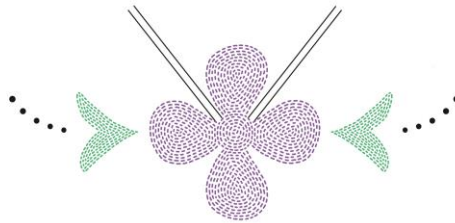


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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 IV - Closing Oral Submissions
The Westin Ottawa
Ottawa, Ontario**



PUBLIC

**Friday December 14, 2018
Oral Submissions - Volume 9**

Nunatsiavut Government

Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

Association of Native Child and Family Service Agencies of Ontario

Iskwewuk Ewichiwitochik

New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council

Christa Big Canoe, Commission Counsel,

INTERNATIONAL REPORTING INC.
41-5450 Canotek Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K1J 9G2
E-mail: info@irri.net – Phone: 613-748-6043 – Fax: 613-748-8246

II

APPEARANCES

Government of Nunatsiavut

President Johannes Lampe
(Representative)

Manitoba Keewatinowi
Okimakanak

Jessica Barlow
(Legal Counsel)
Gerri-Lee McPherson Pangman,
Corley McPherson, Hilda
Anderson-Pyrz, Grand Chief
Garrison Settee, Sandra
Delaronde (Representatives)

Association of Native and
Child Family Service Agencies
of Ontario

Katherine Hensel
(Legal Counsel)

Iskwewuk Ewichiwitochik

Darlene R. Okemaysim-Sicotte,
Shirley Wilson, Judy Hughes
Carol Wolfe (Representatives)

New Brunswick Aboriginal
Peoples Council

Amanda Leblanc, Elizabeth
Blaney (Representatives)

MMIWG National Inquiry

Christa Big Canoe
(Lead Commission Counsel)

III
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Truth-Gathering Process
Oral Submissions - Transcript Volume 9

Chair: Violet Ford (Commission Counsel)
Second Chairs: Meredith Porter (Commission Counsel)

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

Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers & National Family
Advisory Circle (NFAC) members: Vincent Kicknosway, Elaine
Kicknosway, Thelma Morriseau, Stanley LaPierre, Eelee
Higgins, Reta Gordon, Laureen Blu Waters, Bernie Poitras,
Leslie Spillett, Louise Haulli, Pénélope Guay, Kathy Louis,
CeeJai Julian, Myrna Laplante, Gladys Radek, Charlotte
Wolfrey, Micah Arreak, Norma Jacobs, Barbara Manitowabi,
Sarah Nowrakudluk

Eagle River Drummers: Shady Hafez, Yancy Thusky, Awema
Tendesi, Steve Tendesi, Jordan Jacko

Clerks: Bryana Bouchir & Maryiam Khoury

Registrar: Bryan Zandberg

IV
TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Opening Ceremony	1
Opening remarks by ELDERS VINCE, ELAINE, AND RETA	1
Submissions by MS. JOHANNES LAMPE OF NUNATSIAVUT GOVERNMENT	12
Submissions by MS. JESSICA BARLOW OF MANITOBA KEEWATINOWI OKIMANAK INC	30
Submissions by MS. KATHERINE HENSEL OF ASSOCIATION OF NATIVE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES OF ONTARIO	53
Submissions by MS. DARLENE O'KENWAYSIM-SICOTTE OF IKSWEWUK EWICHIWITOCHIK	72
Submissions by MS. AMANDA LeBLANC OF NEW BRUNSWICK ABORIGINAL PEOPLES COUNCIL	113
Closing remarks by MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE	144
Closing remarks by COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON	188
Closing remarks by COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE	200
Closing remarks by CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER	208
Closing Ceremony	225

V
LIST OF EXHIBITS

NO.	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
20	Summary of recommendations (2 pages) Submitted by: Johannes Lampe, Representative Nunatsiavut Government	29
21	Bilingual executive summary of oral submissions (13 pages) Submitted by: Darlene R. Okemaysim-Sicotte, Representative Iskwewuk E-wichiwitochik	109
22	List of recommendations (2 pages) Submitted by: Darlene R. Okemaysim-Sicotte, Representative Iskwewuk E-wichiwitochik	109
23	Slide presentation of Iskwewuk E-wichiwitochik (36 slides) Submitted by: Darlene R. Okemaysim-Sicotte, Representative Iskwewuk E-wichiwitochik	110
24	Video presentation of Commission Counsel, .mp4 file format, 540 MB (14 minutes 30 seconds) Submitted by: Christa Big Canoe, Commission Counsel	153

1

Ottawa, Ontario

2

--- Upon commencing at 8:32 a.m./L'audience débute à 8h32

3

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: Hope

4

everyone had a well-rested night. I certainly did.

5

Today is our last day and it's been a long

6

-- not a long -- it's been a quick two years of, you know,

7

working with the Commissioners and staff, Parties with

8

Standing and everything to get this done.

9

But good morning.

10

M. MATHIEU MELLON: Alors bon matin, tout

11

le monde. Nous allons débiter sous peu. Merci d'être

12

ici. Nous en sommes à la dernière journée d'un long

13

périple pendant lequel nous avons fait de nombreuses

14

audiences et nous sommes heureux de vous compter parmi

15

nous aujourd'hui.

16

MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO: So now I'd

17

like to call upon our elders, Vince and Elaine and Reta.

18

M. MATHIEU MELLON: Nous aimerions inviter

19

nos aînés Vince et Elaine.

20

21

---OPENING REMARKS BY/REMARQUES PRÉLIMINAIRES PAR ELDERS

22

VINCENT, ELAINE, AND RETA:

23

ELDER ELAINE KICKNOSWAY: So boozhoo.

24

Ahneen. Tansi. Kwekwe. (Speaking in Indigenous

25

language).

1 We give thanks for the rising of today,
2 give thanks for the water and the sun and the earth and
3 the movement, the continue of the movement and the voices
4 and the place of what we call the missing and murdered,
5 the places of the song, the words, the advocacy, and the
6 effects. But also through that is the resilience and the
7 strength of the learners and the teachers, the learners to
8 listen and also in the teaching to listen, in the creation
9 of the strength that comes through our resiliency, our
10 resiliency of love, our resiliency to be here and continue
11 to support and survive through our songs and our dance and
12 throughout the strength of each other, even just to lend a
13 hand, help each other, help each other out and in that
14 place of coming together in a good way, always in a good
15 way. So I say *miigwetch*.

16 **ELDER RETA GORDON:** (Speaking in Indigenous
17 language). Hello, everyone, and welcome. Bonjour à tous
18 et bienvenue.

19 I want to thank the people that invited me
20 here. I've never had a week like it. My heart is so
21 full. Sometimes I wanted to cry for the people that were
22 hurt and for their loved ones and all what the
23 Commissioners have done.

24 Today I'm not going to say a prayer, as
25 such. I'm going to read about what a mother is. For

1 those of you who are lucky enough to still be blessed with
2 your mother, this is a beautiful story. And for those of
3 you whose mother has passed away, I hope this story
4 reminds you of your mother.

5 "The young mother set her foot upon
6 the path of life.

7 'Is this the long way?' she asked.

8 "And the Creator said, 'Yes, and the
9 way is hard. You will be old before
10 you reach the end of it. But the end
11 will be better than the beginning.'

12 "The young mother was happy and she
13 would not believe that anything could
14 be better than these years. So she
15 played with her children, she fed
16 them, bathed them, taught them how to
17 tie their shoes, how to ride in a
18 school bus, and reminded them to feed
19 the dog, do their homework, brush
20 their teeth, to always be polite, and
21 to say their prayers.

22 "The sun shone on them and the young
23 mother said, 'Nothing will ever be
24 lovelier than this.'

25 "Then the nights came, the storms, the

1 pain, and the children shook with fear
2 and the mother drew them close,
3 covered them with her arms, and the
4 children said, 'Mother, we are not
5 afraid, for you are near and no harm
6 can come to us.'

7 "The morning came and there was a
8 steep hill ahead. And the children
9 grew weary and the mother was tired
10 but she said to her children, 'Keep
11 climbing and if you fall, I will pick
12 you up.'

13 "So they climbed. And as they
14 climbed, they learned to weather the
15 storms, and with this, she gave them
16 strength to face the world.

17 "Year after year she showed them
18 compassion, understanding, hope, but
19 most of all, unconditional love. When
20 they reached the top they said,
21 'Mother, we would not have done it
22 without you.'

23 "And the days and weeks and the months
24 and the years passed and the mother
25 grew old and became little and bent,

1 but her children were tall and strong
2 and walked with pride.

3 "And the mother, when she lay down
4 looked up at the stars and said, 'This
5 is a better day than the last, for my
6 children have learned so much and are
7 now passing on their knowledge to
8 their children.'

9 "And when the way became rough for
10 her, they lifted her and gave her
11 their strength, just as she had given
12 them hers.

13 "One day, they came to a hill and
14 beyond the hill they could see a
15 shining road and a golden gate flew
16 open. And the mother said, 'I have
17 reached the end of my journey and now
18 I know the end better than the
19 beginning, for my children can walk
20 with their heads held high. They can
21 walk with dignity and pride. That's
22 all I had to give them, but I'm
23 happy.'"

24 Thank you for listening.

25 (APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

1 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** *Miigwetch.*

2 **ELDER VINCENT KICKNOSWAY:** Boozhoo.

3 Kwekwe. Ahneen. (Speaking in Indigenous language).

4 These are some of the greeting salutations within this
5 region here. I extend that to the many directions that
6 are in attendance. I don't know your language or your
7 greetings but I extend that this morning in the pipe
8 ceremony to all who have travelled from the west, south,
9 east, and the north. I acknowledge that. These are the
10 elements in life that we appreciate, I appreciate.

11 (Speaking in Indigenous language)

12 My English name is Vince Kicknosway and my
13 Anishinaabe name is (Native name). And I am so grateful
14 that I had grandparents but I've also had many teachers,
15 and that's what I'm very appreciative of.

16 We acknowledge (speaking in Indigenous
17 language) this Algonquin territory that we stand upon and
18 walk upon. We are so grateful to the people of this
19 territory.

20 We acknowledge and give thanks and I ask
21 Gitchi Manidoo, our Creator, to watch over, as I had
22 indicated in our pipe ceremony to the Commissioners and
23 their ability to listen through the many times and the
24 journeys and the paths that they have taken through this
25 Inquiry, that ability to listen. To those who have come

1 forward in the many areas that have used their voice, I
2 acknowledge and I give thanks.

3 I acknowledge and give thanks to those
4 helpers. There have helped tremendously throughout these
5 many days and many times that the Inquiry has come
6 forward. We are so grateful to the grandmothers that are
7 here. We are honoured to the mothers, to their sisters,
8 to their nieces. We are honoured. I give thanks to that.

9 To those who have coordinated and
10 facilitated, the organizing of this Inquiry, we are so
11 grateful. We are honoured. We are so grateful to the
12 Inuit because we have within this region many Inuit that
13 have come from the north to share with us, to teach us
14 their ways of life.

15 To the Metis, we are so honoured and
16 grateful to the many Metis in this region that have come
17 from other places. To our First Nations of many Nations
18 of the many cultures, we are so grateful. We honour that.

19 So with the greeting of Gitchi Manidoo I
20 ask, as I did this morning in the pipe ceremony to watch
21 over us, to help us recognize our abilities of what we
22 will see through this day and what we have seen throughout
23 this week, what we will hear, what we will smell, and the
24 delicious foods that we have been served for what we have
25 tasted.

1 And mostly how we feel. These are
2 important parts of what I understand the Creator made
3 available to us. We are so grateful to that.

4 (Speaking Ojibway).

5 I acknowledge and I give thanks and
6 greeting and that everyone has a very wonderful day.
7 *Miigwetch.*

8 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** *Miigwetch.*

9 Now we would like to call upon our drum
10 group, Eagle River, to open us up this morning.

11 **M. MATHIEU MELLON:** Nous accueillons
12 maintenant les joueurs de tambours de Eagle River.

13

14 **(EAGLE RIVER DRUMMERS/TAMBOUR)**

15

16 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** *Miigwetch.*

17 Now I'd like to call upon Eelee to do
18 lighting of the quilliq and she will do the translation
19 with Micah.

20 **M. MATHIEU MELLON:** Donc on aimerait
21 inviter Eelee qui va procéder à l'allumage du quilliq.

22 **MS. EELEE HIGGINS:** (Speaking Inuktitut,
23 translated by Micah)

24 Good morning. Welcome everyone. And I
25 have been very impressed this week. I am very grateful to

1 see the Commissioners doing their work. I know it's hard
2 work but we can see your dedication and commitment and we
3 are very proud of you.

4 You Commissioners and all the staff have
5 been very great and welcoming and hospitable so I just
6 wanted to acknowledge the hard work and dedication that
7 have been shown this week.

8 And the invited guests, I am very impressed
9 with them as well. Thank you.

10 All this week I've been doing what I've
11 envisioned that I've always wanted to be a firekeeper and
12 so therefore I am very grateful to be able to light the
13 quilliq this week. I've been very grateful for being
14 given the opportunity to do this.

15 And although I speak English my preference
16 is to speak my mother tongue, Inuktitut, because it gives
17 me strength. Thank you.

18 This week I've been emphasizing the
19 importance of unity, and welcoming, being a servant, and
20 negotiation, also training, exercising, and also
21 collaborative approaches consistent of firsts and
22 practices, working in unity, and innovativeness tending to
23 our environment. These I've been emphasizing all week.
24 All those that has been discussed during this week all
25 relate to these items that I noted.

1 I'm very grateful for this week. Although
2 I'm capable of getting my own cup of tea or water, they've
3 provided all those to me during this week and I am very
4 grateful for that. Because welcoming and friendliness is
5 very important in this situation, and even little things
6 will bring us up, even to us -- someone in need. As
7 little as getting water or a cup of coffee or a tea being
8 brought to me has been very important.

9 Getting along is very important and working
10 in unity is very important as a value for our people. And
11 this week, especially when we lose our loved one, we
12 automatically go to that person to comfort them and to
13 console them. You don't need to say anything to them, but
14 you know. And the energy that comes with what happens,
15 the energy is there, and we can all feel that moment when
16 bad times arise or even good times arise.

17 Like this week, we've all negotiated on
18 each item discussed or we have planned this in unity.
19 Therefore, innovativeness is very important because we --
20 they could have Plan B if Plan A doesn't work. So those
21 kind of things are very important so that we can make --
22 consistently improve things over the process during this -
23 - during the hearings and meetings.

24 Thank you so much. Have a good day.
25 Nakurmiik.

1 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** Thank you.
2 Just a friendly reminder, we have smudging and healing
3 through beading with Gerri and Cora Lee in the Québec
4 Room.

5 **MR. MATHIEU MELLON:** Donc pour ceux qui le
6 souhaitent, nous vous rappelons que dans la salle Québec
7 y'aura de la purification par la fumée et du perlage qui
8 est une activité-là qui favorise la guérison dans la
9 culture autochtone.

10 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** So have a
11 good day. We have 4 minutes so we'll take a quick
12 4 minute break and reconvene at 9:00 a.m.

13 **MR. MATHIEU MELLON:** Alors nous allons
14 prendre une petite pause de quatre minutes après quoi nous
15 allons débiter la journée.

16 --- Upon recessing at 8:57 a.m./La séance est suspendue à
17 8h57

18 --- Upon resuming at 9:06 a.m./La séance est reprise à
19 9h06

20 **MS. VIOLET FORD:** ...Violet Ford. I am one
21 of the Commission counsel, and sitting next to me is my
22 colleague, Meredith Porter. She is also Commission
23 counsel.

24 To begin this morning's session, Commission
25 counsel would like to call to the podium the Nunatsiavut

1 Government, Johannes Lampe, President of Nunatsiavut
2 Government. And you have 40 minutes.

3 **---SUBMISSIONS BY/REPRÉSENTATIONS PAR MS. JOHANNES LAMPE:**

4 **MR. JOHANNES LAMPE:** Nakurmiik. (Speaking
5 Inuktitut)

6 It is indeed my pleasure to be here today
7 to provide opening remarks on behalf of Labrador Inuit and
8 the Nunatsiavut Government. Our journey as a people and
9 as a government has been a long, and at times, a difficult
10 one. The Labrador Inuit Association, which preceded the
11 Nunatsiavut Government, was formed in 1973 to promote our
12 culture, to improve the health and well-being of our
13 people, and to protect our constitutional, democratic, and
14 human rights.

15 In 1977, the LIA began the long path
16 towards self-government by filing a Statement of Claim
17 with the Government of Canada seeking rights to the land
18 and sea ice in Northern Labrador. Our dream of self-
19 government was realized on December 1, 2005 with the
20 signing of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement and
21 the establishment of the Nunatsiavut Government.

22 We are the first Inuit region in Canada to
23 achieve self-government, guided by *Labrador Inuit*
24 *Constitution* to give our own government and regions a
25 future where Labrador Inuit are self-sufficient,

1 practising our unique way of life, our culture and
2 traditions in healthy communities and within sustainable
3 environments.

4 Our connectivity to each other and our
5 cultural values as Inuit have shaped who we are as a
6 people and as a society. We have learned from the past
7 and we know all too well the importance of family, of
8 community and personal values. We have shown time and
9 time again that we can overcome challenges, personally and
10 collectively. And we have proven that we can move forward
11 with renewed strength, hope, and determination.

12 There are five communities within
13 Nunatsiavut which in English means "our beautiful land".
14 There are no roads linked to our region or connecting any
15 of our communities. The primary means of transportation
16 is Twin Otter aircraft from Happy Valley, Goose Bay,
17 though there is a passenger and a cargo carry operating
18 during the summer and fall and some travel between
19 communities by snowmobile during the winter and spring.

20 Services from Advocacy to frontline
21 practice by Nunatsiavut government have been repeatedly
22 shown to positively contribute to individual, family, and
23 community wellbeing. Supporting self-governance such as
24 the Nunatsiavut government to be active leaders and
25 service-generating bodies must be a key priority in

1 improving individual, family and community wellbeing.

2 As a government, we are committed to
3 addressing these social inequities faced by our people and
4 our communities but we can't do it alone. We need help.
5 That's why it is important to build on our relationships
6 with both the federal and provincial governments so that
7 our strength and needs are considered in the development
8 of all policies, programs, and practices.

9 However, those relationships and our
10 partnerships must be based on trust, understanding and
11 mutual respect with the goal of merging our combined
12 efforts in the best interests of Labrador Inuit. The
13 Inuit-Crown partnership is a significant positive step in
14 this direction but one which will require continuous
15 support and commitment in order to remain effective.

16 Likewise, there are examples of effective
17 partnership with provincial leaders and service providers.
18 Unfortunately, too often these partnerships are vulnerable
19 to changing provincial and federal government leadership
20 priorities.

21 Changing personnel in management and civil
22 service positions are overlooked entirely when Inuit
23 perspectives do not align with the priorities of federal
24 or provincial partners. Meaningful involvement of Inuit
25 requires a sustained commitment to engage with Inuit

1 leaders regardless of changes in political leadership,
2 changes in personnel, or differing priorities.

3 There must be sustained funding and support
4 to allow us to self-govern and to deliver services. And
5 there must be active engagement of Inuit leaders in all
6 stages of the development, implementation, and evaluation
7 of policies, programs, services, and practice approaches
8 which impact Indigenous communities and peoples.

9 Addressing social inequities will
10 significantly improve the wellbeing of Inuit communities,
11 families, and individuals and create opportunities for
12 further healing, success, and leadership. Many of the
13 services to our people in our communities are provided by
14 the province such as Kindergarten to Grade 12 education,
15 transportation, health, social assistance, child welfare,
16 and justice.

17 The Government of Canada also provides
18 services such as policing through an arrangement with the
19 province. As a third distinct level of government we also
20 offer a wide range of services and programs including
21 those the domains of community programming as well as
22 social development, mental wellness, communicable disease,
23 and public health non-insured health benefits, language,
24 and cultural programming in schools, research, resource
25 extraction and development, economic development, post-

1 secondary student support, and much more.

2 Labrador Inuit have a holistic and
3 collective understanding of wellbeing. Healthy
4 individuals exist in a context of healthy families;
5 healthy families exist in a context of healthy
6 communities. Healthy communities in our regions arise
7 when the broader Canadian society acknowledges, respects,
8 and supports Inuit leadership, knowledge, and culture.

9 Labrador Inuit lag behind non-Indigenous
10 Canadians in many key indicators in relation to the social
11 determinants of health. There are high rates of crime and
12 violence within Nunatsiavut. In fact, the court circuit
13 serving Nunatsiavut has been documented to have the sixth
14 highest rate of domestic violence in the country. One in
15 three respondents to the Inuit Health Survey 2008
16 identified having experienced sexual abuse during
17 childhood and one in five identified having experienced
18 sexual violence as an adult.

19 Rates of police-reported homicide and
20 attempted murder are also above the national average as
21 are the rates for common assault, police-reported
22 victimization by violence.

23 We also have high rates of families
24 involved with the Child Welfare system. Some 142 Labrador
25 Inuit are currently in care, 60 of whom live outside of

1 Nunatsiavut, away from their families, the culture,
2 language, and community supports.

3 Family and community distress are closely
4 associated with suicide, the leading cause of death in our
5 territory. In fact, the suicide rate is nearly 20 times
6 higher than the Canadian average and the rate of
7 hospitalization due to suicide attempts and/or injury is
8 5.7 percent higher.

9 It is estimated that only about 10 percent
10 of our people speak and understand Inuktitut which poses
11 and increasing challenge. It is difficult to hire
12 Inuktitut speakers for key roles such as teachers,
13 translators, and interpreters.

14 Graduation rates are lower than both the
15 provincial and national averages and the unemployment
16 rates which vary from community to community are much
17 higher.

18 These challenges to Inuit social
19 determinants of health and social inequity were present
20 across the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered
21 Indigenous Women and Girls testimonies of Nunatsiavut.
22 Understanding this broad context for violence is critical
23 to addressing the issues, as has been repeatedly stated,
24 but cannot be overstated.

25 Addressing social inequities faced by Inuit

1 is critical to improving individual, family, and community
2 wellbeing. The disappearance and death of nearly 1,200
3 Indigenous women and girls is an ongoing national tragedy,
4 one that needs to stop. The families and friends of these
5 victims have waited long enough. The healing needs to
6 start so that these people can move on with their lives
7 and the victims deserve justice.

8 Deirdre Marie Michelin, 21, was a mother of
9 4 from Rigolet who was shot and killed in a murder/suicide
10 by her then partner.

11 Henrietta Millek was a 25-year old mother
12 of 2 from Nain who disappeared in St. John's December 11,
13 1982. She was last seen in a bar with two men. The only
14 trace of the young woman was her purse found on the floor
15 of the bar.

16 Sarah Obed, 45, was stabbed on August 13,
17 2005 in her boyfriend's home in Nain. She later died in
18 hospital. No charges have been laid in connection with
19 her death.

20 Nineteen (19) year old Kimberly Jararuse of
21 Nain went murdered on January 12, 2010. Her killer was
22 convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to time served and
23 released a year later.

24 In February 2014 25-year old Loretta
25 Saunders, a young Inuit woman from Happy Valley Goose Bay,

1 lost her life in a brutal and senseless act of violence.
2 Her killers are currently serving time. And there are
3 others.

4 To reduce incidents of violence and violent
5 death among Labrador Inuit we are of the view that
6 measureable actions must be taken in addressing the poor
7 social determinants of health.

8 Inuit self-governance and participation in
9 national, provincial, territorial governance is the most
10 effective means of ensuring policies, programs, services
11 and practice approaches are appropriate for Indigenous
12 communities and peoples. Within this overarching theme,
13 Nunatsiavut Government has put forward multiple sub-
14 recommendations.

15 Challenges within Inuit communities all, in
16 some way, relate to a lack of social determinants of
17 health. And while there has been some progress in
18 addressing these concerns, the work is far from complete.

19 These inequitable social determinants keep
20 Inuit trapped in cycles of poverty and violence and leads
21 to high rates of physical, mental health concerns, child
22 and family welfare issues, substance abuse and addictions,
23 unemployment and under-employment and incarceration.

24 Education. Labrador Inuit need and deserve
25 equitable access to educational opportunities and

1 outcomes. Inuit children require access to high quality
2 education, ranging from early childhood to post-secondary.
3 Due to the developmental importance of early childhood,
4 this time period is particularly important. Educational
5 achievements starting in early childhood promote
6 individual and family wellbeing across a lifespan.

7 Inuit leadership and ownership over the
8 delivery of education services must be supported by
9 ensuring sufficient resources are available.

10 Adequate funding for a year-round daycare
11 and childcare services must be made available for
12 Nunatsiavut. Educators and staff in the education system
13 must be made familiar with Inuit culture, language and
14 community context.

15 Inuit should be encouraged and supported to
16 pursue positions within the education system. Inuit
17 culture and language must be meaningfully incorporated
18 throughout the school curriculum, with Inuit as a core
19 component.

20 Inuit must be supported to participate in
21 post-secondary education with specific consideration for
22 unique cultural and contextual barriers they may face in
23 preparing for attending and returning from post-secondary.

24 Culture and language. Inclusion of Inuit
25 culture and language in programs and services must be a

1 priority.

2 Inuit should be encouraged and supported
3 into roles of delivering services and providing input to
4 service development, delivery and evaluation. As well,
5 service providers including health, social services,
6 justice, education, et cetera, within Nunatsiavut must be
7 educated on Inuit culture, history and community context
8 prior to commencing service delivery. Those service
9 delivery systems and policies must be flexible to adapting
10 to the needs of Inuit and context of Nunatsiavut.

11 Economic opportunities. Poverty, both
12 absolute and relative, reduces individual family and
13 community wellbeing. Employment opportunities must be
14 available for Inuit which provide a sustainable and
15 equitable livelihood. And for those requiring social
16 assistance support, this must be sufficient to cover the
17 basic costs of living within Nunatsiavut.

18 Employment and social assistance for Inuit
19 in Nunatsiavut must match the cost of living in
20 Nunatsiavut. Support for Inuit entering and participating
21 in a labour market according to their ability and/or
22 interest must also continue and strengthen.

23 Given the significant higher cost of living
24 in Nunatsiavut, the minimum wage should be increased to
25 levels of similar in other northern communities in the

1 country.

2 Rates of payments for social assistance
3 must also reflect the higher costs of living within
4 Nunatsiavut and broader social determinants of health.

5 Justice services. Protection and justice
6 services within Nunatsiavut, including child welfare,
7 policing, courts, correctional centres and offender
8 reintegration must be adapted to the unique Labrador/Inuit
9 context. Current systems of protection and justice have
10 been transplanted from the south and do not align with the
11 reality of life within Nunatsiavut and frequently result
12 in needless distress for all involved.

13 There must be continued commitment to
14 redesign child welfare services to meet the needs of Inuit
15 and Nunatsiavut communities. And there must be a
16 continued commitment to support the evolution of these
17 services from the government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

18 The right to timely court proceeding, both
19 family and criminal, must be upheld and enforced. And
20 alternative means of courts including family, mediation,
21 domestic violence courts, drug courts, sentencing circles,
22 et cetera, must be explored and implemented within our
23 region.

24 Correctional services must promote
25 rehabilitation and individual wellbeing, including access

1 to culturally congruent mental health and health services,
2 educational and employment development services and
3 reintegration planning and services post-release.

4 The needs of Inuit women in correctional
5 centres in Newfoundland must be giving specific
6 consideration due to a severe lack of access to culturally
7 congruent supports.

8 Transitional housing and halfway housing
9 must be made available to offenders being released to
10 Nunatsiavut and Labrador. Emergency shelter and housing
11 for men, including offenders, must be given targeted
12 consideration as a means of preventing violence and
13 increasing healing and well being.

14 Shelter services must be made available to
15 vulnerable and homeless women, including those housed in
16 unstable situations, regardless of whether they are
17 currently fleeing a situation of violence.

18 To the greatest extent that child safety
19 will allow, children must be supported to remain in their
20 home with their families. This may include providing
21 extensive support to parents and families to address
22 concerns, including housing, insecurity, and overcrowding,
23 for their security, housing repairs and/or maintenance, et
24 cetera, within the home, such that the children may remain
25 there.

1 For situations where children cannot be
2 maintained safely within the family home, every effort
3 must be made to keep them within their families,
4 communities, and within Nunatsiavut where they can receive
5 community supports, be connected to their culture.

6 Our protection and justice services
7 including policing, courts, correctional centres, child
8 protection, and health and mental health services must be
9 grounded in knowledge of trauma-informed practice with
10 specific consideration for the impacts of inter-
11 generational trauma, forced relocation, residential
12 schools, and family violence. Service providers must be
13 specifically trained in how to intervene in situations of
14 family violence and how to promote safety, healing, and
15 wellbeing for all.

16 Inuit must be supported in training,
17 recruitment, and retention into justice service positions.
18 Overall recruitment and retention practices for justice
19 service professionals must be reviewed and improved.

20 There must also be an accessible mechanism
21 for reporting and addressing malpractice and poor services
22 within justice and protection services. Such mechanisms
23 must be broadly advertised and easily accessible to
24 community members.

25 Access to adequate housing, particularly in

1 Hopedale, is significantly lacking. While we have made
2 considerable strides in recent years, more needs to be
3 done.

