survivor-centric and inclusive of children and families, recognizing the expertise of survivors and community agencies providing support, being trauma and violence-informed, and being culturally safe, relevant, accessible, and appropriate.

In December 2021, FPT Ministers responsible for the Status of Women reiterated their commitment and collaboration to advance towards a GBV NAP.

Budget 2022 provided \$539.3 million over five years to WAGE to enable PTs to supplement and enhance services and supports within their jurisdictions to prevent GBV and support victims and survivors. This supports the whole-of-government approach to ending GBV in Canada.

## **2. Support to Survivors (Recommendations 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 23)**

Support to survivors and victims of IPV and family violence, including violence prevention and intervention, and mental health, is an area of shared responsibility between jurisdictions. The Government agrees with the Committee's recommendations that fall within the federal jurisdiction, and will continue to work with PTs to advance work related to violence prevention, intervention and healing strategies that respond to the unique cultural, social, economic, and historic context of communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Quebec supports the general principles of the joint declaration and will continue to be active in the fight against GBV by prioritizing its own actions and measures. It also intends to continue to share information and best practices with other governments on this issue.

## **Housing**

In 2017, the Government launched the **National Housing Strategy (NHS)**. The NHS is a 10-year initiative with an investment of over \$72 billion that will give more Canadians a place to call home. The NHS covers the entire housing continuum, from shelters and transitional housing, to community and affordable housing, to market rentals and homeownership. The NHS has a goal of at least 25% of investments under the NHS to be dedicated to supporting the needs of women and their children, which includes women fleeing situations of IPV or family violence. The National Housing Co-Investment Fund (NHCF) is an NHS initiative that supports the construction of new housing units and the revitalization of existing affordable housing projects. Under the initiative, there is a commitment to support the construction of over 2,000 new shelter spaces and the repair or renewal of over 700 shelter spaces.

In addition, the **Family Violence Prevention Program** funds the operations of emergency shelters and transitional (second stage) housing to improve the safety and security of Indigenous women, children, families and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people across Canada, including in the North and in urban centres. Through funding approved in 2020 and 2021, two initiatives with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) have launched for new shelters and transition homes that will double the number of facilities available to support Indigenous women, children, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people escaping violence, including the 2020 Shelter Initiative for Indigenous Women and Children and the current Indigenous Shelter and Transitional Housing Initiative.

Under the 2020 **Shelter Initiative for Indigenous Women and Children**, which is a joint initiative between the CMHC and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), the Government has committed \$44.8 million over five years as part of the COVID-19 Economic Response Plan to build 10 shelters in First Nations communities and two in the territories. In addition, \$40.8 million through ISC will be invested in operational funding for these new shelters over four years and \$10.2 million annually thereafter. In June 2021, the Government announced the selected twelve shelters. This will help to protect and support Indigenous women and girls experiencing and escaping violence. These shelters will be Indigenous-led and will provide vital refuge and culturally appropriate critical supports and services to help victims and survivors of family violence recover from the trauma of their experiences, access support programming and create a stable environment where they can begin to regain an independent life.

The 2020 Fall Economic Statement announced \$724.1 million over five years and \$96.6 million ongoing to ISC to launch the comprehensive **Violence Prevention Strategy** to expand access to a continuum of culturally relevant supports for Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people facing GBV. This strategy, which is part of the Government's response to the National Inquiry into MMIWG2S+ will support new shelters and transition housing for First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples across the country, including on reserve, in the North and in urban areas.

As part of the Violence Prevention Strategy, the **Indigenous Shelter and Transitional Housing Initiative** has dedicated \$420 million of the \$724.1 million to support the construction of a minimum of 38 shelters and 50 new transition homes for Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people escaping GBV. Committees made up of representatives from Indigenous women's organizations and subject matter experts in shelter and housing delivery have also been formed to further develop the evaluation process and the selection of projects. Projects will be funded by March 31, 2026. This includes a commitment to fund the construction and operations of shelters for Inuit women and children across Inuit Nunangat as well as in urban centres.

In its ongoing efforts to ensure everyone in Canada has housing that meets their needs and that they can afford, in October 2020, the Government, through the CMHC, launched the \$1 billion **Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI)**. The RHI was launched to help address urgent housing needs of at-risk Canadians, especially in the context of COVID-19, through the rapid construction of affordable housing. The RHI takes a human rights-based approach to housing, serving people at risk of homelessness and others who are among the most vulnerable, including women and children leaving situations of violence

domestic violence. The initiative received a top-up of \$1.5 billion in Budget 2021, bringing the total funding provided through the initiative to \$2.5 billion. As of March 31, 2022, the RHI has committed to the creation of over 10,249 new affordable units. Of the total units committed, over 3,354 are targeting women and children, and 494 units are targeting women and children fleeing domestic violence.

To ensure that more affordable housing can be built quickly, Budget 2022 provided \$1.5 billion over two years, starting in 2022-23, to further extend the RHI. Announced on August 30, 2022, this new funding is expected to create at least 4,500 new affordable housing units, with at least 25 per cent of funding going towards women-focused housing projects.

The **Canada Housing Benefit** was co-developed with PTs and launched in 2020 with joint funding of \$4 billion over eight years to provide direct financial support to Canadians who are experiencing housing need. Budget 2021 provided an additional \$315.4 million over seven years to the CMHC to top up the Canada Housing Benefit, to increase direct financial assistance for low-income women and children fleeing violence to help with their rent payments.

To further support those struggling with housing costs, Budget 2022 provided \$475 million in 2022-23 to provide a one-time \$500 payment to those facing housing affordability challenges.

The Government also know that Indigenous peoples, regardless of where they live, face unique barriers to affordable housing. The Government is continuing to work with partners across Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut to address the issues of housing availability and quality that disproportionately affect Northerners. Budget 2022 provided \$150 million over two years, starting in 2022-23, to support affordable housing and related infrastructure in the North. Of this amount, \$60 million will be provided to the Government of Nunavut; \$60 million to the Government of the Northwest Territories; and \$30 million to the Government of Yukon. Budget 2022 also provided \$300 million over five years, starting in 2022-23, through the CMHC to co-develop and launch a **Northern, Urban and Rural Indigenous Housing Strategy**.

### **Support to organizations and survivors and victims**

Under the **federal GBV Strategy**, the Government has made key funding investments to support organizations in the GBV sector that advocate and provide frontline supports and resources for victims and survivors. For example, since 2015, WAGE's GBV Program has supported more than 60 projects to develop and implement promising practices that will strengthen the GBV sector to better address the needs of underserved populations.

- The ***She is Wise: Sexual Violence Research Project***, through the Ontario Native Women's Association, uses a community development model to find strategies to help communities in their efforts to combat violence and systemic discrimination. They engage directly with Indigenous women, using a trauma-based care approach and cultural practices to develop recommendations for both organizational and system-wide approaches and mechanisms to respond to Indigenous women survivors of violence.

