



WHAT WE HEARD

PRELIMINARY ENGAGEMENT ON THE GNWT ACTION PLAN FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

Le present document contient un sommaire en français

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Acknowledgements

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) would like to acknowledge and honour the missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people who have suffered from violence and who have been, and continue to be, cruelly taken from their families and loved ones.

We acknowledge the strength and resilience of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, survivors, family members, friends, and the communities who support them, and who continue to fight for justice.

We thank and extend our appreciation to the families that took part in the National Inquiry. The strength and courage in bearing witness on behalf of loved ones and speaking their truths was an essential step that will allow Canada and this territory within it to face and address this tragedy. Their stories are rooted in pain, trauma, racism, and resilience; their courage to come forward has provided us with a platform to effect change.

Lastly, our sincere thanks to those who took the time to participate in the preliminary engagement workshops. Your input and feedback were immeasurable and insightful. The passion and sincerity with which you shared your knowledge and experience did not go unnoticed and is hopefully reflected in this report.

"We must acknowledge that violence against Indigenous women and girls including members of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities is a crisis that demands an urgent and active response."

- Jane Weyallon, President, Native Women's Association of the NWT.

Executive summary

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is developing a GNWT Action Plan to address the Calls for Justice in *Reclaiming Power and Place: Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)*.

The GNWT coordinated three separate face-to-face workshops in June 2021 with the Native Women's Association of the NWT, the Status of Women Council of the NWT, and community contacts representing NWT Indigenous governments and organizations.

These workshops provided opportunities for the GNWT to:

- share information on the development of the GNWT Action Plan;
- seek feedback on the internal review of how GNWT programs and services are addressing the Calls for Justice; and
- identify gaps in programs and services that may require improvement.

During the workshops, the GNWT also provided information about the release of the MMIWG National Action Plan and the Federal Pathway to Address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. The latter document is the federal government's response to the MMIWG Final Report. Overall, the preliminary engagement sessions were well received, and the feedback provided indicated that the participants were pleased with the opportunity to provide input.

This *What We Heard* report summarizes the feedback the GNWT received during preliminary engagement sessions with key partners and stakeholders. Participants were able to provide a broad perspective on the GNWT's self-assessment of how it is currently addressing the Calls for Justice, and substantial input was received on how the GNWT can do better. While some of the feedback provided included overarching recommendations such as accountability and transparency, more specific recommendations were also made for specific Calls for Justice. The more specific recommendations are captured in the attached Appendix.

The GNWT committed to producing a *What We Heard* Report on the results of the preliminary engagement workshops. Those who participated in the workshops were given an opportunity to review and provide comments on this report prior to its' release.

Participants were clear that they do not want this work to wind up on a shelf. The feedback presented in this report will be taken into consideration and will guide the preparation of the GNWT's response to the Calls for Justice and the development of the MMIWG Draft Action Plan. The GNWT will continue to engage with its key partners, Indigenous governments and organizations, and community governments as it works to finalize the GNWT Action Plan.

Sommaire

Le gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (GTNO) prépare actuellement un plan d'action pour la mise en œuvre des appels à la justice de *Réclamer notre pouvoir et notre place : le rapport final de l'Enquête nationale sur les femmes et les filles autochtones disparues et assassinées*.

En juin 2021, le GTNO a tenu trois ateliers en personne pour discuter respectivement avec l'Association des femmes autochtones des Territoires du Nord-Ouest, le Conseil sur la condition de la femme des TNO, ainsi que des personnes-ressources représentant les gouvernements et organismes autochtones des TNO.

Ces ateliers ont été l'occasion pour le GTNO de :

- communiquer de l'information sur l'avancement du plan d'action;
- recueillir des commentaires au sujet de l'examen interne portant sur la manière dont les programmes et services du gouvernement ténos contribuent aux appels à la justice;
- recenser les points à améliorer dans les programmes et services.

Au cours des ateliers, le GTNO a également éclairé les participants sur deux publications : le plan d'action national pour les femmes et les filles autochtones disparues et assassinées, d'une part, et le document *Voie fédérale concernant les femmes, les filles et les personnes 2ELGBTQQIA+ autochtones disparues et assassinées*, d'autre part. Ce dernier est la réponse du gouvernement fédéral au rapport final de l'Enquête nationale sur les femmes et les filles autochtones disparues et assassinées. De manière générale, ces premières séances de consultation ont été bien accueillies. En effet, les participants ont laissé paraître dans leurs commentaires qu'ils se réjouissaient de pouvoir donner leur avis.

