National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls

Enquête nationale
sur les femmes et les filles
autochtones disparues et assassinées

National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 4 Closing Oral Submissions of the Parties with Standing
Sheraton Eau Claire - Calgary, Alberta

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Part 4 Oral Submissions - Volume 1
Monday November 26, 2018

Christa Big Canoe / Commission Counsel

Union of BC Indian Chiefs

Assembly of First Nations Québec-Labrador

Kwanlin Dün First Nation

Government of Yukon

Heard by Chief Commissioner Marion Buller
& Commissioners Brian Eyolfson, Qajaq Robinson
& Michèle Audette

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Second Chair: Shelby Thomas (Commission Counsel)

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Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers & National Family Advisory Circle (NFAC) members: Gerald Meginnes, Alvine Wolfleg, Norton Eagle Speaker, John Wesley, Skundaal Bernie Williams, Leslie Spillett, Louise Haulli, Myna Manniapik, Darlene Osborne, Pam Fillier, Lorraine Clements, Lesa Semmler

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Calgary, Alberta

--- The hearing starts on Monday, November 26th, at 8:35 a.m.

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: (Anishnaabe spoken) My name is Christine Simard-Chicago. I come from Lac Seul First Nation and Treaty 3, and I'm Anishinaabe.

I'd like to thank the territory of Treaty 7, the drums, the bundles, the Elders, the Commissioners, staff, parties with standing, and observers in the room and online.

Right now, I would like to call upon Alvine Wolfleg and Spike Eaglespeaker.

Alvine, as a well-respected Elder and a retired educator from the Siksika Nation near Strathmore, Alberta, who works with high school students to learn their traditional Blackfoot knowledge -- language. Alvine believes that language is the key to preserving their Nation.

Alvine has done traditional teaching in her community and as a well-respected Elder in the Siksika Nation and a grandparent to the Horn Society. Prior to retirement, Alvine was an accomplished language educator with the Siksika Board of Education and focused on educating the under 30 generation and preserving their language.

Norton Spike Eaglespeaker is a well-respected traditional Elder from the Siksika Nation near Strathmore who works with his community to preserve their traditional ways. Norton works with youth and traditional ways of the Mystical Society of Bundle Carriers.

Norton believes that the language and traditional preservation is important to preserving their traditional ways.

Norton is a leader and grandparent to the Horn Society and the Sacred Blackfoot Society.

So please come up.

MS. ALVINE WOLFLEG: (NATIVE LANGUAGE) In Blackfoot, it means happy morning. We don't really say "Good morning", even though we're nice and full today.

We're going to say our prayer in Blackfoot, but in our ways what we pray for is to have a good day, that the people in the hospitals and the people that have diseases like cancer, diabetes, that they get well, that the people that are incarcerated, that they come home to their loved ones.

We also pray that we have a good day. We also pray that our good, that what we're going to eat today and what we're going to drink today, that it brings nutrition to our bodies and that we don't get on sick it.

Also, we also pray for our Elders within

our Treaty 7 territories and other Elders within Canada, that we -- that you see us for a long time.

Also, we also ask prayers for ourselves as Elders because it's been a long time since we've been here, and we're always glad to be invited to places to share our culture, to share our language.

These are just some of the things that we pray for, especially for the children, the youth of today with all the different drugs that are floating around. Especially today, we're going to remember the Blood Reserve.

In our newspapers, you must have seen what's happened to their children, so those are the -- and we also want to pray for the drummers because they need that prayer for their beautiful voices and that.

So we're going to pray together.

(OPENING PRAYER - NATIVE LANGUAGE)

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: So we have the Blackfoot Confederacy Drum with us. The Blackfoot Confederacy Drum group was formed in 2006.

The drum group consists of members from the Blackfoot Confederacy Tribes, the Piikani, the Siksika -- oh, forgive my pronunciation -- Kainai, and -- I can't say that one, either. Meskwaki from the U.S.A.

The drum group formed with the intent to

bring back the old songs and the original composition. The drum group travels mostly during the summer months to different powwows across Canada and the United States, competing in various competitions.

The group has been invited to many functions and events locally and are always honoured to be requested to share their music and their songs.

Migwech.

(OPENING DRUM)

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: Oh, *Migwetch*. Now, we're going to have lighting of the qulliq with Myna Manniapik from Pangnirtung, Nunavut. She now resides in Edmonton.

--- LIGHTING OF THE QULLIQ

MS. MYNA MANNIAPIK: Thank you. Hi. Good morning. My name is Myna Manniapik. I'm originally from Pangnirtung, Nunavut Territory, but I reside in Edmonton at the moment. I'd just like to say a little bit about qulliq, but traditionally, qulliq was used for a term of the oil lamp that was on a higher level in the hut. It's not a traditional name of this -- the lamp because the other qulliq -- the -- the other lamp was in a lower level of the hut was called alliq (phonetic), the one in lower level of the hut. So, actually, when we say qulliq, it doesn't necessarily mean that's what, you know, what the

qulliq is called. That we call it that way anyways.

Qulliq was used for heat source, cooking, and -- and light from way back. And I am proud to say that I lived in it when I was child growing up. I remember my mother doing this first thing in the morning because a part of the flame would be going all night long. And in the morning, my mother would just spread the flame across, and then use it for cooking and heating water, and for the heat in the tent. It is very traditional and useful. It was used for everything in the -- in the hut and igloos.

It's funny how I was going to light this today, and last night when I turned the T.V. on, there was the movie called Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner was on. It was very reassuring for me.

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: Thank you, Myna. So right now, I would like to call up the family -- the National Family Advisory Circle. We have members from across the country that are here with us today. Pauline Muskego, Lesa Semmler, Lorraine Clements, Darlene Osborne, and Melanie Morrison.

MS. LESA SEMMLER: I'm really short. I don't know where Lorraine is. All right. *Uvlaami*. Good morning. I'd like to welcome the families, Commissioners, and all those that are in attendance today. I'm really

short, so I'd like to acknowledge that we are here on Treaty 7 territory, and I'm sorry if I don't say these right, to the nations of the Siksika, Kainai, Piikani, Miscabie (phonetic), Tsuut'ina, and Stoney. Okay.

Uvanga atira Lesa Semmler. My name is Lesa Semmler, and I am a member of the National Family Advisory Circle. This group of families were formed and identified as strong advocates fighting and making awareness for this issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women. We've been supporting and advising the Commissioners throughout this Inquiry. Today, we are beginning the final submission stage of the process. This week, we will be witness to what the parties with standing will be adding. As families, we hope that you have heard what we have said over the past two years, and stay focused on putting families first, and honouring the memory of our loved ones, and avoid compromising this process for organizational advancement and funding that may not meet the needs of the individual families, as has been done in the past.

Families have fought hard to have this Inquiry, so that you, Canada, and the rest of the world could see the inequity in our Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirited -- what they're challenged with every day. So on behalf of the NFAC, we look forward to this week,

and we thank you all for being here.

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: M'hm. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: *Migwetch*. Right now, it's time for the Commissioners to do their opening comments. So I'd like to call upon Commissioner Robinson. I was talking to my chest here.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You're not wearing heels.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Coquette (phonetic). Good morning. *Bonjour*.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Good morning. Bonjour. I want to start by acknowledging the land and the people that walk amongst Treaty 7 territory, the homelands of the Blackfoot peoples and the Métis Nation.

I want to acknowledge and thank Alvine and Spike for your prayers this morning, but also for the ceremony this morning and how -- and thank you for the prayers that have continued since the last time we were here. We were here in the spring speaking about some very difficult things, and your prayers and your presence then were so needed, and they've been -- we've received them and we feel them, and I want to thank you for that, very much.

It was an important teaching this morning that you gave us about how pipe and prayer, they never close. They never stop.

And the pipes that have been lit, the sacred fires, the (NATIVE LANGUAGE) that have been lit across this country and that continue to be burning are something that I feel very much today here in this room, in this process. And I wanted to acknowledge that formally.

I want to thank, of course, the Blackfoot Confederacy Drummers for the beautiful song. That was so powerful.

(NATIVE LANGUAGE)

I thank you for lighting the (NATIVE LANGUAGE) for providing us with light and warmth this week.

I want to give a -- I can't -- following Lisa and those words is difficult. I'm still trying to compose myself.

But the National Family Advisory Circle, those here with us, Pauline, Lisa, Lorraine, Darlene, Melanie and Pam, and your husbands, your partners who are here with us, and all the NFAC members who are watching online, I just want to raise my hands up to you and acknowledge you. We've come so far.

And all the families and survivors who've shared with us over the last few months. We've heard from hundreds of people from across the country, and it was so important that we hear from families and survivors first because their lived experience, their lives, their knowledge, their wisdom, it must be central.

And I want to echo what Lisa and the members of the National Family Advisory Circle have said, the importance of putting that first.

From a legal perspective, from an evidentiary perspective, there's nothing that gets to the point and to the truth more honestly, more deeply than what families and survivors have told us.

We've come to final submissions, and I'll admit that we have a phenomenal amount of information and knowledge and wisdom we've received during the community gatherings, statement taking and the experts and institutional panels. And as much as we want more, we have to honour what we've been given, the truth that we've been given.

When we started the work, we talked about what our vision and our goal was, was to find the truth, honour the truth, give life to the truth. It couldn't get more complete and more simple than that.

Today, we are at a very important point in

honouring the truth. And hearing from you, parties with standing, how you understand what the families, survivors and experts and knowledge keepers have told us and what we do with that, how do we honour that truth? How do we live -- lift that truth up? How do we then give life to that truth?

So I look forward to hearing what you've heard, what you've learned, what you feel that we should all be learning and how we need to be moving forward.

And as Lisa has so eloquently said, no politics. It's about lifting up indigenous women and girls, trans and two-spirited, and ensuring that this is a country where they can reclaim their place and their power.

Thank you, and I look forward to a week of learning.

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: I'd like to now call up Chief -- I mean, sorry, Commissioner Eyolfson.

COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Thank you for the promotion.

Good morning. Bonjour. It's a pleasure to be back here in Calgary.

I first, as well, want to acknowledge the traditional territories of the Blackfoot and the First Nations people of the Treaty 7 territory as well as the

Métis people of this region for welcoming us back to their territory and homeland to conduct this important work again here.

I also want to acknowledge and thank a few people, our respected Elders and grandmothers who provide us with guidance and support. And I want to thank Alvine and Spike for the opening prayer, and especially for the beautiful pipe ceremony that they led this morning. Thank you very much.

And Myna, thank you for the lighting of the (NATIVE LANGUAGE), and I also want to recognize our grandmothers from the Commissioner's Grandmothers' Circle, who are here with this week, Louis Holly and Bernie Williams, for helping us guide us along the way and always being here for us.

I also want to acknowledge the drummers for their beautiful, powerful song this morning.

And to the members of our National Family Advisory Circle for their ongoing commitment, for walking with us and providing us with guidance and advice.

I want to thank all the members of the National Family Advisory Circle, and especially those that are here with today for being here this week, Pauline, Lisa, Lorraine, Darlene, Melanie and Pamela. Thanks for being here with us.

And I also want to thank those who have joined us in person and by webcast to honour the spirits of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, including two-spirited peoples.

And of course, I want to thank all of our staff and our teams that are here for your hard work and for your dedication, and for making these gatherings and events happen. Thank you very much.

And I especially want to thank the parties with standing for joining in this National Inquiry.

Examining the systemic causes of all forms of violence against indigenous and women girls and two-spirited and trans-gendered people, including the underlying social, economic, cultural, institutional and historical causes, is no small task, especially in the allotted time that this Inquiry's been given.

And I know that many of you have been long-time advocates concerning the issue of the violence against indigenous women and girls and have asked for this inquiry, and many people have been working on this for decades.

So I want to thank you all for being here, and I want to thank the parties with standing for supporting -- being involved in and supporting the work of the National Inquiry and being on this journey with us.

Together, we've heard a great deal about the issues surrounding missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, and we've also heard many recommendations on how to address these issues at both the regional and national levels.

And we've heard truths from many family members, from survivors of violence, institutional witnesses, experts, knowledge keepers about the often negative experiences of indigenous women, girls, and trans and two-spirited in key rights areas such as culture, health, areas of security and justice.

And just to outline or to highlight a few of the things that we've heard about, we've heard about the many challenges with respect to obtaining employment, education, housing. We've heard about inter-generational trauma and the impacts of residential schools, child welfare systems, the criminal justice and correctional systems, and colonial policies.

We've also heard about agencies and governments not recognizing women and girls and two-spirited people as experts in their own experiences. We've heard about racism. But we've also heard about resistance, agency and resilience in addressing these issues.

So we turn to you now, the parties with

standing, for your perspectives and recommendations in light of the evidence we've all heard. I know you've put a lot of thought into your work, into your final submissions, and I thank you for taking that opportunity to be with us here.

So I look forward to your submissions and your recommendations to assist us with the final report, which is due April 30th, 2019, and I know that date will come up quickly, in order to address -- help us address the safety and healing of indigenous women, girls and 2SLBGTQIA people in the communities -- in our communities across the country.

So migwetch. Thank you. Merci.

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: Migwetch, Brian.

Now I'd like to call up Commissioner Audette.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Merci, Mme Chigard -- Chigard. Rewind. Thank you.

Bon, I had a sip of cappuccino and we never have a cappuccino before a speech. This is why. But because I did good this morning, I'm forgiven, I'm sure.

I want to say merci beaucoup, beaucoup, beaucoup for the two of you this morning for giving me this honour, my first ever experience to hold something so

sacred and to share something in English. It was tough. But I'm sure you understood or he understood.

And I hope that we will honour those words, those prayers and your love that you have for us all week, and forever, of course. And you're still cute, so thank you.

Thank you for welcoming us to your beautiful territory. Merci beaucoup.

Merci aux gens du territoire des Black Foots de nous accueillir chez vous, encore une fois. Merci de nous avoir enseigné les protocoles et pour ceux et celles qui nous écoutent en ce moment, nous sommes rendus vers la fin des audiences publiques où là, nous allons entendre des groupes, des représentants, des avocats de différentes parties intéressées… pardon, parties ayant la qualité pour agir, afin de nous partager votre savoir, vos recommandations et, évidemment, nous aider à travailler très fort pour soumettre un rapport avec des recommandations dans lequel aucun gouvernement ne va dire non!

This is where you say, "Yes". Thank you.

But I'll say it in English with a little bit of caffeine in my body.

You know, I'm sad this morning and now you're making me laugh. You know why I'm sad. It's

because we're almost at the end of the public hearings.

And this morning during the prayers I ask the Creator, I ask our Elders that we have to remember why -- maybe I didn't say it that why, but why we're doing this, why every day we're working or get involved or doing what we do, you know, volunteering or this National Inquiry. That there is so many voices that had no choice -- no chance to come and share their truth to this process, to this National Inquiry.

I know the National Inquiry is one of the tool, one of the exercise that is provided here in Canada for families and survivors that lost a loved one or a victim of many systemic causes. Too many, I would say.

So I had that this morning and hope also that we have to find a way that for those who are silent, not because they want to be silent, but because the system right now didn't give us the opportunity to travel across Canada, Canada that I know, the one that there is a real north, there is an island on the west coast, there's a small island on the east coast, and there's so many communities across Canada that should have had that right and come and share their truth.

So I carry that every day.

So hopefully, with what we were able to do, we did it with conviction, with love, with passion, with

frustration sometimes. But we know we tried to do it in a good way with lots of love.

The final submission, it's also an occasion for you groups, lawyers, representative, individual, to come and, of course, people from government to add to the knowledge, the collective knowledge. Not my knowledge. I always said we are a tool. I am a tool. To bring that knowledge to any government across Canada, including our governments, Métis, First Nation and Inuit.

It's also a place to contribute to the final report, the final result, and to show a new path.

We know the problem. We know the solutions. But there's some allies that are missing in that canoe, boat or choose the way you want to transport our voices out there.

I have to say thank you to the family members for your patience with us, for your love and for your advice.

Thank you for the Elders also that are walking with us, not for us, but making sure that we do it the right way, to remind also that the families and the Elders, those voices that we weren't able to come here, they know them so they bring those voices. Thank you so much.

Like I said, we are heading to the almost

last month of our work. Our work. It's including you.

It's not only the staff of the Inquiry and the Commissioner, but all of us.

I hope that we could collectively make a commitment to the -- that this work will not stop here with the National Inquiry, that as a citizen or a member of an organization or a staff from a government that I will challenge my people that I'm working with to make sure that we change things starting today. Not when the report will come, but starting today.

This is where I say all the time, we all have that responsibility. All of us. All of us.

We might hear some people this week to say, "Ah, the Inquiry, you didn't do this, you didn't do that".

Fine. Do it, if it's going to help you to feel better, but remember that your voice, it's to help Canada, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Quebec, all the province and territory, and our indigenous government, to change the way we do things here in this country.

So take your minutes to be part of that chapter, historical chapter. They're very important.

And believe me, we are reading. I'm reading in English for you. I love you. Yes.

And I see so many solutions. I have so bubbles in my belly that, "Yes, that's it". If Canada

don't see it, come on. I have glasses.

If the other, you know, province and territory government don't see it, come on. But you'll hear from them.

I read their submission. Some of them are making good stuff. Some of them are -- they challenge me when I was reading their submission. Really? How come we don't have that in Quebec? See. So thank you.

So this change needs to happen. It's happening today. Believe me. But because it's happening, we have warriors, we have women, survivors and people that believe that change needs to happen.

So again, merci. Merci, merci beaucoup. And I'll go finish my good coffee.

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: Thank you, Michèle.

Now I'd like to call upon Chief Commissioner Buller.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: The real Chief, yeah. That's what they tell me.

Well, good morning, everyone. Bonjour. I want to start, as I always do, by acknowledging and thanking the spirits of the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, including 2SLBGTQQIA. Their memories and their spirits guide our work every day.

I also want to acknowledge the special courage and challenges faced by members of the 2SLGBTQQIA community. They inspire me to work harder and to take more care.

Well, it's good to be back here. Thank you to the Blackfoot Nation for welcoming us again.

Thank you to the Nations in Treaty 7 for welcoming us. We're very happy to be back here again, though I'm not too sure about the snow.

And thank you, members of the Métis Nation, Region 3, for welcoming us. It's a warm welcome, even though it's a little cold outside. Coming from the west coast, I feel it a little bit more.

Thank you those coming in person and those attending by webcast. Your presence virtually and in person is very important in the work that we're doing. Calgary, Alberta.

Myna, thank you again for giving us the light to move forward and the warmth that we're going to need this week.

Alvine and Spike, thank you again. I'm so happy to see you, and for your hard lessons through love. Thank you.

To the Blackfoot Confederacy Drummers, wow. What a way to start the morning. Who needs caffeine,

Michèle, when you've got drummers like that?

I'm mindful of drumming wherever we go because the drum, regardless of whose drum it is and who's drumming, reminds me and inspires me that even though there's been centuries of colonization, our heartbeat is still strong, and getting stronger.

I want to take this moment to acknowledge the people in the back of the room, people that we don't always see, but make this National Inquiry happen, the translation booth people in the back. Hello, and thank you for your tireless work, for AVA people who make the microphones work, thank you. And to our staff, our amazing National Inquiry staff, who, as I've said before, at the back there, back of the room, make it happen. They work magic every day.

I want to, at this point, too, give a special thanks to our legal team who really have pushed this National Inquiry forward and made sure that we've had the right evidence from the right witnesses at the right times. Brilliant work by all of you. My hand's up to the legal.

The one benefit of being the last speaker is they've all said it better than I could, but I want to add to the parties with standing. Thank you for being here and thank you for joining us on this strange and

mysterious journey over the last two years.

We all look forward to hearing from you. What you say is important, what you think the evidence is that we should pay attention to. We look forward also to hearing your recommendations.

We want to hear from you through your eyes, ears and hearts about how we're going to, all of us together, make this a safer country for all indigenous women and girls. It's not an easy job, and we need your help.

I also want to say at this point in time that it's been a wonderful journey, and it's coming to an end, but the work will have to continue. And I'm going to ask each and every one of you that after our final report is filed that you look at that only as the next step and making this a better place for our women and girls.

So let's get to work. Enough talking from us. Let's get to work and do the important stuff that we're here to do this week.

Thank you all. I'm very grateful that we're back in Calgary, and I'm so happy to see so many familiar faces.

Thank you so much.

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: Thank you, Chief Commissioner.

Just a couple of housekeeping notes. We have eight health supports in the room and around the floor this week just to help those that are -- that might be having trouble with some of the presentations that are going on, it's important that we protect our support and have that support.

So we have the Elders' room, which is in the Mariposa Room, which is around to the right of the elevators, and the health room is there as well. So all the rooms are on this level.

(PAUSE)

MR. REGISTRAR: Testing, testing, testing, one, two. Testing, one, two. You're good?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Now, tell him to quit playing. No, stop, playing.

(PAUSE)

MR. REGISTRAR: I would like to formally call the oral submissions to order this morning. We're in Calgary. It's November the 26th. And I'd like to begin by inviting Commission counsel, Christa Big Canoe, to begin with our over view of the testimony of the Commission. We'll begin right away.

--- SUBMISSIONS BY MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you, Mr. Registrar. And if you could just set the time for me,

that would be great. *(Speaks in Native Language)*. Bearspaw First Nation, Chiniki First Nation, Blood Tribe, the Piiknai Nation, Siksika Nation, Tsuut'ina, and the Wesley First Nation, all members of Treaty 7, whose territory we're on. *Migwetch*, Métis, *(Speaking Native Language)*. *Migwetch*.

Bonjour, commissaires. Je m'appelle Christa Big Canoe. Je suis du clan de la loutre et Anishinaabekwe de la Première Nation des îles de Georgina. Je suis l'avocate en chef de la présente Commission. Je vous présenterai une vue d'ensemble de l'évidence et des témoignages entendus dans le cadre des travaux de l'Enquête nationale sur les femmes et les filles autochtones disparues et assassinées.

Cela peut paraître inhabituel de vous présenter ceci, puisqu'en tant que commissaire, vous avez entendu vous-mêmes la preuve dans le cadre de l'audience depuis le mois de mai 2017 à travers tout le pays. The reason for the overview is to inform the public and all those in attendance or watching about the process, and even those who aren't, but will be able to come back to this public record to hear about the testimonies we have heard to date. Cette information offre également une mise en contexte préalable à l'écoute des soumissions finales des différentes parties.

Aujourd'hui est la première journée de deux semaines d'audiences courantes sur les observations finales des parties ayant la qualité pour agir.

Cette semaine, à Calgary, en Alberta, nous allons entendre 20 parties ayant les qualités pour agir. À partir du 10 au 14 décembre 2018, nous allons également entendre les observations finales de 37 parties. Leurs observations permettront d'identifier les problèmes importants ainsi les preuves qui mèneront à la rédaction d'un rapport final et des recommandations finales.

L'Enquête nationale pris connaissance d'une immense quantité de preuves. Tous les témoins et les individus qui ont fourni une déclaration ou qui ont soumis une déclaration sous forme d'expression artistique sont braves et courageux d'avoir partagé leur vérité et leur histoire pour aider aux travaux de l'Enquête. Cependant, ces témoignages entendus ne font qu'effleurer la surface de la problématique.

Je vais poursuivre la présentation en anglais.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

So good morning, Commissioners. I'm Christa Big Canoe. I've introduced myself first in Anishinaabe, which is the language, my traditional language that I'm still learning. And as, you know, part

of the colonial legacy is something I strive to do. So I introduced myself in anishinaabemowin and I took the time, like many of us do, to recognise the territory, particularly the Nations of Treaty 7 as well as the Métis whose homeland we're on.

I took the time to thank the Creator as is what is important in Indigenous law to do from an Anishinaabe perspective, as well as the grandparents. And I mean the grandparents and the Elders in this room, but also those that have already passed on to spirit world.

And so I also explained that I'm from the Otter Clan and that I'm anishinaabekwe from Georgina Island First Nation. That is a Anishinaabe community in Ontario.

I'm the lead counsel, Commission counsel. And today I will be presenting an overview of the evidence and testimony that the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls has heard. It may seem unusual to be presenting this to you because as Commissioners you have been hearing evidence all across the country at many hearings since May 2017. The reason for the overview is to inform the public and all those in attendance or watching about the process, and even those who aren't, but will be able to come back to this public record to hear about the testimonies we have heard to

date. This information will provide context for everyone prior to hearing closing submissions from parties.

Today is the first day of two weeks of hearings for oral closing submissions from the parties with standing. As you know, this week we are in Calgary, Alberta and we will be hearing from 20 parties. From December 10th to the 14th we will be also hearing oral closing submissions from 37 parties. Their submissions will identify you in assisting key issues and evidence required to write your final report and in making your recommendations.