In addition to the supports for shelters and housing noted above, and in response to the COVID--19 pandemic, the Government moved swiftly to ensure those experiencing GBV had a safe place to turn. Following an initial \$100 million in **emergency COVID-19 funding** provided to WAGE through the Government's COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan, Budget 2021 provided an additional \$200 million to organizations supporting those experiencing GBV, for a total of \$300 million since April 2020. This funding is ensuring the continuity of services and is enhancing the capacity of over 1,400 organizations, including women's shelters, sexual assault centres, and other organizations providing critical supports and services to those experiencing GBV. This funding directly supports organizations that provide critical and often life-saving services and supports for women, girls, 2SLGBTQI+, and non-binary people experiencing

violence. Because of this funding, more than 1.3 million individuals experiencing violence had a safe place to go and had access to supports across Canada.

As mentioned above, Budget 2022 provided \$539.3 million over five years to WAGE starting in 2022-23, to enable PTs to supplement and enhance services and supports within their jurisdictions to prevent GBV and support victims and survivors.

### *Mental health and wellbeing*

In Budgets 2017 and 2018, the Government invested **\$5 billion over ten years to improve Canadians' access to mental health services**. The investment is being provided directly to PTs via negotiated bilateral agreements to help them expand access to community-based mental health and addiction services for children and youth, integrated services for people with complex needs, and spread proven models of community mental health care and culturally appropriate interventions linked to primary health services.

Budget 2021 provided \$45 million over two years to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) to develop **national standards for mental health and substance use services**, in collaboration with PTs, health organizations, and key stakeholders. National standards help to formalize what Canadians can expect in terms of the quality of services while providing an evidence-based framework for service delivery that Canadians can rely on, no matter where they live or access services. One of the priority areas is focused on defining and advancing integrated youth services models, to promote high-quality, timely and integrated care.

Budget 2021 also provided funding to Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) to establish the **Support for the Wellbeing of Families and Survivors of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People program**. This program is part of the Federal pathway, the federal contribution to the MMIWG2S+ National Action Plan, under the theme of Health and Wellness. The program funds Indigenous organizations to deliver culturally relevant and trauma-informed healing and wellness activities, programs and services for the healing journeys of Indigenous family members who have missing or lost loved ones due to violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Funded projects, such as a project entitled the *Healing and Strengthening Indigenous Sisters and Two Spirits program* from All Nations Hope are engaging in promising work in this area. In addition, it funded the Cultural Spaces in Indigenous Communities Program, which supports Indigenous communities in re-establishing and revitalizing cultural spaces. In doing so, the program offers opportunities for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals to access culture and language and strengthen identities.

Budget 2022 also provided \$140 million to PHAC to support the **Wellness Together Canada** (WTC) portal for two more years, extending until April 2024. WTC is a nationally available platform providing free, immediate, 24/7 access to a range of self-guided resources and supports in both official languages. Resources and supports available through the WTC portal include mental health and substance use literacy tools, 24/7 phone and text triage crisis lines, single- and multi-session counselling, online peer support, therapist-assisted services, and internet-based cognitive behavioural therapy. Additionally, tailored approaches for priority populations and additional specialized services are included, such as those for grief and crisis events. Through Wellness Together Canada, children and youth (ages 5 to 29) can access mental health and substance use resources, including Kids Help Phone which provides online, phone and text-based support to young people. On August 31, 2022, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) also announced that it will adopt 9-8-8 for Canadians to call or text when in need of



immediate mental health crisis and suicide prevention support. This will be launched across Canada on November 30, 2023.

### *Prevention programs*

Through the ***Preventing and Addressing Family Violence: The Health Perspective investment***, the Government, through PHAC, is also investing up to \$18.5 million per year in projects to deliver and test interventions that promote safe relationships and prevent family violence, including IPV, child maltreatment and elder abuse.

- Several projects focus on supporting children who have witnessed IPV and family violence. For example, the interRAI Lab at Western University is evaluating the effect of improved trauma-informed practice on children and youth who have experienced family violence using an innovative set of tools that assess the health needs of individuals between 4 to 18 years of age.
- Other projects have focused on enhancing mental health and trauma support services. For example, the Child Development Institute will host and facilitate a community of practice among organizations that are delivering the Stop Now and Plan (SNAP) program across the country. SNAP is an evidence-based, multi-component trauma-informed cognitive behavioural model that provides a framework for teaching effective emotional regulation, self-control and problem-solving skills to children struggling with disruptive behaviour issues and their families.

ISC's **Family Violence Prevention Program** funds culturally appropriate, community-driven violence prevention activities. The program supports activities that increase awareness of family violence and provide families and communities with tools to address violence such as treatment and intervention, culturally sensitive services (Elder and traditional teachings), and awareness and self-development projects. The 2021-22 call for proposals for violence prevention activities that focus on First Nations, Inuit, Métis, urban or 2SLGBTQQIA+ people facing GBV closed on February 18, 2022. The 2022-2023 call for proposals is expected to launch in fall 2022.

WAGE and Public Safety are co-leads for the human safety and security theme of the Federal Pathway. Under this theme, WAGE is leading an initiative aimed at **bolstering the capacity of Indigenous women's and 2SLGBTQQIA+ organizations to provide GBV prevention programming**. Budget 2021 provided \$55 million over five years to WAGE for this work, and a call for proposals for this funding closed in March 2022.

Through the **National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS)**, the Government invests over \$40 million annually via Public Safety Canada in community-based crime prevention efforts. The NCPS is delivered in partnership with the PTs and provides grant and contribution funding to support communities in developing, implementing and evaluating tailored crime prevention initiatives. Current priorities of the NCPS include building protective factors and addressing risk factors among vulnerable children, youth, and young adults; preventing youth gangs and youth violence; preventing cyberbullying; and fostering prevention in Indigenous and Black-Canadian communities.

In addition, Budget 2021 provided up to \$64.6 million over five years, beginning in 2021-22 and \$18.1 million ongoing, to Public Safety to enhance Indigenous-led crime prevention strategies and community safety services, including through the **NCPS' Northern and Indigenous Crime Prevention Fund (NICPF)** and the **Aboriginal Community Safety Planning Initiative (ACSPI)**. The NICPF supports the adaptation, development, implementation and evaluation of innovative and promising culturally sensitive crime prevention practices, both on and off-reserve and in the North. The ACSPI directly supports Indigenous community healing through a facilitated community-driven process that works to address multiple safety and wellness issues. With this new dedicated funding, communities will be supported in implementing holistic interventions that address their self-identified crime prevention and community safety needs.

