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Report Details:

The Commission's report is an account of the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people that is a central facet of Canada's heritage, the distortion of that relationship over time, and the terrible consequences of distortion for Aboriginal people - loss of lands, power and self-respect. The commission envisioned the report to be a guide to the many ways Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people could begin that time, to repair the damage to the relationship and enter the next millennium on a new footing of mutual recognition and respect, sharing and responsibility.

Recommendations:

The Commission provides an extensive list of detailed recommendations regarding processes and policies to improve the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relationship. The following are recommendations that directly relate to the particular realities of women:

- Aboriginal leaders take a firm, public stance in support of the right to freedom from violence of all members in the community, but particularly of women, children, elders, persons with disabilities and others who may be vulnerable, as well as in support of a policy of zero tolerance of actions that violate the physical or emotional safety of Aboriginal persons.
- Aboriginal governments adopt the principle of including women, youth, elders and persons with disabilities in governing councils and decision-making bodies, the modes of representation and participation of these persons being whatever they find most agreeable.
- The full and equal participation of women be ensured in decision-making bodies responsible for ensuring people's physical and emotional security, including justice committees and boards of directors of healing centres and lodges.
- Aboriginal leaders and agencies serving vulnerable people encourage communities, with the full participation of women, to formulate, promote and enforce community codes of behaviour that reflect ethical standards endorsed by the community and that state and reinforce the responsibility of all citizens to create and maintain safe communities and neighbourhoods.
- The government of Canada provide funds to the national Aboriginal organizations, including national Aboriginal women's organizations, to permit them to prepare a comprehensive human resources development strategy in health and social services that:
 - i) Facilitates and draws upon regional initiatives, integrates information from diverse sources, and is structured to incorporate regular updating;
 - ii) Builds an inventory of Aboriginal human resources currently available in health and social services, identifying where, in what field and at what level Aboriginal personnel are currently practising;
 - iii) Assesses current and future Aboriginal human resources needs and identifies the actions needed on the part of governments, educational institutions and others to address these needs;
 - iv) Assesses requirements for direct service personnel as well as for planners, researchers and administrators;
 - v) Collates an inventory and available evaluative data on training and education options;
 - vi) Explores recruitment, training and retention issues;
 - vii) Examines the personal and professional supports required to encourage Aboriginal professionals to practise in Aboriginal communities;
 - viii) Develops proposals for a system to monitor the status of Aboriginal human resources;
 - ix) Develops an analysis of how, to the maximum extent possible, Aboriginal human resources development can be brought under Aboriginal control.
- Federal, provincial and territorial governments and national Aboriginal organizations, including Aboriginal women's organizations, explore how training approaches and personnel complements of current health and social services, including the community health representative and drug and alcohol abuse programs, can contribute to a more comprehensive, holistic and integrated system of services, while helping to maintain continuity and adequacy of Aboriginal community services.

- The government of Canada provide funding to Aboriginal women's organizations, including urban-based groups, to (a) improve their research capacity and facilitate their participation in all stages of discussion leading to the design and development of self-government processes; and (b) enable them to participate fully in all aspects of nation building, including developing criteria for citizenship and related appeal processes.
- Aboriginal governments and organizations provide for the full and fair participation of Aboriginal women in the governing bodies of all Aboriginal health and healing institutions.
- Aboriginal women give Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal service agencies direction and guidance in formulating policy and developing services that may be used by Aboriginal women and children and participate fully in the delivery of programs and services established specifically to meet the needs of urban Aboriginal women.
- In addition to cross-cultural training, non-Aboriginal individuals and organizations whose work or responsibilities directly affect urban Aboriginal women's lives receive comprehensive information and education on the situation of urban Aboriginal women.

Aboriginal Justice System and Aboriginal People – Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba, 1996

Report Details:

The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry was created in response to the failure of the justice system to effectively respond to the deaths Helen Betty Osborne and J.J. Harper. These incidents were troubling examples of the manner in which Manitoba's justice system was failing Aboriginal people. The scope of the commission was to examine all components of the justice system, including policing, courts and correctional services. The commission evaluated whether and the extent to which Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal persons are treated differently by the justice system and whether there are specific adverse effects, including possible systemic discrimination against Aboriginal people, in the justice system.

Recommendations:

The report provides an extensive list of detailed recommendations to improve the overall system. The following are the recommendations relevant to the issue of violence against Aboriginal women:

- The Indian Act be amended to provide for the equal division of property upon marriage breakdown.
- At the provincial level, Aboriginal leaders must begin to support the types of programs which assist Aboriginal women and children to report abuse and to get help for its effects. Aboriginal leaders should establish a local government portfolio for women and children, with responsibility to develop educational and support programs in the area of spousal and child abuse.
- Police forces establish family abuse teams which include police officers and social workers trained in dealing with domestic disputes. Such teams should make extensive use of electronic record-keeping and community resources.
- Shelters and safe homes for abused women and children be established in Aboriginal communities and in urban centres. These shelters should be controlled by Aboriginal women who can provide culturally appropriate services. Counselling and support for the victims of abuse are essential.
- The provincial government implement the recommendations found in the report of the Child Advocacy Project entitled *A New Justice for Indian Children*.
- Community mediation programs such as the one operated by the Hollow Water Resource Group be expanded to Aboriginal communities throughout the province. Such programs must be designed and operated by Aboriginal people.
- Alternatives to incarceration appropriate to Aboriginal cultures be developed for Aboriginal women
- The Portage Correctional Institution be closed.
- All women who are now sent to a federal penitentiary outside the province be permitted to serve their sentences in Manitoba.
- Culturally appropriate group homes be established in urban areas by Aboriginal women's organizations where urban Aboriginal women can serve any term of incarceration to which they may

be sentenced, with access to programs of recovery from substance abuse, recovery from victimization and dependency, academic upgrading and training, and parenting skills.

- Aboriginal women living in isolated or rural communities be held in open custody facilities in their home communities. Such women would be free to attend to their families, to work or to obtain education during the day, to attend counselling sessions in the evenings, and remain in the facility each night until their sentence is served.
- The Milner Ridge Correctional Centre be converted to a co-correctional institution as a pilot project.
- When facilities for men and women are established near northern communities, Aboriginal women from the North be allowed to serve their sentence in the facility nearest to their home community.
- Arrangements be made for children to have frequent visits with their mother.
- Child and family service agencies provide necessary support to Aboriginal mothers in jail and their children to ensure that the family is kept together.
- Where children need to be taken into care following the incarceration of an Aboriginal mother, child and family service agencies make culturally appropriate foster arrangements for the children of such inmates.
- Aboriginal women be appointed to the National Parole Board.
- Funding be provided to Aboriginal women to establish a halfway house for Aboriginal female inmates.
- The National Parole Board give direction that release plans for female inmates with children pay close attention to the need for family reintegration, and in particular to living and income security arrangements required for family reintegration. We further recommend that the federal and provincial governments ensure that income and housing support programs be developed for released female offenders with young children, designed to facilitate family reintegration.

Provincial Association Against Family Violence – *Moving Toward Safety: Responding to Family Violence in Aboriginal and Northern Communities of Labrador, 2002*

Report Details:

The primary objectives of this report are:

- To describe current practices;
- To explore existing models of service delivery in similar communities in Canada and other parts of the world;
- To identify alternatives to traditional shelter services for Aboriginal families and northern communities in Labrador; and,
- To recommend elements of a framework for establishment of effective preventive measures.

Recommendations:

The literature emphasizes the need for solutions that have the following characteristics:

1. A holistic approach.
2. Community-based and community-driven design and delivery.
3. Culturally appropriate design and delivery.
4. Active involvement of women.
5. Multi-sectoral collaboration and effective coordination.
6. 24-hour crisis response.

In addition, the following recommendations are provided below:

- A financial commitment to established women's groups that would increase their capacity to coordinate an integrated community response to family violence.
- Restructuring current, reopening closed, and developing of shelters across the province for Aboriginal women.
- Establishment of multiservice unit in a central location that could provide effective shelter, education and related services to women.

- Development of family violence response teams in communities with shelters or multi-service units together with agreements covering transportation and acceptable police response times for communities that have no regular police stationed in their communities.
- A consultation process should be considered which would enable communities to begin planning proposed initiatives.
- A comprehensive evaluation process for all initiatives to ensure that goals and objectives are realized.

Pacific Association of First Nations Women, BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre, BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs – *The “Start of Something Powerful”: Strategizing for Safer Communities For BC Aboriginal Women, October 2003*

Report Details:

The Strategizing for Safer Communities for BC Aboriginal Women forum was held in Vancouver on June 2 and 3, 2003.

The Pacific Association of First Nations Women (PAFNW), BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre (BCWs) - Sexual Assault Service, Woman Abuse Response Program and Aboriginal Health Program and the BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs (BCASVACP) are organizations who work provincially with programs and communities dealing with violence against women in relationships, sexual assault, and adult survivors of sexual abuse, and, as such, work with Aboriginal women who are working to end violence against women in their communities.

Recommendations:

The organizations identified the long-term goal of the forum was to increase Aboriginal women's health and safety within the context of sexual assault and relationship violence. The following recommendations were made:

- Funds be allocated to the development of anti-violence programs managed and staffed by Aboriginal women.
- Funds be allocated for a transition house program for Aboriginal women in the North to be funded by Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services.
- Funds be allocated for a new community based victim assistance program located in a region with high Aboriginal population, utilizing funds from the Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General.
- Core funding be provided by the Provincial Health Services Authority to develop a provincial Aboriginal women's organization with Aboriginal women's health and safety as a primary mandate.
- The Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General provide funds to develop and implement education and training on variety of topics related to violence in Aboriginal communities delivered by Aboriginal women.
- Training be developed and provided by Aboriginal women focused on capacity building within Aboriginal communities on topics such as leadership, intersectoral coordination, policy and protocol development, etc.
- As all issues impact violence against Aboriginal women, Aboriginal women's involvement in policy making must extend beyond “violence against women” to include treaty and all other issues impacting Aboriginal peoples.
- All social policy ministries in BC review existing research about Aboriginal women and violence to expand knowledge and inform policy, programs and services.
- The Ministries of Public Safety & Solicitor General and Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services take the lead role in this initiative, and provide funds for Aboriginal women to review the existing literature related to Aboriginal women and violence, aggregate the findings and recommendations and the Ministries begin to fund programs based on the recommendations.

- The Ministries of Public Safety & Solicitor General, Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, Health Planning and Health Services allocate core funding directly to Aboriginal organizations and programs in the areas of anti-violence and health related services.
- The Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General review and alter their population-based funding formula to ensure that women in remote communities have access to services.
- The Ministries of Public Safety & Solicitor General, Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, Health Planning, Health Services and Children and Family Development review current government funding criteria to ensure that it is accessible, relevant and equitable to Aboriginal women and peoples.

Amnesty International – *Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada*, October 2004

Report Details:

This report examines the role of discrimination in acts of violence carried out against Indigenous women in Canadian towns and cities. Amnesty International reviewed published reports and the findings of inquests and government inquiries, interviewed survivors of violence and the family members of Indigenous women who have been murdered or who have gone missing and met with key organizations and individuals who have worked on their behalf. Where possible, the researchers also spoke with police investigators or spokespersons.

Recommendations:

1. Acknowledge the seriousness of the problem

All levels of government, governance structures, should:

- Publicly condemn the high rates of violence against Indigenous women – whether within Indigenous communities and society as whole – and make public their plans to address the crisis.
- Undertake a review of outstanding recommendations from Canadian commissions, inquiries and inquests pertaining to the safety and welfare of Indigenous people with a view to ensuring their timely implementation.
- Clearly outline the measures taken to address the problem of violence against Indigenous women in Canada in reports to relevant UN human rights bodies, including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Human Rights Committee.

2. Support research into the extent and causes of violence against Indigenous women

- The federal government should ensure adequate funding for comprehensive national research on violence against Indigenous women, including the creation of a national registry to collect and analyze statistical information from all jurisdictions.
- In consultation with Indigenous peoples, organizations and organizations representing ethnic minorities, protocols should be developed to ensure that police consistently record and appropriately use data on the ethnicity of the victims and perpetrators of violent crimes.
- The federal government should request the United Nations. Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people and Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, to jointly study and document patterns of violence against Indigenous women, including in Canada.

3. Take immediate action to protect women at greatest risk

- Federal, provincial and territorial governments should ensure adequate, sustained, multi-year funding to ensure the provision of culturally appropriate services such as shelters and counseling for Indigenous women and girls.

- Police should work closely with Indigenous women's organizations and other frontline groups to identify and implement appropriate and effective protocols for action on missing persons cases, with a view to developing standards for police response in keeping with the risks to Indigenous women and girls.
 - Police forces should provide specialized staffing to review and coordinate responses to missing persons cases.
 - As part of ongoing review and implementation of laws regarding the sex trade in Canada, give police clear instructions to ensure that the fundamental rights of women involved in the sex trade are protected in the course of all law enforcement activities.
4. Provide training and resources for police to make prevention of violence against Indigenous women a genuine priority
- All police forces should receive adequate training to ensure an understanding of violence against women in a range of settings including family violence, child sexual exploitation and violence against women in the sex trade.
 - The scenarios used in police training should incorporate issues of cultural sensitivity and violence against women.
 - Meetings with Indigenous women leaders and other community members should be organized to build understanding of the specific risks to Indigenous women in Canadian society and establish and strengthen relationships of trust between police and Indigenous communities.
 - All police departments should review issues of workload, staffing levels and job rotation to ensure officers have the opportunity to become familiar with and can develop relations of trust with the specific communities they are intended to serve and protect.
 - The actions of police, including compliance with policies on the investigation of missing persons cases, should be subject to independent civilian oversight.
 - Funding should also be provided for the creation of independent advocates and liaison workers for Indigenous people in contact with police.
 - Officers found to have failed to act on reports of missing women, or to have carried out biased or inadequate investigation of violence against women, should be subject to appropriate discipline.
 - Clear policies and practices should be established with respect to the timely provision of information, including autopsy results and coroners reports, to the families of missing and murdered persons.
5. Address the social and economic factors that lead to Indigenous women's extreme vulnerability to violence
- The federal government should provide adequate sustained, multi-year funding for initiatives to deal with the immediate and intergenerational impacts of both the physical and psychological abuse suffered at residential schools, including the loss of cultural identity.
 - Federal, provincial and municipal governments should subject all social programs to a periodic review to ensure the accessibility and resourcing of programs for Indigenous women and families is at least on a par with those available to non-Indigenous people in Canada.
 - Federal and provincial governments, with the full participation of Indigenous women, should organize a high level intergovernmental and interdepartmental meeting to ensure proper coordination and information sharing on initiatives to address the safety and welfare of Indigenous women and girls.
 - In collaboration with Indigenous representatives and organizations, the federal government should take urgent action to address the chronic unemployment and poverty faced by Indigenous women and men both on and off reserve.
 - The federal government should commit to fully implementing outstanding recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples which address poverty and social marginalization of Indigenous people in Canada, as has repeatedly been urged by United Nations treaty bodies.