4 High levels of food security in all of our
5 communities is also a major contributing factor to poor
6 health amongst our people. Barriers to housing and food
7 security must be urgently addressed collaboratively
8 between all levels of government.

9 Health and mental wellness services must be
10 accessible to our people. Accessibility considers not
11 only geographic and financial barriers but also socio-
12 cultural barriers. Practitioners must understand and be
13 able to mitigate potential barriers of language and
14 communication differences, cultural and contextual
15 differences, impacts of colonization, and inter-
16 generational trauma, and the challenges posed by poverty,
17 overcrowding, and food insecurity.

18 For healing services, a pan-Indigenous
19 approach to services is inadequate. Inuit culture and
20 context is distinct from other Indigenous groups and our
21 needs in mental illness and healing services, including
22 inpatient treatment, must be given specific consideration
23 in the continuum of culturally-congruent services made
24 accessible to all Inuit.

25 As I stated from the outset, Labrador Inuit

1 have a holistic and collective understanding of wellbeing.
2 Our identity has been shaped by our relationship with the
3 land, the sea, the animals, and with each other. This is
4 what has defined us as a people. It has made us strong,
5 vibrant, resourceful, determined, and above all, very
6 proud.

7 These traits can never be taken from us.
8 As a government, we have a responsibility to future
9 generations of Labrador Inuit to remind them of the past
10 so that we may protect the interests, find ways to gather
11 strength so that we can seize the opportunities and meet
12 the challenges that await.

13 We are confident that with the core
14 resources, we can and we will overcome those challenges.

15 Again, thank you for your time. It is my
16 hope that the concerns of Labrador Inuit will be heard
17 loud and clear and that they may be given full
18 consideration in the Inquiry's final report.

19 In the end, we all want justice, we all
20 want the violence to stop. (Native word).

21 **(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)**

22 **MS. VIOLET FORD:** Thank you, President
23 Lampe. Do you have any exhibits that will be entered ---

24 **PRESIDENT JOHANNES LAMPE:** Yes.

25 **MS. VIOLET FORD:** --- that can be provided?

1 **PRESIDENT JOHANNES LAMPE:** Yes. As of
2 today, we will be sending an email, an electronic copy of
3 the submission that I have provided today. (Native word).

4 **MS. VIOLET FORD:** Thank you. I'm not --
5 Commissioners, Chief Commissioner, do you have questions
6 for President Lampe?

7 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** (Speaking in
8 Indigenous language).

9 I want to thank you for your submissions
10 and I want to emphasize or share with you how strong the
11 Nunatsiavut people's voice has been throughout this
12 process. I note some very strong Nunatsiavut women who
13 have played a role and I want to mention them here today
14 within the Inquiry. Violet Ford on the National Family
15 Advisory Circle, Charlotte Wolfrey (phonetic), and with
16 the Parties with Standing, Elizabeth Serpa (phonetic),
17 strong amazing women from your community.

18 Thank you for sharing them with us.
19 They've represented Inuit and Inuit within their region,
20 Nunatsiavut and across the country so well. (Speaking in
21 Indigenous language).

22 I want to acknowledge you and your wife
23 (Native name) for sharing with us your daughter Kimberly.
24 (Speaking in Indigenous language).

25 I want to acknowledge as well that you are

1 before us a leader of your people but also as a father and
2 we must always remember that and acknowledge that.
3 (Speaking in Indigenous language).

4 I look forward to reading your written
5 submissions and learning more and I want to thank you
6 again for your presence here today. (Native word).

7 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** President
8 Lampe, I just want to say thank you for coming here and
9 speaking to us today and for sharing with us some of your
10 recommendations. And I also look forward to reading the
11 written materials that you provide. (Native word).

12 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** I too
13 want to thank you, President Lampe, for being here today
14 and being such a powerful advocate for your people. Thank
15 you for reminding us of the importance of the social
16 determinants of health and the role that they will play in
17 our analysis of the evidence. And I also want to thank
18 you for reminding us about the importance of language and
19 the loss of language.

20 So thank you, President, for being here
21 today, and we're very grateful for your submissions, and I
22 look forward to reading them again. Thank you, sir.

23 **MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** Thank you.
24 President Lampe, one housekeeping item before you take
25 your seat.

1 Chief Commissioner, the -- there was a
2 two-page summary of recommendations that was provided by
3 the party prior to their presenting their oral submissions
4 here today, and we do look forward to receiving the full
5 written submissions by email later.

6 But at this time, is it your request to
7 have the two-page summary made an exhibit as part of the
8 formal record? There was a two-page summary that was
9 submitted on behalf of your party previously, a written
10 summary of your recommendations. Is it your interest in
11 having those made an exhibit?

12 **PRESIDENT JOHANNES LAMPE:** Yes.

13 **MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** Yes? Okay.

14 **PRESIDENT JOHANNES LAMPE:** Yeah.

15 **MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** Thank you.

16 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:**

17 Exhibit 20 please.

18 **--- EXHIBIT NO./PIÈCE NO. 20:**

19 Summary of recommendations (two pages)

20 Submitted by: Johannes Lampe,

21 Representative for Nunatsiavut

22 Government

23 **MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** Thank you.

24 Thank you, President Lampe.

25 **PRESIDENT JOHANNES LAMPE:** Nakurmiik.

1 (APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

2 **MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** The next party I'd
3 like to invite to the podium is Grand Chief Garrison
4 Settee, and Grand Chief Settee is providing oral
5 submissions on behalf of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak
6 Inc. (MKO).

7 (SHORT PAUSE/COURTE PAUSE)

8 **---SUBMISSIONS BY/REPRÉSENTATIONS PAR MS. JESSICA BARLOW:**

9 **MS. JESSICA BARLOW:** Good morning. I would
10 like to begin by expressing my gratitude for being here on
11 the unceded territory of the Algonquin Nation. As I have
12 done many times before, I would also like to acknowledge
13 the spirits of our sisters, the Elders and the
14 grandmothers, the sacred items in the room and the
15 medicines, the families and survivors, and the
16 Commissioners, the Inquiry staff, and the health supports
17 as well. Thank you.

18 My name is Jessica Barlow, and I have been
19 privileged to be legal counsel on behalf of MKO throughout
20 this Inquiry. And with me today is MKO Grand
21 Chief Settee, and also Ms. Hilda Anderson-Pyrz who is the
22 MKO MMIWG Liaison Unit Manager.

23 We also have many people from Manitoba
24 sitting with us today in support of MKO's submissions, and
25 I thank you for sitting with us.

1 If we could bring up an image on the
2 screen, and I would invite Ms. Anderson-Pyrz to speak to
3 that image, please. Thank you.

4 And with that, I welcome Ms. Anderson-Pyrz
5 to speak to you today.

6 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON-PYRZ:** Good morning,
7 everybody. I just wanted to say thank you for having me
8 here today. And Grand Chief is going to bring official
9 greetings on behalf of MKO, so I'm going to save time and
10 not do that.

11 For those of you who don't know me, my name
12 is Hilda Anderson-Pyrz. I'm the Manager of the Missing
13 and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Liaison Unit for
14 the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak.

15 And I just wanted to share a little bit
16 about the image that we have on the screen here. When I
17 started in the unit a little over a year ago, we wanted to
18 have a logo that represents the full circle of life for
19 our woman and our girls to show how strong we are. When
20 we start out as babies, we go into little girls, then we
21 go -- we become women, and then we become grandmothers.

22 And grandmothers have a very significant
23 role for us as Indigenous women and girls. They're our
24 protectors. Anytime we struggle we go to our
25 grandmothers, and our grandmothers make us feel safe.

1 And if you notice in the image, the
2 grandmother is holding sage and the sage is burning a
3 circle of protection around our women and our girls. And
4 the butterflies in the image represent our sisters who
5 have been murdered, and the stars in the image represent
6 those who are missing to always know that we have a light
7 shining for them, and we always hope that they find their
8 way back to us.

9 And why I share the image today is for me,
10 as an Indigenous women, I really struggle with the fact
11 that Canada cannot protect our lives and allow us to live
12 that full circle of life. For us that's important.

13 And I feel that Canada needs to recognize
14 that as Indigenous women and girls that we should have
15 every opportunity and all the mechanisms should be in
16 place to allow us to grow into grandmothers, you know, to
17 allow us to see our grandchildren, to allow us to see our
18 children succeed, you know, to allow us to basically have
19 a family. You know, a family unit is really important in
20 our culture, and for us, in many situations and
21 circumstances, our family units have been very fractured
22 by the loss of a loved one.

23 And I also wanted to share that in my role
24 and part of the family information liaison units, our
25 funding comes from Justice Canada through Manitoba

1 Justice, and we have a contract with Manitoba Justice.
2 And we're funded \$200,000 a year for all of Northern
3 Manitoba.

4 And we've done some amazing work in the
5 year that we've been -- or little over a year -- almost a
6 year-and-a-half that we've been in that role and giving
7 families different tools for healing and going forward, as
8 well as working on tools for prevention. Because
9 prevention is critical. We need to ensure that those
10 tools are in place to protect the lives of our women and
11 girls.

12 And with that, I'm just going to hand it
13 over to Grand Chief. Thank you.

14 (APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

15 **GRAND CHIEF GARRISON SETTEE:** Tansi.

16 (Speaking Indigenous language.)

17 I bring greeting from Manitoba Keewatinowi
18 Okimakanak territory. I also want to acknowledge the
19 traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Nation;
20 Chief Commissioner, Commissioners, Elders, grandmothers.

21 But I also want to also make a special
22 acknowledgement to the women's organizations from the
23 grassroots level that prompted for us to be able to look
24 at the gravity and the seriousness of this undertaking.
25 It is because of them we are here to look at the stark and

1 shocking reality of what our people had to live through
2 with our missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls,
3 and also the two-spirited people.

4 I want to acknowledge first and foremost
5 the families and the two-spirited people who have
6 experienced loss, tragedy. My condolences. My heartfelt
7 sympathy for the journey that you've had to travel . And
8 you are here today as a people that are resilient, strong,
9 courageous, brave. I acknowledge that as I stand before
10 you on this day that I believe is a sacred time when we
11 look at the national tragedy that has happened to our
12 women, our girls, our sisters. They have experienced
13 horrific systemic domestic and sexual violence, sexual
14 exploitation, human trafficking, compounded by racism and
15 patriarchal dominance.

16 You are the real experts when it comes to
17 moving forward because you have lived this tragedy. You
18 are the ones to guide us, to move us forward, because
19 you've lived and felt the pain of losing a sister, or a
20 mother, or a grandmother. You are the greatest teachers,
21 and we want to learn from you, and we should learn from
22 them.

23 And as Canadians and leadership all across
24 the nation, government representatives, we must ensure
25 action and implementation of all the recommendations based

1 on the truths that have been shared. We must ensure that
2 action takes place.

3 I believe the time of leaving reports and
4 recommendations to collect dust on shelves are over. The
5 lives of our Indigenous women and girls and the two-
6 spirited people have suffered too long for this issue to be
7 neglected. The time for action is now, because these
8 peoples' lives mattered, and they still matter, and they
9 will forever be in our hearts. We will not forget. We
10 will not forget their spirits and the dignity that was
11 taken from them. And we have the rights as Indigenous
12 people, and particularly our women, to live free of
13 violence and to thrive in environments that are healthy,
14 safe, and where you are respected.

15 And as a Grand Chief of MKO Territory, I
16 give you my personal commitment to do my utmost to create
17 those safe spaces for all of you and for the generations
18 to come. Where it is possible, I will make every effort
19 to educate and bring in partners to support strong and
20 healthy women and girls, who in turn will support healthy
21 families and safe communities.

22 The National Inquiry into murdered and
23 missing Indigenous women and girls is a vehicle to share
24 important truths, but as a country we have an obligation
25 to protect the lives of Indigenous women and girls and

1 two-spirited individuals.

2 And as a leader, I have the political will
3 to implement the recommendations to the best of my ability
4 using the limited resources and supports we have within
5 the MKO Territory.

6 So I want to say love and peace to all of
7 you.

8 I want to begin by sharing a story when I
9 was nine years old. I heard a story of Helen Betty
10 Osborne, and it has impacted my life the way a Cree young
11 woman was brutally murdered in The Pas, Manitoba, stabbed
12 52 times, helpless, no one there to stand up for her to
13 protect her. That story has been part of my life for a
14 long time.

15 And 40 years later I was at the site of
16 where she died, and we as a group in her 40th anniversary
17 -- the death of her 40th anniversary, we walked from where
18 she was killed and we walked into town of The Pas and we
19 had a theme for that march. It was called "Walking into a
20 New Dawn".

21 That is what Canada must do when it comes
22 to murdered Indigenous women and girls; we need to pave a
23 way forward so that these tragedies will no longer take
24 place.

25 So I'm here today as a warrior to protect

1 our women and girls from future exploitation, from further
2 violence to their lives.

3 We're not here for political posturing but
4 we're here on a mission. We want to see a paradigm shift
5 in this country when it comes to the lives of Indigenous
6 women and girls. We must protect them, and they must be
7 protected, and they will be protected, because the
8 warriors are standing up. That is our role, to protect
9 the women and girls in our Nations.

10 As a former chief of my First Nation I came
11 to the assembly here in Ottawa, and I believe I was one of
12 the first chiefs to pass a resolution for an inquiry into
13 murdered Indigenous women. So this is real to me. This
14 is something that is part of my spirit, because the
15 tragedies that our women have faced should have never
16 happened if they were protected.

17 And this day I find that we have a choice,
18 we have a responsibility, we have decisions to make when
19 it comes to murdered and missing Indigenous women and also
20 the protection of all those that are with us today. This
21 Inquiry should make transformation, transformative change
22 when it comes to Indigenous women, and I want to be part
23 of that transformation. I want to be part of that change.
24 We must create a pathway for change to survive, to thrive
25 in their environments in a way that is safe, and healthy

1 and positive.

2 I'm an advocate that every First Nation
3 should have a women's shelter. Every First Nation should
4 have a place where a woman can run to for safety, and
5 also, second-stage housing where they can begin to move
6 forward, overcoming the life of violence and tragedy.

7 And I feel that we need to be part of that
8 solution as Indigenous people. We can point the way on
9 how these women can be protected, if we are allowed.
10 Historically, policies and legislations have harmed our
11 people, beginning 150 years ago with the residential
12 school system.

13 Any time other entities have tried to fix
14 our problems, they have always created a bigger mess. So
15 it's time to include us. We know the way. We know the
16 path. Allow us; allow us to lead the way because these
17 are our people. These are our women. These are our
18 girls. These are our people, and we must be given that
19 opportunity to do so.

20 In our traditional way of life, everything
21 is non-linear. It's circular, interconnected. We must
22 return these women back to their culture, to their
23 language, to their ceremonies, and their communities, to
24 their environments where they can be near their waters and
25 their rivers and their forests. And through this holistic

1 world view, our relationships, our connections, and the
2 world around us can guide our path like they did before
3 the newcomers came to this land.

4 The imposition of western ideologies,
5 systems, and institutions have caused us to lose our way
6 and our women and our girls are the ones that have borne
7 this loss the most.

8 So now is the time for action. The future
9 is now. We do not need for the report to be completed.
10 Today is the day of action. Today is the day for change.
11 On the streets, young girls are vulnerable in every urban
12 area; young women are vulnerable of being exploited.

13 So that's why we must act now. We must
14 allow for our people to access resources and supports,
15 families to have resources to heal themselves, and
16 survivors to be able to heal, and two-spirited people to
17 have a chance to accept their place in our society so that
18 they can be whole.

19 And we must look at this from our
20 Indigenous lens. We need to provide that capacity for us
21 to move our people forward. And there are also human
22 rights considerations when we look at us. We have a right
23 to be treated like every other individual in this country.
24 But the way our women and our girls have been treated is
25 an atrocity, their cases put on shelves because of who

1 they are and where they're from.

2 Human rights violations continue to take
3 place in our Nation when it comes to our women. It's time
4 for that to stop. And we need action. We need
5 Indigenous-led and implemented based on Indigenous values
6 and our traditional ways and our laws. We want to focus
7 on prevention rather than reacting to every incident that
8 occurs.

9 A lot of the things that are happening are
10 happening without us being involved. So we need to be
11 part of this design and we need to implement it ourselves
12 as Indigenous people because families are the core of our
13 societies. Those families were created to be one entity,
14 but because of government policies and legislation, that
15 has been severed. It has been broken.

16 And people sat in a boardroom to decide the
17 fate of children, women, from foster home to forced foster
18 home, traumatized and being sexually abused under the
19 caregivers, most of whom are non-Indigenous.

20 So we must change that. And these young
21 women and girls come out of foster care, go out in the
22 streets with no support whatsoever, left to survive on
23 their own. What kind of system are we perpetuating here
24 in Canada?

25 It is wrong and it must stop. It is wrong

1 to take a child from their home, from their community,
2 away from their culture and their language and their
3 relatives to put them in environment that is strange and
4 foreign to them. And that's why we have so many women and
5 girls on the streets, because they have been traumatized
6 by government, legislation, and policy.

7 The impacts of colonization have impacted
8 our women and our girls. The lack of proper education,
9 proper housing, community facilities that provide safety
10 has caused many women to leave First Nations and go into
11 urban areas where they get caught up in a system that
12 eventually brought them to their demise.

13 Ninety (90) percent, maybe 85 percent of
14 First Nation communities are unemployed. Women don't find
15 adequate housing for themselves or for their children and
16 they move away from the First Nation trying to find a
17 better life. But with limited educational opportunities,
18 they succumb to the pressures of urban life and they get
19 lost, and they become dependent on many things. And that
20 all could have been prevented if they had those resources
21 in their communities.

22 Even the health system is impacting our
23 women. Lack of proper health facilities cause our women
24 to go to urban areas, even young women, medical
25 appointments in urban areas. And many examples in

1 Winnipeg of young women leaving their hotel there on a
2 medical appointment, next day they're found missing, next
3 day you find missing persons announcements.

4 Young women are lost. Some have been found
5 in the Red River of Winnipeg. Sadly, some have been found
6 in waste disposal sites. Some have been murdered by
7 serial killers.

8 And as the Chief of my First Nation, I
9 looked around with the help of my people for over 2 months
10 to find one of our girls. She was 18 years old. Her name
11 was Lorna Blacksmith. She fell victim to a serial killer
12 who allured her with drugs and different things.

13 That's the first time as a Chief that I
14 cried. That's the first time I was broken to see such a
15 beautiful young woman taken from us because there were not
16 supports in her community to be able to help her. She
17 moved around from family member to family member, and
18 eventually ended up in Winnipeg.

19 And our health system is exposing our women
20 and girls to tragedy. That system must be changed.

21 Policing. Going back to the hell in Betty
22 Osborne case, she was not considered important at the
23 time. Her file was brushed aside. And even though
24 everybody in that community knew who killed her, everybody
25 knew who the perpetrators were, but nothing was done

1 because she was an Aboriginal woman. Policing has failed
2 our people.

3 Even in the areas of hydroelectric projects
4 coming into First Nation communities where people come in
5 disrespecting our women, violating our women, exploiting
6 our women, these complaints have never been handled
7 seriously. And the truth came out this summer when the
8 Clean Environment Commission's report that such incidences
9 took place, and 40 years after the fact it was only
10 brought out into the open. Because they were Indigenous
11 women, that's why these -- these complaints should have
12 been treated seriously by the police that handled them,
13 and we need to change that.

14 Our relationship with the police must
15 change. Their relationship with us must change if we are
16 to alleviate the problems that we're facing today when it
17 comes to missing and murdered Indigenous women.

18 The industry on First Nations has also
19 impacted our women. Man camps. Male workers coming into
20 the First Nations disrespecting our women, taking
21 advantage of our women. It's time the warriors stood up
22 and say enough, we're not going to allow that to happen
23 anymore. We're stepping into our roles as warriors. The
24 violence must stop. The violence must end, and it must
25 end now.

1 And we need to ensure that our families and
2 the survivors have access to all types of healing
3 traditionally through ceremony healing gatherings,
4 monuments, art displays, education, and programs on
5 prevention and awareness. We must do that as we move
6 forward.

7 And our jurisdiction must be respected.
8 The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous
9 People have recognized that our jurisdiction must be
10 respected and we must be allowed to take over systems that
11 are currently being run by other entities. Because we
12 know how to solve the problem. Because all these years
13 people have tried to alleviate and try to fix our
14 problems, but the problems are still there because we are
15 left out of the process. But now we're stepping up.
16 We're going to be part of the process.

17 And these systems have never worked for us
18 because they were not designed by us and they don't have
19 our interests at its centre.

20 And today I come here because I want all
21 Canadians to listen, to learn, to recognize that we are a
22 resilient people, we are a strong people, we are a
23 powerful people, and we can define for ourselves the best
24 way forward to live dignified lives. That has been taken
25 from us through the residential school systems, the

1 Sixties Scoop, child and welfare systems. Those were
2 taken from us.

3 **GRAND CHIEF GARRISON SETTEE:** But today we
4 take it back.

5 (APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

6 **GRAND CHIEF GARRISON SETTEE:** Today we take
7 it back. We take back our dignity. We take back our
8 jurisdiction. Today, we take back our inherent rights to
9 govern ourselves, to sustain ourselves, to protect
10 ourselves, to stand up for ourselves, and to exercise our
11 rights. And today we come, and we have the political will
12 to do so, We have the political means to do so, and we
13 want Canada to get on board.

14 Because we know the root causes of violence
15 against our women. We know the impacts it has on our
16 families, and we hold the solutions. And we call upon
17 this Inquiry to listen about our people, our truths, our
18 stories, our pain, our tragedy. We want you to listen.
19 It is in your hands. It is in your hands today to make
20 changes.

21 And we seek justice for our families, our
22 survivors, and we need to continue to commemorate our
23 sisters who have been lost so that violence does not
24 impact one more Indigenous woman or girl.

25 (APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

1 **GRAND CHIEF GARRISON SETTEE:** We call on
2 you Canada to recognize that this tragedy affects us all
3 and the time for action is now.

4 In closing, I just want to highlight five
5 important aspects of the Truth and Reconciliation
6 Commission recommendations. In closing:

7 Number 1, call for an implementation of
8 UNDRIP framework in its entirety, recognizing the inherent
9 rights of all Indigenous people.

10 Number 2, use a family centric approach to
11 form all actionable recommendations that respect the
12 diverse and unique needs of families, survivors, and
13 communities.

14 Three, recognize that our women and girls
15 deserve to be safe no matter their race or geography, and
16 the appropriate measures must be taken no matter the cost.

17 Focus on the need for Indigenous-led
18 programs and services that include women and youth in
19 decision-making processes and core funded.

20 Five recommendations are specific to and
21 applicable to the implementation in remote and isolated
22 communities, especially in northern regions.

23 Lastly, number six, establish a legacy fund
24 for families and survivors, regardless of participation in
25 this Inquiry such as there is -- such as individual

1 compensation for victims, and also fund funds that will
2 last over time to create safe spaces and programs for the
3 future.

4 So I'm here today to say it's time for
5 change, time for action. Let's change the lives of
6 murdered and missing Indigenous women and the survivors
7 going forward. (Speaking in Native language).

8 (APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

9 **MS. JESSICA BARLOW:** Chief Commissioner and
10 Commissioners, subject to any questions you have, those
11 are MKO's submissions.

12 **MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** Thank you, Grand
13 Chief Settee.

14 Ms. Barlow, I'm just going to request some
15 clarification. Would you like the photo that was put up
16 to be made an exhibit?

17 **MS. JESSICA BARLOW:** Thank you. We don't
18 request that it needs to be made an exhibit as it forms
19 part of our written submission.

20 **MS MEREDITH PORTER:** Okay.

21 **MS JESSICA BARLOW:** Thank you.

22 **MS MEREDITH PORTER:** Thank you.

23 Chief Commissioner, Commissioners, do you
24 have any questions for the party?

25 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Grand Chief

1 Settee, Hilda, Jessica, their colleagues in the back,
2 (speaking in Native language). I want to thank you for
3 your leadership and your powerful words reminding us of
4 the importance of recognition, acknowledgment and justice.

5 You've said a number of times -- and I want
6 to raise my hands to you for stepping up and stating your
7 political will. We need all leaders to do that and I want
8 to acknowledge that what we've heard from so many is the
9 lack of political will, words are great, but unless people
10 with power are doing something, it means nothing, right
11 down to the rights. Rights are paper unless you respect
12 them. Rights are no different than this if you don't
13 respect them and uphold them.

14 So I want to acknowledge the power of your
15 expression of your will and acting by speaking and showing
16 up and standing with the women in your territory, the
17 knowledge keepers and Elders within your territory. From
18 what I've learned from your people, from Hilda, from
19 Thelma, is that that means something significant and I
20 want to acknowledge that.

21 You've mentioned a number of time limited
22 power and resources. And that we've heard from a number
23 of parties and Indigenous governments. The lack of that
24 space or the lack of power, I guess it's the lack of
25 jurisdiction. And I want to say that I recognise your

1 inherent jurisdiction, but what needs to be recognised or
2 what has to happen, the acknowledgement and recognition
3 has to happen and has to be given by those that currently
4 hold it, the state, provinces and territories and the
5 federal government.

6 So I would like -- and perhaps this is
7 something that will be in your submissions. I'm not
8 saying right now, but some guides on how we create this
9 paradigm shift to ensure that the power shifts.

10 There are certain instruments in this
11 country that entrench and hold tight that power. I posed
12 this to NWAC. The Constitution is the big one, the
13 division of powers, for example. And I wanted to give you
14 an opportunity to share with us what you see is needing to
15 be done to ensure that that power shifts. How do we break
16 free some of that power so your inherent jurisdiction has
17 space to be exercised and asserted?

18 **GRAND CHIEF GARRISON SETTEE:** I personally
19 believe, as Indigenous people, within the constitutional
20 framework we have an inclusion of our Aboriginal rights,
21 our treaties. And in that is the right to self-govern
22 ourselves. So, if the Constitution is to be honoured and
23 upheld, it must allow for that, and that includes
24 jurisdiction. And we need to be allowed to exercise and
25 mobilise those rights. That has not happened yet. Yet

1 the Constitution specifically states that our rights are
2 recognised and affirmed. It's time for Canada to honour
3 their Constitution. We're ready to move.

4 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** (Speaking in
5 Native language).

6 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Thank you
7 very much for your submissions, Grand Chief.

8 I too was struck by your mentioning
9 commitment or political will, to having political will.
10 And you also said that and you want Canada to get on
11 board. So I'm wondering if you or -- and if you, Ms.
12 Anderson-Pryz or Ms. Barlow, have any thoughts or
13 recommendations on when we make our recommendations, how
14 can we compel governments like Canada and the provincial
15 and territorial governments to implement the
16 recommendations that we make?

17 **GRAND CHIEF GARRISON SETTEE:** I think that
18 Canada needs to be honourable. They need to be sincere
19 and they need to get back on the moral compass when it
20 comes to our people. They need to exercise ethics when it
21 comes to us as First Nation people. And many inquiries,
22 Aboriginal justice inquiry, RCAP, have been put on
23 shelves. All they need to do is take those things off the
24 shelves and start implementing them. It's already in
25 place. They just have to have the political will and the

1 moral and I guess to have some integrity.

2 As a society, as a government and as a
3 people of this nation, we must do our utmost to do that
4 which is right. And when you honour those, you're
5 beginning to do the right thing. And the time to do the
6 right thing is now.

7 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON-PRYZ:** I also say to
8 Canada it's time to end the two-tier system, that we
9 should all be treated as equals. And if you don't have
10 the political will to implement the recommendations that
11 come forth from this inquiry and all the other
12 recommendations that are collecting dust, shame on you,
13 Canada.

14 (APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

15 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Thank you
16 very much for your submissions. I look forward to your
17 written submissions.

18 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Well,
19 thank you all. First of all, I want to thank people at
20 the back there. Sandra, Thelma, Gerri, I'm sorry, I can't
21 see everybody there, Hilda. Thank you for holding our
22 feet to the fire. Thank you for your kindness, your love
23 and I have to say I'm going to miss you all.

24 Ms. Barlow, thank you for being an
25 exemplary advocate on behalf of your client or clients, I

1 suppose.

2 Grand Chief, I'm going to challenge you I
3 hope in a respectful way. You're saying it's time. Can I
4 in a respectful way say it's time to stop asking for
5 permission?

6 (APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

7 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** And I
8 have a question for you. How can we, as a national
9 inquiry, empower our own people across Canada to stop
10 asking for permission.

11 **GRAND CHIEF GARRISON SETTEE:** I think that
12 after you have done all that you have -- all of the
13 information that you have gathered through this Inquiry,
14 every Canadian must know the truth, because it's truth
15 that liberates; it's truth that emancipates. Education is
16 power. Canadian society must be educated from coast to
17 coast to coast. That's the key.

18 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Thank
19 you, Grand Chief.

20 Thank you all. It's been a pleasure and
21 I'll miss you all.

22 (APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

23 (SHORT PAUSE/COURTE PAUSE)

24 **MS. VIOLET FORD:** Chief Commissioner and

1 Commissioners, we are now scheduled for a break, and
2 because we are breaking early and we're not due to come
3 back until 11:00, we're recommending a half an hour break,
4 but I seek your direction.

5 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Let's
6 return as scheduled at 11:00 a.m. please.