### *Care for the pets of victims and survivors of IPV*

The Government also provides funding to several organizations that provide supports for victims and survivors and their pets, including improving collaboration and education for implicated stakeholders. For example, the **Canadian Federation of Humane Societies** (also known as Humane Canada) received funding from WAGE for a project entitled *ACT (Awareness, Collaboration, Tools) for Women with Pets Experiencing GBV*. This 29-month project addresses systemic barriers to help-seeking, safety planning and support services for women, with an animal companion, experiencing GBV across Canada. Humane Canada is achieving this by expanding the work of the Canadian Violence Link Coalition (CVLC) – a Humane Canada initiative – to raise awareness; improve cross-sector collaborations; and offer practical options, response policies, and improved support systems. The Government is committed to continue exploring funding to shelters for the care of companion pets and shelter of victims and survivors of abuse when they leave an abusive relationship.

### *Children and young adults*

The Government agrees with the Committee on the importance of addressing the high rates of sexual assault in **post-secondary institutions** (PSIs). Budget 2018 provided \$5.5 million over five years towards developing a harmonized national framework to ensure consistent, comprehensive, and sustainable approaches in addressing GBV at PSIs across the country, as part of the federal GBV Strategy.

- WAGE provided Possibility Seeds - a Canadian social change consultancy dedicated to gender justice, equity, human rights and inclusion - with funding to engage key stakeholders and develop recommendations, which led to the August 2019 report entitled *Courage to Act: Developing a National Framework to Address and Prevent Gender-Based Violence*. The report was informed by advice from the Advisory Committee on the Framework to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence at Post-Secondary Institutions, involving over 300 diverse stakeholders, and a variety of communities across Canada. The report identified recommendations, promising practices, and key resource gaps in three areas: responding to disclosures of GBV and support for people affected by GBV; GBV prevention education; and reporting, investigations, and adjudication. Possibility Seeds Consulting is continuing work to address gaps identified in the report, such as toolkits and communities of practice for networking and information sharing. Through the development of the GBV NAP, the Government is working to complement and support the extensive efforts already made by provinces, territories and PSIs across the country to prevent and address GBV at PSIs.

In addition, **Child Advocacy Centres/Child and Youth Advocacy Centres** (CACs/CYACs) provide a coordinated, comprehensive, multi-disciplinary response to address the needs of children, youth and their families in cases where child abuse is suspected. CACs seek to minimize system-induced trauma and support longer-term wellbeing by providing a child-friendly facility for young victims and their families to seek services, ideally under one roof.

CACs are regarded as a leading practice in responding to child abuse cases. Since 2010, the Department of Justice Canada has undertaken policy development, funding, research and evaluation to support the creation and enhancement of CACs across the country. There are approximately 40 CACs at various stages of development.

### **Poverty Reduction and Economic Security**

Ensuring economic security is a critical piece to supporting individuals' experiences and attempting to leave situations of IPV and family violence. The Government agrees with the Committee that it is critical to provide support to individuals experiencing and attempting to leave situations of IPV and family violence by implementing measures to reduce poverty and ensure economic security.

**Expanding income guarantee programs:** ESDC's **Old Age Security (OAS)** program is the first pillar of Canada's retirement income system and provides a basic level of income to all seniors who meet the eligibility criteria. The benefits under the OAS program include the quasi-universal OAS pension, which is paid to all persons aged 65 or over who meet the residence requirements. In July 2022, the OAS pension was permanently increased by 10 percent for seniors over the age of 75. It also includes the **Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)** for low-income OAS pensioners. The GIS is paid at a higher rate for single seniors to reflect the economies of scale available to seniors living in a couple, economies not available to those living alone. In April 2022, the Government announced a one-time grant payment to GIS recipients to support vulnerable, low-income seniors who are experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19.

**Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care System:** In Budget 2021, the Government made a transformative investment totaling up to \$30 billion over five years through ESDC to build a Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care system with provincial, territorial and Indigenous partners. Combined with previous federal investments in early learning and child care announced since 2015, this means that as of 2025-2026, a minimum of \$9.2 billion will be provided every year – permanently -- for Early Learning and Child Care and Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care.

The Government has now reached agreements with every province and territory to implement a Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care system. Nearly all of Canada's PTs have announced and are implementing child care fee reductions to support the affordability goals of the Canada-wide ELCC system, which will see an average cost of \$10-a-day for licensed child care by March 2026. By the end of 2022, fees for regulated early learning and child care spaces will be reduced by 50 percent on average across the country.

The Government will continue to work in collaboration with First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation to move toward a co-developed Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care system that respects and responds to the unique needs of Indigenous children, regardless of where they live or access services. In addition to funding to PTs, Indigenous-specific investments are advancing First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation early learning and child care priorities, guided by a co-developed **Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework**.

A Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care system will ensure that all families have access to high-quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive early learning and child care no matter where they live.

**Financial counselling and financial literacy training reflective of diverse linguistic and social contexts:** Through the FCAC's **National Financial Literacy Strategy 2021-2026**, the Government is encouraging organizations in the financial literacy ecosystem to develop financial products, services, and literacy efforts that acknowledge and embrace a sophisticated understanding of diversity and inclusion. This includes being attuned to cultural practices and religious beliefs around money, accommodating disabilities, providing multilingual resources, and using relevant role models. In support of this objective, the Government is:

- leading by example in tailoring financial literacy content, programs, communications, and experimental interventions to meet the needs of diverse population groups;
- conducting ongoing research and analysis to identify and understand diverse needs of target population groups who are at greater risk of experiencing financial vulnerabilities; and,
- collaborating and engaging with community-based organizations serving diverse audiences to user-test and develop resources to serve their audiences.

**Women's access to education, training and employment:** Budget 2022 provided \$272.6 million over five years to support the implementation of the Employment Strategy for Canadians with Disabilities through ESDC's **Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities (OF)** to help address labour market shortages through

increased participation by persons with disabilities. The program seeks to redress the exclusion of women and strive to align participation of men and women in the program equitably, while working to raise women participants' access to employment and training.

ESDC's **Women's Employment Readiness Pilot Program** was announced in the 2020 Fall Economic Statement. The two-year, \$50 million pilot program funds organizations to provide and test pre-employment and skills development supports for four groups of women who face multiple barriers: racialized and/or Indigenous women; women with disabilities; women from the 2SLGBTQI+ community; and women who have been out of the workforce for a prolonged period.

Organizations provide and test foundational and transferable skills training, which can include financial literacy, coupled with wrap-around supports, such as transportation, counseling, living allowances, etc. The Pilot also tests models to improve workplace inclusivity. The results of the Pilot will be used to inform system changes to improve access to skills training and employment for women facing multiple barriers.