6. End the marginalization on Indigenous women in Canadian society

- All levels of government should work with Indigenous peoples to strengthen and expand public education programs, including within the formal school system, that acknowledge and address the history of dispossession and marginalization of Indigenous peoples and the present reality of racism in Canadian society.
- All levels of government should adopt such measures as are necessary to ensure that Indigenous women are consulted in the formulation and implementation of any policy that could affect their welfare and status.

Pacific Association of First Nations Women, Ending Violence Association of BC, BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre – *Researched to Death: B.C. Aboriginal Women and Violence*, September 2005

Report Details:

This report examines ten studies and one book relating to Aboriginal women and violence. The purpose is to review reports from different sources to determine the extent to which the numerous recommendations and suggestions have been acted on to ameliorate the impact of violence against aboriginal women.

Recommendations:

1. Aboriginal Women's Contribution To Social Policy Development

- There needs to a Provincial Aboriginal women's organization that offers support, training, and education to Aboriginal women. This organization would also have a mandate to provide input to policy makers on issues that effect Aboriginal women in order to improve and assist government in the development of relevant and effective policy and programs.
- This organization would be the "voice" that is rarely heard or understood at provincial and federal levels. BC Aboriginal women state that involvement required to ensure the safety of their families, communities and themselves.

2. Programs and Services

- On-going funding is needed to support culturally relevant Aboriginal programming and services that are designed, delivered and implemented by healthy, Aboriginal women, Elders and community workers.
- The programming and services need to include a counselling component specific to intergenerational trauma issues and be delivered from a holistic approach to healing, meaning, that the victim, offender, the victims and offender's family would all need support in their healing to create long term community change.
- The programming and services would work towards this community supported healing with a direct understanding that there are community "power dynamics" that need to be recognized and interrupted for the healing to occur.
- The Aboriginal communities' leadership, community members and the communities' workers must work as a team to support this community development approach to women's safety.
- To ensure the reduction of violence there needs to be connections between the Aboriginal community and non-Aboriginal community's services.
- A community based committee that has a pro-active role in networking within community (members, employees and those that need assistance), outside agencies, justice system personnel and other related resources/supports would aid in this change.
- The Attorney General's office needs to design a program that addresses the coordination problems found in child sexual abuse cases on reserve.

3. Training and Education

- The Aboriginal community and non-Aboriginal people, organizations, law enforcement, legal society, judicial system and government agencies must receive education on the history of colonialism, cultural genocide, sexism, racism, forced assimilation, family violence, and violence against women in the sex trade.
- The overall society needs to also be educated on Aboriginal people's history and present challenges that support family violence.
- Aboriginal leadership with the financial support of the government needs to create workshops and conferences for Aboriginal community members, workers and leaders that are directed towards family violence, including sexual violence.
- Family violence, personal safety (prevention), and sex education are also a necessity that needs to be delivered in Aboriginal schools.

4. Policy and Research

- An implementation of past government commissions and inquiries reports completed on Aboriginal women and violence is a good start.
- An even better direction with long-term results would be to implement the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People and the United Nations human rights treaty bodies. recommendations that relate to "poverty and social marginalization of Indigenous peoples in Canada.
- The Canadian government needs to work with Aboriginal women to work towards solutions to stop the violence and include them in any policy discussions that will directly affect them.
- Since the rate of Aboriginal women incarcerated is increasing a mandatory appointment of Aboriginal women on the National Parole Board is a necessity.
- Specific actions and protocols need to be implemented, designed and supported by the federal and provincial government for missing Aboriginal women and youth cases.
- The creation of protocols for respectful working relationships with the justice system to support this end is also needed.
- Judicial support needs to also be implemented for law enforcement officers.
- Specific actions need to be taken to protect Aboriginal women.
- Request the United Nations to study and document violence against Aboriginal women.
- This study needs to determine if there are specific measures being taken by Canada to address the violence against Aboriginal women.
- A transformation in Canadian perspective and law needs to be a priority.
- Canadian laws need to be changed that currently support "domination" and the continued victimization of women.
- A provision needs to be included in the Indian Act that allows for the same equal division of property for Aboriginal women on reserve.

Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, Carrier Sekani Family Services, Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, Prince George Native Friendship Centre, Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment & Training Association – *The Highway of Tears Symposium Recommendation Report*, June 2006

Report Details:

The report, released on National Aboriginal Day, is the result of a two-day symposium that was held in Prince George, B.C. The symposium brought together high-ranking government officials, top members of the RCMP, community leaders and family members of virtually all the missing or murdered women along the Prince Rupert-Prince George corridor.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations were made:

1. Victim Prevention

- Recommendation #1: That a shuttle bus transportation system be established between each town and city located along the entire length of Highway 16, defined as the “The Highway of Tears”.
- Recommendation #2: That while the RCMP does a commendable job in patrolling the highway; these patrols can no longer drive past a hitchhiker who fits the victim profile.
- Recommendation #3: That the RCMP be provided the resources to increase their highway patrols during the hitchhiking season, more specifically increase these patrols along the sections of Highway 16 near First Nation communities, towns and cities.
- Recommendation #4: That the Greyhound Bus Company’s “free ride” program be expanded, and target marketed to the population in the Highway 16 corridor who fit the victim profile.
- Recommendation #5: That every Public Sector employee working between Prince George and Prince Rupert be contacted and used as a female hitchhiker detection network.
- Recommendation #6: That a number of “safe homes” similar to, and possibly including, MCFD and Aboriginal Social Service safe homes be established at strategic locations along the entire length of Highway 16, between the cities of Prince Rupert and Prince George, British Columbia.
- Recommendation #7: That the Rural Crime Watch Program be expanded to include a Highway Watch component along the full length of the Highway of Tears.
- Recommendation #8: That a number of emergency phone booths be placed along the highway at strategic locations between the Cities of Prince Rupert and Prince George, British Columbia. The distance between the towns, cities, and First Nation communities exceed 100 kms. in some places along this highway.
- Recommendation #9: That a number of billboards, and many more posters, be placed at strategic locations along the Highway 16 corridor between Prince George and Prince Rupert, British Columbia.
- Recommendation #10: That an annual awareness and prevention campaign be delivered to every; elementary school, high school, college, university, and silviculture company located in, and between, the cities of Prince Rupert and Prince George prior to the hitchhiking and tree-planting season.
- Recommendation #11: That every First Nation Community, and First Nation families living in the towns and cities, located on or near Highway of Tears, be targeted for a more intensive awareness and prevention program.
- Recommendation #12: That Aboriginal Youth, who live in the Rural First Nations communities, and Urban Aboriginal Youth who live in the towns and cities on the Highway of Tears, be organized and listened to.
- Recommendation #13: That recreation and social activity programs for Rural First Nation community youth, and Urban Aboriginal youth, be increased in the First Nation communities, towns and cities located along the Highway of Tears.
- Recommendation #14: That media campaigns be launched on the subject of the murdered and missing women, and more specifically contain key victim prevention measures targeting young women viewers and readers along the Highway of Tears.
- Recommendation #15: That the number, types, and frequency of essential health and social services be increased for direct delivery to the First Nation communities located along the Highway of Tears.

2. Emergency Planning and Team response

- Recommendation # 1: That the Highway of Tears Community Governing Body, undertake the development of an Emergency Readiness Plan
- Recommendation #2: That the Emergency Readiness Plan contain specific timelines for the actions of the Community Emergency Readiness Teams commencing from the time a missing person’s report is first received.

- Recommendation #3: That this Emergency Readiness Plan contain a missing persons Alert and Response component in the form of community emergency readiness teams.
- Recommendation #4: That this Emergency Readiness Plan be communicated to an Emergency Readiness Team(s) located in each city, town and First Nation community located along the entire length of the Highway of Tears.
- Recommendation #5: That, to the greatest extent possible, existing and established community resources like Search and Rescue organizations and Fire Departments be utilized and expanded upon in building each Emergency Readiness Team.
- Recommendation #6: That there be two contact persons appointed; one acting as the primary, and one the backup secondary, who would be given authorization by the RCMP to enact the Emergency Readiness Plan in each community, and coordinate pre-determined Emergency Readiness Team actions.

3. Victim Family Counselling and Support

- Recommendation #1: That a permanent Regional First Nation Crisis Response Plan be developed and implemented for First Nation communities, and Aboriginal families (Urban and Rural) experiencing a traumatic event.
- Recommendation #2: That a roster of fully qualified Aboriginal; mental health therapists, grief counselors, critical incident stress counselors, and other counselors of relevant specialty, be developed.
- Recommendation #3: That an exceptionally qualified First Nation Crisis Response Team be assembled, receive training on their roles, and be ready for deployment to any of the Rural First Nation communities, or Urban Aboriginal family, from which a victim disappears.
- Recommendation #4: That Aboriginal Agencies, or First Nation Communities, qualified to deliver such services, be assigned to provide long term counselling and support to Aboriginal victims' families upon their request and direction.
- Recommendation #5: That the RCMP re-establish and maintain communication with each of the victim's families.
- Recommendation #6: That a First Nation Advocate be provided to bridge the long-standing communications and awareness gap which exists between the RCMP and First Nation victim's families.

4. Community Development and Support

- Recommendation #1: That a Highway of Tears Legacy Fund be established as one source, among others, to develop and support multi-community, and multi-agency efforts in victim prevention, emergency readiness planning and team response, and victim family counselling and support.
- Recommendation #2: That a Board of Directors (Governing Body) be established to; provide direction and support in all four areas of this Highway of Tears Community Initiative; and manage the Legacy Fund.
- Recommendation #3: That the Board of Directors, (Highway of Tears Community Governing Body), establish working committees in each city and municipality along the Highway of Tears.
- Recommendation #4: That the Board of Directors hire two coordinators to provide development and support assistance to each Highway of Tears community working committee located along the highway.
- Recommendation #5: That the Board of Directors, (Highway of Tears Community Governing Body), report out and be held accountable to the communities and funding bodies at annual Highway of Tears Symposiums.
- Recommendation #6: That the RCMP continue its official investigation, or inquiry, into the Aboriginal community's assertions on the actual number of missing women.

Ontario Native Women's Association, Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres – A Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women, September 2007

Report Details:

The Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) and the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC) convened a strategy meeting on March 20-22, 2007, entitled "A Summit to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women" (the Summit). The Summit was funded by the Ontario Women's Directorate and a number of provincial and federal officials attended.

The intent of the Summit was to bring together community "leaders" to develop a framework for a strategy to end violence against Aboriginal women. In addition to participants from the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres and the Ontario Native Women's Association women from the Union of Ontario Indians, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Grand Council Treaty #3, independent First Nations, the Metis Nation of Ontario and some direct service providers also attended.

Recommendations:

The report makes the following recommendations in regards to the development of a comprehensive strategy for Ontario:

1. That a specific Strategy to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women be developed, adopted, resourced and implemented, consistent with the principles and design set out in this document.
2. That an Aboriginal women-specific gender-based analysis be developed by Aboriginal women in Ontario and be applied broadly by all levels of government.
3. That through an intensive process of examination, amendment and/or replacement, all legislation, policy, funding and programming processes ensure Aboriginal women are protected from all forms of violence and abuse.
4. That the Ministers responsible to address the Domestic Violence Action Plan or its successor meet with Aboriginal women forthwith, to discuss the Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women and ensure that they undertake, at a minimum, annual meetings with Aboriginal women concerning the progress of the Strategy, administration of funds, and the enhancements of policies designed to address violence against Aboriginal women and strengthen the government, organizational and community responses.

Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons – Final Report of the Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons, October 2007

Report Details:

In December 2005, the Government of Saskatchewan established the Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons (PPCMP) to address the issue of dealing with missing persons cases. Organizations with knowledge, experience and expertise in the area of missing persons were invited to join this collaborative committee in order to examine this issue and try to improve responses to missing persons cases. The Partnership, chaired by justice officials, has representation from 14 organizations across the province including police, First Nations, Métis, community organizations, search and rescue and government.

PPCMP released this final report in October 2007, which identified several specific actions seen as necessary to improve the overall response to missing person situations. The report included recommendations in 20 areas that dealt with, "actions to improve public awareness and education about the risks of going missing, how to respond to missing person situations, what supports families need to effectively respond to missing person situations, and what improvements are needed in response systems".

The families who participated in the meetings greatly influenced many of the recommendations, particularly through the valuable insights they provided in identifying gaps and possible solutions to help the families of missing persons.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations are made in the report:

2. Responding to Issues Raised by Families:

- Recommendation 1: Supports need to be developed by the Provincial Partnership Committee or other partner organizations to help families deal with a missing person situation:
 - i) Families require a simple checklist to follow of actions they can or should take, such as determining who the family contact person is with the police, with the media, or the type of information they might look for to assist the police in the investigation;
 - ii) Families require a media kit or information on dealing with the media to help them understand the issues and relationship that may develop during an investigation in terms of providing information to the media or responding to media inquiries; and
 - iii) Family members who are involved in supporting a missing person investigation may need financial and emotional support from community members or organizations.
- Recommendation 2: The media is encouraged to develop best practice standards in dealing with missing person cases which include consistent, neutral messaging sensitive to the family and cultural circumstances.
- Recommendation 3: Families of missing persons should be supported by governments and involved agencies to develop a support network.
- Recommendation 4: The provincial government should review existing common law and legislation dealing with missing persons and develop a timely, comprehensive legislative response to deal with the estate of the missing person.
- Recommendation 5.1: The provincial government, in partnership with police services, First Nations, Métis and Aboriginal organizations, and local governments, should consult with families of missing persons to determine the form or forms that a provincial memorial to missing persons could take and how it would be implemented and maintained.
- Recommendation 5.2: The Saskatchewan Minister of Justice should raise the topic of creating a national memorial to missing persons at the next Ministers Responsible for Justice meeting.
- Recommendation 6: The SACP [Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police] is encouraged to promote the concept of a national website or linked websites and the Saskatchewan Minister of Justice is encouraged to raise the need for a national website or linked websites on missing persons at the next meeting of Ministers Responsible for Justice.

3. Responding to Prevention, Awareness and Public Education Issues:

- Recommendation 7.0: As a priority, the Provincial Partnership Committee or another agency, with relevant community stakeholders, should be tasked to develop information/education materials to provide a factual overview of all aspects of missing person situations.
- Recommendation 7.1: Agencies that deal with at risk populations should establish teams to conduct presentations on awareness, prevention and personal safety to social and professional networks throughout the province.
- Recommendation 7.2: The Provincial Partnership Committee or another agency should be tasked to compile and maintain an inventory of agencies involved in missing person cases to support networking and a publicly accessible inventory of existing or new educational materials on prevention and personal safety.
- Recommendation 7.3: Police, as part of communications with the public, should ensure that information about police policy, procedure and practices related to missing persons cases and the role that the public can play in assisting in missing cases is generally available.
- Recommendation 8: Saskatchewan Learning should include awareness about the risks of going missing or facing missing children and youth in all schools through health education programs and

encourage educators and School Community Councils to continue to build awareness through access to materials, speakers, or other programming.

