

**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP**

**REPORT TO**

**PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL  
MINISTERS OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**AND**

**NATIONAL ABORIGINAL ORGANIZATION  
LEADERS**

*A Framework for Action in  
Education, Economic Development and  
Violence Against Aboriginal Women & Girls*

**APRIL 28, 2010**



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# 1. INTRODUCTION/CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

In October 2009, Aboriginal Affairs Ministers and the leaders of five National Aboriginal Organizations<sup>1</sup> (NAOs) agreed to establish an Aboriginal Affairs Working Group with representation from the provinces and territories and the National Aboriginal Organizations to work together to develop recommendations, and identify actions and strategies to improve the quality of life for Aboriginal peoples in Canada. The creation of the working group fulfills a direction from all premiers and leaders in their discussions at the August 2009 Pre Council of the Federation meeting with the NAO leaders in Regina, Saskatchewan.

The October 2009 meeting served as a launching point for the working group envisioned by the Premiers and NAO leaders and resulted in the adoption of a series of recommendations for further action (see **Appendix 4.1**).

Ministers and Leaders confirmed that establishing a strong and enduring working group process of federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for Aboriginal affairs and national Aboriginal leaders is critical to improving socio-economic conditions for all Aboriginal peoples. Further, it was agreed that many priorities are shared between the working group members and the Federal Government. Where policies and programs exist or are contemplated in shared priority areas, Federal Government participation will be critical to achieving concrete, measurable results for all Aboriginal peoples in Canada.<sup>2</sup>

The Honourable Chuck Strahl, federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs who was invited and attended the October 2009 meeting, and indicated that the Federal Government is prepared to consider joining the AAWG process in the future. If invited, the minister said that he is prepared to return for the next meeting of the Aboriginal affairs Ministers and Leaders of the National Aboriginal Organizations, and highlighted the need for concrete, practical outcomes. However, Minister Strahl noted that the Federal Government was not part of the Council of the Federation.

The Aboriginal Affairs Working Group (AAWG) was directed by the provincial and territorial ministers and national leaders to examine how governments and NAOs can work more effectively to improve outcomes for First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples<sup>3</sup>. The working group was engaged to focus on tangible, concrete and results-oriented action in the areas of education and skills training (i.e. lifelong learning) and economic development with the intention of having this action serve as the foundation for a possible First Ministers Meeting (FMM) on

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<sup>1</sup> The five NAOs include the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP), the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), the Métis National Council (MNC), and the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC).

<sup>2</sup> October 29, 2009, Communiqué

<sup>3</sup> The *Constitution Act, 1982*, refers to the "Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada". The term "First Nation" is often now used synonymous with "Indian", and the term "Aboriginal" is often used to refer to each of these three categories collectively.

Aboriginal issues in 2010<sup>4</sup>. Officials also acknowledged in October 2009 that the issue of violence against Aboriginal women, including the over 520 missing and murdered Aboriginal women documented by the Native Womens' Association of Canada, remains an urgent priority for Ministers and NAO leaders. The AAWG has committed to work towards realistic and pragmatic recommendations which will act as a catalyst to improve socio-economic conditions for all Aboriginal peoples.

It has been illustrated through numerous reports, research studies, media accounts and community testimonials that First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples face significant socio-economic challenges in Canada. The vast majority point to an urgent need to focus more attention on the well-being of Aboriginal peoples.

In the pursuit of the goal of enhancing the well-being of Aboriginal peoples across Canada, it is instructive to consider policy and program options from the determinants of health perspective. Under this model, health and well-being are viewed as the end result of a complex interaction of a number of social and economic conditions. These conditions combine to shape the overall health and well-being of an individual or a population and determine the extent to which individuals can effectively participate in society in a productive, equitable, safe and secure way.

Recognizing the foundational importance of the social determinants of health, this report uses them as a contextual framework from which to address the priorities of education, skills training, and economic development as well as violence against Aboriginal women, and to develop recommendations for achieving progress.

For the priority of education, the AAWG has primarily focused on kindergarten to Grade 12 education, with expanded opportunities on other elements along the lifelong learning continuum in the medium to long term. The detailed discussion paper on Aboriginal education identifies the need for better coordination between provinces and territories in training and skills development, information sharing and data collection.

With respect to economic development, the working group has focussed on methods to explore, enhance and advance economic development in ways that respect the needs and interests of all parties concerned. The detailed discussion paper on Aboriginal economic development analyzes the challenges and barriers to the development of successful Aboriginal businesses, along with emerging sectors that may benefit Aboriginal businesses and communities.

The work undertaken by the AAWG is being done for the greater good of Aboriginal peoples and all Canadians. It is recognized by all parties that an enhanced co-ordinated federal-provincial-territorial-Aboriginal dialogue would be helpful and would create opportunities for the sharing of information and resources. It is also recognized that all parties need to work together to build consensus on ways to eliminate the socio-economic gaps experienced by

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<sup>4</sup> It is understood that it is the prerogative of the Prime Minister to call a First Ministers' Meeting.

Aboriginal peoples in Canada. The provinces, territories and National Aboriginal Organizations have entered these discussions with openness and have conducted themselves in a fair and transparent way. Some compromises to the language in this document have been made to arrive at consensus and as such the recommendations are not necessarily reflective of all parties' full positions. Challenges regarding the capacity to carry out the preparatory work for this process created barriers to the full integration of all parties' views and perspectives. Collaboration among the AAWG is guided by principles of: transparency and fairness; equity; partnerships and inclusion; and recognition of diversity.

Everyone involved recognizes that change cannot be unilateral and done *for* Aboriginal peoples of Canada; it must come *from partnerships and inclusion*. These partnerships are committed to consensus building and working towards equity. However, the AAWG also recognizes and respects the diversity of Aboriginal peoples. As such, in circumstances where it is appropriate, issues and recommendations may be based on constitutional and gender distinctions when the need is identified by the participants.

Finally, it is recognized that provinces and territories have full jurisdiction to implement these recommendations within their own financial parameters.

## **1.1 RECOGNIZING DIVERSITY**

The Aboriginal population in Canada is a diverse group. Specifically, critical distinctions exist between and within First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples based on a number of factors including language, cultural beliefs, social structures, geography, governance structures, and the existence of Treaties and other agreements with the Crown in some areas.

Inuit who live in the North primarily live in 53 isolated fly-in communities in the four land claims areas of Inuit Nunangat: the Inuvialuit Settlement Region; Nunavut; Nunavik; and Nunatsiavut.<sup>5</sup> Up to 20 per cent of Inuit now live in southern urban areas.

In recognition of the diversity amongst Aboriginal peoples, Provincial and Territorial ministers of Aboriginal affairs and National Aboriginal Organization leaders directed that special attention be paid to the need for a distinctions-based approach for First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and, where appropriate, recognizing that this includes constitutionally protected rights equally for men and women. Ministers and Leaders further directed that this approach should fully integrate the needs and perspectives of women, urban populations, youth and other segments of the population <sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> The Inuvialuit region is in the Beaufort Delta area of the Northwest Territories, Nunavik is the Inuit region of Arctic and sub-Arctic Quebec, and Nunatsiavut is the Inuit self-governing region of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

<sup>6</sup> The approach acknowledges specific needs that arise as a result of urban/rural/northern and on/off reserve-based considerations, north of 60° considerations, the application of the Indian Act, and gender issues.

## 1.2 SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

According to the World Health Organization, the social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. Social determinants of health are the *economic and social conditions* that shape the health of individuals, communities, and jurisdictions as a whole. These conditions include but are not limited to early childhood development; education, employment and job security, social inclusion, food security, health services, housing, income, and social safety nets.<sup>7</sup>

These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of opportunity and resources at global, national and local levels, which are themselves influenced by public policy.<sup>8</sup> The World Health Organization indicates that every aspect of government and the economy has the potential to affect health and health equity.<sup>9</sup> Coherent action across government, at all levels is essential for improvement of health equity.<sup>10</sup> The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology report “A Healthy, Productive Canada: A Determinant of Health Approach” recommended that the health determinants of education, economic development and violence against Aboriginal women, children and elders be given priority.<sup>11</sup>

Although this report and the Provincial-Territorial and Aboriginal (PTA) process is not health specific, the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group uses the social determinants of health as a framework to address demographic-specific Aboriginal issues, and as a means to develop and evaluate broader policy choices.

Effective education for children and lifelong learning for adults are key contributors to health and prosperity for individuals, and for the country. Education contributes to health and prosperity by equipping people with knowledge and skills for problem solving. Education increases opportunities for jobs, income security and job satisfaction. It also improves people's ability to access and understand information to help keep them healthy.<sup>12</sup>

This includes addressing the elements of early childhood development such as early childhood education, child poverty, childcare, prenatal, postnatal and maternal health and providing a safe and happy home environment during the formative years. Early child development, including physical, social/emotional, and learning has a determining influence on subsequent life chances and health through skills development, education and employment.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Raphael, D. “Social Determinants of Health: Canadian Perspectives”, 2008.

<sup>8</sup> World Health Organization (WHO). Retrieved from [http://www.who.int/social\\_determinants/en/](http://www.who.int/social_determinants/en/). 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Final Report on the Commission of Social Determinants of Health, Geneva, World Health Organization. Geneva, Switzerland, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Senate of Canada, The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology Final Report of Senate Subcommittee on Population Health. 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada, Population Health Approach – What Determines Health? Retrieved from: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/determinants/determinants-eng.php>. 2003

<sup>13</sup> Final Report on the Commission of Social Determinants of Health, Geneva, World Health Organization.



The health of individuals is influenced by the community in which they live. Creating and enabling economic opportunities for Aboriginal communities are key determinants of the community's health and well-being. Aboriginal communities require new sources of revenue in order to provide the necessary community infrastructure. With appropriate infrastructure and resource development opportunities available, individuals have greater economic security within communities. Alternatively, those communities with inadequate infrastructure, such as lack of housing, have serious impacts on the health of individuals and their communities. Aboriginal communities need both a self-sufficient economy at the micro level, as well as an economy of partnership at the macro level that integrates with the broader regional and national economy.

Aboriginal equality and gender equality are also viewed as key social determinants of health. Aboriginal women have had significant challenges that have affected not only their own lives, but the lives of their children, families and communities. Poor quality housing, single parenting, lower education levels and poor economic development within their communities has perpetuated health and violence problems for Aboriginal women. As a result, violence against Aboriginal women will continue to be a negative outcome if social determinants are not adequately addressed.



## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Inequalities between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians persist in every province and territory throughout Canada. The legacy of Canada's historical conduct has left Aboriginal peoples marginalized in our Canadian society. Educational attainment for Aboriginal peoples lags behind the averages for the Canadian population as a whole. The 2006 median income for Aboriginal people was 30 per cent lower than the median income for the rest of Canadians. Fifty four per cent of Aboriginal women experience severe and potentially life threatening forms of violence. These conditions are unacceptable.

Building on progress to date, this socio-economic gap which divides First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and non-Aboriginal Canadians can be closed through a co-ordinated national approach focussing on tangible, concrete actions. Closing the gap requires First Nations, Inuit and Métis to be directly engaged in shaping education and economic approaches, and strategies to eliminate violence against Aboriginal women and girls. This can only be achieved with the full participation of all orders of government, Aboriginal governments, and National and other Aboriginal organizations. The federal government has a direct role and responsibility. Their valued leadership is critical to a national effort.

The Aboriginal Affairs Working Group (AAWG) has identified the following three goals:

- Closing the graduation gap;
- Closing the income gap; and
- Ending violence against Aboriginal women and girls.

### A. EDUCATION

The education achievement gap faced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis learners and the consequences the gap produces for individuals, Aboriginal communities and the Canadian economy, and social fabric as a whole, need to be addressed. Critical distinctions exist on a regional basis and among First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples. The needs of Aboriginal women and girls require special consideration. Recognizing this, the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group officials recommend that the Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and the National Aboriginal Organization Leaders:

#### WORKING WITH THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION, CANADA (CMEC)

1. Support CMEC's three initial priority areas for action:
  - Data – Define Collect and Share;
  - Federal Investment; and
  - Information Sharing and Reporting on Progress.

2. Direct their officials to continue working with education officials to ensure that the work of the AAWG supports the implementation of CMEC's Aboriginal Education Action Plan by:
  - Formalizing existing agreements to work together;
  - Bringing forward ideas for collaboration, including those derived from the April 2010 AAWG meeting, the Inuit Education Strategy and others; and
  - Engaging in a preliminary discussion on the approach, purpose and objectives of future partnerships formalized through terms of reference.
3. Provide strategic input to CMEC on a range of socio-economic issues, and factors that can affect educational outcomes, and work with CMEC to generate momentum for multi-jurisdictional dialogue amongst interested parties (including Aboriginal governments, and National and other Aboriginal organizations) on common priorities and actions aimed at improving education outcomes.

#### **AAWG SUPPORT FOR PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL PROCESSES**

4. Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs work with provincial and territorial Ministers of Education and Advanced/Post-Secondary Education, Aboriginal governments, and National and other Aboriginal organizations to improve graduation rates and educational outcomes for Aboriginal students in areas such as:
  - strategies to foster inclusive learning environments, including culturally appropriate and First Nation, Métis and Inuit perspectives in curriculum and resources;
  - improved teacher training and professional development for all teachers and administrators respecting Aboriginal student cultural and learning needs;
  - increased opportunities for Aboriginal teacher training, recruitment and retention;
  - development of protocols for the collection, use and disclosure of student achievement data; and
  - encouraging Aboriginal leadership and communities to foster the engagement of Aboriginal parents in the education of their children.

#### **WORKING WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

5. Take steps to engage the federal government in relation to improving Aboriginal education outcomes (both on-reserve and off-reserve) including, but not limited to, the issue of federal financial investment.

## **B. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

For Aboriginal businesses to be successful and truly self-sufficient, federal, provincial and territorial governments, Aboriginal governments, National and other Aboriginal organizations, and the private sector must work in partnership to eliminate existing barriers to Aboriginal economic development. At the same time, it is recognized that most Aboriginal organizations and communities have limited resources and capacity to support and undertake economic development initiatives. In order for successful Aboriginal economic development to become a realistic and tangible goal, supportive of both Aboriginal men and women, the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group Officials recommend that the Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and the National Aboriginal Organization Leaders expand on the positive work that has been accomplished thus far by assisting in the following areas:

### **ACCESS TO CAPITAL**

1. Working together to identify financial sector, Federal, Provincial and Territorial government programs that can improve access to capital for Aboriginal businesses and identify gaps in relation to access to capital.

### **TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT**

2. Encourage the utilization of the broad range of training and development programs available through Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments to increase expertise and skills of the growing Aboriginal workforce including aspiring Aboriginal entrepreneurs. This may include promoting/creating partnerships with universities and community colleges.

### **LEADERSHIP**

3. Encouraging Aboriginal communities to provide leadership to support entrepreneurial development and economic growth while building capacity and establishing consistent governing practices. The goal is to build leadership capacity that will create an environment of responsibility within the Aboriginal community for economic growth and development.

### **COMMUNITY ASSETS**

4. Identifying examples of community economic development initiatives that successfully leverage resources and supports from a variety of sectors and developing a promising practices guide that will assist communities to implement these activities.

## EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

5. Taking steps to build on practical regional processes (e.g., 2009 Métis Economic Development Symposium) and promote the development of long term partnerships with governments, industry and the Aboriginal business community. Activities to encourage and facilitate Aboriginal economic partnerships that could be undertaken, where applicable, might include:
  - skills training and development;
  - apprenticeship and mentorship;
  - contracting policies; and
  - access to capital.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

6. Identifying needs and collaborating on strategies that support Aboriginal infrastructure projects that can enhance economic development, such as increasing broadband connectivity.