Budget 2021 included additional funds for the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) **Racialized Newcomer Women Pilot** (formerly the Visible Minority Newcomer Women Pilot) to continue to provide support to improve the employment outcomes and career advancement of racialized newcomer women in Canada through the delivery of targeted services under IRCC's Settlement Program. This pilot is exploring interventions that contribute to addressing multiple barriers, including gender- and race-based discrimination, precarious or low-income employment, lack of affordable child care, and weak social supports. The initiative will contribute to greater opportunities for racialized newcomer women to participate equally and fully in the economy and will inform further supports for newcomer women under the Settlement Program.

Through the **Canadian Apprenticeship Strategy**, ESDC provides a suite of federal supports for apprenticeship and the skilled trades, including measures geared towards facilitating women's access to training and employment. For example, the Union Training and Innovation Program (UTIP) supports union-based apprenticeship training, innovation, and enhanced partnerships in the Red Seal trades. A key objective of this program is to support equity-deserving groups such as women, Indigenous people, newcomers, persons with disabilities and visible minorities to enter and succeed in the trades. Budget 2022 provided an additional \$84.2 million over four years to double funding for the UTIP. The new funding will help apprentices from equity deserving groups, including women, begin and succeed in careers in the skilled trades through mentorship, career services, and job-matching.

***A livable disability benefit and financial compensation for survivors of IPV:*** As a cornerstone of Canada's first ever **Disability Inclusion Action Plan**, ESDC reintroduced framework legislation for the Canada Disability Benefit (Bill C-22) in the House of Commons on June 2, 2022. The goal of the proposed benefit is to reduce poverty and support the financial security of working-age persons with disabilities. In the spirit of "Nothing About Us Without Us," the Government will continue to engage with Canadians with disabilities and other stakeholders to inform the design of the benefit and future regulations.

### **3. Training and a Responsive Justice System (Recommendations 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21)**

As Canada's justice system is a shared responsibility between the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, the Government agrees with the recommendations under this theme that fall within the federal jurisdiction. The Government recognizes that close collaboration between jurisdictions and other partners, including Indigenous partners, as well as stakeholders will remain key to creating an increasingly responsive justice system for victims and survivors of GBV and their families. Consultations with community organizations that work to strengthen justice system responses to IPV and family violence, as well as with victims and survivors and their families, will remain equally important. The Government will also share the Committee's Report with the

Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Forum of Ministers responsible for the Status of Women and work with its provincial and territorial partners to continue to advance these issues.

Within its jurisdiction, the Government is currently working to encourage integration and cooperation among the various resource agencies in communities, enhancing judicial education on IPV and coercive control, and understanding economic abuse as a facet of IPV and family violence.

### **Encouraging integration and cooperation among resource agencies**

As part of the **Federal Pathway**, actions include strengthening Indigenous-led community-based programs and engaging with Indigenous partners on an Indigenous Justice Strategy. To date, Justice Canada has expanded the Indigenous Justice Program to provide funding to Indigenous-led community-based justice programs to provide family mediation services and expanded the Indigenous Courtwork Program to include Indigenous family court work services to better support Indigenous peoples and families navigating the Canadian justice system. Justice Canada is also supporting Indigenous-led engagement to inform the development of the Indigenous Justice Strategy.

Justice Canada also provides funding to support **Family Information Liaison Units (FILUs)**. FILUs provide specialized services to families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. FILUs, which are available in every province and territory, help families access available information about their missing and murdered loved ones from multiple government sources. FILUs are delivered through victim services and Indigenous community organizations.

In addition, ***Circles of Safety: Women-Led Interagency Violence against Women Support and Safety in Rural and Remote Communities***, a 53-month long WAGE-funded project through Women's Shelters Canada, is testing the Community Safety Circle. This is an initiative that brings together service providers to create survivor-led, customized safety and support plans, as a promising practice to provide greater safety to women living in rural, remote and Northern communities throughout Canada who do not have access to an emergency shelter.

Through the ***Preventing and Addressing Family Violence: The Health Perspective investment***, the PHAC is funding a project through the University of Western Ontario to initiate, host, and support a community of practice of family violence experts, victims and survivors, family lawyers, researchers, mental health, and social service professionals, through Canada's research centres on violence against women. The overarching goal of the project is to enhance support to victims and survivors of violence through the family law system by increasing opportunities for family law practitioners to have training, guidance, and resources to support trauma-informed practice, and to improve coordination of services that will enhance the safety and wellbeing of all parties.

Under the **federal GBV strategy**, the RCMP has designed and developed cultural awareness and trauma-informed training courses. The training aims to improve capacity across the RCMP to effectively respond to GBV in a trauma-informed manner that is gender and culturally sensitive. For example, in 2020-21, the RCMP Vulnerable Persons Unit launched the Cultural Awareness and Humility course, which was deemed mandatory for all RCMP employees in November 2020. As of August 20, 2021, 91.4% of all RCMP employees, have completed the course. This includes police officers and civilian employees.

### **Enhancing judicial education**

The Government recognizes the importance of a highly trained judiciary and the role that judicial education plays in helping enhance public confidence in the justice system. The constitutional principle of judicial independence requires that the judiciary control judicial education, including on IPV and coercive control. This is necessary to ensure

continued public confidence in an impartial judiciary that is free from interference or influence by the executive.

The **Canadian Judicial Council**, which consists of the chief justices and associate chief justices of Canadian superior courts, is the appropriate national institution to determine the content of introductory and ongoing judicial education for superior court judges, and to administer this judicial education through judge-led agencies and/or other judge-approved organizations such as the National Judicial Institute. The Council collaborates closely with the National Judicial Institute, an internationally recognized, judge-led organization that is independent from government. The National Judicial Institute is responsible for the overall coordination of judicial education in Canada, in addition to being a primary education provider.

The Government is confident in the work of the Council and the National Judicial Institute and recognizes that their efforts have made Canada an international leader in the field of continuing judicial education.

Through Budget 2017, the Government provided the Canadian Judicial Council with \$2.7 million over five years, and \$0.5 million per year thereafter, to ensure that more judges have access to professional development, with a greater focus on gender and culturally sensitive training.

In May 2021, the former Bill C-3 received royal assent and came into force. This bill made several amendments to the *Judges Act* regarding judicial education on matters related to sexual assault law and social context, which includes systemic racism and systemic discrimination. Former Bill C-3 highlights the Government's understanding of the role that judicial education plays in enhancing public confidence in the justice system while respecting the need for judicial control over judicial education, as required by the principle of judicial independence. Former Bill C-3 also underscores the Government's commitment to helping promote a justice system in which survivors are treated with dignity and compassion.

The Government is also supporting Private Member's Bill C-233, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Judges Act (violence against an intimate partner)*. This bill proposes amending the *Judges Act* to specify that the continuing education seminars that the Canadian Judicial Council may establish could include seminars on matters related to IPV and coercive control in intimate partner and family relationships. This bill also proposes amending the *Judges Act* to encourage the Council to report on seminars on these topics.