The National Inquiry has heard an immense amount of evidence. All of the witnesses and individuals that have provided statements, including providing artistic expression, are brave and courageous in contributing their truth and stories to us. Therefore, today's overview really only scratches the surface. It briefly touches on so many important topics and about the testimonies and evidence we have received.

And we will also be using a slide presentation and I will be relying on after my oral overview a video. And the video takes tiny clips from the part one hearings, the community hearings where we heard families and survivors, family members, survivors, individuals who've experienced violence, their truths,

their stories. Of course, again, that's barely scratching the surface. In the amount of time we have we have chosen a few clips. And there's been no preference for clips. Everyone's story has mattered, but they were moments that were brought to our attention either by families, parties with standing, staff that actually marked for them a poignant moment.

But one of the things we've had to do in this entire process is protect our spirits. So anyone in attendance, anyone who's watching, sometimes in order to hear the evidence we've received, it has taken a lot of courage even on the part of the listeners, because people are sharing it's often sad truths. People are sharing some of the worst moments in their lives.

So as I speak today and talk to some of the evidence, which is only just brushing on it, I just want to remind everyone to protect your spirit. The content is not easy, as you, Commissioners, would know, having met families and having met survivors face to face, as well as of a number of our parties who have participated in part ones, two and three. Even when it wasn't a witness who necessarily was sharing their own story, but was talking to an issue that's relevant to your mandate, they often would be passionate. They would invoke a lot of emotions. And as wonderful as it was to have them, as brilliant as

they were, some of those moments weren't easy either. But we all know that this National Inquiry is not about being easy and it's not about finding quick solutions.

I could ask to have the slide presentation up? And we can go past the title page to the first page, please.

So throughout the slide presentation you're going to see a number of pictures. The pictures that have been taken have usually been taken by staff or at various events. And in the various events we'd always have a waiver so that we could either put it on our website or publicly share it as part of the public record, the consent that allows. So any picture you do see up here, it either has a staff member or individuals that have signed such a consent. These will be peppered throughout the presentation and they're representative of the full hearings, community visits that we've seen.

And as you can see even on one page, they're taken in different locations. So, for example, you know, the sign up top was on the journey to Liard in the Yukon. We have the red dress that was in Montreal. We have a community visit that took place in Rankin Inlet. We have objects also in pictures and setups.

And in every hearing room that we've had, we've often tried to make it a place that's a little more

comfortable than a courtroom. So we try to make it less legalistic, but we are a legal process in that we do have to take things like evidence and that we do have to put into place. But in each place we try to make it welcoming and you see we have chairs and not tables. But one of the things that I found most astounding as well is in all of these places when the communities themselves put up a backdrop or welcomed us by using something that they made or that was important to their communities and you'll see that throughout the pictures.

You can tell where we were based on those backdrops, based on that artistic expression and that love that was poured into the backgrounds of various places.

I ask that we get the next slide?

And the landscapes. The landscapes the National Inquiry has seen, that is not actually formal evidence, but in journeying across the country in all the seasons we have also had the privilege of seeing different places and often reminded. And I think of, you know, what we've heard from Indigenous law practitioners or decolonizing practitioners, how important it is, though, to go back to the land. So throughout the presentation you will see these pictures.

You will also see things where communities have provided to us love like the poster on the bottom

with hearts, or often the red dresses that communities and children have made to welcome us into their spaces.

And although they may not form part of the formal record in a hearing, often these things have been donated to us as part of artistic expression and we know that stories are not just told with words. They're also told with expressions and they're told through art and they're told through the cultures that we have the privilege of sharing.

One of the really important things is in the spaces that we hold -- of course, our process isn't perfect. No process is. And we put in a good effort to try to ensure that we invite local individuals and spiritual leaders to help us start things in a good way.

Ceremony has been central. As a lawyer that has practiced mostly in inquest, in test case and in victim rights advocacy, I can say with true honesty that this is a space unlike any other. I have found myself making submissions before inquests to beg to have the picture of the deceased, to beg to have an eagle feather in the space. And one thing we have tried to exemplify is making or creating a safe space that is representative of Indigenous people, and that is unlike any other process I personally have taken part in. We -- I -- we have seen strides in courts. We see courts now using eagle feathers

and often even allowing Elders in for prayers. But I'm hopeful that as this process moves forward, that more courts and administrative tribunals see the real significance of what it means to create an Indigenous space for people to share their truth. Next slide, please.

So it -- one of the things that's important to understand, and I do have to spend a little bit of my time on process, and it's mostly just for context. But, again, the Parties with Standing in the room, and yourselves, will know, like, Christa, why are you telling us about the process? It's available on our website, we've been doing it for all these months. But I think it's important because these are often the unsaid things that don't turn up on the public record in the hearings, and so that it's understood by anyone watching, or anyone accessing this in the future, that our hearings have taken place in three parts. The first part was community hearings and statement gathering. The second part was institutional hearings. And the third part was knowledge keeper and expert hearings. Often, we had to get creative with the short timeframe we've had and combine Part 2 and 3 hearings, so that we could get as much evidence before the public. And a big important role has been the Parties with Standing.

So before I actually dive into the evidence and testimony you've heard in hearings, I want to talk about, first, the important role of Parties with Standing. And then I want to talk about -- a bit about the steps before truth gathering, and what that entailed because we don't actually get to a hearing room. We don't actually get to evidence without an immense amount of work before, and a lot of relationship building, and seeking trust from people who have no reason to trust us, quite frankly. And so the first place I'd like to start is Parties with Standing because before we actually went into community visits, before we went to different territories, we had Parties with Standing make application to the Commissioners to be recognized as a Party with Standing. A Party with Standing is a group that's often represented by counsel, or a non-legal representative, who will speak on behalf of an organization that has been given standing, so that they can explain, not only to the Commissioners, but to the public in general, about their knowledge in position. And the way they do that is through something called Participatory Rights.

We have granted standing to persons or groups who have demonstrated that they have a substantial and direct interest in the subject matter of the National Inquiry. We have also granted standing to parties who do

not have direct and substantial interest in the subject matter, but who represent distinct interests, and whose expertise and perspective will be essential for the National Inquiry to fulfill its mandate.

See, a National Inquiry has some key things. The first thing is, in Canada, there has never been a national joint inquiry. We are the first national joint inquiry. We are the first inquiry -- public inquiry that actually falls under 14 different jurisdictions. The federal government, all of the provinces and the territories. This has made some interesting work for us in understanding what laws apply and what areas and jurisdictions, but I think it's also enriched because what it means is the terms of reference that the federal government gave to you, and the terms, and your mandate, were also emulated and repeated by 13 other jurisdictions. So we are a first. There's never been a joint national inquiry.

We also have a requirement, as a public inquiry, in law. So there's a number of laws in place that speak to what we can and can't do. There's a purpose and function to public inquiries. Part of it -- in some cases, it's investigative. In some cases, it's policy-based, where you look at academic works and -- and research, and you make findings on what policies should

change. This National Inquiry is both. So it's another layer, and it's another important thing.

So the parties that have interest, and who get to participate, they enrich the process because they get to represent the voices of people who have a stake in ensuring that we have a safer Canada. And so it's important that they have participatory rights, so that they can, along the path, help us test evidence, help us talk when we're with knowledge keepers and experts, to dig deeper and to look, and to ask questions we might not have thought of. We -- we as Commission counsel, you as Commissioners, may not have had the perspective the same as another party. So that's, obviously, of assistance.

And so, you know, this week, and the week in Ottawa, obviously, speaks to the crucial and important role that the parties will have, and I believe the Chief has already said this, so I'm sorry if I'm being redundant, in helping you to identify those important things because they've been listening. They're another set of eyes. They're often another set of ears. But, most importantly, they're another voice that will help contribute to the -- the work that needs to be done.

Before the truth gathering, so we refer to our hearings, and we refer to the testimony we receive as truth gathering. And before the truth gathering could

take place, there was a lot of work that needed to be done by you the Commissioners in terms of meeting with a number of stakeholders, you know, a -- a -- national Indigenous organizations, governments, but there was also an important path to meet with communities. And there was different ways that we tried an approach to work with communities. And so that we had communities' input on various things, like what should our hearings look like, how can we do this. But what was really important, and as it applies specifically to the evidence to the testimony you have, a number of the visits that we undertook, as a National Inquiry, took us to the places where we would hold hearings in places beyond, so that we could actually meet with witnesses in Part 1.

And, actually, what that often meant for -- it was an inter-disciplinary approach, which meant there was someone from health involved, there was often someone for research, there would be community relations as well as legal counsel. And -- and when we went to these communities, and when we met with these witnesses, it gave us an opportunity to determine a number of things. First of all, it gave us the first opportunity to try to build a relationship, to ask someone to come and share their truth, often in a very public way and at very difficult circumstance. And, again, this process, it was large. So

it -- it was imperfect. And part of it was learning as we went. But the opportunity to have these community visits also helped inform us, from a -- a from our community relations and health perspective, about what needed to be in place when we actually came to a hearing, understanding the Indigenous people in a region, or the needs or the services, was crucial to ensuring that we set up appropriate health services, and that we did things in a good way.

The teams worked together, and the comradery grew amongst the -- the different members or the different units. And it -- I think it's fair to say, this far in, that the staff are like family because they've gone through a lot. They've heard a lot. As I said, the testimony's not easy.

So when we talk about the truth gathering process, and I've talked about the three parts, that -- and I would like to start, specifically, with Part 1, and the fact that Part 1 focused on gathering information from families and survivors through the hearings. They can -- they first began in May 2107, and they continued through, including statement taking, until as recently as last week. And so the -- the first part, in particular, I do want to, for the purpose of the record, lay out a bit of procedure.

So when the hearings occur in various communities, what you'll often see is -- what you'll often -- what you'll often see is the public-facing hearing, which is like what we're doing today. But that's only a small part of the hearing process. So in addition to having public hearings, we also held -- hold something called in-camera hearings. That's a fancy word for private. We're having a private hearing, and there's a number of reasons, both in law, and to ensure that we're trauma-informed, and that we protect the safety of individuals, by holding them in-camera. We hold -- we hold public hearings that are public, not just because you can attend them, but because they're being live-streamed, and you can pull up the archives.

In those processes, we -- we have heard it as -- and you'll see as I walk through in immense. In the in-camera hearings, often the only people in the -- that particular space, would include a Commissioner, Commission counsel, Parties with Standing who are granted standing were allowed to attend, unless there was an extenuating circumstance. And everything that was heard, was recorded for the purpose of your ability to make findings of fact as well as recommendations. However, those hearings have bans of publications and will not form the public record. Parties with Standing have had access to those, but the

general public will not have access to those.

And so I just want to touch, briefly, on the reasons why. The reason why I -- as I mentioned, there's reasons both in law and in -- for safety of individuals. We were talking about a lot of incidences of violence and harm that occurred to individuals, either survivors or someone who experienced a loss, often, in order to ensure that we had a trauma-informed process. Some people didn't want to sit in front of a camera that would be publicly streamed, and that would be retrievable forever. And they would not be able to share their story in a candid or honest way, unless they had the protection of privacy. If they couldn't share their story, then we wouldn't have been able to receive it. But there were also legal reasons. Sometimes we wanted to be sure that we were protecting an individual who may have a threat of violence. An example I often use in explaining to witnesses was if you aren't -- if you have lost someone and you live in a neighbourhood where there's still increased violence, by publicly putting out there who you believe or if there's been a conviction potentially can cause a threat to your wellness or to those of your family members. So that was something that was gauged. Most often we relied on the individual's presentation, but we also looked at documents often to make sure that we

weren't putting anyone in harm's way.

We also didn't want to expose people to -- who they survived violence from, to an offender or a potential assailant. We wanted to ensure there was protection in place.

And the third thing that we've done is statement gathering. So pursuant to the rules, under Section 9, the Commission has the ability to hear statements. Statements are generally not done in front of a Commissioner. They are done with a statement gatherer who takes the information and records the evidence of an individual. The individual is welcome to have supports or health in place so that they have the opportunity again to speak candidly.

The statement gathering has happened all across the country. And as I said, it continued as late as last week. The statements can be either public or private and it depends on the circumstance.

One of the things about statement gathering is it's been very helpful in ensuring that we collect as much evidence as possible, but it takes a lot of work to do the review. And so in terms of timing, it's a lot of work to review and ensure that everything's in -- within the statement gathering could -- if chosen to be public, can actually do so without harming third party interests.

If I can have the next slide?

Again you'll see some pictures. As I said I'm going to take you to some pictures throughout this presentation. So you'll see us in Iqaluit, you'll see us in Thunder Bay. You'll see us in Edmonton, in the Yukon. Where the canoe is was actually in Moncton. And another picture in Iqaluit and the two feathers, those were feathers that one of our grandmothers was gifted and provided to the National Inquiry so that witnesses could swear or take an affirmation on an eagle feather to provide their testimony.

If I could get the next slide?

So you've heard me talk about the different processes for collecting the information. Now I want to tell you a little bit about what we have collected.

In part one community hearings and statement gathering there has been 468 public witnesses. They -- that was in 202 public hearings. So in a space much like this in front of one to four Commissioners, we've had 202 public hearings. We've had 202 in-camera witnesses in 147 in-camera hearings. And we have had -- and it's only until October, as I said we've had some, so we will have to update on this last one, but we've had 641 statements provided by the end of October. We've had 7 informal submissions and we've had 604 individuals that

provided artistic expressions. So what that means in total is we've heard from 1,992 participants in this process since May 2017.

We, as you know, have -- this means a lot of things. One of the interesting things is it means that the National Inquiry has heard 552 hours of testimony in 349 hearings for just part one. That doesn't include information on the other parts. This -- so it doesn't include -- that estimate of 550 hours also doesn't include the many hours that our statement gathering team and health teams collected statements. And often statements, you know, they could be short. They could run an hour or two, but we had ones run as long as five and six hours. And we've had that with hearings too where we have started and it's been so important to let the witnesses complete telling their story that we will continue -- we would continue to sit.

In a lot of the places -- and if I could get the next slide please? Oh, sorry. I'm also going to touch briefly on the next parts just to give you some context and statistics around the witnesses we did hear from during Part two and three hearings.

In total we had 82 witnesses. Those witnesses were knowledge-keepers, experts or institutional witnesses and it's broken down on the chart for you to

describe how many we had at each of the nine hearings that were Part two and three hearings. And that's mostly for context.

But if I could just -- if we go to the next slide, and if I could just return back to what we heard in Part one in terms of the hearings. Something that I think is important for the public to understand is we didn't always just run one room. In some of the places we visited, like Vancouver, for example, we held four rooms, hearing rooms. Three were public and one was in-camera. Sometimes we were able to make two in-camera, but what it meant was all four of you were sitting. And sometimes, you know, we'd start a normal day, 9:00 a.m. and some of the hearings would complete and sometimes we sat until 11 o'clock at night. And it was important to hear that evidence.

In here you see clips including the blanket or backdrop from Yellowknife. You see some of our staff members they're standing because there's a prayer. You see some beautiful jingle dancers giving us some healing. That is Dr. Smiley and myself. And we have a clip of Thunder Bay. We had a fire and a tepee outside. And we have what was put in -- a picture put into exhibit during our hearings in Moncton that was talking about the importance of Igmagi (ph) laws and pictographs.

If I could get the next slide, please?

I'm not going to actually go through the whole list. We held 15 hearings. These are the locations and dates for which the hearings were held, often -- and the Commissioners or staff have been heard to say "from coast to coast to coast" and literally we have gone from coast to coast to coast.

This does not include all of the places that we also did statement gathering or places where we did community visits. The 15 hearings, as I said, allowed us to have those 349 hearings in which we were able to gather evidence.

I'm going to turn my attention to the Part two and three, but before I do that, I think it's really important to say -- I mentioned earlier I'll be relying on a video, because in the time I have with you today and the overview I want to present to the parties and to the public, there's not enough time to actually go over all of the stories of those 1,992 participants. There's no way to show you every artistic expression or what it means.

But one of the things with artistic expressions is often interviews were done and there was protocols put into place. Even the things we have before us, all of these items are archived. They're marked. There is information filled out so we know how to treat

and handle them. And in the artistic expressions that we receive we do the same thing.

What I can say is I will never be the same person following our community hearings. All of our hearings I think has been an opportunity to learn, to share with the public, to truly speak about the issues that we need to hear about in order to address our mandate. But I can tell you, as someone who practiced mostly in -- and I hate the word "victim" -- but victim rights advocacy and in inquest work that hearing and working with these families, with these survivors, has fundamentally changed me as a human being and the way I look at law, as both an Indigenous person and as a Canadian practitioner of law.

The ability to work with families and survivors was not only a pleasure, it was not only a privilege, it gave me the opportunity to understand and see what resiliency truly is and how difficult and hard sometimes it was for people to speak their truth, yet they did it. And they did it in a way, and often very publicly, almost unbearably hard for some people to share those truths. But the fact that they let us walk with them to do that, the fact that they shared their truths in a way so that others can hear and learn and listen has fundamentally changed me as a human being.

I cannot do justice in the time I have to talk about each and every family that I've had the pleasure to work with or the number of other counsels that have worked with literally the hundreds of witnesses we've had. But I do want to sincerely thank any individual, regardless of how they chose to share their truth, that they did so and that they let us walk with them in doing it.

At this point I would ask for the next slide, please?

I'm going to start with Part three. You're, like, well, you just finished Part one. Why are you jumping to Part three? There's a bit of chronology here at work. The first -- the very first Part three, and Part three is our knowledge-keepers and expert hearings. The first one we had was actually August 22nd to August 24 2017 was the first time we held an expert hearing, and we it as a national expert hearing, and we held it specifically on indigenous law and decolonizing perspectives.

This was done because it was important to have context for the Commissioners to set out frameworks and understanding of the evidence that they would hear moving forward.

In August 2017, the National Inquiry held

its first knowledge keeper and expert hearing, and boy, was it a learning curve, and not just because of the great evidence we received, but because we learned of protocol. And I actually see some of the grandmothers in the room today.

And there was that one moment where I sat there as a Canadian lawyer cross-examining an expert, but I turned and I looked to my left and there sat three grandmothers harvesting sage, picking medicine and preparing it for the witnesses and the parties. And I remember that moment and sitting there thinking, "Wow, I've never seen this in a courtroom".

And it was important because, to me, it actually exemplified indigenous practice and indigenous law at practice.

We learned the value of indigenous legal principles and models that would likely prevent violence against indigenous women, girls, transgendered and two-spirit people, and to reduce the vulnerability they're exposed to and the violence they're experiencing.

The witnesses spoke of the value of revitalizing indigenous laws in contemporary society as a solution.

The witnesses included Dr. Val Napoleon, Dr. Hadley Friedland, Tuma Young, Dawnis Kennedy, Sandra

Omik and Karen Drake, who helped and assist as we learned on the third day rather than going with the evidence or testimony we wanted to, to have the grandmothers help us and guide a circle and speak with families.

Chief Commissioner Buller, you were quoted as saying not only were all of the panels invaluable to us as Commissioners; it was also an opportunity to educate all Canadians about the existing laws of the Anishinaabe, the Mi'kmaq and the Inuit.

Dr. Val Napoleon and Dr. Hadley Friedland presented the need to shift our beliefs as a society and to undo false assumptions that indigenous laws no longer exist. They proved and demonstrated that indigenous law continues to be in practise, and they actually encouraged us to think beyond that mind frame that just says, "Oh, there's indigenous law", but that indigenous law lives and breathes.

They shared that indigenous laws are practical tools to help solve problems when they arise, and that these laws still continue to be part of communities every day. They talked about the basic concepts of indigenous law, but they pushed us further.

They reminded us that when we're listening to stories that not only do those stories help us to derive truth, but they also signify legal principles and

practices that are in place or should be in place.

When we look at indigenous law, and a good example of this -- and we heard this time and time again throughout the community hearings and in these other hearings -- was that when we looked to our laws, we actually learned things like how we should act, how we should treat children, how we should teach them about their rites of passage so they understand the roles of womanhood, of manhood, of their obligations of relationships.

The biggest point I took away from this particular hearing was understanding how important our relationships are in indigenous law, and indigenous law is in governing all of our relationships.

When we have better relationships, we have less violence.

Tuma Young shared with the Commissioners the concepts behind two-eyed seeing, which is how to work and think in a space between both Canadian and Mi'kmaq law. He expressed that this concept can be practised by all Canadians.

Professor Young explained that Mi'kmaq law is practised through song, ceremonies, languages, dances and storytelling. He emphasized the role of collective responsibility in Mi'kmaq law and how this principle, when

implemented, is more effective in preventing abuse and violence than is the Canadian criminal justice system, which focuses only on individual responsibility.

Sandra Omik shared with us about Inuit perspective and the Inuit laws.

The talking circle that I referred to included grandmothers and families. The grandmothers that were in attendance -- so during these particular hearings, we had a sacred fire at Odena and we had a number of ceremonies in place. And we were so lucky to have so many grandmothers' guidance.

And I had the privilege of sitting in a room with them one evening eating Chinese food for a number of hours to get their direction. And you know, Chinese food and pop actually helps get a little more energy out of some of our grandmothers than you'd expect.

But the last person that we had as a witness that we want to talk about, although she was not the last witness, is Dawnis Kennedy.

Dawnis Kennedy explained that Anishinaabe law is a deep wellspring from which we all derive.

She spoke about Anishinaabe law and her own life experiences as a survivor of violence and as someone who's lost someone.

She reminded us and the National Inquiry

that we could draw on that wellspring and that the key to having respectful relationships is to understand, in this case, Anishinaabe law and philosophy.

Commissioner Eyofson, you were quoted saying, "The standing ovation for Dawnis Kennedy was a powerful moment about how profound her words were for all of us."

In that hearing, Dawnis Kennedy reminded us that human rights are, from her perspective, only one part of life. She said, and I quote:

> "I believe in life for everyone, respect for everyone. That's what I believe in. Living a good way of life in harmony and respectful relationships with all my relation."

"And I am related to a lot of people", she told us.

She also said:

> "I'm related to everyone in this room. I'm related to everyone watching out there. I'm related to every tree, I'm related to the stars. I'm related to every being in the entire universe because my creation tells me so. And you're all related to the entire

universe as well."

So, she said:

"That's a lot of relationships that we have to work at maintaining, you know. Human rights isn't going to get us there all the way. It's a bit of a stingy word because that deer has as much right to water as I do. That cow has as much right to nourish her children as I do, if I had one."

She giggled, and then continued on:

"I believe if we get better about honouring and protecting life, all life, I will feel good about the world that we leaving for our great-grandchildren. I can't undo what's done. I can't bring back what's gone, but I can find my best way forward and I can do whatever I can do to help anybody who wants to do the same."

"If I can do it for you, I will", she said. "If I can share my story with you and you can find something in it, I will."

We left with a lot of good lessons from that.

The next hearing we had was actually as it relates to knowledge keepers and experts was a national and regional one, and it was a human rights framework.

It was held in Quebec City May 14th to the 17th, 2018. The witnesses presented powerful tools such as international instruments and talked about things like the social determinants of health that can inform the work of a national inquiry and build a human rights framework that includes a gendered lens and is based on not just substantial rights, but ensuring that intersectionality as well as cultural-specific, indeed, colonizing practices are also built into such a framework.

The witnesses we heard from that week were Tracy Denniston, Tim Argetsinger, Faye Blaney, Professor Naiomi Metallic, Brenda Gunn, Corey O'Soup, Dr. Dalee Sambo Dorough and Jean Leclair.

Beyond the tools that they shared with us, those international instruments, there was some reflection on a couple things.

A reflection on the important role of men in ending the cycle of violence was brought in as compelling evidence. Men need to be part of the solution and walk beside women and girls in our communities and honour and respect and support them.

The hearing strengthened the National

Inquiry examination of systemic causes that we'd heard in Part 1 from so many witnesses. It helped us understand what laws are in place from a human rights-based approach and what needs to be done, I would suggest, not just in Canada, but globally as it impacts indigenous women and girls and two-spirited.

One of the noteworthy moments, and there were many in that hearing, was when the provincial advocate for Saskatchewan, Mr. Corey O'Soup, shared the stunning statistics of children in care in that province, but he reminded us over and over again using both law but just the perspective and a book that youth developed that the voice of children and youth is not only important, but they also have human rights and we cannot ignore their human rights.

The next expert -- sorry, knowledge keeper and expert hearing we held was in June 2018, and it was held in Toronto, and its theme was racism.