## CO-ORDINATION & INFORMATION SHARING

7. Working together on developing efficient and flexible mechanisms to enhance Aboriginal economic development in the areas of information sharing and government supports and services. This may include developing a roster of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal economic development experts to advise and consult with Aboriginal communities and aspiring Aboriginal entrepreneurs on economic development opportunities.
8. Working together to identify and share Aboriginal economic development promising practices in provincial and territorial jurisdictions, including regional Aboriginal economic development agencies that will inform partners on how best to support Aboriginal economic development across Canada.

## WORKING WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

9. Work with the federal government to effectively implement the new Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development and to identify gaps in the Framework where additional work is required, including but not limited to federal financial investment.

## **C. ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN AND GIRLS**

In order for Provincial and Territorial governments, and National Aboriginal Organizations to address the high rates of violence against Aboriginal women and girls, the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group Officials recommend that the Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and the National Aboriginal Organization Leaders:

### **LOCAL COLLABORATION**

1. Increase collaboration and engagement among governments, non-governmental organizations, service agencies, justice systems including courts and police forces, and National and other Aboriginal organizations with the goal of developing more co-ordinated approaches to address issues of violence against Aboriginal women, including missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. This could incorporate support for shelters and safe houses and other local initiatives.

### **BUILDING ON NATIONAL INITIATIVES**

2. Support the work of national organizations and Federal, Provincial and Territorial working groups. This support could include a review of existing initiatives with the goal of identifying future opportunities for collaboration and engagement in areas such as gaps in the areas of service and program delivery, access to justice and root causes of violence against Aboriginal women and girls.

### **WORKING WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

3. Work together along with the federal government with a goal of developing comprehensive approaches to addressing violence against Aboriginal women and girls in Canada, including missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.

## **D. REPORTING BACK**

The Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs, and the National Aboriginal Organization Leaders direct the AAWG officials to carry out further work to:

- identify specific targets flowing from the recommendations;
- define methods of measuring progress on these targets;
- identify areas where progress has been reported by jurisdictions and National Aboriginal Organizations;
- identify next steps of the AAWG process, including anticipated Federal Government participation;
- report back on results after the April 2010 meeting of the AAWG; and
- prepare a report for the meeting of the Premiers and National Aboriginal Organization Leaders in August 2010.



### **3. DISCUSSION PAPERS**



## 3.1 ABORIGINAL EDUCATION IN CANADA

### 3.1.1 SCOPE OF WORK

At the October 29, 2009 meeting, Ministers and National Aboriginal Organization (NAO) leaders agreed to work with Ministers of Education/Advanced Education on specific priority areas identified through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), in addition to agreements and processes already in place. There is an initial focus on kindergarten to Grade 12 education, with expanded opportunities on other elements along the lifelong learning continuum in the medium to long term.

Ministers and NAO leaders agreed that an initial focus on kindergarten to Grade 12 education could seek to emphasize graduation rates as the basis for complementary and multi-pronged strategies that would reflect the varying needs of the different Aboriginal groups and the various distinctive situations across the country. Based on this direction, a specific focus is being placed by officials on finding ways in which Aboriginal Affairs ministries and NAOs can provide value-added support to the existing CMEC agenda. This involves recognition of the legitimate expertise of each party and finding ways to mesh that expertise to further advance the Aboriginal education agenda in Canada.

### 3.1.2 BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

#### Statistical Overview<sup>14</sup>

A number of studies have concluded the most effective way to alleviate the poverty and marginalization of Aboriginal peoples in Canada is to improve education outcomes. The strong positive relationship between education and earnings is one of the most well-established relationships in social science. While education can be a solution to poverty and marginalization, the possibility of obtaining an education is significantly affected by these factors.

In addition to education having a direct effect on earnings, research has documented a number of other positive outcomes such as improved individual health and reduced criminal activity. Another important benefit is the intergenerational effects on child development, health and education, which are associated with the educational attainment of the parents. Ultimately, better educational outcomes will have a positive impact on First Nations, Métis and

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<sup>14</sup> The data in this section are based on the concept of Aboriginal identity rather than Aboriginal ancestry. The Aboriginal identity population is 1,172,790, whereas the Aboriginal ancestry population is 1,678,235. There are larger gaps in educational attainment between the Aboriginal identity population and the rest of Canadians than between the Aboriginal ancestry population and Canadians generally. See Appendix B for a provincial breakdown of Aboriginal peoples comparing the ancestry versus identify variables.

Inuit community development overall and on the lives of urban Aboriginal peoples.

Although both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations experienced significant increases in their level of educational attainment since 1966, outcome gaps still persist.

Based on the most reliable available data available from the 2006 Census of Canada, 44 per cent of Aboriginal peoples between 25 and 64 years of age had not completed high school, compared to 23 per cent of the non-Aboriginal population. Breaking down the Aboriginal population into distinct groups reveals a wide range in terms of high school completion. More than six in 10 Inuit (61 per cent) have no high school diploma, compared to 48 per cent of First Nations and 35 per cent of Métis peoples. First Nations people living off-reserve have consistently higher educational outcomes than on-reserve residents. In 2006, 60 per cent of the off-reserve First Nations population had at least a high school certificate, compared to only 45 per cent of those on reserve.

More than half (51 per cent) of the non-Aboriginal population in Canada between 25 and 64 years of age, according to the 2006 Census, had completed post-secondary education, compared to 35 per cent of the Aboriginal population. Once again, there are big differences within the Aboriginal population: 40 per cent of Métis people, 32 per cent of First Nations and 26 per cent of Inuit have a post-secondary degree, diploma or certificate. While over seven per cent of Aboriginal women aged 25 years and over have a university degree, it is projected that more than 70 per cent of all jobs created will require some post-secondary education.<sup>15</sup>

The proportion of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians 15 years of age and older who obtained a university degree increased between 2001 and 2006, but Aboriginal peoples experienced a much smaller increase. In 2006, 18.5 per cent of non-Aboriginal Canadians, compared to 5.8 per cent of Aboriginal Canadians had obtained university degrees. Only four per cent of on-reserve residents had a university degree. If Aboriginal rates of university completion are to eventually approach non-Aboriginal levels, Aboriginal high school completion must be prioritized<sup>16</sup>.

## Early Learning

First Nations, Métis and Inuit experts emphasize the need to take a holistic approach to lifelong learning. In that context it is important to note the significance of early learning and its link to success in the school system. Children arrive in kindergarten with striking disparities in their readiness to learn. Early Childhood Education (ECE) is an intervention with the potential to overcome at least some socio-economic disadvantages. Other interventions include prenatal, postnatal and maternal health programs and services.

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<sup>15</sup> Canada Census, 2006

<sup>16</sup> Sharpe, A., Arseneault, J., Lapointe, S., & Cowan, F. (2009). The Effect of Increasing Aboriginal Educational Attainment on the Labour Force, Output and the Fiscal Balance. Centre for the Study of Living Standards. Retrieved February 5, 2010, from <http://www.csls.ca/reports/csls2009-3.pdf>.

Based on 2006 Census data, the Aboriginal share of the school-age population is 6.2 per cent of the children between five and 14 years of age. This is much higher than the Aboriginal share of the total Canadian population (3.8 per cent). The Aboriginal share of children four years of age and under is higher at 6.4 per cent. Many of these families are parented by Aboriginal women as single parents, indicating a need to provide supports to Aboriginal women (80 per cent of Aboriginal single parent households located off-reserve are headed by women<sup>17</sup>).

Provinces and Territories are leaders in Early Childhood Education. There are 10 ECE policies and no national programs other than Aboriginal Head Start (AHS). In 2006-07 AHS, which is federally funded, operated at about 560 sites serving roughly 14,000 Aboriginal children under age six, both on and off-reserve. This is a small fraction of the eligible children as the 2006 Census indicated there were 110,000 Aboriginal children four years of age and under in Canada. It is reasonable to conclude that many Aboriginal children are not currently attending an Early Childhood Education centre, and many of them would benefit from doing so<sup>18</sup>.

## Lifelong Learning

There is considerable merit in adopting a holistic life course approach to improving education, training and employment outcomes. Under such an approach, outcomes are viewed as the product of multiple interacting factors that impact upon individuals over the entire lifespan. Therefore, it makes sense to think about improving outcomes by considering policy and program options against a broad continuum that spans the early years, kindergarten to Grade 12 education, post-secondary education and other forms of education and training and includes school-to-work transitions and links to employment.

Considering our actions against a broad continuum makes a great deal of common sense. It is also an approach strongly supported in the literature. For example, it is widely accepted that failure to graduate from high school is not a single event as the term “dropping out” implies. In fact, the vast majority of evidence indicates that failure to graduate is really the end result of a complex series of events and conditions beginning in early childhood which impact the individuals over their entire life. Generally speaking, the same is true for other priority outcomes such as post-secondary educational attainment levels and employment outcomes – all of which depend on numerous factors including but not limited to success at the high school level. All things considered, this makes it highly unlikely that any single action implemented in isolation will be sufficient to close the substantial education, training and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

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<sup>17</sup> Canada Census, 2001

<sup>18</sup> Richards, J. & Scott, M. (2009). *Aboriginal Education: Strengthening the Foundations*. Canadian Policy Research Networks. Retrieved February 5, 2010, from <http://www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=2088&l=en>.

As is almost invariably true no matter what the issue, the possibilities for action related to Aboriginal education, training and employment outcomes far exceed available resources. This makes it critical that governments focus very strategically on initiatives that will have a substantial impact. To do this, one must consider each potential initiative in the context of its evidence-base, the extent to which communities support the idea, the degree to which the idea addresses multiple outcomes over the life course, and the degree to which the initiative does or could be characterized as having a substantial population reach.

### **3.1.3 TRAINING & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

Turning to the area of skills development, it is generally recognized that governments, federal, provincial and territorial, must invest in improving labour market outcomes for First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples to meet future labour market needs. This is especially relevant as Aboriginal peoples, with their growing populations, have a critical role to play in the context of a shrinking Canadian labour force and emerging labour market shortages. These investments must also consider the unique barriers facing Aboriginal women and solutions to overcoming these obstacles.

The Government of Canada has taken several initiatives in recent years to encourage better integration of Aboriginal peoples into the Canadian labour market. Under Labour Market Agreements with the provinces and territories, it is transferring over \$500 million over six years to enable provinces and territories to provide labour market programs and services to non-EI eligible clients, with some of this funding being targeted at Aboriginal clients.

At the same time, the Government has announced that a new Aboriginal Skills, Employment and Training Strategy (ASETS) to replace the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (ARHDS) effective April 1, 2010. This strategy is part of an umbrella federal Aboriginal Economic Development Framework that focuses on engaging the private sector and the whole of government, including provinces and territories, in promoting economic development and self-sufficiency of Aboriginal communities.

There is a need to better co-ordinate provincial/territorial and ASETS holder programs and resources to achieve optimum results for Aboriginal peoples. The Aboriginal Affairs Working Group could facilitate the process of engagement between Aboriginal organizations and provincial/territorial governments on Aboriginal labour market development issues and add value to the implementation of the (ASETS) Skills and Partnership Fund.

### **3.1.4 COUNCIL OF MINSTERS OF EDUCATION, CANADA**

In February 2009, for the first time in its history, CMEC Ministers held a national summit with national and regional Aboriginal leaders to discuss priorities for moving forward on eliminating the gaps in educational achievement for First Nations, Inuit and Métis learners. A key goal of the event was to build a new relationship among leaders in Aboriginal education and to build consensus on shared opportunities. Further to the CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education, at their September 2009 meeting, PT Ministers of Education/Advanced Education agreed to build on their partnership with national and regional Aboriginal leaders and develop a detailed plan for provincial and territorial follow up.

The August 2009 pre-Council of Federation meeting was timely as the NAO leaders and Premiers identified education and skills training as a key priority in need of immediate attention and established a working group comprised of Aboriginal Affairs Ministers and the leaders of the National Aboriginal Organizations.

The convergence of these two processes provides an opportunity to develop in co-operation with the national Aboriginal leadership more collaborative, cross-jurisdictional and cross-ministerial approaches to work on eliminating the educational achievement gap. Although Provincial and Territorial Education/Advanced Education Ministers have responsibility for provincial and territorial programs and services provided to Aboriginal learners, with the exception of services provided on reserve, Ministers responsible for Aboriginal Affairs also have a role in improving outcomes in a range of areas for First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

As co-ordinated through its lead Minister, the federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada, the Government of Canada also has a key role to play in relation to the education of all Aboriginal peoples. It has a variety of tools to pursue this role, including federal legislation (e.g. the Indian Act, self-government and modern treaty ratification legislation), intergovernmental agreements, and agreements with Aboriginal representative organizations, including the Inuit Education Strategy. It also can play a major role in improving Aboriginal educational results by helping to improve the socio-economic conditions of Aboriginal peoples in general. INAC has emphasized that work is under way on some key pillars of education reform, including: results-based accountability; partnerships with provinces and First Nations; and, comparability with provincial policy directions, standards, programs and student outcomes.

## Priorities

In March 2010, CMEC Ministers approved the following three proposed priorities for a pan-Canadian post-Summit action plan:

### 1. Data – Define, Collect and Share

At the CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education, education data emerged as a key theme. As the summary report states “Data is critical to understanding the educational-achievement gaps of Aboriginal peoples. Currently, the approaches taken by provincial, territorial, and federal governments to capture and use data are not co-ordinated. This lack of coordination makes it difficult to assess what works and what doesn’t for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners.”

CMEC has an established partnership with Statistics Canada, called the Canadian Education Statistics Council (CESC), to guide the collection, analysis and dissemination of pan-Canadian data relevant to education and lifelong learning. CESC has outlined a data strategy which includes work on Aboriginal education. Some examples are:

- a. A survey of jurisdictions’ practices in Aboriginal self-identification and data collection (in elementary/secondary and post-secondary education);<sup>19</sup>
- b. An increase in Aboriginal data coverage in *Education Indicators in Canada*;<sup>20</sup>
- c. CESC is also looking at various indicators and measures on Aboriginal education.

### 2. Equity in Funding

A recurrent theme emerged from Aboriginal leaders at the CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education about concerns with the inequities and shortfalls of federal investment in Aboriginal education. Provinces and territories agree that this is an area of critical importance to include in their Aboriginal Education Action Plan.

Ministers of Education/Advanced Education have noted recognition on the part of the Federal Government to making improvements to programming and funding in Aboriginal Education. In the 2008 Budget, the Government of Canada stated that the focus in reforming First Nations education is grounded in access to comparable education with provincial systems. Education/Advanced Education Ministers note the federal commitments in the 2010 Budget for increased funding to better support elementary-secondary education, and have also noted the interest in the

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<sup>19</sup> Available at: <http://cmecc.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/123/epi-report.en.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Available at: <http://www.cmecc.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/212/education-indicators-canada-international-perspective-2009.pdf>



development of a new approach to help learners access post-secondary education.

With these commitments in mind, Ministers of Education/Advanced Education will seek opportunities to engage the Federal Government on closing the educational achievement gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners through enhanced federal investment and improved funding models.

### **3. Information Sharing and Reporting on Progress**

CMEC is committed to information-sharing with National Aboriginal Organizations (NAOs) and the Federal Government (where appropriate) on Aboriginal education and initiatives. CMEC jurisdictions will be sharing best practices in Aboriginal education.