### **Access to legal representation**

The Government is committed to supporting access to adequate legal representation. As part of the **federal GBV Strategy**, Budget 2021 provided \$32.5 million over five years to Justice Canada to support the implementation of free independent legal advice and representation programs for survivors of sexual assault. An additional \$16.25 million was provided for independent legal advice and representation to victims of IPV in the criminal justice system, as well as provision of independent legal advice to victims of IPV in the family justice system. This investment provides victims and survivors with access to personalized, tailored independent legal information specific to their case by trauma-informed lawyers.

Budget 2021 provided an additional \$35 million to Justice Canada for additional supports for victims and survivors of IPV to navigate the family justice system. This includes a range of activities aimed at better supporting victims and promoting safety throughout a family law case. For example, under this initiative, funding has been provided to the Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador to educate victims of IPV on financial violence and their rights. Legal clinics are providing information on financial protection for victims and additional resources on financial violence will be developed and published. Justice Canada is also funding the National Judicial Institute to develop a national online course for Canadian judges on IPV in the family justice system. This training will help judges identify, understand, and respond to

IPV in family law cases, and help them understand and apply the recent *Divorce Act* amendments pertaining to family violence.

### **Economic and financial abuse**

As part of its work addressing financial and economic abuse as a facet of IPV and family violence, **amendments to the *Divorce Act*** came into force on March 1, 2021, that included changes aimed at promoting safe and appropriate responses in cases involving family violence. The new definition of family violence in the *Divorce Act* recognizes that financial and economic abuse can be a form of family violence.

For the purposes of the *Divorce Act*, family violence is defined as conduct that is violent or threatening, that constitutes a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour, or that causes a family member to fear for their own safety or for the safety of another person. Within this definition, family violence includes physical, sexual, psychological, and financial abuse; harassment and stalking; and threats to kill or harm an animal or to damage property, or actually causing that harm. In the case of a child, it includes direct or indirect exposure to such conduct. Behaviour does not have to be a criminal offence to be considered family violence under the *Divorce Act*.

Justice Canada has also undertaken a number of important initiatives aimed at supporting the effective implementation of the family violence provisions in the *Divorce Act* and improving family justice system responses to family violence. These initiatives include the development of an online course on family violence and family law for legal advisers, as well as a toolkit to help family law legal advisers identify and respond to family violence in a trauma-informed way. Both of these resources are available on the Department's website. Departmental officials have also provided training on the family violence amendments to lawyers, family justice system officials, and other family law stakeholders across the country, and have provided information sessions for the judiciary in a number of provinces.

The Government is also currently undertaking a review of the immigration enforcement and inadmissibility frameworks within the ***Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*** (IRPA) and associated Regulations (IRPR) to ensure that sufficient protections are in place for victims and survivors of GBV.

The Government notes the Committee's recommendation around conducting a review of federally regulated financial institutions to inform the development of a federal system designed to detect signs of economic abuse and provide support to survivors. The Department of Finance regularly reviews the financial sector legislative framework to ensure it stays up to date and responds to the needs of stakeholders and Canadians. For example, the Seniors Code was put in place in January 2021 to set out the banking industry's commitment to mitigate potential financial harm to seniors. The Government notes the recommendation at this time because while it falls under federal purview, the Government is currently conducting a financial sector legislative review focused on the digitalization of money and maintaining financial sector stability and security. This item could be considered within this review.

The Government also notes the Committee's recommendation to introduce electronic monitoring (EM) devices. CSC has the authority to use EM as a supplementary tool on federal offenders in certain cases to enhance their ability to monitor offenders' compliance with imposed geographical restrictions and to ensure prompt action following suspected breaches. CSC also has many other robust measures in place apart from EM. This approach has been effective to date; however, it differs significantly from the provincial EM program targeting domestic violence in Quebec. Due to jurisdictional considerations, the Quebec program allows for the use of EM at an earlier stage of the criminal justice process, which affords the Quebec courts access to EM on past IPV offenders to keep their victims safe. Meanwhile, offenders must be sentenced to two years or more to fall under federal jurisdiction. While CSC has been keeping itself apprised of the Quebec model, implementation of a similar model at the federal level would offer little value beyond what is already in place at CSC. CSC will provide advice

and to collaborate with other jurisdictions to share best practices related to the use of EM.

In addition, the Government is supporting Bill C-233, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Judges Act (violence against an intimate partner)*, which proposes amendments to the *Judges Act* regarding judicial education, and seeks to better protect victims of IPV by requiring bail courts to consider whether an accused person who is charged with an offence involving the use, attempt or threat of violence against an intimate partner should wear an electronic monitoring device as a condition of bail release, where requested by the Attorney General.

The Government of Canada is also committed to engaging with PTs that wish to enact Clare's Laws. These laws allow individuals at risk of domestic violence – or their representative – to request information from the police about their current or prospective partner's violent history so they can make informed decisions about their safety and the safety of their intimate partner relationships.

Many PTs have begun advancing this work. For example, Saskatchewan's and Alberta's Clare's Laws came into effect on June 29, 2020, and April 1, 2021, respectively. A Clare's Law was enacted in Newfoundland and Labrador in December 2019 but is not yet in force pending Regulations. Manitoba has proposed legislation, which is currently at the first reading stage. British Columbia and Ontario have both introduced Clare's Laws, however in both instances the legislation would need to be reintroduced in Provincial Parliaments.

Amendments to the RCMP regulations to ensure the RCMP can enforce Clare's Laws in a way that is consistent with the federal privacy framework came into force on April 1, 2021.

#### **4. Preventing and Addressing the Root Causes of IPV (Recommendations 10, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28)**

It is broadly recognized that GBV is rooted in gender inequality and is further intensified by systemic inequalities, such as sexism, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, colonialism, racism, ableism, classism, poverty, and a collective history of trauma. The Government agrees with the Committee's recommendations on the need for national action to prevent and address the root causes of GBV, including IPV, and commits to playing a leadership role in this area and to make further progress in actions that fall within the federal jurisdiction.

The Government agrees that ending gender and raced-based violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people is a complex and sensitive issue that requires a comprehensive response that addresses the underlying factors (root causes) that contribute to this violence. It also requires sustained and coordinated efforts across all orders of government (federal, provincial-territorial, Indigenous, and municipal) and in close collaboration with Indigenous partners. This is why both the forthcoming GBV NAP and the MMIWG2S+ NAP and Federal Pathway were developed to respond to the root causes of GBV and violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in Canada and work towards the Government of Canada's goal of ending GBV for all people in Canada.

Work undertaken through the federal GBV Strategy, MMIWG2S+ NAP, Federal Pathway, and the development of the GBV NAP to respond to the root causes of GBV in Canada has emphasized that vulnerable and marginalized populations face many systemic barriers, including access to justice. The Government is committed to building a healthier and more inclusive Canada, and this includes investments to promote protective factors and address related risk factors to mitigate the likelihood that individuals will come into contact with the criminal justice system.