Le présent rapport résume les commentaires qu'a reçus le GTNO pendant ces séances de consultation préliminaires avec des partenaires et acteurs clés du milieu. Les personnes présentes ont pu s'exprimer de façon globale sur l'autoévaluation du GTNO en ce qui concerne sa gestion des appels à la justice, ainsi qu'émettre des commentaires importants sur ce que le GTNO pourrait faire de mieux. Quelques suggestions étaient de nature plus générale (ex. responsabilisation et transparence), alors que d'autres étaient précisément en lien avec les appels à la justice (voir l'annexe ci-jointe).

Le GTNO s'était engagé à produire un rapport synthèse sur ce qui est ressorti des ateliers de consultation préliminaires. Les participants à ces ateliers ont eu la chance d'examiner le rapport et de formuler leurs commentaires avant sa publication.

Les participants ont exprimé clairement leur désir de voir ce travail aboutir à quelque chose. Les commentaires présentés ici seront pris en compte par le GTNO dans sa réponse aux appels à la justice ainsi que dans la préparation d'un plan d'action provisoire pour les femmes et les filles autochtones disparues et assassinées. Le GTNO va continuer d'interagir avec ses principaux partenaires, les gouvernements et organismes autochtones, ainsi qu'avec les administrations communautaires, jusqu'à l'achèvement du plan d'action du GTNO.

Introduction

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (National Inquiry) was officially launched on August 3, 2016. On October 4, 2016, the GNWT registered an order under the *Public Inquiries Act* to provide the National Inquiry with the authority necessary to fully examine matters within the jurisdiction of the NWT.

The National Inquiry held nine institutional hearings, 15 community hearings and additional statement gatherings in communities across Canada and heard from more than 2,300 people who shared their experience and offered recommendations for change. The National Inquiry visited Yellowknife for the first time on August 28, 2017 and came back to hold community hearings on January 23-25, 2018.

The only NWT Indigenous organization with standing in the National Inquiry was the Native Women's Association of the NWT. The GNWT supported the four primary recommendations put forward by the Native Women's Association of the NWT in its closing submission and committed to working in partnership with them to address the issue of violence against Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual (2SLGBTQIA)+ people. The four primary recommendations are as follows:

- i. We must acknowledge that violence against Indigenous women and girls including members of the 2SLGBTQ¹ communities is a crisis that demands an urgent and active response.
- ii. We must re-establish, build, and foster trust between all levels of government, service providers, communities and every one of their citizens.
- iii. We must ensure that the purpose and objective of all government services is to be community and person-centered.
- iv. We must establish a meaningful entity with accountability to monitor and evaluate the acknowledgement by governments, efforts towards rebuilding trust and establishment of and outcomes from community and person-centered government services.

¹ The acronym 2SLGBTQIA+ is used in the Final Report to refer to 2 Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual + people and will be used throughout this report for consistency. This reference to 2SLGBTQ communities reflects the wording used in the Native Women's Association of the NWT's final submission.

On June 3, 2019, the National Inquiry released its Final Report containing 231 Calls for Justice. The Final Report is explicit in describing and explaining its subject as a deliberate race, identity, and gender-based genocide. The Calls for Justice took a theme-based approach largely focused on:

- Human and Indigenous Rights and Governmental Obligations
- Culture
- Health and Wellness
- Justice
- Human Security

2021 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People National Action Plan

On June 3, 2021, the 2021 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People National Action Plan was released. The National Action Plan is the result of collaboration between Indigenous governments and Indigenous partners along with input from federal, provincial, and territorial governments, who were called upon to work together to address issues raised in the Final Report.

The National Action Plan is a major step in ending violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. The National Action Plan is intended to support the necessary change over time across the country to ensure Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are safe wherever they live, now and in the future. It will always be changing and adapting and will be updated regularly.

With the involvement of families and survivors, the National Action Plan is built on the principle "nothing about us, without us." This upholds and prioritizes their voices and truths and places them at the centre of co-development. It is:

- an approach that includes all levels of Canadian governments, Indigenous governments, and organizations;
- rooted in the unique needs, experiences and cultural contexts of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis peoples;
- considerate of the needs of diverse regions;
- respectful of the experience and expertise of family members and survivors;
- updated regularly based on effectiveness and accountability; and
- meaningful because it measures real results.