CMEC is also committed to engaging with the public and reporting on its progress on the Aboriginal Education Action Plan, individually through its member jurisdictions and as a pan-Canadian body.

#### **3.1.5 PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION**

PTA Officials have been directed to return to the AAWG with a series of recommendations for how Aboriginal Affairs Ministers and NAO leaders can contribute to improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal peoples by supporting the ongoing activity of CMEC.

#### **Aboriginal Education Action Plan**

Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and NAO leaders could lend value-added support to the work of CMEC by supporting the implementation of CMEC's Aboriginal Education Action Plan. Activities could include:

- Supporting CMEC engagement with Aboriginal peoples and the Federal Government through:
  - Identifying and supporting multi-jurisdictional information sharing;
  - Working together on shared priorities;
  - Undertaking gender-based analysis; and
  - Confirmation of existing and identification of new opportunities to mutually support educational outcomes of Aboriginal peoples.
- Promoting and facilitating research and policy forums designed to enhance the aims of the Aboriginal Education Action Plan;
- Promoting and facilitating the development of Aboriginal leadership, research capacity and scholarship in the area of Aboriginal education;
- Raising the political profile of Aboriginal education issues and generate momentum for change by supporting improved Aboriginal education structures, supports and ultimately outcomes.

## **Provision of advice and input on Canada-wide issues related to Aboriginal education**

Recognizing that PTs have unique relations with regional Aboriginal organizations and partners and are at different stages in addressing Aboriginal education, Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and NAO leaders could support the work of Ministers of Education/Advanced Education by providing further advice and input on issues that are faced Canada-wide.

This could include working with CMEC on activities, where appropriate, such as:

- Facilitating relationships between CMEC and regional Aboriginal organizations;
- Helping to develop national data, identifiers and indicators and helping to interpret research findings and national trends;
- Working with CMEC on matters pertaining to federal funding for Aboriginal education (including ECE, kindergarten to Grade 12, post-secondary and skills training). Specifically this work could involve the designation of a mechanism to study funding allocations with a view to develop consensus recommendations regarding options to achieve funding comparability;
- Facilitating an increased voice for Aboriginal peoples in relation to Aboriginal education policy and programming;
- Promoting the importance of Aboriginal languages, cultural programming and histories within education systems;
- Promoting the importance of educational enhancements, including childcare supports and delivery mechanisms using new technology, for northern and remote communities;
- Advancing and promoting key national messages in Aboriginal education;
- Facilitating information sharing among stakeholders.

## **Provision of strategic input on socio-economic issues impacting on Aboriginal education**

Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and NAO leaders recognize that education issues facing Aboriginal peoples should be considered within a broader socio-economic context including but not limited to health, housing, employment, infrastructure, economic development and Aboriginal languages and cultures.

Additionally, Aboriginal Affairs Ministers and NAO leaders can play a leadership role in promoting the benefits of cross-jurisdictional and cross-ministry collaboration to address the gap in educational attainment and in promoting policy interventions with the highest potential to close the gap in educational attainment.

Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and NAO leaders can help support the work of Ministers of Education/Advanced Education by providing input on a number of strategies targeting a range of socio-economic issues, and factors that can affect educational outcomes.

Five of the most urgent issues and relevant factors include:

- Poverty and its related effects, such as social exclusion and violence against Aboriginal women and girls.
- The lack of adequate, affordable housing both on-reserve, in the north and in urban settings.
- The impact of inferior health status, mental health issues and addictions.
- The intergenerational impact of the misguided policies and programs of the past, such as the Indian Residential School system.
- The challenges presented by living in remote, isolated and northern locations and the limited recognition of First Nation, Métis and Inuit worldview, knowledge, cultures and traditions in mainstream education.

### **Information Sharing**

To be effective in their leadership role, Ministers and Leaders need better mechanisms for information sharing on policies and programs that show promising results and access to reliable data to support policy development. Additionally, the provision of reliable, accessible data, disaggregated on the basis of gender where possible, and comprehensive information sharing require the involvement of the Federal Government as well as cooperation between and with Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Education/Advanced Education.

Aboriginal Affairs Ministers and NAO leaders, in cooperation with CMEC, have a role to play as champions of the need to improve educational outcomes at the national level since the large gap in educational attainment is experienced by all Aboriginal peoples across Canada. At the same time, the specific needs of First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners as they emerge in a regional and local context, must be acknowledged and considered in policy and program development. And if policies and programs developed and implemented at the local or regional level are found to make a positive difference, a mechanism for sharing such information on a systematic basis would clearly benefit everyone involved in the effort to close the gap in educational attainment, at local, provincial and national levels.

### **Working with Regional Aboriginal Organizations to Support AAWG Initiatives**

It is generally agreed there is potential for Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and NAO leaders to help support the work of Ministers of Education/Advanced Education and CMEC by supporting existing and emerging processes of engagement amongst jurisdictions to advance mutual interests of improved outcomes, co-ordination and comparability at the provincial and regional levels. In addition, there is potential to assist regional Aboriginal organizations if Provincial/Territorial or Regional Aboriginal Organizations (RAO) wish to engage in joint projects and initiatives.

Both the capacity and involvement of RAOs in education matters vary widely across Canada. In Quebec, for example, Aboriginal (First Nation and Inuit)

School Boards have been formed and are essentially responsible for education in their respective communities. In Newfoundland and Labrador, kindergarten to Grade 12 education has devolved to a single school board for Mushuau Innu First Nation and the Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation. NAOs are often closely linked to regional affiliates and, in some cases, the regional affiliates play a direct role in service-delivery, including the delivery of education and training. However, the capacity of regional affiliates to assume such roles varies widely.

Formal mechanisms such as Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) to assist in knowledge sharing and common approaches to resolving issues have proven to be beneficial in jurisdictions where they have been developed. The MOUs help to facilitate discussion on matters of mutual concern which typically involve all levels of government.

While RAOs need to assess whether or not they see benefits to engaging with NAOs and Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs in cooperation with CMEC to facilitate their objectives in relation to education, some tangible ways that Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and NAO leaders could help support the work of RAOs include:

- Maintaining and strengthening relationships through ongoing communication and liaison with RAOs on the CMEC action plan as it develops;
- Promoting and supporting new technologies to increase knowledge transfer and information sharing in Aboriginal education, including information sharing on best practices in jurisdictions where RAOs with direct responsibility for education have experienced positive outcomes;
- Identifying strategies to support collaboration in data collection and research related to Aboriginal education, including a strategy to engage relevant federal departments that have conducted research and evaluation in Aboriginal education;
- Promoting positive approaches across jurisdictions and with Aboriginal organizations to strengthen the Aboriginal self-identification processes; and
- Contemplating a strategic role in relation to increasing the numbers of Aboriginal teachers, developing/supporting teachers of Aboriginal languages, and improving the knowledge of all teachers in the area of Aboriginal education.

### **Co-ordinating Efforts**

As noted in previous sections of this report, a variety of activities are presently underway through the work of CMEC that link directly to the task of improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal peoples. There is considerable value in finding ways to better co-ordinate these activities amongst governments and better co-ordinate recommendations across multiple initiatives and strategies.

At their March 2010 meeting, CMEC Ministers accepted a series of recommendations from officials. Among these, CMEC Ministers “*directed*

*education officials to continue to work with Aboriginal affairs officials to ensure that the work of the AAWG support CMEC priorities”.*

Aboriginal Affairs and NAO officials could capitalize on this direction from CMEC Ministers by engaging with educational officials with the future aim of:

- Formalizing existing agreements to work together;
- Bringing forward ideas for collaboration that are derived from the April 2010 AAWG meeting;
- Engaging in a preliminary discussion on the approach, purpose and objectives of future partnerships; and
- Identifying potential ways to measure progress and report on results.

### **3.1.6 MEASURING PROGRESS & REPORTING ON RESULTS**

At the October 29, 2009 meeting of the AAWG, the importance of measuring progress and reporting on results was highlighted. It was noted that reliable and valid measurements of progress not only serve to tell us what the outcomes of our efforts are, but also allow for a level of reciprocal accountability and a continual feedback mechanism necessary to re-adjust our activities and approaches if need be.

The AAWG agreed that the issue of performance measurement may be viewed on two levels including a) performance measures aimed at assessing progress toward higher level changes in well-being and b) measures aimed at more specific “interim outcomes” produced as a direct result of federal, PT or NAO interventions.

Further work to define methods of measuring progress and reporting on results might be defined after the April 2010 meeting of the AAWG and after the proposed meeting between AAWG and CMEC representatives, once further clarity is achieved regarding the specifics of the proposed partnership.

### **3.1.7 EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

The education achievement gap faced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis learners and the consequences the gap produces for individuals, Aboriginal communities and the Canadian economy, and social fabric as a whole, need to be addressed. Critical distinctions exist on a regional basis and among First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples. The needs of Aboriginal women and girls require special consideration. Recognizing this, the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group officials recommend that the Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and the National Aboriginal Organization Leaders:

#### **WORKING WITH THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION, CANADA (CMEC)**

1. Support CMEC's three initial priority areas for action:
  - Data – Define Collect and Share;
  - Federal Investment; and
  - Information Sharing and Reporting on Progress.
2. Direct their officials to continue working with education officials to ensure that the work of the AAWG supports the implementation of CMEC's Aboriginal Education Action Plan by:
  - Formalizing existing agreements to work together;
  - Bringing forward ideas for collaboration, including those derived from the April 2010 AAWG meeting, the Inuit Education Strategy and others; and
  - Engaging in a preliminary discussion on the approach, purpose and objectives of future partnerships formalized through terms of reference.
3. Provide strategic input to CMEC on a range of socio-economic issues, and factors that can affect educational outcomes, and work with CMEC to generate momentum for multi-jurisdictional dialogue amongst interested parties (including Aboriginal governments, and National and other Aboriginal organizations) on common priorities and actions aimed at improving education outcomes.

#### **AAWG SUPPORT FOR PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL PROCESSES**

4. Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs work with provincial and territorial Ministers of Education and Advanced/Post-Secondary Education, Aboriginal governments, and National and other Aboriginal organizations to improve graduation rates and educational outcomes for Aboriginal students in areas such as:

- strategies to foster inclusive learning environments, including culturally appropriate and First Nation, Métis and Inuit perspectives in curriculum and resources;
- improved teacher training and professional development for all teachers and administrators respecting Aboriginal student cultural and learning needs;
- increased opportunities for Aboriginal teacher training, recruitment and retention;
- development of protocols for the collection, use and disclosure of student achievement data; and
- encouraging Aboriginal leadership and communities to foster the engagement of Aboriginal parents in the education of their children.

#### **WORKING WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

4. Take steps to engage the federal government in relation to improving Aboriginal education outcomes (both on-reserve and off-reserve) including, but not limited to, the issue of federal financial investment.





## 3.2 ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN CANADA

### 3.2.1 SCOPE OF WORK

Increasing economic development opportunities for Aboriginal peoples remains a key priority for Provinces and Territories and National Aboriginal Organizations. Evidence gathered from across Canada and around the world supports the premise that sustainable and meaningful economic development not only provides socio-economic stability, but also improves the overall health and well-being of Aboriginal peoples. It is important to note that limited economic data on Aboriginal peoples exists and pales in comparison to the economic data available for non-Aboriginal peoples. This shortfall must be addressed in order to provide an accurate and precise picture of Aboriginal economic development in Canada.

As a starting point, a particular emphasis should be placed on finding ways to jointly explore, advance and enhance the aims of the new Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development (FFAED).<sup>21</sup> The Federal Government has committed to a new Aboriginal economic development model that is opportunity-driven, results-focused and partnership-based. The AAWG shares that vision. The AAWG's scope of work must also go further to recognize that specific needs may arise as a result of urban/rural/northern and on/off reserve-based considerations, north of 60° considerations, the application of the *Indian Act*, and gender issues.<sup>22 23</sup>

A successful results-oriented approach to Aboriginal economic development can only be achieved once Aboriginal entrepreneurs are on a level playing field with their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Aboriginal businesses face several barriers in comparison to their non-Aboriginal counterparts, including access to financial capital, access to childcare, limited access to resources for developing skilled and trained workers, leadership, limited community capacity and unsettled land claims.

The AAWG recognizes that the current federal framework alone is unable to adequately create the business-friendly climate Aboriginal entrepreneurs require to be successful. Provinces, Territories and National Aboriginal Organizations have emphasized the need for the creation of provincial and territorial, and where appropriate, regional and diverse approaches to enhance Aboriginal economic

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<sup>21</sup> The Framework's five pillars include: strengthening Aboriginal entrepreneurship by creating a business-friendly climate on reserve and in the north, including improving access to capital; developing Aboriginal human capital by supporting demand-driven labour markets; enhance the value of Aboriginal assets by aligning federal investments with economic opportunities; promoting Aboriginal partnerships with the provinces and private sector; and improving Federal Government effectiveness and efficiency with clearer direction, greater coordination and more linkages.

<sup>22</sup> Aboriginal Affairs Working Group (AAWG), Oct 29, 2009, pg. 7.

<sup>23</sup> NWAC has completed a gender based analysis of Canada's Economic Development Framework which is essential to ensure that Aboriginal women benefit from any economic development strategies. This includes the development of performance indicators that measure whether Aboriginal women are benefiting from, and accessing economic development programs and strategies

development in the areas of information sharing and government support and services. This would allow each jurisdiction and/or region to build on the existing federal framework while simultaneously appealing to specific Aboriginal economic development concerns of distinct regions from coast to coast to coast.

### **3.2.3 BACKGROUND & CONTEXT**

#### **Statistical Overview**

Many First Nations, Inuit and Métis have expressed a desire to participate in economic development ventures, provided that their participation will contribute positively to both their communities and their lives. According to data retrieved from the 2007 Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Financing Initiative, approximately 2.4 per cent of small businesses in Canada were majority owned by Aboriginal peoples. This translates to roughly 27,000 businesses operated both on- and off-reserve.<sup>24</sup> Due to a lack of available data these figures do not include incorporated and community-owned entities.<sup>25</sup> (See **Appendix 4.2** for a more in-depth statistical overview).

#### **Aboriginal Entrepreneurs**

Aboriginal businesses and economic development initiatives span numerous sectors. Aboriginal entrepreneurs are just as creative and innovative as their non-Aboriginal counterparts, creating and seizing opportunities that stimulate community growth and meet market demand.

Building partnerships with Federal Provincial Territorial (FPT) governments and the private sector are important for the diversification and longevity of Aboriginal businesses. More importantly, access to capital, experience and expertise (skills and capacity) and private sector funding are essential for aspiring and established Aboriginal entrepreneurs. Moreover, by gaining expertise and knowledge through private venture partnerships, Aboriginal entrepreneurs can share their knowledge and help build capacity in their respective communities.

The number of private sector partnerships has been increasing for a number of years. In 2004, the Supreme Court of Canada introduced a 'spectrum' of consultation, noting that the stronger the Aboriginal right or title asserted and the more serious the proposed impact upon said right or title, the broader the scope of the government's duty to consult. Although the Duty to Consult rests with the Crown always, the Supreme Court of Canada noted that certain aspects of the Duty to Consult could be delegated to private sector companies, although any failure or inadequacy by a company in the discharge of these aspects would not absolve the Crown of responsibility. In many circumstances, the duty to consult and accommodate will not require economic benefits to flow to Aboriginal

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<sup>24</sup> 2007 SME Financing Data Initiative

<sup>25</sup> Statistics Canada and industry Canada, 2002 Entrepreneurs Survey, in *Aboriginal People in Canada: Growing Mutual Economic Interests Offer Significant Promise for Improving the Well-Being of the Aboriginal Population*, TD Bank, June 11, 2009. Pg. 15.

communities. However, in practice, relationships between Aboriginal communities and private sector companies that begin with the duty to consult can lead to economic development opportunities. Aboriginal businesses and communities can work in partnership with Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments and private sector companies on economic development projects on and/or affecting Aboriginal lands. Aboriginal women are under-represented in natural resource development initiatives.<sup>26</sup> Mechanisms for increasing their participation need to be pursued.