Justice Canada provides funding for Independent Legal Advice and Representation programs for victims of sexual assault and IPV. These programs do not specify



characteristics of the victims that can access them. Any victim of sexual assault or IPV is eligible to receive these services.

Budget 2021 provided \$108.8 million over two years, starting in 2021-22, to re-establish and revitalize Indigenous cultural spaces. Women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ populations have traditionally occupied central roles in governance and knowledge-keeping among our Indigenous partners. CIRNAC's **Cultural Spaces in Indigenous Communities Program** responds to Call for Justice 2.3 and supports Indigenous communities in re-establishing and revitalizing cultural spaces. The program offers opportunities for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals to access culture and language and strengthen identities.

As previously mentioned, ISC's **Family Violence Prevention Program** funds culturally appropriate, community-driven violence prevention activities. The program supports activities that increase awareness of family violence and provide families and communities with tools to address violence such as treatment and intervention, culturally sensitive services (Elder and traditional teachings), and awareness and self-development projects. In addition, the network of 46 emergency shelters provides prevention programming to better address the needs of their clients.

Under the **federal GBV Strategy** and as part of Budget 2017, \$1.5 million over five years was provided to IRCC to develop a **Gender-Based Violence Settlement Sector Strategy** - a national strategy to address GBV for newcomers and refugees. This funding facilitates a coordinated partnership of settlement and anti-violence sector organizations and includes the establishment of a common base of knowledge on GBV and training for front-line settlement workers to assist with identifying abuse. This is the first investment of its kind to address GBV through a strategic, settlement sector approach, and an opportunity for the Government to support the ongoing efforts of the settlement and anti-violence sectors to enhance their GBV services for newcomers. Budget 2021 provided additional funding of \$2 million to extend the GBV Partnership to continue building the capacity of the sector through training, resources, and strengthening cross-sector collaboration.

In 2019-20, a coordinated partnership of settlement and anti-violence sector umbrella organizations was established to implement the Gender-Based Violence Settlement Sector Strategy. The strategy focuses on GBV capacity-building in the settlement sector, strengthened collaboration between the settlement and anti-violence sector, and enhanced service delivery for newcomers and refugees at risk of experiencing GBV. The partnership is the first of its kind in the settlement sector and a key opportunity to achieve a strategic impact across both sectors by strengthening relationships and building capacity.

In 2019, IRCC implemented two initiatives to support foreign nationals in Canada who are in situations of family violence in finding safety. These measures specifically support those whose immigration status may be precarious due to their reliance on an abusive spouse or partner for their status in Canada (including, but not limited to, sponsored spouses and partners). The first measure is an **expedited, fee-exempt, temporary resident permit (TRP)**, which includes fee-exempt work permit and Interim Federal Health program coverage, and is available to vulnerable, out-of-status individuals who are victims of family violence. This program provides protection to this population and/or their dependent foreign national children in Canada through security of short-term immigration status to help escape the influence of abuse and grant them time to decide their next course of action. Second, an **expedited process is available for individuals in Canada who are in urgent situations of family violence** and who apply for permanent residence on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. This means eligible individuals will have their permanent residence applications processed more quickly, with the goal of helping them leave abusive situations as expeditiously as possible. The Government continues to successfully deliver on these mechanisms while monitoring the programs to ensure client needs are being met.

In addition, the Government is conducting policy work on potential regulatory changes which includes the possibility of expanding immigration detention considerations to

include GBV-related factors when making decisions related to detention within the immigration enforcement framework. The CBSA is reviewing the differential impacts of GBV including human trafficking, throughout the immigration enforcement and inadmissibility policy frameworks, with a view to ensuring that policies account for specific considerations related to victims and survivors of human trafficking and GBV, and that policies do not inadvertently re-traumatize victims. To that end, GBV considerations will continue to be included in related legislative and regulatory work.

### **Awareness and educational tools**

The Government is currently advancing work to develop educational tools to increase awareness of IPV, as well as regarding bodily autonomy and consent for children and youth using an intersectional lens and informed by social context. As much as possible, the Government is working to ensure efficient communication strategies with attention to accessibility and reaching groups at high risk of IPV and other forms of GBV.

The Government, through WAGE, is supporting multiple projects and leading initiatives aimed at increasing awareness of IPV resources through awareness raising actions, including the “**16 Days of Activism against GBV**” movement each year, and the **GBV Knowledge Centre** online platform and events which shares information, resources and research related to GBV for diverse audiences including information on crisis lines and other support services available across Canada to individuals experiencing GBV.

WAGE is also launching a **GBV Youth Awareness Campaign**, focused on youth from ages 14 to 24. The Campaign will roll out in two phases. The first is to provide awareness on GBV across Canada. The second phase will be developed with the input of youth from various communities and supporting organizations, focusing on how to create awareness to targeted communities. Material developed for this Campaign will focus on support resources for youth, information on sexual violence and consent, and healthy relationships. PHAC also continues to host the Family Violence Initiative **Stop Family Violence website** which provides information on family violence for health professionals and the public.

Through PHAC’s ***Preventing Gender-based Violence: The Health Perspective investment***, initiatives have been funded to support programs preventing teen dating violence and child maltreatment, and equipping health professionals to recognize and respond safely to GBV. Many of the health promotion programs that are being tested through this investment focus on developing educational tools regarding bodily autonomy and consent. For example:

- The Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA), in collaboration with the Centre for Sexuality, is adapting, delivering and evaluating an existing comprehensive sexuality education curriculum that has shown promise for preventing youth dating violence.
- The Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (VSAC) is delivering and evaluating SHIFT, which is a program that aims to prevent gender-based teen dating violence by creating shifts toward consent culture within and across school communities.
- The Centre d'expertise Marie-Vincent is delivering and evaluating the Lantern Program in communities in Quebec, in both official languages, and in Francophone child-care settings in Whitehorse, Yukon. Lanterne is a program to prevent sexual violence for children ages 0 to 5 through age-appropriate sexual health education and the promotion of safe and healthy relationships. This program will enable young children to develop protection skills and knowledge related to intimacy, privacy, personal space and boundaries and, sex and gender-based stereotypes.

With regards to the promotion of healthy relationships, White Ribbon is receiving funding through WAGE for two projects. The first project will develop and implement best practices and resources created by the Ontario’s education sectors to scale up in other parts of Canada and in Ontario’s Catholic system to address the root causes of GBV. The second project focuses on promoting gender equality and preventing violence

by engaging youth, especially young men, in their communities to build their capacity to challenge rigid gender norms and stereotypes.

