

THE HONOURABLE CAROLINE COCHRANE
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STATUS
OF WOMEN

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**Government of the Northwest Territories Initial Response to the
Final Report of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls National
Inquiry**

Mr. Speaker, on June 4th, I tabled the final report of the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in this House. The report, entitled *Reclaiming Power and Place*, outlines the systemic causes of the violence experienced by Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people in this country. The Inquiry's report also presents 231 recommendations as Calls for Justice.

The Calls for Justice cover many areas of public and private activity, including, among others, the justice system and police services, health and wellness programs, human security, and extractive industries. The Government of the Northwest Territories has now completed a high-level review of the report and prepared an initial response to the thematic areas presented in the Calls to Justice. I will be tabling this response later today, at the appropriate time.

In undertaking our review, we were mindful of the upcoming territorial election and conscious that a new government will be carrying this work forward. Once the new government is in place, a more in-depth analysis will be completed, with a view to better understanding the steps necessary to make the response meaningful and effect real change.

As the Inquiry began, we recognized that this would be an ongoing project. When the Inquiry concluded and the Final Report was released, we understood that it was not the end of the work, but the beginning. This initial GNWT response, called *Doing Our Part*, is a

signal of our jurisdiction's commitment to keep working, to continue the dialogue and to keep paying attention to the stories of the families and survivors and to the Calls for Justice.

Mr. Speaker, this is a national issue and some of the solutions have to be national as well. We are encouraged by the Prime Minister of Canada's public announcement that they will be working on developing the National Action Plan called for in the Calls for Justice. We have communicated our jurisdiction's commitment to participate in this national discussion.

Working together on the implementation of the Calls for Justice not only creates the potential for sharing of resources but also builds upon the successes we have had to date. Working together also means bringing many perspectives to the table. To ensure a fair and equitable approach in how we work together with other jurisdictions, we also need to have a northern discussion on what a northern response will look like.

This discussion must include the Native Women's Association of the NWT, who have been strong partners during the Inquiry. When they presented their final submission to the National Inquiry, they chose to highlight four key areas that speak to acknowledgement, trust, the need for a person-centered approach and accountability. The GNWT supports their recommendations and we are committed to working with them on these four areas.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage the Members of this House, and all residents, to review the final report, especially the Calls for Justice. It is one fundamental way to honour the courage of survivors and family members of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people. To truly understand the impact of this trauma, we need to read the stories that were shared.

And because these stories can be painful to read, I encourage anyone who is triggered to call on the support services available. The number for the toll free national help line is 1-844 -413 - 6649. You can also call Native Women's Association or community Victim Services Coordinators.

I would like to end by saying, again, that violence is not okay. The GNWT is committed to addressing the systemic causes of violence so that Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people are able to feel safe and empowered in our country and in our territory.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.