The National Inquiry heard that third knowledge keeper and expert hearing on racism, and the hearing explored racism and discrimination that creates vulnerable circumstances and increases violence for indigenous women, girls, two-spirited, LGBTQQIA people.

The hearing looked at solutions as well, practices and policies that combat racism and ways to

create safer spaces and services. That hearing in particular spoke a lot to services and it covered the gamut, whether it was medical services that Indigenous people received, whether it was education services, and we also explored sort of media and pop culture implications and how racism has an impact.

The -- in the first panel, we were fortunate enough to have two witnesses that were able to provide a perspective as it relates to Two-Spirit LGBTQQIA. And we learned about things like pronouns. And that seems funny, but I found that a really compelling moment, when we start treating humans like humans and accepting how people want to identify themselves.

The witnesses included Albert McLeod, Fallon Andy, Dr. Barry Lavallie, Amy Hudson, Dr. Sylvia Moore, Farida Deif, Jesse Wente, Tanya Talaga, and Dr. Cindy Blackstock.

We heard powerful testimony about the intersections between racism and the Two-Spirited issues -- education, health, and welfare. As I said, one of the points that I thought was eye-opening for a lot of participants and those watching was how racism in media and journalism and film actually impact us as a larger society.

Particularly, Tanya Talaga spoke about the

Fallen Feathers, the seven youth for which there was an inquest held in Ontario. And she talked about the impact of writing a book and what it meant to share her truth, but she also talked about what was portrayed in media as often mistaken drug overdoses instead of close looks at those deaths.

Jesse Wente explained how pop culture, cultural appropriation, and not being represented within pop culture has had an impact, not only on Indigenous people but also in how society interprets or misunderstands Indigenous peoples cultures and practices. Specifically, he said -- and I quote:

> "When we see ourselves misrepresented, we realize that we are not, that we are othered, that we have been positioned outside of mainstream culture. And that is, I think, traumatic, and [that] becomes reflected in how, not only we view, but the larger culture ultimately views us."

He explained further that -- and quote:

> "And I think the big issue is one of dehumanization. And that over the course of time without authentic

representations, and with false representations being the norm, Indigenous people have struggled to be human on Turtle Island. And when you're not human, it becomes much easier to assert violence, oppression, and neglect. It becomes much easier to ignore these things [that are] in the community. It becomes much easier to accept [that you] wouldn't be acceptable in your own community if you don't think other people are human. And I think that is largely what the media has done to Indigenous people."

He further said:

"And I would say that while it wasn't calculated, I don't think there was ever [a meeting] in Hollywood or any major media where everyone gathered to say, [hey, let's] do this, I think it was a function of nation building of both Canada and the U.S. to do this, but it has made -- [and meant] an enormous cost for Indigenous people to

be dehumanized in this way as part of the colonial process on Turtle Island."

Okay. The next -- can I have the next slide, please?

Again, we see a number of pictures. I do want to point to two in particular. The one is the middle is a heart. There were children that made little red dresses, and they put the poster together and it formed a heart, and they wanted anyone at the hearings to have them.

And then there's also Angel. Angel wrote -- this was in Iqaluit, and this is the street that's been dedicated to lost missing and murdered Indigenous women. Some of these are just beautiful landscape. The top picture is in Thompson, Manitoba.

Next slide, please.

So in addition to Part III, we also had Part II Institutional hearings. So we had government services held in this actual location back in May and essentially, it was the first of our Institutional Hearings on Government Services. There was no combination of witnesses. This was strictly institutional. So they were either worked for a government, a non-profit, an agency that could speak to institutional issues.

Specifically, we heard on victim services, health, including mental health, addiction services and treatment in remote Indigenous communities, and housing, including emergency housing, shelters, and safe houses.

The witnesses were John Phelps, Leanne Gardiner, Naomi Giff-McKinnon, Betty Ann Pottruff, Dr. Valerie Gideon, Jackie Anderson, Christine Duhaime, Nakuset, Sandra Montour, and Josie Nepinak.

The testimony that was shared shed important light on how government services, whether they are victim or justice service, family violence prevention services, or health addictions or mental health service often struggle with service delivery, particularly in north -- northern and remote communities and how frontline workers work tirelessly to support Indigenous Women and Girls and Two-Spirit in often extremely trying circumstances.

I think we often talk about the hours we hold, but I think we often forget to recognize the volunteer hours or the hours that frontline service providers put into when they're under resourced.

A noteworthy moment was the panel with Nakuset, Sandra Montour, and Josie Nepinak because they assisted in our understanding of the real impact of the lack of resources beyond the spreadsheets, beyond the

cost, beyond the corporate issues, but what it meant on the ground, and they talked about taking a small amount of money and feeding more people.

And the need to build stronger -- they talked also to the need to build stronger relationships with police services and authorities. And quite frankly, they talked about what delivering humane and kind services should look like for anybody providing services to any of those people in need.

The next Institutional Hearing that we held was on Police, Policies, and Practices. It was a national and regional. It was held in Regina, Saskatchewan from June 25th to the 29th, 2018.

It was the second Institutional Hearing, and the hearing focused on how police respond to violence against Indigenous women and girls and Two-Spirited, including policies and practice. There was a large body, not just of oral testimony, but a large amount of documents produced out of this particular week, because we did see a lot of...

So the witnesses that we had during that week included Commissioner Brenda Lucki of the RCMP, Daniel Bellegarde, Jean-Pierre Larose, Richard Coleman, Yvonne Niego, Chief Clive Weighill, Jean Vicaire, Alana Morrison, Sergeant Dee Stewart, and Deputy

Commissioner Brenda Butterworth-Carr, as well as Captain Paul Charbonneau, and Chief Superintendent Mark Pritchard.

The testimony that we heard -- there was a couple of noteworthy moments, and one has -- but I can't not look over. And people will take different positions, and that's as they should on this particular testimony, but something unprecedented happened. The Commissioner of the RCMP apologized.

Commissioner Brenda Lucki made an apology to families of missing and murdered Indigenous women, and she said, and I quote:

> "On behalf of myself and my organization, I am truly sorry for the loss of your loved ones and the pain [it] has caused you, your families, and your communities. I'm sorry that [for too many people] -- too many of you, the RCMP was not the police service that it needed to be during this terrible time in your life. It is very clear to me that the RCMP could have done better. I promise to you we will do better. You are entitled to nothing less than our best

work in your communities. I believe it's never too late to do the right thing, and I want this apology to be just one more step in the RCMP's commitment and reconciliation."

She continued and said:

"Although we are not the only solution to these issues of violence against Indigenous women, girls, [and]...two-spirit, LGBTQ community, we know we have a large role to play when it comes to preventing this violence in bringing perpetrators to justice. So I look forward to providing some insight into the recruiting, retention, training and development, and policing [of] Indigenous communities. Thank you."

That was a noteworthy moment because it was the RCMP making an apology to families.

If I could have the next slide, please?

Again, you will see some beautiful landscapes in the Yukon, and in Smithers. We have one of our staff members with a basket of gifts, and it was gifts made by NFAC members that include little smudge kids, and

we have the red dress that was presented to the National Inquiry in Thunder Bay.

Can I have the next slide, please?

And in the last Part II and III hearings, we actually, you know, combined to conquer time. And what we -- what you as commissioners directed that we do is that we cull evidence that included both institutional and knowledge keeper and expert hearings.

The first one that we held -- yes. The first one... hearings. The first one that we held -- yes, the first one that we held was in Iqaluit, Nunavut from September 10th to the 13th. And it was focused on colonial violence. And I will apologize in advance, because I am certain I will not be able to pronounce the Inuktitut names properly, but we had Elisapi Aningmiuq, Inukshuk Aksalnik, Hagar Idlout-Sudlovenick -- Sudlovenick. So and I --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sudlovenick.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Sudlovenick, thank you. We also had Dr. Janet Smylie, Jasmine Redfern, TJ Lightfoot, and Jeffrey McNeil-Seymour. There were many notable moments that occurred in this particular hearing. And I'm only going to speak really briefly to two of them.

In one of them, Dr. Janet Smylie reminded us why it's important to count, which is interesting

because there's this really strange dichotomy between why we are counting, and why aren't we. But her point wasn't about counting the losses we've experienced alone, it was about counting Indigenous people in particular. Because we don't provide good services, and we don't do our work, unless we understand the communities we're serving, and we actually take a count of their population to provide that -- that service.

Also, there was a really -- a couple poignant moments on the last panel with TJ Lightfoot, Jasmine Redfern, and Jeffery McNeil-Seymour that provided insight and perspective from -- from two-spirit community, but also talked about activism and the roles that is important in protecting -- and fighting against a colonial legacy.

The next hearing we held was on criminal justice system and oversight. And it was held -- sorry. It was also held in Quebec City. We heard from a number of wonderful witnesses, who I will have to put later on the record because I can't find it in my notes, so I apologize. But we also then heard the family child and family supports in domestic violence the week of October 1st in Winnipeg. The witnesses that we heard from spoke to a -- a large number of perspectives, and some of the most massive issues that we've heard time and time again

as it relates to children in care or the break down of family based on government services. We heard from Cora Morgan; Sara Clark; Dr. Amy Bombay; Dr. Cindy Blackstock, who came back to be cross-examined; Susan Aglukark; Dr. Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond; and Dr. Alan Wade.

The last of the hearings that we heard, the combined hearings, was on sexual exploitation, human trafficking and sexual violence. This literally occurred a month ago. So it might be fresh in some of the parties' memories. It was a very emotional week, and it was a week that took many witnesses a large amount of bravery to present, not just their stories and impacts, but potential solutions. We heard from the Assistant Commissioner Joanne Crampton, Inspector Tina Chalk, Assistant Deputy Attorney General Juanita Dobson, Mealis Sheutiapik, Jennisha Wilson, Dr. Pertice Moffitt, Dr. Robyn Bourgeois, Mary Fearon, Lanna Moon Perrin, Chief Danny Smyth, Staff Sergeant Darryl Ramkissoon, Diane Redsky, and Rachel Willan. We had a large number of witnesses in this particular hearing.

Again, there were number of poignant and important moments. Pardon me. But I did want to highlight, yet, another apology that we heard from a police service. Chief Danny Smyth apologized on behalf of the Winnipeg Police Service. He spoke quite a bit upfront

about the need for this, but what I want to quote is:

> Before I talk about the partnership that we've established, I also want to acknowledge that the police in Winnipeg have not always been on the right path. That our past actions and procedures contributed to harming Indigenous people in our community. Indigenous women were not treated with the respect and dignity that they deserve.

He also said:

> As the Chief of the Winnipeg Police Service, I offer my apologies for past conduct and policies that contributed to harming Indigenous women and girls.

At this point, I only have a few minutes left, and I may have to beg for indulgence for an extra, just to make my closing remarks before we watch the video. One of the most important functions of any public inquiry, is public education. It's about having other Canadians understand the issues that are being investigated, to understand the impacts because if people don't understand them, and they don't hear about them, they don't have the opportunity to know better.

> We have a lot of records in Canada. We

have a lot of history. The TRC has produced and provided us information. There is a lot of stuff on the public record. There is already a lot of stuff in public archive. But this particular process got to hear about gendered violence. It got to hear about Indigenous women and girls, often from perspectives of Indigenous women and girls, or those who were impacted by the violence and harm.

This particular National Inquiry has taken some unprecedented steps. It has had hiccups, it's had burps. It's had problems, as would be expected in something this size, of this magnitude, with the time limitations it faced.

So in concluding, I would like to -- to say a couple important and key things. The -- the body of evidence before you is large. It is compelling. It has touched not only on the number of issues that are essential to the mandate of this public Inquiry but includes real human experiences that individuals and families had the courage to share with the National Inquiry. These truth demonstrate human fragility, frustration, heart-wrenching losses, deep sadness. But they also speak to humanity and resiliency. They speak to relation to it -- to relationships between families, friends, and partners, and the community. And,

ultimately, their truth speak of love.

The task before you, to write the final report and provide recommendations, given the sheer volume of evidence, is not a small one. But it is a task, I know, you're all committed to. That you have heard and read these testimonies and met the people who told the truth, means that you're in a position to honour and respect stolen and murdered sisters.

For families, Parties with Standing, those who have attended or watched any of the hearings, thank you for your attention and participation. This, after all, is a public inquiry. And as I stated earlier, an important part of that is to hear the truth that people have to share.

Witnesses took big steps to show tremendous strength to speak to the National Inquiry, often in those very public forums that is nerve-racking even for those of us seasoned in it, and share. Some have waited a long time to be heard. We heard that over and over again, "I've been waiting years and decades to tell my story in a meaningful way." That's why it's so important that others are listening. One of the crucial roles is that public education -- to educate about the issues that fall within the mandate. But I'm going to suggest, the witnesses that shared their truth, were in the best position to educated

everybody about the -- what they were experiencing and to identify the changes needed for improving the dire circumstances we've heard about over and over again.

As Commission counsel, not looking now to the Commissioners, but to others, I make a challenge to all in attendance here or watching, and other who are not here. I challenge all Canadians and people, including people in other countries, countries were Indigenous women also experience disproportionate violence and disappearances and murders, I challenge you to watch, listen, or read the truths shared by the witnesses in their testimonies of this National Inquiry. We've created this large body of publicly available evidence. We have collected the truth. We have collected the perspectives and understanding, in addition to all of those families, those -- the 1,992 participants, and additional 86 Knowledge Keepers, experts, and institutional witnesses that form part of a public record.

This evidence doesn't just belong to the Commission, this evidence belongs to the public. It is accessible in video format and in transcripts. It can be recalled and watched at command. These publicly available testimonies should be used. They should be used by academic institutions. They should be used by governments, policy-makers, service providers. They

should be used to anyone who wants to understand what Indigenous women are experiencing in this country. It should be heard by those who want to ensure that positive change will occur, so that Indigenous women, girls, two-spirited, LGBTQ -- QIA individuals can walk in safety. They can live in safety. And to ensure that they are afforded, not only the same human rights to …all other citizens, but rights that will equal the playing field.

The evidence is compelling. There's a problem in this country and how indigenous women, girls and two-spirit are treated.

There is a problem about the lack of respect for indigenous women, girls and two-spirited, a problem about the lack of care, and there is clear discrimination and racism and that needs to be addressed and requires a cultural shift to make the necessary changes.

I acknowledge that many of these testimonies are not easy to listen to. I have spent many tearful moments with families, with staff, by myself thinking and hearing words over and over again of these brave people who have shared with us.

A colleague told me that any time you have a hearing, it can become ragged because it's unscripted. So most often we know truth is not easy to tell. It's not

easy to listen to, either.

When you are listening to these testimonies, and I challenge you all to listen to these testimonies, make sure that you have taken necessary steps to protect your spirit. Make sure you have supports in place and recognize that hearing this testimony may cause trauma or vicarious trauma.

It's important to talk about these issues, but the issues must be raised in a safe and honest way.

I encourage you not only to listen, read, watch, but to talk about these issues with your families, with your communities. When you are empowered by knowledge and the truth you've heard, you should share that power.

It's through having tough conversations that we help shape a new culture for change, so please, take up the challenge so you can truly understand the humanity and resilience that indigenous women exemplify in the face of adversity and colonial legacy.

Take up the challenge so you can stand in righteousness and say you will not contribute to the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in this country.

People have shared profoundly sad and upsetting truths, but they have also provided solutions

and recommendations. Having the knowledge and awareness to contribute to the change and acknowledging the harm and pain that drives the need for change is something that anyone can do.

I want to thank you for your attention during this overview of evidence. As chatty as I am, believe it or not, I don't want the last word.

I believe the evidence does speak for itself and, therefore, the last portion of my presentation is an overview of evidence that's dedicating to watching the testimony of those who were brave enough to speak to the truth.

I do ask you to protect your spirit, to brace yourself, to understand that what we have to hear is not always easy.

I also have to give an immense amount of gratitude to all the staff, all of the legal team, everybody who's been a part of helping us summarize the evidence in this very fast but, over time, summary and particularly to Tiara Wilson and Shelby for editing the video we're about to watch.

So if we could please let the last word be those of the witness. Migwetch.

(VIDEO PRESENTATION/PRÉSENTATION VIDÉO)

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Those are our

submissions.

I suggest at 15-minute break, please.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Fifteen (15), please.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you.

--- Upon recessing at 11:10

--- Upon resuming at 11:33

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I would like to welcome you back to the hearing.

There are two small housekeeping matters that I would request.

During the overview the Commission counsel provided, there was a slide presentation. I'm going to kindly ask that that be marked as an exhibit, and the video as well to be marked as an exhibit.

I understand that the video will become available online, and the slide presentation, in both English and French.

---Exhibit 1: "Evidence Overview" Powerpoint presentation, November 26, 2018 (16 slides)
Submitted by: Christa Big Canoe, Commission Counsel

---Exhibit 2: Video presentation - Overview of evidence

Submitted by: Christa Big Canoe,
Commission Counsel

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: As we now sort of shift gears, we'll be inviting parties with standing, either their counsel or representatives, to make their closing submissions to you.

Each party, for the purpose of this week and in our next round of closing submissions, will have 40 minutes to make their submissions to the Commissioners.

The first party that we would like to invite up is the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs. Salima Samnani is counsel, and I'd invite her to the podium, please.

---SUBMISSIONS BY MS. SALIMA SAMNANI:

MS. SALIMA SAMNANI: My name is Salima Samnani, and I'm here representing the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs.

I want to start by acknowledging the Blackfoot territory and the people of Treaty 7, Bearspaw First Nation, Cianiki First Nation, Blood Tribe Kainai Nation, Piikani Nation, Siksika Nation, Tsuut'ina Nation, and Wesley First Nation.

I thank the people of this beautiful land for allowing Kupki7 Judy Wilson for performing her protocol prior to giving her remarks. Kupki7 Wilson will

soon be drummed and sung in by Jody Leon and her grandson, and Elder Sawsem(phon) and his daughter, Miranda. They will be joined by Secwepmec leader Charlene Belleau, who is the Chief of SCAT and worked with Indian Residential School survivors in Ottawa.

I now welcome Judy Wilson Kupki7.

(CEREMONIAL DRUMMING)

CHIEF JUDY WILSON: (NATIVE LANGUAGE)

MIRANDA: That was a Porcupine Song, and it's sung for if you've lost your way, it's for you to come home. The porcupine will help you. And it's also for the ones that are out there that are still missing, and for the loves ones to call their children to come back home.

The porcupine carries great medicine, and will help the people, so kuksham(phon).

KUPKI7 JUDY WILSON: Thank you so much for being on the Blackfoot territory, and also thank you for Alvine and Spike Eaglespeaker, Sr. for the prayers and the pipe ceremony this morning.

It was wonderful to be connected to the pipe for the truth and also for the feeling because sometimes the hardest and longest journey our people have is from your mind to your heart and to act the truths. So thank you so much.

I wanted to thank Miranda and -- for the song and explaining what the porcupine is. It's a medicine, the teachings from our Secwepemc people. And also for Charlene being with us. She's done a lot with her community and has showed a lot in the world what we can do by our actions.

And also to Jody, who tirelessly works in our Nation on missing and murdered women and stopping violence against our women and girls.

And also Sawsem(phon). He's with us and he's our women's helper. And he's -- will drop anything and everything to be in supporting our women.

My name is Chief Judy Wilson Kupki7. I'm the secretary-treasurer of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs. And I've been Chief for over a decade and also served as a Councillor for eight years.

I first started into politics with my late uncle, Grand Chief George Manuel, who I served one term with before he passed away. And he was a very hard teacher as well.

I'm also a survivor. My sister was murdered 22 years ago.

My mother and brother told their story for the first time at the hearings in Vancouver, and I'm here to ensure their stories and the stories of others do not

go silent and that justice is realized for all.

The Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs were dedicated to affirming and defending inherent title and rights of our First -- indigenous people and realizing our own self-determination.

The Union is made up of representatives elected by Band Council of B.C., and currently we serve over half. There's roughly over 110 communities that belong to the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs.

The Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs is the only organizations of Chiefs in Canada that have been granted standing for this Inquiry.

The Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs was formed in 1969 in response to the White Paper Policy, which tried to -- for Canada's final solution to the "native problem". The main goal of the White Paper Policy was to lay out a plan for Aboriginal and title rights to be extinguished, either through treaties or through governments imposing their will.

The true respect for indigenous people require that their inherent title and rights be recognized and respected without being extinguished.

The displacement of our indigenous peoples from their territorial lands has resulted in the state-controlled reserve systems, dependency and poverty. My

cousin, late Chief Arthur Manuel, spent his life work -- he wrote two books, authored two books in regard to this issue.

The Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, we advocate locally, provincially, federally and around the world to demand that the colonial government meet its obligation to finally restore indigenous people with the security and liberty that they had -- we had before being colonized.

The governments must take every ordinary and extraordinary step to continue the healing and reconciliation for Aboriginal people. This includes repudiating the genocidal doctrines of discovery and superiority and respecting our rights to our land in our own way of living.

This is the core issue of dispossession and displacement of our people. What you're hearing through the stories about the tragedies and the loss, those are the symptoms of our people being displaced and dispossessed from our lands so that the very core issue is our indigenous title and rights.

Currently, the Union is involved in implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. This week we released a paper entitled "True Lasting Reconciliation", a paper that guides the

B.C. government on implementing the UN Declaration.

This paper outlines the steps for the government to take in addressing unfinished business in decolonizing our lands and our way of life.

And in addition, our organization, we also did a sexual abuse review committee, and we're developing a tool kit and policy and templates for indigenous organizations and Bands.

When we had an incident occur, the Chiefs came together and thought it was very, very important to start looking at even our own organizations and how we treat women, and stop the violence.

Canada has ratified seven major UN, United Nations human right treaties. The first one is the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The second one is the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The third one is the International Covenant on Economic and Social and Cultural Rights. The fourth one is the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The fifth one is Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment and Punishment. And the sixth one, a Convention on the Rights of the Child.

And the seventh is the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Those are binding to Canada, and the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs will continue to make all our efforts to ensure Canada complies with all of its international obligations.

We have been over there several times. We've been planning to go again next year in 2019 to continue reporting and monitoring and stating what Canada is doing to our indigenous people.

We actually go with other people that are right holders, title holders, and we present submission papers regular to the United Nations Declaration.

The Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action cannot be implemented without the UN Declaration being fully adopted and implemented without qualification.

The second part of my oral submission is the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs and indigenous women, girls and transgender and two-spirited.

Prime Minister Trudeau has said he wanted a new relationship with indigenous people based on rights, respect, cooperation and partnership. Mr. Trudeau betrayed his election time promises to indigenous people, like buying a pipeline that crosses our beautiful

Secwepemc territories, and that was done without our proper title and right holders' consent.

Mr. Trudeau's government has taken the First Nations to Court and gone around the will of our First Nations people. We want the governments we can rely on in all cases, not just when it suits them.

One of the issues of missing indigenous women and girls the government has not done enough, and now they're proposing to set up a 1,000-man camp in our territory which, in many reports, have said a lot of those man camps have a lot of violence against our women. And I applaud our women for standing up against that.

The government spared no effort in colonizing our land and brutalizing our people. They used and continued every legal and illegal tactic to keep our people in their colonial Courts, fighting for clean water, our land and our children, whereas those should just be given rights.

They kidnap our children in residential schools and now the child welfare system. They use tremendous efforts and resources to hold us down and prop themselves up, but when we ask for help we hear, "That's too expensive. Solutions are too complex".

The government spares no expense and effort to keep us down and erase us. Pipelines are expensive and

complex, but the government finds a way with the national TransCanada pipeline.

If we are in a new era of reconciliation with the government must stop making excuses and act with the same dedication they used many years ago to colonize us.

The Union has written a closing submission that will focus on many issues, but today I'm only going to focus on two: The systemic issues of the police and women and girls; and the second one, support services for Indigenous women and girls. Although, some reports suggest there's 3,000 women and girl -- Indigenous women and girls that have gone missing and murdered in Canada, that data is unreliable and incomplete. Many women and girls have not been added to these lists. Three thousand is a gross underestimation.

For years, we have demanded action by government and police to properly investigate the murders and disappearance of Indigenous women and girls. White girls and women don't have to worry about their safety the way Indigenous women and girls do here in Canada. I'm inspired by the movements in various communities that have become allies and advocates, advocacy groups and the fellow agitators for changes. For instance, Idle No More powerfully highlighted the many ways in which our people

experience discrimination, oppression, and especially, policy brutality. The Me Too movement has highlighted the every day criminal treatment of women in all areas of life. I stand with these movements, amplify their voices, and raise my own voice in solidarity to call for change, justice and equality for Indigenous women and girls.