4. Improving Responses to Missing Persons Cases:

- Recommendation 9.1: The Saskatchewan Police Commission should review its current policy and work with all police agencies in Saskatchewan to develop and implement an overarching provincial Missing Person Policy for all municipal police agencies, and encourage the RCMP to adopt the policy in Saskatchewan.
- Recommendation 9.2: The Saskatchewan Police Commission should give consideration to incorporating the following standards in the policy:
 - i) A missing person report must be taken immediately when information comes to the attention of police, regardless of the length of time the person has been missing or the location where the person went missing.
 - ii) A standardized specialized in-take form for recording a missing person report and a specialized investigative checklist should be used.
 - iii) A common assessment tool should be developed to help assess the priority of the investigation.
 - iv) Immediate investigation of missing persons in suspicious circumstances.
 - v) Once it is established that a person is missing, the case will be entered on CPIC as soon as possible.
 - vi) Continued communication with the families of missing people.
 - vii) A media and public communications protocol for disseminating information about missing persons and requesting the public's help in locating a missing person.
 - viii) The police, upon identifying a chronic runaway situation, should develop approaches to link with other agencies to support appropriate intervention.
 - ix) All police forces should assign a police officer responsible for coordination of missing persons files and establish a backup process to avoid gaps in effectively responding to missing person reports.
 - x) In order to effectively implement the above approach to recording and managing investigations on missing person cases, standardized training and practice guides should be developed.
 - xi) There is a need for a more systematic and consistent approach to collecting data on:
 - (1) Missing person reports,
 - (2) Actual missing persons,
 - (3) Basic demographic information about missing persons, and,
 - (4) CPIC data entry.
- Recommendation 10: A process is required to ensure that all suspicious and at-risk missing person reported incidents (young children, medical, elderly, high risk life style) are fanned out to all relevant police agencies in the province immediately.
- Recommendation 11: Police should establish protocols with community agencies to provide a formal system to fan out "Missing Persons Information".
- Recommendation 12.1: The provincial government should amend provincial legislation to permit the disclosure of information on missing persons to police conducting a missing persons investigation as information necessary to protect the mental or physical health or safety of an individual.
- Recommendation 12.2: The Saskatchewan Minister of Justice should raise with the Federal Ministers responsible for Justice the need to amend federal legislation to ensure that when police are investigating a missing person case they have access to information under federal jurisdiction relevant to the investigation.
- Recommendation 13: The mandate of Victim Services should include the provision of support to families of missing people.
- Recommendation 14.1: The province and local government need to enhance search and rescue resources province-wide by standardizing provincial policy and providing provincial core funding to ensure volunteer sustainability.
- Recommendation 14.2: The province, communities and search and rescue organizations need to work cooperatively to ensure effective Search and Rescue responses by:

- i) Creating a provincial SAR Advisory Council of representative and mandating agencies, for strategic and operational direction to SARSAV;
 - ii) Creating a standard policy regarding the use of SAR teams;
 - iii) Ensuring that municipalities and communities take ownership of SAR volunteer teams;
 - iv) Providing basic SAR training and equipment to volunteers free of charge;
 - v) Ensuring trained SAR teams, SAR managers and trainers are available throughout all areas of the province;
 - vi) Creating a central provincial database for all SAR events, training and personnel;
 - vii) Ensuring consistent and timely involvement of SAR teams in a missing person's event;
 - viii) Providing specialized training for SAR volunteers, i.e. emergency management and recognizing the need for SAR teams in a disaster event, crime scene or evidence recovery;
 - ix) Developing heavy urban SAR capacity;
 - x) Ensuring support systems are in place for long term and/or remote searches;
 - xi) Ensuring liability protection for volunteers; and,
 - xii) Ensuring Critical Incident Stress Management support to SAR volunteers.
- Recommendation 15: The various Saskatchewan police forces need to establish protocols on when and how to engage search and rescue capacity in a missing person's event.
 - Recommendation 16: All school divisions are encouraged to develop policies and procedures for collaborating with police and/or school resource officers in missing persons cases, which may include procedures for requesting information from students and staff, appropriate communication and information sharing practices, and critical response provisions.
 - Recommendation 17: The Committee recommends that the government undertake a study to better understand the issues related to the high number of runaways and to identify prevention and intervention strategies, particularly for chronic runaways and their families.
 - Recommendation 18: The provincial government should fund a caseworker pilot with a police service. This caseworker would work with the "found" missing person and their family to deal with the causes of the person going missing by discussing how to avoid future situations and linking the individual and/or family with available resources to deal with the underlying causes of the person going missing to try to avoid repeat situations.
 - Recommendation 19: The provincial government, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, First Nations, and Métis communities and organizations should be encouraged to develop and enhance mutually supportive strategies to ensure that:
 - i) First Nations and Métis communities have the capacity to respond to a crisis when a person goes missing;
 - ii) Trained Search and Rescue capacities exist in all communities that incorporate and are sensitive to the culture, language, traditions and values of those communities;
 - iii) First Nations schools participate in prevention and response approaches similar to the recommendations for provincial school involvement; and,
 - iv) Relationships between the police (RCMP and municipal police forces) and First Nations and Métis communities are strengthened in missing person cases.
 - Recommendation 20: The Saskatchewan Minister of Justice should raise at the next meeting of Ministers Responsible for Justice the need for national consideration of whether and how a voluntary national information base or linked information bases on potential missing persons could be created.

National Aboriginal Women's Summit – Summary Report: A Call for Action, January 2008

Report Details:

The first ever National Aboriginal Women's Summit (NAWS) which took place in Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador from June 20-22, 2007.

It represents the third of a series of Aboriginal Summits that started with a Summit on Aboriginal Health issues in Vancouver in November 2006 hosted by Premier Gordon Campbell and followed by a Symposium on Aboriginal Economic Development hosted by Premier Lorne Calvert in Saskatoon in January 2007.

The NAWS theme *Strong Women, Strong Communities* reflects the significant role Aboriginal women play in their families and communities and the importance of addressing issues of concern to help support Aboriginal women. The Summit was organized into three main themes which were determined by the National Planning Committee based upon the feedback received from Provinces, Territories, the federal government and National Aboriginal Organizations. The main themes contained three to four major topics for discussion in facilitated breakout sessions by the Aboriginal women delegates.

Recommendations:

At the end of the Summit there were 137 recommendations made by First Nations, Inuit and Métis women. 59 of the recommendations were identified as priorities. 29 recommendations were highlighted by theme for more immediate action.

1. Theme: Health, Safety and Wellness:

Six overall priority recommendations under this theme were overwhelmingly supported by the Aboriginal women and are listed below:

- Federal/Provincial/Territorial Governments must increase financial resources for family violence initiatives and abuse prevention programs; provide more national financial and policy support for enhanced programming regarding family violence and abuse for prevention, care, healing initiatives/treatment and support; and increase resources for child sexual abuse and Elder abuse programs and services.
- Make violence against Aboriginal women and girls a priority in all areas. In health, this includes providing sexual and reproductive health services, particularly sexual health education programs, HIV/AIDS awareness, education and health prevention and promotion services. In education, particularly post-secondary education, this means supports that meet the unique needs of Aboriginal women, such as child care and housing, to decrease their vulnerability to violence and increase their opportunities for economic opportunities. In housing, this means ensuring that emergency shelters, second stage housing and transition shelters are adequately funded in areas where these services are currently not accessible to Aboriginal women.
- Ensure that resources be available to address all issues that negatively impact on Aboriginal women's well-being, including poverty, lack of housing, sexualized, racialized violence, employment, education, single parent families, healthcare, urban and remote issues etc.
- Ensure economic opportunity strategies consider all the socio-economic conditions that are required to create the right environment for Aboriginal women to participate in the economy. For example, child care, adequate housing, strategies to combat gendered racism and ensuring that the right and fundamental freedom to live free from violence are all factors to be considered. Existing inequities facing Aboriginal women must be removed in all sectors. This requires the application of a culturally relevant gender-based analysis.
- Recognize and understand: the role and value of traditional Aboriginal reproductive, pregnancy and birthing knowledge; the loss of continuity of family and community care and involvement for women who must leave their communities during late pregnancy to give birth; the importance of Aboriginal women's roles in teaching young women about the physical aspects of womanhood and holding related ceremonies; and develop and implement a comprehensive strategy that promotes the inclusion of Aboriginal youth in the design and delivery of policy, programs and services.
- Aboriginal women must be engaged fully within environmental stewardship issues, including water, land, food, air quality, medicines and access and benefit sharing of traditional knowledge on the use of resources, consistent with traditional and modern responsibilities.

2. Theme: Equality and Empowerment

- Recognizing Aboriginal Women's Rights,
- Empowering Aboriginal Women,

- Section 15 of the Charter of Rights:

Twelve overall priority recommendations under this theme were overwhelmingly supported by the Aboriginal women and are listed below:

- National and regional Aboriginal women's organizations (NAOs) must be provided appropriate resources for the development, implementation and monitoring of a national, long-term strategic plan for Aboriginal women in all spheres (social and economic development, etc.). Resources must reflect the unique circumstances of each group or geographical area.
- Action must be taken on a full suite of legislative initiatives including addressing the gender bias under the Indian Act, customary and family law reform, Bill C-31 and Canadian Human Rights legislation. Participants want to ensure that the Aboriginal and Treaty rights of Aboriginal women under Section 35(4) are recognized and protected.
- Federal, provincial and territorial governments must address jurisdictional issues so that programs and services are provided irrespective of status and residency with specific agreements for delivery.
- Prior to the repeal of Section 67 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, a comprehensive multi-year plan must be developed for community education and consultation in order to define next steps.
- Aboriginal women must be actively involved and take their rightful place in self-determination and processes must be developed to ensure that their unique and important roles in Aboriginal governments be recognized.
- Economic development for First Nation, Métis and Inuit women is a priority.
- Educational outcomes for Aboriginal women must be improved through accessible affordable educational opportunities and increased financial resources.
- Gender equity is a right and must guide all policies and legislation while taking into account the distinctiveness of First Nations, Métis and Inuit women.
- Federal legislation related to Matrimonial Real Property (MRP) on-reserve must be enacted in order to ensure that the property rights of Aboriginal women are recognized and meaningfully respected, upon marital breakdown. The proposed solutions must be reviewed to ensure that they do not result in inequitable impacts on Aboriginal women.
- The Federal Government must adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and must work with Permanent Forum and Indigenous People's organizations.
- Governments must work jointly with First Nation, Métis and Inuit to facilitate governance, capacity building and accountability with an emphasis on supporting the roles of Aboriginal women.
- Aboriginal languages are a significant part of identity. Language program funds need to be increased to allow for retention of the language from various nations. This is a vital part of maintaining cultures.

3. Theme: Strength, Balance & Honour

- Culturally Relevant Gender-based Analysis
- Justice System and Policing
- Revitalizing and Strengthening Language and Culture:

Eleven overall priority recommendations under this theme were overwhelming supported by the Aboriginal women and are listed below:

- NAOs, Federal, Provincial, Territorial, and all governments ensure that "culturally-based" GBA processes are established, and that Aboriginal women be resourced to define for themselves the impact of any proposed legislation, policy, programs and services. a. Protection of intellectual property and indigenous knowledge transmission must be included and respected through the GBA.
- Implementing a culturally relevant gender based analysis (CRGBA) framework in all legislative, policy and programming at all government levels will provide critical insight into the current situation forcing outcomes to be more holistic, and inclusive.
- Full participation of Aboriginal women at all decision making tables is needed so they are well served in all legislative, policy and programming initiatives affecting Aboriginal people.

- A lifelong learning strategy must be developed in key areas of early childhood development, primary, secondary, and post-secondary education, and skills development, and retention, which addresses the unique circumstances of Aboriginal women.
- All levels of government in partnership with all Aboriginal organizations should take the necessary steps to address the root causes leading to the over-representation of Aboriginal women as victims and offenders within the criminal justice system.
- All NAOs must work in partnership with all levels of government, mainstream organizations and each other to ensure: a) that existing victims services are adaptable to needs of Aboriginal victims of crime; b) that existing services and structures are respectful of traditional approaches to justice. Police officers, judges and lawyers must learn about the legislative and policy-related history that impact only Aboriginal peoples in Canada, especially Aboriginal women and the key factors which lead Aboriginal women into the justice system.
- A strategic approach to minimize the growth and impact of gangs in First Nations communities and urban centres, as well as to minimize the continued recruitment of Aboriginal youth into gangs must be developed.
- Aboriginal communities must be supported for the continued implementation and expansion of collaborative and cooperative Restorative Justice Approaches, where this is appropriate and supported by the Aboriginal community.
- The Federal Government (as a result of the previous assimilation policies of residential schools that negatively impacted on languages) must fund the revitalization of indigenous languages through programs dedicated to adults, youth and children.
- Provide support and recognition to traditional healers, and opportunities for Aboriginal women to help develop traditional healing policies and programs and encourage meaningful dialogue between Aboriginal healers and non-Aboriginal health care providers.
- Develop a strategy to allow Aboriginal women to reclaim their traditional roles, pass on traditional knowledge, and revitalize their cultures and communities through increased research and educational opportunities.

Native Women's Association of Canada – *Voices of our Sisters in Spirit: A Report to Families and Communities*, March 2009

Report Details:

The Native Women's Association of Canada officially released the second edition of "Voices of Our Sisters in Spirit: A Report to Families and Communities." To address the alarmingly high number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada, the work of the Sisters In Spirit initiative included research, education and awareness activities aimed at increasing the safety of Aboriginal women and girls. The second edition of this report features three new life stories, updated research results and includes policy recommendations to improve the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal women and girls.

Recommendations:

Guided by a human rights perspective, one that privileges and incorporates Aboriginal cultural and ethical values, four key policy areas have been identified to support the Sisters In Spirit initiative. These include:

1. The reduction of violence against Aboriginal women and girls, which results in their disappearance or death.
 - All governments (federal, provincial/territorial, municipal, First Nations, Inuit, Métis) publicly condemn the high rates of violence against Aboriginal women, acknowledge their role in addressing this reality and make a commitment to bring this issue to their senior officials for follow up and response, including making public their plans to address this crisis.
 - Identify resources and champions at senior levels of all governments who are committed to the reduction of violence against Aboriginal women and girls. These individuals must be resourced to

provide leadership within their departments, ministries or organizations on an ongoing basis to produce positive change in legislation, policies and procedures affecting Aboriginal women and girls.