7 --- Upon recessing at 10:35 a.m./L'audience est suspendue à
8 10h35

9 --- Upon resuming at 11:05 a.m./L'audience est reprise à 11h05

10 **(NOTE: APPROX. 1 MINUTE OF RECORDING MISSING)**

11 **---SUBMISSIONS BY/REPRÉSENTATIONS FINALES PAR MS.**

12 **KATHERINE HENSEL:**

13 **MS. KATHERINE HENSEL:** ...policy and funding
14 regime that at times requires them to adhere to practices
15 that they know are not only ineffective but actually do
16 harm and lead to many of the risks, vulnerabilities, and
17 actual tragic outcomes that you've heard so much evidence
18 about throughout this Inquiry.

19 This Commission has heard ample, repeated,
20 extensive evidence about the risks and harms that arise
21 and have arisen for decades and continue to intensify from
22 known Indigenous Child Welfare practices. While not every
23 missing or murdered Indigenous girl or woman had direct
24 contact with the Child Welfare system, virtually all had
25 at least indirect contact with Child Welfare because as

1 Indigenous people, virtually all of us do.

2 Many, and likely most of the girls and
3 women who are lost did have direct contact and involvement
4 with Child Welfare authorities, whether as children in
5 care, as adoptees, as the siblings of children in care or
6 adoptees, as the daughters of women raised in care or
7 adopted out, or as the mothers of children taken into
8 care. Many have been subject to all of these forms of
9 Child Welfare intervention.

10 There is ample evidence before the Inquiry
11 for the Commissioners to find that but for the experience,
12 the girls' and women's experience of non-Indigenous Child
13 Welfare practices, many of these sisters, daughters, and
14 mothers would still be with us today.

15 There is no longer any doubt that
16 transforming Child Welfare practices is a critical and
17 urgent task, yet it is one that has not seriously begun in
18 this country.

19 The Association urges the Commissioners to
20 find, based on the evidence that's been placed before it,
21 that non-Indigenous Child Welfare practices are a readily-
22 identifiable cause in the deaths of Indigenous girls and
23 women, which is not to say that -- when I said "but for",
24 it was advisedly. It is not the full explanation for the
25 harm and the tragic outcomes. But without these

1 interventions, without the risk and harm that resulted
2 from Child Welfare, non-Indigenous Child Welfare
3 practices, it is reasonable to assume that the losses
4 would not have occurred.

5 Late last year, Minister Jane Philpot
6 described the ratio of Indigenous children in Canada's
7 Child Welfare system as a humanitarian crisis. The
8 Ministers held -- Ministers Philpot and Bennett held a
9 two-day emergency meeting in Ottawa in January for First
10 Nations leaderships, ministers, provincial ministers, and
11 child welfare professionals. And they noted there and we
12 know -- based on the evidence before and the exhibits and
13 the expert evidence that this Commission has heard -- that
14 the rates of Indigenous children in care, the numbers, the
15 sheer numbers and the proportions, are higher than they
16 have ever been, ever.

17 And when you look at the causal links, the
18 "but for" connection between the loss of Indigenous girls
19 and women and Child Welfare, particularly apprehensions
20 and spending time in care, how can we hope to stem the
21 tide of loss without addressing the Child Welfare question
22 and crisis?

23 You look at the legitimacy and purpose of
24 Child Welfare statutorily, ethically, morally, it's all
25 premised exclusively on promoting the best interests of

1 children and protecting them. Sadly but certainly, the
2 history and current practice of Child Welfare in the lives
3 of Indigenous children and families and communities have
4 failed to protect children and promote their best
5 interests. And beyond this failure, the evidence before
6 this Inquiry makes clear that the practice of child
7 welfare not only fails to protect but actually causes
8 harm.

9 ANCFSAO's members know which practices and
10 services will be effective in serving and protecting
11 Indigenous children, families and communities, and they've
12 identified approaches, and legal basis, and resources that
13 they believe would change the practice if Indigenous child
14 welfare from a source of risk and harm into a foundation
15 for intergenerational recovery and healing.

16 This would not only stem the tide of loss
17 of our girls and women, for every girl or woman that we
18 have lost there are hundreds who suffer, who live
19 marginalized painful existence, and who do not enjoy the
20 comfort, safety, the conditions -- the pre-conditions to
21 thriving that are necessary for their safety and well-
22 being.

23 So the transformation of the child welfare
24 system would not only -- and the child welfare practice
25 would not only stem the tide of loss but improve the lives

1 of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of people in
2 this country, as well as posing -- raising the possibility
3 of intergenerational healing.

4 So ANCFSAO's recommendations and
5 submissions are intended to assist the Commission in
6 arriving at findings and recommendations that, if adopted,
7 would transform Indigenous child welfare.

8 I asked some members of my client and the
9 executive director over the last week, to Blue Sky, what -
10 - if you could envision the resources and legal framework
11 and conditions upon which you could do the best work,
12 within and through your agencies, and it was a struggle
13 for them to respond.

14 They said, "We're so busy trying to cope.
15 So busy scrambling from crisis to crisis, so busy trying
16 to meet the different measures of accountability imposed
17 by the province and imposed by the statutory regime that
18 we don't have the headspace at times to even envision what
19 we know would work -- what would be necessary to do what
20 we know is -- will work."

21 I have, throughout the years, worked with
22 many of the members of the Association and heard time and
23 time again that in terms of intergenerational healing
24 every time a child is removed from their family, an
25 Indigenous child, the clock on intergenerational harm is

1 reset. It means that any possibility of intergenerational
2 healing throughout the generations is reset and must begin
3 anew.

4 Every time a child is apprehended, that
5 trauma reverberates for generations in the lives of
6 children and families and their descendants. This
7 Commission has heard evidence of how that trauma is --
8 that -- this trauma, and other traumas, are transmitted at
9 a chromosomal level, hormonally, physically, and in the
10 lives the lived experience of families throughout the
11 generations.

12 What the members of the Association tell me
13 is that when you -- the only hope for reversing and
14 recovering at an -- on an intergenerational basis from the
15 traumas of colonization, racism, residential schools, the
16 Sixties Scoop, all the systemic and historic and current
17 traumas that this Commission has heard evidence about, the
18 only way that can happen is when families remain intact.
19 And that separating children out, removing them from their
20 families negates and prevents and renders impossible any
21 hope of intergenerational recovery.

22 It's not only intergenerationally that the
23 effects of child -- non-Indigenous child welfare practices
24 have been felt and transmitted harm. If you look at the
25 lives of girls and women, and all Indigenous people, their

1 exposure, the conditions of their lives are affected by
2 child welfare before they are born in the lives of their
3 mothers and fathers, prenatally.

4 They may well not -- their mothers may well
5 avoid seeking prenatal care, you heard from witnesses in
6 the Winnipeg hearings because of the fear of birth alerts
7 and apprehension at birth. So before a child is even
8 born, they experience harm because of the relationship
9 between child welfare authorities and the fear that their
10 mothers have of loss.

11 At birth, if and when they are apprehended
12 and in care as children and as youth, the effects of
13 removal from community, from territory, from language,
14 from culture, from the very relationships that must be the
15 most protective factor in their lives, have and -- have
16 had and now have devastating consequences and lead to the
17 very losses that are the subject of this Inquiry.

18 You've heard evidence of the effects the
19 impact of living a life in care on children and youth.
20 The devaluation of human life that girls and boys --
21 Indigenous girls and boys experience. You heard Cora
22 Morgan testify about how children who are raised in care
23 and who live in group homes, for example, the value they
24 place on human life is diminished. Their own lives and
25 the lives of others. These are the preconditions for

1 loss, for violence and for loss.

2 This Commission has heard evidence of the
3 effects of dislocation from community and culture, of
4 children and youth being moved far -- even thousands of
5 kilometers from their communities and families in order to
6 even secure a foster home placement or to receive specific
7 services that are not available within or near their
8 communities. Children are often removed for years and
9 years permanently and lose any meaningful access to their
10 families, cultures, territories, and communities.

11 This practice not only precludes the
12 culturally and community-based placements and services
13 that would be most effective for Indigenous children and
14 youth, it severs -- renders impossible the very
15 relationships that ANCFSAO has found to be vital to the
16 safety and well-being of Indigenous children in the moment
17 and for the rest of the children's lives.

18 So children taken so far away from home are
19 left without vital connections and supports when their
20 placements break down or when they encounter the dangerous
21 influences in, for example, group home care. They become
22 so vulnerable to all the harms and risk that contribute to
23 tragic loss.

24 For that reason, ANCFSAO requests that the
25 Commission make recommendations to prevent such removals,

1 including provincial and federal funding that both permits
2 and prioritizes the delivery of services to children
3 living within Indigenous communities, no matter how
4 remote.

5 In particular, that governments ensure the
6 availability of dedicated permanent funding within and for
7 Indigenous communities for the type of infrastructure that
8 is necessary for emergency family receiving homes, for
9 placements within community, for things like homemaking to
10 assist families who are struggling with the basics of
11 running a household in a safe way.

12 I don't know how many cases I've dealt with
13 as a lawyer and that the members of the association have
14 dealt with that but for the hygiene and cleanliness of the
15 home and the organization of the home the children could
16 safely stay, that's the only issue, but it's an
17 overwhelming issue. You send in a homemaker. But the
18 funding is siloed and that's not part of protection.

19 We urge the Commission to make
20 recommendations that funding formulas that support
21 families, including extended families caring for children,
22 be made available and indeed prioritized.

23 I'm going to move on now to how we got to
24 this terrible state legally, politically, and in practice.

25 The operation across the country,

1 provincial and territorial statutes, purports to occupy
2 the field in child welfare. The provinces have asserted
3 uniformly exclusive jurisdiction over the care and
4 protection of Indigenous and other children. The
5 statutory regimes across the country that do so also
6 occupy the field with protection, what is termed
7 protection, measures intended to identify children who at
8 risk, who are in need of protection, and to take those
9 steps necessary to address those needs and the risks.

10 The statutes belabour and detail the
11 procedural requirements and considerations for society's
12 intervening on an involuntary and mandatory basis in the
13 lives of children and families. They each make reference
14 for the need to adopt least intrusive measures to prevent
15 risk and harm but they don't spell it out and they don't -
16 - it's rendered not mandatory.

17 Funding models reflect that. They reflect
18 an imperative of unlimited funding available for children
19 in care, and you've heard lots of evidence about that,
20 that there's unlimited funding available once a child is
21 taken away for the foster family, for all services, for
22 recreational activities, but severely capped and limited
23 funding for truly preventative measures that would permit
24 children to safely remain at home.

25 Further, the statutes neither acknowledge

1 nor permit the operation of Indigenous jurisdiction over
2 the care and protection of children other than through the
3 delegation of authority from the province to Indigenous
4 agencies.

5 And the regulatory regimes that accompany
6 these statutes effectively and at a very granular level
7 prescribe the delivery of services, such that the members
8 of ANCFSAO and other Indigenous agencies don't have any
9 flexibility about how they can deliver services, it's all
10 quite prescribed at a very particular level.

11 And the combined effect of the statute and
12 regulations and funding models is to preclude the exercise
13 not only of Indigenous jurisdiction over the care and
14 protection of children but prevents -- functions to
15 prevent Indigenous agencies from employing best Indigenous
16 practices in relation to the services they provide to
17 Indigenous children and families.

18 You saw in the video that my colleague Ms.
19 Beamish presented yesterday and entered into evidence that
20 had us all sniffing, that video reflected the types of
21 relationships that can and will protect Indigenous
22 children, and the centrality of those relationships, that
23 is the core of actual protection.

24 You don't see those relationships reflected
25 in the legal regime, the mandatory statutory and

1 regulatory regimes, and they're not reflected in the
2 funding models that operationalize it with the results
3 that we see now, the humanitarian crisis.

4 Many of the members of the ANCFSAO all of
5 them operate with delegated provincial authority; many but
6 not all of them also operate with -- pursuant to the
7 inherent jurisdiction of -- for example, the Anishinaabeg
8 Family Care exercises the authority of the Robinson
9 Superior Treaty First Nations. Abinooji exercises the
10 inherent authority of Grand Council Treaty Number 3. But
11 it's an uneasy set of dual accountabilities.

12 And again the provincial regulatory and
13 funding regimes really occupy the field and prevent the
14 agencies from adopting measures and practices and
15 resourcing measures and practices that will honour the
16 relationships in the way that the video "Embrace Love"
17 yesterday demonstrated.

18 No Indigenous people or Nation in Canada
19 has ever, to the best of our knowledge, surrendered its
20 right to govern itself with respect to the care and
21 protection of children and families. It's never -- this
22 right has never been extinguished through any valid
23 constitutional instrument.

24 The operation and paramountcy of provincial
25 law has been merely assumed and imposed by federal and

1 provincial authorities from at least the '60s onward.
2 This assumption must be challenged if the necessary
3 transformation and the care of Indigenous children is to
4 occur.

5 It's simply impossible, under the
6 provincial statutes, as they're currently construed -- and
7 they get amended. You know, Ontario's *Child and Family*
8 *Services Act* was amended and turned into the *Child, Youth*
9 *and Family Services Act*. They get -- the reform comes
10 nowhere near the level of transformation that's necessary
11 to prevent further loss.

12 We entered into evidence in Winnipeg the
13 Spallumcheen Bylaw, the Secwepemc assertion and
14 operationalizing of inherent jurisdiction of the people of
15 Splatsin and Spallumcheen. That is an exclusive -- it's
16 exclusive assertion of -- exclusive jurisdiction.

17 Splatsin's agency has been operating since
18 1981 and not a single child has been lost while in their
19 care. This is an extraordinary record and represents best
20 practices, reflects best practices that are only possible,
21 in my submission, once Indigenous agencies and communities
22 can step out of a fundamentally colonial non-Indigenous
23 provincial statutory regime.

24 The members of the ANCFSAO describe
25 practices -- their practices, and child welfare generally,

1 as too little too late with Children's Aid Societies left
2 to pick up the pieces through traumatic protection
3 measures when children and families are in acute -- and
4 youth are in acute crisis, when earlier dedicated and
5 focussed prevention measures would and could have served
6 to actually protect Indigenous children and families by
7 addressing the manifestations of colonisation, of poverty
8 and intergenerational trauma in a supportive manner, at
9 home, with and through an intact family. But, again, the
10 resources are not there for these approaches. And within
11 the framework that I've described, those early
12 interventions, the supportive relationship-based
13 interventions are not only not prioritised or resourced,
14 they're rendered impossible.

15 Canada has, through Ministers Philpott and
16 Bennett, very recently recognised this paradox in funding,
17 in particular, as one of the causes of the humanitarian
18 crisis in Indigenous child welfare. In statements made
19 earlier this month, Ministers Philpott and Bennett
20 contemplated federal legislation that would eliminate what
21 they described as the perverse incentives for the
22 apprehension of Indigenous children.

23 In our written submissions we will be
24 urging the Commission to make recommendations that they
25 follow through with this contemplated legislation, but we

1 note that any such federal legislation would be limited to
2 on-reserve children. And we know that many, if not most,
3 Indigenous children who have contact with child welfare --
4 possibly not most -- but are in urban centres or off-
5 reserve.

6 So we will also be urging the Commission to
7 make recommendations so that the provinces correct and
8 reverse and eliminate the perverse funding incentives that
9 not only don't fund prevention, but incentivise the
10 removal of children in their legislative and funding
11 regimes for child welfare.

12 Members of the Association repeatedly have
13 experienced youth -- children and youth in crisis, to the
14 extent that there are police involvement -- there's police
15 involvement, there's mental health involvement, there's
16 child welfare involvement, and the crisis that the
17 children and youth are experiencing are exacerbated by the
18 lack of coordination of the multi -- many disciplines of
19 service that the children -- that intervene in the life of
20 the child, which renders some of the services not only
21 ineffective, but counterproductive if they're not properly
22 coordinated.

23 We will be urging the Commission to make
24 recommendations that community-based institutions
25 including police, hospitals, education, in addition to

1 Child Welfare authorities, are required to enter into
2 MOUs, protocols, to coordinate their responses, not only
3 at institutional levels, but with respect to individual
4 cases and children.

5 Members of the Association have found --
6 and we will be, in our written submissions, including
7 references to written expert reports -- that when young
8 children interact with multiple systems of care the
9 fragmentation and the lack of appropriate or sufficient
10 communication and information-sharing amongst services and
11 service providers is institutionally driven; that the
12 barriers to sufficient communication and effective service
13 provision are at times structurally endemic; and that
14 those barriers -- and so we will be urging the Commission
15 to make recommendations so that those barriers to
16 coordination and information-sharing be removed.

17 The members of the Association note that
18 prevention is protection. Protection -- child protection
19 as is currently construed, for all the reasons that we've
20 described and that you've heard in evidence, that's not
21 protection. What will actually protect Indigenous
22 children and girls and women throughout their lives and
23 intergenerationally is prevention.

24 We will be urging the Commission to make
25 recommendations that provinces reform child welfare

1 legislation to make prevention measures, as in services,
2 resources and interventions that serve and protect
3 children within their families and communities mandatory
4 for child welfare agencies and for all service providers.

5 That provinces reform child welfare funding
6 formulae to dedicate most resources to prevention services
7 rather than so-called protection measures.

8 That all governments, Indigenous,
9 provincial and federal, enhance prevention and protection
10 services specifically oriented towards intergenerational
11 recovery from the effects of colonisation, residential
12 schools and non-Indigenous child welfare practices, and
13 that Indigenous child welfare service models be developed,
14 reformed and resourced, which prioritise the availability
15 and delivery of services within communities and that such
16 services are available to children at home and delivered
17 in a timely way.

18 We will also be urging the Commission to
19 make recommendations that provinces adopt legislative
20 reform that both acknowledge (sic) and encourages the
21 exercise of inherent jurisdiction over the care and
22 protection of children and families by Indigenous
23 communities where such communities have asserted and have
24 chosen to exercise such jurisdiction. And that the
25 operationalising, the delivery of those services resulting

1 from the exercise of jurisdiction be resourced at a level
2 at least as high in funding terms as the delivery of
3 services under provincial statutory models.

4 And I say at least as high because
5 communities and agencies need resources in order to
6 recover and give life to Indigenous practices and laws.
7 They have been effectively suppressed for so long that it
8 will take time and work and money, unfortunately, to
9 uncover, to breathe new life into and to adapt Indigenous
10 laws and practices to operationalise them.

11 Subject to any questions you may have,
12 those are my submissions on behalf of ANCFSAO.

13 (APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

14 **MS. VIOLET FORD:** Thank you for your
15 submissions.

16 And, Commissioner, Chief Commissioners, if
17 you have questions?

18 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Ms. Hensel,
19 thank you for your presentation and your submission,
20 especially considering I know you're not feeling very
21 well.

22 I want to thank you for drawing a path,
23 particularly when it comes to legislative reform. You've
24 heard my questions, this issue of power and jurisdiction
25 and we've heard from some of your clients and from other

1 witnesses how, particularly in Manitoba, the delegation to
2 Indigenous-run organizations that are just -- I call it
3 putting sealskin on the existing beast, right? Like, it's
4 tokenization, it's superficial, and how that's a huge
5 problem.

6 So I want to thank you for, in a very
7 practical way in your recommendations, outlining a path on
8 what that transition has to look like, how not only do
9 governments have to meet their obligations and do better,
10 but where the shift in power has to happen as well.

11 So I want to thank you very much. You've
12 given me a lot to think about and I look forward to
13 reading your client's final submission. Thank you, thank
14 you. *Miigwetch.*

15 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Ms. Hensel, I
16 want to thank you as well. Similar to my colleague,
17 Commissioner Robinson, well, we've heard so much about
18 Child Welfare and its negative impacts, so I want to thank
19 you for sort of connecting some of these things together
20 and summarizing and pointing out recommendations. And I
21 really look forward to reading your more fulsome written
22 submissions. *Chi-miigwetch.*

23 **MS. KATHERINE HENSEL:** (Native word).

24 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Well, I
25 echo what my colleagues have said. We look forward to

1 reading your final submissions.

2 Once again, I want to thank you for -- I
3 don't mean this in a cold way at all -- the surgical
4 precision that you show, not only in your submissions, but
5 in questions that you've asked throughout our hearings.
6 It's been very helpful for us, to start with, but also, it
7 shows me that your clients are very lucky to have you as
8 counsel.

9 Thank you so much.

10 **MS. KATHERINE HENSEL:** Thank you.

11 **(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)**

12 **MS. VIOLET FORD:** The next Party with
13 Standing that Commission counsel would like to request to
14 come to the podium is -- and forgive me if I pronounce
15 this -- I think it's Women Walking Together, if you can
16 just advise -- it's Darlene O'Kemaysim-Sicotte.

17

18 **---SUBMISSIONS BY/REPRÉSENTATIONS PAR DARLENE O'KEMNAYSIM-**
19 **SICOTTE:**

20 **MS. DARLENE O'KEMNAYSIM-SICOTTE:** Good
21 morning. I'm sad, nervous, hopeful, nervous, excited in a
22 weird way about the future. We've worked so hard and I'm
23 really pleased with all the parties that we saw over the
24 last six months and getting to know how they do their
25 thing.

1 I'll just start my presentation.

2 Thank you, *tansi*. Firstly, I want to
3 acknowledge the Creator for giving us all such a beautiful
4 day, and also acknowledge the prayers and drum this
5 morning, the pipe ceremony, and their carriers.

6 I am the non-legal advocate and here on
7 behalf of Iskwewuk Ewichiwitochik, Women Walking Together,
8 from the Treaty 6 area in the City of Saskatoon,
9 Saskatchewan, Canada.

10 As we sit here in Algonquin land, which is
11 on unceded territory, you and I are all sitting on a very
12 unique area which represents space, part of the first
13 contact with settler society in Canada's history.

14 This week is about truth, talking about it,
15 being honest, and Canada being accountable. It includes
16 the four Rs for Indigenous people, especially Indigenous
17 women: respect, recognition, resurgence, and even
18 revolution.

19 As you know, our people have tried many
20 ways, many forms to carry out the truth. We still face
21 obstacles that are always in front of us -- the
22 residential school, the Sixties Scoop, and the biggest
23 barrier, the *Indian Act*.

24 I echo what Chief Marie-Anne Day Walker
25 said at the police hearing in Regina in June 2018.

1 "I stand here as a woman, an
2 Indigenous (Native word) Cree woman, a
3 great-grandmother, myself a
4 grandmother. We are able leaders,
5 strong leaders, strong women in the
6 future.

7 "The Inquiry is a place and an
8 opportunity for our people to speak
9 the truth, to be strong, and that
10 those prayers that were said this
11 morning asking the Creator to be with
12 us will always be with us to give us
13 that strength, to give us that
14 courage, and we need to stand
15 together.

16 "Nobody wants to talk about the 'R'
17 word, racism and that's the biggest
18 challenge we all have, is to overcome
19 that so at the end of the day, at the
20 end of the week, that we do better
21 than yesterday. That's all I ask, and
22 that our Treaties, our First Nations,
23 our Treaties are paramount. We need
24 to honour these together." (As read)

25 Good morning to the Chief Commissioner

1 Marion Buller, Commissioner Qajaq Robinson, Commissioner
2 Brian Eyolfson, and Commissioner Michèle Audette, the
3 National Family Advisory, and fellow Parties with
4 Standing. Last but not least, families of the missing and
5 murdered Indigenous women and girls and LGBTQ2S.

6 Iskwewuk Ewichiwitochik Women Walking
7 Together final report was focused on a human rights-based
8 approach, an ad-hoc practitioner experience with no
9 government funding, no office, and not even non-profit
10 status for the last 13 years.

11 Iskwewuk laid out in our report
12 consultations with families, policy change arguments,
13 awareness education, measuring change in the media, the
14 sustainable development goals and national implementation
15 strategy, anti-racism national strategy, health,
16 aftercare, and feel for missing women, the memorial fund
17 and commemoration fund, and Iskwewuk recommendations,
18 calls to action, a missing persons national centre, a
19 missing Indigenous women and men's fund.

20 I will be sharing some of these keys on
21 this oral closing submission, as this Inquiry knows that
22 there is a great need to support families of the missing,
23 the taken, the murdered, and nearly-murdered Indigenous
24 women and girls, which includes to maintain some intense
25 and thorough contact, building rapport and trusting

1 relationships with family members.

2 We must always bring attention and honour
3 to the memory of the missing, the taken, the murdered, and
4 nearly-murdered Indigenous women and girls.

5 We do this by attempting to keep up with a
6 central record and send out these alerts of missing
7 persons around the country and with our allies, raising
8 awareness and fostering prevention through education and
9 political action, missing, taken, murdered Indigenous
10 women and girls.

11 We do this to promote the dignity of all
12 women, particularly Indigenous women and girls,
13 networking, partnering with organizations also dedicated
14 to the issue of missing, taken, murdered, and nearly-
15 murdered Indigenous women and girls. We do this to
16 maintain contact and communication with organizations,
17 groups, families, and individuals with similar concerns
18 and goals.

19 In our policy change arguments we have in
20 our closing submission, we are including primary
21 objectives that should provide a consistent and systemic
22 approach to modify and improve current policies and
23 legislation on public safety and prevention of violence
24 against Indigenous women and girls by the country. The
25 intention is to have effective processes in all areas of

1 MMIW2SLGBTQ experiences.

2 At this closing, Iskwewuk Ewichiwitochik
3 will focus on 1) access to justice for families, 2)
4 families experience of treatment by RCMP after reporting,
5 3) families experience of search process, 4) systemic
6 racism as tragedy, and 5) the Human Rights Watch SAS
7 policy. In our face-to-face request to Minister Carolyn
8 Bennett, Crown, Indigenous Relations in Saskatoon,
9 Saskatchewan, we shared that we in Saskatchewan hope to
10 have five FILU locations. To date, only one FILU office
11 is operated in two locations in Regina and in Saskatoon,
12 despite the fact that Saskatchewan is considered one of
13 the four hotspots in Canada. But we all know that Canada
14 is a hotspot for missing women.

15 Despite the June 2018 announcement that the
16 FILU's will be funded until 2020, we are actually needing
17 this to last 5 to 10 years, because our women and girls
18 are still going missing. The families of MMIWG 2SLGBTQ to
19 complement any existing national crime prevention centre
20 initiatives, we believe this work is needed to provide
21 national leadership on effective ways to prevent and
22 reduce the crime of missing, then found murdered, by
23 intervening on the risk factors before the crime of
24 missing, then found murdered, happens.

25 This can't happen if federal departments

1 and agencies don't contribute or work directly or
2 indirectly with each other. We must have all of them work
3 together on this: Public Safety Canada, RCMP, Correctional
4 Service of Canada, the Department of Justice, the Canadian
5 Centre of Justice Statistics, Canadian Heritage, Health
6 Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Human
7 Resources and Social Development Canada, the Canadian
8 Association of Chiefs of Police, the Federation of
9 Canadian Municipalities. All these partners are to
10 supplement this access to justice by families of MMIW.

11 This brings me to the hopeful changes in
12 policy of RCMP urban police services when families of MMIW
13 LGBTQ approach these spaces regarding the reporting of
14 their missing loved ones. From the recommendations of the
15 Commission on First Nations and Métis Peoples and Justice
16 Reform in Saskatchewan, we add and support and made focus
17 of several of those recommendations.

18 That the Government of Saskatchewan and
19 Government of Canada, in view of the fact that it invest
20 in community policing initiatives, conduct province-wide
21 surveys every two years to monitor the degree of public
22 satisfaction regarding policing within all communities.

23 We also recommend that an Aboriginal
24 liaison worker or volunteer individual be available for
25 First Nations, Métis, or Inuit upon their arrival at a

1 police station or detachment office.

2 We also recommend an independent complaint
3 investigation agency that will meet the needs of First
4 Nations, Métis, and Inuit with the objective of having
5 such agencies around the communities in the Country of
6 Canada. In Saskatchewan, the FSIN Special Investigation
7 Unit will hopefully continue to reflect and respect that
8 spirit and intent with those supports.

9 For any policies that are focused on search
10 and rescue, families are told and learn for themselves
11 that there is limited supports, resources, or search
12 vehicles. We need to have search efforts and emergency
13 preparedness plans for, one, search of missing Indigenous
14 persons; two, sexual assault; three, suicide, and these
15 require staff, resources, and a fleet of vehicles. In
16 Saskatchewan, searches predominantly take place with the
17 families whom are currently and often enduring trauma
18 while hunters and group-known trackers take their place.

19 Iskwewuk Ewichiwitochik has since inception
20 13 years ago has made efforts to tackle the race issue
21 regarding MMIWG 2SLGBTQ during every aspect of our
22 awareness and remembrance on the way victims of MMIW LGBTQ
23 are portrayed.

24 Currently, an anti-racism strategy is
25 taking place across the country with Minister for the

1 Department of Heritage, Honourable Pablo Rodriguez. This
2 is an opportunity for the Commission to witness what has
3 happened to the families of MMIW LGBTQ about their loved
4 identities, their personal attitudes, and their own
5 beliefs and behaviours towards the families by general
6 society in understanding the impact of racism on the
7 development of our families and our children of MMIW
8 experience.

9 There is a need to decentre and extend
10 sympathy, sympathy and empathy, by giving, providing
11 awareness, knowledge, and appreciation of the Indigenous
12 cultural experiences and histories of Indigenous
13 individuals and Indigenous groups. This requires many
14 changemaker leaders to develop anti-racist attitude skills
15 and build on that confidence in and out of our schools,
16 offices, institutions, homes, and governments.