The Government of the Northwest Territories contributed to the development of the National Action Plan by providing a reporting on programs and services that respond to the Calls for Justice and outlining the proposed development of the GNWT response to the Calls for Justice. The GNWT also committed to continue to collaborate with Indigenous partners and community organizations to respond to the needs of Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in the NWT.

Federal Pathway to Address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People

The *Federal Pathway to Address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People* is the Government of Canada's response to the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Also released on June 3, 2021, the Federal Pathway outlines the federal government's approach to ending violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

The Federal Pathway document acknowledges that this violence is a systemic problem that requires substantial, immediate, and transformative change.

Both the National Action Plan and the Federal Pathway document referenced four broad themes that were noted in the Final Report.

These four themes included:

- culture,
- health and wellness,
- justice
- human security

Government of the Northwest Territories' Response to the Calls for Justice

In August 2019, the GNWT prepared and tabled its initial response to the Final Report in the Legislative Assembly. Entitled *Doing Our Part*, the response committed the GNWT to review and analyze the 231 Calls for Justice and assess its own programs and services.

The GNWT developed a step-by-step workplan that outlined how it would develop a Draft Action Plan in response to the Calls to Justice. This workplan was tabled in the Legislative Assembly in November 2020.

As a first step, the GNWT created an interdepartmental MMIWG Working Group to coordinate the GNWT's response to the Calls for Justice. Chaired by the Special Advisor to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, the working group includes appointed representatives from the departments of Executive and Indigenous Affairs (EIA), Health and Social Services (HSS), Justice, Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), and the NWT Housing Corporation (NWT HC).

The Gender Equity Division collaborated with GNWT departments to conduct an in-depth internal review and analysis of its programs and services. The results of the internal review were compiled into summary reports that identified:

- i. programs and services that fully address one or more of the Calls for Justice;
- ii. programs and services that partially address one or more of the Calls for Justice (i.e. they do not exactly match the specific intent of a Call for Justice);
- iii. programs and services that need to be implemented to address one or more of the Calls for Justice, noting those that:
 - *can be implemented immediately*
 - *can be implemented within one year, or*
 - *require long-term planning, and*
- iv. Calls for Justice that do not apply to the GNWT.

Copies of the Summary Reports were provided to the participants prior to the preliminary engagement workshops.

Thematic Approach

The GNWT proposed—and workshop participants agreed to—a thematic approach to align the NWT approach with the National Action Plan and the Federal Pathway document. The participants also directed that the GNWT reflect the vision statement presented in the National Action Plan but that it be reworded to reflect the NWT. The themes are:

Culture

To create an environment and opportunities that support Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, to revitalize their cultures, restore their traditional roles and strengthen their identity; and where their strong sense of family, community and belonging can thrive, be celebrated and honoured, and passed on through their leadership, teachings and resilience.

Health and Wellness

To support healthy and safe Indigenous communities and foster health systems free from racism and discrimination, where Indigenous peoples are respected and safe, and where access to culturally relevant mental health and wellness services is improved.

Justice

To address racism and discrimination throughout the policing and justice systems and improve access to justice to provide a fairer, stronger, more inclusive and representative justice system that respects the rights of Indigenous peoples, and protects Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Human Security

To address the discrimination and violence Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are experiencing to ensure the NWT and Canada is a place where they are respected, and their human security is assured and safeguarded.

Engagement Approach

In June 2021, the GNWT held in-person preliminary engagement workshops with three key groups:

- the Native Women’s Association of the NWT,
- the Status of Women Council of the NWT, and
- Community Contacts identified by NWT Indigenous governments and organizations.

Detailed descriptions of each group—and its role—is included in the Appendix.

An engagement plan was drafted prior to start of the preliminary engagement workshops. The GNWT’s primary concern was to ensure the process respected the spirit and intent of the Calls for Justice and created an environment where participants could speak freely.

The format of the preliminary engagement workshops was aimed at reviewing the GNWT’s self-assessment of the response to the Calls for Justice and provided an opportunity for participants to have a voice in the development of the Draft GNWT Action Plan by approving or modifying the direction of commitments. An overview of the engagement approach is included in the Appendix.