For far too long the lives of Indigenous women and -- and girls have been ignored. We will not stand for this anymore. I take strength and inspiration from these movements for change. There can be no more discussion about whether we are discriminated against and treated unfairly. We are, period. And we want solutions now. In fact, we want these -- wanted these solutions decades ago when we first began calling for a National Inquiry. And I applaud the many women that are in this room that began those discussions in their communities many, many decades ago. And they're still here, thankfully. But there's just as many that are passed on now in the spirit world.

The -- the Union, we received standing in the Missing Murdered Women Commission in -- of the Inquiry in B.C. but refused to participate because of the denial of a just process. Indigenous women in -- in our organizations were purposely excluded, denying our voices and our experiences once again. The Union has called for

a national public inquiry with many of our sisters, and once again, we were shut out by the process. We were not able to meaningfully participate. We are here today to let the Commissioners and the government know that, after years of advocacy, for many others, and us, to bring this Inquiry into beginning -- into being, this Inquiry is not enough. We expect more, we deserve more, and we'll continue to demand more.

Indigenous people have no confidence in the justice system. Be it the police, the courts, the law-makers, or whether in the Downtown Eastside, or the Highway of Tears, we have seen the law-makers drag their heels, and police turn a -- a blind eye while women are being murdered by the dozens.

It breaks my heart to think of the hundreds of fathers, mothers, sisters, and aunties who have walked the highways, the riverbanks, and the forests looking for their daughters. And this just happened in Hope, and there was a sad outcome to -- in -- Innalise (phonetic), she was found in the river. So that was just reported to us the other day. My heart goes out to that family.

It is clear to me that the murders of Indigenous women and girls are not treated with respect and urgency. Let me say in this forum, for you, the Commissioners and the government to hear, that Indigenous

women and girls will not be erased. That we are strong, and we will demand justice every day of all of our lives. Our calls for justice will not be softened with the closing of this Inquiry. But instead, this will be another platform on which we will stand to drum, to sing, and call for justice.

So the third part is the police and the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs. The Union has worked tirelessly to educate police on how to behave ethically. This is the work we should not have to do. Police treat Indigenous people as though being Indigenous is a crime. We have advocated for the appointment of an Indigenous as the Police Complaint Commissioner, but this has not happened. This has to change. We'll call an end to the practice of police investigating their own. There must be police accountability for Indigenous people to have faith in any policing system.

We need to look no further than the case of Cindy Gladue to demonstrate the shameful way in which the justice system treats her Indigenous women. An Edmonton jury acquitted Bradley Barton in the violent death of Cindy Gladue. Her physical remains were scrutinized inside the courtroom, which was a gross violation of her physical and spiritual integrity, and extremely hurtful to her family, and to Indigenous women, and to us all. The

court proceedings were racist. How can we believe the justice system when the highest court, the Supreme Court of Canada, to hear an absurd appeal of her killer? We will keenly watch this for their decision, but we don't have any high-hopes in this justice system.

We have lost many Indigenous women and girls in horrific ways. Robert Pickton murders where dozens of women's -- with -- with the police just looking on. The government in B.C., the Missing Women's Commission of Inquiry led by Wally Oppal, that guy -- that Inquiry is a study of not how to run an inquiry. It marginalized the very groups and people affected by the missing women tragedies. It was plagued by scandal, and then issued a report that found no specific fault of any police officer and held no accountability for their mistakes. To make matters worse, recommendations from the Commission have been largely ignored.

In 2016, the Auditor General released a report that found the government had not been transparent in reporting its progress on implementing recommendations. And has only implemented the intent of eight of the 23 recommendations. As far as the eight there have been -- that have been implemented, there has been very little consultation with our Indigenous women and girls and the grassroots people.

We strongly urge this Inquiry not to follow the footsteps of the Oppal Inquiry. This Inquiry's institutional expert hearing process was not adequate enough. I know I heard the report this morning, but I -- I need to say that. It did not properly dive into the systemic issues in the justice system, which need to bring shift for this change. It is clear a national Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls will likely not -- will not -- will likely not be recalled. This is why it's so important that the Commissioners be brave, be bold, speak the truth, to insight a societal shift in Canada.

The fourth part the police and the women and the deep distrust and lack of help. Give UBCIC's history with policing issues, we speak with authority that women and girls feel a deep distraught of the police. This deep distrust is justified. Indigenous women have a higher vulnerability to violence simply because they live in a society that pose risk to their safety. This statement deserves pause and reflection. The statement must be understood and internalized, especially by the police forces in B.C. and across Canada. We must ask the tough questions. What makes society more risky for Indigenous women? Who in society is directed -- directly responsible for this risk? Who is indirectly responsible

for this risk? The Commissioners must answer these questions decisively, and the politics must be put aside.

Indigenous women live in a more dangerous world than the average person. And such, are deserving of the best protection from the state and its police forces. This is not the case, however. It is opposite is often the truth. The report of the Commissioner Oppal, he asked a question of whether police met their obligations to provide equal protections, specifically to vulnerable groups. He concluded that the police investigation of missing, murdered women and girls did not live up to this obligation in several important ways. However, Commission Oppal found that:

> Failing are the -- attributable neither to overt or intentional police bias, nor generalized institutional bias, but to the operating of negative stereotypes and systematic biases.

Two and half years and $10 million dollars later, all he came up with, a defence for the police that their deliberate racist behaviour was not deliberate. The UBCIC agrees with Commissioner Oppal on the later, however, not the former. Indigenous people experience discrimination by police every single day in our communities, in our families. I just had instances in my community just last

week that -- it was a -- so this was a -- a son. You know, we cannot allow that in our community, in our -- in our nations, or anywhere.

The Union agrees that -- that we can only make lasting changes if the Commissioners believe women and girls, when they tell you the police are deeply racist at every level. The police forces in B.C. and Canada must lead the change in ending deep distrust between them and our Indigenous women and girls. In a note, it was mentioned that Brenda in June -- Brenda Lucki, the police commissioner, RCMP Commissioner, apologized to the families, and we heard today Chief Danny Smyth, we heard these apologies, is a welcomed first step, but the RCMP finally are recognizing their role in creating this crisis, and are acknowledging that they need to do better. But, apologies without action, without change, are meaningless. You cannot simply just say something. You have to do something.

We call upon each of the Commissioners to speak the truth, to power and make recommendations that will make these statements more than just hollow words. We call upon the Commissioners to make findings that assign clear and specific responsibilities for these failures, and make effective recommendations that give all of us a roadmap to stop this loss of life. Anything less

would render this Inquiry a waste.

I'm going to go on to this other section on lack of support services now.

Apart from the help from police and the courts, Indigenous women need support and services. Support for Indigenous women and girls lack in quality, quantity and relevancy.

When women and girls are seeking help from the police, it's because the harm they are facing is about to be realized. These women and girls deserve and require support and help before issues in their lives reach this crisis point. Indigenous women and girls need support services that are Indigenized and decolonized. These support services must be driven by Indigenous people themselves and grassroots organizations.

The government programs fail to consult us and result in meaningless programs that don't work. The programs must ensure that as women and girls move through urban and rural areas or through different stages of their lives, their care is continuous, well-funded and responsive to the women and girls' changes needs.

The Commissioners are well aware of the issues women and girls face that are involved in the child welfare system. The Commissioners are also aware of the girls, the issues they face as they age out of the system.

This is one issue we face, but a good example of an issue that has widely and thoroughly been discussed, but the government has not implemented enough changes.

We have seen child welfare systems that treat women and girls with no regard. We know when Indigenous children are in care, they are at risk of harm, serious harm. The state must stop taking our Indigenous children from our communities. We know how to raise our children. Any disruption to this knowledge and our families is because of the residential school and colonization. Support us in rebuilding our way of life and stop taking our children from us. And, paying white people to raise our children, often harming them, is residential school all over again by another name. Support Indigenous women and families and children, and finally get on our side, we need that.

So, now we say, "What now?" So, what now for some people? The final days of the Inquiry will provide closure. But, for many, it's just the beginning. For many, if the Inquiry's report accurately reflects the concerns of the families and the communities, the report will be a first step in the journey of healing, truth and reconciliation.

It is not enough to simply repeat our stories, saying "you heard us". We need action. If no

deep change comes from this Inquiry, the shameful legacy of Canada's treatment of Indigenous women and girls will continue, and we have had enough.

The questions that we have for you today are for now what? Where do we go from here? We ask the Commissioners to do everything they can to make bold recommendations to ensure that the recommendations in the reports are implemented in a timely, thorough and urgent manner.

We ask that this Inquiry continue to recognize the various complex causes for marginalization, deeply consider the role of the state that creates and maintains these vulnerabilities of Indigenous women and girls, and inspire all levels of government to afford not just basic but the very best quality of rights for Indigenous women and girls. And, most of all, the utmost importance, to recast Indigenous women and girls as valuable members of Canadian society that uphold positions of high regard, including us as givers of life.

The Canadian state has been perpetuating violence against Indigenous women and girls since contact. This is a position that the state has benefitted from, stealing our lands, territories and resources, and this violence at a state and individual level continues every day.

We call upon this Inquiry to hold the government accountable for these gross acts of injustices, and purposeful marginalization and exclusion.

We ask all those who are witnessing today, and those that are on the webcast that are joining us through the livestream, we ask the people to continue to speak their truths. It is going to take generations to turn this around, but it starts with each one of us today that are in this room that have shared their stories and that went through all of these tragedies. The young girl in the video that spoke in the video said, "Speak your truth and we are strong. We can turn this around," but it's going to start with each one of us.

And, we want to be able to create those safe places and clear the path for all of our people who came here today and have the right, the basic human right, to feel safe and not be violated, and not have sexual abuse or any kind of violence or murder perpetuated upon them. That is the right to life that we have, the right to human rights as an individual. Any person has those rights.

Canada has those seven covenants from the United Nations. It took a country to monitor and watch what Canada is doing to say, "You're not treating your Indigenous people right. You need to change that."

Whereas the Indigenous people have been saying that since contact. This has to change. This has to start from the very highest level of government to the person, the public, the citizenry that are on the streets, because they need to understand this is not just an Indigenous problem. This is all of our problem because we've steered so far away from what being human is about, what being a human being is about.

In our teachings as Indigenous people, that's one of the greatest teachings, is we strive to be human beings. We strive to follow Creator's path that he set out for us, and we need to all be able to encourage everyone to listen to one another, and to continue to fight for justice.

For the ones that were murdered, our sisters and brothers, I will add, and also for those ones that are experiencing it right now, right this minute in Canada, and that are going to be experiencing it because it happens every single day, almost every minute of the day our women are experiencing this and our girls are, too, that's the cycle we need to end, Commissioners, and I really pray and hope you've listened to those words to take the bold action against Canada as a state government, continuing to oppress our people and say, "Enough Canada. Give recognition to the people, the Indigenous people, and

return their lands," so we can be independent again, not dependent on the government, which they made us.

They created programs and services, and they created reserves, and they created that we are wards of government. We didn't create any of that. It was the state that created that so that they could have access to our lands and resources and displace us. And, they placed us on reserves. They thought that we would become extinct or extinguish us, but we're still here and we're going to continue to be here, and I really -- I appreciate that we have that foundation of the teachings and the practises and our language and our culture, because that's our bedrock and our foundation. Thank you.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Chief Commissioner and Commissioners, did you have any questions? Yes.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I do. Just one. First, thank you very much for your testimony, and I look forward to reading the full submissions. We've heard from witnesses, and you've reiterated the importance of the implementation of the U.N. Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and I would very much like a copy of that ledger outlining the process that you believe needs to be followed.

I tried looking online and I couldn't find it, but if we could get a copy of that, that would be

fantastic. …

KUPKI7 JUDY WILSON: Thank you.

The report was -- the embargoed report was released Thursday, so it's actually just coming out. It'll be released, I believe, Tuesday, and there will be a press release as well. And we'll make sure that the Commissioners receive a copy because it's a really fundamental piece on implementation of the UN Declaration.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you.

And just sort of to follow up, we've heard from a number of witnesses how foundational implementation of the UN Declaration is to addressing this national crisis.

Is that something that you would support as it being foundational and a key -- like a big step?

KUPKI7 JUDY WILSON: The UN Declaration is key because it talks about our -- not only our free, prior and informed consent as indigenous people, but it also talks about our self-determination, so there's many, many clauses in there, including the protection of our women -- indigenous women and girls. But without having self-determination and free, prior and informed consent,= -- we need to have that as well.

That's why we've always been calling upon the governments to fully implement without qualification

the entire UN Declaration. And that was also in the 94 calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Report as well.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Those are all my questions. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Merci beaucoup, Chef Wilson.

Him and I are -- we're very listening and the beauty of the image I had when you were talking, it's we're doing this for him and for all our babies. So it was an honour to carry your grandchild during your presentation.

But also, I'm anxious to have the written and very, very sensitive about the recommendation that you are presenting on behalf of your organization, by the way, an organization that is very involved.

We echo your -- we hear the echo of your drum or your demonstration even in Quebec, just so you know that it's very powerful.

And of course, I have to say thank you for your -- how do we say in English -- you were transparent, honest about what went wrong or what could have been better through this process, and that -- I acknowledge that. Merci beaucoup, beaucoup, beaucoup.

And of course, there will be other

recommendations from other groups or representative, and it's going to be a tough exercise to see what do we present.

So I hope the dialogue will still be open with you if we have any further question or which one we should, you know, put or how we should be strategic to make sure that it's effective for all of us.

Merci beaucoup, beaucoup, beaucoup.

KUPKI7 JUDY WILSON: I just wanted to say I guess I adopted a grandson. It's actually Jody's grandson, but what do you say, publicly now I guess I got another grandson.

I have one grandson, Quinn Wilson, and my husband, William Wilson, and my daughter, Maria Wilson and Hannah, or Jeffrey Wilson.

So yeah, I just wanted to say I guess we share a grandson now.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Chief Wilson, thank you so much. And thank you to your supporters and the beautiful song. It was a great way to start.

You've inspired us with your words today, being a wonderful leader yourself, so thank you again.

(CEREMONIAL DRUMMING)

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Chief Commissioner

and Commissioners, at this time we would like to request a one-hour lunch break. It is now 12:10, so if we could reconvene at 1:10 to call the next party with standings to make their submissions, that would be appreciated.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Yes, 1:10, please.

--- Upon recessing at 12:13

--- Upon resuming at 13:13

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I'm going to ask that you please take your seat. We will be getting started in a moment.

Just so everyone's everyone, the next party will be presenting en français, in French, so there are headsets so that you can get the full translation if you require it just at the back of the room. So if you want to grab a translator if you require it, that would be helpful, and we'll be getting started in just a couple minutes.

(SHORT PAUSE/COURTE PAUSE)

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Bonne après-midi, les avocats de la Commission aimerais inviter Me Wina Sioui et Me Philippe Larochelle pour présente les observations finales de l'Assemblée des Premières Nations Québec-Labrador. Ils vont 40 minutes pour présenter les observations finales.

--- SUBMISSIONS BY MS. WINA SIOUI:

MS. WINA SIOUI: Bonjour. You all have your head sets because I think you'll need it.

Donc, j'aimerais d'abord reconnaître le territoire des Nations du traité numéro 7 ainsi que celui de la nation Métis de la région. Nous les remercions de nous accueillir aujourd'hui, afin que l'on puisse livrer nos représentations finales afin de contribuer à la clôture des travaux de l'Enquête nationale.

Nous soulignons d'abord le courage et la détermination de celles qui sont venues livrer des témoignages troublants et accablants, mais oh combien importants d'être partagés devant vous dans le cadre de vos travaux.

Nous soulignons aussi tout l'amour porté par les familles envers leurs proches et puis nous souhaitons remercier les aînés, les grand-mères, Madame la commissaire en chef, mesdames et messieurs les commissaires, l'équipe de procureurs de la Commission ainsi que toute la précieuse équipe derrière l'Enquête nationale, incluant l'équipe de soutien moral et émotionnel et l'équipe de traduction, aussi, qui m'a d'ailleurs mentionné de ne pas parler trop vite, donc je vais m'adapter [Rires], alors sans qui toute cette merveilleuse équipe, on ne serait pas ici aujourd'hui.

Alors, merci!

Donc, je me nomme Wina Sioui, je suis une femme, membre des Premières Nations, mais principalement, je suis une Huronne Wendat et membre de la nation aussi, de la communauté Anishnabeg, Abitibiwinni, qu'on appelle aussi Pikogan. Je suis avocate conseil et je représente l'Assemblée des Premières Nations du Québec Labrador, qui est une partie ayant intérêt pour agir devant vous.

Alors, je suis l'ainée de l'un des deux frères Sioui de l'arrêt *Sioui* qui a été rendu de façon unanime par la Cour suprême du Canada en 1990, ça fait déjà un bon moment, mais cette décision-là es d'une grande importance, elle concerne la validité, les règles d'interprétation des traités préconfédératifs, ainsi que l'importance de la relation de nation à nation.

Si je vous parle de cette décision-là, c'est notamment pour introduire mon collègue, Me Philippe Larochelle, qui m'accompagne aujourd'hui et qui va vous livrer une partie de notre présentation un peu plus tard. Me Larochelle n'est pas étranger à la défense et à l'avancement des droits des Premières Nations, son père a justement été l'un des acteurs clés ayant mené à la victoire en Cour suprême dans la cause *Sioui*. Mais c'est aussi en raison de son expertise en droit international que la décision de s'allier avec Me Larochelle a été prise

tout naturellement. Je vais lui laisser évidemment le soin de se présenter lui-même lorsque son tour sera venu, mais sachez que vous avez devant vous deux guerriers qui sont alliés, qui se sont alliés afin de poursuivre une bataille amorcée depuis longtemps pour la défense et la protection des droits des Premiers Peuples, un intérêt que l'on peut qualifier, pour Me Larochelle et moi, comme étant intergénérationnel entre deux alliés.

Alors, comme je vous l'ai mentionné, nous allons vous adresse à vous aujourd'hui au nom de l'Assemblée des Premières Nations Québec-Labrador. Donc, qui est l'APNQL, l'Assemblée des Premières Nations Québec-Labrador? Rapidement, l'APNQL a été créée en 1985, elle est composée de l'Assemblée des Chefs, d'un bureau administratif et de commissions régionales. L'Assemblée des Chefs est composée justement des chefs et des grands chefs des 43 communautés des Premières Nations qui sont situées au Québec et au Labrador. Ces 43 communautés des Premières Nations sont réparties dans 10 nations au Québec. Je vais vous les nommer : les Abénaquis, les Algonquins ou encore les Anishnabés, les Atikamekw, les Cris ou les Eeyous, les Hurons-Wendat, les Malécites, les Mi'gmaq, les Mohawks ou encore les Kanyen'kehà:ka, les Innus et les Naskapis.

Les chefs en assemblées élisent pour un

mandat de trois ans le chef de l'APNQL. Le chef actuel est M. Ghslain Picard et il est en poste depuis 1992.

Donc, bien que l'APNQL soit évidemment grandement préoccupée par la situation qui existe au Canada tout entier, vous comprendrez qu'elle est d'abord interpellée par la situation propre au Québec. Alors, le rôle de l'APNQL dans le cadre de vos travaux, des travaux de l'enquête nationale, est donc d'apporter sa contribution afin de vous aider à remplir le mandat qui vous a été confié, l'important mandat qui vous a été confié, en apportant un éclairage particulier sur la situation qui est propre au Québec.

Alors justement, pour ce qui concerne le Québec, vous avez sans aucun doute, certainement, y'a une autre commission d'enquête qui en cours en ce moment, qui est en cours au Québec, et elle poursuit ses travaux de façon parallèle à ceux de la présente enquête nationale. Cette commission se nomme la Commission d'enquête sur les relations entre les Autochtones et certains services publics au Québec. On l'appelle aussi la Commission Viens, c'est le nom de son commissaire, le commissaire Jacques Viens.

Alors, la Commission Viens a été mise en place en décembre 2016 afin – là, je cite une partie du décret qu'il a mis en place – « d'identifier les causes

sous-jacentes à toute forme de violence, de discrimination systémique et de traitements différents qui pourraient exister à l'égard des Autochtones ». On comprend qu'elle vise, donc, des enjeux très similaires à la présente enquête nationale.

La Commission Viens vise particulièrement, elle, six services publics au Québec, incluant les services policiers, et c'est important de mentionner les services policiers et c'est important de mentionner les services policiers parce que c'est principalement le service public qui était visé à l'origine et qui a mené à la création de la Commission Viens. Le rapport final de la Commission Viens devra être présenté, lui, le 30 septembre 2019. L'APNQL, vous comprendrez, qu'elle a également obtenu le statut d'intervenante devant la Commission Viens et nous devrons déposer notre mémoire dans les prochains jours, le 30 novembre prochain. Les audiences finales, elles, auront lieu le 13 décembre à Val-d'Or. C'est la raison pour laquelle on est ici cette semaine à Calgary.

Alors, juste pour vous donner une idée de ce que représente la Commission Viens, je vais vous donner quelques chiffres, quelques chiffres en vrac, c'est des approximations, mais ça donne une bonne idée de la bête.

Alors, plus de 500 témoins ont été entendus, plus de 1 000 pièces ont été déposées au cours

de plus de 150 audiences, journées d'audience – pardon – qui ont généré plus de 25 000 pages de transcription. C'est énorme. De nombreux grands chefs et chefs du Québec y sont intervenus. Ils y ont livré des témoignages quant à leurs préoccupations et les difficultés vécues à l'égard des relations avec les services publics du Québec. Ils y ont également présenté leurs recommandations. Plusieurs commissions de l'APNQL ont également contribué aux travaux de la Commission Viens. Les témoignages et l'ensemble de la preuve faite devant la Commission Viens a révélé l'ampleur du gouffre à surmonter avant que les membres des Premières Nations puissent recevoir des services publics de qualité et qui soient exempts de discrimination, de préjugés, de racisme, et qui soient financés de manière adéquate et satisfaisante.

On a pu également constater le nombre anormalement élevé d'allégations d'actes criminels et on inclut ici des agressions sexuelles, des abus de pouvoir de toutes sortes visant des policiers, notamment de la SQ – la Sûreté du Québec – à l'encontre de femmes des Premières Nations de Val-d'Or, et d'ailleurs, au Québec.

La Commission Viens apporte donc, selon nous, un éclairage important qui est en quelque sorte absent ici et qu'on va tenter de digérer un peu pour vous puis de vous le replacer dans des mots plus simples et

peut-être plus concis pour qu'il fasse partie des travaux de la présente enquête. Alors, c'est un peu le défi qu'on va mettre dans notre mémoire.

Mais, voici rapidement ce qui s'est passé qui a mené à la… en place… et qui a mené à la mise en place de la Commission Viens. Alors, vous avez sûrement déjà entendu parler du premier reportage de l'émission *Enquête* de Radio-Canada qui a été parue… qui a paru – pardon – en 2015. Ce reportage a ramené à l'avant-scène les dénonciations justement des femmes des Premières Nations contre des policiers de la SQ. Alors, à l'époque, on se replace en 2015, on visait les dénonciations des femmes de Val-d'Or ou contre… plus particulièrement, contre des policiers de la région de Val-d'Or.

À ce moment-là, quand l'émission *Enquête* a paru, on a fait face à une véritable onde de choc. Ça l'a soulevé un mouvement de soutien collectif. Pourquoi? Face au courage et à la détermination de celles qui ont osé dénoncer et qui ont vu leur réputation attaquée et qui considèrent, pour plusieurs, considèrent toujours aujourd'hui ne pas avoir obtenu justice.

Mais qu'est-ce qui a été fait face à ces multiples dénonciations à l'encontre des policiers de la SQ? Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé? Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait au Québec? Eh bien, dès le lendemain du reportage d'*Enquête*,

le ministère de la Sécurité publique a confié la responsabilité des enquêtes à un autre corps de police, le SPVM – c'est le Service de police de la ville de Montréal. Parce que je vous rappelle que les enquêtes qui étaient alors actives avaient été jusqu'alors gardées à l'interne, au sein de la SQ. Alors, c'était la SQ qui enquêtait sur la SQ – situation qui a été décriée – et la solution qui a été présentée, c'était de confier les enquêtes à un autre poste de police – comme je viens de le dire, le SPVM.

Alors, on se retrouve maintenant en novembre 2015. Pour tenter de gagner la confiance du public, le Québec a nommé Me Fannie Lafontaine, une experte en droit international, afin d'agir à titre d'observatrice civile et indépendante pour suivre le déroulement des enquêtes du SPVM.