- NWAC and all levels of government must work collaboratively to review and consolidate existing recommendations from Canadian commissions, inquiries and inquests pertaining to the safety and well being of Aboriginal women from 1982 to the present, with NWAC resourced to participate as a full member in developing a work plan to identify outstanding recommendations and priorities for action.
- NWAC and governments jointly establish criteria to evaluate progress including budget expenditures, staffing and service delivery benchmarks and milestones for governmental quarterly reporting to NWAC on the specific actions taken by each department, ministry or agency to address gaps and improve the safety and freedom from violence of Aboriginal women and girls.
- NWAC, governments and police collaborate to develop policies and procedures that address the issues of prostitution, trafficking and sexual exploitation of children by focusing on the perpetrators, preventing the abuse, and ensuring that the victims are not penalized, criminalized or have their personal autonomy restricted.

2. The reduction of poverty experienced by Aboriginal women and girls will increase their safety and security.

- Age restrictions associated with training, education and skills development programs and funding must be removed.
- Support NWAC to research and evaluate poverty line and market basket measures that underpin income support programs from an Aboriginal women's perspective in order to better understand the factors influencing the poverty experienced by Aboriginal women and girls and to evaluate the effectiveness of income support programs.

3. The reduction of homelessness and increased ability of Aboriginal women to access safe, secure and affordable housing which meets minimum standards of cleanliness and repair.

- Governments work with NWAC to establish appropriate funding levels for programs and services that meet the needs of Aboriginal girls and youth who are homeless: these must include barrier-free measures and have a geographic distribution that matches the pattern of need.
- Additional funding to link youth with programs and services that meet their personal needs for income, safety and well being must be available to assist youth to facilitate their exit from supported housing shelter.
- Governments, in cooperation with NWAC, must establish adequate, sustained ongoing funding for the provision of sufficient homelessness and housing services for Aboriginal women and girls, ensuring that these are culturally relevant, have a geographic distribution that matches the pattern of need, and include emergency shelters, second stage and third stage transitional housing.

4. Improved access to justice for Aboriginal women and girls and their families.

- Implement mandatory comprehensive training for all new recruits and all existing personnel in all police forces on issues, concerns and history of Aboriginal peoples. This training should focus on real issues and outcomes, must address the gap in understanding that exists between officers and Aboriginal peoples because of cultural differences, and not be limited by political or operational considerations.
- Police forces develop cooperative relationships with NWAC to establish the basis for future collaborative work on developing information sharing protocols in the medium term.
- Governments and police work with NWAC to develop and implement a process for police reporting to NWAC on current missing person protocols or processes in use in jurisdictions across Canada. . Governments work with NWAC and other national organizations to develop a process to broaden Jordan's Principle to include all jurisdictional issues affecting Aboriginal peoples.
- Governments collaborate with NWAC to identify and develop approaches that focus on the needs of families who have female members who are missing or who have been murdered.

- Governments (federal, provincial/territorial) work cooperatively with NWAC to conduct an environmental scan of Victims Services programs to identify what is available, what level of usage exists, gaps and the overall effectiveness of these services in meeting the needs of individuals.
- Governments (federal, provincial/territorial) collaborate with NWAC to conduct an environmental scan of child welfare systems regarding use of culturally relevant values, beliefs and practices related to child rearing and Eurocentric values ingrained in current child welfare policies and practices, including examining current definitions of neglect and related concepts, and to report this information to NWAC.
- Governments provide resources and funds to eliminate the current inequality in funding between First Nations and non-First Nations child welfare systems.
- Governments (federal, provincial/territorial) increase funds for support measures linked to child welfare, in-home child supports, poverty-related neglect and other issues to assist Aboriginal families to meet their needs in the least disruptive way possible to the family, ensuring equity between First Nation and non-First Nations systems.
- Governments collaborate with NWAC to conduct a needs assessment to identify the supports and services needed by Aboriginal children and youth who have experienced harms because they are street involved, have witnessed family violence/abuse or experienced sexual exploitation or trafficking.
- Governments draw upon the expertise of NWAC and other Aboriginal organizations to identify the number of Aboriginal individuals who have been negatively impacted or traumatized by the child welfare system, and conduct a needs assessment to identify issues and gaps in meeting these needs.
- Establish and fund processes and avenues for individuals to connect with court supports, court access and Community Justice protocols, including funding for Aboriginal court workers in all jurisdictions and adequate legal aid for Aboriginal individuals requiring this assistance.
- Governments and NWAC work together cooperatively to identify gaps and barriers to the protection of and full enjoyment of human rights by Aboriginal women by reviewing outcomes using a report card model, and evaluate the effectiveness of measures implemented to date to ameliorate these gaps and barriers.
- Governments work with NWAC to conduct a culturally relevant gender based analysis of funding formulas and report results to Aboriginal organizations.

National Aboriginal Women's Summit II – *Strong Women, Strong Communities: Summary Report*, June 2009

Report Details:

The second National Aboriginal Women's Summit (NAWS II) was held on Dene land in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories (NWT). Over 150 women from every jurisdiction in Canada attended NAWS II. The purpose of the Summit was to develop strategic actions to aid in the implementation of the twenty-nine priority recommendations that were the result of the first National Aboriginal Women's Summit in June 2007. The objectives of NAWS II included:

- To maintain the profile of the issues currently faced by Aboriginal women in Canada, building on the momentum generated by the first National Aboriginal Women's Summit (NAWS I).
- To build on and advance the overarching principles and recommendations of NAWS I, and on this basis, to develop strategic action items.
- To examine and focus on issues and recommendations from a northern, rural and remote perspective.
- To share among jurisdictions best practices for legislation, policy development and effective services and programs developed for and by Aboriginal women.

To meet the objectives of NAWS II, the focus of the second Summit echoed that of NAWS I: Strong Women, Strong Communities and developed plenary sessions and breakout discussions based on the three theme areas and the recommendations from the first Summit. The three themes were:

- Strength, Balance and Honour
- Health, Safety and Wellness, and,
- Equality and Empowerment.

Recommendations:

While no recommendations are offered in the report, it does provide a comprehensive update on initiatives that specific jurisdictions, the Government of Canada and National Aboriginal Organizations have made as a result of NAWS I.

Amnesty International – *No More Stolen Sisters: The Need for a Comprehensive Response to Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada*, September 2009

Report Details:

This update to the 2004 Stolen Sisters report highlights the continuing marginalization and inequality experienced by Indigenous women in five key areas:

- The role of racism and misogyny in perpetuating violence against Indigenous women;
- The sharp disparities in the fulfilment of Indigenous women's economic, social, political and cultural rights;
- The continued disruption of Indigenous societies caused by the historic and ongoing mass removal of children from Indigenous families and communities;
- The disproportionately high number of Indigenous women in Canadian prisons, many of whom are themselves the victims of violence and abuse; and,
- Inadequate police response to violence against Indigenous women as illustrated by the handling of missing persons cases.

Recommendations:

Recommendations to the Government of Canada:

1. As a matter of urgent priority, the federal government should work with Indigenous women and representative organizations and provincial and territorial officials to develop and implement a comprehensive, co-ordinated national plan of action in keeping with the scale and seriousness of the violence and discrimination experienced by Indigenous women. Such a plan of action should include:
 - The collection and routine publication of gender disaggregated data on health and social and economic conditions for Inuit, Métis and First Nations women and men, including rates of violence against Indigenous women;
 - The promotion of standardized protocols for police handling of missing persons cases including tools for fair and effective assessment of the risk to the missing individual;
 - Improved co-ordination of police investigations into long-term missing persons cases and unsolved murders involving Indigenous women and other women at risk.
 - Adequate, sustained long-term funding to ensure the provision of culturally relevant services to meet the needs of Indigenous women and girls at risk of violence or in contact with the police and justice system, including emergency shelters, court workers, victim services and specific programmes to assist women who have been trafficked within Canada;
2. Review all social programmes to ensure that funding for programmes for Indigenous women, children and families is equitable to those available to non-Indigenous people in Canada and is sufficient to ensure effective protection and full enjoyment of their rights. Particular priority should be given to eliminating discrimination in funding for Indigenous child welfare;

3. Restoration of funding to fulfill the commitment set out in the Kelowna Accord (First Ministers and National Aboriginal Leaders: Strengthening Relationships and Closing the Gap) to end inequalities in health, housing, education, and other services for Indigenous peoples;
4. Immediate implementation of recommendations of the Canadian Human Rights Commission and the UN Human Rights Committee concerning the treatment of women prisoners, including the creation of a new security risk assessment system;
5. Publicly commit to fully implement the standards contained in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to engage Indigenous Peoples in discussions about their implementation.

Recommendations to the Government of British Columbia:

At the earliest opportunity, the provincial government should establish a public inquiry into police handling of the cases of women who are reported to have gone missing from Downtown Eastside in Vancouver.

Native Women's Association of Canada – *What Their Stories tell Us: Research Findings from the Sisters in Spirit Initiative*, March 2010

Report Details:

What Their Stories Tell Us: Research findings from the Sisters In Spirit Initiative brings together five years of research related to missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada. The purpose of this report is to answer three fundamental questions: What are the circumstances, root causes and trends leading to violence against Aboriginal women in Canada? How many Aboriginal women and girls have gone missing or have been found murdered in Canada? And, why this violence has led to such disturbingly high numbers of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada without connection by police or justice authorities?

What Their Stories Tell Us presents demographic and statistical evidence from NWAC's Sisters In Spirit database, while situating the issue within the larger context of root causes and ways forward. It also draws on information gathered through the existing literature and highlights some of the stories and experiences shared by families of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.

Recommendations:

The report has no recommendations.

Vancouver Police Department – *Missing Women Investigation Review: Summary Report*, June 2010

Report Details:

This Summary Report is a condensed version of a much more comprehensive report ("the Review"). The Review provides a chronology of events and a critical analysis of the investigation into the then unexplained disappearances of numerous sex trade workers, the majority of whom were associated with the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver.

Recommendations:

The report offers the following recommendations:

To the Vancouver Police Department:

The Review makes eleven recommendations to the VPD, including:

- That the VPD ensure adequate major case management training is provided;
- That the Inspectors selected to be in charge of the Major Crime Section have the necessary experience;
- That the Executive be fully briefed on major cases;

- That the major case management model is followed for task force investigations;
- That the VPD ensure replacement officers in a major case investigation team are fully briefed on the investigation; and,
- That the current efforts by the VPD to forge improved relationships with the sex trade workers of the Downtown Eastside continue to be strongly supported by VPD management.

Regarding the City of Vancouver:

- The VPD should encourage the City of Vancouver to continue to support the resource needs of the VPD so that no major investigation is compromised by a lack of sufficient staff and expertise.

Regarding the Provincial Government and the B.C. Association of Chiefs of Police:

The VPD should encourage the Provincial Government and the B.C. Association of Chiefs of Police to:

- Create a protocol or framework for the rapid formation of multi-jurisdictional major case investigations, including mechanisms to seek assistance, and for extraordinary funding for such investigations;
- Conduct an examination of the benefits of a regional police force in the Lower Mainland;
- Develop provincial standards for the management of major cases in BC, and that support be provided for the RCMP's major case management accreditation process, which should include municipal police departments;
- Strike a Provincial committee of key stakeholders to study and make recommendations regarding a single uniform computerized case management system by police agencies throughout British Columbia for major cases; and,
- Continue to support the new provincial analysis unit to examine missing persons cases and to provide further attention to eliminating barriers to making missing persons reports.

Coordinating Committee of Senior Officials – Missing Women Working Group – Issues Related to the High Number of Murdered and Missing Women in Canada, September 2010

Report Details:

At their meeting in February 2006, FPT Deputy Ministers Responsible for Justice endorsed the establishment of a working group of the Coordinating Committee of Senior Officials (CCSO) to review issues related to the high number of murdered and missing women in Canada. Alberta and British Columbia were asked to co-chair this working group.

The CCSO Missing Women Working Group (MWWG) includes members from the justice and public safety departments of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Canada. The members of the MWWG include police and prosecutors who have had experience with cases involving predators, as well as members with expertise in criminal law policy analysis and social science research.

The MWWG considered strategies for determining the best way to intervene and prevent further predatory homicides of women. These strategies included: protection of persons who are at high risk of being victimized by these predators; early reporting and improved responses to cases of missing women who may become victims of violence; evidence based identification of those who may be considered suspects in an investigation; intervention with those who may become predators; management of prosecutions in high profile cases; and, improved databases, records-management policies, training, and information sharing.

During discussions in September 2008, FPT Ministers Responsible for Justice directed further work on the broader issue of “missing persons”, noted in particular the seriousness of the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women, and directed officials to report back on efforts to create a national information database of missing persons.

The research done for this report was primarily conducted between 2006 and October 2010, when FPT Ministers released the summary document. This report does contain some additional references to events that occurred after October 2010.

Recommendations:

The report makes the following recommendations:

1. The MWWG recommends that FPT Ministers Responsible for Justice encourage Ministers responsible for work place health and safety to ensure that all employers assess the risk factors that may make isolated employees vulnerable to serial predators within work environments and develop safety plans with employees in order to promote safety and reduce risk of harm.
2. The MWWG recommends that municipalities and First Nations, as appropriate, work with relevant community agencies and police to establish programs at key places where women rely heavily on hitchhiking, and incorporate strategies such as the shuttle bus transportation system recommended in the Highway of Tears Report.
3. The MWWG recommends that:
 - Jurisdictions work with justice system partners such as local police; community justice services; Aboriginal court workers; and victims' services to support Aboriginal communities and organizations to assess safety risks to Aboriginal women and to develop local plans to respond to those risks.
 - As a priority Aboriginal organizations or organizations that work with high-risk Aboriginal populations be funded to support individual or group safety planning awareness and engagement, taking into account, in particular, the specific barriers women face, and their lack of protections on or off reserve.
4. The MWWG recommends that the FPT Community Safety and Crime Prevention Working Group should be asked to examine the need to make the personal safety of women a priority, with particular consideration given to those factors shown to increase the risk of violence from predators.
5. The MWWG recommends that FPT Ministers Responsible for Justice consider undertaking or encouraging the continuation of research into the escalation of violence in criminal sexual predation as related to risk assessment processes.
6. The MWWG recommends that FPT Ministers Responsible for Justice, in cooperation with other partners, should continue to provide adequate levels of monitoring, social support and intervention to sex offenders to interrupt patterns of serial predation.
7. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions support research that monitors and evaluates the efficacy of measuring levels of psychopathy in offenders as a means of intervention.
8. The MWWG recommends that there be consideration by federal, provincial and territorial officials to better provide the tools needed to address preparatory conduct involved in facilitating sexual offences under the Criminal Code.
9. The MWWG recommends that FPT Ministers Responsible for Justice direct officials to engage in discussions with health professionals and other affected professional bodies to ensure that the existing protocols and legislation in each jurisdiction are adequate to address the public safety exemptions or whether legislative changes are required.
10. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions support the use of risk assessment and monitoring of serious offenders, and support the work of Corrections authorities to continue improving these approaches.
11. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions encourage law enforcement training authorities to include in police training information about the multiple factors that are characteristic of individuals who commit serial sexual offences.
12. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions provide support to justice institutions, including correctional facilities and forensic psychiatric institutions, to develop and implement research-based therapeutic interventions that have the potential to interrupt paraphilic fantasies and the escalation of violence in sexual offenders.
13. That:
 - The MWWG recommends that Ministers ask the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police to consider a national strategy to ensure consistency in reporting mechanisms for reporting missing persons. This could be developed in conjunction with implementation of a National Data Base.