The Government has also supported the delivery and testing of health promotion programs tailored to Indigenous and Northern communities, and those involving cultural community services and immigration settlement services. For example, funding through PHAC is supporting a number of initiatives, including the following:

- MOSAIC is developing, delivering, and testing the effectiveness of a teen healthy relationships program for youth and parents or caregivers, tailored to immigrant, refugee, and racialized families in British Columbia.
- Ndinawemaaganag Endaawaad Inc. (Ndinawe) is leading a community-driven and culturally adapted dating violence prevention program for Indigenous teens in Winnipeg, aged 12 to 17. The development, delivery and evaluation of the Ode'ima zhigo ode'ima (Heart to Heart) project involves a collaboration of 3 Winnipeg organizations: Ndinawe, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre (Ma Mawi) and Research and Education for Solutions to Violence and Abuse (RESOLVE).

Through Budget 2021 and previous investments, the Government provided funding to support projects to deliver and test interventions that promote safe relationships and prevent family violence, including IPV, child maltreatment and elder abuse. Several funded projects in this investment include educational programming focused on gender-diverse individuals, those living in Indigenous and Northern communities, and those involving cultural community services and immigration settlement services.

Various funded programs also provide services and material in Indigenous languages. For example, the Shelter Initiative for Inuit Women and Children, which is a joint initiative between the Government through ISC and Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, information and the Application Guide and Form are provided in Inuktitut.

Justice Canada has developed a publication entitled Abuse is Wrong in Any Language, which provides information about family and IPV and the Canadian law in 10 languages. In addition, Justice Canada has made a series of factsheets available on the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights. These factsheets are available in English, French, and twelve Indigenous languages.

**Engaging men and boys:** The Government recognizes the need to engage men and boys in preventing GBV, including IPV and family violence, and promoting healthy relationships.

The Government leads several activities to engage men and boys as allies in advancing gender equality and ending GBV. For example, in 2018, WAGE held a series of roundtables were on how to engage men and boys in advancing gender equality, which continues to inform Government work on the subject.

Since 2015, the Government has provided \$16.7 million in funding to 41 organizations to engage men and boys. Budget 2021 also provided \$105 million over five years to enhance the GBV Program, including funding for initiatives that engage men and boys. Examples of initiatives funded through WAGE include:

- Association Y.W.C.A. de Québec is developing and implementing an appropriate activity outline for boys, particularly racialized boys, and a framework for more egalitarian practices in youth spaces and school settings to address the root causes of GBV. They will address systemic barriers in norms and attitudes on gender through group activities for boys that will promote healthy masculinity by establishing a large local network for dialogue and collaboration that will involve several organizations working in youth spaces and school settings, by sharing the expertise developed, and by offering an inter-organizational support and mentoring service. In addition, the Y.W.C.A. will adapt the approach developed in

the boys' living environment to the school environment by focusing on the specific issues and practices to promote in academic settings.

- Next Gen Men is working towards the development of a new regional network to advance the engagement of men and boys in addressing the root causes of GBV. Once the network is established, they will leverage it for convening and building relationships among diverse and unconnected individuals and organizations from across sectors committed to advancing gender equity and preventing GBV as well as through the dissemination of existing research and emergent recommendations on the engagement of men and boys from action-based and evidence-informed partners.

ISC's **Family Violence Prevention Program** also has a Moose Hide Campaign Contribution Agreement of \$6 million over five years, starting in 2019-20. The Moose Hide Campaign is an Indigenous-led grassroots movement of men, boys and all Canadians - standing up to end violence against women and children. This funding is to support the Moose Hide Campaign in the implementation of their strategic plan.

## **5. Research and Data Collection on IPV (Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 12, 18)**

The Government agrees with the Committee's recommendation on the need to ensure and improve research and data collection on IPV and GBV more broadly that fall within the federal jurisdiction.

The Government acknowledges that available data understates the magnitude of the problem, as people are often reluctant to report GBV due in part to stigma, shame, fear and systemic issues, which may lead to a lack of confidence that the justice response will be effective. The Government also acknowledges a further challenge is the lack of data to support the use of an intersectional lens, which recognizes that people often experience multiple oppressions due to the combined effects of systemic discrimination. This highlights the continued need to collect and report on disaggregated data, wherever possible, and to continue to invest in population-specific targeted research to address persistent gaps and challenges in data.

Through the federal GBV Strategy, several initiatives related to IPV have been funded. Since 2017-18, \$30 million in funding for research on GBV, including IPV and family violence has been provided to academics, community organizations, Statistics Canada, and other federal partners to collect data and conduct research, and to expand the capacity of such organizations to collect disaggregated data on GBV.

Among this funding, \$17.1 million was provided to Statistics Canada to develop and implement three new national GBV surveys, and to undertake analyses of the data. These three national surveys on experiences of GBV in Canada are: 1) the Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (SSPPS); 2) the Survey on Individual Safety in the Postsecondary Student Population (SISPSP); and 3) the Survey on Sexual Misconduct at Work (SSMW).

The SSPPS aims to collect information on Canadians' experiences of safety at home, in the workplace, in public spaces and online, and it provided the first nationally representative data on transgender and gender-diverse people, and new data on experiences of IPV that better capture the gendered aspects of IPV. IPV data are disaggregated by several identity factors, including gender, sexual orientation, Indigenous identity, visible minority identity, disability, age group and immigrant status. These data have allowed for disaggregation of indicators of IPV and family violence captured in Canada's Gender Results Framework (GRF).

Findings from the SSPPS are contained in seven reports issued by Statistics Canada on experiences of IPV among various population groups and are available on Statistics Canada's website. Each of the reports explores the prevalence, nature, and impact of IPV on Canadians taking a gender-based approach by comparing the experiences of women and men, and where possible, gender-diverse individuals. The series of reports starts with an overview of the issue in the Canadian population, followed by a report on these specific population groups: Indigenous women, sexual minority women, sexual

minority men, women with disabilities, young women, and visible minority women. Data are being used to inform the Government's implementation of the federal GBV strategy and the forthcoming GBV NAP. The next phase of the SSPPS will be conducted via one single survey covering the key thematic elements of the original three surveys to reduce respondent burden, increase sample size and allow for oversampling.

Budget 2021 provided an additional \$11 million over five years for GBV research and knowledge mobilization, including funding to increase the sample size for the next cycle of the SSPPS (to be conducted in 2024-25) and to over-sample particular populations, notably Indigenous, racialized, and LGBTQ2 groups. This will allow for enhanced disaggregated data and intersectional analyses on IPV and family violence. The next cycle of the SSPPS will be informed by extensive consultation with stakeholders on deeper disaggregation, intersectional analyses, and response burden while taking into consideration the ability to monitor trends.