17 In regard to the aftercare health, Iskwewuk
18 acknowledges fully the challenges and barriers of First
19 Nations, Métis, Inuit in Canada which holds many human
20 rights violations. In June 2018, the government announced
21 20 million to healthcare for families of Indigenous MMIWG
22 2SLGBTQ. As of early fall, all of that 20 million has
23 already been disbursed country-wide. I am not certain
24 that these funds are being used once more for other health
25 services needs other than mental, physical, emotional, and

1 spiritual needs of the families of MMIW.

2 It took almost a year to finally submit my
3 aftercare plan to the Inquiry. I was very insistent to
4 plan a feast, a mentoring with a female Indigenous Elder,
5 massage therapy, and hopefully some counselling. I was
6 pleased to see that the Indigenous Services Canada updated
7 their mental health counselling coverage prior approval
8 request form with a tick-off for clients seeking
9 counselling services related to the impact of MMIW. So I
10 am just putting that out there that there is counsellors
11 out there, there is a tick-off.

12 As part of our recommendations, we
13 reiterate the possibility of two health positions for
14 Canada, an Indigenous health auditor, an Indigenous health
15 ombudsman. As Dr. Barry Lavallee said in Toronto expert
16 hearings, "it would be a good start", after Iskwewuk had
17 cross-examined him.

18 These positions would be required to review
19 and report to Indigenous peoples and to Parliament on
20 progress and failures of healthcare to Indigenous peoples.
21 The ombudsman would respond to and resolve complaints
22 about their healthcare experience.

23 In our recommendations, Iskwewuk suggests
24 that efforts pay attention to the UN 17 sustainable
25 development goals where 11 of 17 affect the daily lives of

1 Indigenous women and girls in our country. Canada scored
2 1.5 out of 7 on a rating for meeting these goals, and
3 that's discouraging and shocking.

4 Canada has now opened a SDG office under
5 the Minister of Families, Children, and Social
6 Development, the Honourable Minister Duclos. In
7 particular, we must pay attention to Goal Number 5, which
8 talks about violence against women, and Goal Number 16 on
9 peace, justice and strong institutions.

10 At this time, I want to take us back to
11 some transcripts of previous expert hearings held this
12 spring that supplement the SDG goals.

13 In my cross-examine to Dr. Dalee Sambo-
14 Dorough, I introduced myself as:

15 "Good morning. My name is Darlene
16 Rose O'Kemaysim-Sicotte. I am the
17 Co-Chair for Iskwewuk E-wichiwitochik,
18 it's Women Walking Together. We're a
19 grassroots organization in Saskatoon,
20 Saskatchewan in Treaty 6.
21 We actually have been doing our work
22 for [13] years. We...don't have [any]
23 government funding, we don't have no
24 office, we're not even non-profit. So
25 we've had a long journey on this work

1 on awareness, remembrance, and
2 supports to families, in particular.
3 So my first question is Dr. Dalee, and
4 my six questions to be to her and then
5 a few others.
6 In [her] testimony, [she] spoke about
7 the United Nations' Special Rapporteur
8 on Violence Against Women in her
9 12-day visit to Canada in April 2018,
10 in particular, about the ongoing
11 systemic inequalities, and violence
12 against Indigenous women in Canada.
13 The expert visited Ottawa, Iqaluit,
14 Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg, and
15 this goal was to review, assess and
16 address gender-based violence against
17 women to ensure that Canada is
18 honouring its commitments under the
19 Convention on the Elimination of all
20 Forms of Discrimination Against Women
21 and the Declaration on the Elimination
22 of Violence Against Women, with
23 special attention to the situation of
24 Indigenous women who face multiple and
25 interconnected forms of discrimination

1 and violence.

2 My question is, do you agree the
3 biggest challenge is the inability of
4 the current government to commit to a
5 long-term political will to address
6 this?"

7 Dr. Dalee Sambo Dorough responds,

8 "Thank you for the question. I think
9 it's fair to say that, at least with
10 this current government, there has
11 been [...] expressions of willingness.

12 The campaign promise of the
13 Trudeau Government, not to mention the
14 mandate letters that were issued to
15 various members of his Cabinet with
16 regard to implementation of the UN
17 Declaration, but also the reference,
18 the specific reference, for example,
19 to Minister Carolyn Bennett, indicate
20 and expressly state reference to
21 international human rights law. Given
22 that, [these] two items, the campaign
23 promise, the subsequent promise,
24 [then] finally elected, as well as the
25 mandate letters, that it appears there

1 is an opening [of] an opportunity to
2 do so.

3 Political enterprises and
4 political will, I cannot point to you
5 for certain, and I think to some
6 extent it is a call to action to all
7 of us to uphold these promises. And I
8 would regard them as solemn
9 obligations, especially when you see
10 the statements of the ministers within
11 the hallowed halls of the UN General
12 Assembly.

13 [Minister] Jody Wilson-Raybould
14 spoke to the UN General Assembly,
15 Minister Carolyn Bennett spoke to the
16 UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous
17 Issues. So I would characterise
18 [these] as solemn obligations, the
19 representatives of government who have
20 made important pronouncements.

21 And words matter, as I said
22 yesterday. So I would suggest that,
23 absolutely, and let's see how the
24 promise intersects with the political
25 will [to] regard to, not only the UN

1 Declaration on the Rights of
2 Indigenous Peoples, but as stated in
3 the mandate letters, other
4 international human rights law."

5 I go on to ask,

6 "Do you agree that Canada should
7 immediately, in terms of the visit
8 from the Rapporteur, to immediately
9 implement legislation and provide
10 maximum resources to address the
11 inequality of access to housing, funds
12 to education, employment training and
13 child welfare on reserves, and if so,
14 can you expand?"

15 Dr. Dalee Sambo Dorrough responds,

16 "The short answer is absolutely. I
17 think that the visit of the Special
18 Rapporteur on Violence Against Women
19 is a alarm. And usually, when you
20 hear an alarm, you pay attention, you
21 take action, you exit the building.
22 Whatever it takes; right?

23 So as far as the opportunities, I
24 think at [that] moment that she issued
25 these statements, it would have been

1 highly constructive for Indigenous
2 women across Canada to stand up, link
3 arms, and say, did you hear what she
4 said. Sort of along the lines of what
5 Corey [...] was saying in [his]
6 relation to children.

7 I think that there are numerous
8 options on the basis of the statements
9 that she made, and as you know, the
10 forthcoming actual country report.
11 And in fact, that may have been an
12 opportune time in terms of [...]
13 issuing of the report to take further
14 action at the local level and the
15 regional level, [and] at the national
16 level, but also, I think it's an
17 invitation at the international
18 level."

19 I go on to ask her,

20 "This is still in regards to [your]
21 visit [to] the Rapporteur. Do you
22 think Canada, all provinces and
23 territories, should redesign the child
24 welfare and foster care system and
25 practices, in particular those

1 children left behind of the missing,
2 murdered Aboriginal women?"

3 Dr. Sambo Dorough responds,

4 "Yes. I must say as a proviso, that I
5 am not intimately familiar with the
6 specific conditions of Indigenous
7 children in Canada. However, if the
8 issues are similar to those in Alaska,
9 a concrete, constructive response
10 needs to be undertaken, especially in
11 the context of orphan children.

12 This is [...] when, for example,
13 when Corey O'Soup spoke about the best
14 interest of the child, the *Indian*
15 *Child Welfare Act* in the United States
16 and with[...] our communities, our
17 Inuit communities and other Alaska
18 native communities that actually mean
19 something and something important.
20 The urgent nature of it, the threats
21 and risk to such orphaned children
22 needs immediate response."

23 I go on to ask her,

24 "Do you [...] agree that a monitoring
25 mechanism is recommended and

1 recommended in [...] the document of
2 CEDAW to track and monitor the
3 conditions of Murdered and Missing
4 Indigenous Women and Girls post
5 Inquiry is necessary to prevent
6 further violence against Indigenous
7 women?"
8 "Yes. I would only amend that
9 statement to say throughout, and not
10 necessarily post Inquiry. And I think
11 that [there] is one of the key
12 messages of the Special Rapporteur on
13 Violence Against Women as she left
14 Canada following her country visit.
15 That even before the work of the
16 Inquiry is concluded that action
17 should be taken.

18 So I would say that not only post
19 Inquiry, but as soon as possible,
20 [...] and I think there are ways in
21 which action could be taken."

22 In my last question to Dr. Dorrough I ask,
23 "Do you agree that [there should be] a
24 national action plan on violence
25 against women [and] should [it] have a

1 specific prevention of violence
2 against Indigenous women that reflects
3 the barriers the *Indian Act* and to
4 accommodate the over 620 [First
5 Nations] different communities [and
6 Métis Nations in Canada and] their
7 languages and cultural practices as a
8 plan?"

9 She responds,

10 "I think that the first step should be
11 outreach to all of those Indigenous,
12 First Nations, Métis as to what the
13 major priority is in regard to the
14 *Indian Act*.

15 I am not familiar with
16 discussions to date regarding the
17 *Indian Act*. I'm familiar to some
18 extent with its impacts upon
19 especially Indigenous women but I
20 think that any kind of national action
21 plan in response to these issues needs
22 to start with dialogue with the
23 Indigenous peoples concerned and their
24 exercise of the right of self-
25 determination because they are the

1 self in self-determination and that a
2 national action plan should begin in
3 that way in order to identify the
4 priorities and what the specific
5 problems are and what the potential
6 solutions are.

7 If there is dialogue and
8 discussion about instituting a
9 national action plan it, should also
10 draw from the developments that have
11 taken place at the international
12 level. Yesterday I referred to the
13 U.N. declaration, a range of [...] *international human rights*
14 *instruments*, as well as the
15 *sustainable development goals* and you
16 could probably very quickly and easily
17 identify the alignment of the issues
18 and concerns related to the *Indian*
19 *Act*, the status and the rights and
20 interests of Indigenous women and
21 girls and put together something
22 fairly comprehensive."

24 That ended my questions for Dr. Dorough,
25 but I had questions for Brenda Gunn. In her testimony she

1 spoke about,

2 "...forced disappearance may be a rule
3 of customary international law which
4 would apply in Canada.

5 Would you say that this forced
6 disappearance implies murder when
7 they're the first one -- [when they're
8 the first --] when there's first
9 abduction, then detainment ending with
10 location of the person that was
11 abducted? In Canada, how would we
12 hold Canada responsible under the
13 international convention for the
14 protection of all persons from
15 enforced disappearances? If so, would
16 you recommend that compensation and
17 restitution take place for the
18 families of missing and murdered
19 [Indigenous] women and girls?"

20 Brenda Gunn responds,

21 "Yes, I did say that [...]forced
22 disappearance is beginning to be
23 recognized as a rule of customary
24 international law. And so my point
25 was if it is a rule of customary

1 international law."

2 At least some people in some communities
3 and some are making that argument.

4 "And so my point [is] if it is a rule
5 of customary [...] law, then [...] it
6 [does] apply directly in Canada as law
7 and that was sort of held by the court
8 in 2008 with how customary
9 international law applies.

10 I did raise that convention and
11 the idea of [...]forced disappearance
12 because I do think that many of the
13 circumstances that we know about the
14 process of murdered and missing
15 Indigenous women and the way in which
16 Canada has known about this situation
17 for a significant period of time and
18 arguably has failed to act in a way to
19 successfully prevent, investigate,
20 prosecute, punish and compensate that,
21 you know, this seems to fit [...] with
22 what [...] convention is aiming to do.

23 Now I [...] want to be clear."

24 She says,

25 "I know that Canada has not actually

1 ratified that convention, so we can't
2 use that convention generally but
3 holding Canada responsible I think is
4 always a challenge. Despite being a
5 lawyer, I don't always think that
6 litigation is our best [-- best]
7 approach [or final approach].

8 I do think that the inquiry is
9 part of the process of holding Canada
10 responsible and I think that's part of
11 [-- I mean,] holding someone
12 responsible is also understanding what
13 they've done, right. And so the truth
14 that is being sought through the
15 inquiry process I think is key to that
16 accountability process.

17 I can't say that the
18 international standards do speak to
19 compensation and reparations.
20 Reparations is the term generally for
21 a remedy in international law. So it
22 would be reparations and compensation
23 is what they speak to. And if so
24 Canada is found to have these
25 obligations, which I strongly believe

1 they do, and has failed to uphold
2 them, then yes, international law
3 requirements does include aspects of
4 compensation and reparations. And
5 it's important to also think that
6 reparations internationally can
7 include a broad range of activities.
8 Yesterday I spoke about some of the
9 cases of genocide that I worked on in
10 Guatemala and for those communities,
11 they were looking for a range of
12 things. There was some personal
13 compensation that was made but in a
14 couple of the communities, there were
15 memorials that were built. [Some] [...] of
16 them in particular was a big stone
17 [monument] [...] and it [had] [...] the
18 look of a book and all around it [had]
19 [...] all of the names of the people who
20 were lost in particular to genocide.
21 There were dollars set [aside] [...] for
22 community health. [And] I'm trying to
23 think of the range of activities.
24 [But] there is a need to apologize
25 publicly and in various Indigenous

1 languages and on the radio and to make
2 [...] decision publicly available so
3 that, you know, for the survivors and
4 others to know that the genocide had
5 occurred and that Guatemala had [that]
6 [...] part of that responsibility. So I
7 [...] just want to point [...] that
8 compensation and individual financial
9 payments can be [a] part of that but
10 it can also be much broader and
11 include some of those requirements to
12 do community building [...] some of
13 those socio-economic programming that
14 is necessary to adjust the situation
15 going forward, [with] [...] both a cause
16 and a consequence in that sort of way.
17 [...] I'm really glad that you [...] [gave]
18 [gave] that example."

19 And that's what I want to share from the
20 expert hearings that had impacted the kind of work that
21 Iskwewuk does.

22 I'm going to read a bit from a victim
23 impact statement that I submitted during the trial for
24 late Daleen Bosse-Muskego. Oh, God. This first sentence
25 is always so hard.

1 "I have been deeply impacted by the
2 missing person case of Daleen Bosse-
3 Muskego who resided in the city of
4 Saskatoon in May 2004 with her husband
5 Jeremiah and her daughter Faith. She
6 was a student in one of our Native
7 Studies classes at the U of S. You
8 could say she was an adopted student
9 daughter and a resident of Saskatoon
10 with four children, an employee at the
11 University of Saskatchewan Department
12 of Native Studies. In the work of an
13 admin a person gets a panoramic view
14 of the residents of the city who are
15 of Indigenous ancestry. It was not
16 uncommon to meet students who have
17 enrolled at the U of S and interact
18 with them. Maybe not face-to-face,
19 but work amongst them as they pursue
20 their studies and become involved in
21 city wide gatherings. As an
22 Indigenous woman who is active in the
23 City of Saskatoon, you become to rely
24 on seeing these active students go
25 from student experience to building a

1 life, maybe in the city, or leaving to
2 pursue their career once convocation
3 has taken place. As a mother myself
4 of four, it was not uncommon to take
5 my children with me, especially my
6 only daughter, to city events. And
7 many times, I've had the opportunity
8 to see late Daleen there with her
9 little family. She would garner a
10 smile. We would admire each other's
11 children and just be happy, I guess,
12 to be in a city that did not always
13 welcome Indigenous peoples to their
14 gatherings or circles. After Daleen
15 went missing I was still employed at
16 the U of S as an administrator; a
17 unique post for most women on campus.
18 But during that time there was much
19 concern and worry from students,
20 instructors and some of the public
21 that were known to be in her circles.
22 I was at the assembly of First Nations
23 gathering the day she was last seen.
24 I understand she had worn a black top
25 and I'm confused if I had seen her and

1 not because our department had a
2 display table close to the assembly
3 that I was manning, but because it was
4 a warm summer day. No one wore coats
5 from what I remember and then I'm
6 thinking she might have come down the
7 stairs that afternoon around 2:30
8 p.m., but I am not sure. From that
9 day forward, I would not have known
10 how long and dedicated my life would
11 turn in wondering what happened to
12 Daleen."

13 I'm good.

14 "What I know is that I missed a
15 community member and a student which
16 staffers tend to bond with, in terms
17 of admiration and nurturing capacity.
18 So when someone you know is an
19 acquaintance it bothers you a lot and
20 worry sets in. As an Indigenous
21 woman, we were always very proud of
22 our students walking into class, onto
23 the campus or into the department
24 offices for services and support.
25 Knowing she was not seen for so long

1 and that no search had taken place I
2 often wondered about in those early
3 years of being what I call "the Daleen
4 experience". When you are situated in
5 a role as an administrator for a huge
6 campus and being a sole administrator
7 in Native Studies, it was very a
8 common place to discuss, monitor and
9 evaluate trending news, and perhaps
10 provide experts and interviews with
11 journalism in all sorts of mediums and
12 the late Daleen was a steady
13 discussion in our department. A month
14 later a colleague's son on the campus
15 who was enrolled I ITEP program which
16 late Daleen was in, decided to search
17 on his own for her. He knew the
18 colour of her car and in June 2004
19 located the car. I recall my
20 colleague, the late Trish Monture,
21 shared this with me during one of our
22 brief visits on a business campus day.
23 She was truly concerned because it was
24 affecting her son who found the car,
25 another student. So that is when it

1 really began to set in with me that
2 this is more serious. As a staffer I
3 felt it was my duty and responsibility
4 to monitor and follow the story and
5 situation in the case other affected
6 people need support, advice and
7 sharing of information. Not only to
8 settle their minds but also to see if
9 there's anything they can do or if any
10 other persons' lives were in danger.
11 That is how I lived that first year.
12 We all lived that way the first year.
13 Silently monitoring late Daleen's
14 disappearance. Keeping my eyes and
15 ears open at a distance without
16 seeming noseey, without trying to act
17 uncaring or trying to be an
18 instigator. My personal feelings as a
19 human being began to be really tested.
20 A year later an active community
21 member named Arlene Carter, whom I
22 knew to have raised in Onion Lake
23 First Nation, met with a handful of
24 students, staff and friends in a local
25 pub on a Friday night to discuss the

1 next day. We planned a search in the
2 Sutherland area. I remember it was
3 cold and starting to blow. I went
4 home early that evening and waited on
5 the news of the search through the
6 media. Nothing in the news came up
7 about the search. My children were in
8 daycare during the week so leaving
9 early in the day on a Saturday to
10 search was not something I could do
11 with them without them getting very
12 cold, but I knew my heart was with the
13 students as they searched, as would
14 become the fashion of my role as a
15 campus administrator. The Student
16 Council Office was just a floor below
17 me and so there were always ways to
18 keep focused on what we were willing
19 to share. Anyhow, come October 2005,
20 there are over a dozen missing
21 Indigenous women and girls in and
22 around the city that were very
23 alarming to a lot of people. Late
24 Daleen was one of these humans. A
25 group formed in Saskatoon and I became

1 a member. Was asked to liaison with
2 families. This meant having to know
3 the missing person's family, their
4 heritage, where they resided, the
5 family composite. Did they have a
6 husband, a boyfriend, a common law.
7 Were they mothers, sisters, nieces or
8 grand-daughters. As part of this role
9 a person will get to know the last
10 whereabouts of the missing person. I
11 learned a great deal about late
12 Daleen. From what I could see, when
13 she was with us is that she was very
14 energetic and enthusiastic and loved
15 to smile." (As read)

16 I work at the Gordon Tootoosis Nikaniwin
17 Theatre and she was in the first program. I wanted to pop
18 that in there.

19 "I learned she had been giving some
20 personal items away, something that
21 Indigenous people see as signs of
22 something either of someone prepared
23 to leave this life or of not
24 returning. These kind of revelations
25 would break my heart over the next 10

1 years... over the last 10 years. On
2 Saturday December 10th, 2005, on
3 International Human Rights Day, a
4 group posted an event in honour,
5 remember, and bring awareness to those
6 who are affected by missing -- to
7 missing then found murdered. A
8 picture of late Daleen was brought to
9 the event and put on a chair with a
10 blanket.

11 This was an extremely delicate time
12 for me to contain my personal feelings
13 of anguish and suppress extremely
14 strong emotions, a common thread
15 throughout these years, and invite
16 families to possibly speak to
17 journalists, provide gifts on behalf
18 of event organizers, and generally
19 watch over and protect the families
20 during what would be a very public
21 display of their frustration, grief,
22 and anger of the missing person
23 experience.

24 When this is happening your mind
25 becomes a flurry of the missing as we

1 do these public events, so late Daleen
2 was on my mind the days leading up to
3 that day, the day of the event and
4 afterwards during the hub of the
5 season, the Christmas holidays.
6 Over the next 3 years -- over the next
7 3 more years there was no location of
8 late Daleen. I became very upset in
9 the early summer of 2008 wondering why
10 after all the work the family has done
11 to educate, speak to MPs, do their
12 walks and (indiscernible) and searches
13 and publicly work with people to help
14 them find her was all done in vain, no
15 word yet. And it broke my heart
16 again, asking if the Creator was not
17 listening to our prayers, to their
18 prayers. And seeing the effort of so
19 many people that late Daleen be found.
20 Then during the Missing Women's
21 Conference at the U of R in August
22 2008, we learned that she was located.
23 The news came during a week of work.
24 So I broke down in tears and asked my
25 vice-president could I leave that day.

1 I had mixed feelings: jubilation,
2 heartbreak, and sobriety, curiosity
3 and pain mixed as to what would be
4 shared.

5 It was during this time that Walk for
6 Justice was coming through Saskatoon,
7 and they just..." (As read)

8 I don't know how Creator puts us all
9 together, but I just want to thank Bernie and Gladys for
10 being there when this time was happening:

11 "We were able to say good-bye and lay
12 to rest this dear and beautiful woman,
13 and seeing her remains in the coffin
14 in a small box. It broke my heart
15 over and over. I again suppressed as
16 much as possible, wanting to scream
17 and scream. 'How wrong is all this?'
18 Over the past 10 years, this anguish
19 and the loss of late Daleen affected
20 me physically. I developed anxiety,
21 emotionally I became depressed and I
22 was sad. Mentally, I had anguish all
23 the time throughout the process. And
24 spiritually, I became weakened.
25 Reading news articles and hearing her

1 name and seeing images of her brings
2 pain to my heart, along with all of
3 the other families that we worked
4 with. My ability to function
5 sometimes during the hardest part of
6 the work brings much anxiety. What I
7 know is that of sister, daughter I
8 barely knew became a very big part of
9 my life after her missing story, and I
10 will never get over what she endured,
11 what her life could have been in that
12 -- in the City of Saskatoon, or in her
13 community of Onion Lake. Would we
14 never again sit near each other at a
15 community event to smile and say hi to
16 each other ever again? I know that
17 she would have been so happy, and by
18 now we would have been good friends,
19 if not one day be a colleague or a
20 fellow activist in the work of
21 women.'" (As read)

22 This victim impact statement affected the
23 judge and he used it as part of his sentence. And I was
24 very pleased with that because all this work that we do is
25 not in vain, and it is effective, and we can't give up.

1 And those are my -- this is Iskwewuk's
2 closing submission.

3 (APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

4 **MS. DARLENE O'KEMAYSIM-SICOTTE:** I just
5 want to thank the supporters that are behind me. Judy
6 Hughes, Elmere Decette (ph), Shirley Wolfe, Gladys
7 Reddick, Bernie Williams, Carol Wolfe, Michelle Audette.

8 And I want to, lastly, say in memory of our
9 missing sisters in Saskatchewan: Melanie Geddes; Dahleen
10 Bosse Muskego; Amber Redman; Karina Bethanne Wolfe;
11 Shelley Gail Napope, my cousin; Emily Osmond, Myrna's
12 aunt; Victoria Nashacappo; Tamara Keepness; Courtney
13 Brianna Johnstone; Happy Charles; Ashley Morin; Shirley
14 Lonethunder; Marie Norma Mike; Brandy Wesaquate; Maggie
15 Natomagan; Mary Goodfellow; Carolyn Burns; Edna Smith;
16 Lavina Tochette; Corrine Moosomin; Myrna Montgrand; Joyce
17 Lileeotson; Ernestine Kayson; Patricia Maye Favel. These
18 are some of the families that we have known -- and Danita
19 Faith Bigeagle.

20 Do you have any questions? Am I done?

21 (LAUGHTER/RIRES)

22 **MS. VIOLET FORD:** Thank you for your
23 submission. Just a couple of questions as to the
24 documents that were submitted. Do you -- would you like
25 to have those entered into as exhibits?

1 Submitted by: Darlene R. Okemaysim-
2 Sicotte, Representative for Iskwewuk
3 E-wichiwitochik

4 **MS. VIOLET FORD:** Yeah.

5 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** And a
6 separate PowerPoint as Exhibit 23; is that right? Yeah,
7 okay. Twenty-three (23), please, is the PowerPoint.

8 **---EXHIBIT NO./PIÈCE NO. 23:**

9 Slide presentation of Iskwewuk E-
10 wichiwitochik (36 slides)

11 Submitted by: Darlene R. Okemaysim-
12 Sicotte, Representative for Iskwewuk
13 E-wichiwitochik

14 **MS. VIOLET FORD:** Thank you. If the Chief
15 Commissioner and Commissioners have questions.

16 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** I don't have
17 any questions. I just want to say thank you.

18 When you say you're a non-legal advocate,
19 you know, I hope you recognize how powerful that is to be
20 in that role, and you've done it with a clear commitment
21 to the women that you work with, the families that you
22 support, and the women that you stand with. And you've
23 brought, with your questions and your presence and your
24 approach to how you have done this, so much information
25 for us to consider, but also paving the way for these

1 kinds of processes that tend to be -- that we expect to be
2 really legal and it's only for the lawyers to do. And
3 you've really helped break that and ---

4

5 **MS. DARLENE O'KEMAYSIM-SICOTTE:** It's very,
6 very hard.

7 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** But you've --

8 -

9 **MS. DARLENE O'KEMAYSIM-SICOTTE:** We were
10 winging it the whole time.

11 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Secret
12 lawyers wing it all the time too.

13 No there was no way for anyone to know how
14 to do this, and you found your way and your voice, and
15 thank you so much for sharing it with us.

16 And to the women standing beside you,
17 Myrna, and all the women with Iskwewuk Ewichiwitochik,
18 thank you.

19 And you know, I had questions but they were
20 for Ms. Audette behind you.

21 (LAUGHTER/RIRES)

22 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Teasing.
23 Thank you. Thank you again.

24 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** I also just
25 want to thank you very much as well, Darlene, for your

1 submissions, your very thoughtful, powerful submissions.
2 And thank you so much for contributing to the work of the
3 Inquiry and for your thorough submissions and detailed
4 recommendations that you've provided to us which I have
5 been reviewing so and I will continue to do so. So thank
6 you very much.

7 **MS. DARLENE O'KEMAYSIM-SICOTTE:** You're
8 welcome. I was shocked that we put 64 in our whole file -
9 - report. They're not numbered. They're all over the
10 place.

11 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Darlene,
12 *miigwetch*. Thank you very much for bringing the beauty,
13 the wisdom, and strengths from our women who are on the
14 frontlines every day doing the hard work. Thank you so
15 much. You've made a big difference to our work. Thank
16 you.

17 **MS. DARLENE O'KEMAYSIM-SICOTTE:** You're
18 welcome.

19 **(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)**

20 **MS. VIOLET FORD:** Chief Commissioner, that
21 concludes the parties that are scheduled to be heard this
22 morning. The time now is 12:30 and we're scheduled to
23 return back at 1:40 for the afternoon submissions. I'll
24 seek your direction on taking an hour and 10 minute lunch
25 break.

1 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Yes,
2 we'll reconvene as scheduled at 1:40 this afternoon.
3 Thank you.

4 **MS. VIOLET FORD:** Thank you.
5 --- Upon recessing at 12:30 p.m./L'audience est suspendue à
6 12h30

7 --- Upon resuming at 1:43 p.m./L'audience est reprise à 13h43

8 **MS. VIOLET FORD:** Good afternoon. Chief
9 Commissioner and Commissioners, Commission counsel would
10 like to call the last Party with Standing for the
11 afternoon, the New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council,
12 Amanda LeBlanc. So you have 40 minutes. Thank you.

13

14 **---SUBMISSIONS BY/REPRÉSENTATIONS PAR AMANDA LeBLANC:**

15 **MS. AMANDA LeBLANC:** Thank you.

16 Good afternoon, elders, families, friends,
17 Chief Commissioner, and Commissioners, Parties with
18 Standing, and other guests here today.

19 I'd like first to acknowledge the unceded
20 Algonquin territory that we're gathering on and thank the
21 Algonquin people for allowing us to do this really
22 important work on their territory. It's both an honour
23 and an obligation that I'm here today representing our
24 constituents.

1 My name is Amanda LeBlanc. I'm from the
2 Wolastoqiyik Nation along the beautiful Wolastoq River in
3 New Brunswick. I'm here today as the interim President-
4 in-Chief of the New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council,
5 and I speak to you representing our constituents as well
6 as the constituents of our sister organization, the Native
7 Council of Nova Scotia which we've collectively received
8 standing.

9 I'll first introduce who we are. The New
10 Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council, formerly the New
11 Brunswick Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians, was
12 founded in 1972. We constitute a community of Indigenous
13 people, both status, non-status, territorial, non-
14 territorial, who live in the ancestral homelands of the
15 Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqiyik, and Passamaquoddy peoples.