C'est à la suite du deuxième reportage de Radio-Canada, qui est paru en avril 2016, que le mandat du SPVM a été élargi, non plus seulement à la région de Val-d'Or, mais à l'ensemble du Québec. Alors, ça l'incluait maintenant toutes les plaintes provenant d'un Autochtone et visant un policier membre d'un corps policier du Québec, à l'exception du SPVM, bien sûr. Et qu'est-ce qu'elle a fait, Me Lafontaine? Eh bien, elle a observé le travail des policiers enquêteurs du SPVM afin d'examiner et d'évaluer l'intégrité et l'impartialité de leurs

enquêtes.

Le 15 novembre 2016, Me Lafontaine rendait son premier rapport. Ce premier rapport, on dit qu'il… qui vise la phase 1 des enquêtes, parce qu'il y a deux phases aux enquêtes de Me Lafontaine. La phase 2 est toujours en cours, elle n'est pas terminée. Alors, Me Lafontaine va pouvoir rendre le rapport de sa phase 2 lorsque les enquêtes seront terminées et qu'elle aura terminé de rédiger son rapport. Le rapport sur la phase 1 est public ; on va aussi le déposer en vertu de la règle 33 de vos procédures.

Mais cette phase, elle, vise 38 dossiers d'enquête; des dossiers d'enquête qui se sont déroulés… les enquêtes ont eu lieu entre le 23 octobre 2015 et le 5 avril 2016. Alors, la phase 2 suit le 5 avril 2016 jusqu'à aujourd'hui.

Donc, on se demande : si on lit le rapport de Me Lafontaine et on regarde ses conclusions, on devrait bien trouver là toutes les solutions pour régler les problèmes, éradiquer la discrimination, le racisme systémique. Donc, on lit avec grand enthousiasme son rapport… mais savez-vous quoi? Eh bien, le travail n'aurait pas été mal fait – c'est ce qu'on lit, dans le rapport. Les règles du processus d'enquête policière auraient bel et bien été suivies, les règles auraient été

respectées par les enquêteurs du SPVM.

Alors, j'aimerais, à ce moment-ci, vous lire un extrait de son rapport, qui résume bien la situation. Donc, ça va comme suit :

> « Cela étant dit, une enquête criminelle classique a des objectifs limités, soit de déterminer si un acte criminel a été commis et d'identifier un ou des responsables. Il y a peu ou pas de place pour l'identification de chaînes de comportements ou pour l'explication des causes sous-jacentes à un phénomène qui n'est documenté que de façon fragmentaire au gré des plaintes individuelles formulées. L'enquête du SPVM ne peut donc être qu'un élément de réponse à une profonde crise sociale marquée par des enjeux plus collectifs et plus systémiques. En situation de crise, l'enquête criminelle est nécessaire, mais elle est insuffisante. La justice, dans ce contexte, ingrédient essentiel à la réconciliation, doit

être rendue tant au plan individuel qu'au plan collectif, via des mesures complémentaires au processus criminel.»

Me Lafontaine nous dit aussi, dans son rapport, que les plaintes des femmes autochtones de Val-d'Or et d'ailleurs servent de catalyseur à un mouvement de dénonciation, de solidarité et, surtout, de refus de laisser perdurer des situations d'injustice –et là, et j'ajoute, qui perdurent depuis beaucoup trop longtemps.

Je poursuis la citation :

« Ces témoignages qui brisent le silence ne sont pas vains, même lorsqu'ils ne mènent pas à la responsabilisation pénale individuelle d'un policier pour des raisons propres au système pénal, qui ne remettent aucunement en question la véracité de l'histoire vécue. »

Donc, Me Lafontaine nous dit ici que ce n'est pas parce que le DPCP, par exemple, le Directeur des poursuites pénales et criminelles ne dépose pas de plainte, ne traduit pas le dossier d'enquête, ne le porte pas devant les tribunaux, ce n'est pas parce que la décision a été faite de ne pas poursuivre au niveau du

tribunal que l'histoire est fausse, au contraire. Me Lafontaine, justement, ici, réfère à l'annonce qui a été faite par le Directeur des poursuites criminelles et pénales en novembre 2016, qui confirmait la décision de ne porter aucune accusation contre les policiers de Val-d'Or visés par les dénonciations initiales.

Donc, le problème n'est pas tant dans la façon de mener les enquêtes; il est donc ailleurs. Nous, on croit qu'il est beaucoup plus dans les mentalités à changer et aussi dans un processus qui n'est tout simplement pas adapté aux réalités et aux cultures des Premières Nations.

À titre d'exemple de mentalité à changer, je vais vous donner un exemple qui, je pense… je vais juste le dire puis je suis certaine que vous l'avez tous en tête : la situation du port des bracelets rouges par les policiers de la SQ en réaction aux dénonciations des femmes de Val d'Or. Faut-il rappeler que cette représaille par la SQ a été perçue certainement pas comme un geste dans la bonne direction, un beau geste de réconciliation – évidemment que non. Ça a été perçu comme un geste d'intimidation pur et dur contre les Premières Nations.

Je pourrais aussi citer, à titre d'exemple, le refus de la direction de la SQ d'admettre quelque faute ou d'offrir quelque excuse que ce soit aux victimes et aux

survivantes ou à leur famille ou à leurs proches.

Donc, dans le cadre de la présente commission, vous avez entendu plusieurs témoignages de survivantes, de victimes, de familles, en plus des témoignages, par exemple, de nombreux policiers à travers le Canada qui nous permettent de conclure que la situation qui est décrite dans le mémoire… pardon, dans le rapport de Me Lafontaine n'est pas exclusivement réservée au Québec, elle semble être bien généralisée à travers le Canada.

Me Lafontaine a identifié la situation ; elle a mis le doigt dessus, elle n'a pas eu peur des mots. Elle a fait clairement le constat que l'on fait face à, et je cite encore une partie de son rapport, on fait face à quoi?

> « à l'existence d'un racisme systémique au sein des institutions policières du Québec. »

Et là-dessus, j'aimerais apporter une petite précision. Comme nous le rappelait la professeure Suzie Basile, la professeure attikamek Suzie Basile devant la Commission Viens, elle nous disait que les femmes des Premières Nations sont quant à elles victimes d'une double discrimination : d'abord, ce sont des femmes puis elles sont autochtones. Alors, mettez-le dans l'ordre que vous

voulez, les deux éléments mis ensemble, double discrimination. Elles ont aussi subi les contrecoups du colonialisme, du racisme, du sexisme

. Alors, il semble qu'ultimement, la seule façon d'éradiquer le fléau –et je dis bien le fléau – que représente le racisme systémique, ça doit passer à travers ou par l'éducation de la société tout entière.

Et ça ne repose pas seulement sur la formation des policiers, par exemple ; oui, c'est très important, c'est urgent, même, que les policiers soient sensibilisés et formés aux réalités et aux cultures des Premières Nations, mais ce n'est pas suffisant. Pour éradiquer le racisme systémique, il faut, de manière profonde et urgente, viser l'ensemble de la population, afin que les cultures des Premières Nations soient valorisées, reconnues, ce qui implique d'être connues, à leur juste valeur.

Alors, on retient quoi, du rapport de Fanny Lafontaine? C'est que même si on avait les meilleures recommandations au monde et leur meilleure mise en œuvre au monde, si on ne réussit pas à changer les mentalités, on fait du sur-place, on n'avance pas.

Le mémoire de l'APNQL que nous allons vous déposer en décembre contiendra certainement des recommandations qui vont viser notamment à retravailler

l'offre des policiers, par exemple, mais qui vont aussi tendre à s'attaquer aux attitudes racistes dans toutes les sphères de la société.

J'arrive maintenant à l'après-enquête. Donc, qu'est-ce qu'on veut retenir… une fois que l'enquête va être terminée, qu'est-ce qui va rester? Qu'est-ce qu'on va faire après, la suite, donc? Parce que toutes les recommandations ne seront pas suffisantes. Oui, il faut changer les mentalités, il faut aussi penser aux victimes, ne jamais les oublier.

Et c'est pourquoi, dans nos réflexions, Me Larochelle et moi et les réflexions de l'APNQL, nos réflexions, justement, ont été motivées par deux axes principaux pour la recherche de solutions. Le premier, c'est un souci constant de faire en sorte que les victimes et les survivantes soient replacées au premier plan ; c'est le premier axe.

Le deuxième ; on était… on a été… on a réfléchi de quelle façon on peut faire en sorte ou on peut faire tout ce qui est en notre possible pour que le rapport de l'Enquête nationale ne soit pas tabletté et qu'il n'accumule pas la poussière comme tous les autres qui sont déjà d'excellents rapports, mais qui sont sur les tablettes du Parlement, qui accumulent eux aussi… pas eux aussi, mais qui accumulent de la poussière et qui

contiennent d'excellentes recommandations?

Alors, face à ces constats, qu'est-ce qu'on peut faire? Ou plutôt, que pourriez-vous faire de plus pour les victimes? C'est pourquoi on a pensé qu'en plus des recommandations à faire, une partie de la solution C'est pourquoi on a pensé que, en plus des recommandations à faire, une partie de la solution pourrait peut-être se… ça pourrait peut-être être de se tourner vers le droit international.

Et c'est ici que je vais laisser la parole à mon collègue, Maitre Philippe Larochelle, qui va vous présenter le fruit de nos réflexions à ce sujet. Je vais revenir un petit peu à la fin pour… je sais qu'on n'a pas beaucoup de temps, mais pour faire une courte conclusion.

Alors, je vous reviens. Je cède la parole à Maitre Larochelle.

Me PHILIPPE LAROCHELLE: Madame la commissaire en chef, Mesdames et Messieurs les commissaires, merci de nous accueillir ici, c'est un honneur pour moi d'être devant vous.

Mon nom est Philippe Larochelle. Je suis avocat à Montréal et j'arrive à vous par un chemin un peu détourné, celui du Rwanda, où j'ai vécu un autre génocide pendant plusieurs années, où j'ai eu la chance de côtoyer de nombreuses victimes, de nombreux survivants, de

nombreuses survivantes, et j'ai pu voir de première main les effets dévastateurs que le génocide a pu avoir sur ce pays, et je dois dire que le travail de préparation et le travail avec Me Sioui m'a, je le confesse, ouvert les yeux sur une tragédie dont je n'avais pas réalisé l'ampleur et la persistance. Et c'est fort de mon expérience et de mes connaissances en droit international que j'ai essayé bien humblement de penser à quelque chose que vous pourriez peut-être faire pour aller plus loin au niveau du droit international avec les victimes.

J'ai très peu de temps, mais je vais quand même retourner un peu dans le temps pour voir d'où j'arrive et où je pense que nous pourrions aller en droit international. Je pense… et on a fait circuler hier quelques documents que vous devriez normalement avoir en votre possession.

Je tiens à souligner que la question du droit international fait partie des thèmes que vous mentionnez dans vos axes d'enquête, c'est le thème 1(d). Plus précisément, un objectif que vous poursuivez, selon ma compréhension, c'est de « relier la violence au Canada aux cadres autochtones et aux cadres des droits humains à l'échelle mondiale ».

Le droit international s'est déjà invité dans toute la problématique. Je pense que si on prend le

premier document qui est celui du 30 mars 2015, le document du 30 mars 2015 est un rapport d'enquête du Comité pour l'élimination de la discrimination à l'égard des femmes. C'est un rapport d'enquête, c'est une enquête qui avait été initiée en 2011 à la suite de plusieurs demandes qui émanaient du Canada à la suite de visites d'experts du Comité au Canada et qui amené à ce document que j'estime, moi, être fort important et qui contient à la fin 37 recommandations qui peuvent certainement vous aider à formuler vos propres recommandations à la fin de cet exercice.

Et pourquoi je tiens à attirer votre attention sur ce rapport, c'est qu'il conclut au paragraphe 214… en fait, là j'essaie de sauver du temps parce que je me rends compte que je suis un peu pressé par le temps, mais avant d'aller au paragraphe 214, vous pouvez passer par le paragraphe 94. Le paragraphe 94 – malheureusement le document n'existe qu'en anglais, donc je préviens à l'avance les traducteurs que je vais sauter, et d'ailleurs, traducteurs auprès de qui je m'excuse si je vais trop vite –, mais ce document, ce rapport d'enquête au paragraphe 94 – je le lis, il dit ceci :

> « With the aim of analyzing all aspects of violence of Aboriginal women, including missing and murdered

> Aboriginal women, the findings of fact section covers the vulnerability of Aboriginal women to violence due to the legacy of colonization, their disadvantage, socio-economic situation, their reluctance to seek help from the authorities for fear that their children would be placed in foster care, and their vulnerability to prostitution and trafficking. It also covers the high levels of violence faced by Aboriginal women from within and outside their community, and the response of the police and the justice system. »

Y'a 100 paragraphes de ce rapport qui détaillent les conclusions de fait de cette commission d'enquête. Je vous en conjure, relisez-les avant de rédiger votre rapport puisque ces « Findings of fact », ces conclusions factuelles sont importantes et sont encore, trois ans plus tard, d'actualité. La preuve, ce que j'ai vu, ce que j'ai entendu de vos travaux reflète le fait que ces conclusions de fait sont encore d'actualité aujourd'hui.

Et à partir de ces conclusions de fait, si

vous allez au paragraphe 214, en fait le paragraphe 214 et 215 sont en quelque sorte les conclusions du Comité d'enquête, et il arrive… il conclut à la violation de nombreuses dispositions de la Convention sur l'élimination de la discrimination à l'égard des femmes, mais surtout, ce qui est très important, vous allez comprendre, pour la suite de ma discussion, c'est qu'il conclut, il attribue le qualificatif de « violation grave ». Donc, ce ne sont pas des violations banales ou anodines, le Comité n'hésite pas à aller plus loin et a considéré que ces violations sont « graves », qualificatif qui peut être accolé à des violations en vertu du Protocole additionnel à la Convention sur l'élimination de la discrimination à l'égard des femmes.

Ce Protocole additionnel, je vous en ai aussi distribué une copie, c'est le deuxième document que vous auriez normalement… que vous devriez avoir dans votre pile, et ce Protocole a été ratifié par le Canada. Ce Protocole est important parce qu'il prévoit tout d'abord le mécanisme d'enquête en vertu duquel le rapport auquel je viens de référer a été rendu, mais il prévoit aussi – chose que je tiens à souligner –, il prévoit aussi à son article 2 une procédure de pétitions individuelles, et c'est vers cette procédure de pétitions individuelles que je m'en vais tranquillement dans les 12 minutes qu'il me

reste, procédures de pétitions individuelles qui doivent, suivant l'article 4 du même Protocole, faire une démonstration de l'épuisement de recours internes. Donc, si vous êtes familier avec le droit international, vous connaissez peut-être ce concept.

Là où je veux vous amener, c'est à considérer dans votre rapport le fait que, pour les victimes qui pourraient être encore insatisfaites parce que leur voix… elles considèrent que leur voix n'a pas été assez entendue, pour les survivants qui sont encore sur le chemin d'une guérison et qui espèrent encore plus que le simple fait d'être entendus, la voix de pétitions individuelles permet pour une personne de s'adresser directement, de faire directement une plainte pour les préjudices qu'elle a subis contre le Canada.

À partir de la preuve que vous avez reçue, à partir également d'autres conclusions que l'on trouve dans les documents qui émanent du Comité de la… du Comité responsable de l'élimination de la discrimination à l'égard des femmes, je pense que vous pourriez inclure dans votre rapport final un paragraphe ou une section – une section, puisque c'est une démonstration relativement complexe à faire –, une section qui détaillerait en quoi le Canada n'offre pas de remède interne efficace à ses victimes.

Quelle serait l'utilité de cet exercice, si vous acceptez de vous y prêter? L'utilité de cet exercice sera de sauver cette démonstration onéreuse à chacune des personnes qui désirent poursuivre le combat devant le Comité pour l'élimination de la discrimination à l'égard des femmes. Elle pourrait s'appuyer… vous pourriez… votre rapport servirait de plateforme pour ces personnes pour qu'elles puissent s'adresser directement au Comité et faire les plaintes qu'elles estiment nécessaires pour les violations qu'elles ont elles-mêmes vécues.

Donc, c'est quoi, des recours internes? Évidemment, j'ai fait des dossiers devant le Comité contre la torture et devant d'autres comités dans le système interaméricain et le système africain, c'est… les recours internes sont systématiquement opposés par les États qui font face à des plaintes devant les instances internationales. Notre mémoire va détailler davantage évidemment notre pensée à ce sujet, va référer à la jurisprudence qui vous permettrait éventuellement de poursuivre la réflexion, si vous désirez allez plus loin sur ce chemin, mais je pense que ça serait une piste intéressante à offrir aux victimes de votre part pour qu'elles puissent continuer après.

Quoi qu'il en soit, quelques mots sur la question de l'épuisement des recours internes, les recours

internes, pour être validement opposés à une plaignante, doivent être : disponibles, suffisants et effectifs.

Pourquoi j'ai attiré votre attention tout à l'heure sur le paragraphe 214 du document de 2015, c'est que y'a une exception à l'épuisement des recours internes dans la jurisprudence lorsque les violations qui sont alléguées sont graves, sont qualifiées de graves comme le fait précisément le Comité. Donc, vous avez déjà une première piste pour argumenter que l'épuisement des recours internes ne peut pas être opposé aux victimes et survivants en ce que les violations sont graves et persistantes, donc vous avez déjà une première ligne d'arguments qui vous permet d'offrir cette plate-forme aux victimes et aux survivantes.

Les recours doivent être suffisants ; quels sont les recours effectifs? Et la jurisprudence se penche sur cette question lorsque, par exemple, ce qui aurait dû être fait, c'est une poursuite criminelle, comme on le voit souvent dans ce qui s'est passé. Alléguer, dans ces circonstances, que la personne ou que la victime ou que la survivante aurait pu poursuivre en dommages et intérêts n'est pas suffisant, selon la jurisprudence internationale, ce n'est pas suffisant. L'État ne peut invoquer le non-épuisement des recours internes dans de telles circonstances.

Et je vais attirer votre attention sur certains paragraphes du document de 2015, qui sont des conclusions qui pointent, à mon avis, vers le fait qu'il n'existe pas, au Canada, de recours internes efficaces à la disposition des victimes et des survivantes que vous avez entendues, donc qui ont osé porter la parole, mais pour celles aussi qui n'ont pas pu ou qui n'ont pas trouvé le courage et la volonté pour des raisons qui leur sont propre, de venir s'exprimer devant vous.

Le premier paragraphe sur lequel j'aimerais attirer votre attention, c'est le paragraphe 147, qui se conclut de la manière suivante : The committee considers that the response of the justice system offers insufficient protection to Aboriginal women as a disadvantaged group in a minority population affected by high rates of violence.

Voilà déjà un indice que le comité sera sensible à tout argument pointant vers la question de la non-existence de recours efficaces en droit canadien.

Au paragraphe 169 : Several reports have highlighted substantial shortcomings on the part of the justice system with regards to Aboriginal women, such as lack of communication and responsiveness; limited awareness and understanding of rights; discriminatory treatment of Aboriginal women, victims and witnesses;

insufficient enforcement of criminal laws on hate crimes, and low prosecution rates for crimes against Aboriginal women.

Les paragraphes 171 et 172 sont dans la même veine. 172 : Based on the information before it, the committee considers that the state party has not taken sufficient measures to comprehensively address the challenges faced by Aboriginal women in accessing justice and to combat the descrimination against Aboriginal women in the justice system. The state party has not given sufficient focus to addressing the underlying causes that prevent Aboriginal women from accessing justice on an equal basis to men and non-Aboriginal women.

Vous avez aussi, finalement, au paragraphe 180, la simple question de coûts a été même considérée par le comité d'enquête : The families of victims may claim restitution from the offender when bringing their cases to court. However, the federal ombudsman reported that restitution is under utilized and poorly enforced in the state party, and that costs for victims constitute a barrier to access.

Donc, ça, ce sont seulement des pistes de réflexion qui pourront alimenter vous-mêmes et les gens qui travaillent avec vous. Mais je pense que ce serait un legs intéressant que vous pourriez laisser aux victimes

que celui de faciliter leur accès à un recours international après vos travaux.

J'aurais aimé vous parler de la Déclaration des Nations Unies sur les droits autochtones. Le Canada déclare, sur les plateformes à l'extérieur du Canada, qu'il met en œuvre cette déclaration. Or, force est de constater, lorsqu'on vit au Canada, que ce n'est pas le cas du tout ; le Canada se fait tirer la patte dans ce domaine. Est-ce qu'on pourrait faire appel au concept qui tend à prendre beaucoup d'ampleur, d'honneur de la Couronne, qui ment sur les plateformes internationales, mais qui refuse à l'interne, dont la parole n'est pas suivie d'actes concrets à l'interne?

Vous avez d'autres déclarations, en plus de la Déclaration des Nations Unies sur le droit autochtone; il y a une déclaration dans le système interaméricain. Il y a également… Trudeau a promis qu'il allait ratifier, que le Canada allait ratifier la Convention de Belém, qui contient aussi des garanties très importantes. Je pense que dans la section sur le droit international, vous devez rappeler le Canada à l'ordre et lui rappeler ses devoirs et ses engagements sur la scène internationale pour qu'effectivement, ces conventions soient ratifiées par le Canada.

Et dernier aspect que je considère être

intéressant : dans le premier document que je vous ai distribué, celui du 30 mars 2015, qui est un long rapport d'enquête du Comité, vous avez, à la fin, comme je le disais un peu plus tôt, 37 recommandations, en 2015, avant… dont une, évidemment, qui vous concerne, puisque sur la table à dessin du comité d'enquête, on retrouve votre Commission, la Commission. Mais il y a 37 recommandations qui concernent la plupart des problématiques que vous avez abordées au cours de vos travaux.

Par la suite, je vous réfère au troisième document que j'ai distribué, qui est un document du 25 novembre 2016. Ce document fait suite à des échanges entre les représentants du Canada et le comité et constitue les observations finales du comité suite à ces échanges.

Je vous fais grâce de l'ensemble du document puisque, de toute façon, je n'ai pas le temps de l'aborder avec vous; par contre, j'attire votre attention sur le paragraphe 28, où le comité prend acte de l'engagement du Canada à appliquer la Déclaration des Nations Unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones et il demeure préoccupé par l'absence d'une stratégie ou d'un plan cohérent pour améliorer les conditions économiques et sociales des communautés autochtones.

Surtout… j'attire votre attention sur un paragraphe qui est peut-être passé inaperçu jusqu'à présent, qui est le paragraphe 58. Donc, ce document est daté du 25 novembre 2016 ; donc, le comité avait jusqu'à… le Canada avait jusqu'à hier pour faire rapport au comité sur la mise en œuvre des recommandations qui figurent à la fin du premier document. Je vous invite peut-être à talonner les autorités canadiennes pour qu'on ait le rapport sur ces recommandations qui, à bien des égards, rejoignent le travail que vous avez fait et vont certainement aller dans le même sens que les recommandations que vous allez vous-mêmes formuler.

Donc, le Canada est en retard ; le Canada nous doit des explications et nous doit un suivi sur des mesures qui lui ont été formulées il y a maintenant plus de trois ans.

Il reste… je dois m'arrêter ici, je dois laisser… je veux laisser Me Sioui conclure. J'espère que vous allez… comme nous parlons français, nous sommes un peu pénalisés, nous devons parler plus lentement, donc je vous demande une minute ou deux pour permettre à Me Sioui de conclure.

Je vous remercie infiniment pour votre attention.

Me SIOUI: Donc, pour conclure rapidement,

d'abord, c'est certain, je vous invite à lire notre mémoire, parce qu'en ce moment, c'est un peu un teaser, un aperçu des grands points qui vont être à l'intérieur.

Puis on voulait conclure aussi avec un sondage qui vient tout juste de sortir du four, au Québec ; c'est un sondage qui a été réalisé par la Commission de santé et services sociaux de l'APNQL, qui a été fait en collaboration avec l'Observatoire des tout-petits, qui a été réalisé par Léger, une firme de sondages professionnels et scientifiques et qui révèle des choses incroyables… on me dit de réduire le rythme!

Alors, ce sondage a été mené auprès de la population québécoise et concerne les enfants des Premières Nations et il révèle des choses ou fait un constat qu'il y a urgence d'agir et révèle essentiellement que deux Québécois sur trois savent bien que les enfants des Premières Nations sont l'objet de discrimination et qu'ils naissent avec moins de chances que les autres enfants de développer leur plein potentiel.

Alors, au Canada, en 2018, les enfants des Premières Nations naissent encore avec moins de chances que les autres ; la population en est consciente. Alors, c'est pourquoi on vous demande et on a déposé ce sondage-là, on vous dit ou on vous demande ou on vous encourage à être braves dans votre rapport. Soyez audacieux, allez

loin, allez loin! Tellement de gens comptent sur vous!