- The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions work with law enforcement/police agencies to ensure that the public is made aware of reporting practices for missing persons in their jurisdiction; to evaluate the adequacy of current educational mechanisms; and consider how to make information more accessible through websites. This could include a national public education campaign about missing persons, issues and police policies and procedures in order to change misconceptions.
14. In order to increase the likelihood that disappearance of marginalized women will be reported in a timely fashion, the MWWG recommends that jurisdictions encourage police to develop specialized positions or specific units within police agencies so that:
 - Knowledgeable personnel are given clear responsibility for contact with families and the public in missing person reports; and,
 - Identified police personnel can link with vulnerable communities to increase awareness about reporting missing persons, specifically to:
 - i) Let people know that the reporting of a missing person is not limited to immediate family members, and;
 - ii) Reassure individuals who may be associated with criminal lifestyles that they can access police services and report a disappearance without fear of arrest.
 15. The MWWG supports the Saskatchewan Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons. Report in urging that police continually communicate with families of missing persons in order to provide ongoing updates to them on the status of the case.
 16. The MWWG supports the recommendation made in the Saskatchewan Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons. Report that tools be created for use as an information resource for families of the missing and/or murdered, such as a simple checklist for families to follow that outlines steps they could take during investigation and prosecution of the case.
 17. Building on recommendations in the Saskatchewan Report, the MWWG recommends that jurisdictions give consideration to an expansion of the Victims Services mandate to include provision of support to families of missing persons, and that protocols be developed between police and victim services for engagement and support of the families once that need has been identified.
 18. The MWWG encourages FPT Ministers Responsible for Justice to ensure that police in their respective jurisdictions create appropriate standards for missing person cases, including that:
 - A report is taken immediately when information comes to the attention of police, regardless of the length of time the person has been missing or the location where the person went missing.
 - A standardized, specialized in-take form for recording a missing person report and a specialized investigative checklist is used.
 19. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions support and encourage police to develop, as recommended in the Saskatchewan Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons report:
 - A common assessment tool to help assess the priority of the investigation.
 - A practice of entering cases on CPIC as soon as possible after it is established that the person is missing.
 20. The MWWG recommends that FPT governments consider the need for legislation that would allow police access to personal information of persons reported missing.
 21. The MWWG recommends that FPT governments support training and education for personnel responsible for records in departments of health, social assistance, and other government agencies to be aware of the need for timely police access to records in cases of missing persons and to encourage development of protocols for the sharing of that information relative to permissible legislative exceptions such as “law enforcement purposes.”
 22. The MWWG recommends that FPT Ministers Responsible for Justice support, as a priority, the work of the Multi-Provincial Strategy on Missing Persons & Unidentified Remains to establish a national missing person database containing both police missing person information and information on unidentified human remains. This database should be accessible to and searchable by both police and coroners or medical examiners, with designated sections accessible to the public by website.
 23. In order to target police resources effectively, the MWWG recommends that jurisdictions support, where appropriate, police consideration of:
 - Developing approaches to target high risk youth;

- Establishing collaborative approaches with relevant non-police agencies to assess the level of police intervention required in particular missing person cases, such as chronic run-away children;
 - Setting policies and procedures consistent with the involvement of and advice from the relevant non-police agencies;
 - Evaluating approaches currently in use in order to determine the gains, if any, in efficiencies and effectiveness in responding to missing persons reports, and;
 - Sharing the results of evaluations on collaborative operational polices with other interested police agencies.
24. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions support the recommendations of the Saskatchewan Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons. Report that the police develop media and public communications protocols to implement best practices to disseminate information about missing persons and to request the public's help in locating a missing person.
25. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions support the following Saskatchewan Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons recommendation:
- All police forces should assign a police officer responsible for the coordination of missing persons' files and establish a backup process to avoid gaps in effectively responding to missing person reports, in conjunction with recommendation 14 that calls for the identification of a specific unit within police services.
26. The MWWG recommends that FPT Ministers Responsible for Justice support further exploration of the recommendation by the Saskatchewan Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons that a more systematic and comprehensive approach be taken to data collection on missing persons in Canada and that the Ministers ask the CACP to consider the following approaches with respect to data entry/collection:
- Use of a common intake and investigation forms;
 - Increased reporting of missing persons cases onto CPIC; and,
 - Aggregate reporting from police reports at the local, provincial/territorial or national level subject to resources.
27. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions:
- Review the police response to missing Aboriginal person cases to understand barriers (cultural and systemic) to reporting and investigation and determine how police responses could be improved.
 - Encourage police to consider the need to develop standardized police intake forms and appropriate assessment criteria based on the risk profile of Aboriginal women and other marginalized women to ensure an appropriate and consistent police response.
28. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions encourage police forces to work with Aboriginal organizations to develop and disseminate tools and information about the reporting process for missing women that reflects different literacy levels and is available in a range of languages/formats.
29. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions encourage police training on missing person investigations to incorporate specific information respecting Aboriginal people and particularly Aboriginal women, in order to enhance cultural sensitivity and mitigate any potential distrust on behalf of the families caused by past relationships.
30. The MWWG recommends that cases matching the profile of women particularly vulnerable to serial predators be flagged as priority cases when a missing person report is received.
31. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions encourage police, as recommended in the Saskatchewan Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons. Report, to develop standardized training and practice guides for recording and managing investigations in missing person cases.
32. The MWWG recommends that a move toward compatible MCM software be considered by police agencies across Canada in order to coordinate between police agencies in major investigations.
33. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions encourage police forces, as they develop improvements to MCM, to also explore strategies that would promote sharing these best practices with other police forces in a timely manner.
34. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions conduct a feasibility study on the development of a voluntary database containing information on individuals considered to be at high risk of going missing, including developing criteria for such a database; and that the federal government lead the feasibility study, including a review of any legislative authority required for the collection and use of this information.

35. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions support further consideration of the feasibility and utility of a Missing Persons Index, including potential resolutions to privacy concerns relating to the possible cross-matching feature of the sub-indices, and also subject to the ongoing review of the DNA Data Bank scheme.
36. The MWWG recommends that Ministers recommend to CACP that they support local and national police agencies in developing a strategy to raise awareness and use of all available databases by considering the development of a national police electronic resource, such as a web page, containing current information on available databases as well as resources such as those contained by National Flagging Coordinators on specific offenders for use in investigations of serial homicides, and a description of each with contacts for additional information.
37. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions encourage,
 - Where appropriate, police forces to review the resources and policies relevant to ViCLAS in order to increase and maintain the coverage of serious crimes within this system, and to ensure that trained specialists are available to provide analysis to investigators;
 - Police investigators, who receive a “potential linkage” report from ViCLAS, to follow up with additional investigation on a timely basis;
 - Police investigators and forensic lab personnel, when they receive notification that a DNA linkage has been made on an outstanding case, to advise ViCLAS so that the ViCLAS personnel can update their database.
38. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions encourage police agencies across Canada to:
 - Consider strategies to promote the empirical testing of specialized tools for narrowing the field of suspects in cases involving serial predators.
 - Consider mechanisms for sharing current research information and promising practices relevant to these specialized tools, including profiling and instruments to assist in the assessment of potential suspects in serial murder cases.
39. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions consider the provision of targeted funding to police agencies to ensure that there are adequate resources for dealing with cold case files.
40. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions encourage police forces to examine policies on releasing information on „cold cases. to media and „co-victims., with a view to determining the best strategies for determining how and when to provide this information in order to advance investigations and to provide assurance to families and friends that appropriate attention is being given to the case.
41. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions review their record retention policies for police, prosecutions and courts with a view to assessing the extent to which access to historical records would assist in solving cases, such as the identification leading to new DNA samples being collected for those historical cases and thus linking them to DNA crime scenes on other unsolved cases.
42. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions give consideration to the incorporation of early Crown involvement on suspicious missing persons’ files where foul play is suspected.
43. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions consider testing and evaluating community mobilization processes, such as adaptations of the Community Solutions to Gang Violence initiative in urban communities with a high population of vulnerable women.
44. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions encourage and support, as appropriate, police services to consider using an Aboriginal liaison officer to work with Aboriginal families, wherever possible, and police and Aboriginal organizations/agencies to develop and implement protocols for working together and with Aboriginal families and communities.
45. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions encourage police investigators involved in cases of missing or murdered women to design and implement effective media plans in order to ensure proactive and strategic use of media sources for educating and soliciting information from the public concerning details of the investigation.
46. The MWWG recommends that media best practices should be developed in consultation with police and media and made public.
47. The MWWG recommends that Heads of Prosecution and the FPT Working Group on Victims participate in the development of and distribution of best practices for police, prosecutors and Victims Services respectively to use when dealing with victims’ families, witnesses and the media in missing and murdered person cases.

48. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions consider the recommendation made in the 2005 FBI symposium on serial murder that investigators should consult with behavioral experts on the development of a proactive media strategy in order to circumvent issues related to interactions between the offender and the media.
49. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions ensure that media involvement in any large and complex trial should be managed within a framework supported by the Judiciary.
50. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions consider the recommendation of the Panel on Justice and the Media that consideration be given to formally implementing the guidelines established in the "Protocol Regarding Public Statements in Criminal Proceedings" document.
51. The MWWG recommends that Heads of Prosecution and FPT Working Group on Victims examine the issue of victim and witness support best practices in this context. The best practices identified in the Pickton and Svekla prosecutions may provide a valuable starting point for this examination.
52. The MWWG recommends that jurisdictions support justice agencies in developing plans for supporting those who have close contact with offensive material in cases involving missing and murdered women given the disturbing nature of these files.

British Columbia Ministry of Citizens Services – *Stopping Violence Against Aboriginal Women: A Summary of Root Causes, Vulnerabilities and Recommendations from Key Literature*, February 2011

Report Details:

This paper supports the work of the British Columbia Government in preparing for the National Aboriginal Women's Conference on violence against Aboriginal women and girls that was held in Vancouver in June 2011.

Based on an analysis of key symposium, conference and research reports on the issue of violence against Aboriginal women and girls, it provides an overview of the root causes of and vulnerabilities associated with such violence, and a synthesis of recommendations for addressing the issue.

Recommendations:

The many policy and program recommendations put forward in the literature fall into a number of categories:

- Those that focus on the root causes and vulnerabilities;
- Those that speak to the fundamental characteristics of effective programming and strategies; and,
- Those that focus respectively on promising practices for violence prevention, intervention and post-incident support.

The recommendations make a loud and unanimous call for increased and sustained funding for all initiatives to address Aboriginal socio-economic disadvantage as well as to address the specific issue of violence against Aboriginal women and girls. In addition, the recommendations make a clear call for all levels of government to take an integrated approach to the socio-economic challenges facing Aboriginal people, and to work in close collaboration with Aboriginal leadership, communities and women's organizations.

Other key imperatives in the recommendations for addressing violence against Aboriginal women and girls effectively may be broadly captured as follows:

- Governments and Aboriginal leadership must acknowledge the extent and seriousness of the problem, and be held accountable for addressing it;
- More and higher-quality research should be conducted to inform a better understanding of the problem and how most effectively to address it;
- Governments must support Aboriginal approaches to individual and community healing;
- Cultural revitalization strategies that allow women and men to reconnect with traditional roles and with healthy ways of relating must be supported;

- There should be an expansion of culturally-appropriate, community-based services across the prevention, intervention and post-incident continuum;
- Governments must make prevention of violence a priority;
- All non-Aboriginal personnel who work with Aboriginal clients must receive adequate cultural-sensitivity training and education;
- Standards and protocols for how police and other relevant services respond to cases of family violence or of missing and murdered women must be developed; and,
- Culturally-appropriate alternatives to the mainstream justice system must be explored and developed.

British Columbia Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation – *Stopping Violence Against Aboriginal Women: A Discussion Paper to Support Community Focus Groups*, March 2011

Report Details:

This paper supports the work of the British Columbia Government in preparing for the National Aboriginal Women's Conference on violence against Aboriginal women and girls that was held in Vancouver in June 2011.

Recommendations:

Root causes and vulnerabilities - To deal with the causes of violence against Aboriginal women and girls, and to deal with the factors that make Aboriginal women and girls more likely to experience violence.

Governments should:

- Work closely with each other and with Aboriginal communities and leaders;
- Provide long-term funding and increase the amount of funding for programs and services;
- Support healing for Aboriginal individuals, families and communities;
- Support the renewal of Aboriginal languages and cultures;
- Help to strengthen Aboriginal communities and their ability to provide local services and supports;
- Help Aboriginal people to succeed in school, college and university;
- Make sure that all policies and programs meet the cultural and spiritual needs of the Aboriginal peoples they are designed to serve;
- Make sure that non-Aboriginal staff who provide services to Aboriginal people have the right training to understand the needs and situations of Aboriginal women and men; and
- Work to stop racism against Aboriginal people and to improve non-Aboriginal Canadians' understanding of Aboriginal peoples' cultures and histories.

The Federal Government should:

- Make sure that all the recommendations of the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples are acted upon;
- Make changes to laws that deny equal rights to Aboriginal women; and,
- Take action to deal with the unemployment and poverty faced by Aboriginal women and men.

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal leadership/governments should:

- Welcome Aboriginal women to all decision-making tables; and,
- Support Aboriginal women to give input into how health and social services are developed and delivered.

Communities can:

- Build partnerships with one another to join strengths and resources.

Dealing with violence against Aboriginal women generally - To make sure that all policies, programs and supports:

- Actually reduce violence against Aboriginal women and girls; and,
- Do the best possible job of helping Aboriginal victims of violence to heal and to rebuild their lives.

Governments should:

- Work closely with Aboriginal leadership and communities to develop a national plan of action to deal with violence against Aboriginal women;
- Work closely with Aboriginal leadership and communities to make sure that all Aboriginal women can get the help they need, where and when they need it;
- Provide long-term funding and increase the amount of funding for programs and services that deal with violence against Aboriginal women;
- Support the ability of Aboriginal peoples and communities to design and deliver their own programs and services to deal with violence;
- Make sure that programs and services are based in Aboriginal ways of knowing and healing; and,
- Fund new research, including better gathering of information and statistics, that will add to our understanding of the issue of violence against Aboriginal women and how best to deal with it.

The British Columbia Government should:

- Make sure that the amount of funding for Aboriginal women's programs is fair and just;
- Make sure that the amount of funding for services in rural and remote communities is fair and just;
- Fund a new provincial Aboriginal Women's Council whose role is to support improvements in women's health and safety; and
- Study the research on violence against Aboriginal women and use this knowledge to create programs and services that really work.