16 The New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples
17 Council is duly mandated to protect the rights of
18 Indigenous people who live off reserve and to have direct
19 representation to government, exemplifying self-governance
20 practices.

21 The Native Council of Nova Scotia advocates
22 for united voice between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit
23 people in Nova Scotia. As an elected body, the Native
24 Council of Nova Scotia respects traditional Mi'kmaq

1 governance, maintaining the relationship with the
2 communities' ancestral homelands.

3 Through political advocacy and
4 collaboration with regional, national, and international
5 organizations, the Native Council of Nova Scotia works to
6 improve the social, economical, and political conditions
7 of the Mi'kmaq and other Aboriginal peoples living in Nova
8 Scotia.

9 Since 1971, Native councils have
10 represented the interests of off-reserve, status and non-
11 status Indians, and Métis all across Canada. While we are
12 all Indigenous, historically, some of us have not always
13 been recognized by Canada as Indian people. Through our
14 national voice, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, we've
15 led and participated in monumental court decisions, most
16 recently, the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in
17 *Daniels*. For 16 years, the Congress of Aboriginal People
18 fought tirelessly for the recognition of rights of non-
19 status and Métis people.

20 Canada has employed various methods,
21 including the Indian Registry under the *Indian Act*, to
22 control, civilize, and assimilate indigenous people; in
23 other words, to relinquish their responsibilities. With
24 the government's thought to register all Indian people, a
25 large people didn't register. Some didn't know they were

1 supposed to, others were afraid to acknowledge their
2 heritage, and some were deliberately left off this
3 registry. They and their children were therefore not
4 entitled.

5 Some people were voluntarily and
6 involuntarily enfranchised if they wanted to access things
7 that the average Canadian had access to like education,
8 employment.

9 One of the more familiar ways that a person
10 became a non-Indian pertains to women marrying non-status
11 men and the children who were born from these marriages.
12 The policy result was to deny their rights to the creation
13 of a new class of non-status Indian or the "forgotten
14 Indian".

15 Many non-status women across the country,
16 including strong leaders from our communities, lobbied
17 governments to repeal the discriminatory practises and
18 policies of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

19 In 1985, after many years of pressure, the
20 Canadian government attempted to fix the damage the *Indian*
21 *Act* had caused. As my colleagues have pointed out on
22 various occasions throughout this Inquiry, Bill C-31
23 enabled those who were negatively impacted by section
24 12(1)(b) of the *Indian Act* and their first-generation
25 children to register as status Indians. However, the

1 change and the subsequent changes did not address other
2 discriminatory practices in the *Indian Act* and how it
3 applies to Indigenous people who live off reserve.
4 Inequities remain today and we remain the innocent victims
5 of that Indian policy.

6 While many who were non-status in the early
7 1970s are registered Indians today, most continue to live
8 off reserve and are still represented by Native councils,
9 not the bands that their status cards associated them
10 with.

11 Far too often, the Native councils and the
12 people we represent, the off-reserve, status, and non-
13 status Indian people, are overlooked by governments in
14 what we believe to be a deliberate attempt to shut the
15 door in our faces, preferring to follow the myth that all
16 Aboriginal peoples living in the Maritimes are represented
17 by reserve communities that are scattered throughout.

18 As the Royal Commission on Aboriginal
19 People stated,

20 "There is a history in Canada of
21 putting Aboriginal people in their
22 place on reserves."

23 Nations have been divided by policy and
24 legislation. The violence and the perpetuation of these
25 policy decisions was echoed during the Inquiry proceedings

1 in Moncton. A map of New Brunswick that included the 15
2 reserve communities was shown by the National Inquiry and
3 it was asked for comment by the knowledge keepers.

4 Elder Meg Mahon (phonetic) stated,

5 "The map that everyone is looking at,
6 that identifies us. It is the first
7 act of violation against us, primarily
8 against women. When we look at the
9 land, we are looking at our sacred
10 Mother, looking at ourselves as a
11 people. New Brunswick is a colonial
12 border. We are the Wabanaki." (As
13 read)

14 For nearly 50 years, the Native councils
15 have been asserting our right to self-govern our own
16 communities. As proclaimed by the Royal Commission on
17 Aboriginal Peoples again, we are a political community.
18 However, our members are disadvantaged and denied the
19 necessary material benefits to manage their affairs. They
20 face consistent erasure due to the disproportionate focus
21 by Canadian settlers on Indigenous reserve communities.
22 This makes non-status and off-reserve people extremely
23 vulnerable to continued racism and discrimination in their
24 daily lives.

1 It has long been recognized by the Supreme
2 Court of Canada that off-reserve and non-status Aboriginal
3 peoples are distinct groups with Charter rights under
4 section 15(1), even though they may be very diverse. The
5 Court has noted that these groups have faced a long
6 history of discrimination from others in Canadian society,
7 especially our women and girls.

8 The Supreme Court of Canada decision in
9 *Daniels* as late as 2014 affirmed that the federal and
10 provincial refusal to acknowledge jurisdiction over off-
11 reserve, non-status, and Métis peoples, the daily impacts
12 of the discrimination and marginalization experienced by
13 our women and girls, refusing to mention them in policy
14 puts Indigenous women and girls at risk of greater
15 violence.

16 Again in Moncton knowledge keeper Dr. Judy
17 Clark spoke on the continuing impact of the *Indian Act's*
18 gender discrimination. She stated, "We are survivors of
19 the *Indian Act*, of systemic racism and discrimination."

20 Although the Canadian courts again have
21 long recognized that these discriminatory practices exist,
22 they continue to insist on their application when claiming
23 to fulfil their duties to Indigenous people in Canada and
24 they perpetuate the systemic violence.

25 In *R. v. Midiskis* (phonetic), a Section

1 15(1) challenge, the Federal Court of Appeal ruled that
2 off reserve communities as functioning Aboriginal
3 communities and as worthy of recognition as a reserved-
4 base community.

5 Today over 75 percent of Indigenous people
6 live off reserve and nearly 24 percent are non-status. By
7 Canada ignoring non-status and off reserve people through
8 their chosen representation, such as Native councils, it
9 places our women and children in extremely vulnerable
10 positions to violent victimization.

11 So I'd like to talk to you a bit about what
12 community means to us.

13 So through RCAP and countless other court
14 proceedings it has been long established that we have a
15 right to self-government and a right to self-
16 representation.

17 One of the definitions of community is a
18 body of persons or nations having a common history or a
19 common social, economic, and political interest, but
20 politically community has widely been accepted by Canada
21 to that which is attached to a reserve.

22 Out of necessity, Native councils came into
23 existence. We established our own communities. We
24 celebrate together, we grieve together, and we rally to
25 support each other when the call is made.

1 The United Nations Declaration on the
2 Rights of Indigenous People, to which Canada is signatory,
3 states that Indigenous people have a right to participate
4 in decision making matters in which would affect their
5 rights through representatives chosen by themselves in
6 accordance with their own procedures as well as to
7 maintain and develop their own Indigenous decision making
8 institutions; Article 18.

9 And it further states that Indigenous
10 people have a right to determine their own identity and
11 membership in accordance with their customs and traditions
12 to determine the structures and to select the membership
13 of their institutions in accordance with their own
14 procedures; Article 33.

15 Still Canada continues to refuse to accept
16 our claim to community, even after decades of
17 reaffirmation by the courts. Because we're not a colonial
18 creation, we're not allowed the same recognition that
19 reserve communities experience. As it was stated this
20 morning in relation to child welfare, our right to self-
21 govern has not been extinguished.

22 So here's what we bring to the table.
23 You're living two lifestyles when you live among settlers.
24 Unfortunately our constituents are vulnerable to the day-
25 to-day racism and violence in a way that they have no way

1 from retreating from. However, because of our particular
2 positioning along Canadian society our organizations bring
3 a unique set of expertise to the questions posed by this
4 Inquiry because we are always interfacing between
5 Indigenous communities and settler institutions.

6 Another component is the expertise of
7 Native councils to represent across tribal lines. Native
8 councils are uniquely placed to realize that Nations
9 extend beyond the colonial borders and therefore need to
10 support our fluid and shifting communities.

11 We also shed light that those of us who
12 have lived off reserve, for whatever reason, have unique
13 lived experiences then those who may have spent time in
14 their connected reserve communities. We are constantly
15 having to remind Canadian mainstream society that we are
16 Indigenous.

17 When we are asked where are you from, and
18 we don't respond with a reserve community that they're
19 familiar with, our identity is immediately diminished in
20 the eyes of the asker. We're constantly defending who we
21 are.

22 When we reach out to mainstream services
23 and they don't meet our needs, the phrase we're often
24 faced with is, "Well then go back to the reserve."

25 Native councils have had an exceptional

1 track record of working with researchers. We've developed
2 our own research capacities over the last five decades.
3 The recommendations that we provide to you we've developed
4 from these research capacities.

5 We encourage the Commissioners to give due
6 consideration to the weight of that track record. We also
7 want to draw the Commissioners' attention to the
8 consistent reality in Canada that research outside of our
9 own organizations is not focused on the off reserve
10 populations, especially in the east.

11 This Inquiry has also heard from the other
12 parties that have similar interests to ours. What we're
13 speaking to is connected to what you heard from Roy
14 Stewart and Amy Hudson from NunatuKavut and Alisa Lombard
15 from the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, specifically,
16 that our women and girls have been marginalized and
17 ignored through systemic racism; that the devaluation of
18 our people and that the eraser and minimization of our
19 history and that their policies were to get rid of us, all
20 of which has impeded our ability to support our women and
21 girls and the daily impacts of the discrimination and
22 marginalization just because of where they live, all of
23 which stems from the refusal of Canada to recognize our
24 authority to represent them.

25 So now I'd like to talk a bit about why we

1 chose to participate in the National Inquiry process.

2 We got involved because, like our sister
3 organizations, we were concerned that the particularities
4 of history and current realities in the east we'd be
5 forgotten yet again. We also wanted to ensure that the
6 women and girls who live off reserve and who may also be
7 non-status had representation.

8 The New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples
9 Council initiated a research and community action project
10 called "Looking out for Each Other." This project was
11 designed to enhance collective understanding of cases
12 involving missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls,
13 and sexual gender minorities in eastern Canada with a
14 particular focus on the off reserve.

15 The objective is provide concrete and
16 effective assistance to families and friends when an
17 Indigenous person goes missing by supporting the
18 Indigenous communities and organizations through
19 collaboration, as well as to access the services and
20 resources they require.

21 Activities include opportunities for
22 families, friends, and communities to share their stories
23 and their experiences in dealing with the law, with media,
24 and the justice system when a loved one has experienced
25 abuse, gone missing, or was murdered.

1 Information gathered is being used to
2 support the development of culturally appropriate
3 resources and supports at the community level. The
4 stories provide valuable information in our work with the
5 legal clinics and the law firms to provide services to
6 people seeking this legal advice with policing services to
7 ensure that protocols and tools are responsive to the
8 needs of the Indigenous missing persons and their loved
9 ones and with media to have more helpful and non-
10 discriminatory reporting practices.

11 We're also working with a team of
12 researchers from the University of New Brunswick,
13 Université du Québec à Montréal, St. Thomas University,
14 Memorial University of Newfoundland, Mount Saint Vincent
15 University, King's College, and Dalhousie University to
16 respond to a community identified gapped in practices,
17 policies, media, and policing to develop tools and
18 resources in collaborations with the communities and
19 organizations to assist them in addressing the
20 victimization and loss.

21 Throughout the Inquiry many have identified
22 systemic discrimination at the heart of the missing and
23 murdered Indigenous women tragedies. The recommendations
24 of the New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council draws
25 particular attention to Indigenous people who live off

1 reserve.

2 As we've heard through the Inquiry, many
3 experts are still unaware of how many people live off
4 reserve and who represents them. The New Brunswick
5 Aboriginal Peoples Council continues to hope for an
6 inquiry that is inclusive of the lived realities and
7 perspectives of Indigenous people who live off reserve.
8 We hope that the recommendations that the Inquiry puts
9 forward will not reflect this misunderstanding.

10 Therefore, to assist the Inquiry at this
11 late stage to adequately understand and address the
12 realities for many murdered and missing Indigenous women
13 and girls and their families and communities, we
14 respectfully make the recommendations in our final
15 submission on behalf of us as well as the Native Council
16 of Nova Scotia with whom we've collaborated in preparing
17 the submission.

18 We committed to this process of the
19 National Inquiry to ultimately achieve better outcomes of
20 missing cases of Indigenous women and girls in the east
21 and also for the overall betterment of Indigenous peoples
22 and their communities, whatever that community may look
23 like.

24 We're hopeful that Canada will be truthful
25 in upholding their commitments of implementing

1 recommendations of the Commission in a meaningful and
2 timely manner. We also hope that the recommendations are
3 truly inclusive and representative of all Indigenous women
4 and girls regardless of status or residency.

5 With this hope, we still hold a bit of
6 hesitancy due to Canada's refusal to even acknowledge our
7 existence in their oral submission.

8 I want to turn your attention now to
9 Canada's 10 principles to respecting the relationship with
10 Indigenous peoples.

11 We've heard Canada talk about adopting the
12 United Nations Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous
13 Peoples, yet at the same time, Canada perpetuates outright
14 discrimination in their boldly written number 10, which
15 states,

16 "A distinction-based approach is
17 needed to ensure that the unique
18 rights, interest and circumstances of
19 First Nations, the Métis Nation and
20 the Inuit are acknowledged, affirmed
21 and implemented."

22 But how can Canada reconcile this exclusion
23 with the UN's International Convention on the Elimination
24 of all Forms of Racial Discrimination which states in
25 Article 1,

1 "In this Convention, the term "racial
2 discrimination" shall mean any
3 distinction, exclusion, restriction or
4 preference based on race, colour,
5 descent, or national or ethnic origin
6 which has the purpose or effect of
7 nullifying or impairing the
8 recognition, enjoyment or exercise on
9 equal footing of human rights and the
10 fundamental freedoms in the political,
11 economic, social, cultural or any
12 other field of public life."

13 How can we be confident that Canada's
14 putting the needs of our constituents, our women and girls
15 first while still trying to maintain this distinction-
16 based approach?

17 Indeed, in Canada's oral submission this
18 week, the act of only acknowledging three of the five
19 national organisations and excluding the Congress of
20 Aboriginal Peoples, Canada continues a broader politics of
21 exclusion.

22 Now I'd like to discuss some of the
23 recommendations that you'll see us putting forth to the
24 Commission in our final submission. You'll find that we
25 have 46 in the written submission, which include numerous

1 citations of the research that informs our position. We
2 highlight the fact that urban and rural Indigenous people
3 who live off reserve often have different experiences and
4 needs from Indigenous people who live on reserve, and that
5 a one-size-fits-all response are inadequate for adjusting
6 the realities of the various Indigenous peoples in Canada.

7 The obligation to engage does not only rest
8 with governments, their organisations or their various
9 initiatives. The exclusion and omission of off reserve
10 Indigenous people by researchers and educators is
11 similarly unacceptable.

12 This is, in part, because when populations
13 are not included in research, their existence and needs
14 become or remain easy to ignore.

15 Now I want to start by making three
16 overarching recommendations.

17 Firstly, that any of the recommendations by
18 the National Inquiry must include a strong and meaningful
19 representation from off reserve communities; secondly,
20 that any recommendation that is not consultation-based
21 must still have a focus on off reserve; and thirdly, that
22 an inclusive approach of who is Indigenous needs to inform
23 your recommendations.

24 To illustrate the inclusion of off reserve
25 perspective I'd now like to draw your attention to a few

1 of the recommendations you'll find in our submission.

2 So the first recommendations are about our
3 right to representation and the acknowledgement of that
4 right.

5 As previously stated, through exclusion,
6 Canada is impeding our right to representation. We call
7 on the federal and provincial governments to correct their
8 practices of erasure of non-status and off reserve
9 Indigenous people and to consult with all Indigenous
10 people, including through the five national organisations
11 and their provincial affiliations.

12 Second recommendation. We call on
13 researchers, educators and policy makers in Canada to
14 collaborate with Native councils and friendship centres
15 alike, to focus on off reserve populations in research,
16 training, service provision and government programming,
17 and to cease perpetuating the false idea that Indigenous
18 people only live on reserves.

19 The third recommendation. As mentioned
20 often throughout this inquiry, Indigenous people are
21 perpetually placed in positions of having to educate
22 settler service providers about Indigenous culture, social
23 context and historical relations when seeking services or
24 navigating the justice system. This can result in
25 repetitive retraumatization. It forces Indigenous people

1 to explain and relive painful, systemic experiences in
2 order to teach non-Indigenous people about the current
3 realities of the systemic discrimination they face.

4 We call on all Canadian settler
5 institutions to demonstrate through sustained and vigorous
6 efforts that they're dedicated to acknowledging and
7 correcting systemic wrongs committed against Indigenous
8 people.

9 Our fourth recommendation. Mistrust
10 permeates the interactions that Indigenous people have had
11 with non-Indigenous institutions and services such as
12 police and child welfare services. We've heard from many
13 that neither trust these institutions, nor do they see a
14 path forward and to allow a trusting relationship to be
15 built.

16 Moreover, we've heard that some people view
17 the measures that have been taken by institutions such as
18 hiring more Indigenous employees and requiring cultural
19 competency training as superficial changes that rather
20 than a genuine interest and progress in improving how the
21 institutions interact with Indigenous people.

22 This perception is important to recognise
23 because given genuine efforts will not lead to improved
24 trusting relationships of Indigenous people who do not
25 believe that the institutions are interested in changing.

1 Institutions should expect resistance,
2 frustration and continued distrust from Indigenous
3 individuals and communities, but should nonetheless be
4 committed to the sustained efforts required to improve
5 institutional attitudes and interactions with Indigenous
6 people across the country.

7 This challenging work must be done to truly
8 work towards reconciliation and to address the crisis of
9 missing and murdered Indigenous people in general and
10 Indigenous women, girls and sexual gender minorities in
11 particular.

12 It's simply not enough to state, all I can
13 do is say "I'm sorry."

14 I want to draw your attention to a
15 disturbing story, but it's one that illustrates this
16 problem well. In preparation, please remember self care
17 is important and please seek it if you feel the need to.

18 We've heard from police officers who are
19 Indigenous and those who are women face continued
20 discrimination in many police services. In our research,
21 we heard from an Indigenous female police officer who was
22 violently sexually assaulted at work by her commanding
23 officer.

24 The commanding officer was pushed into
25 retirement as a result and receives his full pension. And

1 despite being found guilty of the assault in a court of
2 law, he was given an absolute discharge because the judge
3 believed that going through the criminal trial meant that
4 he had suffered enough for attacking his employee.

5 In contrast, the officer we spoke with says
6 she's missed valuable promotion opportunities as a result
7 of her complaint and that the assault -- and does not
8 believe that she will ever be promoted from her current
9 position for the same reason.

10 This appalling example illustrates how
11 police officers who are members of marginalised groups can
12 be left vulnerable to abuse by other officers without
13 direct protections from sexual and racialised abuse and
14 discrimination. It also sends a message that police
15 services are unable or unwilling to properly support
16 civilian Indigenous women if they cannot or will not
17 protect their own in their own ranks.

18 With this, we call on the government and
19 mainstream services to implement meaningful change with
20 long-term strategies in place, realising they have decades
21 of mistrust and lost confidence to overcome.

22 Now the next few recommendations are
23 specifically in relation to police services.

24 Our fifth recommendation. We've heard in
25 our research that the process for investigating civilian

1 complaints has been improved in some police forces.
2 However, it's unclear whether all forces are improving
3 civilian complaint investigations and whether similar
4 changes have been made to the process of investigating
5 internal complaints.

6 As we've heard in this inquiry, an example
7 of the need for better processes for investigating
8 civilian complaints against police services comes from the
9 response to the sexual and other abuse complaints by
10 several Indigenous women in the Sûreté du Québec or SQ
11 officers in Val D'Or, Quebec.

12 The women were let down by the Crown
13 prosecutors declining to prosecute any of the 6 SQ
14 officers who were named in the 35 complaints. Adding
15 insult to injury, some local police in Val D'Or began
16 wearing the wrist bands to symbolise support for the SQ in
17 light of the complaints.

18 This action was felt as an act of
19 aggression against the complainants, despite statements
20 that the bands were shown to show support for the SQ as a
21 whole, not for the suspended officers.

22 The response to the complaints in Val D'Or
23 shed light on the need for impartial and robust
24 investigations into complaints by civilians against police
25 officers. It also demonstrated the importance of

1 understanding the systemic violence and discrimination
2 that impacts both how police services interact with
3 Indigenous people and how police services investigate
4 complaints against officers.

5 The situation in Val D'Or raises further
6 questions about how complaints by officers against other
7 officers are investigated and what pressures could be
8 placed upon the complaining officer as a result.

9 We call on police services to increase
10 transparency and civilian oversight regarding how
11 complaints, both civilian and by officers, are
12 investigated and responded to.

13 Independent civilian oversight bodies
14 should be formed to achieve this goal. We join Ellen
15 Gabriel in the recommendation -- and recommend Indigenous
16 led authoritative and well-resourced oversight bodies.

17 At the very least, oversight bodies must
18 include seats for Indigenous representative organisations
19 with authority and resources to initiate independent
20 investigations when required.

21 Disproportionate representation from
22 marginalized communities is appropriate in these oversight
23 bodies, as the populations who are most subject to the
24 discrimination and abuse by police, such as Indigenous
25 people, have more experience and expertise with both

1 systemic discrimination and the discrimination perpetuated
2 by police.

3 There should be a separate oversight body
4 whose jurisdiction includes monitoring for discriminatory
5 application of disciplinary procedures to Indigenous
6 officers.

7 Our sixth recommendation. Police services
8 have had the opportunity to work with media outlets to
9 widely disseminate accurate information about missing
10 persons' investigations so that popular myths don't impact
11 how a loved one responds when someone goes missing.

12 Importantly it's a nearly universally held
13 belief that a missing person can't be filed until the
14 person has been missing for 24 hours. This is not the
15 case as we've heard in this inquiry, but if people believe
16 it to be true then they're likely to wait before
17 contacting police which reduces the chances of
18 successfully finding the person safely.

19 We call on all police forces to establish a
20 uniform media protocol to ensure that police services are
21 effectively using the media to locate missing persons and
22 are appropriately supporting families in their contact
23 with the media.

24 Work with media outlets needs to ensure
25 that accurate information, rather than prevalent myths, is

1 widely available about missing persons' cases. Every
2 police press release should include the information that
3 there is no wait period for missing person.

4 Now I'd like to switch gears a bit and go
5 into children in care with our seventh recommendation.
6 Our research and the TRC's final report have noted how a
7 lack of focus on supporting families and preventing child
8 apprehension greatly contribute to the over representation
9 of children in care.

10 Research with Indigenous families has
11 demonstrated how quickly apprehension is resorted to,
12 including when parents come to child welfare services to
13 receive support in parenting and demonstrate a desire to
14 provide the best for the children.

15 In missing person cases we've also heard
16 that some parents don't report right away in fear of
17 losing their other children. Especially if they're
18 already known to child services.

19 Inquiry testimony also discussed how the
20 funding for child and family services organisations is
21 based on the number of children in care, so that
22 incentives -- there are incentives to apprehend children
23 rather than provide the families with the supports they
24 would need to keep their kids in custody.

25 We call on child welfare agencies to

1 establish practices that prioritize prevention rather than
2 apprehension by working with families to provide the
3 supports that would enable them to care for their own
4 children and using apprehension as a very last resort.

5 Prevention officers -- sorry, efforts must
6 include increasing the resource capacity of Indigenous
7 organisations that serve off-reserve, urban and rural
8 communities such as friendship centres, Head Start
9 programs, to develop and provide programming to support
10 off reserve families who are at risk of child
11 apprehension.

12 Our eighth recommendation. While in
13 community placements are crucial to develop and support,
14 significant attention must also be paid to supporting
15 Indigenous parents before and after their children are
16 placed in care, so that they can avoid losing their
17 children or are able to regain them.

18 When children have been apprehended,
19 parents often face impossibly high standards and the
20 requirements for their children return to them, which
21 frequently makes apprehension permanent.

22 Indigenous parents are therefore not only
23 under higher scrutiny by child welfare organisations, but
24 the higher scrutiny can prevent them from taking advantage
25 of opportunities to improve their skills, which in turn

1 makes apprehension of subsequent children likely.

2 Programming such as Head Start programs,
3 provide support to Indigenous parents, including
4 advocating for parents seeking to regain custody of their
5 children who have been apprehended.

6 Currently in New Brunswick, the majority of
7 Aboriginal Head Start programs are in-reserve communities
8 and there is only one Head Start program for the whole
9 urban center -- in one urban center for the entirety of
10 the off-reserve community in New Brunswick, and they only
11 receive funding to support six families.

12 We call on child welfare agencies to ensure
13 that children in care have continued connection with
14 families and communities and the cultures, by offering
15 Indigenous focuses programs and services rather than
16 colonial one-size fits all programs.

17 We recommend that off-reserve Indigenous
18 families are identified as Indigenous and receive
19 culturally appropriate programming.

20 We call on the Federal Government to
21 provide sufficient resource capacity to off-reserve
22 Indigenous organisations and service providers to provide
23 safe programming for families, children in care and for
24 non-Indigenous care providers.

25 Now our last recommendation speaks to

1 resourcing and it's two part. So as stated in RCAP, most
2 contemporary institutions governing Aboriginal life are
3 regulated by the norms that originate outside of
4 Aboriginal communities.

5 The services they offer are fragmented and
6 sometimes overlapping. These services are extended or
7 withheld from Aboriginal persons on the basis of status
8 categories that are also determined by non-Aboriginal
9 authorities.

10 This results in a service deficiency
11 affecting more than half of all Aboriginal people. In
12 urban and rural off-reserve areas, Aboriginal people
13 confront an array of services, scarcely any of which even
14 show a token acknowledgement of the varied cultures and
15 the needs of the people they are intended to serve.

16 We have heard on numerous occasions during
17 this inquiry that the expertise to offer programs and
18 services that are relevant and safe already exist within
19 our own communities and organisations.

20 We call on the Federal Government to ensure
21 that Indigenous communities and organisations are fully
22 resourced in the provision of programs and services.
23 Secondly, more substantial training is needed for all
24 educators and service providers.

25 For example, we've heard from the educators

1 and professionals who after they receive their initial
2 education on Indigenous culture and Indigenous settler
3 relations, continue to feel woefully unprepared in their
4 professional capacities.

5 We call on all mainstream educational
6 institutions and professional associations to ensure
7 mandatory, meaningful and comprehensive cultural
8 competency training that is developed through consultation
9 with Indigenous elders and organisations since Indigenous
10 people access these services and professions in all areas
11 of Canadian life.

12 We humbly thank those who have participated
13 in the inquiry and for their dedication and sharing of
14 their stories, expertise and time.

15 With that, commissioners, I'd like to thank
16 you for your dedication to this process and wish you luck
17 with the very hard job you have ahead of you.

18 We trust that you will ensure the best
19 recommendations are put forward for all Indigenous women
20 and girls and they can live the lives they choose and
21 deserve. In peace and friendship, (speaking in Indigenous
22 language.

23 (APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

24 **MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** Thank you, Ms.
25 Leblanc.

1 Chief Commissioner, commissioners, do you
2 have any questions or comments for the party?

3 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** I don't have
4 any questions. I just want to express my appreciation
5 with CAP, with NunatuKavut. You have brought a very
6 historically silenced perspective to us and it's one of
7 the areas where I've learned the most, so I want to thank
8 you for that, and thank you.

9 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Merci,
10 Commissaire Robinson.

11 I don't know who said that yesterday or the
12 day before. I think it was Cheryl Maloney who lent the
13 mic to a young Indigenous woman lawyer and I'm glad that
14 she mentioned that, because over the year - many, many
15 months - I was impressed to see young women to take the
16 mic, and the beautiful wisdom in the back to say take it.
17 So it's encouraging and for me this is hope. And I always
18 like your energy each time I got my morning hug, so merci.
19 I just -- one comment to reassure you. I don't know for
20 my colleagues, but we all live outside of the reserve, our
21 own respective community, and we're very sensitive about
22 what's there, what's not for us Indigenous people when we
23 leave the community.

24 But also, to remind you or remind the
25 people who are listening that for some of us here reserve

1 is a creation of the *Indian Act*, another good example of
2 colonialism, you know. So you have us there. I just want
3 to reassure you.

4 And one of the beautiful teachings that we
5 got from the Grand Chief where I live close by in Wendake,
6 that it's not a reserve, it's a territory. So yes, I will
7 make sure that we capture that in our recommendations.

8 Merci, beaucoup.

9 **MS. AMANDA LeBLANC:** Merci.

10 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Thank you,
11 Ms. LeBlanc. I just want to thank you for your
12 submissions, for being a part of the Inquiry, and for
13 providing us with your written submissions and the -- all
14 the written recommendations. Thank you very much.

15 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Yes. I
16 just simply echo what my colleagues have said. My thanks
17 to you for excellent written submissions. They were
18 brilliantly done. Thank you. And also, thank you for all
19 of your hard work all across Canada. It's been a
20 pleasure. Thank you so much.

