

**Update on the National Inquiry on
Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories made a commitment in its mandate to support and participate in the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls in collaboration with families, Aboriginal governments, the federal government and other organizations. I would like to update Members today on the work our government is doing to fulfill that commitment.

The National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was formally launched by the Government of Canada on September 1, 2016. Since my last update on this initiative, the National Inquiry has launched an official website that will be populated as the Inquiry progresses. The Commission on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls has also written to the friends and families of murdered and missing women and girls advising of progress to date and of the establishment of a network team to connect to the communities. The Commission has committed to ensuring that there will be health teams in place to support families before, during and after the hearings.

The Commission held a press conference on February 7, 2017 advising on what has occurred to date. The most notable items mentioned in the press conference are that the Inquiry is meeting with families who volunteer to take part in the process, and that the Commission is only going to communities where they are invited. This being said, the Commission is looking at different ways to gather information, from direct interviews to written submissions, to visual representation. I encourage family members who wish to participate to contact the National Inquiry office.

The Commission has contacted all provincial and territorial governments to establish an Intergovernmental Liaison Panel that will be a link between the Inquiry and governments. No meetings of this panel have been called at this point. In the interim, our government has reached out to the Commission; looking for ways to support the Inquiry and to ensure that families in the Northwest Territories are heard.

The Government of Canada is providing funding to establish Family Information Liaison Units across Canada. These units will provide family members with information and emotional support throughout the process. In the Northwest Territories, the Department of Justice is working with the federal government and the Native Women's Association to establish a unit that will serve all Northwest Territories communities during the Inquiry.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first time that provinces and territories have fully participated in a national inquiry. This will give the Inquiry a full scope to access evidence in all jurisdictions. Although the Inquiry is an independent process, it remains critically important for all governments to work together and do their part to ensure that the national attention on violence against Indigenous women and girls remains on the forefront.

To guide and support the Government of the Northwest Territories' involvement in the Inquiry, the Government of the Northwest Territories, led by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, is establishing an interdepartmental working group. We will also be collaborating with our Aboriginal government partners, and with families and other stakeholders. Our officials have also been reaching out to the Nunavut and Yukon governments, to ensure there is consistency in our support of the Inquiry.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has long supported the call for a National Inquiry, and now that this work is getting underway we will be giving it our full support. We believe that the Inquiry is an important step in acknowledging and addressing the root causes of violence towards Indigenous women in Canada. We need the Inquiry to address those who have been lost, but also to address the unacceptable amount of violence against Indigenous women and girls. It is our hope and intention that through the participation in the Inquiry, Indigenous women and girls will be respected, valued and safer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.