

First Nations Summit

NEWS RELEASE

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Troubled National Action Plan must lead to real, tangible and timely change across Canada

(Xʷməθkʷəy̍əm (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)/Vancouver, B.C.) – Leaders of the First Nations Summit (FNS) have apprehensions following today's release of the federal government's National Action plan in response to *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) (2019)*. FNS leaders are concerned that the federal plan will be considered a plan to keep planning, and like many other federal plans, will be mired in bureaucratic red tape rather than effecting necessary systemic and societal change.

"The fact that it has taken two full years of flawed consultations, following the release of the MMIWG Inquiry Final Report, just to get to the point of having an announcement on a federal plan forward is very concerning. These timeframes are simply not good enough and are a clear indication of inaction on the part of government. We continue to ask ourselves, how many Indigenous Women and Girls have, and will continue, to fall victim, because of the glacial pace and inaction of governments," said Cheryl Casimer of the FNS Political Executive.

"In British Columbia, we have the lived experiences of the Highway of Tears, the Pickton Inquiry, the Coalition on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, yet we were not invited to meaningfully contribute our experience and expertise to the development of the National Action plan," added Lydia Hwitsum. "This was a major concern for us, and the resulting Action plan bears out that there are shortcomings."

"While we appreciate the identification of significant resourcing by the federal government to implement MMIWG Action Plans, the FNS believes it is absolutely imperative that the federal and provincial governments fully engage with Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual (2SLGBTQIA+) people, especially those who have been victims of violence, in the implementation of any federal and provincial MMIWG Action Plans. Given the process to date, we have deep concerns that successful implementation can be achieved," concluded Robert Phillips of the FNS Political Executive.

The federal government must move forward on MMIWG issues on an urgent, inclusive and transparent basis. We cannot lose any more Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ family members. Governments and Canadian Society must value us, and not treat any of us as disposable objects instead of as valued members of families and society.

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The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. The Summit is also a NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Further background information on the Summit may be found at www.fns.bc.ca.

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