Aboriginal entrepreneurs want to be successful, build capacity, create partnerships, and provide long-term sustainable employment in their communities. At the same time, the private sector has taken notice of the potential benefits to partnering and investing in Aboriginal businesses.

### **Successful Aboriginal Businesses**

There is considerable merit to expanding the current number of Aboriginal businesses from coast to coast to coast. FPT governments, as well as National Aboriginal Organizations and the private sector, have a role to play in creating a friendly environment for trade and entrepreneurial development. Providing low interest loans and financial incentives for Aboriginal businesses to establish companies and joint ventures with private sector investors is just one of the ways to create a business friendly environment. The provinces and territories can also provide collateral or loan guarantees necessary for Aboriginal businesses or partnerships to obtain loans from financial institutions based on business plans and financial projections.

All successful businesses share similar leadership qualities that enable them to be profitable enterprises while simultaneously creating sustainable employment in their communities. Successful Aboriginal businesses are no exception. Some of these traits include:

- Leadership;
- Sound Business Practices;
- Strong Partnerships and Relationships;
- Human Resource development; and
- Competitive Advantages.

**Leadership** comes in many forms. However, all successful leaders share similar attributes, which are: they're excellent communicators and negotiators, strategic thinkers, are results oriented, are willing to take calculated risks, inspire those around them, and embrace continuous learning.

**Sound Business Practices** -- No business can compete in the market-place without sound business practices. These include the development of well

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<sup>26</sup> For example, in 2006 women accounted for only 14 per cent of all Aboriginal employees in the mining sector (NWAC Fact Sheet Profile of Aboriginal Women in Canada).

thought-out, researched and viable business plans, a code of ethics and developing benchmarks in order to monitor and reach company objectives.

**Strong Partnerships and Relationships** -- Building strong business partnerships and relationships are essential for every business to succeed in the market place. Strategic partnerships, such as the equity investment and sharing model, the subcontracting model and the cooperative model, are three important partnerships that are advantageous to Aboriginal businesses.

**Human Resource Development** -- Aboriginal youth is the fastest growing demographic in Canada. In order to build capacity and maintain long-term sustainable economic development, Aboriginal businesses communities must harness that human capital potential through various education and training partnerships and programs. A gender analysis of the unique needs of Aboriginal women can inform the best ways to increase their participation and ensure their full potential is reached.

**Competitive Advantages** -- Aboriginal businesses have distinct competitive advantages that make themselves attractive to potential private sector investment. On reserve opportunities include property tax exemptions for businesses located on-reserve, GST/HST exemptions on goods or services purchased by businesses for use on-reserve, and Impacts and Benefit Agreements (IBAs). More generally, certain approvals in areas of resource and renewable energy development favour proposals that include Aboriginal partners or Aboriginal workforce. There are also favourable procurement opportunities for developments serving a primary Aboriginal population (See **Appendix 4.4** for broader explanation). Finally, there is a growing Aboriginal workforce located in areas of the country where development is occurring.

## Key Emerging Sectors

There are several key and emerging sector developments that could be beneficial to aspiring Aboriginal businesses and their communities. Environmental issues need to be considered in these developments. One such opportunity relates to reserve land base expansion and land acquisition. For example, many land claim settlement agreements have allowed First Nation communities to acquire new lands, as reserve lands held or held in trust, either adjacent to the community or in strategic locations. A new or expanded land base can help encourage community and economic development, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal business opportunities, private sector investment as well as use of the land as collateral when obtaining loans from financial institutions in some cases.

With the settlement of comprehensive and specific land claims, the Aboriginal land base continues to grow. First Nations on-reserve now own or control 15 million hectares while the Inuit own or control 45 million hectares.<sup>27</sup> The progressive increase in Aboriginal land base will lead to significant economic development opportunities, particularly in resource-based industries. “Over

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<sup>27</sup> Government of Canada, “Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development,” Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Supply and Services: Ottawa, 2009, pg. 4.

\$315 billion in major resource developments have been identified in or near Aboriginal communities.”<sup>28</sup> In the North, a further \$24 billion has been identified in the mining, oil and gas sectors that could significantly benefit Aboriginal communities over the next twenty years.

Aboriginal infrastructure, particularly those located on remote reserve lands, can be the difference between attracting and deterring investment. Constructing and maintaining road and telecommunications infrastructure is essential for enticing the private sector to invest in Aboriginal communities. Broadband and high-speed internet has become a vital component of business marketing and success. By partnering with provincial and private sector companies, Aboriginal companies can negotiate and obtain construction projects while at the same time gaining expertise and building capacity. This is equally important for urban Aboriginal businesses, which require broadband services to compete with and market their products internationally.

Other infrastructure projects, such as water and wastewater treatment facilities, are not only essential for the health and well-being of Aboriginal communities, they can also create long-term employment opportunities. In some instances, construction can translate into training and mentorship opportunities, allowing First Nations to gain valuable skills and long-term employment through site monitoring and post-construction maintenance.

It is important to note that water and wastewater facilities are just one example of successful infrastructure spinoffs. Industries specializing in manufacturing and processing will also benefit substantially from such investments. The same skills-building and training model can be achieved through the construction of housing units, community health centers and community schools.

Renewable energy is becoming a strong emerging sector for Aboriginal economic development, especially in Ontario.<sup>29</sup>

### **3.2.4 CHALLENGES & BARRIERS**

First Nation, Inuit and Métis businesses face similar challenges that any small or medium-sized business would face. However, Aboriginal peoples are faced with distinct obstacles their non-Aboriginal counterparts do not have.

Some of these challenges include:

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid. pg. 4.

<sup>29</sup> For example, Ontario Power Generation (OPG) and the Lac Seul First Nation have formed a historic partnership that will see the First Nation own 25 per cent of the Lac Seul Generating Station. This is OPG's first new hydroelectric generating station since OPG was formed and is adjacent to the existing Ear Falls Generating Station on the English River in Ear Falls. The station was declared in service on February 20, 2009. The deal stems from a past grievance settlement reached in 2006 that addressed the impact of hydroelectric facilities built on traditional aboriginal lands in the 1930s and 1940s.

- Limited access to capital, due to the inability to leverage capital on reserve, Inuit, or Métis settlement land as collateral;
- Limited access to skills training and development, especially in remote areas;
- Leadership issues related to band governance, e.g. lack of government / private sector partnerships due to *Indian Act* restrictions;
- Limited community capacity to leverage resources and supports from a variety of sectors; and
- Unsettled land claims.

### Access to financial capital

Accessing financial capital is one of the biggest obstacles that Aboriginal entrepreneurs face when trying to start a business. Aboriginal businesses, like any business, require seed monies to begin operations; start-up funds for assets and equipment; working capital to maintain operations; and expansion capital to acquire additional resources and make investments in new technology.<sup>30</sup>

The reality is many Aboriginal entrepreneurs cannot gain access to capital because they do not meet established lending criteria of conventional financial institutions based in some cases on their inability to use reserve lands as leverage or collateral due to restrictions set out in the *Indian Act*. Not only do these factors inhibit Aboriginal peoples from accessing capital, they also hinder potential infrastructure development that many Aboriginal communities require to be successful. Furthermore, a lack of developed infrastructure also deters potential investors and private sector partnerships.

To address these challenges, many Aboriginal-owned financial institutions have been created, providing equity and loans to Aboriginal businesses and communities which otherwise would not have access to capital. Moreover, Aboriginal businesses receiving loans from Aboriginal Financial Institutions (AFIs) have played a leading role in economic development projects, where possible, enabling Aboriginal peoples to leverage benefits and build wealth.<sup>31</sup>

Their success rate (i.e. the number of businesses within the AFI sector remaining active after five years) is 58 per cent while that of Canada as a whole is 33 per cent. At the same time, despite the impressive track records of many AFIs, they have faced constraints on their capacity which has limited market access and threatened their long-term sustainability.

For example, businesses financed by Métis Capital Corporations (MCC) on the Prairies have a success rate over 70 per cent, but serving a clientele which often requires smaller size loans and is scattered across entire provinces and territories, often outside major urban centres, carrying with it higher costs.

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<sup>30</sup> *True to Their Visions: An Account of 10 Successful Aboriginal Businesses*. The Conference Board of Canada, November 2009, pg. 6.

<sup>31</sup> *Toward a Canada-Métis Nation: Economic Development Framework*, Métis National Council/Ralliement National des Métis, February, 2009, pg. 4.

Like other AFIs launched in the 1980s from a very limited capital base, the MCCs are restricted to making loans not exceeding \$250,000. This means that as the capital needs of some of their clients have grown considerably over the years, MCCs have been prevented from servicing this important and more profitable source of market demand. They are now working with INAC on the development of a Métis Nation Syndicated Loan Pool, to be jointly owned and administered by the MCCs that would fill this gap in financing and enhance their own sustainability.

Other avenues being considered under the new federal framework, for example, include the development of investment corporations and Métis Community Enterprise Corporations, which help build capacity at the community and regional level through employment and community economic development.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, the Federal Government's 2008 Loan Loss Reserve program (LLR) will help First Nations [on-reserve] access capital by offsetting a portion of commercial lenders' potential losses and creating incentives for the financial institutions to provide loans to First Nations businesses that would otherwise fall below the lender's standard for acceptable risk.<sup>33</sup>

In addition, the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association, a network of AFIs dedicated to stimulating economic growth for the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, has done remarkable work in advancing the growth of Aboriginal businesses. Since their inception in the late 1980s, AFIs have provided over \$1.3 billion in financing to Aboriginal small businesses, representing over 30,000 loans.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, the Federal Government announced the creation of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor) in 2009, a stand-alone regional development agency in the North. The Federal Government's financial commitment of \$50 million over five years will aid in implementing an innovative technology-based approach to respond to the unique opportunities and challenges of the North and to co-ordinate and deliver programs and policies for all three territories.<sup>35</sup>

### **Access to resources for developing skilled and trained workforce**

Many Aboriginal businesses suffer from a lack of resources, including expertise, skilled and trained employees and market access. This problem is further complicated for businesses located in rural and remote communities. Gaining access to business expertise continues to be a major barrier for existing and aspiring Aboriginal entrepreneurs. According to Statistics Canada, only one in four Aboriginal entrepreneurs have taken formal business training at the college or university level.<sup>36</sup> Without the proper expertise and training, it is difficult for

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, pg. 5.

<sup>33</sup> Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. "Government of Canada Launches New Measures to Support Aboriginal Economic Development," Dec 29, 2009.

<sup>34</sup> National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Associations. About Section.

<sup>35</sup> Office of the Prime Minister of Canada. "Background: Regional Development Agency for the North."

<sup>36</sup> Statistics Canada, "Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey," in *True to Their Visions: An Account of 10 Successful Aboriginal Businesses*. The Conference Board of Canada, November 2009, pg.8.

any business to succeed, let alone provide employment opportunities and build capacity.

Successful Aboriginal businesses often take advantage of training and development programs available through banks, Federal Provincial Territorial governments and Aboriginal lending institutions, among others. By providing support to Aboriginal enterprises through business development, Aboriginal businesses will be better positioned to succeed in the long-term. Further, gender specific business development programs would help meet the needs of Aboriginal women business owners.

Moreover, by creating partnerships with universities and community colleges, aspiring Aboriginal entrepreneurs will gain experience and expertise through on-the-job training and mentorships. This will allow Aboriginal communities to utilize the human capital they have without feeling forced to bring in people from outside the community to address their capacity and expertise issues.

## Leadership

First Nations bands often provide the best avenue for Aboriginal entrepreneurs on-reserve to gain local economic development opportunities. However, when the Band Council is also the board of directors, potential problems may arise. These include political instability (length of terms), leadership disputes and potential conflicts of interest.<sup>37</sup>

High turnover rates among Chiefs and Councils are due in part to the two-year terms imposed under the *Indian Act*. However, many First Nations communities have moved away from two-year terms. Most First Nations communities, for example, now have three-year terms (41 per cent), followed by two-year terms (28 per cent), four-year limits (26 per cent), and five-year terms (5 per cent).<sup>38</sup> High Band Council turnover, particularly those on the board of directors, can be detrimental to the long-term sustainability of First Nation businesses being financed by the band.

Despite these challenges, there are many success stories that merit attention. Membertou First Nation in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, is a good example. In 1995, the Membertou band “had a \$1 million deficit and only had 37 employees.”<sup>39</sup> The Membertou band council made the decision to hire back band members who left the reserve to pursue higher education. In 2000, Membertou Corporate Division was established in Halifax, and the band received ISO 9000 certification in 2001.<sup>40</sup> Today, Membertou Corporate Division is 100 per cent owned by the

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<sup>37</sup> *True to Their Visions: An Account of 10 Successful Aboriginal Businesses*. The Conference Board of Canada, November 2009, pg. 10.

<sup>38</sup> National Centre for First Nations Governance, *Elements of Custom Election Code*, in *True to Their Visions: An Account of 10 Successful Aboriginal Businesses*. The Conference Board of Canada, November 2009, pg. 10.

<sup>39</sup> Membertou Corporate Division. In *True to Their Visions: An Account of 10 Successful Aboriginal Businesses*. The Conference Board of Canada, November 2009, pg. 36.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*



members of the community, is operating at a surplus, and has a 95 per cent employment rate.<sup>41</sup>

Building capacity and establishing consistent governing practices, not only in First Nations communities but in all Aboriginal communities, will lead to both entrepreneurial and political stability. Simply put, the goal is not to create complicated set of bureaucratic offices or elaborate staffing models, but to establish rules that consistently govern the way First Nation governments affairs are handled, and to make certain those rules survive changes in leadership or other personnel.<sup>42</sup> By building capacity and establishing a consistent governing structure, First Nations governments on reserve, for example, would focus on their elected responsibilities, leaving economic development to professionally educated First Nations business people.

### Limited Community Capacity

For Aboriginal communities without a land base, opportunities to partner with the private sector have in the past been restricted despite the increase of resource and energy development in the vicinity of these communities. Impacts and Benefit Agreements and the realignment of federal community economic development programs anticipated under the new framework offer the potential for these communities and their entrepreneurs to exploit opportunities for economic accommodation and benefit from procurement and joint venture projects. Progress, however, will require resources for communities to be able to engage with corporations and governments in planning and participating in economic and business development. This is also an opportunity for communities who wish to develop community economic development approaches that build and support capacity in numerous sectors of the community, while also building business skills.

Through on-going discussions with the Federal Government on the implementation of the new economic development framework and INAC successor community development programs, the National Aboriginal Organizations have been participating in engagement sessions in recent months and at other meetings. For example, the 10 affiliates of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) have undertaken research on a national economic development strategy for Métis, Status and non-Status Indians living off-reserve. CAP has an on-going dialogue with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada in regard to the new Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS). The Native Womens' Association of Canada has conducted a gender-based analysis on the framework and will continue to work with INAC in this regard. The Métis National Council's five provincial affiliates are pursuing arm's-length provincewide Métis Community Enterprise Corporations to build capacity at the community and regional level. They would work to integrate and strengthen current developmental institutions and programs with an emphasis

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Miriam Jorgensen and Jonathan B. Taylor, "What Determines Indian Economic Success? Evidence from Tribal and Individual Indian Enterprises." Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, Harvard University, June 2000, pg. 20.

on private sector focused economic development and the re-engineering of social supports to achieve economic outcomes. They would be equipped to undertake planning initiatives such as developing business plans, leveraging financial resources, and supporting business development.