What We Heard

The input received from participants during the engagements sessions is summarized by theme. It is important to note, however, that some closely linked issues can apply to more than one theme.

Culture

Cultural Awareness Training

Participants were happy to learn about GNWT's mandatory Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Training: *Living Well Together* and that the training is available to the public, free of charge. Participants thought that GNWT employees who complete the training could be invited to a nearby community to take part in traditional and cultural activities with residents. Other practical exercises, such as a blanket exercise would also be of great value. Such in-person experiences would solidify the teachings offered in the training.

Participants noted the importance to keep the training up to date, so it continues to accurately reflect important issues and would like to see accountability mechanisms built into the training, such as reporting functions and quizzes.

Participants also feel that children needed this type of training so they can learn about the history of colonization and residential schools and better understand Indigenous people's history and perspective. Further, all curriculum around colonization and the history of residential schools should be Indigenous-led.

Cultural Exchange

Participants feel that having Indigenous peoples playing an active role in welcoming newcomers to the Northwest Territories would strengthen cohesion between cultures and allow people to gain a better understanding and connection to Indigenous peoples and culture. Cultural exchanges would promote reciprocal learning to allow for all cultures to connect to one another through collaboration and cooperation.

Elder Mentorship

Elder mentorship is a vital means for youth to access traditional healing and prepare for potential leadership roles in their communities. According to participants, developing and using Elder cultural support workers is proving to be very successful in Tłı̨ch̨ communities and Ulukhaktok where elders have been hired to work with youth in schools and in communities. Participants also thought that designated spaces for Elders, such as Knowledge Keeper's healing lodges, would be of great benefit to communities.

Education and Training

Participants believe local, Indigenous-led, training facilities and programs are needed to teach various traditional ways of doing things and that the GNWT should prioritize the creation of Indigenous focused training and education pathways that combine western and traditional forms of teaching. When possible, students should be able to access locally developed education and training programs that enable them to secure jobs in the North.

The counsellor certificate training program offered by the Dene Wellness Warriors was cited as a positive example. In partnership with Rhodes Wellness College, the program trains 25 Indigenous counsellors to receive their Canadian Professional Counsellors Association credential. Participants feel that the GNWT should support these types of efforts as much as possible.

Participants mentioned Campaign Schools for Women for helping women run for elected office. Participants encouraged the GNWT to continue the workshops and asked that the Campaign Schools be offered in smaller or remote communities, suggesting early involvement with youth to help identify leadership qualities in young women.

Participants also stressed the need for more teachers and social workers who are from the NWT—as opposed to staffing these positions with individuals from outside the territory. Participants recommended bringing back the teacher education and social work programs at Aurora College to provide opportunities for Northerners to study these fields without having to leave the territory. Offering programs in the north increases the likelihood that the content will reflect the northern realities.

Human Resources, Equivalencies and Lived Experience

Participants feel that there is a need to recognize equivalencies to staff GNWT positions and that lived experience should have greater weight when making staffing decisions. Having a post-secondary degree should not always be the deciding factor. Recognizing life experience as equivalent to professional qualifications in certain situations will sustain culture, provide job stability, and encourage youth to pursue training in the helping fields.

“Don’t fix what ain’t broke!”

To illustrate this, the participants cited instances when longstanding Indigenous staff were replaced by non-residents based on new hiring policies that require a level of education the Indigenous staff did not possess, even though they had been doing the job for decades.

“If 51 percent of the population of the NWT is Indigenous, the same representation should be reflected in our workforce.”

The participants stated that the GNWT’s hiring policies—such as affirmative action—are not working as intended and have failed the residents of the NWT. They believe that hiring for positions that regularly interact often with residents (such as social workers, community support workers, counsellors and Indigenous language and Northern Studies teachers) should prioritize Indigenous individuals with lived experience over those who may have higher education credentials.

Participants believe that building a workforce that is reflective of our population is an important step toward reconciliation. One suggestion was to rewrite the Affirmative Action Policy, in partnership with Indigenous governments, to require:

- i. a fully representative public service with 51 percent Indigenous employment at all levels of government;
- ii. new criteria to evaluate lived and learned experience as equivalencies for positions; and
- iii. establishment of an oversight board with Indigenous governments for job appeals.