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal leadership/governments should:

- Make a public statement that they understand how serious the issue of violence against Aboriginal women is, that they condemn such violence, and that they will take action to end it; and,
- Make sure that women can easily find information about the programs and services that are available to them.

Communities can:

- Try new and different ways of spreading the word about the programs and services that women can find in their communities.

Violence prevention

Governments should:

- Make prevention programs an urgent priority;
- Work closely with Aboriginal leadership and communities to develop education programs that teach Aboriginal women, children and men about healthy relationships and traditional roles and values;
- Support programs that help to end racism against Aboriginal men and women by non-Aboriginal Canadians;
- Support the creation of Aboriginal women's meetings where women can speak openly about their experiences of violence;
- Provide police forces with the training they need to make prevention of violence against Aboriginal women a real priority; and,
- Improve the quality and number of services to help Aboriginal women with an addiction problem to recover and rebuild their lives.

The British Columbia Government should:

- Increase the number of violence education programs; and,
- Support Aboriginal women to give training within their communities that helps to build women's strength, wellbeing and independence.

Aboriginal leadership and communities should:

- Put in place a zero-tolerance policy towards violence against women and girls.

Highway of Tears

Governments should:

- Put more effort and money into prevention education to make sure women and girls are aware of the risks;
- Increase RCMP patrols along the length of the Highway;
- Fund affordable public transit along the length of the Highway;
- Place emergency phone booths at key points along the Highway; and,
- Create "safe homes" at key points along the Highway.

Violence intervention

Governments should:

- Increase the number of intervention programs and services, including:
 - Healing lodges;
 - Safe houses;
 - Transition houses; and,
 - Telephone help-lines.
- Support the creation of local services that are delivered by Aboriginal women and that meet cultural needs of Aboriginal women;
- Make sure that police and other professionals have the training they need to understand the cultures and situations of the Aboriginal women they work with;
- Make sure that non-Aboriginal staff working in small communities understand the difficult issues around privacy;
- Provide the funding needed so that Aboriginal women can get help from nearby emergency services at any time of day or night and on any day of the week;
- Support the creation of family violence community response systems; and,
- Together with Aboriginal leadership and communities, develop standards for how police and social services should:
 - Work with Aboriginal families where violence is happening; and,
 - Respond to cases of missing and murdered women.

The Federal Government should:

- Develop and fund an Aboriginal Housing Strategy that provides for safe, affordable housing for women escaping violence. and,

Communities can:

- Work with social services to help make sure a woman's privacy is protected when she reports an act of violence; and,
- Work with Aboriginal leadership and non-Aboriginal governments to create a family violence community response system.

Highway of Tears

Governments, Aboriginal leadership and communities should:

- Work together to create a community Emergency Readiness Plan that will help to make sure cases of missing persons are responded to quickly and effectively.

Post-incident response

Governments should:

- Work with Aboriginal communities to provide a range of healing and reconciliation programs and supports for victims, their families, and the wider community;
- Work with Aboriginal communities to provide a range of healing and reconciliation programs and supports to men who commit violence and to their families;
- Increase the number of long-term counselling and relapse prevention services for abusive men; and,
- Work with the police and courts to put in place Aboriginal approaches to justice for men found guilty of abuse and violence.

Governments, Aboriginal leadership and communities should:

- Work together to develop crisis response plans and teams so that missing women cases are dealt with quickly and effectively;
- Work together to make sure that support services for families of missing or murdered women are delivered by Aboriginal agencies and staff; and,
- Take action to improve the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the RCMP.

Highway of Tears

The British Columbia Government should:

- Create a Highway of Tears Legacy Fund and work with Aboriginal leadership and communities to put in place a Board of Directors to manage the fund and to organize efforts to prevent more cases of missing and murdered women along the Highway 16.

Standing Committee on the Status of Women – Hon. Hedy Fry, M.P., Chair – *Wiping Away the Tears: A Gathering for Families of Missing and Murdered Women*, March 2011

Report Details:

A gathering for families of missing and murdered women took place on June 2, 3, and 4, 2010 in Manitoba. The gathering was coordinated in order to provide a forum for family members to share their experiences with government representatives as well as other families and to bring forward recommendations to better address this issue. In addition to sharing the tragedy of their loss families wished to raise awareness with respect to their experiences while interacting with government and its systems such as justice and child welfare and the gaps that exist in these systems.

Recommendations:

The families that participated in this gathering contributed openly, articulately and provided expertise in identifying problems and additional atrocities families experience when a loved one goes missing or is murdered and provided the following recommendations:

Counselling:

- A specific person or counsellor should be assigned to address the counselling needs of families of missing and murdered women.
- Counsellors who specialize in this area are obtained.
- Sharing Circles or Support Groups be established for families affected by this issue.
- Establish accessibility to Aboriginal traditional supports such as elders who can assist families.
- A person or persons be directed to carry out check-in phone calls to the families on a regular basis.

Media:

- The stigma attached to missing and murdered loved ones by media be addressed because the negative images and stereotyping created through media will only continue to perpetuate the devaluation of Aboriginal women and girls.

Education:

- An awareness campaign be launched by government to bring more awareness to the issue of missing and murdered women.
- Higher levels education be made available at the community level (high schools in communities).
- Other family members are approached to choose other missing and murdered women to be honoured at the annual Manito Ahbee Celebration.
- Awareness packages be created to help families deal with media and what to do when you suspect your loved one has gone missing.

Justice/Police:

- The Integrated Task Force be made up of Aboriginal officers, both male and female.
- Police provide ongoing and consistent communications such as case updates or follow-up procedures.
- Specific police contacts are implemented and made known to the families.
- The police receive sensitivity training, discrimination awareness, education training and communication skills training regarding the issue of working with families of missing and murdered women.
- A fund is created to help families with the expenses associated with searching for a loved one and with help in accessing counselling, perhaps in the form of a foundation.

Jurisdiction:

- A dialogue begin and partnerships be established among the parties identified such as Winnipeg Police Services and RCMP, provincial and federal governments, and communities regarding the jurisdictional concerns raised by the families.

Communication:

- A phone tree be created so that families can stay connected, share information and have the ability to support one another.

Standing Committee on the Status of Women – Hon. Hedy Fry, M.P., Chair – Interim Report - Call Into the Night: An Overview of Violence Against Aboriginal Women, March 2011

Report Details:

In March 2010, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women passed a motion to undertake a study on violence against Aboriginal women. The Committee heard from many witnesses, including representatives of Aboriginal organizations, academics, service providers, and Aboriginal women themselves, with the goal of:

- Gaining a better understanding of the extent and nature of the violence;
- Examining the root causes of the violence; and,
- Recommending solutions in consultation and with the full cooperation of Aboriginal women.

Between April 2010 and February 2011, the Committee heard from over 150 witnesses from across Canada. The study began with three meetings in Ottawa with national Aboriginal organizations, government departments and other stakeholders. During the first months of this study, the Committee conducted fact-finding visits to Aboriginal and urban communities in eastern and central Canada; this included Iqaluit (Nunavut), Labrador City (Newfoundland and Labrador), Fredericton (New Brunswick), Montreal, Québec City, and Maniwaki (all in Québec). In January 2011, the Committee continued its fact-finding visits in the west by travelling to Sioux Lookout and Thunder Bay (Ontario), Winnipeg (Manitoba), Prince Albert (Saskatchewan), Edmonton (Alberta), Vancouver and Williams Lake (British Columbia), and Yellowknife (Northwest Territories). During fact finding visits, the Committee made a number of site visits to local organizations and service providers, such as women's shelters and friendship centres.

Recommendations:

Witnesses across the country emphasized two key approaches to moving forward to decrease the levels of violence which Aboriginal women face:

- A coordinated, holistic approach to violence against women; and,
- The definition of priorities and solutions tailored to their particular circumstances by communities.

Policy, Planning and Evaluation Branch Ministry of Justice and Attorney General as a Member of the Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons – Report on the 2011 Western Regional Forum on Supporting Families of Missing Persons, May 2011

Report Details:

The Western Regional Forum on Supporting Families of Missing Persons was held at in Regina, Saskatchewan on March 2 – 3, 2011. This Forum was attended by approximately 60 individuals who were invited as representatives of a range of agencies across western Canada [Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon and Northwest Territories] and included federal participation from Justice Canada and Public Safety Canada. Participants who attended the Forum included: victims services workers, law enforcement officers, Crown Counsel, other criminal justice employees, community-based organization workers, First Nations, Métis and Aboriginal organizations and government representatives.

The report provides general information about missing persons issues in Canada as well as more specific information regarding issues in western regions. This information is followed by a synopsis of the Western Regional Forum on Supporting Families of Missing Persons, including resulting outcomes and recommendations.

The Western Regional Forum on Supporting Families of Missing Persons was a very interactive process. Forum attendees were walked through stages of development and creation in order to build strategies and solutions to help better address the needs and issues that families of missing persons face.

Recommendations:

The groups were challenged to form their ideas into actual concrete steps – both large and small – in order to begin the journey of their vision becoming a reality. The following list is what forum participants agreed are the next steps that they need to take in order to reach the vision they see in the future.

1. Produce a report – In order to create awareness and notify families, communities, public and other agencies about what has occurred at this Western Regional Forum, PPCMP is tasked with the responsibility of producing a report about this Forum. This report will be circulated to all participants in draft form for review, and finalized and released to the public.
2. Report to families – Forum participants discussed the importance of having input and feedback from families and ensuring that they are involved in important processes. PPCMP may provide a report and seek feedback and information from families of missing persons on the WRF.
3. Make a commitment – In order for any progress to be made it is important to have all agencies committed as well as to clearly identify who can do what, who is willing to do what and name various subgroups that are willing to provide assistance and help create strategies.
4. Build relationships – All Forum participants are responsible to build and maintain cross-jurisdictional relationships in order to work toward our goals and provide the best services possible to missing persons and their families.
5. Identify champions – Every province and territory is tasked with identifying a person who will champion the issue of missing persons.
6. Identify a key point or person – Participating jurisdictions will identify one person who is linked to many services and professionals that knows how to help families of missing persons.
7. Pursue partnerships and support – Forum members will continue to contact other organizations and groups in order to build positive partnerships that will help raise awareness.

8. Seek national attention – It will be important to get the report on the schedule of Federal, Provincial and Territorial Deputy Ministers Responsible for Justice. There is an International Symposium on Victim Issues being organized by Public Safety Canada for November 2011, where we may be able to present our results in a national setting. A panel presentation may occur at this conference, in order to link more partners and gain more support.
9. Raise awareness – All participants are responsible for presenting the key findings of this Forum back to their organizations and jurisdictions. There needs to be an ongoing effort in creating and maintaining awareness of this issue.
10. Provide feedback for NPSCMP's public website – Sergeant Prosper has indicated that she would be appreciative of feedback from various sources for her project. Participants are encouraged to provide feedback within one year so that a national website can be developed.
11. Develop a business proposal – A formal proposal needs to be brought forth in order to find an official coordinator to develop a business plan and support continued collaboration amongst WRF participants. PPCMP will take responsibility for this step.
12. Develop a business plan – The creation of a formal plan needs to be brought forth. Ideally this would be a joint partnership both on regional and national levels.
13. Build a clearinghouse of information – A depository of information about missing persons consisting of items such as inventory kits, tools, checklists, pamphlets and other useful sources will be created. Some participants indicated that they may be able to employ a group of students to complete this task.
14. Develop and implement a communication strategy – A strategy will be developed so that members of the Forum can communicate with one another to provide feedback.
15. Increase public support – Commitment and support is necessary in making sure that this issue remains a priority.
16. Establish a national database – NPSCMP is already working toward this goal, so it is important for participants to provide any support and help they can to Sergeant Prosper as her and her group work toward achieving this.

Collaboration to End Violence: National Aboriginal Women's Forum – National Aboriginal Women's Forums Report on Outcomes and Recommendations from Working Sessions, July 2011

Report Details:

Between June 15 and June 17, 2011, the Province of British Columbia's Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation (BC MARR) and the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) co-hosted the Collaboration to End Violence: National Aboriginal Women's Forum.

More than 250 people from all provinces and territories in Canada attended the forum, with participants including representatives of provincial and territorial government departments and agencies, national Aboriginal organizations, and First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities and community-based organizations. The agenda included three working sessions in which participants developed recommendations for actions to address violence against Aboriginal women and girls. The first session focused on post-incident support, the second on intervention and the third on prevention. This report summarizes outcomes of the working sessions.

Recommendations:

The outcomes of the Forum reinforced the need for a holistic and community-driven network of responses, with strengthened relationships and improved accountability. Participants in the Forum working sessions identified leading practices and lessons learned and generated key recommendations relating to the following themes:

1. The Need for All Responses to be Community Engaged and Community Led
2. Holistic Continuum of Programs and Services
3. A Continuum of Programs & Services to Empower Children and Youth

4. A Continuum of Programs and Services to Empower Women
5. A Continuum of Programs and Services to Empower Men
6. Equitable Access to Programs and Services
7. Improved Integrated Networks of Resources and Services
8. A National Strategy
9. Relationship-Building, Partnership and Accountability
10. Engaged and Accountable Leadership
11. Funding
12. Data, Assessment and Evaluation
13. Public Education and Awareness

Key recommendations under these themes are summarized below.

1. The Need for All Responses to be Community Engaged and Community Led

- Aboriginal leaders and community members need to take ownership of the response to violence against Aboriginal women and initiate activities in their own communities to prevent and address violence.
- Aboriginal community members need to reinstitute community governance by establishing formal structures that support their ability to work together to address violence against Aboriginal women and other community issues.
- Ongoing consultation and communication must be established between government and Aboriginal women on policies, decisions, planning, projects or activities that affect or involve them.

2. Holistic Continuum of Programs and Services

- A continuum of programs and services that assist women and girls who are at risk of or have experienced violence and their children, families and communities and that can be accessed throughout an individual's full life cycle should be available in every community.
- Programs and services that draw on or are based on culture and tradition should be available in all Aboriginal communities.
- Wherever reasonably possible, programs and services should be delivered in the home communities of people using those programs and services.

3. A Continuum of Programs & Services to Empower Children and Youth

- Public health funds should be directed towards young vulnerable mothers with very young children and other people identified as being at particularly high risk.
- Activities for children designed to prevent violence and promote healthy relationships should be incorporated into elementary school activities and begin in the primary grades.
- Children and youth should have access to activities that will help strengthen their traditional and cultural knowledge and identity, and help them understand and negotiate the impacts of history on their present day lives.

4. A Continuum of Programs and Services to Empower Women

- Increase women's access to services that are designed and delivered by Aboriginal women, including in-community victims' services, advocacy services and activities that build capacity for Aboriginal women.

5. A Continuum of Programs and Services to Empower Men

- Government and Aboriginal leaders should explore ways to expand upon or adapt the model used by the Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin: "I Am A Kind Man" Initiative for national implementation.