### **Unsettled Land Claims**

The process to settle comprehensive and specific land claims in Canada is a slow one. Since 1973, only 21 comprehensive land claims have been settled. In 2007, the Federal Government adopted a Specific Claims Tribunal for claims amounting to less than \$150 million.<sup>43</sup> Settling comprehensive and specific land claims creates an environment in which Aboriginal businesses, communities, and private developers can work in partnership to develop economic development opportunities that will benefit all parties.

### **3.2.5 PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION**

Federal Provincial Territorial governments, as well as National Aboriginal Organizations and the private sector, have collectively expressed a willingness to develop and sustain Aboriginal economic development. The barriers to and solutions for Aboriginal economic development have been presented throughout this report. In order to move forward and help Aboriginal businesses and entrepreneurs achieve success, AAWG must develop a strategy that legitimately tackles the barriers that inhibit Aboriginal economic growth. The AAWG supports the principle of the Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development that an Aboriginal economic development model must be one that is opportunity-driven, results-focused and partnership-based. Moreover, the working group believes by adopting the four strategic principles, Aboriginal entrepreneurs will be given the same opportunity to succeed as their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

The four strategic principles are:

- access to financial capital;
- developing Aboriginal human capital;
- enhancing the value of Aboriginal assets;
- forging new and effective partnerships <sup>44</sup>; and
- resources and co-ordination.

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<sup>43</sup> National Centre for First Nations Governance, *Elements of Custom Election Code*, in *True to Their Visions: An Account of 10 Successful Aboriginal Businesses*. The Conference Board of Canada, November 2009, pg 12.

<sup>44</sup> Government of Canada, "Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Supply and Services: Ottawa, 2009, pg. 12.

## Access to Financial Capital

Aboriginal businesses operate in different economic climate than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Aboriginal entrepreneurs face a variety of challenges, including access to capital and a lack of developed human capital, to name a few. It is critically important that a more business-friendly climate is established and maintained for Aboriginal entrepreneurs. This includes improving access to capital, including access to debt and equity capital, removing legislative barriers that impede Aboriginal economic growth, such as those currently found in the *Indian Act*, building community capacity through private sector and educational institution partnerships, and expediting the land claim resolution process. By eliminating these existing barriers, aspiring Aboriginal entrepreneurs will succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

## Developing Aboriginal Human Capital

One of the best assets Aboriginal communities have is human capital. The Aboriginal population is the fastest growing demographic across the country, particularly Aboriginal youth. By supporting demand-driven labour market development, Aboriginal communities can develop capacity in their respective communities while simultaneously meeting the labour demand that will not only benefit Aboriginal communities, but all Canadians in general.

## Enhancing the Value of Aboriginal Assets

Currently, many Aboriginal communities continued to face unwarranted barriers to economic development. Laws and regulations, such as the *Indian Act*, the Northern regulatory regime and deficits in community and institutional capacity are impediments to developing Aboriginal assets.<sup>45</sup>

As a result, Aboriginal assets are wrongly undervalued and under developed. The growing land and natural resource base of Aboriginal peoples as a result of comprehensive and specific land claim settlements presents a unique opportunity to develop and enhance the value of Aboriginal assets.

In order to properly seize this opportunity, all future economic development programs should be opportunity-driven and market-oriented. In the process, the current regulatory framework should be reviewed so modern lands management regimes can be adopted and implemented.

In Aboriginal communities without a land base, capacity must be created to enable these communities to exploit opportunities for economic accommodation and benefit from procurement and joint venture projects. This could entail the development of arm's-length institutions such as Métis Community Enterprise Corporations to undertake planning initiatives such as developing business plans, leveraging financial resources, and supporting business start-up and expansion.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid. pg. 15.

## Forging New and Effective Partnerships

Forging new and expanding on current partnerships cannot be overstated. Successful and long-term economic development will only be achieved if all interested parties work together to ensure Aboriginal entrepreneurs are given every opportunity to succeed. Together, Federal, Provincial, and Territorial governments, National Aboriginal Organizations and the private sector, can identify, collaborate, and partner on economic development initiatives that will benefit both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. For example, some provinces and territories utilize procurement policies to promote Aboriginal business development.

Economic development that is community-based and resourced should also be a priority. Collaborative partnerships are especially important for these types of initiatives and have tremendous opportunity to benefit the entire community.

## Resources and Co-ordination

In order for Aboriginal economic development to move forward, policies and programs should be developed to complement and address diverse needs and gaps in INAC's new Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development. Each provincial and territorial jurisdiction, as well as regional Aboriginal economic development agencies and National Aboriginal Organizations, will develop efficient and flexible mechanisms to enhance Aboriginal economic development in the areas of information sharing and government supports and services. Each distinctions-based approach should be opportunity-driven, results-focused and partnership-based. One size does not fit all, so a diverse and flexible approach is required to achieve jurisdictional and/or regional-specific solutions.

However, in order for the strategic delivery frameworks to be effective, Federal Territorial Provincial governments must work together to eliminate access to capital and financing barriers that currently exist for Aboriginal peoples. This is particularly important for First Nations on-reserve which are governed by archaic and outdated provisions in the *Indian Act*. This is also important for other Aboriginal-owned financial institutions, such as the Métis Capital Corporations and Aboriginal Financial Institutions who despite their efforts in supporting Aboriginal entrepreneurs, continue to face capacity and limited loan thresholds.

National Aboriginal Organizations must also work with Federal Provincial Territorial governments, as well as the private sector, to develop community expertise and capacity to run Aboriginal-owned and Aboriginal-created businesses. Once solutions to these obstacles are developed and implemented on a jurisdictional and where applicable, a regional basis, it is hoped that some of the existing barriers to Aboriginal economic development will be addressed. An example may include Métis specific economic development initiatives and programs such as those identified in the Métis Economic Development Symposium held in Calgary in December 2009.

### **3.2.6 MEASURING PROGRESS & REPORTING ON RESULTS**

The importance of measuring and reporting on the progress of Aboriginal economic development is paramount from both a national and regional perspective. Reliable and valid measurements of progress will not only serve to inform how effective efforts have been, they will also create an environment of accountability through continuous dialogue and feedback. This will allow each jurisdiction and, where applicable, region to re-adjust or modify the delivery of services accordingly.

The issue of performance measurement may be viewed on multiple levels. On the one hand, performance measures may be aimed at assessing progress toward higher level changes in well-being in areas such as educational attainment and high school graduation rates.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, measures may be aimed at more specific “interim outcomes” achieved in correlation to Federal Provincial Territorial and National Aboriginal Organizations intervention. In particular, emphasis should be placed on developing jurisdictional and regional indicators, thus allowing each jurisdiction and region to measure and monitor progress according to their specific needs.

The adopted approach should measure quantitative and qualitative indicators that are:

- Specific, measurable and valid;
- Consistent in application and comparable over time using reasonable time horizons for measurement;
- Rich enough to make distinctions among Aboriginal peoples and among various levels of geography, gender and age group, on and off reserve;
- Focused on outcomes as opposed to outputs so as to measure true change in quality of life;
- Results focused and relevant in the eyes of those making use of the data; and
- Affordable and accessible. <sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Aboriginal Affairs Working Group (AAWG), Oct 29, 2009, pg. 10.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, pg. 11.

### **3.2.7 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

For Aboriginal businesses to be successful and truly self-sufficient, federal, provincial and territorial governments, Aboriginal governments, National and other Aboriginal organizations, and the private sector must work in partnership to eliminate existing barriers to Aboriginal economic development. At the same time, it is recognized that most Aboriginal organizations and communities have limited resources and capacity to support and undertake economic development initiatives. In order for successful Aboriginal economic development to become a realistic and tangible goal, supportive of both Aboriginal men and women, the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group Officials recommend that the Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and the National Aboriginal Organization Leaders expand on the positive work that has been accomplished thus far by assisting in the following areas:

#### **ACCESS TO CAPITAL**

1. Working together to identify financial sector, Federal, Provincial and Territorial government programs that can improve access to capital for Aboriginal businesses and identify gaps in relation to access to capital.

#### **TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT**

2. Encourage the utilization of the broad range of training and development programs available through Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments to increase expertise and skills of the growing Aboriginal workforce including aspiring Aboriginal entrepreneurs. This may include promoting/creating partnerships with universities and community colleges.

#### **LEADERSHIP**

3. Encouraging Aboriginal communities to provide leadership to support entrepreneurial development and economic growth while building capacity and establishing consistent governing practices. The goal is to build leadership capacity that will create an environment of responsibility within the Aboriginal community for economic growth and development.

#### **COMMUNITY ASSETS**

4. Identifying examples of community economic development initiatives that successfully leverage resources and supports from a variety of sectors and developing a promising practices guide that will assist communities to implement these activities.

## **EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS**

5. Taking steps to build on practical regional processes (e.g., 2009 Métis Economic Development Symposium) and promote the development of long term partnerships with governments, industry and the Aboriginal business community. Activities to encourage and facilitate Aboriginal economic partnerships that could be undertaken, where applicable, might include:
  - a. skills training and development;
  - b. apprenticeship and mentorship;
  - c. contracting policies; and
  - d. access to capital.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

6. Identifying needs and collaborating on strategies that support Aboriginal infrastructure projects that can enhance economic development, such as increasing broadband connectivity.

## **CO-ORDINATION & INFORMATION SHARING**

7. Working together on developing efficient and flexible mechanisms to enhance Aboriginal economic development in the areas of information sharing and government supports and services. This may include developing a roster of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal economic development experts to advise and consult with Aboriginal communities and aspiring Aboriginal entrepreneurs on economic development opportunities.
8. Working together to identify and share Aboriginal economic development promising practices in provincial and territorial jurisdictions, including regional Aboriginal economic development agencies that will inform partners on how best to support Aboriginal economic development across Canada.

## **WORKING WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

9. Work with the federal government to effectively implement the new Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development and to identify gaps in the Framework where additional work is required, including but not limited to federal financial investment.





### **3.3. ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN & GIRLS**

#### **3.3.1 SCOPE OF WORK**

At the October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009 meeting, Ministers and National Aboriginal leaders recognized the critical importance of addressing violence against Aboriginal women and the situation of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada, including a commitment to a national, co-ordinated approach.

The solutions to the broad issue of violence against Aboriginal women require addressing its root causes. Service delivery concerns, including shelters, social services, legal services and public education, must be addressed.

#### **3.3.2 BACKGROUND & CONTEXT**

Aboriginal women experience victimization rates that are 3.5 times greater than non-Aboriginal women and are eight times more likely to suffer spousal homicide after a separation than non-Aboriginal women (Statistics Canada, 2006). Some 54 per cent of Aboriginal women report the most severe and potentially life threatening forms of violence, compared with 37 per cent for non-Aboriginal women. Further, the type of violence is of greater severity for Aboriginal women – 54 per cent of Aboriginal women who are victims of spousal violence experienced being “beaten, choked, threatened with or had a knife or gun used against them, or sexually assaulted” as compared to 37 per cent of non-Aboriginal women (Brzozowski, Taylor-Butts and Johnson, 2006:6).

Northern Aboriginal women experience some of the highest rates of sexual and domestic violence in Canada. The Territories, consisting of the Yukon, NWT and Nunavut, have a greater proportion of Aboriginal residents than any of Canada’s provinces and territories, with about 51 per cent of the population being either Inuit, First Nations or Métis (Yukon 25 per cent; NWT 50 per cent; Nunavut 85 per cent).<sup>48</sup>

Studies have identified that violence experienced by Aboriginal peoples is likely to go unreported (Statistics Canada’s General Social Survey, 2004). One study found that approximately 6 out of 10 incidents of violence went unreported in 2004 (Brzozowski et al, 2006).

The Sisters in Spirit Initiative of the Native Women’s Association of Canada has confirmed through its research that there are more than 520 missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada. Of these 520 cases, 24 per cent are missing women and girls, and 67 per cent are murder. Over half the

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<sup>48</sup> Statistics Canada 2006 *Aboriginal Population Profile* (2009) Ottawa, ON

cases involve women and girls under the age of 30 years. Fifty-five percent of the murder cases and 43 per cent of the cases of missing women and girls have occurred during or since 2000. This indicates a growing problem. The majority of the cases, 69 per cent, have occurred in the western provinces of Canada (26 per cent in British Columbia, 17 per cent in Alberta, 14 per cent in Manitoba and 12 per cent in Saskatchewan) (NWAC, 2009).

### **Root Causes & Social Determinants**

The social determinants of health must be considered when examining violence against Aboriginal women, including the need for adequate physical, social and personal resources in the areas of early childhood development, education, employment and job security; food security, health services, housing and income; social inclusion, and social safety nets. The contextual factors related to colonization and the impacts of the residential school, child welfare and justice systems also need to be considered.

There are many root causes leading to the high rates of violence and victimization against Aboriginal women and girls. When identifying root causes of domestic violence, the literature demonstrates that this problem has been negatively impacted by the shifting (and unbalanced) gender regimes, linked to colonization and rapid social change and/or the impacts of colonization on First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures and identity (Rexe, 2010).

Furthermore, concerns relate to service delivery in the areas of shelters, social services, legal services and public education. In northern and remote areas, the need for greater access to programs and services is even more acute. Jurisdictional issues can result in gaps in service delivery. Fiduciary duties related to Aboriginal rights must be duly recognized and met in order for these jurisdictional barriers to be overcome.

### **Issues to be addressed**

It has been acknowledged by the Ministers and National Aboriginal Leaders from across Canada that the crisis of missing and murdered First Nations, Métis and Inuit women and girls in Canada must be a priority area of action. The fact is that the research shows this is an increasing human rights concern in Canada that has attracted international attention. Indeed, the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women's (CEDAW) review of Canada in 2009 requested that Canada report back in one year given the pressing nature of the issue (CEDAW Concluding Observations 2008, Universal Periodic Review of Canada 2009).

Systemic challenges including racism, sexism, and the need for improvements to the overall health, social and economic status of Aboriginal women need to be addressed. In addition to this, however, research on the disappearance and death of Aboriginal women suggests that victims are not targeted because of Aboriginal identity but because of the lack of responsiveness of the police to reports of missing Aboriginal women (Rexe 2010; Whiteduck, 2010; Amnesty International, 2007; Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association, 1993; Ontario

Domestic Violence Death Review Committee, 2009). Some of the experiences recounted by families of missing and murdered Aboriginal women include: police simply not taking a report when a family contacts police; police sharing false information about the length of time a person must be missing before a missing persons report is filed; and the requirement of being next of kin to file a missing persons report (Rexe, 2010). Such experiences point to the clear need for increased focus on police and justice reforms that will improve investigations and prosecutions of these crimes.

Much media attention on this issue in Canada has focused on sex trade workers and women with drug addictions going missing from Vancouver's downtown eastside, creating an image of missing and murdered Aboriginal women being from this segment of the population (Rexe, 2010). However, the reality is that the victims represent a much broader cross-section of Aboriginal women. NWAC has found evidence for only a small number of cases that involve women and girls who were in the sex trade or had "high risk street lifestyles" at the time of their disappearance or death. This is not to suggest that sexual violence and exploitation of Aboriginal women and girls is not a serious problem in need of redress, but rather that this is just one piece of the puzzle. Gang involvement is another area that requires attention.