Concerns were also shared by the participants that the major decision-making forums that are held with Indigenous governments are often comprised of mostly male leaders. These forums need to have a grassroots representation at the decision-making table by the people and communities that use the programs and services. These forums need a voice for Indigenous women at the table.

“When they are at the table talking about land claims and where resource revenues will go, where are the single moms? Are they at the table?”

Health and Wellness

Family Violence

Acknowledging that family violence was a major concern throughout the NWT—and especially in communities—participants specifically commented on the need to address the normalization of violence. Creating new education and prevention programs were suggested to express that any form of violence is unacceptable. Participants also acknowledged the importance of keeping elder abuse and lateral violence as a part of the broader conversation about violence, as well as violence that specifically targets 2SLGBTQIA+ people in the north. The participants were relieved to hear that the GNWT has hired a Family Violence Coordinator to map out a family violence strategy in response to the high rates of family violence in the NWT. They were also encouraged to hear that extensive community engagement will take place to inform the strategic response.

To stop the normalization of family violence, participants want the GNWT to take a more rigorous approach to family violence that:

- acknowledges that it is present in our communities;
- states that family violence is not acceptable and that survivors need our help;
- includes strong statements from leaders against family violence.

Other options discussed included the expansion of healthy relationships programming that include age-appropriate lessons for youth on what a healthy relationship looks like. Videos on family

violence and related topics should also be available for viewing at home or at the convenience of individuals within the community.

Trauma-Informed Practice Training

Participants believe that trauma-informed practice training provides front-line workers with a greater understanding of how to support survivors of trauma and will increase their own knowledge of how the impacts of vicarious trauma can affect their own well being. Front-line service providers must be provided with trauma informed practice training that emphasizes safety, trust, connection, collaboration, and self-care and should be held accountable when not responding in a trauma-informed manner to ensure that they are not retraumatizing the residents they serve.

Justice

Access to Services

Participants relayed gaps in services across the NWT that result in inequitable access for residents. A lack of appropriate services in communities exacerbates violence and additional trauma allows social problems fester and leaves residents to manage their own problems without proper health or mental support. One participant provided an example of how issues with circuit court practices can have a detrimental impact on residents in small communities:

“Waiting for a year to have your charges dealt with in a court of law by circuit court is hurting families. Then when they do come, circuit court feels rushed because they want all appearances to happen in a day so the Justice staff can fly out. Some people are pleading guilty even when they’re not because they don’t want to wait for their court date. Also, when people are waiting for their charges to be heard, it is a stressful time for them and their family and the stress of the wait is contributing to family violence, substance abuse and even youth suicide”

Finding solutions to these issues and services requires community engagement and government needs to work more with community residents to address these issues.

Accountability

“The GNWT can say they are doing something but where is this information coming from? Is there any mechanism for accountability built in when departments are reporting what they are doing?”

Participants believe that accountability needs to be built into the structure, planning, and delivery of all GNWT programs and services and that departments should involve frontline workers when developing responses to the Calls for Justice.

While the GNWT often commits to drafting new legislation that will address program inefficiencies, timelines for completion are often not communicated and definitive reporting mechanisms not included. Changes to the *Child and Family Services Act* was cited as an example.

Participants recommended that the GNWT use a rubric that explicitly identifies how its programs and services address each of the Calls for Justice.

Participants noted that the summary reports indicated that the GNWT was meeting several Calls for Justice on the basis that they *offer* services to all communities. In practice, these services are not *available* in the communities, and in many cases, are not available within the region or within the NWT.

One participant noted that children must be sent out of territory to access diagnostic and treatment services for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). In this participant's view, if a service is not offered in the NWT, it should not be considered as addressing in the GNWT's response to the Calls for Justice.

Transparency

To some participants, the GNWT's self-assessment of progress felt like an exercise in rhetoric and optics. While GNWT programs and services might look great on paper, they are not necessarily being delivered as intended. Yet the GNWT's reporting does not reflect the reality of what services look like on the ground. Residents often encounter barriers when trying to access these programs and services, and when they raise issues about programs and services, they receive responses that are so diluted that the reality of the issue raised is no longer accurately reflected. They felt that this is not in the spirit of accountability and transparency.