6. Equitable Access to Programs and Services

- All provinces and territories should dedicate funding to provide emergency support to victims of domestic violence.
- Government departments need to address jurisdictional issues that may present barriers to access.

7. Improved Integrated Networks of Resources and Services

- Establish single points of access where women can connect to integrated services.
- Crisis response teams should be in place in all First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities, with adequate funding to train community members and sustain activities.
- Working in partnership with Aboriginal communities and leadership, establish a virtual centre, clearinghouse or similar online resource where information and resources on violence against Aboriginal women can be aggregated and made publicly available.

8. A National Strategy

- Federal, provincial and territorial governments and national and regional Aboriginal leadership need to develop and implement a multi-year national strategy to facilitate collaboration and partnerships with Aboriginal organizations to develop and implement community-based solutions to address violence against Aboriginal women.
- Establish a National Centre of Excellence focused on violence against First Nation, Métis and Inuit Women.

9. Relationship-Building, Partnership and Accountability

- Departments and agencies in all levels of government should explore opportunities for interdepartmental and intergovernmental partnerships, as well as partnerships with Aboriginal government, leadership and communities.
- Police services, Aboriginal leaders and grassroots community organizations should explore ways to establish mutually empowered and accountable working relationships.
- Cultural competency and sensitivity training (including components focused on Aboriginal history and historical trauma) and anti-racism and anti-oppression training should be instituted for employees in all positions and at all levels of police and criminal justice systems.

10. Engaged and Accountable Leadership

- Federal government departments or agencies should set family violence as a priority and allocate appropriate funding to support community-led activities in this area. The federal government should also share and strategically coordinate funding between and across departments and agencies and, if appropriate, with other levels of government.
- Provincial government departments or agencies should set family violence as a priority and allocate appropriate funding to support community-led activities in this area. It should share and strategically coordinate funding between and across departments and agencies and, if appropriate, with other levels of government; lobby and advocate at federal, provincial and territorial levels and establish violence prevention as an area for statutory activity.
- Municipal governments should provide in-kind support and share resources (e.g., public space for camps) and funding to support community-led activities.

11. Funding

- Federal, provincial and territorial governments should ensure that funding is coordinated, timely and capable of meeting community needs.

12. Data, Assessment and Evaluation

- Explore ways to measure meaningful outcomes or assess the effectiveness of activities related to violence against Aboriginal women.

13. Public Education and Awareness

- Develop and implement a national campaign that focuses on a message of zero tolerance for domestic violence.

- As individuals and organizations, take action to educate the media about violence against Aboriginal women and girls, encourage media to report responsibly and respectfully about Aboriginal peoples, cultures and history, and acknowledge and honour them when they do.
- Use social media and other web platforms for a campaign focused on women and youth, to educate and share information and resources, address root causes and prevention of abuse, and draw on traditions and a holistic approach to violence.

Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Justice – Report to Premiers: Consideration of the Root Causes of Violence Against Aboriginal Women and Girls, December 2011

Report Details:

Following the July 20, 2011 meeting of Premiers and Leaders of the National Aboriginal Organizations, Premiers directed justice ministers in all provincial and territorial jurisdictions to “consider the root causes of violence against Aboriginal women and girls and report back by December 2011”. In response to the Premiers’ direction, senior justice officials reviewed reports from recent symposiums, forums, and research on violence against Aboriginal women and girls. This report provides an overview of the findings from those sources, including the nature and scope of violence against Aboriginal women and girls; the factors that drive violence; the continuum of justice system responses; the role of the justice system and other sectors in preventing and responding to violence; and examples of work underway, or planned to address this issue.

Recommendations:

No recommendations are made in this report.

Pitawik – Hear Me - Manitoba Aboriginal Women’s Gatherings – Comprehensive Final Report, January 2012

Report Details:

This report documents the voices of the nearly 350 Aboriginal women who attended a series of four gatherings held throughout Manitoba in Opaskwayak Cree Nation, March 2009; Thompson, November 2009; Brandon, May 2010; and Winnipeg, September 2010.

The information contained within this report is drawn from each respective gathering report. The purpose of the Pitawik gatherings was to provide women with a forum to voice their successes, challenges and solutions as key components of the Government of Manitoba’s Pitawik (Hear Me) Strategy. The strategy was developed in response to the National Aboriginal Women’s Summits (NAWS) I and II that took place in 2007 and 2008. The Pitawik gatherings focused on the NAWS themes of Health, Safety and Wellness; Equality and Empowerment; and Strength, Honour and Balance.

Recommendations:

Five key challenges facing Aboriginal women throughout the province were identified under at least one theme at all four gatherings, and relate to the areas of:

- Access to, and disparities in, services and programs;
- Economic development, including access to education and training;
- Empowering people (especially women and youth) in the community;
- Recognition, support and access to traditional healing; and,
- Housing

The solutions put forward at the gatherings can be broken into the six common themes of:

1. Women in leadership;
2. Traditional knowledge;
3. Youth;

4. Housing;
5. Communication; and,
6. Holistic healing/wellness.

Additional regionally specific solutions were identified at each gathering that were not thematically similar to others, and thus are identified as “unique” within the report. Recommendations, solutions and challenges are presented in detail within the report, under the following general areas:

- There is a need, stated at each gathering, for women to have some formal, organized bodies that provided a regular forum for them to come together to meet, discuss, share their concerns and build leadership capacity. This is to happen at the community level, allowing for women to gain support and share their stories, but also at the local, provincial, national and international levels, inserting Aboriginal women’s voices into the larger political agenda and securing increased Aboriginal women’s leadership.
- As the keepers of the culture, women are interested in the revitalization of culture and language, paying particular attention to the inclusion of youth and Elders.
- Youth in our communities are struggling with drugs and alcohol, lack of boundaries, intergenerational residential school trauma, and lack of recreation, services and opportunities. A variety of measures are called upon to address these concerns.
- All communities – urban, rural, and northern – have serious and urgent housing needs.
- Access to clean water and affordable healthy food are of primary importance for all communities and particularly for northern communities.
- Considerable efforts must be made to end ongoing cycles of family violence.
- Parents need increased and enhanced supports that are culturally relevant.
- Women need more opportunities and supports for education, training and economic development to support a variety of options that include everything from entrepreneurship, to professional education, to training in non-traditional occupations.
- Our health care system must pay attention to a continuum of health needs, addressing a number of specific issues, such as but not limited to: accessibility, holistic healing, local Personal Care Homes for the elderly, grief counseling, drug and alcohol treatment, Diabetes prevention, disability services, and suicide prevention.

Coordinating Committee of Senior Officials (Criminal) - Missing Women Working Group – Report and Recommendations on Issues Related to the High Number of Murdered and Missing Women in Canada, January 2012

Report Details:

At their meeting in February 2006, FPT Deputy Ministers Responsible for Justice endorsed the establishment of a working group of the Coordinating Committee of Senior Officials (CCSO) to review issues related to the high number of murdered and missing women in Canada. Alberta and British Columbia were asked to co-chair this working group. The CCSO Missing Women Working Group (MWWG) includes members from the justice and public safety departments of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Canada. The members of the MWWG include police and prosecutors who have had experience with cases involving predators, as well as members with expertise in criminal law policy analysis and social science research.

The MWWG considered strategies for determining the best way to intervene and prevent further predatory homicides of women. These strategies included: protection of persons who are at high risk of being victimized by these predators; early reporting and improved responses to cases of missing women who may become victims of violence; evidence based identification of those who may be considered suspects in an investigation; intervention with those who may become predators; management of prosecutions in high profile cases; and, improved databases, records-management policies, training, and information sharing.

Recommendations:

The research done for this report was primarily conducted between 2006 and October 2010, when FPT Ministers released the summary document. This report does contain some additional references to events that occurred after October 2010. The report does not contain any new recommendations from the previous report released in 2010.

The BC Missing Women Commission of Inquiry (MWCI) – Commissioner: the Honorable Wally Oppal – FORSAKEN: The Report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry, November 2012

Report Details:

The primary objectives of the MWCI were:

1. To inquire into and make findings of fact respecting the investigations conducted between January 23, 1997 and February 5, 2002, by police forces in British Columbia respecting women reported missing from the Downtown Eastside of the City of Vancouver.
2. To inquire into and make findings of fact respecting the decision of the Criminal Justice Branch on January 27, 1998, to enter a stay of proceedings on charges against Robert William Pickton of attempted murder, assault with a weapon, forcible confinement, and aggravated assault.
3. To recommend changes considered necessary respecting the initiation and conduct of investigations in British Columbia of missing women and suspected multiple homicides.
4. To recommend changes considered necessary respecting homicide investigations in British Columbia by more than one investigating organization, including the co-ordination of those investigations.

Recommendations:Restorative Measures

1. That Provincial Government appoint two advisors, including one Aboriginal Elder, to consult with all affected parties regarding the form and content of the apologies and other forms of public acknowledgement required as a first step in the healing and reconciliation process.
2. That Provincial Government establish a compensation fund for the children of the missing and murdered women.
3. That Provincial Government establish a healing fund for families of the missing and murdered women. These funds should be accessed through an application process pursuant to established guidelines.
4. That Provincial Government appoint two advisors, including one Aboriginal Elder, to consult with all affected parties regarding the structure and format of this facilitated reconciliation process and to consider mechanisms for funding it. These consultations and recommendations could be undertaken together with recommendation #1 under Measures to Enhance the Safety of Vulnerable Urban Women.

Equality-Promoting Measures

1. That the Minister of Justice direct the Director of Police Services to undertake equality audits of police forces in British Columbia with a focus on police duty to protect marginalized and Aboriginal women from violence. These audits should be carried out by an external agency and with meaningful community involvement.
2. That Provincial Government set a provincial standard establishing that police officers have a general and binding duty to promote equality and to refrain from discriminatory policing.
3. That Provincial Government amend the BC Crown Policy Manual to explicitly include equality as a fundamental principle to guide Crown Counsel in performing their functions.
4. That Provincial Government develop and implement a Crown Vulnerable Women Assault Policy to provide guidance on the prosecution of crimes of violence against vulnerable women, including women engaged in the sex trade.
5. That Provincial Government adopt a policy statement in the BC Crown Policy Manual requiring that a prosecutor's evaluations of how strong the case is likely to be when presented at trial should be made on the assumption that the trier of fact will act impartially and according to the law.

6. That Provincial Government direct the Director of Police Services to consult with the BC Association of Municipal Chiefs of Police, the RCMP and community representatives to recommend the wording of a statutory provision on the legal duty to warn and a protocol on how it should be interpreted and applied.
7. That police forces work with local communities to develop communication strategies for the issuance of warnings that ensure the message is conveyed to community members who are most at risk of the specific threat.
8. That Provincial Government fund three law reform research projects on aspects of the treatment of vulnerable and intimidated witnesses:
 - The effects of drug and alcohol use on memory and how to support those experiencing dependency or addiction to provide testimony;
 - Police, counsel and the judiciary's bias and perceptions of credibility of people with drug additions or who are engaged in the survival sex trade; and
 - Potential changes to the law of evidence to better allow vulnerable witnesses, including those who have been sexually assaulted, those suffering from addictions, and those in the sex industry, to take part in court processes.
9. That Provincial Government develop guidelines to facilitate and support vulnerable and intimidated witnesses by all actors within the criminal justice system based on the best practices identified by the Commission through its review of protocols and guidelines existing in other jurisdictions.
10. That police forces integrate into training, performance standards, and performance measurement the ability of police officers to develop and maintain community relationships, particularly with vulnerable members of the community who are often at risk of being treated unequally in the delivery of public services.
11. That the BC Association of Municipal Chiefs of Police and the RCMP establish a working group to develop a best practices guide for the establishment and implementation of formal discussion mechanisms to facilitate communication and collaboration that transcends the institutional hierarchy within a police agency.
12. That police officers be required to undergo mandatory and ongoing experiential and interactive training concerning vulnerable community members:
 - Active engagement in overcoming biases, rather than more passive sensitivity training (sometimes called anti-oppression training);
 - More intensive and ongoing training in the history and current status of Aboriginal peoples in the province and in the specific community, particularly with respect to the ongoing effects of residential schools and the child welfare system;
 - Training and resources to make prevention of violence against Aboriginal women a genuine priority;
 - Training to ensure an understanding of violence against women in a range of settings including family violence, child sexual exploitation and violence against women in the sex trade; in particular, the scenarios used in police training should incorporate issues of cultural sensitivity and violence against women; and
 - Training in recognizing the special needs of vulnerable individuals and how to meet those needs, including recognition of a higher standard of care owed by the police to these individuals.
13. That the Police Complaint Commissioner, working with police forces across the Province, take steps to develop, promote and refine informal methods of police discipline, particularly in marginalized communities such as the DTES and with Aboriginal communities.
14. That Provincial Government engage with the RCMP in order to bring them into the provincial complaints process.

Measures to Enhance the Safety of Vulnerable Urban Women

1. That SisterWatch be evaluated to provide a basis for further refinements and with a view to establishing best practices for meaningful police-community partnerships; and that these best practices be shared with other police forces to encourage them to develop and maintain ongoing, collaborative community forums
2. That all entities with proposed responsibilities under the Living in Community Action Plan commit to these priority actions that together form a strong basis for enhancing the safety of women engaged in the survival sex trade.

3. That other communities be encouraged to undertake the type of collaborative community engagement strategy employed by Living in Community to develop an integrated strategy for enhancing the safety of women engaged in the survival sex trade.
4. That Provincial Government fund additional full-time Sex Trade Liaison Officer positions in the Lower Mainland.
5. That the City of Vancouver create and fund two community-based liaison positions to be filled by individuals who have experience in the survival sex trade.
6. That Provincial Government undertake a community consultation, needs assessment and feasibility study concerning the reestablishment of an independent society comparable to the former Vancouver Police Native Liaison Society.
7. That the VPD establish a position of Aboriginal Liaison Officer whose responsibilities would include assisting Aboriginal persons in their interactions with the Missing Persons Unit.
8. That all police forces in British Columbia consider developing and implementing guidelines on the model of the Vancouver Police Department's Sex Work Enforcement Guidelines in consultation with women engaged in the sex trade in their jurisdiction.
9. That the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Police Department take proactive measures to reduce the number of court warrants issued for minor offences by:
 - Reducing the number of tickets issued and charges laid for minor offences;
 - Developing guidelines to facilitate greater and more consistent use of police discretion not to lay charges; and
 - Increasing the ways in which failures to appear can be quashed early in the judicial process.
10. That courts consider making increased use of diversionary or alternative measures to deal with bench warrants and breaches of conditions. This is in light of the barriers that outstanding warrants have on the ability of vulnerable women who are victims of violent crime to access police services. And that proactive steps be taken to assist women to clear outstanding warrants.
11. That the Minister of Justice consult with the judiciary, police and community representatives to develop a protocol providing the police with the discretion not to enforce a warrant in a circumstance where a sex trade worker is attempting to report a violent crime.
12. That the Minister of Justice establish a working group to develop options for enhanced legislative protection for exploited women. The working group should include representatives of sex workers, community-based organizations providing support to and advocacy for women engaged in the sex trade, Aboriginal women's organizations, police agencies and the Crown Counsel Association.
13. That the BC Association of Municipal Police Chiefs and the RCMP, with support from the Director of Police Services, should develop a protocol containing additional measures to monitor high-risk offenders, including recommendations for the efficient and timely sharing of information.