It is clear that measures are needed in order to address this issue, which should become a priority area of action for all leaders from Aboriginal, provincial, territorial and Federal Governments. Measures should also build on the expertise already developed by Aboriginal women's organizations. In 2010, the state of affairs with regards to the safety and security of Métis, First Nations and Inuit women and girls in Canada continues. However, there is a broad spectrum of violence that must be acknowledged when discussing the issues of safety and security of Aboriginal women in Canada. While much of the evidence collected on violence against Aboriginal women reflects experiences of domestic or intimate partner violence, there are other forms of victimization perpetrated by acquaintances, friends, relatives or community members. Research based on the experiences of families who have lost a loved one indicates an overwhelmingly negative response by police and the justice systems when families report a loved one missing, or when a loved one has been killed (Whiteduck, 2010). Included in the experiences of First Nations, Métis and Inuit women and girls are layers of violence that may be associated with or amplified by sexual exploitation, gang violence and vulnerability to violence because of a social system that has failed to protect women from complex factors of racism, sexism and marginalization. This said, there is very little research conducted to make the connection between the extremely high levels of violent crime and victimization of Aboriginal women, and the reality of disappearance and death.

To draw attention to the experiences of violence against Aboriginal women and girls, there are three distinct issues that must be addressed:

1. There is a direct co-relation between the high rates of violence against Aboriginal women and the experiences of disappearance and death. This connection must be addressed in policy and decision making regarding access to programs and services.

2. A societal indifference to the high rates of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada, which has been identified in the Sisters in Spirit research.
3. Inadequate police and justice system response to the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, which must be remedied.

### **3.3.3 BUILDING MECHANISMS & STRUCTURES**

A number of current initiatives have begun to shed light on the complex factors leading to violence against First Nations, Métis and Inuit women and girls. The following are examples of how this issue is currently being addressed at the national level and may serve as building blocks for co-ordinating efforts on a national scale.

#### **Stolen Sisters Initiative**

The launch of the Stolen Sisters report in 2004 by Amnesty International, as well as the Sisters in Spirit Campaign in 2004, resulted in an increased understanding and awareness of the levels of violence and societal indifference faced by Aboriginal women and girls in Canada. In 2005, the Native Women's Association of Canada received five-year funding for the Sisters in Spirit Initiative (SIS) for research, policy and education relating to missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada. The SIS has set out the challenges in detail and ongoing action to advance the needed solutions in the areas of promoting safety, promoting access to justice, increasing awareness of risk, educating police officers and the justice system about the needs of Aboriginal women and their families and promoting healing and access to culturally appropriate victim services for families who have lost a loved one. This initiative has been extremely successful in raising awareness of violence against Aboriginal women, and has set out policy changes that need to occur to address the root causes of violence and victimization that have led to the disappearance and death of Aboriginal women and girls. Of course, these efforts will only be completely successful with support from all involved. Aboriginal leaders have a role to play in ensuring members and leaders of their respective jurisdictions fully support addressing violence against Aboriginal women through educational, policy and legislative reforms, where appropriate.

#### **Nuluaq Project**

The Nuluaq Project was developed by Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada in order to improve the co-ordination of abuse prevention services and resources in Inuit communities. The Nuluaq Project conducts research, compiles a national Inuit database for abuse prevention, and shares information with the public. Abuse is an important issue and as such, Pauktuutit has been active in abuse prevention and building capacity to address abuse issues since its inception in 1984. This

project has enabled Pauktuutit to bring together individuals, agencies and groups who share a common interest in preventing abuse in Inuit communities, to collaborate on the development and implementation of this unique national, community-based strategy.

### **Working Group on Aboriginal Justice**

The mandate of the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Working Group on Aboriginal Justice is to address victimization and abuse in Aboriginal communities. The four priorities of the Working Group are: spousal abuse, child abuse, missing and murdered Aboriginal women and family, offender and community healing. The Federal, Provincial and Territorial Working Group on Aboriginal Justice is well-placed to identify and ensure implementation of their respective jurisdictional responsibilities in all the areas identified above, including access to justice, child welfare and overall social and economic well-being of Aboriginal peoples, with a particular focus on addressing the root causes of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.

### **FPT Family Violence Initiative**

The Federal, Provincial and Territorial Family Violence Initiative Working Group led by Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). The group consists of membership of 11 federal departments and provincial and territorial representatives and applies a specific lens to Aboriginal women's experience of family and domestic violence. There is also a Federal, Provincial and Territorial Status of Women Forum including a Working Group on Aboriginal Women with an ongoing priority focus on violence.

### **Other mechanisms**

In terms of other mechanisms, a number of Indigenous Peoples and Civil Society Organizations have recommended the establishment of a Joint House of Commons/Senate Committee in the Parliament of Canada on the International Affairs of Indigenous Peoples. The mandate of the Committee would be to monitor and evaluate Canada's progress on the implementation of their human rights obligations as well as to provide an educational function about the most recent human rights developments (NGO Briefing Note on the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review of Canada, January 2009).

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Collaborative efforts with the initiatives described above are needed, particularly in the areas of spousal abuse and missing and murdered Aboriginal women. This demonstrates a commitment to reduce the barriers that currently exist in the justice system to achieving safety and security for Aboriginal women and girls in Canada. Any strategies developed out of the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group should build on these and any other relevant federal, provincial and territorial mechanisms and structures.

### **3.3.4. ADOPTING A CO-ORDINATED APPROACH**

It is clear from the message received from the Ministers and National Aboriginal Leaders at the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group that there is a broad basis of support for addressing violence against Aboriginal women, including missing and murdered Aboriginal women, as a priority area for action. Nothing less than action by all involved will remedy this societal problem given its pervasive nature. Further, a social determinants of health approach that addresses the root causes of violence against Aboriginal women is required. This requires a national co-ordinated approach.

Increased collaboration between governments and National/regional Aboriginal organizations on issues of violence against First Nations, Métis and Inuit women would be a first step toward this goal. In addition greater clarity in roles among provincial, federal and territorial governments that is informed by the perspective of National Aboriginal Organizations would also assist in addressing these issues.

Areas for further dialogue and collaboration could include:

- Access to justice through improved police services, and a more culturally sensitive justice system (including prisons and the courts);
- Addressing the negative impacts of children in care; and
- Improving the overall socio-economic well-being of Aboriginal Peoples, including mental health, housing, food security, education and employment needs.

Governments and Aboriginal organizations should examine and determine approaches to address service delivery gaps identified in the areas of shelters, social services, legal services and public education. This should be done in a gender specific and culturally sensitive way. Jurisdictional issues that prevent service delivery should be overcome in a way that is respectful of Aboriginal and Treaty rights, including section 35(4).

More dialogue and collaboration among all orders of governments and Aboriginal organizations would also provide an avenue to ensure that existing initiatives are co-ordinated and integrated for the achievement of the greatest benefit for Aboriginal women and their families, and communities.

#### **Resource Allocation and Co-ordination**

Given the recent announcement in the federal budget of \$10 million over two years to address the disturbingly high number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women, it is crucial that federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal partners work together to ensure this investment will address the gaps in the social and justice systems.

### **3.3.5 MEASURING PROGRESS & REPORTING ON RESULTS**

Measuring progress and reporting on results is necessary in order to ensure that the political commitments made to increase the safety and security of Aboriginal women and girls becomes a reality before another generation of young girls suffer high rates of violence and victimization, including that which may lead to their disappearance and death.

At the October 29, 2009 AAWG meeting, it was agreed that the issue of performance measurement may be viewed on two levels including a) performance measures aimed at assessing progress toward higher level changes in well-being and b) measures aimed at more specific “interim outcomes” produced as a direct result of federal, PT or NAO interventions.

This could include setting out a process for measuring results arising from a national action plan on violence against Aboriginal women. Such a system would set out the respective roles and responsibilities of the federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal jurisdictions.

### **3.3.6 VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN & GIRLS RECOMMENDATIONS**

In order for Provincial and Territorial governments, and National Aboriginal Organizations to address the high rates of violence against Aboriginal women and girls, the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group Officials recommend that the Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and the National Aboriginal Organization Leaders:

#### **LOCAL COLLABORATION**

1. Increase collaboration and engagement among governments, non-governmental organizations, service agencies, justice systems including courts and police forces, and National and other Aboriginal organizations with the goal of developing more co-ordinated approaches to address issues of violence against Aboriginal women, including missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. This could incorporate support for shelters and safe houses and other local initiatives.

#### **BUILDING ON NATIONAL INITIATIVES**

2. Support the work of national organizations and Federal, Provincial and Territorial working groups. This support could include a review of existing initiatives with the goal of identifying future opportunities for collaboration and engagement in areas such as gaps in the areas of service and program delivery, access to justice and root causes of violence against Aboriginal women and girls.

#### **WORKING WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

3. Work together along with the federal government with a goal of developing comprehensive approaches to addressing violence against Aboriginal women and girls in Canada, including missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.

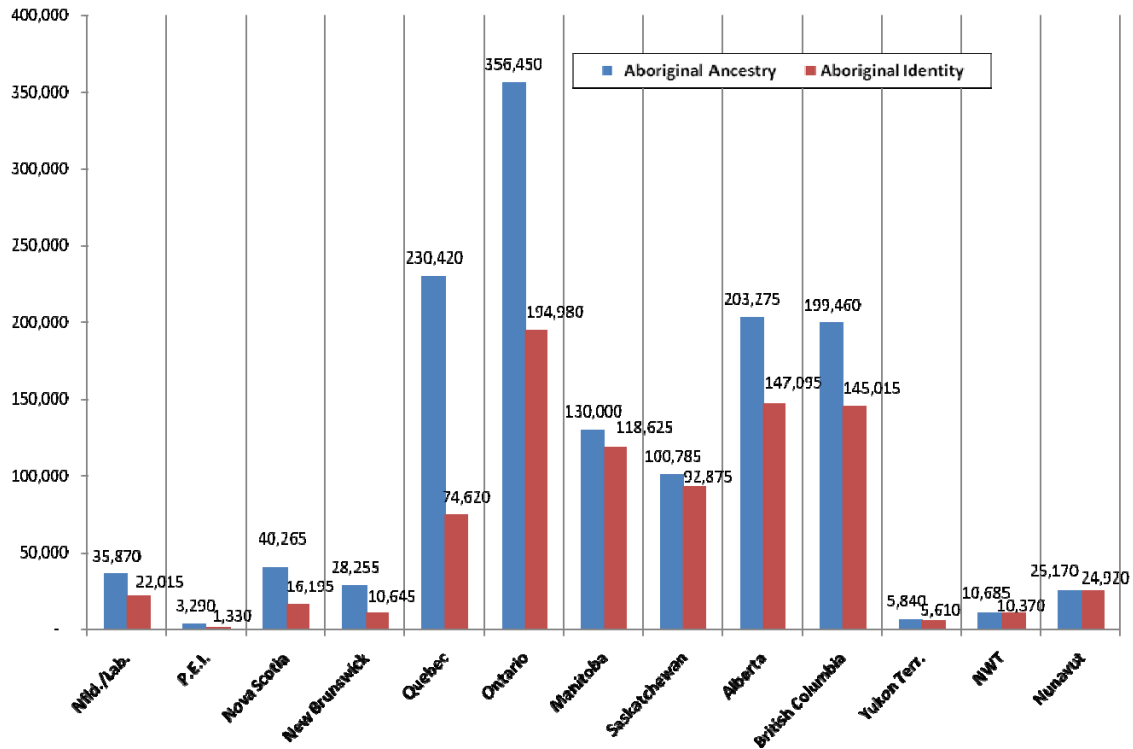


## 4. APPENDICES

### 4.1 *Adopted Recommendations from the October 29 AAWG Meeting*

1. That Provincial Territorial Ministers responsible for Aboriginal Affairs and the five National Aboriginal Organizations Leaders commit to ongoing dialogue by participating on the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group with a view to identifying and implementing concrete and tangible actions to improve outcomes for First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples in the priority areas discussed at the October 29, 2009 meeting.
2. That education and economic development be tabled as topics for further exploration at the meeting of Ministers and National Aboriginal Organization Leaders on October 29, 2009 with the aim of jointly selecting specific areas for further exploration and initial work.
3. That Provincial, Territorial and Aboriginal officials be directed to begin immediate work, with their federal counterparts, within the selected topics and return to the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group with recommendations for concrete and tangible activities that could be taken by governments and National Aboriginal Organizations. This work would take the form of one or more discussion documents or action plans with recommended areas for actions to be tabled at the next Working Group meeting proposed for April 2010.
4. That Provincial Territorial Ministers and National Aboriginal Organization Leaders connect the work of the Working Group to other forums and processes as appropriate (e.g., Provincial Territorial Ministers and Aboriginal Leaders' connection back to the Council of the Federation; linkages between the Working Group and Council of the Ministers of Education Canada on education matters; for the Federal Government and provinces from Ontario west, the Ministerial roundtable session on Métis economic development); and work toward a First Ministers' Meeting on Aboriginal Issues in 2010. The First Ministers' Meeting would serve as the key vehicle to launch a plan to achieve concrete and tangible outcomes for First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples consistent with the objectives of each of the parties.
5. That special attention is paid to the need for a distinctions-based approach for First Nations, Inuit and Métis where appropriate, and that this approach should fully integrate the needs and perspectives of women, urban populations, youth and other issues.

## 4.2 Aboriginal Ancestry Population & Aboriginal Identity Population Living Off-Reserve, by Province & Territory, 2006 Census



Ontario and Quebec have the largest shares of the ancestry based Aboriginal population relative to all other provinces and territories (356,450 and 230,420 respectively). There are higher numbers of Aboriginal ancestry population relative to the identity-based population in all provinces and territories. Many more people living off-reserve report ancestry than self-identify as Aboriginal in these provinces and territories, while the two population groups are much closer in size in the prairie provinces and in the territories.

### 4.3 Statistical Overview: Aboriginal Economic Development

As Figure I explains, the average ages of Aboriginal entrepreneurs are younger (35-44 years) than their non-Aboriginal counterparts (45-54 years), are small businesses located in urban areas, and have been operating for over five years.<sup>49</sup>

Figure I

| <b>Profile of Aboriginal Entrepreneur</b>  |
|--|
| 2.4% (or 27,000) of SME's in Canada majority-owned by Aboriginal people                                    |
| Aboriginal entrepreneur on average is younger (35-44 years) than non-Aboriginal entrepreneur (45-54 years) |
| Most Aboriginal businesses are small   |
| Most Aboriginal businesses are located in urban centres  |
| Approximately 70% have been operating for more than five years   |
| Source: 2007 SME Financing Data Initiative   |

Aboriginal employment falls into two categories: wage earners and the self-employed. For example, according to Statistics Canada, the majority of the First Nation labour force fall in the wage earners (94.1 per cent) category, while those identified as self-employed are less than half the Canadian average (5.8 per cent Aboriginal, 12 per cent non-Aboriginal).<sup>50</sup>

However, a closer look reveals a troublesome reality. An astonishing 75.6 per cent of First Nations 15 years of age and older have an annual income of \$30,000 or less, compared to 55.8 per cent of non-Aboriginal peoples.<sup>51</sup> These figures demonstrate a significant gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, and begs the question: have FPTA governments and the private sector done enough to encourage and support Aboriginal entrepreneurship? It is important to note that due to the limited amount of statistical information available on Aboriginal peoples, it is difficult to adequately and holistically provide a comprehensive statistical overview (see Economic Development Recommendation 4).