21 **MS. AMANDA LeBLANC:** Thank you.

22 (APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

23 **MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** Thank you.

24 Chief Commissioner and Commissioners, that
25 concludes the oral submissions that are to be presented by

1 the Parties with Standing. And at this time, we're
2 scheduled to have some closing remarks from lead
3 Commission counsel, Christa Big Canoe.

4 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** I've had
5 a request for a 2-minute break, not a 5-minute break.
6 Okay. So we'll just take a quick 2-minute break.

7 **MS. MEREDITH PORTER:** Okay. Thank you.
8 --- Upon recessing at 2:23 p.m./La séance est suspendue à
9 14h23
10 --- Upon resuming at 2:32 p.m./La séance est reprise à
11 14h23

12 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Good to go. Yes,
13 if we could commence please. Everyone grab a seat.

14 **---CLOSING REMARKS BY/REMARQUES DE CLÔTURE PAR MS. CHRISTA**
15 **BIG CANOE:**

16 Aaniin, wena boozhoo (ph), (speaking
17 Indigenous language).

18 Good afternoon, Chief Commissioner,
19 Commissioner Eyolfson, Commissioner Audette, and
20 Commissioner Robinson. As you know, I'm Christa Big
21 Canoe. I am from the Otter Clan, and I'm Anishinaabe kwe
22 from Georgina Island First Nation. I am lead Commission
23 counsel.

24 I started in Anishinaabemowin just to
25 recognize the unceded territory of the Algonquin to thank

1 the Creator, the grandmothers, the grandparents, those
2 that are here and those that have passed before our
3 ancestors.

4 Today, I'll be making closing statements on
5 behalf of Commission counsel. What a journey the National
6 Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and
7 Girls has had.

8 A debt of gratitude is owed to family
9 members and survivors. It is their strength and tenacity
10 that we must be grateful for. Their calls for a National
11 Inquiry is why we are here. They have demonstrated
12 fierceness in their participation, advocacy, and through
13 their representatives and counsel for the Parties with
14 Standing.

15 You have heard many people and
16 organizations characterize the violence that Indigenous
17 women and girls and two-spirit people are experiencing as
18 a crisis. You have heard compelling and heartfelt pleas
19 for action, you have heard of the need to be bold and
20 brave time and time again. It is my hope that Commission
21 counsel's submissions today will assist you in the tough
22 task that you have ahead of you.

23 But as I said in my evidence overview,
24 today we'll just scratch the surface. Commission
25 counsel's work on a slate of recommendations or advice

1 will really only begin after today.

2 Today is the due for written submissions by
3 all of the parties, and today was the conclusion of oral
4 closing submissions. In the two weeks of closing
5 submissions we have heard from 53 Parties with Standing.
6 Their words and submissions have been powerful,
7 compelling, and have advocated the diversity of opinions
8 and knowledge from many perspectives. Our next steps will
9 include continuing to analyze and look at those
10 submissions, along with continuing to look, read, and
11 analyze evidence received by the National Inquiry.

12 Before I discuss what I will cover today, I
13 must reiterate what has been said by many parties and
14 individuals about the true crisis of missing and murdered
15 Indigenous women and girls. The crisis is not new. As
16 acknowledged by the National Inquiry, it's colonial legacy
17 and continuing colonial attitudes and practices that cause
18 and ensure that the crisis endures.

19 The crisis is continuing. Women, girls,
20 and two-spirited Indigenous people continue to be stolen
21 and murdered, even as the National Inquiry crisscrossed
22 the country. Truth gathering. Weekly we have heard about
23 a missing or murdered sister or child. Our social media
24 news has filled with disappearances of Indigenous women,
25 girls, and two-spirited people the entire time we've sat

1 as a National Inquiry. We have held numerous moments of
2 silence as part of our process when loss or tragedy has
3 occurred, and this has been too often.

4 So the work we are doing must be
5 acknowledged as part of a path, but not the end. For even
6 as we investigate root causes, hear truth, and work to
7 heal, more and more of our Indigenous sisters and children
8 are stolen.

9 It has been acknowledged that the National
10 Inquiry could never be everything for everyone, and you as
11 Commissioners have said time and time again that the
12 government and state actors should not wait for your
13 report to begin actions to end violence against missing
14 and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirited,
15 they should act now. That remains true. Although it will
16 turn around quick in the few months before your report is
17 due, actions could be taken.

18 We have called on all Canadians to engage
19 and learn about the crisis and to act in ally-ship, to
20 educate themselves and act against the violence and
21 oppression, and not to contribute to any further violence.

22 This public Inquiry has created a public
23 record that now must be utilized by all those who want to
24 demand child, all those who want to stop the crisis, and
25 those that want to be part of the required cultural shift

1 that will make this a better and safer place for everyone.

2 My submissions will occur in three parts
3 today: First, I will be continuing and updating on the
4 evidence overview I provided on November 26th, 2018 in
5 Calgary, Alberta; second, I will address processes in the
6 current context in which you're making recommendations
7 and; third, I will more generally discuss recommendations.

8 On November 26th, I advised you of some
9 information or some facts about what we had heard to date
10 in terms of the witnesses and the hearings we had, and
11 those were correct from the time period between May 2017
12 to October 2018, but I do have a couple updates that I
13 think are important to ensure we put on the record.

14 I previously told you, and it remains true,
15 that we had 468 public witnesses in 202 public hearings.
16 That we had 202 in-camera witnesses in 147 in-camera
17 hearings. I previously provided you the number of 641
18 statement providers. This number has been updated to the
19 last statement that was taken, and I can advise that it's
20 actually 744 statement providers in 604 statements.
21 That's almost 100 more than I advised.

22 We've had 7 informal submissions. We've
23 had 600 -- I advised we had 604 individuals that provided
24 artistic expressions. The number is -- has increased
25 since my last updated. The total is 623 individuals that

1 have made artistic submissions, and we have received 224
2 objects.

3 That would change the total participants
4 that I had previously provided you at 1,992 to 2,189. And
5 of course, sometimes, you would have someone who would
6 make a statement but also provide an artistic expression,
7 so the numbers aren't completely drilled down or broken,
8 but I thought it was important you heard that.

9 One of the things I talked about was the
10 sheer number of hours of testimony that we heard,
11 including 552 hours of testimony in 349 hearings. One of
12 the things I didn't get a chance to elaborate on and that
13 I want to make sure is included is to discuss the
14 documents and the video archive that this public record
15 has also created.

16 I am advised that we have over 100
17 tetrabytes of raw video footage that has been filmed by
18 professional audio and visual teams, tech teams.
19 Apparently -- and I don't know this, I can't lie -- a
20 tetrabyte is 100 gigabytes, so that's a lot of
21 information.

22 We also -- and any of the Parties with
23 Standing I'm sure would attest to this and part of their
24 submissions address this -- have a large and voluminous
25 document repository. A lot of these documents that are

1 created, 1) the transcripts that exist out of all the
2 hearings; and 2) is any of the document or evidence that
3 came in with the witnesses, particularly in Part II and
4 III; and finally, we had a number of practice direction 33
5 submissions. So the documents in evidence are large,
6 needless to say.

7 Any of the public documents from the
8 transcripts, (inaudible) documents will be available and
9 will constitute part of the public record.

10 During my evidence overview, at one point,
11 I stumbled and I overlooked listing the witnesses from one
12 of the events. So as I was describing the nine, the nine
13 Part II and III hearings we heard, and I got lost in my
14 notes and did not let you know who the witnesses were for
15 the Criminal Justice System Oversight and Accountability
16 in Quebec City, held September 17th to the 21st in 2018.

17 The witnesses included Chief Terry
18 Armstrong, Mike Metatawabin, Connie Greyeyes, Jacqueline
19 Hansen, The Honourable Kim Beaudin, Kassandra Churcher,
20 Savannah Gentile, Diane Sere, Patricia Tate, Professeure
21 Renee Brassard, and Ellen Gabriel.

22 And just as a refresher from that, we heard
23 many interesting things that week. But Ellen Gabriel
24 reminded us a couple of things that I thought were worth
25 mentioning.

1 She had said,

2 "We are living in a society that is

3 topsy-turvy everywhere we look, where

4 human rights accomplishments are

5 really just on paper, where the UN

6 Declaration on the Rights of

7 Indigenous People is viewed as

8 aspirational, and that they will only,

9 the government, have said in its

10 rights and recognition papers, it will

11 take articles instead of implementing

12 the whole of the Declaration.

13 "Just as the Universal Declaration of

14 Human Rights has become the bedrock

15 for a lot of human rights acts in

16 Canada, whether it's the *Canadian*

17 *Humans Right Act*, whether it's

18 Quebec's, because you cannot

19 discriminate, you have to treat people

20 as equals."

21 She also said,

22 "We know what the root causes are.

23 Society looks at us as if we are

24 privileged, that we get everything for

25 free, and that makes us appear to them

1 as if we're just sitting on our elbows
2 all day and they think we are rich.
3 And if we had such great benefits from
4 the Indian life, then we would be the
5 most richest people in the lands, and
6 we are not. We are the most
7 impoverished. We are the most
8 marginalized. And I don't say that
9 with pride. I say that with sadness."

10 (As read)

11 At this point, we will be showing a video.
12 So during the evidence overview, we ended with the voices
13 of the witnesses who had testified in Part I, the families
14 and survivors that were sharing their story. This video
15 includes footage from our Part II and III hearings, but
16 again, as I explained in the evidence overview, this is a
17 scratch. This barely touches the surface. There were a
18 number of clips and a lot of information that we heard
19 that could be used.

20 So this is going to just show sort of a bit
21 of what we heard during these proceedings. And again, as
22 I mentioned in the evidence overview, even though it's not
23 families or survivors talking, I'm going to ask that
24 everyone do protect their spirit and keep in mind that
25 sometimes it's hard to hear or review our evidence.

1 If I could ask for the video to be shown at
2 this time. Thank you.

3 **--- (VIDEO PRESENTATION/PRÉSENTATION VIDÉO)**

4 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you. Again,
5 I have to show immense amount of gratitude to both Tiar
6 Wilson and Shelby Thomas for putting that compilation
7 together for us.

8 I would ask that we do mark that an exhibit
9 to my submissions.

10 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Exhibit
11 24.

12 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you.

13 **---EXHIBIT NO/PIÈCE NO 24:**

14 Video presentation provided by
15 Commission Counsel
16 Submitted by: Christa Big Canoe,
17 Commission Counsel

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** That actually
19 concludes the first part, the sort of overview or update I
20 wanted to give on the evidence as it related to the
21 hearings.

22 I now am going to turn my attention to a
23 couple things, talking a little bit about our process,
24 your authority, as well as the context that you'll be
25 making your findings and recommendations in.

1 So as we're well aware, the terms of
2 references and the Orders in Council, so I had said, but I
3 will repeat it for the purpose of the record that the
4 mandate of the National Inquiry comes out of the federal
5 terms of reference that laid out the mandate you have to
6 investigate, explore and to make findings and
7 recommendations. All other 13 jurisdiction, governmental
8 jurisdictions put into place. Orders in Council that
9 mimicked and repeated. And your mandate is not a light
10 mandate. Everyone's recognised that including parties
11 with standing and nobody envies the position that you find
12 yourselves in.

13 One of the things that you have the ability
14 to do is to set your own rules and process and you have
15 done that pursuant to the rules of the legal path under
16 10.

17 One of the other rules that's kind of
18 important because it allows you to look at any pre-
19 existing reports, studies and other substantive materials
20 and evidence, just in case we didn't put enough evidence
21 in front of you to make the findings of fact, you consider
22 relevant to discharging your mandate.

23 Well, as you're aware, based on the hard
24 work of our research team, grandmothers, NFAC, a number of
25 people providing you all of the reports, this too would be

1 a very large body of things that you can take into
2 account.

3 So it's in this vein that I want to talk
4 about the current environment in which you're making
5 recommendations. I think the momentum of the National
6 Inquiry itself, the participation we've seen nationally,
7 has actually -- did bring us a momentum. And that we're
8 in a different time context because we come after Truth
9 and Reconciliation Commission where we had reports and
10 reports you can rely on, but what we're seeing more and
11 more of as a society is sort of a true reflection or look
12 at some of our systems and problems.

13 You, as Commissioners, will also have an
14 opportunity in your findings and recommendations, but I
15 just want to give some context. And specifically I would
16 like to raise two reports as examples. And that's what
17 they are. They're examples. They're examples because
18 they speak to only one community in this country. They
19 speak to Thunder Bay. And, of course, it's very timely
20 because both reports release this week.

21 They do speak of policing issues. So when
22 I speak, I'm not painting every single police officer or
23 service with that one brush. I am speaking to you only
24 the findings that were made in both of these reports.

25 The first report I want to draw to your

1 attention is one entitled "Broken Trust". You have heard
2 other parties make brief submissions on this particular
3 report. This was released by Gerry McNeilly. He's the
4 Director of the Independent Police Review Director, so the
5 Office of the Independent Police Review Director.

6 And what has happened is he had called a
7 review into systemic racism within the Thunder Bay Police
8 Services in regards to the things that are happening and
9 occurring as they relate to investigations regarding
10 Indigenous people, like missing Indigenous people or
11 murdered Indigenous people.

12 The report, I would suggest, is a good
13 example of being brave. Having said that, I also have to
14 really press home a really important message, this is a
15 brave report. It speaks truthfully and honestly, but as
16 an Indigenous person and knowing all that you've heard in
17 the course of this inquiry, I would suggest that it didn't
18 require this report to legitimise the story of those
19 Indigenous people that have been experiencing the systemic
20 discrimination that was found to be true; that this is the
21 pre-existing issue that we know as colonial legacy and
22 continuation.

23 Having said that, I think this is an
24 example of a brave report that points out and doesn't hide
25 from the issues. It tries to address them head-on.

1 The Director actually addresses the racism,
2 stereotyping and racial discrimination in a lot of detail.
3 He talks about the impacts and it's a lengthy report. I
4 will not get into it given time, except to -- I do want to
5 point to one point. The Director in his findings -- and
6 this is contained at page 184 -- he talks about the
7 attitudes about Indigenous people among Thunder Bay police
8 officers.

9 This, again, is just one small part in a
10 report, but I think it's an important one because we heard
11 this time and time again that people had this same feeling
12 that for some reason they felt as an Indigenous person
13 they weren't being heard or that there was stereotypes
14 working against them.

15 Specifically the Director states,

16 "Unfortunately, we also heard very
17 disturbing views expressed by some
18 officers in our interviews. While
19 these views were expressed by a
20 minority of officers, they were
21 expressed by more than "a few bad
22 apples." These officers exhibited a
23 contempt bordering on hostility
24 toward[s] Indigenous people,
25 manifesting in an attitude of

1 "[blaming] the victim"...

2 The next page, which I won't go over,
3 includes quotations from interviews that OIPRD had with
4 officers and they are, quite frankly, appalling,
5 disgusting. I don't even want to give them mic time.

6 But one of the other points that was made
7 between the quotation is that some of these disturbing
8 attitudes related to the conduct of death investigations;
9 and, in particular, to the assessment of whether the death
10 of an Indigenous person is deemed suspicious.

11 Essentially, the Director is pointing out
12 the fact that that bias impacts investigations. And I
13 think it's a theme we've heard a lot of.

14 So, that's one of the reports I just wanted
15 to contextualize for you.

16 Another report that was just released today
17 was the Thunder Bay Police Service Board Investigation, a
18 Final Report. It was written by Senator Murray Sinclair.
19 He was the lead investigator. The report informally
20 released in November, but just formally released to the
21 public today at 2 o'clock.

22 So one of the things that I think is
23 important to contextualize is their findings. And so this
24 investigation wasn't looking at the Police Service. It
25 was looking at the Police Board. And the findings as

1 stated in Senator Sinclair's report under that heading,
2 "The Findings" on page 6 state,

3 "The Indigenous population of Thunder
4 Bay experiences racism, both overt and
5 systemic, on a daily basis. High-
6 profile cases of murder and violence
7 are only the tip of the iceberg; every
8 Indigenous interviewee had a personal
9 story, ranging from inferior service,
10 verbal insults, and racial profiling
11 to physical assaults, threats of
12 violence, and, in many cases, the
13 death by violence of friends [and]
14 family members. This general climate
15 of racism was most powerfully
16 described by those who experience it
17 daily; it was also reflected in an
18 analysis of media coverage, statistics
19 [and] on rates of [violence] and race-
20 based crime and prior studies on these
21 issues.

22
23 As a result, the Indigenous community
24 has lost its confidence in the ability
25 and, in many cases, the commitment of

1 the [Thunder Bay Police Service] to
2 protect them."

3 This is part of the context that you'll be
4 doing reports. And another part is the one we saw in some
5 of the video clips where you actually have some police
6 services recognising their contribution to the harm. So I
7 think there's both opportunity to look to both phenomenons
8 (sic) happening; one where we see continued racism as
9 found by independent reviews, and one where we have open-
10 mindedness and maybe this is a window or a door, an
11 opportunity for change.

12 I'm going to turn to my third -- the third
13 part of what I'd like to present to you. And this is
14 speaking more broadly on recommendations.

15 And so I had said earlier that I'm
16 scratching the surface. I'm not going to get an
17 opportunity to go in and I also said earlier that our work
18 really just begins now. So I'm not going to stand here
19 and provide you a slate of recommendations or enumerate
20 recommendations or actually make any positions on the
21 recommendations we've heard. But there are six areas we
22 believe that you should consider as you go into
23 deliberations. And this is based on Commission counsel
24 having raised the evidence and led the evidence and done
25 all the work looking at what we heard in all three parts

1 of evidence.

2 And so there is (sic) six areas. I'm going
3 to list the six areas and then I'll walk through them with
4 you.

5 The first is a space, place and process to
6 hear more truth.

7 The second is about how language matters.

8 The third is it's our position that law is
9 on your side. The breaches have been many. The law is on
10 your side. The breaches have been many.

11 The fourth area is about accountability and
12 implementation.

13 The fifth area is about calls to action.

14 And the sixth is listening to the families,
15 because we know we have the solutions. The solutions lay
16 within community.

17 I'm going to start first with the space,
18 place and process to hear more truth. Over the course of
19 both community hearings and part two, three hearings, and
20 I would suggest even in the last two weeks of submissions
21 by parties with standing, we have heard time and time
22 again that although it was great to have this process
23 here, the truth of people, that there is a real need and
24 desire for you, as part of your recommendations or a part
25 of something that you're suggesting needs to be done, is

1 to create ongoing space or places where families, when
2 they're ready, can tell their truth in a way that people
3 can listen and hear.

4 And so that obviously will look like
5 different things for different people. And, of course, it
6 can no longer be included in our process; however,
7 advocating so that there is continued opportunities. I
8 know we've heard things about how retelling your story can
9 be retraumatizing. We've also heard that healing occurs
10 in the ability to be able to share your story and
11 empowering people to share their truth.

12 So that one is fairly short and concise,
13 that I think there is a need and a desire and we heard it
14 many times.

15 The second thing I'd like to discuss is
16 language matters. There's actually two parts to this and
17 I'm going to describe both.

18 The first starts with Indigenous language
19 or the failure to recognize or support Indigenous
20 language. I mean by state actors, I mean by educators,
21 post-secondary institutions, even elementary schools. We
22 invest little money ever in Indigenous languages in this
23 country.

24 And so one of the things we heard time and
25 time again was about the ability to regain or to share,

1 those that have the knowledge and power of their language,
2 to be able to share it with others.

3 Ellen Gabriel reminded us about language in
4 this country. She said,

5 "It's a new form of assimilation, what
6 policies are doing. It's a new form
7 of assimilation when two languages,
8 which are languages of this country,
9 Canada's linguistic duality, continues
10 to impose upon us, our children, and
11 our youth, that they should know those
12 languages more than they should know
13 their on."

14 She continued,

15 "Our languages contain within them
16 traditional knowledge. It is
17 embedded. We see the links to our
18 ancestors and how they thought, the
19 cosmology, and it is being treated as
20 if it's nothing." (As read)

21 It is once again the crabs in the bucket of
22 where they're at funding for languages and cultures. But
23 there's no evidence that the government is sincere about
24 it.

25 We have heard a lot and we have seen in our

1 process, when we have had the ability to have translators,
2 it's assisted in people being able to share their truth
3 from their language, which also includes their
4 perspective, that connection to the ancestors, and the
5 relationships that are part of language, which is often
6 part of Indigenous law.

7 So as you're moving forward in your
8 deliberations, we, Commission counsel, believe that is one
9 important thing to think about.

10 The other part is also about language, but
11 it's different. It's not about the linguistic background
12 you have. It's about the way we name things.

13 The truth that people have shared has
14 taught me the importance of using words that matter.
15 Language does matter.

16 We heard Dr. Wade and Ann May Schrader
17 (phonetic) as well as other speakers talk about using
18 proper words to describe the violence, not gratuitously,
19 not to talk about violence gratuitously, but to
20 characterize the harm in an appropriate manner.

21 This became a personal lesson that has had
22 a profound impact on me. It is this concept of finding
23 the right words to describe violence and the strength and
24 resiliency of survivors who have shared their truth, that
25 has helped me.

1 It's no secret that I survived an incidence
2 of sexual violence as a child. And over the years, I've
3 gained strength to be able to speak about it and to do the
4 advocacy work I do. In fact, that experience drives my
5 advocacy. I have always had the love of family and
6 friends and it is their love that has supported me. I
7 have been able to say these words out loud, but in a very
8 softened way. I was sexually assaulted.

9 To convey my understanding to other
10 survivors, it helped that I can share that experience,
11 understanding as an Indigenous woman and as a survivor.
12 But it has only been in this process, hearing from and
13 being with and healing with other survivors that I have
14 gained enough strength to name what really happened to me.

15 There is no way that a six-year-old girl
16 understands sexual context and unfathomable that the
17 violence I experienced, that I could understand that that
18 was sexual violence. I did not have sex when I was six
19 years old. I was raped. I was threatened and I was told
20 if I told anyone in my family, I would be harmed.

21 I was unable to disclose or share the
22 violence and the hurt that I experienced until I could
23 truly understand what had happened to me. And it has
24 taken years to stand in this place of strength. Who knew
25 that the love experienced in this process could empower me

1 more?

2 In your deliberations on legislation,
3 policies, and in general, naming the violence is
4 important. We need to stop softening the truth of what
5 has happened to us.

6 My next point is that the law is on your
7 side. The breaches are many. In my overview, I talked
8 about how we had heard so many times, particularly about
9 international human rights or other human rights. I had
10 cited child advocate Corey O'Soup's statistics and the
11 information he had to share with us just to demonstrate.

12 Then again, we go to Winnipeg and we hear
13 from a number of child advocates the truth and reality.
14 And I would suggest that there has been a lot of breaches
15 of human rights. We've all acknowledged them, we've all
16 heard them, but now we need to actually use the law on our
17 side to ensure. And whether it's domestic law or
18 international law, I suggest the law is on your side that
19 will give you boldness and strength in your submissions
20 and in your recommendations.

21 When Dr. Blackstock spoke to us the second
22 time, she provided some information about her role as
23 being a commissioner or a report called "Just Societies".
24 When she testified October 3rd, she discussed a quotation
25 by Eduardo Galiano (phonetic). His quotation was -

1 actually, I'll give where she started and I'll let you
2 know when his quotation comes up. Dr. Blackstock said,

3 "I came upon his quote which I think
4 really captures, to me, the essence of
5 the danger of colonialism as
6 differentiated between and two other
7 forms of discrimination."

8 And this is what he writes. Eduardo says,

9 "Blatant colonialism mutilates you
10 without pretence. It forbids you to
11 talk, it forbids you to act, it
12 forbids you to exist. Invisible
13 colonialism, however, convinces you
14 that serfdom is your destiny and
15 impotence is in your nature. It
16 convinces you that it's not possible
17 to speak, it is not possible to act,
18 and it is not possible to exist."

19 Dr. Blackstock then continued,

20 "And I found that quote so important
21 because too often, we talk about the
22 mechanisms of colonialism and we too
23 often negate the psychology of
24 colonialism, which builds prisons
25 around our own lives and our own

1 existence and gets in the way of
2 people being able to live the lives
3 they wish to have. And because we do
4 not give that adequate attention, we
5 do not often give attention to the
6 structural situations that reinforce
7 that invisible colonialism within our
8 society." (As read)

9 And particular, in my case, because the
10 group I work with most often is children and young people.
11 I am going to suggest to you if the law being on your
12 side, particularly as it relates to international
13 instruments, human right instruments, one of your major
14 focuses should be on the voices of youth and children.

15 The next point that the Commission counsel
16 would like to bring to your attention is around
17 accountability and implementation. I know this has been
18 an area that has been important to each of you because
19 throughout the course of Part II and III hearings, I have
20 heard you ask really important questions to a number of
21 the witnesses about well, how could we implement this or
22 how do we hold someone to account? So I know this is one
23 of your ongoing concerns.

24 And so our recommendation is however you
25 draft or create your recommendations, that you build in a

1 section, a part, a recommendation that speaks specifically
2 to implementation plans. There have been examples of this
3 in other reviews and inquiries in terms of asking for
4 timeframes and responses back, setting up recommendations
5 around implementation committees, implementation time
6 plans, and who or which government, state actor, service,
7 non-profit, Canadian society in general, who is liable,
8 including pointing to leadership.

9 And on that point, I want to remind you
10 about what Dr. Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond told us. She
11 explained,

12 "My own experience was, if you make
13 recommendations and they involve
14 system change, you need to try and
15 shift the system to be permanent,
16 long-term change, take accountability
17 for that area, and continue to report
18 into the future."

19 So that is part of the legacy of
20 improvement. If it's a one-off recommendation, that could
21 be very helpful to one person, but it doesn't eliminate
22 the need to continually go back to the same problem. So
23 systemic type of change is very significant.

24 She also added,

25 "When you have an entity like a public

1 inquiry, when you look at success for
2 those inquiries or institutions,
3 generally, they are more successful if
4 there has been a process to track,
5 monitor, and report on compliance and
6 implementation, that if that isn't
7 there, then we tend to have successive
8 reports." (As read)

9 Now you have heard time and time again, and
10 you have asked yourself that question about, "what about
11 the report collecting dust on the shelf". And I'm going
12 to turn back to Dr. Turpel-Lafond, because she did
13 actually talk to this and she said:

14 "I think in terms of recommendations
15 to change systems, they need to be
16 powerful recommendations. As we know
17 with the Truth and Reconciliation
18 Commission, they didn't call them
19 recommendations, they called them
20 'calls to action', because
21 commissioners felt they were stronger
22 than recommendations. They wanted
23 action. I think making the report
24 reflect the information that's been
25 received about the circumstances that

1 families have been through is
2 incredibly impactful. I think in
3 terms of the recommendations to change
4 systems they need to be powerful
5 recommendations, as we know, with the
6 Truth and Reconciliation Commission."

7 (As read)

8 She also said:

9 "So there may be some areas that are
10 recommendations, there may be some
11 things that are called 'calls to
12 action', so it's important to make
13 that distinction and, I think,
14 building on what we've learned." (As
15 read)

16 She, on a personal reflection, said:

17 "Certainly, as one person I don't see
18 reports as dust. I mean, I appreciate
19 they don't get actioned, but when I
20 look at the importance of reports that
21 have been produced in Canada, like the
22 Royal Commission on Aboriginal
23 Peoples, the report on Truth and
24 Reconciliation Commission, these are
25 real significant." (As read)

1 In my life they're very significant to me
2 and they're deeply meaningful and they're impactful, and
3 I've seen a lot of progress and change.

4 One of the common things about any public
5 inquiry is you often don't feel the impact in the time of
6 the process and sometimes even until years after. Often
7 the impact follows and it's part of that cultural shift,
8 so there's value and importance.

9 As a litigator who often cites things like
10 RCAP and AJI, even in litigation up to the highest levels
11 of Court, there is value in the report and it takes
12 change.

13 We've also heard sometimes it takes
14 generations to change. One example I often use is my now
15 13-year-old who was 11 when I started this. My -- and
16 whose birthday was this week and I missed. He, in Grade
17 5, learned about residential schools. I didn't learn that
18 in Grade 5.

19 Now I'm a second-generation survivor. My
20 father attended, so he knows more than his classmates.
21 But to come home from school and actually have a good
22 conversation with me about what Indian residential schools
23 were, I found encouraging. Not the topic. The fact that
24 in Grade 5 they're already talking about these things.

25 And when people ask me well why was I

1 coming here or "what can I do at the National Inquiry",
2 I'm like, "I don't know", but I hope that my daughter's
3 class when she's a young woman and she goes to a school -
4 a non-Indigenous school - they're going to be talking
5 about the strength and resiliency of Indigenous women in
6 the face of all the adversity they've had, given the
7 crisis of MMIW.

8 The next point was on call-to-action. I
9 think actually Dr. Turpel-Lafond already addressed that.
10 This is not to be, you know, any recommendation on the
11 prescriptive nature of how you come to what
12 recommendations, but I think she made a good point. I
13 think you can have both and I know that it's in your
14 discretion and that you have the authority to make both
15 the findings and recommendations you will.

16 But there may be a good way or balance that
17 those things - that need for cultural shift - could be
18 achieved in something like calls-to-action that demand
19 people to take up the cause, versus more detailed
20 recommendations. So I encourage you to put thought to
21 maybe doing more than just one thing.