Measures to Prevent Violence Against Aboriginal and Rural Women

1. That Provincial Government fully support the implementation of The Highway of Tears Symposium action plan, updated to the current situation and in a manner that ensures involvement of all affected communities along Highway 16.
2. That Provincial Government fund a community consultation process led by Aboriginal organizations to develop and implement a pilot project designed to ensure the safety of vulnerable Aboriginal youth during the rural-urban transition.
3. That Provincial Government provide additional funding to Aboriginal women's organizations to create programs addressing violence on reserves, so that fewer women and youth are forced to escape to urban areas.
4. That Provincial Government provide additional funding to Aboriginal women's organizations to provide more safe houses and counselling programs run for and by Aboriginal women and youth.
5. That Provincial Government fund a collaborative action research project on the entry of young women into the sex trade, especially Aboriginal women who are often homeless during the transition from reserves or foster homes to urban centres, and to develop an action plan to facilitate and support exiting the survival sex trade.

Improved Missing Person Policies and Practices

1. That the provincial standards be developed by the Director of Police Services with the assistance of a committee consisting of representatives of the BC Association of Municipal Police Chiefs, the RCMP, representatives of community and Aboriginal groups, and representatives of families of the missing and murdered women.
2. That proposed provincial missing persons standards include at least 15 components:
 - Definition of “missing person;”
 - Criteria for the acceptance of reports;
 - Jurisdiction;
 - Missing Person Risk Assessment Tool;
 - Provincial Missing Person Reporting Form;
 - Standards related to interaction with family/reportees;
 - Initial steps – background information;
 - Supervisory responsibility/quality control;
 - Forensic evidence standards;
 - Coroners’ Liaison;
 - Monitoring outstanding missing person cases;
 - Automatic annual review of unsolved cases;
 - Closing missing person files;
 - Prevention and intervention; and,
 - The role and authority of the BCPMPC.
3. That the provincial standards require a proactive missing persons process whereby police must take prevention and intervention measures including “safe and well” checks when an individual is found.
4. That best practice protocols be established for (1) enhanced victimology analysis of missing persons, (2) investigative steps in missing person cases, (3) collaborative missing person investigations collection, (4) storage and analysis of missing persons data, and (5) training specific to missing person investigations.
5. That Provincial Government establish a provincial partnership committee on missing persons to facilitate the collaboration of key players in the ongoing development of best practice protocols for missing person cases. The committee should be chaired by a senior government official and include representatives of the missing and murdered women’s families, Aboriginal organizations, community groups, service providers, police, and Victim Services.
6. That Provincial Government establish an agency independent of all police agencies with the purposes to include co-ordinating information, identifying patterns, establishing base rates, checking on police investigations, ensuring accountability for linked inter-jurisdictional series, and warning the public. It should provide oversight and analytic functions, but it should not be an investigating entity.
7. That provincial authorities create and maintain a provincial missing person website aimed at educating the public about the missing persons process and engaging them in proactive approaches to prevention and investigation.
8. That provincial authorities establish a provincial 1-800 phone number for the taking of missing person reports and accessing case information.
9. That provincial authorities develop an enhanced, holistic, comprehensive approach for the provision of support to the families and friends of missing persons. This should be based on a needs assessment carried out in consultation with the provincial partnership committee on missing persons.
10. That representatives of the media be invited to be members of the provincial partnership committee and that the committee should develop a protocol on issues related to the role of the media in missing person investigations.
11. That the provincial partnership committee develop a proposal for either an enhanced BCPMPC to meet additional responsibilities relating to the needs of members of the public and, in particular, reportees; or to create an independent civilian-based agency for this purpose.

Enhanced Police Investigations

1. That Provincial Government enact missing persons legislation to grant speedy access to personal information of missing persons without unduly infringing on privacy rights. I recommend the adoption of

single purpose legislation, as in Alberta and Manitoba, with a provision for a comprehensive review of the operation of the Act after five years

2. That Provincial Government mandate the use of Major Case Management (MCM) for major crimes and that the Director of Police Services develop these MCM standards in consultation with the police community and through a review of best practices in other jurisdictions.
3. That the Director of Police Services mandate accountability under the MCM standards by requiring that police forces:
 - Provide an explanation as to why MCM was not used for a “major crime” in an annual report to the Director of Police Services;
 - Notify the Director of Police Services of all “major crime” investigations that are not under active investigation and have remained open for more than one year. Upon receipt of such notification, the Director will appoint another police department to conduct an independent audit of the prior investigation and conduct such additional investigatory steps as it deems necessary, and report its finding to the Director and the originating police agency; and
 - Conduct annual internal audits of a statistically valid random selection of MCM investigations to ensure proper compliance with the model.
4. That issues related to a single electronic MCM system for British Columbia, as well as compatibility with cross-Canada systems, be reviewed as part of the consultation on MCM standards set out above.
5. That Provincial Government take active steps to support the development of a National DNA Missing Persons Index and to assist in overcoming the impasse on outstanding concerns over its creation and operationalization.

Regional Police Force

1. That Provincial Government commit to establishing a Greater Vancouver police force through a consultative process with all stakeholders
2. That Provincial Government establish an independent expert committee to develop a proposed model and implementation plan for a Greater Vancouver police force.

Effective Multi-Jurisdictional Policing

1. That the Director of Police Services mandate provincial standards for multi-jurisdictional and multi-agency investigations to be incorporated into the provincial MCM standards referred to in recommendation #2
2. That the Director of Police Services consult with the BC Association of Police Chiefs and the RCMP to create a protocol or framework for multi-jurisdictional major case investigations to ensure the timely and seamless implementation of multi-agency teams, including a provision for an independent panel to resolve disputes regarding when the protocol should be triggered.
3. That Provincial Government commit to moving expeditiously to implement a regional Real Time Crime Centre.

Increase Police Accountability to Communities

1. That the accountability structure for the Greater Vancouver police force incorporate a holistic approach that provides oversight on both an individual and systemic level and is fully responsive and responsible to the communities it serves.
2. That the Police Act be amended to provide that the Mayor is an ex officio member of the Board, but has no voting authority.
3. That additional steps need to be taken to ensure representation of vulnerable and marginalized members and Aboriginal peoples on police boards.
4. That police boards have access to greater resources from the Division of Police Services to gather and analyze information to enable them to better carry out their oversight functions.

Measures to Assure the Women’s Legacy

1. That Provincial Government appoint an independent advisor to serve as a champion for the implementation of the Commission’s recommendations. This appointment should take effect within 12 weeks of release of the report.

2. That the independent advisor work collaboratively with representatives of Aboriginal communities, the DTES, and the victims' families in the implementation process.

The Assembly of First Nations – *Submission of the Assembly of First Nations to the UN Commission on the Status of Women- 57th Session, 2012*

Report Details:

This submission is an analysis of the current status of the issue of violence against Indigenous women and girls in Canada. It was intended to inform the Commission's evaluation of Canada's progress in regards to this topic. It compiles the information from the most recent literature and discussions between First Nations leadership and the Government of Canada.

Recommendations:

1. As Canada is a federal state, the creation of an inclusive, outcome oriented inter-governmental mechanism is recommended, comprised of Indigenous women and girls, elected leadership and federal and provincial Ministers, to develop a comprehensive action and implementation plan to address the high incidences of violence against Indigenous peoples.
2. That all levels of government broadly pursue relationship and policy principles that restore the role of Indigenous women and girls in decision-making, policy and strategy development in order to reduce the social and economic circumstances that place them in situations of increased vulnerability and overrepresentation in the correctional and criminal justice systems.
3. That the Government of Canada recognize and support the full implementation of First Nations' jurisdiction over justice systems, institutions and law-making and ensure capacity in First Nations' design and delivery of program, services and supports aimed at restoring harmony, balance and wellness in communities.
4. That the Government of Canada immediately strike an independent and inclusive National Public Commission of Inquiry on Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls, with the full support and participation of Provinces and Territories.
5. Any activity must be supported through dedicating resources to support this work. Such action would demonstrate a clear and focused commitment on the part of Governments to achieve change and to work with Indigenous women, leaders and communities to end violence.

Public Safety Canada – *Marginalized: The Aboriginal Women's experience in Federal Corrections, 2012*

Report Details:

This report provides an examination of the current and historic conditions that surround the overrepresentation of Aboriginal women in the correctional system. It examines, the complex and multilayered root causes as well as the system's unsuitability to address the issue and unique needs of Aboriginal women. Among the most relevant finding are:

- While Aboriginal people account for just four per cent of the Canadian population, one in three females in the federal correctional system is Aboriginal. In addition, over the last 10 years, the representation of Aboriginal women in the prison system has increased by nearly 90 per cent, making them the fastest-growing offender group.
- Upon entering federal correctional institutions, many Aboriginal women present with a range of programming needs including culturally appropriate and gender appropriate programming regarding life skills; parenting skills; education; employment; alcohol and substance abuse; anger management; and spiritual programming.
- Access to needed culturally appropriate programs and supports is falling short in the current system. For example, the average wait time for a First Nations woman participating in Aboriginal specific programming is 238 days from the date of admission.

- The Federal Government's "Tough on Crime Agenda" does nothing to ameliorate the disproportionate rates at which Aboriginal peoples are incarcerated - quite the opposite, in terms of Aboriginal peoples' over-representation within the justice system, the federal government's current plan will only serve to further increase the numbers and worsen the already staggering injustice experienced by Aboriginal peoples as a whole.

Recommendations:

This report has no recommendations.

Human Rights Watch – *THOSE WHO TAKE US AWAY: Abusive Policing and Failures in Protection of Indigenous Women and Girls in Northern British Columbia, Canada, February 2013*

Report Details:

This report addresses the relationship between the RCMP and Indigenous women and girls in Northern BC. In ten towns across the north, Human Rights Watch documented RCMP violations of the rights of Indigenous women and girls. The report further documents the shortcomings of available oversight mechanisms designed to provide accountability for police misconduct and failure to protect.

Recommendations:

To the Government of Canada:

1. Establish a national commission of inquiry into the murders and disappearances of indigenous women and girls before the end of 2013; ensure the inquiry's terms of reference are developed with leadership from affected communities and that they include the examination of the current and historical relationship between the police and indigenous women and girls.
2. With leadership from Indigenous communities, develop and implement a national action plan to address violence against indigenous women and girls that addresses the structural roots of the violence as well as the accountability and coordination of government bodies charged with preventing and responding to violence.
3. Establish independent civilian investigations of reported incidents of serious police misconduct, including incidents of rape and other sexual assault, in all jurisdictions.
4. Cooperate with the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women's inquiry into the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, by granting permission for a site visit, and provide similar cooperation to other international human rights bodies interested in examining this issue.
5. Ratify the American Convention on Human Rights and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará).

To the Government of British Columbia:

1. Conduct a public inquiry to look into the violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls in northern BC:
 - The inquiry could be part of a national commission of inquiry or a standalone inquiry. It should include the murders and disappearances of Indigenous women and girls along Highway 16 and police abuse of Indigenous women and girls.
 - The inquiry's terms of reference should be defined in cooperation with Indigenous communities, and adequate financial and victim supports for non-government community participation and interests should be proportionately equal to those provided for government and police.
2. Expand the mandate of the Independent Investigations Office to include authority to investigate allegations of sexual assault by police.
3. Provide adequate shelters and social services for victims of violence, including in rural areas and with specific culturally-sensitive services.
4. Renew the commitment to implementing the recommendations of the 2006 Highway of Tears Symposium, updated, as necessary, in cooperation with northern indigenous communities.

5. Expand non-incarceration options for publicly intoxicated individuals, including sobering centers where medical personnel can provide appropriate care.

To the Royal Canadian Mounted Police:

1. Collect and make publicly available (as ethically appropriate) accurate and comprehensive, disaggregated data that includes:
 - An ethnicity variable on violence against Indigenous women and girls in cooperation with Indigenous organizations and the National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains (NCMPUR)
 - NCMPUR should be part of a national RCMP strategy for the elimination of violence against Indigenous women and girls that ensures consistency in data collection, immediate reporting, and access to information by police, coroners, and medical examiners.
2. Expand training for police officers to counter racism and sexism in the treatment of Indigenous women and girls in custody and to improve police response to violence against women and girls within indigenous communities; such training should be:
 - developed through collaboration between Indigenous and human rights organizations, the Canadian Police College, and the Department of Public Safety Canada;
 - focused specifically on Canada's colonial history that has predisposed Indigenous women to suffer from gross levels of violence and on human rights norms, including women's and girls' rights to live free from violence and discrimination and be treated with dignity and respect in custody.
3. Ensure that properly trained officers are stationed at detachments in the north for a sufficient amount of time to develop strong relationships with the local community.
4. Eliminate searches and monitoring of women and girls by male police officers in all but extraordinary circumstances and require documentation and supervisor and commander review of any such searches; prohibit cross-gender strip searches under any circumstances.
5. Prohibit the use of conducted energy weapons (Tasers) on youth and re-examine the rules for the use of police dogs and pepper spray on youth. Limit their use to extraordinary circumstances that are then documented and subject to supervisor and commander review; all RCMP and municipal police policies on conducted energy weapons, police dogs and pepper spray should be made publicly accessible.
6. Enforce existing rules mandating that parents or guardians be contacted immediately in the case of their child's arrest and that youth not be detained in cells with adults or children of the opposite sex.
7. Consider, in consultation with Indigenous communities in northern British Columbia, changing the criteria for cases to be investigated by the E-PANA task force to include a greater number of the murders and disappearances of women in the North.
8. Develop a timeline for NCMPUR to complete and implement specialized and standardized protocols for police response when Indigenous women and girls are reported missing or found murdered; these protocols should be part of the national RCMP strategy and be made in cooperation with Indigenous organizations; protocols should include:
 - Oversight and accountability mechanisms that track a police investigation of a missing or murdered Indigenous woman or girl from the time such an incident is reported;
 - Clear, publicly available communication standards for informing family and the general community about the progress of an investigation as it proceeds, and what they can or are expected to do to contribute to an investigation during its different phases;
 - Goals to involve an Aboriginal liaison officer in all cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls to work with affected families and the police;
 - Goals to review police response to missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls cases at regular intervals to compile and make public a report on best practices and lessons learned.

To the UN Human Rights Council:

1. Raise the issue of violence against Indigenous women and girls in Canada as part of the United Nations Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review.
2. Encourage Canada to launch a national inquiry into the murders and disappearances of Indigenous women and girls.