Aboriginal youth is the fastest growing demographic in Canada. Almost half (48 per cent) of Aboriginal peoples are 24 years of age and younger; in comparison to 31 per cent of non-Aboriginal peoples.<sup>52</sup> According to Statistics Canada,

<sup>49</sup> 2007 SME Financing Data Initiative

<sup>50</sup> Statistics Canada, Catalogue 97-564-XCB2006002, in *The State of the First Nation Economy and the Struggle to Make Poverty History*, the Make First Nations Poverty History Expert Advisory Committee, a Paper prepared for the Inter-Nation Trade and Economic Summit, Toronto, March 9-11, 2009.

<sup>51</sup> *The State of the First Nation Economy and the Struggle to Make Poverty History*, the Make First Nations Poverty History Expert Advisory Committee, a Paper prepared for the Inter-Nation Trade and Economic Summit, Toronto, March 9-11, 2009, pg. 38.

<sup>52</sup> *True to Their Visions: An Account of 10 Successful Aboriginal Businesses*. The Conference Board of Canada, November 2009, pg. 2.

*By 2017, Aboriginal people aged 20 to 29 could make up 30 per cent of those in their 20s in Saskatchewan; 24% in Manitoba; 40 per cent in the Yukon; and 58 per cent in the Northwest Territories. Already, more than 80 per cent of Nunavut's population aged 20 to 29 is Aboriginal, and the proportion is expected to grow.<sup>53</sup>*

Between 2001 and 2006, the Aboriginal population grew four times faster than the non-Aboriginal population, with a median age of 26.5 years -- 13 years younger than the average Canadian.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, 400,000 Aboriginal peoples will reach the age to enter the labour market over the next ten years which represents a unique opportunity to meet Canada's growing labour shortages.<sup>55</sup>

With the vast number of retirements over the next five-to-10 years, Aboriginal peoples are well positioned to help fill the void left as a result of that human resource shortage; however educational attainment must improve to allow Aboriginal youth to fill skilled positions. Moreover, Aboriginal youth is the fastest growing demographic in Canada. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal businesses alike should utilize that untapped human capital in order to become successful in the future. Not only will businesses flourish, the Canadian economy in general will as well.

Although it is important to capitalize on the human capital potential Aboriginal youth provides, it is equally vital for Aboriginal men and women to be given an equal opportunity to succeed. According to the Native Womens' Association of Canada, most Aboriginal women experience greater barriers and poorer outcomes in relation to Aboriginal men and non-Aboriginal women. For Aboriginal businesses to be successful in the future, Aboriginal women should be given the same economic opportunities as their male counterparts. Any economic development initiative must "support, advance and fully integrate Aboriginal women entrepreneurs into the Canadian economy."<sup>56</sup>

Also troublesome is the discrepancy in income levels between Aboriginal men and women. According to the 2006 census, the average income of Aboriginal women was 23 per cent less than that of men. Furthermore, this reflects the concentration of Aboriginal women in lower paying professions; nearly 60 per cent work in sales, service, and business finance or administrative occupations.<sup>57</sup> It is essential that Aboriginal women are given every opportunity to pursue educational and employment opportunities, specifically in management or upper management positions, as well as non-traditional occupations.

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<sup>53</sup> *Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in 2006, in True to Their Visions: An Account of 10 Successful Aboriginal Businesses.* The Conference Board of Canada, November 2009, pg. 3.

<sup>54</sup> Government of Canada, "Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development," Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Supply and Services: Ottawa, 2009, pg. 3.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 3.

<sup>56</sup> Native Women's Association of Canada, "Aboriginal Solutions Toward Stimulating Canada's Economy," Prepared for the First Minister's Meeting with National Aboriginal Leaders: Ottawa, January 15, 2009, pg. 2.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 4.

## 4.4 Summary of Best Practices for Successful Aboriginal Businesses

### Leadership

It has been proven time and time again that behind every successful business is strong leadership. Aboriginal businesses are no different. Long-term vision and timely execution are all features of the 10 successful Aboriginal businesses<sup>58</sup> outlined in the Conference Board of Canada's "An Account of 10 Successful Businesses." These businesses all shared the same leadership attributes and qualities: expert communicators and negotiators; inspirational and passionate; genuine and act with integrity; courageous, embrace continuous learning; are strategic thinkers; and focused on results.<sup>59</sup>

Successful Aboriginal businesses need to communicate and negotiate reasonably and effectively. It is important for leaders to articulate their positions or visions to both potential investors and employees clearly and firmly, while at the same time remaining open to constructive criticism and innovative ideas. This will create a positive working environment among staff and stakeholders, while at the same time holding true to Aboriginal cultures and values in the process.

Successful Aboriginal business people are also inspirational and passionate individuals. They encourage and motivate their employees through their personal involvement and passion for their businesses. For example, the staff from Big Soul Productions Inc, which is an Aboriginal-owned production company that "continues to create, develop and produce programming to showcase established and emerging Aboriginal talent from the Aboriginal arts community,"<sup>60</sup> attributes their success to their positive working environment and the owner's positive energy.

It is critical to have the trust of community members when operating a community-based enterprise. Successful Aboriginal business leaders earn that trust through integrity-based principles and maintaining a genuine approach to business. By doing so, their communities will trust them to do what is right for the greater good for the community. These are the guiding principles of Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park, which is a "world renowned cultural, educational and entertainment centre built for the promotion and preservation of the Siksika

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<sup>58</sup> The ten successful businesses are: Arctic Adventures, Big Soul Productions Inc, Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park, Inc, Five Nations Energy Inc, Kavik-Axys Inc, Khewa Native Art Boutique, Kitassoo Aqua Farms LTD, Membertou Corporate Division, Say Magazine, and Tron Power Inc.

<sup>59</sup> National Centre for First Nations Governance, *Elements of Custom Election Code*, in *True to Their Visions: An Account of 10 Successful Aboriginal Businesses*. The Conference Board of Canada, November 2009, pg 14.

<sup>60</sup> Big Soul Productions, in National Centre for First Nations Governance, *Elements of Custom Election Code*, in *True to Their Visions: An Account of 10 Successful Aboriginal Businesses*. The Conference Board of Canada, November 2009, pg 26.

Nations Peoples' Language, Culture, and Traditions.”<sup>61</sup> It is important for both the Chairman of the Board Jason Doore and General Manager Jack Royal, that they are trusted by the Siksika community, knowing full well that the Park's success or failure will have an immediate impact on the community's socio-economic well-being.<sup>62</sup>

Aboriginal businesses that have been successful for over five years are also courageous and embrace continuous learning. Successful businesses are not successful without taking calculated risks and express the willingness to stay up-to-date on the latest technological innovations. For example, the decline in the salmon population prompted Kitasoo Seafoods Ltd to either shut down operations or expand its operations into fish farming. The risk was taken and the community has reaped the benefits ever since. The establishment of Kitasoo Aqua Farms Ltd has created long-term employment which has contributed to overall-all well-being of the community.

Finally, successful Aboriginal entrepreneurs are strategic thinkers and results oriented. They must be flexible and adapt to the ever-changing business environment, think long-term and obtain results. This is particularly important since most Aboriginal businesses fall in the small or medium-sized category.

### **Sound Business Practices**

Any aspiring business person must have a complete and sound business plan. As the current economic climate indicates, many businesses have fallen to the wayside due to subpar business practices. As Baldwin et al explain, “40 per cent of new businesses fail within two years.”<sup>63</sup> Even more troubling for Aboriginal businesses, according to 2002 statistics, “one in five [Aboriginal] business owners had a written business plan to achieve their goals.”<sup>64</sup> Successful Aboriginal leaders adopt sound business practices and principles so their businesses can compete, are sustainable and can grow, and achieve company targets.

Many Aboriginal community-based businesses are limited by their geographical location. It is therefore critical to use their location and geography to their advantage. A successful business marketing plan and strategy can overcome these challenges, develop a strong reputation and establish a clientele.

Finally, Aboriginal businesses will achieve longevity through their ability to adapt and by sticking to basic business sense. Arctic Adventures, which is an Inuit-owned professional outfitting company, has constantly modified its tourism packages to meet market demand. The business currently offers two different

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<sup>61</sup> Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park, in National Centre for First Nations Governance, *Elements of Custom Election Code*, in *True to Their Visions: An Account of 10 Successful Aboriginal Businesses*. The Conference Board of Canada, November 2009, pg. 28.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 15.

<sup>63</sup> Baldwin et al., “Failure Rates for New Canadian Firms,” in *True to Their Visions: An Account of 10 Successful Aboriginal Businesses*. The Conference Board of Canada, November 2009, pg 17.

<sup>64</sup> Statistics Canada, “Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey” in *True to Their Visions: An Account of 10 Successful Aboriginal Businesses*. The Conference Board of Canada, November 2009, pg 18.

types of outfitting – one with a one-to-four ratio and the other with a one-to-two guide per hunter ratio.<sup>65</sup> This allows Arctic Adventures to appeal to several market demands while maintaining product integrity, and sustaining long-term employment for the region.

### **Strong Partnerships and Relationships**

Establishing strong business partnerships and relationships cannot be overstated. Aboriginal leaders often build relationships with education and financial institutions, governments, and the private sector for a variety of reasons, such as building capacity, education and training, access to capital, and building expertise.

There are several types of partnerships that can be beneficial to Aboriginal businesses. The first is the equity investment and profit sharing model; whereby private sector companies invest in Aboriginal businesses that already have the start-up capital and expertise in house.<sup>66</sup> A prime example is the proposed Mackenzie Valley Pipeline project, where Aboriginal groups control a one-third stake.<sup>67</sup> This project could yield millions of dollars in profits for those Aboriginal partners. In addition, Aboriginal businesses can gain further expertise while at the same time using their partner's investment to access additional capital and expand their enterprise.

Another beneficial business partnership is the subcontracting model, whereby an Aboriginal business provides a service to another enterprise. This commonly occurs with a non-Aboriginal enterprise conducting business with an Aboriginal community and/or land. This sort of business arrangement often occurs as a result of an Impacts and Benefits Agreement<sup>68</sup>.

Another successful partnership is the cooperative model, whereby Aboriginal businesses partner with other Aboriginal businesses or communities. This allows Aboriginal businesses to pool their resources to compete with other non-Aboriginal businesses. This cooperative model, also referred to as "Treaty Economy," has been successful for several Aboriginal businesses. For example, Five Nations Energy is a non-profit energy company owned by three Aboriginal communities. Attawapiskat Power Corp, Kashechewan Power Corp and Fort Albany Power Corp<sup>69</sup> pooled their resources in order to make the initial investment and kick-start their company.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid. 19.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>67</sup> *Aboriginal People in Canada: Growing Mutual Economic Interests Offer Significant Promise for Improving the Well-Being of the Aboriginal Population*, TD Bank, June 11, 2009. Pg. 16.

<sup>68</sup> The IBA usually contain provisions for minimizing negative impacts, such as environmental impact as a result of development, and maximizing benefits, such as job creation.

<sup>69</sup> *True to Their Visions: An Account of 10 Successful Aboriginal Businesses*. The Conference Board of Canada, November 2009, pg. 29.

## Human Resource Development

Aboriginal youth is the fastest growing demographic in Canada. In order for Aboriginal businesses to be successful, Aboriginal communities must educate and train their youth.

An emphasis should be placed on early childhood development and K-12 learning, specifically a proven delivery model with tangible outcomes. This can be achieved by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal governments working together through education partnerships. For example, in 2006, the Province of British Columbia, the Federal Government and the First Nations Education Steering Committee entered into a series of tripartite agreements that recognized the jurisdiction of First Nations over K-12 education.<sup>70</sup> The agreement recognized the right for participating communities to develop laws with respect to education while at the same time working in tandem to achieve desired pupil outcomes. Alberta signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Education in February 2010. The MOU establishes an equal partnership, among the Government of Canada, the Chiefs in Alberta, and the Government of Alberta, and a comprehensive strategic framework, to improve educational outcomes for First Nations students. In 2008, New Brunswick's First Nations, the Province of New Brunswick and the Federal Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together to improve educational outcomes of First Nations students in band-operated and publicly run schools.<sup>71</sup> By working together, governments at all levels can empower students to succeed.

Finally, by providing Aboriginal students with higher learning opportunities through education and private sector partnerships, Aboriginal communities can build capacity and expertise through job training and mentorships.

## Competitive Advantages

Despite the challenges many Aboriginal businesses face, there exist distinct competitive advantages over their non-Aboriginal counterparts. For example, First Nations peoples and bands on reserve are exempt from taxation on property located on reserve<sup>72</sup> and they are generally exempt from taxation of business income if the "actual income-earning activities of the businesses take place on the reserve."<sup>73</sup> In addition, band-owned corporations "do not pay GST/HST on goods [or services] bought for use in band management activities...or for real property on reserve."<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> *Aboriginal People in Canada: Growing Mutual Economic Interests Offer Significant Promise for Improving the Well-Being of the Aboriginal Population*, TD Bank, June 11, 2009. Pg. 8.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 8.

<sup>72</sup> *Indian Act*, s. 87 in *True to Their Visions: An Account of 10 Successful Aboriginal Businesses*. The Conference Board of Canada, November 2009, pg. 4

<sup>73</sup> Canada Revenue Agency, "Information for Status Indians," in *True to Their Visions: An Account of 10 Successful Aboriginal Businesses*. The Conference Board of Canada, November 2009, pg. 4.

<sup>74</sup> Canada Revenue Agency, "Businesses owned by Indians, Indian Bands, or Band Empowered Entities," in *True to Their Visions: An Account of 10 Successful Aboriginal Businesses*. The Conference Board of Canada, November 2009 pg. 5.



Income and sales tax exemptions may also apply to business partners of non-incorporated First Nations-owned businesses. Income tax exemptions may apply for the share of the partnership's businesses that represents activities conducted on reserve.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, both the goods and services tax (GST) and the harmonized sales tax (HST) exemptions apply to partners of status First Nations-owned businesses when goods are purchased on or delivered to a reserve "by the vendor or the vendor's agent."<sup>76</sup>

Aboriginal communities may also benefit from Impacts and Benefits Agreements. Examples include either the subcontracting of services to an Aboriginal-owned company when development occurs on Aboriginal land, or provisions that encourage the creation of Aboriginal-owned businesses. Finally, many Aboriginal businesses have competitive advantages for procurement purposes. Federal Government contracts worth over \$5000 and serving "a primarily Aboriginal population," are set aside for qualified Aboriginal businesses.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, pg. 5.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, pg. 5.

<sup>77</sup> Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business," in *True to Their Visions: An Account of 10 Successful Aboriginal Businesses*. The Conference Board of Canada, November 2009, pg. 5.

## **4.5 GLOSSARY OF TERMS/DEFINITIONS OF VIOLENCE**

### **Culturally Relevant Gender Based Analysis**

Culturally relevant gender-based analysis recognizes that the social, cultural and legal realities of women can vary across cultures and societies and unless these realities are factored into the policy making process, gender equality goals may be compromised. In a First Nation, Métis and Inuit context, culturally relevant gender-based analysis factors in the diverse impacts of colonialism (past and present) on women and men and their respective enjoyment of individual and collective rights. Culturally relevant gender-based analysis recognizes that gender equality can be achieved in different ways. Gender-based analysis of First Nation, Métis and Inuit laws should be grounded in the cultural values and worldview of the Aboriginal people in question; and should assess how specific gender roles or other gender-related social and economic factors may result in an apparently neutral law having different impacts for women compared to men. While some of these factors may be common to most First Nation, Métis or Inuit peoples, there is also great cultural diversity and varying economic and social conditions that can affect men and women differently.