22 The final point was on that the families
23 and survivors know best. They have the solutions and time
24 and time again, from witnesses and from parties, we have
25 heard "we have the solutions".

1 We've heard a lot about the de-evolution of
2 services back to Indigenous community, we've heard time
3 and time families talking about when they were dealing
4 with various services, whether it was medical services,
5 coroner services, police services:

6 "Why aren't they asking me. I knew
7 her best. I can tell you what she was
8 wearing. I can tell you where she
9 was, where she may be, but if you wait
10 too long and you don't include me it's
11 too late." (As read)

12 So a really important consideration, I know
13 that you have all actually expressed this too, that the
14 families and survivors' truth and stories come first and
15 that you recognize they do have the best solutions.

16 It's time that trust is a two-way street.
17 We've heard about listening and changing, part of the
18 change is not about Indigenous people, particularly
19 Indigenous women and girls, and two-spirited people,
20 having to change. We don't need to change. We need
21 others to change.

22 And we talk about trust. We've heard about
23 legitimate reasons such as these two reports, why people
24 are afraid of things like the police. Maybe it's time
25 that more governments, states, services, put trust in

1 Indigenous people. Trust for them to know they know
2 what's most important to them, they know what they need,
3 they know the basics of livelihood, spirituality, mental
4 health, that will help their communities. The trust
5 street works both ways. It's important that people start
6 beginning to trust rather than make choices for Indigenous
7 people.

8 In conclusion, as I said in my evidence
9 overview, you have a large body of evidence before you.
10 It's so large. You have the ability and authority to look
11 at any report you want. That is also very large and
12 daunting. But you have kept at task in many regards and
13 although our process hasn't been perfect, it has been a
14 first. There has not been a national inquiry before this.

15 Learning as we go and absorbing a lot of
16 the information has been something that you have done
17 attentively and read well, and there is confidence that
18 you will put forward and meet the mandate that has been
19 given to you.

20 One of the things that I think, if I could
21 leave on a couple -- two points. One that exemplifies
22 Indigenous peoples' empowerment, Indigenous peoples' skill
23 and Indigenous people advocacy, is the fact that this
24 process has had the most Indigenous lawyers of any legal
25 process in this country to date. We've had a number of

1 allies and other counsel, and everything that everyone has
2 had to contribute has been of assistance and in a capacity
3 to act in the public interest to provide you information
4 you need.

5 but I've got to return to those Indigenous
6 lawyers and largely women lawyers. If you look at the
7 lawyers in the room and you've looked over the course -- I
8 believe Mr. Darrin Blain put it well when he said, "I have
9 over 70 sisters and a few brothers".

10 And that's not to knock our male
11 colleagues, but the amount of women that have come to this
12 process either to represent or as legal counsel is
13 astounding. And particularly the number of young
14 Indigenous lawyers. It's almost a point of pride, just as
15 an Indigenous lawyer myself, to see the strength of the
16 representatives and the counsel that stand up here and
17 that make submissions or ask tough questions it's uncanny,
18 but I also believe it should be exemplifying to states, to
19 services, to all Canadians.

20 It's not like we're in the stone ages.
21 We're smart people and that doesn't require a law degree.
22 It requires the tenacity, the care, the love and the
23 compassion for families and survivors and for our
24 communities.

25 And to see that many of them in this space,

1 contributing and working, I just say Chi-miigwetch. And
2 some of them are going to be kick-butt lawyers in the
3 future and representatives, so my Indigenous sister feels
4 a lot of pride for them.

5 Finally, the families and survivors, I
6 started this with my overview and I'd like to finish with
7 this, is I will never be the same.

8 I have had the opportunity to work with
9 amazing people - and some of the legal team are behind me
10 here - other staff, but the families, survivors, who
11 trusted us enough to sit down with us or to talk on the
12 phone with us, even before we were in a hearing. Who
13 trusted us enough with their stories, with their precious
14 memories, with their strength and with their sadness. The
15 impact that will have on me for the rest of my life has
16 ever changed me and I'd say for the better. It's enriched
17 me.

18 Even when we've shared tears and even
19 through the sadness. That type of trust and that type of
20 relationship, if we all had those, I don't think we'd be
21 talking about missing and murdered Indigenous women. We'd
22 be probably having tea like Dr. Smylie suggested.

23 Those are the submissions. I thank you
24 very much for your attention and time. It's been a
25 pleasure presenting the evidence overview and some of our

1 basic concepts on what we believe may be of assistance to
2 you. Chi-miigwetch.

3 (APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

4 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I believe that
5 concludes this portion, but there will be a closing
6 ceremony, but for formalistic process this would conclude
7 and it will be the last public hearing that we hold, so.

8 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Okay,
9 then until April 30th, 2019, time and place to be
10 announced, we are adjourned.

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you.

12 (APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

13 (APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

14 (SHORT PAUSE/COURTE PAUSE)

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** It's been brought to
16 my attention we just need a couple minutes to reset the
17 space for the purpose of the closing, so just a couple
18 minutes.

19 **---CLOSING CEREMONY:**

20 **M. MATHIEU MELLON:** Alors tout le monde, on
21 sent qu'y'a de l'excitation. Peut-être un peu de
22 nervosité alors que la journée tire à sa fin.

23 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** So if we
24 could ask everyone to take their seats we'd like to get
25 started with the closing ceremonies of the truth seeking

1 process of the National Inquiry.

2 **M. MATHIEU MELLON:** Alors on demanderait...
3 on vous demanderait, s'il vous plait, de regagner vos
4 places pour qu'on puisse débiter la cérémonie de fermeture
5 de ce processus de consignation de la vérité.

6 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** So right now
7 I'd like to call up our National Family Advisory Circle
8 members that we have here, Charlotte Wolfrey, Norma
9 Jacobs, Barbara Manitowabi, Sarah Nowyakallak, Michah
10 Arreak, Gladys Radek and CeeJai Julian.

11 **M. MATHIEU MELLON:** Alors on inviterait les
12 personnes qui viennent d'être nommées à s'avancer à
13 l'avant et ils sont membres du Cercle conseil national des
14 familles.

15 **(SHORT PAUSE/COURTE PAUSE)**

16 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** So we'll ask
17 Norma Jacobs to say some closing remarks on behalf of the
18 National Family Advisory Circle.

19 **M. MATHIEU MELLON:** Alors on invite Madame
20 Norma Jacobs à prononcer quelques mots pour le Conseil
21 national des familles.

22 **ELDER NORMA JACOBS:** (Indigenous language
23 spoken)

24 I just would like to let everyone know how
25 proud I am to be participating in this Inquiry and to have

1 the support of everyone here, especially the family
2 members, and it's just been quite a journey.

3 I've learned so much and I've felt so much
4 from everyone, and I, you know, felt the love of all of
5 the women that came to share their stories, and all of the
6 people who participated in sharing their expertise with
7 us.

8 And we've learned a lot, you know, and it
9 was great to always be here and to stand with one another
10 to be strong and to know that when we stand together that
11 there is so much more strength.

12 It reminded me, you know, of unfolding our
13 bundles, and that we all had something to bring here to
14 this place, to this gathering, and that as we opened the
15 bundles and looked inside what we seen, you know, was not
16 pleasant, and that we are rewrapping those bundles as we
17 move through this Inquiry and put everything back into
18 place and to be proud of who we are as Indigenous people.

19 And so, you know, with those bundles now of
20 everyone's story that we can move together in a good way
21 and to take action with the things that we've learned, and
22 to take them to heart and for us to really begin to
23 activate, you know, all of the things that we learned and
24 all of the injustices that had happened over time that we
25 now have been validated for that.

1 So we're ready to move forward and to do
2 the work as we need to do as Indigenous people and to make
3 right those wrongs.

4 And, you know, I think that we forget over
5 time that our people are a fierce people, you know, and we
6 became colonized and we forgot about our power that we
7 have from within that the Creator gave to us many, many
8 years ago.

9 And so I'm proud to see that today that
10 through our journey that we've been revitalized and we're
11 re-energized, and we remember today, we remember those
12 ancestors, remember our stories, and remember all the
13 values and the protocols that were given to us to guide us
14 in this earth.

15 So I'm proud to be a part of that. And I
16 don't feel alone anymore, and I have all of you to thank
17 for this journey, for the support and for the love that we
18 share for one another.

19 The Commissioners worked hard and, you
20 know, I supported them always, and they've done a great
21 job. They're doing a great job.

22 So we're putting -- rewrapping our bundle
23 in a good way and that we are going to, you know, continue
24 to draw from that good bundle to strengthen us and to keep
25 us strong through this time as we move forward together.

1 Nia:wen

2 **(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)**

3 **MS. CEEJAI JULIAN:** I know I'm not on the
4 schedule, but I just really want to emphasize that the
5 National Family Advisory Circle has supported me in so
6 many ways of healing through the loss that I had of my
7 sisters and many of my friends in the downtown east side.

8 And I want you guys all please don't
9 forget, don't forget what you're learning here. You know,
10 all those recommendations we can apply it in our lives
11 today.

12 I've got to go back to the downtown east
13 side, and it's like people are dying every day, you know,
14 like our woman aren't safe, and that's why I'm here. We
15 fought hard for this.

16 And, you know, I'm just grateful. I'm
17 grateful for the Commissioners. I'm sad because it feels
18 like I'm not going to see you guys again. And I look out
19 and I see the supporters and some of them -- you guys have
20 good recommendations and you kicked their ass, right, and
21 I really -- well, theirs, but anyways, I just wanted to
22 say thank you, and safe travels, and all my relations, and
23 mahsi cho to my ancestors.

24 **(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)**

25 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** Miigwech.

1 Miigwech National Family Advisory Circle.

2 I'd like to call up Audrey Siegl, who's one
3 of our knowledge keepers that we work with here -- well
4 throughout the Inquiry for -- she's been with us through
5 the entire time.

6 **M. MATHIEU MELLON:** Alors on aimerait
7 inviter Audrey Siegl qui est une de nos gardiennes du
8 savoir qui est avec nous depuis le début.

9 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** I'd also
10 like to call up the Commissioners to join Audrey through
11 this process with the commitment sticks.

12 **M. MATHIEU MELLON:** Alors j'inviterais
13 également les commissaires à se joindre à nous à l'avant
14 pour la remise des bâtons d'engagement.

15 **MS. AUDREY SIEGL:** My teachings are first
16 to acknowledge the land, to say (Indigenous language
17 spoken). I thank you. I thank the ancestors. I thank
18 the land. I thank the people of the land.

19 Introduce myself. (Indigenous language
20 spoken). My name is sɣlɛmtəna:t. I am from Musqueam. I
21 am the granddaughter of the late Stephen and Selina August
22 and I am here as a survivor, as a family woman, and as
23 someone the Canadian government is still trying to
24 eliminate. So for each of you to be here and stand with
25 us, I raise my hands to the drum, to the drummers, to the

1 Commissioners, to everyone who has made this work.

2 I have the amazing fun task tonight of
3 calling the names of the people who are going to be gifted
4 copper. These aren't just pieces of copper. This is part
5 of what is at least over 800 pieces of copper that have
6 been carved and gifted by my aunt (Indigenous language
7 spoken) Bernie Williams. She is the only woman mentored
8 under Bill Reid and she is fierce and she is a warrior and
9 we are so grateful for her to have walked this road with
10 us.

11 So first we would like to thank the Elders,
12 Vincent, Elaine, Reta Gordon, the land for his songs, Eli
13 for the qulliq, and as -- any of these people present can
14 make their way to the front.

15 I want to say the names of two women from
16 this land who went missing, Macy and Shannon. Carry them
17 with you. Send love to them and their families. These
18 are two names too many and we say them today to honour
19 them and to bring medicine, not just to them, but to all
20 who loved them.

21 So the gift of copper is one of the highest
22 gifts. As a Haida woman my aunt carves these. They are
23 often a gift given from chief to chief. They are gifts,
24 again, of honour, of recognition, of support. And our
25 Commissioners will be sharing them with you so that you

1 can always carry a reminder that you're loved and that the
2 work you've done here has made a huge difference.

3 We say howa, (Indigenous language spoken),
4 hai, hai, miigwech.

5 (GIFT REMITTANCE/REMISE DE CADEAUX)

6 **FEMALE VOICE:** Sorry, did I do that?

7 (LAUGHTER/RIRES)

8 **MS. AUDREY SIEGL:** So now we move on to --
9 oh, boy, we're already balling up here -- the commitment
10 sticks. So first I'd like to share about the commitment
11 sticks that Elder Fred Johnson in 2015 from Alkali Lake
12 which is near Williams Lake in B.C., he created these
13 sticks as a movement, as an awareness, as a recognition of
14 what needs to happen.

15 That -- this is -- these sticks are a
16 commitment to stop the violence, to stop the violence that
17 continuously leads us back to the same place of murdered
18 and missing Indigenous women, to live with respect and
19 dignity and honour, to act with respect and dignity, with
20 honour, whether you are a man or a woman, whether you are
21 a child or a grandparent. This is what we need to do. To
22 me this is the number one and only call to action.

23 So we would like to -- again, the
24 Commissioners are already here and Barb Manitowabi is
25 standing with me. So we're going to call up the parties

1 with standing who have shared so much of themselves and
2 their lives and their time. They've each brought their
3 own medicine. They've each brought their own teachings.
4 And they have each, I'm sure, experienced their own trauma
5 and hopefully found healing from that trauma that
6 inevitably brought them here to stand with us as family in
7 the National Inquiry.

8 The first party is the Nunatsiavut
9 Government, Johannes Lamp and anyone who was presenting.
10 They had to leave? Okay.

11 So we're going to move on to the Manitoba
12 Keewatinowi Okimakanak, MKO, Grand Chief -- I notice the
13 MKO at the end.

14 (LAUGHTER/RIRES)

15 **ELDER AUGUST SIEGL:** And thank you for your
16 patience. I am -- I believe that our language is a huge
17 holder of knowledge and if I fumble, please know that I've
18 done my best and I mean no insult.

19 Grand Chief Garrison Settee et al. So we
20 have amazing women standing here to represent the
21 Association of Native Child and Family Services agencies
22 of Ontario, Katherine Hensel, the Iskwewuk Ewichiwitochik,
23 Darlene -- oh, she had to leave and she has asked Mirna to
24 collect her stick for her. Okay. Somebody will gather
25 that stick for her. And Amanda LeBlanc, the New Brunswick

1 Aboriginal People's Council.

2 (APPLAUSE APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

3 (GIFT REMITTANCE/REMISE DE CADEAUX)

4 **MS. AUDREY SIEGL:** And Corey O'Soup here
5 still? I'm just checking my notes again. Thank you.

6 (APPLAUSE APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

7 **FEMALE VOICE:** Corey, Corey, Corey, Corey.

8 (LAUGHTER/RIRES)

9 **MS. AUDREY SIEGL:** And if there are any
10 parties with standing that we forgot to mention or who
11 haven't received their commitment stick yet, please feel
12 free to come up now and let us honour you.

13 (APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

14 (SHORT PAUSE/COURT PAUSE)

15 **MS. AUDREY SIEGL:** So the next phase is the
16 one I look forward to the most because I love singing. We
17 have a change. So sorry. Rewind.

18 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** So before we
19 go into honouring the Parties with Standing and all our
20 family members in the ceremony that we're going to have to
21 honour all the survivors, families of missing and murdered
22 Indigenous women and girls, we're going to ask our
23 Commissioners to do their closing comments first, and then
24 we'll go into a ceremony. And that way with the
25 grandfather drum and the extinguishing of the Qulliq, but

1 we'll have our women drummers come up as well to honour
2 our women as well.

3 **MR. MATHIEU MELLON:** Donc avant de procéder
4 aux dernières étapes de la cérémonie où on va rendre
5 hommage aux membres des familles et aux survivantes, nous
6 allons inviter les commissaires à dire un mot de la fin.

7 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** So if you
8 guys want to take a seat for a couple of minutes, and then
9 we'll do this part of the agenda first. Thanks.

10 Oh, so I'm going to call up
11 Commissioner Robinson to come up and do her final remarks.

12 **--- CLOSING REMARKS BY/REMARQUES DE CLÔTURE PAR**

13 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:**

14 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Nakurmiik.
15 Thank you.

16 And first, I want to, of course, thank the
17 land and the people who have welcomed us here. We stand
18 on the unceded, unsurrendered land of the Anishinaabe
19 people. We have had many from that community welcome us
20 this week and join us through this process, and it's been
21 a true honour.

22 I am a guest in your lands as well. I live
23 in Hull. Go Hull. And I hope I walk gently on these
24 lands, and I hope that the work that I do on these lands
25 will make these lands safe for Indigenous women, girls,

1 trans, and two-spirit. It's never lost to me whose land I
2 stand on.

3 I want to acknowledge those that have
4 guided our week, who have kept this space safe, who have
5 kept the spirits of the Indigenous women and girls who
6 have been silenced or whose lives have been stolen, their
7 spirits safe in this place with the offerings of food,
8 prayer, pipe ceremony, song. It's fundamental that that's
9 the foundation of every day.

10 And I want to thank Vince and Elaine
11 Kicknosway, Reta Gordon, and Eelee Higgins for your
12 prayers, your presence, and for the fire. Nakurmiik
13 (speaking Inuktitut). Nakurmiik.

14 I want to acknowledge the flame of the
15 Qulliq, but also the teachings about Inuit law that Eelee
16 shared with us this week, those laws that too often aren't
17 given their rightful place of purpose, understanding,
18 guidance, and power.

19 As she shared with us the Inuit laws, I'm
20 not going to call them principles, they are laws,
21 particularly about (speaking Inuktitut) being welcoming
22 and about how we go through and work together to come to
23 understandings, and how those laws are foundational to the
24 solutions became clearer to me again, and I wanted to
25 thank Eelee for that reminder.

1 I want to thank those -- the drummers --
2 the Eagle River drummers, as well as those women who come
3 up to the front, pick up a rattle, pick up a drum, and end
4 our days with songs. I've learnt some of those songs and
5 they've been such powerful medicine. As our hearts hurt
6 and our lungs tighten up, and our diaphragms doing this
7 work become so -- I'll be blunt -- enraged, the release
8 and the hope that the drums and the songs bring have been
9 some of the most powerful medicine for me. So thank you.

10 I want to acknowledge the families in the
11 room, families and survivors, those that are here to
12 observe, those that came with Parties with Standing, and
13 the members of the National Family Advisory Circle.

14 I want to acknowledged one specific family
15 member, Kathy Meyers. I want to acknowledge your
16 attendance. I want to acknowledge your punik (ph), Angela
17 Meyers, and I want people to say her name and I want
18 people who know where she is to give Kathy and her family
19 the answers they need. And those that play any role, to
20 do the jobs they are tasked to do to the best of their
21 abilities.

22 And I say this for Kathy, and I say it for
23 all the mothers, all the fathers, all the sisters, all the
24 families of the heart who need answers. Justice cannot
25 ever be forgotten and truth can't ever be forgotten is a

1 fundamental objective that we always have to strive
2 towards.

3 I also want to acknowledge Laurie Odjick,
4 for I know this is your battle too.

5 Members of the National Family Advisory
6 Circle, CJ, Myrna, Gladys, Charlotte, who had to leave,
7 but you were here with us this week, Micah, Norma, Barb,
8 and Sarah, and your supports and your family who were here
9 with you this week, thank you again for walking with us
10 and guiding us.

11 Our grandmothers, Lacey (ph), Blu, Bernie,
12 Kathy, Penelope; I want to acknowledge Leslie Spilletts as
13 well, and our medicine keeper, Audrey Siegl. You're
14 quickly moving into Grandmother territory. But definitely
15 knowledge keeper is the role, I think you hold.

16 Our hardworking staff, always, I give you
17 my appreciation and love.

18 And to the Parties with Standing, for
19 giving us so much to think about, this is a legal mandate.
20 Our task was to investigate the root causes of violence
21 against Indigenous women and girls. And this was because
22 families have wanted this for many, many, many years. And
23 they deserved it. It was right and it was needed.

24 The investigation is complex, the scope is
25 incredibly broad. The time we were given was tremendously

1 lacking. But we heard powerful truths, truths that now
2 that we know, nobody can ignore and nobody can put back in
3 their boxes and nobody can silence, nobody.

4 We have heard from close -- what was it --
5 close to over 2,000 people, 2,000 people; families who
6 have shared their truths to us directly; families and
7 survivors who have shared their truths with statement
8 takers; who have given, through their words or through
9 their expression, artistic expression, songs, beadwork,
10 poems, your truth. And that guides the way forward. That
11 is the pavement on the road we must now walk.

12 I want to acknowledge the tremendous
13 courage this took, to stand up against the forced violence
14 and forced silence that is at the root cause of this
15 national epidemic crisis crime.

16 Your words, I will never forget. Your
17 strength, I will never forget. Your humour, I will never
18 forget. Your compassion, I will never forget. Your love,
19 I will never forget. And that love I know is so much the
20 key to how we go forward.

21 Parties with Standing, again, thank you for
22 representing your organizations. And as I often do, I
23 want to share a little bit with you what I heard. It's an
24 important thing to let people know that you're hearing
25 what they're saying.

1 And I want to share with you a little bit
2 of what I heard this week. It's without dispute that the
3 cause of the violence is colonization and continued
4 colonization: colonial attitudes, colonial policies,
5 colonial actions, colonial inactions that continue today.

6 We are desperately in need of disrupting
7 and dismantling this. Now, we've heard a lot about how,
8 how this needs to be done. We've heard about how human
9 rights are a tool, a guide, a path. In the United Nations
10 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is a road,
11 is a path.

12 And I agree, they're fundamental, but what
13 I've also heard is all those papers, all those words don't
14 mean anything without action, without believing, without -
15 - sadly, without believing she's worthy, without believing
16 she's equal. She is my sister. She's all of our sister,
17 and our daughters, and our mothers, and our grandmothers.
18 We would never tolerate this if we saw Indigenous peoples
19 as equal. It's just as simple as that.

20 So action is required to show that that is
21 believed, that it is believed that she matters. That
22 means police officers doing their jobs. That means Child
23 and Family Services staff understanding the best interest
24 of the child is not the best interest of their child; it's
25 what's in the best interest of an Indigenous child

1 according to her family and her people's world view. We
2 all show love in different ways. We all have different
3 beliefs and practices. Respect difference.

4 And I think fundamentally -- and I'm going
5 to end here -- what I've heard is that it has to be
6 Indigenous people that provide the services and lead the
7 way to self-determination in service provisions, to self-
8 determination in governance, to self-determination in land
9 and resource management, to self-determination in every
10 aspect of Indigenous people's lives.

11 It's going to be a long road and there's a
12 lot to be done to get there. But in the meantime -- and
13 this is the message to non-Indigenous peoples, the
14 Canadian government and all state actors -- the time to
15 think that Indigenous people need to be helped, saved,
16 that's over. I really appreciate some of the
17 recommendations and the actions and the best practices
18 that were brought forward by some governments, but
19 fundamentally, if it's not designed by and for Indigenous
20 peoples, it will continue to be non-Indigenous people
21 thinking they can save Indigenous peoples.

22 So do what you promised to do according to
23 your international domestic laws, the promises that you've
24 made in Treaties, and support and stand with Indigenous
25 people. They don't need saving. Quite frankly, for this

1 country to be saved, we need to follow them.

2 And that's all I'm going to say until the
3 final report. Stay tuned.

4 **(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)**

5 **M. MATHIEU MELLON:** Thank you. Thank you
6 so much, Commissioner Robinson. Merci beaucoup,
7 Commissaire Robinson.

8 I'd like now to invite Commissioner
9 Eyolfson to address his remarks. Alors j'aimerais inviter
10 le Commissaire Eyolfson à prononcer son mot de fermeture.

11 **--- CLOSING REMARKS BY/REMARQUES DE CLÔTURE PAR**

12 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:**

13 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Thank you.
14 Merci. *Chi-miigwetch.*

15 First, as a guest in this territory, I want
16 to thank the Algonquin and Anishinaabe people for hosting
17 us in their traditional unceded homelands this week.

18 I also want to acknowledge all the families
19 and survivors of violence across the nation and the
20 spirits of the missing and murdered Indigenous women and
21 girls, including trans and two-spirit people, for you are
22 at the heart of our work. And we'll continue to do our
23 very best to honour your shared truths.

24 I would like to acknowledge the guidance
25 and support, the prayers, the pipe ceremonies provided to

1 us throughout the week by our elders with us here, Elaine
2 and Vincent Kicknosway, Reta Gordon, and Eeelee Higgins,
3 for maintaining the fire in the *quilliq* for us all week.

4 And I'd also like to acknowledge the drum
5 and the drummers for their songs this week.

6 And thank you to Gerry Pagnin and Coralee
7 McPherson for joining us this week in the last few
8 hearings for offering to share your gift of beadwork as
9 healing for all. Thank you very much.

10 I also want to thank our MCs this week,
11 Christine Simard-Chicago, Christian Rock, and Mathieu
12 Mellon.

13 As you know, the National Inquiry is
14 mandated to inquire into and report on the systemic causes
15 of all forms of violence against women and girls,
16 including 2SLGBTQIA people, and to make recommendations on
17 concrete actions that can be taken to improve their
18 safety.

19 And work of this magnitude has many moving
20 parts, and it could not have been done without the support
21 of so many people.

22 I'd like to acknowledge and say special
23 thanks to all those who have supported and engaged in the
24 work of the National Inquiry, including our special
25 grandmothers and cultural supports, Istchii Nikamoon, our

1 Earth Song, Blu Waters; Gul Kitt Jaad, or Golden Spruce
2 Woman, Bernie Williams; Nutalavak (ph) or Louise Haulli;
3 Elder Kathy Louis; Penelope Guay; Evelyn St. Onge (ph);
4 Leslie Spillet; and our Audrey Siegl for providing us
5 with guidance and support through these hearings.

6 And I really want to thank all the members
7 of the National Family Advisory Circle for their
8 commitment to walk through us on this journey -- to walk
9 with us on this journey and to provide us with advice on
10 our work. And I'd like to just mention those that are
11 here with us this week to support us: CJ, Myrna, Gladys,
12 Charlotte, Micah, Norma, Barbara, Sarah, and all their
13 supporters that are here as well.

14 I also want to thank all of our hardworking
15 staff for their commitment, for their many long hours, and
16 for sharing in this journey with us, and all of those who
17 have joined in person or via webcast this week and over
18 the last approximately 2 years to honour the spirits of
19 missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and to
20 honour those continuing to live with violence today.

21 Over the last 2 years, the National Inquiry
22 heard -- held 15 community hearings where family members
23 and survivors of violence shared their truths; 9 knowledge
24 keeper, expert, and institutional hearings; and these
25 final 2 weeks of final submissions, for a total of 26

1 legally-mandated hearings.

2 And because of the shared truths, we've
3 heard about how women, girls, and trans, and two-spirit
4 people continue to encounter violence on an ongoing basis,
5 and the many underlying reasons for that violence. We've
6 heard it described as a crisis, an ongoing crisis, and
7 that Indigenous women and girls continue to be impacted on
8 a daily basis.

9 So as we close our hearings with final
10 submissions this week, I'd also like to thank all the
11 Parties with Standing and their respective leadership, and
12 representatives, for also joining us in this Inquiry, for
13 the hard work in developing their final submissions and
14 sharing their submissions with us.

15 In preparing those submissions, many of you
16 listened to the voices of women and girls and trans and
17 two-spirit people that shared their truths, and for many
18 of you, your submissions were by and for Indigenous women
19 and girls. And the valuable information you shared with
20 your final submissions assists us in developing actionable
21 recommendations on how to address these issues at regional
22 and national levels.

23 Just looking back personally, I think that
24 to unburden yourself in the spirit can be one of the
25 toughest acts of courage in life. And we've heard from

1 many courageous grandmothers, mothers, sisters, aunties,
2 daughters, grandfathers, fathers, brothers, uncles, sons,
3 and other family members, including families of the heart,
4 about their loved ones who have gone missing or have been
5 murdered, as well as many survivors of violence.

6 But to witness the strength of the families
7 and survivors has been incredible and empowering. The
8 strength of their shared truths will always be in my heart
9 and observing such strength and resiliency has always and
10 also given me positive hope that change on this stain that
11 has covered this country for so long can take place.

12 All Canadians have a responsibility to take
13 action to address the issue of violence against Indigenous
14 women and girls, and 2SLGBTQI people, and I firmly believe
15 that the work of this National Inquiry is an opportunity
16 for change as we move forward.

17 To be clear, the launch of our final
18 report, due April 30th, 2019, will not be the end of this
19 work, and our recommendations must not be forgotten. It
20 will inform Canada and the nations and the peoples of this
21 land on how to improve outcomes and living conditions for
22 all Indigenous women, girls, two-spirit and trans people
23 and increase their safety. We all have a responsibility
24 to unite on this journey to support safe spaces and
25 equality for everyone.

1 Again, I want to thank the respected
2 Parties with Standing who have shared with us and helped
3 honour all the missing and murdered loved ones with their
4 presence and their knowledge this week.

5 And in closing, I want to acknowledge the
6 women, girls, trans, and two-spirit peoples who have been
7 stolen from our communities and acknowledge all who are
8 continuing to live with violence today. You are loved.

9 Chi-meegwetch, marsi, nakurmiik, thank you,
10 merci.

11 (APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

12 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** Meegwetch.