On l'a vu dans le vidéo qui a été présenté plus tôt aujourd'hui par Me Big Canoe, le procureur de la Commission : partout au pays, des attentes ont été créées. Alors, ces enfants des Premières Nations, leurs mères, comptent sur vous ; ne les décevez pas. Don't disappoint them.

Thank you, merci!

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Chief Commissioner and Commissioners, do you have any questions for the AFN?

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you both very much.

I do have one question, and perhaps it's more to plant the seed and when you are finalizing your submissions you might want to speak to it.

I'm intrigued by your recommendation with respect to us making a finding about there being an absence of domestic recourse and how that could be a vehicle for recourse and remedy for indigenous women on the international front.

I'm not sure if you're aware of the *Kell* decision by the committee on the elimination of discrimination against indigenous women. I think it was in 2008. It was filed by an indigenous woman in the

Northwest Territories who raised -- dealing with domestic violence, and a multiple denial of fundamental rights.

The committee concluded that she had exhausted and that there were no recourses for her and issued a decision in her favour.

We heard when we were in Yellowknife that she remains homeless and none of those orders have been implemented, so I'd like to hear more from you on how these international forums can lead to concrete resolution and solution for women like Ms. Kell.

So I just wanted to flag that. I look forward to hearing more about this path that you've highlighted, but I flag this issue in my head about the meat and the teeth. And I direct you to that decision by the committee.

But thank you very much.

And if you want to speak to that, my comment, I welcome you to.

MR. PHILIPPE LAROCHELLE: Yeah, the *Kell* decision is actually referred to in one of the two documents I sent you, and I -- for doing that myself, doing international law, I appreciate that, in itself, it is a fight to have these decisions implemented, but it is a fight worth doing. And I can give you an example.

I represented a man who was facing

extradition, and we were opposing it before the Committee Against Torture, and we managed to obtain an injunction before superior Court because the Committee Against Torture had issued provisional measures requesting Canada to withhold extradition pending their examination of the risk of torture. And the Judge was sensible enough to grant an injunction against Canada.

So -- and what I'm saying is that it is rather novel. There are not that many decisions when you look at the jurisprudence of these committees.

But certainly what lies ahead anyone wanting to, you know, make a formal complaint against Canada is that thing which is very peculiar in our case, which is exhaustion of local remedies. And I think the situation warrants at least that you provide a framework for that because you have heard so much evidence on the discrimination and there is so much already said by the committee which I believe would be sensible to that kind of arguments that, in the end, at least would make the task easier for these victims and survivors.

And what -- we cannot foresee the future, but if the committee is flooded with individual complaints there are also -- there is also room for provisional measures that can be argued in the context of, you know, they get a complaint every two years from Canada where

they should be getting thousands, so let's see how they would react to that and let's see what kind of provisional measures could be issued by the committee.

And I get the feeling that, to some extent, the actual government has some sensibility to what comes out from the international plane, so -- and I think in view -- I will conclude on that. In view of the magnitude and the persistence of the problem, I think every avenue should be explored and none should be neglected, and I think there is something that could be done on your part to assist potential victims before these committees.

Thank you. Merci beaucoup! Alors moi, ça va être en français, alors, merci beaucoup Me Sioui et Me Larochelle. Me Larochelle, c'est un plaisir de vous revoir encore – il n'y a pas très longtemps, nous étions dans un même séminaire avec Avocats sans frontière. Et quelle fierté de vous connaître, Me Sioui, de mieux vous connaître maintenant, dans le cadre de l'Enquête, évidemment.

Merci, vous m'avez ramenée dans mes anciens mocassins lorsque vous avez parlé de la convention de Belém do Para qui est… je comprends que le Canada n'a toujours ratifié, bon…

Me PHILIPPE LAROCHELLE: Il y a un engagement de Trudeau au Sommet des Amériques à Lima en

avril dernier de déclencher le processus d'adhésion.

COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay, parfait.

Vous avez, dans votre présentation, parlé de certaines failles; j'imagine qu'on va recevoir le mémoire. Je peux déjà vous dire, c'est sûr que je vais le lire attentivement avec mes collègues de l'équipe Québec, mes collègues avocats, sinon juristes, pour être sûre que je comprends bien, que je comprenne tout ça comme il faut.

Et vous avez parlé des failles au niveau de la justice criminelle, pour soutenir les femmes ; les femmes autochtones, je vais revenir aux femmes autochtones dans le cadre de notre mandat, pour ce qui a trait à ce qui semble être l'inexistence de recours interne pour les aider à aller vers le droit international ou interaméricain. Est-ce que c'est ça que vous nous présentez?

Me PHILIPPE LAROCHELLE: Ce n'est pas l'inexistence, c'est l'ineffectivité…

COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Oh, merci!

[Rires]

Me PHILIPPE LAROCHELLE: … ce qui est différent!

COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: D'accord! Alors ça, c'est important d'amener cette clarification-là.

Et on a aussi entendu des gens – là, on parle du système ou de la justice criminelle, mais est-ce que dans votre mémoire, vous avez parlé aussi des tribunaux des droits de la personne, de l'importance pour les femmes d'avoir accès ou en parlez-vous un peu?

Me PHILIPPE LAROCHELLE: On le fera! [Rires]

COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Je ne vous oblige pas, mais je veux juste savoir, parfait.

Et le droit international semble être une solution ; est-ce que vous amenez des mesures, aussi, pour soutenir ces femmes-là à utiliser le droit international? Parce que ça coûte beaucoup d'argent, le droit domestique ou interne…

Me PHILIPPE LAROCHELLE : Il faudrait, je pense, oui, formuler, dans le cadre des recommandations, il faudra prévoir des mesures pour faciliter l'accès, au-delà d'une argumentation juridique que vous pourriez développer pour déjà couvrir une partie des pétitions. Je pense effectivement qu'il pourrait être souhaitable de prévoir un mécanisme d'aide aux victimes et survivantes qui seraient désireuses, parce qu'insatisfaites peut-être par les limitations des mandats tant ici qu'au Québec, qui seraient désireuses de poursuivre d'autres avenues, d'autres recours.

Donc, oui, je pense que ça devrait faire

partie des recommandations que vous pourriez formuler à l'égard du gouvernement.

COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay. Parce que le Court Challenge Program, je ne sais pas, c'est la contestation judiciaire, je crois, en français, a été coupé. Il semblerait qu'il y a peut-être une possibilité d'un retour. Alors, je ne sais pas si vous en faites une réflexion ou…?

Me PHILIPPE LAROCHELLE : Effectivement, ça pourrait être une avenue intéressante à explorer, si jamais le programme… je sais, j'ai entendu aussi qu'on voulait le réactiver, si c'était le cas, vous pourriez… je pense que ça pourrait être une avenue intéressante à explorer pour les victimes qui veulent continuer.

COMMISSIONNER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Bien, merci beaucoup, parce que la question internationale peut aussi servir – je le vois d'une façon à deux voies, une jurisprudence qui peut être intéressante pour les femmes autochtones du Sud comme les femmes autochtones du Nord. Mais il faut s'assurer, si on propose des recommandations audacieuses, c'est de faire en sorte qu'on puisse soutenir à la base un individu pour qu'il puisse ou qu'elle puisse se rendre jusqu'en Cour américaine ou internationale.

Merci infiniment, c'est un plaisir de vous avoir ici avec nous. Puis merci beaucoup, Me Sioui, de

nous avoir partagé cette information toute chaude, toute neuve encore sur ce que pensent nos jeunes au Québec sur la question autochtone. Et je vous assure que ce document-là va être regardé comme il le faut – pour être maman de cinq enfants qui habite au Québec –et de voir qu'il y a une sensibilité qui n'est plus la même depuis quand moi j'ai commencé, il y a une vingtaine d'années.

Alors, sur ce, merci beaucoup et j'ai hâte de lire votre mémoire. Merci!

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Particularly to remind us to think large, to think big, and to go beyond what might be politically correct. Thank you both for being wonderful teachers and for inspiring us to go beyond what we think we can do. Thank you both.

MS. SHELBY THOMAS: Thank you.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: We'll take a short break. How many minutes?

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: If we could request a 15-minute break before we call the next party. That would bring us back here at 2:20 please.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: 2:20 please.

--- Upon recessing at 2:09 p.m./L'audience est suspendue à 14h09

--- Upon resuming at 2:30 p.m./L'audience est reprise à

14h30

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: ...closing oral submissions for Kwanlin Dün First Nation. She will have 40-minutes.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: You pronounced it correctly.

--- SUBMISSIONS BY CHIEF DORIS BILL:

CHIEF DORIS BILL: First off, I just want to introduce some people here who you notice I have a delegation behind me. First off, Gary Resnick is Director of Kwanlin Dün's Justice Department. Coincidentally, he took over from Minister Jeanie Dendys, who is the Minister of Tourism and Culture with the Yukon Government. She is also Co-Chair of the Missing and Murdered Advisory Committee, which I sit on as well. And she's also responsible for the Women's Directorate in the Yukon.

Next to her is Andrea Bailey. She is Yukon Government's legal counsel. And behind me, directly behind me is Chantal Genier, and Chantal is also on the Advisory Committee, and she'll be doing the Yukon Government's presentation right after me.

Well, good afternoon Commissioners, Elders, family members who have lost loved ones, Indigenous leaders, dignitaries and guests. It is an honour to be here today with you, and it's an honour to be here and see

how far you have come.

Given that this Inquiry started in my traditional territory of Kwanlin Dün, I'm so pleased to see this day come. I'm grateful to be given the opportunity to contribute to the important work of the Missing -- National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

I am, as you said, the leader in my community of Kwanlin Dün. I am dedicated to keeping our community, not just my community, but the Yukon community safe. I also want to help with the safety of people in First Nation communities across Canada if I can, and I am sometimes called upon to do so.

I would like to take the -- this opportunity to acknowledge the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Blackfoot Confederacy. I also want to acknowledge this beautiful sash hanging here that the City of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta Region 3. Masi Chok.

As I present today, I pay tribute to family members who have lost loved ones. I would also like to honour all of those working to reveal the truth and past tragedies in order to create a better, safer society in the future. This is very hard work, but important to our

healing.

I also appreciate those who offer ceremonial and spiritual support to all of us engaged in this process. I believe in the beginning we told you it was important that this Inquiry be steeped in ceremony.

Kwanlin Dün First Nation is located in the City of Whitehorse. We are one of the largest First Nations in the Yukon. We have a community that's about a kilometer by a kilometer. We have been implementing our comprehensive land claim and self-government agreements for 13-years now. We live with both the benefits and risks of our urban location.

Our history of colonization and resulting intergenerational impacts is shared with other Indigenous nations in Canada and throughout the rest of the world. Our most vulnerable families are navigating lives affected by violence, trauma, addictions, mental health issues, poverty, absence of safe housing, and a host of other problems. They demonstrate amazing strength and resilience in navigating their daily lives.

Between December 2014 and February of this year, there have been six murders in our community, four women and two men. Two of these cases remain unsolved. In the other four cases, arrests have been made or convictions obtained. In all four cases, the accused were

connected to our community or another Yukon First Nation community. Each of these tragic losses has had devastating effects on our community and other connected communities.

It is at the community level that resources are most needed to address the issues that bring us here today. We are also on the frontlines in this fight.

We know that both risk and resilience begin to develop very early in life. Patterns that can lead to lives marred by violence begin in childhood. Investment in the support of families with young children is crucial. School aged children develop stronger identities when they are founded in pride of culture and language. Those who suffer in the child welfare system, often followed by the criminal justice system, may never recover their identities or connections to culture and community.

Traditional Indigenous parents knew how to develop and nurture peaceful and loving relationships with family and community members. The disruption of colonization caused that intergenerational transmission of wisdom to be severed. Cultural continuity must be rebuilt on the foundation of our powerful stories, language, teachings and the practices of our ancestors.

Our best solution for healing are found in our communities. We are strengthened through hearing the

voices of our people. Safety is the ground on which healing is built. A person cannot invest in their own well-being and that of others if they are in constant fear of harm.

I will speak about how Kwanlin Dün's community safety officer or CSO Program helps to prevent trauma in our community. The Jackson Lake Wellness Team programming in the community and on the land also addresses trauma and works together with the CSO program. And I know the Inquiry has heard about this program throughout the -- the -- your time in Yukon. In developing and implementing these programs, we work with many service providers within our First Nation and other collaborative partners, which we have built.

The vision for the CSO program is to provide prevention and safety liaison services for our citizens. The CSOs are highly visible in our community. They wear uniforms and have their own culturally branded vehicles. The CSOs mediate disputes between citizens and provide rides to safe places for people in risky situations. They call law enforcement back-up or connect people to other service providers when needed. The CSO program is implemented by a small team of four CSOs and one coordinator, all of whom are Kwanlin Dün citizens or have a connection to the community.

The team -- team has made a tremendous impact on improving the safety in our community. CSOs have a special focus on the safety of Elders. In one case, an older woman was struggling with addictions, which made her vulnerable to abuse. Monitoring by the CSOs has been very effective in improving her safety and decreasing her contacts with the RCMP. The relationship is now well established, and the CSOs are a primary point of contact when her safety is threatened.

Prostitution, illegal drug activity, and bootlegging have been reduced due to the trust citizens have in the CSOs and their ability to directly observe illegal activity and intervene. CSOs work actively with partners in the RCMP and Whitehorse City Bylaw. For example, recently the CSOs spotted a young woman under the influence of alcohol being pulled into a residence by a known male predator. As the marked CSO vehicle approached them, the girl immediately recognized the trusted CSO and got into the safe vehicle. The CSOs were able to drive the woman home to safety. The CSOs then shared their observations with the RCMP for follow up. The CSOs' knowledge of the community and their respectful and consistent approached has earned the trust of the community.

The CSO program was developed in direct

response to community members' concerns in public meetings, that they were feeling unsafe in their homes and in the community. We heard of women sleeping with baseball bats by their beds. Entire families were sleeping in their basements because they were scared to go outside or sleep upstairs in case someone came in.

In 2016, there had been several murders, assaults, and house fires in our community. As a result, Chief and Council initiated a community-based research project to identify priorities for action. The community needs assessment was developed from a review of documents from the last ten years that identified relevant community issues, needs, and problems. The Chief and Council, Elders, and community members also provided input and ideas. And when we -- we developed the CSO program, we had to really seriously scrutinize what was really happening in our communities. And we had to be honest with ourselves about the drugs and violence and who were committing these offences. It wasn't a -- it -- it was a extremely difficult task.

The next stage was a community safety through environmental design report that we produce. The report outlined a plan for improving community safety through changes in the physical environment and infrastructure. As well, the report recommended launching

the CSO program. Our Elders were our biggest supporters. In addition, other actions taken to implement the recommendations included a large-scale community clean-up. We took out tons and tons of garbage. We improved lighting. Trail clearing to improve line-of-sights, and measures to slow vehicle traffic through the community. And as a leader, I participated in those community -- community traffic check-stops. I talked to every vehicle coming into our community, and there were 70 of them.

The CSO program has been operating since August 2017. It has tremendous support and appreciation from the larger community as well. The results are dramatic. The CSO work has significantly reduced citizens' calls to the RCMP in the last year. Calls have decreased most in the areas of assaults, thefts, city bylaw infractions, and reports of suspicious vehicles. In the first full year of operation, there were 909 citizen contacts with the CSOs, most of which were proactive. They have prevented crime, helped solve crimes, and establish a new standard of safety for the community. Yukon Government Department of Justice has funded the three-year pilot with an end date of March 31st, 2019. The community is working actively to compete -- complete an evaluation and secure on-going funding for this very important program.

The Jackson Lake Wellness Team offers the building a path to wellness. It's a four-week healing program on the land. The camp, which is about 30 minutes outside of Whitehorse, has been up -- up graded by Kwanlin Dün. It is a wonderful site for the four-week land-based program. Shorter programs and larger events also take place there. The land-based programs bring together a group -- group of men and women to address challenges with trauma, addictions, and/or mental health. Last year, we had one woman attend the woman's program, and her spouse attended the men's program. With the support of the program and care of the team, before and after, the couple has maintained sobriety and have repatriated their children from the care of the child welfare system.

In addition, the team carries out other land-based activities, such as working with extended families, from a few hours to a few days, to address issues and improve relationships. In one case, the land-based work resulted in two female teenagers being able to stay in the care of their grandmother as an alternative to foster care. Multi-day youth events at Jackson Lake have involved up to 200 youth from across the Yukon. And I want to just add that whole two van-loads of young people from Inuvik had heard about our gathering and drove the Dempster Highway just to attend. Shorter three to five-

day programs for youth have also been very well received. Community members of all ages engage in cultural camps involving traditional activities and relearning lost skills.

I just want to point out here, that we also held a -- a men's sharing circle during this time. Sixty-five men took part in the circle. Later, I -- I heard from one of the men that took part in the circle, and he said, "Thank you. It saved my life." He said he had never had the opportunity to share with other men, or anyone for that matter, how he was feeling. It's one reason that I also advocate on behalf of men. When talking about this issue, we cannot forget the men. They need programs and they need support. It's imperative.

The cultural programming has outdoor recreational, cultural, and healing elements, often supported by professional, clinical services when needed. The engagement of the KDFN community, as the host, in offering Elders, and other cultural resource people, cooks, and camp attendants, is key to the success to all the programming at Jackson Lake. Experiential, clinical, and spiritual activities enhance the programming. Ceremonies include prayers, smudging, circle, letting go, and sweat lodge, complimentary, and alternative elements include equine therapy, yoga, meditation, and breathing.

The most recent October 31st Welcome Home event, held on the last day of the men's four-week program, celebrated the success of the men who completed the program. The pride and stories of change were remarkable.

As one observer said, "The men began with their heads down and bodies slumped, unwilling to meet my eyes. And, now, I see proud men standing up with their drums and songs they made at the camp. And they were demonstrating pride in themselves and their success." The transformation is amazing.

The Jackson Lake Wellness Team also provides Whitehorse based services to people before and after the four-week program. Outreach to all Yukon communities is done on request for crisis response, and the provision of cultural and other supports. People of all ages access the programs. The participants share in the direct and intergenerational effects of residential school and colonization. Many have experienced the child welfare system, and in some cases, have been incarcerated or are on probation. Culturally founded and land-based programming has proven to be very effected for them.

KDFN has been active in offering land-based and community-based healing options to First Nation people and non-First Nation people for more than 25 years. Funding has been accessed from the Yukon Government,

Canada, Aboriginal Healing Foundation, and other sources. Jackson Lake was recently listed in the top five of Indigenous treatment centres across Canada by Health Canada.

But despite that, we have difficulty obtaining permanent and consistent funding. In the past, the funding provided for short-term programs, on the land or in the community, lacked the continuity and comprehensiveness to support lasting change. Intergenerational trauma requires long-term funding commitments to support comprehensive, relevant, and affective programming.

In 2011, we were able to access funding to support a four-person community-based team. The team includes a coordinator, a cultural counsellor, and two outreach after-care workers. Clinic counselling is made available through the Kwanlin Dün Health Department. In 2012, the Yukon Government contributed funds towards two land-based treatment programs per year. The healing programs are open to all 14 Yukon First Nations and others. I believe in our last camp, we had a non-First Nation from Ontario. More than 220 people have completed the program with significant success. Increased levels of long-term funding are needed in order to increase the number of programs offered each year, and to provide more

land-based programs for youth, families and Elders beyond March 2019.

Elders tell us that, traditionally, conflict including crime was mostly prevented. It was prevented by the way children were raised and the values they were taught. Families were strong and community members were well connected with each other, their traditional territories, and larger linguistic groups. Supporting and protecting our infants, children, youth, and their families is vitally important.

In 2011 -- 2011, following a crisis in child welfare and our relationship with the Yukon Government, Kwanlin Dün and Yukon Government entered into negotiations to -- towards an agreement for collaborate service deliverty (phonetic) -- delivery. The Memorandum of Agreement, or MOA, which resulted, took more than a year to negotiate. During the negotiations, as relationships were developed and discussed -- discussions hells (phonetic) -- held, child welfare practices in the community began to change. The 2012 MOA is a unique agreement, as it does not involve the delegation of authority from Yukon or the drawing down of self-government powers by Kwanlin Dün.

Implementation relies on collaboration, respectful working relationships, joint action, a focus on

prevention, and commitment to keeping extended families together. A review of the MOA documented success in reducing the number of children in care and increasing the use of extended family care agreements in place of foster care, or group home care for out-of-home placements. Kwanlin Dün and Yukon Government meet with families together and have developed good working relationships. Kwanlin Dün has recently succeed in negotiating parity between foster parents and extended family care agreement providers, for basic fees, and additional support services.

In addition, more social workers from the Yukon Government have been assigned to the community. The approached programming is founded on respect and cultural approaches. Maintaining connections for children and youth with extended family, community and culture is a shared priority.

I have some recommendations here that I'd like to read out. Community safety officer programs. Provide long-term funding to Indigenous governments for CSO programs in communities that are interested. Continue to evaluate and improve the program for implementation in communities of all sizes.

Wellness teams. Provide long-term funding to be directed by Indigenous governments for wellness

teams that have the capacity for land-based and community-based programs using cultural, clinical and complementary approaches to address trauma, addictions and mental health issues.

Indigenous child welfare. In a spirit of collaboration, design, implement and evaluate community-based and culturally-founded child welfare programs for prevention, early intervention, outreach and support. Out of home care and family reintegration, including cultural planning and agreements.

Agreements for self-determination. Canada, provinces and territories to participate in negotiating and funding the implementation of land claim, self-government and administrative justice agreements to support Indigenous self-determination.

Indigenous research. Fund and support research led by Indigenous academic and community researchers into risk factors and protective factors to help build safer environments and better programming for Indigenous people.

In closing, I want to thank the Commissioners and organizers. I am grateful for the support of my colleagues and community in appearing before you. I wish you well in concluding your very important work for the good of Indigenous people and Canadians, the

country as a whole. Merci.

MS. SHELBY THOMAS: Thank you.

CHIEF DORIS BILL: I need a drink of water.

MS. SHELBY THOMAS: Thank you. Chief Commissioner and Commissioners, do you have any questions?

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Masi chok for your submissions. I just have a point of clarification on the MOA. You said it's not a delegation and it wasn't -- and I didn't quite catch in terms of your self-government agreement, the connections with that.

Could you explain a little bit more about the MOA in a, I guess, jurisdictional and self-determination lens? Because we've heard from other jurisdictions, most recently in Manitoba, the issue about child welfare agencies just being a product of delegation and that not being a true reflection of Indigenous self-determination when it comes to children and families. Could you explain a little bit more about the MOA in that context?

CHIEF DORIS BILL: The Memorandum of Understanding on Child Welfare was negotiated with the Yukon government, and the agreement was negotiated during a time of crises. We had child welfare -- you know, like many other Indigenous communities, child welfare social workers coming into our communities, taking our children,

and without the consent of parents or the involvement of the First Nation.

So, our First Nation took the drastic measure to ban social workers from our community. It resulted in the complete -- thank you. It resulted in the complete breakdown of that relationship, and we took the lead and said you will not be allowed back into our communities until we sit down and negotiate an agreement that is one that will benefit our community, our people and our citizens.

And, the agreement, to this day, social workers, child welfare social workers cannot come into our community without our knowledge. The First Nation is the first point of contact, our Department of Justice. Gary is the first point of contact, and from there, they develop a plan that involves the parents, the First Nation and Yukon government, and it is something that works for our community.

I believe Jeanie -- Minister Dendys was actually our Director of Justice when that agreement was negotiated, and she'd have more around the history part of it. But, it is -- we did not draw down our self-government powers in that area. We chose to negotiate an agreement that our people had control over.

And, I think that's incredibly important,

because for so long, you know, personally, I'm a product of the child welfare system. I grew up in foster homes, group homes, you name it. I've never had a family, and I understand the system. I understand what these children go through, and I wasn't going to let that happen on my watch as well. No way.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you. Masi chok for explaining more about the context of the MOA and the heart of it, and the importance of that control, that self-determination. We've heard some studies referenced that talk about, you know, outcomes being better in the context where there are self-government agreements or land claims settled, and one of the things that you've identified in your presentation and in the evidence we've heard from families and groups in the Yukon is this issue of long-term funding.

Does any of that funding flow through the land claims or are you still dealing with, like, project-based funding from the government?

CHIEF DORIS BILL: Mostly project-based funding. Although we have very, very little to do with the *Indian Act*, our funding, our transfer payments, are still based on *Indian Act*-type funding. I can give you a good example. At one point, and it may still be the case that our entire justice department was funding project

proposal based. Even the director's salary. Even the salary of all the individuals. And, they spent a great deal of time filling out reports and all kinds of stuff which are extremely onerous, when we could be spending that time doing other things.