### **Domestic Violence**

Domestic Violence is any use of physical, sexual force or psychological actual or threatened, in an intimate relationship. Although both women and men can be victims of domestic violence the overwhelming majority of violence involves men abusing women. Intimate relationship includes those between the opposite-sex and same sex partners. Domestic violence may include a single act of abuse and may include physical assault, threats, and emotional psychological and sexual abuse.

### **Intimate Partner Violence or Spousal Violence**

Similar to domestic violence, spousal violence is violence toward or abuse of one's spouse or domestic partner.

### **Family Violence**

Family violence is typically used as a more comprehensive definition of domestic violence, which incorporates a wider range of family and family-like relationships including children, elders, extended family members, or non-family members living in the home. The use of this definition aims to broaden the understanding of domestic violence to better recognize economic, emotional and spiritual abuse, as well as other types of threatening and controlling behaviour.

**For additional definitions, please see: <http://respectwomen.ca/formsofviolence.html>.**

## 4.6 STATISTICAL OVERVIEW: VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN

Nearly 60 per cent of Inuit women in Nunavik have experienced violence in adulthood.<sup>78</sup> According to the 2004 General Social Survey (GSS), residents of the territories were three times more likely than provincial residents to experience a violent victimization such as sexual assault, robbery or physical assault (315 versus 106 incidents per 1,000 population). Police-reported crime rates in the territories were substantially higher than rates in the rest of Canada. Specifically, in 2005, crime rates in the North were over four times higher than rates in the provinces (33,186 compared to 7,679 incidents per 100,000 population).

Statistics also clearly show a gender divide in experiences with violence: over the 30-year period between 1975 and 2004, spousal homicide rates in Nunavut when calculated as a rate per 100,000 couples were 7.3 for women and 3.6 for men, the highest of all three territories (GSS 2004). According to the Statistics Canada report, *Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends 2006*, rates of violence experienced by women in the three Territories were 12 per cent compared to seven per cent in the rest of Canada. The report, which devoted a specific section to Aboriginal women in the three Territories, also found that:

- Where the rates of spousal violence were much higher in the Territories than in the rest of Canada, the severity and impacts of spousal violence were also greater;
- 28 per cent of women in Nunavut were victims of spousal violence compared to seven per cent in the provinces;
- Police reported higher rates of violent crimes in the territories, including sexual assaults and spousal homicides;
- Per capita rates of shelter use were much higher in the Territories than in the provinces, with Nunavut having the highest shelter usage per capita: shelter use in Nunavut on a single day was a staggering 10 times higher than any of the provinces and territories.

Several studies have shown that the resources available for Aboriginal women and children in the North who are victims of domestic violence fall short of meeting their needs. Shelters targeting this population are not able to keep up with the demand for their services. Currently there are a total of 12 shelters serving the three Territories, operating in the range from emergency shelters, transition houses, and second stage housing, although the last is scarce and there is no second-stage housing in Nunavut. In Nunavik there are three women's shelters serving 14 fly-in communities, and three shelters serving five Inuit communities in Nunatsiavut. Shelters across the North are the ones most in need of assistance with regards to operations, as they face particular challenges that are unique to the North, such as very high operating costs

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<sup>78</sup> Institut national de santé publique du Québec and Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services *Qanuippitaa? How are we? Epidemiological Portrait of Physical Violence and Property Offences in Nunavik* (2007) pg. 5

including utilities and shipping costs, human resource capacity issues and lack of access to training and professional supports. They must assist women who are coping with a wide range of social problems, including suicide, substance abuse, and all forms of violence.

Aboriginal women in the North are being impacted severely by family violence and confronted with a glaring lack of resources to address their needs. Homelessness, overcrowding, poverty, lack of employment and/or skills, substance abuse and the lasting effects of colonization, residential schooling and intergenerational trauma are all key issues that further contribute to these women being continually vulnerable to ongoing abuse. The extreme housing crisis across the Arctic often means that for women living with violence in the home there may be no other safe housing options, and the cost of air travel to seek safety in another community can be prohibitively expensive.

This statistical overview demonstrates the critical importance of taking the requisite measures to ensure that First Nation, Métis and Inuit women enjoy their right to live free from violence and to be safe and secure from victimization.

## **4.7 VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN: CURRENT INITIATIVES**

### **SUMMITS**

The First and Second National Aboriginal Women's Summits (NAWS I and II) provided important policy discussion tables to address violence against Aboriginal women and girls.<sup>79</sup> Specific recommendations were made at NAWS I to ensure that addressing violence against Aboriginal women and girls is a priority in all areas, including improvements to sexual and reproductive health services, education, child care, employment and housing (including shelters, second stage housing and transition shelters) (Recommendation #2). Further, there was a call for increased financial resources from the Federal/Provincial/Territorial governments for family violence initiatives, abuse prevention programs and policies, healing initiatives and child sexual abuse and Elder abuse programs and services (Recommendation #2).

At NAWS II, strategic actions were set out including partnerships between governments and Aboriginal women's groups and communities to address root causes related to violence, health and justice, calling for an Aboriginal Women's Strategy on Violence, or building on existing strategies, such as the National Strategy to Prevent Abuse in Inuit Communities which requires additional resources to be effectively implemented. Sustained, increased funding on a multi-year basis was identified as needed. Many of the recommendations and strategic actions identified at NAWS I and II are pertinent to addressing violence against Aboriginal women and girls, including in the areas of the criminal justice system and the need for a culturally relevant gender based analysis (CRGBA). Some of the National Aboriginal Organizations have developed a CRGBA.

### **CULTURALLY RELEVANT GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS**

Culturally Relevant Gender-Based Analysis (CRGBA) is a tool that is now recognized for its usefulness in understanding specific issues related to Aboriginal women, not only by National Aboriginal Organizations but also by the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Governments. For example, NWAC uses its CRGBA as a central lens in its policy and legal work in all areas, including NWAC uses its CRGBA as a central lens in its policy and legal work in all areas, including health, violence against Aboriginal women and girls and human rights, calling for the full equality and constitutional rights of Aboriginal women to be recognized and protected. For example, NWAC has developed a CRGBA of the UN *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Pauktuutit has developed an

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<sup>79</sup> The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) with funding support from the Government of Canada initiated the two National Aboriginal Women's Summits. NWAC co-hosted these Summits in 2007 with the Government of Newfoundland & Labrador and in 2008 with the Government of the Northwest Territories. Over 150 women from every jurisdiction in Canada attended NAWS I and II. The purpose of the Summits was to raise awareness of issues specific to Aboriginal women and to develop strategic actions to aid in the implementation of the twenty-nine priority recommendations to improve the lives of Aboriginal women in Canada that were the result of the first National Aboriginal Women's Summit in June 2007 [see Appendix ..].

Inuit-specific GBA framework that considers factors such as the land and environment; culture, language and spirituality; and external institutions and influences. The Assembly of First Nations has developed a Culturally Relevant Gender Balanced Framework, toolkit and manual used to train the AFN Secretariat, regions and First Nations communities, federal, provincial and territorial governments at restoring balance and equity between men, women, boys, girls, two-spirited and transgendered First Nations peoples.

In order to address the broad issues of violence against Aboriginal women, it is clear that national, concerted, long-term, co-ordinated efforts will be required. These federal, provincial and territorial efforts can build on existing initiatives and resources already in place.

The Federal Plan for Gender Equality (1995-2000) states that all subsequent legislation and policies will include, where appropriate, an analysis of the potential for differential impacts on men and women and approved the Agenda for Gender Equality in 2000 as a government-wide initiative to accelerate implementation of gender-based analysis commitments. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) also encouraged Canada to make gender based analysis mandatory for all governments. Gender budgeting has also been recommended for all federally funded programs, services and policy initiatives by the Auditor General of Canada's 2009 Spring Report.<sup>80</sup>

## **MISSING AND MURDERED ABORIGINAL WOMEN**

Immediate action in addressing murdered and missing Aboriginal women is supported by the global community, as evidenced by the Concluding Observations of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women which called for "priority attention" to be given to the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and for an examination of "the reasons for the failure to investigate the cases of missing or murdered aboriginal women and to take the necessary steps to remedy the deficiencies in the system." (para. 31 and 32, Concluding Observations, CEDAW, November 2008)

A part of the solution to missing and murdered Aboriginal women is a continuing commitment to existing initiatives as well as the development and implementation of key areas of reforms to the criminal justice system. Current initiatives have begun to address these concerns. The Government of Manitoba has initiated a Task Force of Missing and Murdered Women to review open missing and homicide cases and the Aboriginal Action Group to advise on the disproportionate number of Aboriginal women who are missing or murdered in Manitoba.

The five year Sisters in Spirit Initiative by NWAC has conducted research on the required changes to address missing and murdered Aboriginal women, has held more than 40 community engagement workshops nationwide, 3 family gatherings, over a hundred presentations at the national and international level

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<sup>80</sup> [http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_oag\\_200905\\_01\\_e\\_32514.html#hd5f](http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_200905_01_e_32514.html#hd5f).

and held 72 annual SIS vigils across Canada on October 4<sup>th</sup> to remember missing or murdered Aboriginal women. This work has been done in collaboration with numerous partners, including the Assembly of First Nations, Amnesty International, KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, and the National Association of Friendship Centres. As mentioned above, the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Working Group on Aboriginal Justice has been initiated, in part, to examine this specific issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

#### **4.8 CONTEXTUAL TIMELINE: PRE-FIRST MINISTERS MEETING IN KELOWNA, BC, NOVEMBER 2005 – DECEMBER 2009**

**April 19, 2004** – Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable, Ottawa, ON

**Summer 2004** – Pre-Council of the Federation Meeting with National Aboriginal Organization Leaders, Niagara on the Lake

**November 4-5, 2004** – Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable Health Sectoral Session, Ottawa, ON

**November 13-14, 2004** – Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable Life Long Learning Sectoral Session, Winnipeg, MB

**November 18-19, 2004** – Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Sectoral Session, Ottawa, ON

**November 24 - 25, 2004** – Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable Housing Sectoral Session, Ottawa, ON

**December 13-14, 2004** – Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable Economic Opportunities Sectoral Session, Ottawa, ON

**January 12 - 13, 2005** – Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable Negotiations Sectoral Session, Calgary, AB

**January 21, 2005** – Federal-Provincial-Territorial Meeting of Deputy Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, Winnipeg, MB

**January 25 - 26, 2005** – Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable Accountability for Results Sectoral Session, Ottawa, ON

**February 18, 2009** – Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable, Blueprint on Aboriginal Health, Ottawa, ON

**February 28, 2005** – Federal-Provincial-Territorial-Aboriginal First Ministers' Meeting Steering Committee, Vancouver, BC

**March 28, 2005** – Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), Action Plan on Aboriginal issues, Toronto, ON



**May 31, 2005** – Aboriginal Federal Cabinet Joint Policy Retreat, Ottawa, ON

- Signing of:
  - A First Nations - Federal Crown Political Accord on the Recognition and Implementation of First Nations Governments (AFN)
  - Partnership Accord between the Inuit of Canada and Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada (ITK)
  - Métis Nation Framework Agreement between Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada and The Métis National Council (MNC)
  - Accord on Cooperative Policy Development between the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples and the Government of Canada (CAP)
  - Accord on Cooperative Policy Development between the Native Women's Association of Canada and the Government of Canada (NWAC)

**June 27, 2005** – Federal-Provincial-Territorial Meeting of Ministers responsible for Aboriginal Affairs and National Aboriginal Leaders, Ottawa, ON

**August 2005** - Pre-Council of the Federation Meeting with National Aboriginal Organization Leaders, Calgary, AB

**September 8, 2005** – Federal-Provincial-Territorial-Aboriginal First Ministers' Meeting Steering Committee (Deputy Ministers Meeting), Iqaluit, NU

**November 15, 2005** – Meeting between FPT Co-chair Ministers of Health and FPT Co-chair Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and Leaders of National Aboriginal Organizations, Ottawa, ON

**November 23, 2005** – Government of Canada announces approximately \$2 billion for former Indian residential school students, Ottawa, ON

**November 24-25, 2005** – First Ministers' Meeting on Aboriginal Issues, Kelowna, BC

**March 8, 2006** – Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), Renewing Commitment to Aboriginal issues, Yellowknife, NT

**May 29-30, 2006** – Western Premiers' Conference, Affirming Commitment on Aboriginal Issues, Gimli, MB

**July 2006** – Pre-Council of the Federation Meeting with National Aboriginal Organization Leaders, Deer Lake, Newfoundland and Labrador

**January 25, 2007** – Aboriginal Economic Development Symposium, Saskatoon, SK

**Summer 2007** – National Aboriginal Women's Summit, Newfoundland and Labrador

**Summer 2007** - Pre-Council of the Federation Meeting with National Aboriginal Organization Leaders, Moncton, NB

**August 8, 2007** – Council of the Federation, Pre-Meeting with National Aboriginal Leaders, Moncton, NB

**March 2008** - National Aboriginal Health Working Summit, Winnipeg, MB

**April 2008** – FPT Consultation and Accommodation Workshop, Toronto

**June 11, 2008** – Residential School Apology, Ottawa, ON

**July 16, 2008** – Pre-Council of the Federation Meeting with National Aboriginal Organization Leaders, Quebec, QC

**Summer 2008** – National Aboriginal Women’s Summit, Yellowknife, NT

**Summer 2008** - Pre-Council of the Federation Meeting with National Aboriginal Organization Leaders, Quebec City, QC

**February 2009** - FPT Consultation and Accommodation Workshop, Ottawa, ON

**August 5, 2009** – Pre-Council of the Federation Meeting with National Aboriginal Organization Leaders; Premiers directed a Ministerial Working Group to examine how governments and National Aboriginal Organizations can work more effectively to improve outcomes, Regina, SK

**October 29, 2009** – Meeting of Provincial-Territorial Ministers responsible for Aboriginal Affairs and Leaders of the National Aboriginal Organizations, Toronto, ON

**November 2009** - FPT Consultation and Accommodation Workshop, Vancouver, BC

**December 2009** – Métis Economic Development Symposium, Calgary, AB

## 4.9 AAWG WRITING GROUPS

### Introduction / Contextual Framework

Provincial-Territorial Leads: Ontario  
 Aboriginal Leads: Native Women's Association of Canada  
 Group Members: Newfoundland & Labrador  
 Nunavut  
 Assembly of First Nations

### Education

Provincial-Territorial Leads: Manitoba  
 Saskatchewan  
 Aboriginal Leads: Assembly of First Nations  
 Group Members: Alberta  
 Ontario  
 Northwest Territories  
 Yukon  
 Congress of Aboriginal Peoples  
 Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami  
 Métis National Council  
 Native Women's Association of Canada

### Economic Development

Provincial-Territorial Leads: New Brunswick  
 Aboriginal Leads: Métis National Council  
 Group Members: British Columbia  
 Ontario  
 Quebec  
 Nova Scotia  
 Prince Edward Island  
 Assembly of First Nations  
 Congress of Aboriginal Peoples  
 Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami  
 Native Women's Association of Canada

### Violence against Aboriginal Women and Girls

Provincial-Territorial Leads: Nova Scotia  
 Aboriginal Leads: Native Women's Association of Canada  
 Group Members: Northwest Territories  
 Nunavut  
 Prince Edward Island  
 Assembly of First Nations  
 Congress of Aboriginal Peoples  
 Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami  
 Métis National Council