13 Now, I'd like to call upon
14 Commissioner Audette to provide some closing remarks.

15 **--- CLOSING REMARKS BY/REMARQUES DE CLÔTURE PAR**

16 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:**

17 **COMMISSAIRE MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Merci
18 beaucoup, Madame la Chairperson. Où est votre chaise
19 homme? Ah, vous êtes là, Monsieur Mellon.

20 (Speaking Indigenous language.)

21 On est chez vous ici, alors un gros merci.
22 Merci de nous accueillir -- I'll speak English don't
23 worry. De nous accueillir sur ton territoire et je joins
24 mon amour et mes pensées aux paroles de la Commissaire
25 Robinson sur les pas qu'on fait sur ton territoire.

1 Merci beaucoup à tous les aînés qui ont
2 fait les prières du début jusqu'à la fin, comme cette
3 semaine au *quilliq*. Ça c'était très important-là dans
4 tous les endroits où nous sommes allés.

5 Et je veux dire un gros merci à toutes les
6 personnes qui nous ont suivies, soutenues, encouragées,
7 critiquées, pour faire mieux les choses, mieux travailler,
8 mieux écouter, mieux recevoir la vérité, au cours des 20
9 quelques mois ou 2 années intensives.

10 Vous êtes plusieurs, les familles, les
11 survivantes, les leaders autochtones, nos belles
12 guerrières des Premières nations, du People Métis et du
13 People Inuit. Merci à nos alliés, hommes et femmes, à
14 travers le Canada, qui ont appris sur nous, qui ont
15 grandis avec nous, qui ont réagis pour nous et avec nous.
16 Merci beaucoup.

17 Je veux dire merci aux gens du
18 gouvernement, des provinces, fédéral, provincial et des
19 territoires, les gens des municipalités, qui ont osés
20 poser des questions soit par internet ou par téléphone,
21 pour essayer de comprendre pourquoi cette tragédie.

22 Je crois aussi que nous avons la présence
23 d'une membre du Parlement du Gouvernement Fédéral à
24 quelque part par là-bas. Je vous salue, madame. Y'a un
25 homme qui me cache.

1 Alors maintenant je vais vous dire en
2 anglais. In English. It's going to be something to say
3 this in English when my brain and my emotion don't do the
4 translation. I'll try my best.

5 Before I start, I said in French to you,
6 Laurie, and your people, your nation, thank you for
7 accepting me in your territory. What a courage. You have
8 a Parliament on your territory. So I'm sure you have the
9 1-800 direct line to present the report to them or to help
10 us when it's going to be time to present the report and
11 recommendations.

12 And I was saying in French, I know we have
13 the visit of one of the members of the Parliament, Madame
14 la ministre qui est ici. Ah, I see you. Bonjour,
15 Madam Bennet.

16 Yes, thank you so much. Thank you for the
17 Elders. I know Qajaq and Brian, you said thank you to
18 everybody, so I won't repeat.

19 But this special thank, I want to say it, I
20 would like to invite Serge. Serge was there since the
21 beginning, never grumpy. Come on, you're part of the
22 Inquiry. And he's the one who made sure this week I'm
23 here. He took care of many things this week so we can
24 have a roof tomorrow night when we go back in Québec City
25 for those who know.

1 But thank you for the families and
2 survivors. Beautiful teaching last week in Wendake when
3 something happened to our family, Marie Morrison (ph) and
4 Jacquie Gistabish (ph), Nancy Jordan, and other families
5 from Québec were giving me hope, but at the end of the day
6 what they were saying, it was sincere. But I was sitting
7 there and saying, oh, my god, I just lost a material when
8 the women in front of me lost a sister, a mother, a
9 friend, a relative, a sibling and Serge and I was like,
10 ho, we have to stand up and continue this work here in
11 Ottawa. Merci, Serge.

12 I would like also to invite our
13 grandmothers Cathy, you, Louise, toi aussi de venir ici,
14 Blue, young Blue, all the grandmothers, you can come here
15 please. I speak English, la.

16 **(LAUGHTER/RIRES)**

17 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** La -- ask
18 Laurie, will tell you what is la in English. It's not la
19 for you, la, Maître Big Canoe, it's la for, you know,
20 people in Quebec.

21 Bernie, there she is.

22 I'd like to ask all the NFAC members to
23 come here also, please, and family members that accept to
24 work and to paddle with us in this huge canoe that we had
25 to build and can paddle at the same time, all of you

1 families that work with us.

2 Remember when the announcement was made in
3 Gatineau, we were sitting there not knowing what will be
4 the next minute, not the next day but the next minute.
5 And five of us that time made sure that we will, chew,
6 read, read over and over this decree, order in council,
7 and we saw some space there where we can have families
8 walking with us or letting us walking with you. We saw
9 some space where we were able to have grandmothers to
10 guide us, our own laws.

11 You're a family member, toi aussi, a
12 survivor, tu peux venir. I was inviting all the survivors
13 that works at the Inquiry that can stand here.

14 And you will understand why I'm asking you
15 to join me; two simple reasons.

16 On a personal note, I have to be honest,
17 that was quite a journey. Very powerful. We learned. I
18 learned. We cried, we yelled, we wonder, we question, we
19 had all kinds of emotion, but never I had a doubt ever,
20 ever about our personalities, can we get along or not.

21 One of the best values I found in this
22 journey was respect. They let me be crazy, clumsy,
23 Frenglish, or creating words, but they let me be who I am,
24 and that's so powerful. And coming back on me I was able
25 to give back and say what a beautiful diversity we are,

1 and this is my family.

2 I leave my family, like all of us, to go to
3 hearings, meetings, or demonstrate, or walk, or denounce,
4 or hope, but I was coming to a place where I was always
5 welcome. Thank you so much.

6 And for the grandfathers and grandmothers
7 that welcome us everywhere we went to follow your
8 protocols, your love, the way we should do things, thank
9 you so much. I learned. We learned.

10 All of us here, even if there were four of
11 us sitting there, on T.V. or in the room, let's not forget
12 that hundreds of us were receiving your truth, your
13 message, your tears, your laugh, your hope, and we had,
14 and still today, did this in a most respectful way, which
15 for me I say in English with an open mind, with an open
16 spirit, with something that will help us to do the work we
17 have to do.

18 So they don't know what I'm going to ask
19 them to do but I'm sure they'll say yes.

20 This commitment stick or stick commitment,
21 this stick, it's a symbol. Very powerful for me when I
22 saw that in one of our hearings in Calgary, c'est ca, with
23 Chef Bello, we say in French, that I was hoping that it
24 would be something that we do everywhere we go. And I
25 know Maggie, Sandra, I saw Hilda and other women in this

1 room -- oh, there she is -- the families, the survivors
2 that participate or didn't participate but knows that
3 there is an Inquiry, perfect or not perfect it was or is,
4 doing enough, not enough, but something is happening,
5 among many other things across Canada.

6 My commitment to you, my commitment as a
7 mom, as a partner, as a member of a big family here, is I
8 want to walk with you, not for you, but beside you. I
9 want to laugh, cry. I want to do things spiritually or
10 physically side-by-side with you even after the Inquiry.
11 I'll be free moccasin. More free to speak. But this is
12 my commitment to you. And I'm pretty sure my family here
13 has the same feeling for you.

14 If you can stand up family members so I can
15 see you. I can see you. I want to see you. Merci.
16 Merci beaucoup.

17 So this is my commitment to you. And
18 families, with me, yes? Parfait. That same energy. That
19 same energy.

20 Our mandate is not over yet. You know how
21 sad I was because we didn't have the extension. Okay,
22 fine. There's so many other systemic causes that need to
23 be examined, that need to be studied, that need to be
24 relooked or brought to the federal government, provincial
25 government, and territorial, and our own government also.

1 I'm pretty sure in our report we'll mention that so many
2 things need to be done, still happen, or, you know, to do
3 the work that we were mandated to do.

4 So I know we have a woman who represents
5 the federal government, Carolyn Bennett. She's a human
6 being. She's courageous to come here. And I want to
7 acknowledge that.

8 That you will receive a report, a report
9 that will come from hearts, from passions, from
10 determination, sometimes frustration, but with lots of
11 hope, lots of hope that there'll not be cherry picking --
12 what did Dr. Pamela said -- but that it will be for me for
13 sure we recognize as citizens and members of government,
14 we recognize that something was wrong and still today. We
15 apologize, but with those apologies there's action.
16 Simple. That's my medicine for today and my hope.

17 So I'll say I love you. It's not over yet.
18 And my God we will read, and read, and read, and continue
19 the reading while Serge does all the rest at home. Oh, no
20 home over there.

21 **(LAUGHTER/RIRES)**

22 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** And to make
23 sure that I can be there and be the strong woman I was and
24 still today for you families and survivors.

25 Merci beaucoup.

1 (APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)

2 MR. MATHIEU MELLON: Thank you. Thank you
3 very much.

4 I'd now like to call Chief Commissioner
5 Buller to address a few words.

6 J'aimerais maintenant inviter la
7 Commissaire en-chef Madame Buller à prononcer son mot de
8 clôture. Merci.

9 --- CLOSING REMARKS BY/REMARQUES DE CLÔTURE PAR CHIEF

10 COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:

11 COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Thank you so
12 much. Thank you.

13 I want to start by acknowledging the
14 spirits of the missing and murdered Indigenous women and
15 girls, 2S, and trans people. They are always with us.
16 They've been in the room this week, they still are. Thank
17 you for joining us. And stay with us as we move ahead
18 please.

19 Thank you. Merci, et Krisani, Tansi,
20 hello. Thank you.

21 I want to thank the Algonquin Anishinaabe
22 for welcoming us into their region this week. Gracious,
23 warm hosts. Thank you.

24 Thank you, Laurie.

25 I also want to acknowledge the families and

1 survivors of violence who are here today and have been
2 here this week, and those who have been joining us on our
3 Webcast. Remember always that you are loved, and we are
4 inspired by your strength, resiliency, and perseverance
5 for justice. You're not forgotten and you never will be.

6 We know the truth. We know that Indigenous
7 women and girls, 2S and Trans people all across this
8 nation have experienced a disproportionate rate of
9 violence of all descriptions. This is a harsh reality
10 that families and survivors have been teaching us and all
11 Canadians. We must continue to learn from them.

12 Each mother, auntie, daughter, friend,
13 cousin, niece; all are vital to the health and wellness of
14 our families and communities. We will continue to carry
15 this message of their importance, of their value, in our
16 hearts and in the words that we will write.

17 As always, this has been a very informative
18 week. My goodness, all the things we've learned, and this
19 is our final public hearing.

20 We could not have done this work without
21 the guidance, encouragement, and support of so many
22 people, all of whom are committed to the truth.

23 I want to thank our respected Elders who
24 are here this week, our knowledge keepers as well:
25 Vincent, Elaine, Reta, thank you for your prayers and

1 stories, your guidance over the week, your handholding.

2 We couldn't have gotten through this week without you.

3 Thank you.

4 Eelee, thank you also for -- wherever you
5 are. Where are you? Eelee, for tending the qulliq.

6 You know, the qulliq gives us light; it
7 helps us go in the right direction. The qulliq keeps us
8 warm at times when we feel the cold, the fear, the
9 anxiety.

10 Eagle River Drummers, thank you for your
11 songs, your prayers, and thank you for reminding us that
12 every time we hear the drum, we hear our own heartbeat
13 even stronger.

14 Thank you Christine, Mathieu, Christian,
15 for keeping us on track, and I might I add, on time. You
16 know how important it is to me to be on time.

17 I also want to thank our health and
18 wellness team, the people who have the purple lanyards;
19 the people who always seem to have the Kleenex when you
20 need it, and the glass of water, even when you don't know
21 you need it. Thank you for taking care of us all.

22 I want to also thank our communication team
23 who have, in very hard circumstances, made sure that
24 Canadians are listening and learning our lessons.

25 I want to also thank our research and legal

1 teams. They have done an incredible job of marshalling
2 evidence, not only from witnesses that people can see here
3 in the hearing room or a room like this, but also all the
4 reports and documents that we have to consider as part of
5 our work. Thank you to all of you for doing that.

6 Also, I want to make special notice of
7 people who you don't see but whose work is invaluable; the
8 statement gatherers, some of whom are here today.

9 They have met with people all across
10 Canada, more often than not one on one to collect truths,
11 to honour truths. They are our true frontline, and I'm
12 grateful for each and every one of them.

13 **(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)**

14 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Speaking
15 of people who work outside of the camera spotlight and
16 outside of public view, more often than not, thank you to
17 our translation team at the back of the room. I know who
18 you are.

19 **(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)**

20 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** You give
21 voice to us. Thank you. English, French, Inuktitut,
22 thank you.

23 And thank you also to our translation team
24 at the front of the room who are signing. Thank you.

25 **(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)**

1 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Now
2 let's hope they don't turn off my microphone.

3 Thank you to the AV guys at the back there.

4 **(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)**

5 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** I don't
6 know how they do it but we have internet, we have Webcast,
7 we have microphones, we have power bars all across Canada.
8 The AV team is brilliant, nothing less than that. Thank
9 you very much for making us look good and sound good.

10 **(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)**

11 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Our
12 logistical team. Wow. I see at the back of the room
13 there. I know who you are. You constantly work magic to
14 make this happen. Thank you so much. We wouldn't be in
15 the right place at the right time without you. And I know
16 you take calls from stranded travellers at weekends,
17 middle of the night, and you still make it happen for us,
18 so we are truly grateful.

19 **(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)**

20 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** And I
21 want to mention the rest of the National Inquiry staff who
22 aren't here, who are working at home or working in our
23 offices all across Canada. We wouldn't be here today
24 standing here without each and every one of you. Thank
25 you for your dedication, your commitment, your long hours

1 to the truth. You're making it happen.

2 Thank you to the parties with standing who
3 have appeared all across Canada with us. The questions,
4 the submissions have been beyond my expectations. The
5 excellence in advocacy, both by lawyers and advocates, has
6 been truth telling in and of itself.

7 Thank you for your commitment to the truth
8 and thank you for your commitment to your clients.

9 I just want to take a moment here. I had
10 an "Ah-ha" moment earlier this week.

11 A long time ago back in the dark ages when
12 I was a lawyer and I still had black hair, you could take
13 the number of Indigenous women lawyers and put us in a
14 minivan and still have a seat or two left over. And I was
15 honestly touched by looking around the room and seeing the
16 number of highly skilled, incredibly smart women,
17 Indigenous women, who are lawyers.

18 I'm also greatly impressed with the
19 Indigenous men who are lawyers and advocates. I think
20 we'd need a couple of buses now to get everybody on board.
21 And I'm so grateful for that. It's changed the legal
22 landscape of Canada. Each one of them in their own way
23 has changed the legal landscape.

24 I want to thank the allies who have helped
25 and worked with all of our Indigenous lawyers. You've

1 made a pretty awesome team in your entirety.

2 I don't think I can do this without kind of
3 losing it a little bit. I want to thank my fellow
4 Commissioners. And I think about all I can say is this:
5 When we first met, over two years ago now, almost two and
6 a half years ago, we were strangers. Over time I think
7 we've become even stranger.

8 **(LAUGHTER/RIRES)**

9 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** I'll get
10 a translation for you, Michele.

11 This is our last day of public hearings.
12 It isn't a sad say, even though we're saying good bye and
13 thank you to so many people. This is more like a change
14 in seasons where we get to look back on the gifts of the
15 past and look forward to the opportunities that the future
16 provides us.

17 Through the courage and grace of the many
18 the many families and survivors across Canada. We have
19 heard the truth and we have gathered the truth in numbers
20 far beyond my expectations. Now it's time to honour the
21 truth through our final report and to start looking
22 forward to giving life to that truth through
23 commemoration.

24 While we are doing this, while we are
25 preparing our final report to honour the truth and move

1 forward to give life to the truth, I want to pass along a
2 message to all of Canada. We have heard from families and
3 survivors and others this week and for months all across
4 Canada that there has to be a paradigm shift, a change in
5 culture, a change in thinking.

6 So here's the message to all Canadians, all
7 governments, all agencies, all individuals. It is now
8 time to rediscover and reset your moral compasses. Join
9 us, the Indigenous people in Canada all across the country
10 in our canoe. It reaches from coast to coast to coast.
11 There's room for everyone. Learn from us. Heal with us.
12 Let's have some difficult conversations.

13 I will gently remind all Canadians the non-
14 Indigenous people will not be steering the boat, the
15 canoe.

16 **(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)**

17 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Don't
18 miss the canoe. Don't be left on the shore because you
19 don't own the shore.

20 **(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)**

21 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** But I
22 can assure you this, there's no need to be afraid, Canada.
23 You will be in safe hands. Even if you try to tip our
24 canoe, even if we run into some rough waters now and then,
25 you will enjoy the safety in our canoe together, the

1 safety that Indigenous women and girls have not enjoyed,
2 have not been able to enjoy. You'll be safe with us,
3 safer than we have been with you.

4 Thank you all. We'll meet again at the end
5 of April with the final report.

6 And in the meantime, Canada, get on board
7 our canoe. Thank you very much.

8 **(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)**

9 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** *Miigwetch.*
10 *Miigwetch* for those powerful words from our Commissioners.

11 Right now, I'd like to call up Laurie
12 Odjik. I'd like to call up our elders, Vince and Elaine
13 and Reta to come up, please.

14 **M. MATHIEU MELLON:** Alors on aimerait
15 inviter à l'avant Laurie Odjik, ainsi que nos aînés Vince,
16 Elaine et Reta.

17 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** And I'd like
18 to call up the women singers and drummers in the room to
19 come up as well.

20 **M. MATHIEU MELLON:** J'aimerais inviter
21 également les joueurs et les joueuses de tambours à venir
22 nous rejoindre à l'avant.

23 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** So that's
24 Audrey Siegl, Granny Bernie, Barbara, Bobbi-Jo if she's in
25 the room, Christa Big Canoe, Tarya (phonetic), and if

1 there's anyone else that would like to come join us,
2 please do so.

3 So right now while we're organizing this
4 part of the closing agenda, what I'm going to do is I'm
5 going to ask Laurie Odjik to go by the spirit chair. The
6 spirit chair represents our loved ones that are gone, that
7 are missing, that have passed on. And because this whole
8 Inquiry is about our loved one, she needs to be centre,
9 along with our families.

10 And because this is Algonquin territory,
11 and out of respect and the honour and love I have for my
12 sister Laurie, I'd like for her to move the spirit chair
13 beside the bundle.

14 **M. MATHIEU MELLON:** Alors pendant qu'on se
15 prépare pour la suite de la cérémonie de clôture, on
16 aimerait inviter Laurie Odjik à venir proche de cette
17 chaise qui représente, en fait, les esprits qui nous
18 permettent d'honorer la mémoire des femmes et des filles
19 autochtones disparues et assassinées.

20 Comme nous sommes en territoire Algonquin,
21 Laurie qui nous accueille sur son territoire a un rôle
22 important à jouer.

23 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** So next I
24 would like to have our Commissioners up here, our Parties
25 with Standing, all the family members that are in the room

1 and survivors, if you could please come up.

2 **M. MATHIEU MELLON:** Alors on aimerait
3 inviter les commissaires, les partis ayant qualité pour
4 agir et les membres de famille qui se trouvent dans la
5 salle à venir se joindre à nous.

6 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** Let's make a
7 big circle here.

8 **M. MATHIEU MELLON:** Alors s'il vous plait
9 on va essayer de former un grand cercle.

10 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** We have a
11 short recess right now. No? Okay. Never mind.

12 **(LAUGHTER/RIRES)**

13 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** I think
14 sometimes the first thing you have to is admit your
15 mistakes and I made two big ones.

16 First, I want to thank the members of NFAC
17 who have been joining us in person and by webcast all
18 across Canada. And I guess sometimes you forget the
19 people who are the closest to you, inadvertently because
20 they're standing so close to you.

21 So grandmothers, knowledge keepers, and
22 NFAC circle, I apologize for not mentioning you earlier.
23 But thank you to our grandmothers and NFAC for wrapping us
24 in support and love in all the work that we do. Thank you
25 to each and every one of you.

1 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** *Miigwetch.*

2 Okay. So is everyone here in our circle?

3 Charlotte?

4 So before we ask our women drummers and
5 singers and our drum group to continue, we're going to go
6 into to have Vince and Elaine and Reta make -- start with
7 the ceremony that we had discussed.

8 **M. MATHIEU MELLON:** Donc avant de procéder
9 à la partie où on écoute les joueurs et les joueuses de
10 tambours, on va demander à nos aînés Vince, Elaine et
11 Reta, d'adresser quelques mots.

12 **ELDER RETA GORDON:** Hello, everyone. Is
13 this on? I had all this to say but it has been said. So
14 all I would like to say is, I would like to thank all, as
15 a group too numerous to name individually, those who
16 worked in groups, then came together as a team to put in
17 place this fantastic, well-organized conference.

18 So I'll just say a little short prayer.

19 **(PRAYER/PRIÈRE)**

20 **ELDER RETA GORDON:** Till we meet again may
21 a rainbow always touch your shoulder, may the sun shine
22 through your window pane, and may all who enter your abode
23 be blessed and let us never forget that we will always be
24 remembered by the happy tracks our moccasins make in many
25 snows yet to come.

1 And I said at the beginning of this
2 gathering that the Lord said we're all his children, so
3 remember that. We're all brothers and sisters and treat
4 every brother and sister, no matter from the smallest to
5 the oldest, from those way up there to those who
6 unfortunately are down there. Never look down on anyone
7 unless you're looking down to give them a hand up.

8 I ask the Creator to those who live close
9 and those who live far, to guide them safely home to their
10 loved ones.

11 And I won't be seeing you and I wish each
12 and every one of you Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, and
13 a Happy, Healthy New Year.

14 Til we meet again, God bless.

15 **(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)**

16 **ELDER ELAINE KICKNOSWAY:** Sometimes every
17 day you start talking about peoples and sometimes every
18 day there is good news and then sometimes every day there
19 is not so good news.

20 So we want to acknowledge the 15-year-old
21 girl that was found murdered this morning. And that was
22 in The Pas, Manitoba. Her death is being investigated as
23 a homicide.

24 And across this nation, as we continue the
25 wave, the wave of the truth, the wave of our talk, the

1 wave of our languages, the wave, the wave of even our
2 sorrow through the rivers and the tears to acknowledge
3 we're grabbing onto each other and holding tight.

4 As a domestic violence survivor myself,
5 there was a point when it was dark but I looked towards
6 the light, tried to figure it out, to know that there's
7 not an alone place. It's just trying to figure it out
8 half the time through your voice and your song and your
9 dance and whatever can help you stand tall. And if it's
10 holding on tight to somebody, hold on tight, because the
11 wave is coming. We are the wave.

12 The beauty of you and the gracefulness is
13 the wave. And through that comes the whistles, comes the
14 songs, comes the dance and the ceremony. Even if you
15 shake, you dance through it. You sing through it. You
16 tell the truth.

17 And so today I blow the eagle whistle for
18 you all. It's one that I've carried when I met my family,
19 when I went back home as a Sixties Scoop survivor; there
20 is different places of where we've been raised, to know
21 that city and know the land, to not be afraid to tell our
22 truth, to be okay through role models, to know that
23 there's so many more that aren't talking but we're
24 encouraging them through our voice, through our song,
25 through even just sitting together, hearing a little bit

1 of a piece, to say, "Yes, that's me."

2 So I blow my eagle whistles to you and
3 thank you for your breath of life.

4 And I'm going to start in the west and then
5 I'm going to go to the other directions. *Miigwetch*.

6 **ELDER VINCENT KICKNOSWAY:** Boozhoo.
7 Kwekwe. Ahneen.

8 Forgive me, for I know not the greeting,
9 salutation to the Inuit. (Speaking in Indigenous
10 language). *Chi-miigwetch*. (Speaking in Indigenous
11 language).

12 We are so grateful as it has been
13 acknowledged earlier that this beautiful territory that we
14 are in, we acknowledge each and every one of the
15 Anishinaabek Algonquin peoples.

16 We are so grateful. We've heard all the
17 very wonderful voices of thanks from all the Commissioners
18 to all the parties to the individuals. We are so grateful
19 at this time to acknowledge, give thanks to everyone that
20 it has been acknowledged. We are so grateful. And yes,
21 as it has been said, as long as we continue to paddle
22 together in that large canoe, that *chi chimaun*, that we
23 can make it to where we are going. And that's what we
24 want in life, is a better focus on a violence-free
25 lifestyle for our women, girls, trans, and two-spirited,

1 and to all the men who too face that, those young ones.

2 We will carry as best as we know how those
3 abilities within our own individual selves for what we
4 have seen, heard, smelled, spoke, taste, and felt. And
5 may we do that and continue on from this day forward to
6 make those changes. We say to our spirit gods and I say
7 to our spirit helpers, a big *miigwetch*. And I ask Gitchi
8 Manido to watch over each and every one of us and to those
9 who have come to this gathering this week that they have a
10 safe journey back to their destination. I say (speaking
11 in Indigenous language). *Miigwetch*.

12 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** So now we're
13 going to go to our women to start with what Audrey had
14 discussed with our drum group that we have here.

15 **M. MATHIEU MELLON:** Nous allons donner
16 maintenant la chance aux joueuses de tambours. ...de nous
17 faire une chanson.

18 **MS. AUDREY SIEGL:** The song we're going to
19 share is the Strong Woman song. It's a song of strength,
20 it's a song of courage, and courage we should never have
21 to bear.

22 We sing this song for our lost and our
23 stolen. That's who guides us. As much as we're here to
24 change things for the future, first we need to make it
25 right for them. First, we need to show them that they are

1 loved and that we are working so hard to bring the justice
2 that they deserve, the safety that we all deserve.

3 We stand in front of you, as my aunt says,
4 "the red women rising", and we will not be stopped until
5 there is justice, and we will not be stopped until there
6 is safety, and we will not be stopped until there is
7 balance. And this is part of how that happens.

8 It is not up to the Canadian Government to
9 decide if we will be safe. We decide. And we do that
10 every day through prayers and teachings and what some will
11 call reclamaton and reconciliation, but all that is, is
12 us standing up and being who we are.

13 So I invite each of you, you are indigenou
14 to the land somewhere, honour those ancestors, do how they
15 did, and as Marion said, "follow our lead while you're
16 here on Turtle Island, on our ancestors' land".

17 So we sing this song, and then we pass it
18 off, and we raise our hands to you for finishing and
19 closing with the song that you have chosen. Because we
20 need that balance between the men and the women or nothing
21 is going to change. So we thank you for standing with us
22 and for bringing that balance and for leading the way with
23 us.

24 **(SINGING AND DRUMMING/CHANT ET PERCUSSIONS)**

25 **(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)**

1 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD-CHICAGO:** Okay. So
2 now we'll continue with our closing ceremonies and --
3 where's Eelee; I can't see Eelee -- with extinguishing our
4 qulliq.

5 **M. MATHIEU MELLON:** Alors on va poursuivre
6 et c'est maintenant le temps d'inviter notre Aînée Eelee
7 Higgins à éteindre le qulliq.

8 **(SHORT PAUSE/COURTE PAUSE)**

9 **ELDER EELEE HIGGINS:** I need an
10 interpreter.

11 **(LAUGHTER/RIRES)**

12 **ELDER EELEE HIGGINS:** Thank you.

13 First I would like to thank and acknowledge
14 that today and this week have been given such good days.

15 You'll recall yesterday that we sang in
16 Inuktitut, "This Little Light of Mine". Now, today when
17 you are leaving this space, this place, this process, make
18 sure you keep that light in you burning and bright. And
19 when people try to extinguish that light, dampen that
20 light, you fuel it even more; you make it even brighter.

21 Thank you. Safe flights home.

22 I will now say a prayer in Inuktitut.

23 Let's bow our heads.

24 **(CLOSING PRAYER/PRIÈRE DE CLÔTURE)**

25 **ELDER EELEE HIGGINS:** I will now extinguish

1 the qulliq.

2 **(EXTINGUISHING OF THE QULLIQ/EXTINCTION DU QULLIQ)**

3 **ELDER EELEE HIGGINS:** Thank you.

4 **(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)**

5 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD CHICAGO:** So now we're
6 going to just finish off with our travelling song that we
7 sing when we leave our gatherings, because we know that we
8 don't gather like this for a long, long time.

9 So take it away, boys.

10 **M. MATHIEU MELLON:** Donc en terminant on va
11 se laisser avec une chanson des joueurs de tambours.
12 Chanson qui nous accompagne dans nos voyages pour notre
13 retour.

14 **(SONG/CHANT)**

15 **(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENTS)**

16 **MS. CHRISTINE SIMARD CHICAGO:** And that's a
17 wrap.

18

19 --- Upon concluding at 5:27 p.m./L'audience est close à
20 17h27

21

22

23

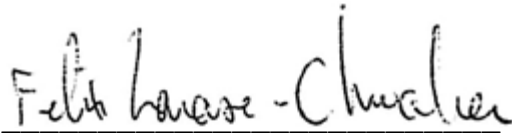
24

25

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

I, Félix Larose-Chevalier, Court Transcriber, hereby
certify that I have transcribed the foregoing and it is a
true and accurate transcript of the digital audio provided
in this matter.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Félix Larose-Chevalier". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Félix Larose-Chevalier

Dec 14, 2018