Kwanlin Dün is negotiating an administrative justice agreement. Through that agreement, we will have our own First Nation courts; the CSO program will fall under there. That is what we -- you know, that -- it's justice as the way we see it, and it will -- because we're based in the City of Whitehorse, that system will meld with the city -- or the territorial system will have to collaborate with them on some things, which is reasonable.

But, we are working towards, through the fiscal transfer process, working towards changing all of that. I'm hoping that those negotiations are really successful in the end but, yes, I can tell you, or Gary could probably better tell you how much time he spends just on filling out applications and reporting on those applications and evaluating the programs and you name it.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: So, even in a modern land-claim context with a self-government agreement where you are exercising your inherent and treaty rights, you, to do that, are having to tap into project pots of

money?

CHIEF DORIS BILL: Yes. Every First Nation in the Yukon. Every First Nation in the Yukon is the same. And, like I say, through the negotiations with the federal government, I'm hoping that the funding will increase and the way we get that funding will change.

It's been that way for a long, long time, and certainly, during the 13 years we have been self-governing, our biggest problem with the land-claim and self-government process has been implementation. Implementation on the part of the federal government has been sorely lacking. We have our First Nations -- as you can see, Kwanlin Dün has done a tremendous amount of work. We are probably one of the most progressive First Nations in the Yukon, but implementation has been the biggest draw back, I would dare say, and adequate levels of funding.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Do you want to elaborate a little bit more on -- so I see the -- I see a funding formula for an Indigenous -- you are a self-government. You are an Indigenous government as being project based, as being really problematic in the sense of effectiveness for you to exercise your inherent rights, but from a relationship perspective, I see it as problematic as well. It doesn't seem to me that your inherent jurisdiction and exercising that within this

confederation is being respected equally if provinces and territories get funding a certain way, and you have to apply to pots.

So, I just wanted to share with you sort of how I'm looking at this funding issue as being effectively problematic, but also, equitably problematic, but I also would like to hear a little bit more, if time permits, on the issues you're dealing with when it comes to implementation sort of on that high level on the relationship with the state kind of dynamic. Do you know what I mean?

CHIEF DORIS BILL: The relationship with the state, with the government, the federal government?

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: You said -- yes.

CHIEF DORIS BILL: The Yukon government?

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Or the Yukon. Both. Either.

CHIEF DORIS BILL: Well, in terms of -- we get funding through a transfer payment agreement, and when we get that funding every year, we're already under-resourced. Right now, a great deal of the funding flows through Yukon government, for example, with child welfare and with health, things like that.

Self-governing First Nations have been

working with the federal government for quite some time and speaking to them about the -- changing the way we receive our funding. We prefer that funding go directly to us. Oftentimes, governments will take an administration fee off the top, and then we get whatever is allotted to Yukon government.

We have repeatedly, repeatedly said, over and over, to the federal government that this is unacceptable. We want the funding to go directly to Yukon First Nations, and we want our communities adequately resourced so we can deal with these issues.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you so much.

CHIEF DORIS BILL: But, you know, we've done what we can in this area, and we continue to do what we can, but we have -- you know, in addition to the things that I speak about, we have -- our communities are now dealing with opioids. It has compounded the problem for many of our communities, and I -- it's something else, yet again, through, you know, chief and council's enormous responsibility that we are having to deal now with a crisis situation.

You know, it's a sad, sad situation because it's most of the young people that are dying. It's a lot of young people, and it breaks my heart to see that. We

have to deal with it at the community level, and often I say this, is that the chief and council really, in these situations, are the first point of contact. And, when I started this job, when I was first elected, I wasn't trained in trauma counselling. But, yet, we have totally traumatized people walking through our doors asking for help, asking for our help.

You know, Kwanlin Dün has been very successful in a number of areas, and we have come a long ways, but I often think about the communities that don't have the resources to put towards this kind of thing. And, you know, I plead with the federal government to adequately fund our communities, to adequately -- to put the adequate funding towards the communities so that we can help our people. I just couldn't stress that enough. You know, no one is more equipped to deal with these issues than our people.

You know, I talked about taking responsibility. When we scrutinized our community, it was tough, because many of the people committing the offenses were our people, and we had to own up to that. And, once we did, we could move forward. And, we're the ones, nobody else, and this is what I said to our citizens when we started our CSO program, if you want change, if you want to fundamentally change the way this community is

right now, then you need to walk with me. You need to help me. Chief and council can't do it. You have to do it. Chief and council can put all the programs and resources out there, but ultimately, if you want change, that change has to come from within. No one else can do it.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Masi chok.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Qajaq, merci beaucoup. I have to say, Chief Doris Bill, it was a powerful presentation ---

CHIEF DORIS BILL: Merci.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: --- for simple and strong reason that the simple one is I was able to read in English and French your submission while my kids were running all over the place, and "Mom, do this and do that". And, I was so proud to read it for this reason. I'll start with this one, because we started this journey in your territory.

CHIEF DORIS BILL: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: It wasn't easy. We were all stressed, but we knew we had to do it, and the first community who invited us, it was you and your government, the government also of Yukon, and other groups, women's groups. So, I have to say thank you for that. So, it's a great honour.

You were in my kitchen, in my home and in my bed when I was reading your submission. I won't tell you what I was doing, but I was reading; okay? But, with very, very proud and also -- come on. That I could do some link with my own community in the east, up north, northern Quebec, or other places that we visited, or we were welcomed, or invited, or another pair of moccasins that I went for another, you know, mandate.

So, I have to say thank you so much. And, what was very, also, powerful, your initiative, your programs or your solutions are simple. They are made by you and for you. You mentioned it in your response to Commissioner Robinson. We know who are the best people to know what's needed. It's us, the people from this land. So, I salute your work.

CHIEF DORIS BILL: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Very, very, very great work. Few questions. Of course, there are great programs or initiatives or actions, concrete actions that you mentioned that some communities don't have adequate funding, including your nation, your community. Do you think it's something as Commissioners we have to think about, resolution -- resolution. Recommendation or action, that it's something that it could be also replicated or other communities could benefit this measure

or initiative?

CHIEF DORIS BILL: You're talking about the CSO program; right?

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: CSO.

CHIEF DORIS BILL: Or both, the Jackson Lake?

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Oui.

CHIEF DORIS BILL: Yes. Actually, most definitely. In terms of the CSO program, I have communities reaching out to me. I have given -- gone to several communities and spoken to the community leaders and to council and to elders and some community members about community safety, and I kind of -- I think as a result of the success of our community safety program, I kind of fell into this role.

And, there are many communities that are asking for this program. They want a program like this in their community. Of course, it will have to be tailored to meet their community, but I can see it being replicated in other communities. We've even had calls from outside of Yukon. I myself have met with Minister Goodale about the program. I've met with Minister Bennett, and they are well aware of the community safety program. Actually, just before I came here, I received a letter of recommendation from Minister Bennett lauding the success

of the program. And, Minister Goodale said he really -- he likes the program and can see, definitely, where it can fill in the gaps that are missing in the communities.

The CSO program has been an incredible success. We've managed to build partners with the Yukon government, the City of Whitehorse, and they're even talking about having our CSOs exchange with bylaws, do an exchange of some sort so they can get to know our community, our people can get to know the system a bit better and how it operates.

We've had our CSOs do -- it's not just our community. They patrol all of our settlement lands. They also -- we have where the Inquiry first started in our beautiful cultural centre on the waterfront, they do patrol in that area as well. But, I have -- you know, it's a program that I definitely would recommend that communities have a serious look at, and I try to help where I can and I try to reach out where I can, but I'm only one person and I have an entire community to look after. I would love to build up our capacity a bit more so I can do the reaching out to other communities as well.

The Jackson Lake Land-Based Healing Program, I definitely see the program being replicated across the country. I mean, I think, you know, First Nation culture is grounded in the land, and it's where we

go to heal. It's where we go to think. It's in here. And, to have a program built based on the land is incredibly powerful, culturally and spiritually. Many of our people -- we -- like I said, we take people from across the country, and it's not just First Nation.

I just want to tell you a story about the guy I spoke about recently that came from a non-First Nation. He's a non-First Nation gentleman. He came from Ontario -- Gary, was it Ontario? Yes. And, about four months, four or five months before he came, I received an email from a gentleman. It came across my screen and it was from a gentleman, a non-First Nation gentleman saying, "I know that your" -- you know, Jackson Lake is for First Nation people, but this man was crying out for help. He was suicidal. He had explained what he had gone through. He had been in numerous -- in car accidents, and he's gone to doctor after doctor after doctor and no one could help him. And, he was crying out for help.

And, unbeknownst to me, he had -- I forwarded his email, and it ended up with the Jackson Lake team, and they accepted him into the program. And, I try and get out to Jackson Lake, you know, when I can, and I was invited out there during the camp. And, I was sitting there talking to a gentleman, and it was the same guy who had sent the email. And, he said to me, he said, "Oh my

God." He said, "I've been to 13 doctors, and nobody has ever talked to me about trauma." And, he said, "That's what I believe is wrong, is that this is the first time I have ever been able to deal with my trauma."

And, the transformation in this man was -- it blew me away. I was, like, wow. I almost cried I was so -- you know, what he was saying was so touching and so incredible. And, you know, I just -- it's a wonderful program. It's a wonderful program that's effective, and I really see other communities, you know, I think it should -- other communities, if they want this type of healing camps, they should -- they should be funded, and they should be able to access these camps.

You know, I spoke -- Jackson Lake was listed in the top five of a Health Canada report recently, and yet, we have trouble getting funding. There was a Health Canada report that listed Jackson Lake as one of the top five Indigenous treatment programs in the country, and yet, we can't get stable funding. We can't get consistent funding. We can't get permanent funding. But, yet, they'll fund something downtown that doesn't work.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Well, again, a powerful statement. Two more things. You mentioned that in the work of this Inquiry, we have to think about recommendations or actions about our men.

CHIEF DORIS BILL: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Our boys.

CHIEF DORIS BILL: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: So, the healing process.

CHIEF DORIS BILL: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Very important. So, I want to salute your courage to be honest to say that some of our men are suffering, and maybe are part of the crime or the family violence, but the way you're doing, it's not to blame, but to support, to help and to have a healing process in place. Is it something you see a result?

CHIEF DORIS BILL: Yes. In Yukon, the murder rate for men is maybe just as high, if not higher. We -- I see it in my community. Men have been murdered, gone missing. I have a gentleman that's gone missing since the 1970's, and from downtown Whitehorse, and his -- nobody has heard or seen of him since. I'm responsible for all people in my community. Even though I stood -- I'm a Co-Chair of the Missing and Murdered Advisory, I always talk about men because in some communities, men's programming is non-existent. Men have nowhere to go when they want to talk about their feelings, or to talk about what is troubling them.

Some of them have been severely, severely abused and traumatized. And we provide that space for them to deal with some of those issues. Some of the -- what the men go through, you know, I just recently ran into a man that we helped get off the streets of Whitehorse and he was severely, severely addicted and severely abused in residential school. And he gave me a big hug and he said, "Thank you. Thank you for giving me a bed." You know, it's incredibly -- for me this work is incredibly important.

I also -- I don't know how much you know about me, but I also -- I addition to my other duties, along with the mayor of Whitehorse, I spearhead what's called Safe at Home, and it's a comprehensive plan to end homelessness within the city of Whitehorse and the Yukon. It's a tall order, but in a short 10 months we came up with a plan between 57 NGOs, First Nation governments, organizations, we sat down and developed a plan.

The entire city -- throughout the entire city -- and the mayor often talks about this, we saw a shift in our community when we were developing this plan. A shift in the way people see homeless people, the attitude started to change. And the plan is now -- we are now implementing that plan. There are some other major changes coming to the City of Whitehorse that I can't go

into today.

But the work has been incredibly satisfying, and I think it comes -- probably a lot of it comes from my roots, you know, the things that I've seen and the things that I see at the community level. And there's so many people crying out for help, I do what I can, and I have an incredible staff. My staff is, you know, we have probably about 150 employees with maybe another 50 on contract, and when these -- you know.

The CSO program started with the death of a young woman in our community. She was murdered by a young man. Both of them were not KDFN citizens, but this is how our community is affected. And our staff, they held me up, because like I said, the Chief is the first point of contact when these things happen in a community. And it was -- it was traumatizing. It traumatized not only our community, but the larger community as well.

Probably one of the smartest things, I think, that we did as Chief and Council, was we held safety meetings with our citizens right after. And we through the doors open and we invited everyone, government, all the top politicians in town. And I said, "I want you to sit there and I want you to don't say anything. I just want you to listen." And they heard from our people how the rest of the city was affecting our

community, the crime, the drugs, the alcohol, everything that the other people were bringing into our community. And they had no idea.

And from that meeting, I said about building partnerships, because that what it says throughout our land claim agreement, it talks about partnerships. Self-government is not doing it alone, by yourself. It's about building partnerships and those partnerships helped us build these programs.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: I would clone you and bring you to Quebec, with a Francophone accent.

CHIEF DORIS BILL: Oui, Oui.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: You're an amazing person, amazing woman, amazing leader. Very impressed.

(APPLAUSE)

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: To conclude in five seconds, you're sitting with amazing women in the back.

CHIEF DORIS BILL: Yes.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: I used to work with Chantal, very proud to know Chantal. And I was able to meet the Minister the l'honorable Dendys. Merci beaucoup, beaucoup, beaucoup, and for your colleges,

thank you.

CHIEF DORIS BILL: Thank you.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Merci.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (off mic - inaudible)

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: She wants to marry you.

(LAUGHTER)

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Chief Bill, thank you so much.

CHIEF DORIS BILL: You're welcome.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Thank you for reminding us where we started and it seems like yesterday, but it wasn't.

CHIEF DORIS BILL: Yes.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: You've certainly started us, you and the other organizations and Yukon government started us off in a good way. So thank you for that. Thank you also for reminding us about important values, and that's of community-based strength of land -- the importance of land-based programming, because that's where we come from, the land.

CHIEF DORIS BILL: Yes.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: And thank you also for reminding us about the importance of

ceremony and healing and the approaches that we have to take in our recommendations. So I just want to thank you on behalf of all of us here for lifting us up, showing us the right way, and for giving us more to think about. Thank you so much.

CHIEF DORIS BILL: Thank you. Masi chok.

(APPLAUSE)

MS. SHELBY THOMAS: Chief Commissioners and -- Chief Commissioner and Commissioners, next Commission counsel would like to call up Chantal Genier on behalf of Minister Jeanie Dendys for the Government of Yukon. She will have 40 minutes.

--- SUBMISSIONS BY MS. CHANTAL GENIER:

MS. CHANTAL GENIER: (Speaking in Native Language)

Commissioners, family members, survivors, and fellow parties with standing. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to stand here on behalf of Government of Yukon today. My name is Chantal Genier, I am Government of Yukon's Senior Advisor for the National Inquiry.

I began by introducing myself in a tradition Southern Tutchone way. I told you my southern Tutchone name and that I am part of the Wolf Clan. I told you that my relatives are the Tagish Khwaan, the Tlingit, and the French. I also told you my mother and

grandmother's name, my father and grandfather's name, and also where I live.

Before I continue, I'd like to acknowledge the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in southern Alberta, which includes the Blackfoot Confederacy, the Siksika, Piikani, the Kainai First Nations, the Tauut'ina First Nation, the Stoney Nakoda, the Chiniki, the Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations.

I also acknowledge that Calgary is home to the Métis Nation of Alberta Region 3. I would also like to acknowledge the presence of Jeanie Dendys, the Minister responsible for the Women's Directorate and Government of Yukon, Chief Doris Bill from the Kwanlin Dun First Nation, and Anne Maje Raider, who will be joining us soon from the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society in Watson Lake. The stories of trauma and tragedy that the Commission has heard over the last year and a half are unfortunately all too familiar in Yukon. However, in partnership with Yukon First Nations, Aboriginal women's groups, non-profit societies, and other key partners over the past several years, the Government of Yukon has carried out significant work towards understanding the reasons why Indigenous women and girls face exceptionally high rates of violence and towards learning about the lasting impact of this violence.

Throughout this journey we have heard stories of loss and grief but we have also heard stories of resilience and hope. We remain committed to standing with our partners in working toward developing better approaches to supporting families who have experienced the loss of a loved one, better support for victims of violence and better approaches to breaking the cycles of violence. Government of Yukon believes that together with Yukon First Nations governments, Indigenous women's groups and other key partners that we can end this legacy of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Yukon and that collectively we have the tools.

In this submission I will provide you with some historical context about Yukon and information about some of the work that I just mentioned. I will also spend some time reflecting on issues and themes that have emerged from the stories of Yukon families who have been affected by high levels of violence that continue to impact Indigenous women, girls, and community members, and LGBTQ2S plus community members. The Commission heard some of these stories firsthand when you opened your community hearings in Whitehorse back in May 2017.

It is also very important for us to take a moment to honour Yukon families and communities and what has transpired leading up to today. Too often in a

context like this we focus only on the heartbreaking stories and the trauma and despair that run with them. However, Yukon First Nations people have shown themselves time and time again to be strong and resilient with cultures and ceremonies that have survived over a century of colonialism. Culture and ceremony are becoming regularly integrated within intergovernmental dialogues, for example, at the recent Status of Women Minister's meeting, which included Minister's from across the country. Indigenous culture and ceremony are grounding relationships, ensuring we share similar intentions and goals and bringing people together to partner, collaborate, and make a difference. The self-governing Nations in Yukon continue to take a leadership role in this way and we certainly see how culture and ceremony are the foundation of supporting and empowering Indigenous women and their families.

Of course Government of Yukon is also in a position to shape territory-wide institutions and programs. The main part of my presentation will outline three areas we have identified and how Yukon has a number of ideas of how to move forward on them. Although we still have quite a ways to go, we have already taken some meaningful steps, and I would like to share some of those with you today.

First, we see the need to take steps to prevent violence. This includes targeted work to improve the safety of women across the territory. We recognize that there are services and supports that are lacking, particularly in communities outside of Whitehorse.

Secondly, we see the need to improve short and long-term responses to violence within our Yukon communities, including education, training, and economic empowerment of Indigenous women. Services that are more timely, accessible, and culturally relevant are also required.

Third, we need to support healing of Yukon families that are dealing with the loss of a loved one or who have experienced violence. While we see the way forward we know we cannot do this alone. The Government of Yukon will need to rely on the wisdom, experience, and skill of our government, First Nations governments, Indigenous women groups, and other key partners. We are fortunate to be able to support them and also to draw on them. To this end we also need to look to ways to ensure the economic empowerment and self-sufficiency of these governments and organizations.

Right now I would like to take some time to provide you with some historical context of Yukon First Nations and some background on important Yukon initiatives

that took place prior to the launch of the national inquiry.

The Yukon is home to 14 distinct First Nations, 11 of which have modern treaties and are self-governing. Yukon's Nations fall under eight different language groups but ties between them are strong and many families are related by marriage and other close relationships. Although known to fur traders, miners, and trappers, the Yukon was essentially free of white settlers and colonial institutions until 1898 with the onset of the Klondike gold rush. The influx of people had devastating consequences on Indigenous peoples and cultures. Further, drastic change occurred in the 1940s and '50s during the building of the Alaska Highway. As the infrastructure of highways and railroads were put in place the federal government was able to implement its policies of assimilation first by removing children to residential schools and later by moving them into adoptions by white families, often in far-flung locations that affectively severed all ties between them and their communities. Many First Nation groups were also combined for ease of administrative purposes.

Following the release of the Supreme Court *Calder* decision in 1973 a delegation of Yukon chiefs went to Ottawa and presented a land claims document to Prime

Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau. This document called "Together Today for our Children Tomorrow" outlined the grievances, needs, future plans, approaches, and recommendations for settlement with Yukon First Nations. It culminated in 1990 with the signing of the Umbrella Final Agreement or UFA. The UFA laid out a framework for land claims negotiations, financial compensation, and served as the foundation for most of the subsequent individual self-government agreements that would follow. By 1993 four First Nations had signed onto the self-government agreements. Since then seven more have signed, bringing this total up to 11. There are three Yukon First Nations that do not have self-government agreements or settled land claim agreements and are remained governed under the *Indian Act*.

According to Crown Indigenous relations and Northern Affairs Canada's website there are 22 First Nations with self-government agreements in Canada. Eleven (11) or half of those are located in the Yukon Territory. Furthermore, according to Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada there are about 50 self-government negotiation tables currently running across the country. What's very important to note about this is that when funding is being considered for program delivery for First Nations with self-government agreements is that it must be

done with the understanding that they require a different framework than those First Nations governed under the *Indian Act*. It is imperative that recommendations reflect the self-governing First Nations of Yukon and are not simply broad sweeping commentaries referencing on reserve and off reserve.

Every Yukon First Nation self-government agreement contains terms of negotiation and defines consultation, which is what will ultimately determine what the Nations citizens' needs are, especially with respect to programs, initiatives, and resource development. These are trilateral agreements signed by Government of Canada, Yukon government, and each respective First Nation.

Although the marginalization and vulnerability of Indigenous women and girls has only recently become more evident to the general public Indigenous women have been keenly aware of it for decades. In the Yukon alone there are three Aboriginal women's groups that have done tremendous work toward raising awareness and giving a voice to Indigenous women and girls and for one organization this work has been done since the 1970s. These groups are the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council, the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle, and the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society in Watson Lake. We owe the women behind the efforts of these groups a tremendous

amount of gratitude for their strength, bravery, and endurance in bringing issues that have and continue to impact Indigenous women and girls forward.

The work of Indigenous women's groups ultimately influenced the decision for a review of policing in the Yukon in 2010. This work was undertaken collectively by the Yukon Department of Justice, the Council of Yukon First Nations, and the "M" Division of the RCMP. The Sharing Common Ground Report recognized, among other things, that the level of service provided to Yukon First Nations communities fell short in many significant respects and provided a roadmap for a new relationship.

Also in 2010 the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council took the lead from the National Sisters in Spirit Project and began researching cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Yukon and northern B.C. By the end of the Yukon Sisters in Spirit Project in 2013, 38 cases of missing or murdered Indigenous women had been identified, and a long overdue conversation started with the families. Sadly, this number has only grown. However, it was this significant project that helped to develop the strong relationships that were needed to meaningfully participate in the work of this Inquiry.

Following the announcement of the Inquiry

in 2015, a family gathering was organized by the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle, and a Yukon Regional Roundtable subsequently took place in 2016. In these venues, families were able to share stories, make recommendations, discuss current initiatives, and identify areas for further collaboration. Several commitments came out of this roundtable, including a declaration to support families of missing and murdered women and girls, to address the root causes of violence against women and girls, and to take collaborative action. This declaration was signed by the majority of Yukon First Nation Chiefs, numerous representatives from Government of Yukon, the RCMP, the Association of Yukon Communities, and many other key community organizations.

Another commitment from the roundtable was a joint submission for the National Inquiry during the pre-inquiry consultation process. Yukon then sent a delegation to the second National Roundtable that was held in Winnipeg in February 2016 and spoke of the collective work being undertaken in Yukon, and the importance of seeking national solutions that meet our territory's you can -- unique circumstances and experiences of northern Indigenous women and girls. Yukon also allocated funding to support Yukon Indigenous women's organizations and their continued work in developing projects that respond

to the recommendations from the Yukon Regional Round.

This work solidified relationships between Yukon family members and allowed them to collectively communicate concerns and support needs. New partnerships were created between the Government of Yukon, First Nations, Indigenous women's groups, and the RCMP, which have allowed for other collaborate effort to be -- collaborative efforts to be advanced. Public events such as the Annual Sisters in Spirit Walks and Walking with Our Sisters Commemoration raised the public consciousness and prompted the RCMP to work closely with the Indigenous women's groups to follow-up on cold case files, and even re-open closed investigations.

Without these efforts, much of the information that have been gleaned by families and loved ones, who courageously shared their truths and stories before you in May 2017, would not be known.

I would like to now speak about some of the issues and themes that arose during the Whitehorse community hearings in 2017. Yukon was honoured to be chosen by the Commission as the first community to host a community hearing. During these hearings, you heard testimony from approximately 72 family members and survivors. While the majority of the testimony was given in-camera, a number of families and survivors bravely

chose to share their stories publicly. Common themes emerged throughout the hearings that illuminated the connection between the experience of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and the traumatic impact of residential school, and in child welfare systems on Yukon families and survivors. The testimonies provided important and invaluable information, and the themes and the insights that emerged, should guide the formulation of recommendations by the Commission.