Through the Disaggregated Data Action Plan, for which funding was provided in Budget 2021, Statistics Canada is on track to answering the call of Canadians, who are seeking detailed data to address gender gaps, racism and other systemic barriers facing specific population groups. Within the first year of the Disaggregated Data Action Plan, Statistics Canada released new data disaggregated by specific racialized groups, Indigenous persons, and women, in numerous areas.

In relation to IPV, Statistics Canada has been working with police and other partners to determine how to collect data through police administrative records on the Indigenous and racialized identity of all victims and accused persons. The data are used for research and statistical purposes to monitor the nature and extent of police-reported crime in Canada, including police-reported intimate partner violence. In 2021-2022, broad engagements were conducted to seek advice on the data collection. Results of the initial engagement will be released this summer and the plan to operationalize collection will have Statistics Canada ready to accept data from police starting in January 2024. With police reporting these data, the project will provide annual police-reported information on IPV experienced by Indigenous and racialized populations.

In addition, the General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization) has previously oversampled Indigenous respondents and residents of the three territories thanks to funding from partners and stakeholders. The next iteration of this survey will be able to oversample specific population groups through funding from the Disaggregated Data Action Plan (DDAP).

Forms of financial and economic abuse in relation to IPV have also been collected through the General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization) which has been collecting this data since the early 1990s. The GSS was last conducted in 2019 and is generally conducted every five years. Disaggregated GSS data on economic and financial abuse are available on the basis of gender, age, Indigenous identity, visible minority identity, immigrant status and disability. Corresponding findings on economic and financial abuse from the 2019 GSS can be found on the Statistics Canada website.

To measure economic and financial abuse through these two surveys, the Government asks about issues including: being forced to give up one's money or possessions or control over them; being kept from accessing a job or financial resources; being prevented from knowing about or having access to one's income; and having one's possessions or property damaged or destroyed.

The Government notes the Committee's recommendation on the revision of metrics used by Statistics Canada to collect economic and financial abuse data. As demonstrated above, the current metric is a robust indicator. Changing and adding questions to the SSPPS and GSS at this time will increase the burden on survey respondents and impact the ability to monitor trends over time. As it is, the existing IPV section of the SSPPS is highly sensitive and lengthy, so having an efficient tool to measure financial abuse in a brief series of questions reduces respondent burden.

Other programs, such as CIRNAC's Indigenous-Led Data Research Projects Program, are working to fund Indigenous organizations and researchers to generate innovative

methodological approaches to improving data related to Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people in distinctions and regionally specific ways, including data related to IPV.

Using annual investments for research under the federal GBV Strategy, the Government is currently working with partners to undertake research related to traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) and their effects on victims and survivors of IPV. One example of funded research on TBIs is the PHAC's *Injury in Review, 2020 Edition: Spotlight on Traumatic Brain Injuries Across the Life Course* report. The report provides important national surveillance statistics on the causes of TBIs across the life course, including sports, seniors' falls, assaults, consumer products, and more. Specifically, the report identifies TBIs associated with intentional events, including IPV, and highlights that concussions among people experiencing domestic violence is an important issue as it is comparable to sport-related concussion in the sense that they may be exposed to repeated concussions/sub-concussions over time. In some cases, this can result in longer recovery times, more severe and/or long-term symptoms.

PHAC is also investing up to \$6.9 million per year ongoing to support programs preventing teen dating violence, including funding for a Teen Dating Violence Community of Practice, led by the Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network (PREVNet) at Queens University. The community of practice fosters connection among projects addressing teen/youth dating violence, helps enhance research and evaluation capacity, and supports projects in mobilizing knowledge to the broader community of researchers and service providers in the field.

Most of these projects integrate intervention research, by including a research partner in the project from the outset, so that while the initiative is reaching families and communities with programming, it is also helping to answer a research question about whether and how this particular approach is effective, or what would need to change to achieve the intended outcomes. Projects that support victims and survivors of violence are able to measure health outcomes in participants, such as decreased anxiety and depression and increased self-care. Those that focus on prevention are measuring changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour associated with violence and victimization. These changes are measured at the project level, not at a population level, given the relatively focused nature of the investment. The broader impact is realized through the contribution to the evidence base in the field, through the hundreds of publications, guidance documents, reports, presentations and other knowledge products, which help advance the field of "what works" to prevent violence and support the health of victims and survivors.

Also, under the federal GBV strategy and through funding provided in Budget 2021, PHAC is investing up to \$10 million per year to support projects to deliver and test interventions that promote safe relationships and prevent family violence, including family violence and teen dating violence. In addition, a new national survey that provided the first comprehensive understanding of IPV in Canada was funded through WAGE under the federal GBV strategy.

PHAC also funded three research reports through Western University's Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children (CREVAWC), focused on the intersections between childhood abuse and IPV. These reports explored the experience of maltreatment in children as a risk factor for men's perpetration of IPV later in life; provided an overview of the literature linking girls' early experiences of violence to subsequent experiences of victimization or use of violence in relationships; and provided an overview of programs to prevent and reduce revictimization and use of relational aggression among women and girls who have experienced child maltreatment, respectively.

The Public Health Agency of Canada also collects data on family violence in the form of data about children's experiences of child maltreatment (abuse, neglect, exposure to violence against others in the home), as addressed by child welfare (child and family) services across Canada. Child maltreatment (especially neglect but also children's exposure to violence) is recorded in child and family services data as a reason for

placing children in out of home care. The issue of child maltreatment in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis families, and the social response to it (i.e., child and family services, including placement) is very complex and changing very quickly. The Government is advancing work to build lasting, respectful relationships with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis organizations related to child and family services data to be used for public health surveillance purposes.

## **Conclusion**

Since 2015, the Government of Canada has been working hard to make progress towards its goal of ending GBV, including IPV and family violence. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has created new challenges, there have been strong, innovative responses by governments and communities across the country.

The endorsement by the FPT Ministers responsible for the Status of Women of the January 2021 Joint Declaration for a Canada free of Gender-Based Violence is a historic milestone to respond to GBV. WAGE continues to work with federal partners, PTs, Indigenous partners, service providers, victims and survivors and their families, and experts to ensure that anyone facing GBV has reliable and timely access to protection and services, no matter who they are or where they live. The forthcoming GBV NAP is a critical step towards a Canada free from gender-based violence, where everyone can live free from violence and is able to fully participate in all aspects of society.



06 OCT. 2022

Mr. Charles Robert  
Clerk of the House of Commons  
West Block, Room 233-C  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Robert,

Pursuant to Standing Order 109 of the House of Commons, I am pleased to enclose, for tabling in the House of Commons, the Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, entitled, *Towards a Violence-Free Canada: Addressing and Eliminating Intimate Partner and Family Violence*, tabled in the House of Commons on June 22, 2022.

Pursuant to Standing Order 32(5), the report is deemed referred to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'ML', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Honourable Marc Len, P.C., M.P.  
Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth

Enclosures