Over the course of the hearings, it became obvious that Yukon's Indigenous women and girls are victims of violence in large part because of government policies and institutions that isolate them from their culture and communities, sever social and family ties, and that make them vulnerable and marginalized. The institutions most squarely responsible for this isolation were identified as residential schools, the child welfare system, and the criminal justice systems. Prohibitions imposed by the Indian Act also worked to attenuate the connection between people and culture. As well, we recognize that Indigenous women often face racist stereotypes that further isolate them from the broader community.

In addition to making women more vulnerable to abuse, testimonies revealed that there is an inner-

section of historic and present-day complex factors that impact Indigenous women and girls, including a loss of culture, language, community, and identity. And that it is a combination of these that often leads to conflict with the justice system, feelings of isolation, poverty, early death, racism, sexual abuses, neglect, suicide, homelessness, violence, a lost of trust, mental health issues, and alcohol and drug addiction.

At these hearings, parents spoke about the lessons they learned from their children, and about their hope for the future. Children talked about the understanding they had for what their parents and grandparents had suffered, and about their resolve to reconnect with their culture and with the land. The families had clear ideas about the way forward as individuals and as communities. Many of the suggestions and recommendations they offered are already known and have been captured in many previous reports and studies. We heard them when they said, “We must take action now.” And that we have the knowledge required to make meaningful change, so no more families have to experience what they have and, in many cases, still experience.

We heard the voices of the families who testified in May 2017, just as we heard the voices of the women whose stories were collected before the Inquiry was

launched. None of this is new. Much is a -- much of what we have heard is already reflected in the recommendations made by past inquiries and in the Interim Report of the Commission. While I will not have time to delve deeply into all three of these areas in my oral submission today, our intention is to expand on them in our written document. For now, I would like to speak about how Yukon has started to address the issues, specifically, around preventing violence, improving short and long-term responses to violence, and support for healing of violence who have -- of families who have experienced violence.

What we heard clearly throughout the Inquiry is that, in order for women to be safe, their communities must be healthy. The circumstances that lead to violence against Indigenous women and girls are complex, and the solutions need to be holistic. To this end, there needs to be community support and healing opportunities that are directed not just towards women, but also towards Indigenous men who are struggling with the same legacy of residentials schools, the child welfare system, and other racist laws and policies. Men have an important traditional role to play with respect to preventing, intervening, and responding to violence against women. According to Stats Canada, in 2011, the rate of police reported violence in Yukon was four times

higher than the national average. The rate in Northwest Territories was nine times higher, and in Nunavut, almost 13 times higher. And for Indigenous women, this rate is even three or four times higher than that.

With this in mind, I want to speak about planning and implementation work that has been taking -- in place in Yukon around community safety planning. We see this as an excellent example of both preventing violence and improving the long-term response as it directly involves and engages the communities that are impacted most by violence. We had taken a lead from the work that the Kwanlin Dün First Nation has done with their community safety initiative. As you've just heard from Chief Bill, one of its most successful components has been the creation of the Community Safety Liaison Officer program, which has made impressive strides toward creating accessible, sustainable, and culturally relevant justice services for their citizens.

In undertaking this work, Government of Yukon has considered options with respect to crime prevention through environmental design as well. We have taken a broader view, however, and consider it to be only one component of a more comprehensive community safety planning process. One that includes community assessment, gap analysis, priority setting, visioning, community

mobilization, and implementation. In exploring options to support community safety planning for Yukon First Nations, we recently collaborated with the Council of Yukon First Nations and Public Safety Canada to deliver a workshop for First Nations and Yukon stakeholders on Public Safety Canada's Aboriginal Community Safety initiative.

The focus of the workshop was on awareness of the new call for crime prevention proposals, information on the new national crime prevention portal, and evidence-based programs, and an information session on community safety and wellness planning. During the workshop, there were four First Nations that confirmed immediate interest and readiness to proceed with community safety planning, and we were pleased to see nine proposals ultimately submitted following that.

The process follows four phases of implementation. The first involves obtaining leadership commitment and the building of a core group. Then, relationship building, which involves introducing a facilitator to plan consultation and engagement activities in the community. Action planning occurs which involves conducting an historical review, setting goals and identifying assets. Then, the safety plan development involves setting priorities, mapping activities and documenting it all.

The initial step is very important. It is for the First Nation governments to indicate their interest and commitment by identifying a community facilitator and submitting a mandate letter for the process going forward. Once that happens, the community facilitators will attend a five-day training workshop, which I believe may have already taken place just recently, and where they will be given tools and resources on how to lead the community safety planning process.

Public Safety Canada is fully supporting a Train the Trainer seminar in the Yukon, which will be based on an intensive, highly-participatory, capacity-building, knowledge-development training model, formatted to mirror what typically transpires in communities engaged in this process.

In addition to the five-day training, Canada has committed to providing funding for six sessions with each community with a Public Safety Canada contractor with the option of additional meetings on an as-needed basis. Once the training is completed, participants will take the knowledge and resources back to their communities to explore interests, leadership commitment, and ideally, to begin the process of community safety planning.

Some of the principles guiding the process include being holistic, really encouraging the whole

community to engage, and identifying what the issues are, and to become active participants in the development of solutions.

Cultural relevancy. The process must embrace and reflect each community's unique history and culture, recognizing the gifts and strengths of individuals in the community, we know that they will need to draw on them for this process to truly succeed.

Respect for each community's current state of development. It is important to recognize that each community will be starting at different levels of readiness and capacity, and this process must be Indigenous-led. We recognize how important it is that the participants own the process.

Canada indicated they have funding available for three to four Yukon First Nations to undertake this process starting this year. Once the community completes the Community Safety Plan, they will then be eligible to apply for up to $100,000 each in implementation funding.

As encouraging at this has been, we have also heard the need for long-term federal funding that includes operational and management streams so that these programs can be sustained. Recommendations must reflect the need for multi-year agreements and for less onerous

reporting requirements.

In order to build safer communities, we feel that the biggest impact can be made by working with First Nation governments and our partners, and that true, meaningful change will only occur if we engage with and support the communities to develop their own Community Safety Plans, and we are excited to see how the work unfolds going forward.

Tragically, the rate of police-reported sexualized assault is also over three times higher in the Yukon than in the rest of Canada, and we are keenly-aware that dark figures exist as well. Yukon takes this matter very seriously and has been focused on not only improving the short-term response, but also the long-term response of addressing these heinous acts.

In December of last year, Yukon committed to improving services for victims of violence and sexualized assault by fostering a more responsive, integrated and culturally-relevant system through the creation of a sexualized assault response team, or SART. Better coordination of existing medical and victim services will be supported by two new Government of Yukon positions; a victim support coordinator and a clinical coordinator. They will work in partnership to ensure there is continuity of care and wrap-around services for

victims of sexualized assault.

There are still components still being implemented. However, we have hired a project manager and have completed an MOU between the Yukon Hospital Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services; a SART cart that will be available in the Emergency Department of the hospital for sexual assault exams; engagement by a medical expert with key partners on all aspects of the affected medical system to inform policy, protocol and training.

A detailed service mapping, linking all critical systems; ensuring that priority access for victims of sexualized assault at the mental wellness hubs, which are located in Whitehorse and some of the surrounding communities. And, we've also established a Deputy Minister oversight committee and implementation committee that consists of representatives of the RCMP, Yukon Hospital Corporation, physicians and Yukon government officials.

Other critical components are under way and include the hiring of a clinical coordinator; a SART victim support coordinator; finalizing negotiations with a host organization for a crisis line; finalizing forensic and medical policies and protocols; and providing training for the SART multi-disciplinary team that includes

physicians, nurse practitioners, victim support workers, crisis line workers, brief intervention and first responders, partners and others as needed.

Victims currently have access to services that will assist, whether they present in a time of crisis or with an historic trauma. Although it has taken some time to fully realize our vision for the SART, we are taking the time needed to get this new initiative right. This work is a high priority for us and involves working with several Government of Yukon departments and external partners.

We are very happy that we are getting close to realizing the ultimate goal of the sexualized assault response team, which is to create a gold standard of holistic care. We are proud of all the hard work it has taken to get to this point, and that we did not compromise client and team health and safety for faster implementation.

Now that Phase 1 is almost complete, Phase 2 will involve more extensive outreach with First Nation governments, Indigenous non-profit organizations, and the Council of Yukon First Nations to ensure that cultural safety is at the heart of integration of victim and clinical supports. For example, we know that some people feel more comfortable disclosing to elders versus an RCMP

officer, a victim services worker or a doctor. So, ensuring that our SART incorporates cultural practises and preferences in such a way that increases safety and healing for victims is critical.

An incredible example of support for healing can be found in the recent project that Yukon supported that was led by the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle called "Finding our Faces", which focused on dedicating a monument to residential school survivors and the release of a book of memories.

The project honours the more than 100 former students who attended the Whitehorse Indian Mission School which operated from 1947 to 1960. The artist, Ken Anderson, met with former students before designing the monument, and settled on a design that includes nine wooden stools placed in a circular formation on a concrete block, and circling an etched design of the former school.

Each stool is intentionally different to reflect the uniqueness of each student, despite school policies that saw all the students receiving the same haircut and assigned uniforms. An opening in the circle is meant to encourage people who did not attend residential school to join the circle and be part of the healing.

That monument is located on the waterfront

next to the Yukon River, very close to where the first community hearings for the Commission took place. The waterfront is sacred to Yukon First Nations people and considered a healing place.

Not only will the monument provide a place where former students can gather to remember and heal, it will be seen by thousands of people who visit the Yukon every year from around the world, sparking many important discussions and raising awareness.

A book was also distributed at the event called, "Finding our Faces", which documents photos and stories from students who have attended the school. It is a second edition, because the original release prompted other students to come forward with more pictures and more stories.

Given that the recognition of culture, identity, and family is critical to the foundation of our healthy communities.

Another area that is a high priority for Yukon is around working to keep Indigenous children with their biological families, extended kin, or within their communities.

The Yukon's *Child and Family Services Act* was updated in 2008 and provides for significant First Nations input in government decisions about child

protection.

In addition, a clause was added that calls for the review of the operation of the Act every five years by an advisory committee. We are currently in the middle of this process and expect that a report will be tabled in the spring that will speak to whether the purposes and principles in the Act are being achieved.

As well, the self-governing agreement signed by the Yukon First Nations allow the service to ultimately be drawn down and administered on an individual First Nation basis.

Yukon recognizes that there is always room for improvement in the implementation of the *Child and Family Services Act* and we are committed to work with Yukon First Nation government to get it right.

This is only a brief summary of some of the work we have undertaken. Our written summary will obviously contain more information both about what we are working to accomplish now and other areas in which we see change being needed.

Before I finish, I want to thank the Commission again for this opportunity, and I raise my hands up to all of you for all of your hard work over the course of your hard work over the course of this Inquiry. We know how hard this work can be and we are grateful to

your commitment and dedication to fulfilling your mandate.

We have learned a lot from the work and recommendations that were set out in the interim report, and know that we still have a lot of work to do.

We are looking forward to the final report so that we can continue to work with our Indigenous counterparts and other key partners to find solutions towards ending the inequalities, inequities, and violence that continue to plague Indigenous women, girls, and members of the LGBTQ2S+ community in the north.

Shone thon (phonetic); thank you.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

MS. SHELBY THOMAS: Chief Commissioner, Commissioners, do you have any questions?

MS. CHANTAL GENIER: I would like to invite my colleague, Andrea Daily (phonetic) to come; she may assist me with some of my responses.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you very much for your presentation, and as a government, who issued an Order in Council to empower us within your jurisdiction in this historic joint National Inquiry. You've empowered us, so you -- has given us this mandate in part as well, so I want to acknowledge that.

And in -- with that in mind, much of our recommendations will be directed to governments, including

yours. And one of the things we've heard, and we've even heard it today, this fear of the reports, the recommendations collecting dust; sitting on shelves.

And our mandates end at the end of this, and I'm really happy to hear about the work that has been done giving life and honouring the truths that have been shared by the families in the Yukon since even before the Inquiry. Your government has been listening and the fact that action has been taken exemplifies what we've been saying all along is that you don't need to wait till we're done.

So I want to raise my hands up to you and your government and your Minister for putting words into action.

One of the things that I think about is how we, as a country, and how governments moving forward demonstrate the honouring of what we've heard, and giving life to what we've heard; so in a sense the implementation of the recommendations and oversight of the implementation of the recommendations that are coming forth.

Do you have thoughts on mechanisms that may be put in place either by your government or other governments across this country that might allow for that ongoing oversight and reporting on the implementation?

MS. CHANTAL GENIER: Thank you for your

question.

I may actually invite my Minister up to help me with this question as well. We've certainly had some discussions around it.

THE HONOURABLE JEANIE DENDYS: Well, that didn't take long.

I was going to say something at the end so I'll say it now and then I'll answer your question. Jeanie Dendys (speaking in Native language). I'm Jeanie Dendys. I come from the Tahltan Nation. I'm Wolf. I come from Cloga Dena (phonetic) people from Northern B.C. but I'm a born and raised Yukoner and very, very proud to be in this position.

I came in just around the time the Inquiry was starting and have been a support to seeing a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Woman and Girls in this country for a very long time.

So I absolutely stand with our Indigenous groups, our governments, and I am honoured to be here today and I echo what my staff member has brought forward, Chantal.

I thought it was really important that a Yukon First Nation woman present on behalf of Yukon and so I'm really proud of her today in doing that on behalf of Yukoners. And, of course, Chief Bill's work that I had

the absolute privilege of working on all of those initiatives that she highlighted today and know that those are transformational initiatives, they are. And I hope in -- I know that the Commissioners have heard about them before but I think that they're absolutely important to others in Canada to hear that there's tremendous hope in empowering our communities and that we have the answers within our communities and that simply sometimes it's just as much -- we need a partnership, that's what's needed.

And so I've followed the Inquiry all the way through from day one. So I was there on the very first day of the hearings and I've come as often as I possibly could to be -- to hear the expert hearings and to hear other family members from other jurisdictions.

I was there on the last day of the family hearings in B.C., and it was quite an honour to hear from families; heartbreaking. I've wept right alongside others in Canada, you know, to hear these devastating stories. And I did hear them today again. The video brought back a lot, and I thank you for that summary.

In terms of -- okay, I'll get to the question now -- the mechanisms to follow the implementation, we do currently have an advisory committee that's co-chaired by myself, by Chief Bill, and by other -- by the Indigenous women's groups in Yukon. So it was

formed previous to the Inquiry to encourage an inquiry, and then when I came on board, we had the Inquiry so it became a committee to advise as the Inquiry unfolded.

And so I will have to talk with my co-chairs and with Yukoners to seek their advice and -- but my sense is that that's the type of approach we will take in Yukon. That we are collaborative, we reported to -- we have what's called the Yukon Forum which meets three -- four times a year with all of the First Nation chiefs, and we've presented to the chiefs, along with all the Ministers in Yukon on the Inquiry in the past, and we will be doing that again.

So Yukon is taking very much a coordinated approach, and absolutely, I've said this before and I'll say it probably many, many more times that this is an important chapter of Yukon -- or Canadian history that …must be told, and I will say this today, that I hold my hands up to you, as Chantal has said today, in doing this important work on behalf of all Canadians. I know how hard it must have been, and I thank you for doing that on all of our behalf. It's tremendous what you've done for us, and I really look forward to the report and being on the receiving end of that report.

So thank you. Madu. Madu is thank you in the Tahltan language.

(APPLAUSE)

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you so much for giving us insight into your government's intentions and desire to follow through. That follow through is so key, and I also want to raise my hands to you for showing up, for being part of the 14 governments and showing up to so many hearings.

Thank you.

COMMISSAIRE MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Merci beaucoup. Merci beaucoup, l'Honorable Dendys. I know you mentioned the great work of Chantal and also to have an Indigenous woman and bring the message on behalf of the Yukon government. It is also, from where I'm sitting, as a mom, a mother, very impressed and very proud to see that we -- you also are an Indigenous woman holding that position where we can contribute for change and a real change.

I used to say or I still say those who have the power, we have the power.

THE HONOROURABLE JEANIE DENDYS: We do.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: We have the power, but we do not change the legislation just like this, unless a Minister wants to see the change.

So I commend you for the work you do and I know you followed the work of the Inquiry, maybe not

physically, but you were on the phone or your staff with us to make sure that we follow the protocol of your territory. So again, thank you so much, and I'm glad that Commissioner Robinson asked what's next for you as a government, and I think it's a good example of when we collectively worked together, not only one agency or an institution, but with the grassroots organization, the women's organization, the leadership from the land, the territory, plus the government. I'm pretty sure there will be some success. I hope so. And it should be a good example for the rest of Canada.

I understand also during your presentation, Chantal, that self-government is an important aspect of the steps being taken by your government in order to attempt to move forward.

And also, we've heard from Chief Bill. Di you have, with other First Nations communities, the same Memorandum of Agreement kind of work?

THE HONOURABLE JEANIE DENDYS: Yes, Commissioner, there are other memorandum of agreements that are under the child welfare, and as Chantal brought forward, we have a full review of our Act right now. It was supposed to be five years. It was within the legislation to do a review in five years, which would have been around the time that we formed government. So that

process is underway, and it includes Yukon First Nations on that review. And so one of them being a Council Member for Kwanlin Dün. So we intend to have very insightful recommendations and practical types of information brought forward from that review committee.

So yes, absolutely, there are others. I was -- when I was Director of Justice for Kwanlin Dün at the time when the banishment of social workers happened, and so I was the one that got the call from then Chief Mike Smith saying, "Yeah, I think you should come in for a meeting because we've just banned social workers from our traditional territory." And I was brand new, and he told me this, and I said, "Okay. What does that mean?" What it meant was a change.

And as Chief Bill brought forward in her testimony, there are no interactions with social workers in regards to Kwanlin Dün children or families without the presence and knowledge of Kwanlin Dün. So it was a catalyst for change, and there are other first nations and communities that are entering into MoAs now in Yukon. And there was a full review of that MoA as well. So there was an evaluation recently that will feed into the review that's happening of the Act.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: So good to have you there, Madame la ministre. I will enjoy this for

another question.

We were able to hear, and Canada also was able to hear Chief Bill about her CSO program in Jackson Lake Project or Team -- Program, sorry. Isn't funding coming from your government or it's coming from the federal government?

THE HONOURABLE JEANIE DENDYS: The CSO Program and the way that it was negotiated was a partnership agreement. It, yes, included funding from the Government of Yukon, but the way it was framed when it was negotiated was that Kwanlin Dün wasn't asking anyone to come and fix anything. They said, "You know what? We need this partnership." So we were very happy to enter into an agreement, a three-year pilot agreement on that.

Is it okay, Chief Bill, to add those -- I had to ask permission.

I think, you know, the intent always is that Chief Bill talked about the administration of justice negotiations that are ongoing, and that's something that Kwanlin Dün's been at the table for a very long time, and the CSO Program, Jackson Lake, all of those initiatives are tied into long-term planning for the First Nation around the Administration of Justice Agreement.

So looking at -- because under the AJA, you can -- you're able to draw down courts, corrections and

enforcement and any other aspects that the parties agree to. So the intent was always that they would tie into the Administration of Justice Agreement. So that's a very important aspect of it in terms of how do you sustain long term.

You know, we're happy, as a government, to give a strong mandate for the negotiations on behalf of Government of Yukon for those agreements to be completed.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: I just want to make sure I understand it was a pilot project, three years, the CFO -- CFO -- mon English is tired, là.

Is it something that could be permanent now, knowing that it's a positive -- there is positive impact or change?

THE HONOURABLE JEANIE DENDYS: And we're supporting those discussions with -- I mean, those discussions are with us, with the Government of Yukon, but also with Canada. So I mean, I know that it's made a tremendous difference in the community. And so we, you know, are very supportive of the change that has occurred.

I had tea with an Elder over Christmas, and she lives right in the middle of Kwanlin Dün's community, and I said, "How's it going? Has it changed?" And she said, "Jeanie, it's changed. It's changed in so many ways. I do not feel scared in my community. The

community safety officers have made a tremendous difference."

And I think Chief Bill is very modest in how she presented the statistics. I think in the first year, without even the full implementation, went down by 40 percent and even further now. And that's a huge reduction in the calls to service, but that interaction with that really important Elder, to me, was a good, clear indication that the community is changing.

You had asked about funding for Jackson Lake as well.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: M'hm.

THE HONOURABLE JEANIE DENDYS: And there is a funding arrangement in place with Government of Yukon, but also with Canada. So the mental health wellness teams hat are funded federally and as Chief Bill talked about, all of those funding arrangements, that kind of -- there's many funding partners to that and it is complicated in how you report.

But -- so there are a number of funding partners that make up the entirety of that program and it's complex and -- but, you know, I'm not 100 percent sure of where those negotiations are but that's generally how it's set out.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Bien merci

beaucoup.

THE HONOURABLE JEANNIE DENDYS: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Thank you so much.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: I want to thank all of you for coming this afternoon and showing us how decolonization can really happen and that's through relationships and partnerships. So thank you very much for inspiring us and giving us a healthy framework for the work that we have to do still. We're very grateful. Thank you.

MS. JEANNIE DENDYS: Thank you very much for the opportunity. It was tremendous for us to be here.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: So having said that, we're adjourned for the day, except for our closing ceremony.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes and I would just ask Chief Commissioner and Commissioners, tomorrow for the schedule the first party withstanding will be called at 9:30 a.m., but I understand that the opening prayer will be at 9:00 a.m., so if we could adjourn until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow?

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Sure, 9:00 a.m., please.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you.

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: Good afternoon. It's been a good long afternoon with good testimony. We have a couple things we need to do to wind down for the day. So right now we'd like to ask Leslie Metchahoya(Ph) to come up.

Leslie was here. Oh, there he is. Sorry. And now I'm going to ask some of our ladies that sing that brought their rattles with them to come up as well. Bobby-Jo and we have Audrey. And anyone that feels comfortable who would like to come up and sing, that would be wonderful.

So I'm going to explain a couple of things while we're waiting for these folks to come up. We're visitors to the Blackfoot Territory and there's protocols that must be followed.

I know at some of our other hearings we've had women drummers and those are the teachings of that land, but we're visitors here in this land.

So in order to respect the protocols of the land and of the people, women don't normally drum, but they can sing. Women can use rattles but when they're in ceremony.

And what we're going to do in a couple of minutes with the parties withstanding is go into ceremony by honouring them. Honouring them for being in this

process with us for the last two years plus. Being there asking questions and advocating for our families and for our women and girls that we have lost.

So if we have everyone that needs to come up, if they can come join us ladies. And I'm going to ask the parties withstanding that are in the room to come up as well. Carol.

(LAUGHTER)

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: We have the two young ladies there behind Marlene. Can you come? Please join us? And the other lady with the ponytail. Yes, you.

(LAUGHTER)

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: Could I ask our Commissioners to come up as well? And Ann Black(Ph). And our grandmothers.

Leslie, Gerry, do you guys want to come up? Okay.

So what we're going to do for the parties withstanding, we're going to honour you and we're going to honour you by singing you a song. An honour song, for all the work and everything that you've done for us and for our families. So I'll let Leslie start us off. Megwetch.

(SINGING)

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: One for the

grandpas. One for the grandpas.

(SINGING)

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: So megwetch. Megwetch. Megwetch for all your hard work and with protocol we also have our closing prayers for the day, so I'd like to call up Alvine and Spike.

MS. ALVINE WOLFLEG: I just want to say I still have to follow protocol here. If I step out of line I'm going to be shunned, so any of you can adopt me. I need to live on a reservation somewhere.

But it's too bad that a lot of the things for the Blackfoot women -- our reservation is very strict. We still have to follow and the laws of our Creator, the laws of our societies. So I had to make a call here. So I didn't ask my husband anything. So it was my call, but I really like his songs. We do have songs too, and -- but these are not sung for public. Those things are done within the lodge, and when we have sundances in the summer, that's when we sing our songs.

So I just want to thank you for coming all of you to my territory. And I hope that you all have a good sleep because I'm pretty tired. My husband, my husband has a degenerative disk disease where his spine is deteriorating, so he can't sit too long. So I'll just do the closing prayer in my language.

(CLOSING PRAYER)

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: All right. Have a good night everyone. Oh, I'm sorry. We have to extinguish the Qulliq too.

Good night.

--- Upon adjourning at 4:42 p.m./L'audience est ajournée à 16h42

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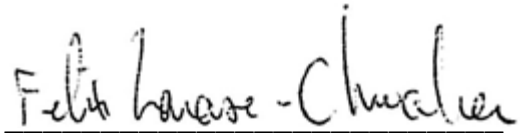

Félix Larose-Chevalier

Nov 26, 2018