"If the GNWT really wants to move forward with change, they have to be willing to take risks with their own transparency"

Participants cited the development of Community Wellness Plans as an example. The initial engagement process was well done, and the resulting reports reflected the input from communities. At the start, the Community Wellness Plans showed great promise and were designed and influenced by people with lived experience and were based on community priorities. Participants felt that this approach would lead to a higher probability of change and acceptance of responsibility due to a sense of ownership resulting from the roles residents played in creating the Community Wellness Plans. Unfortunately, community members reported that very little was done with the Community Wellness Plans; required resources were not provided and regular progress updates or reporting was not done.

Community Wellness Plans are developed by the communities and reflect the community realities. Participants believe that this type of approach will aligns with Calls for Justice that recommend community-based solutions that are designed and implemented at the community level. The participants recommended allocating resources to update and implement Community Wellness Plans and ensuring that regular reporting take place.

Community Outreach

“In order to get a sense of the realities in the communities, GNWT employees need to visit the communities.”

The GNWT needs to engage with communities outside of the regional centres at all junctures to ensure that Indigenous voices are heard. Participants feel that the GNWT should make decisions based on community input gathered through meaningful engagement.

Many participants feel that GNWT Ministers, senior officials and policy makers should travel into communities more often, or ideally live in those communities, as opposed to being based out of Yellowknife. Community concerns may then be heard as part of daily living and, as a result, more readily and realistically addressed. Many participants feel that employees working out of Yellowknife or the regional centres often make decisions that have an impact on those living in the communities without realizing the extent of the impact. The decisions may be well intended, but it don't always work out that way.

In addition, GNWT responses to the Call for Justice must incorporate input from Indigenous governments, organizations, and communities. It was noted that for future community MMIWG engagement sessions, interpretation services must be provided so that all can participate equally. It was also noted that engagement sessions take a trauma informed approach as the subject matter can be triggering and re-traumatization must be avoided.

Human Security

Access to Funding

Participants feel that Indigenous governments and communities should access capital transfer funding directly from the federal government in order to address a lack of programs and services. Participants commented that communities are losing position funds when money flows through the GNWT. Community organizations also require core funding to ensure that they can plan appropriately for sustainable services and programs. In addition, allowing Indigenous organizations and communities to receive funding directly from the federal government will eliminate barriers in reporting, contribution agreements, applications, and proposal writing.

Participants also shared the difficulties many people and organizations experience when trying to complete funding applications. The process for funding applications should be streamlined, and a mechanism developed to make it easier to access funding. Suggestions included simplifying the process for application and proposal writing, making a universal GNWT application with sections specific to the project, and having them all searchable in one place online. Participants would also like to see more proposal writing workshops made available.

Participants noted that Indigenous organizations and communities are often not aware of available funding and that the GNWT needs to do a better job at communicating and advertising available funding sources. Creating a government-wide directory for all available sources of funding that the

public can access would help address this issue. Participants also suggested that training Government Service Officers to help community residents apply for funding. When asked, the participants expressed their support for the Government Service Officers and the services they provide but noted these were part time positions.

Housing

Participants noted two concerns: housing and shelters.

The NWT needs adequate, culturally appropriate housing, and that the current NWT Housing Corporation (NWT HC)/Local Housing Authority approach is not working. The NWT HC should be planning directly with local Indigenous governments and organizations in advance of making decisions to meet the specific housing needs of each community.

Family violence shelters are required in every community, along with transitional housing and programs to help women and children get back on their feet after leaving an abusive partner. Some participants brought up the return of the use of safe houses, which are known members of the community who are there for support for women and children fleeing violence. Safe houses in small communities would not only ensure the safety and security of vulnerable residents and can be implemented safely, as long as the people providing the safe houses are compensated for their assistance.

2SLGBTQQIA+ People

There was limited discussion on 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and it was agreed by all that this was an area that needed further discussion, and that efforts need to be made to include 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in the conversation going forward. The participants recognized the need to be respectful of people's privacy and that every effort should be made not to compromise someone's privacy for the sake of getting input. The GNWT was encouraged to find ways to engage the 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in this work.

Communications Strategy

There was also some discussion on the communications plan. It was agreed by the participants that the communications plan should include activities that inform the public about missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and to raise awareness about the violence that they are subjected to every day. Participants noted that change will take many years but that everybody has to start working together now to affect change.

Other related recommendations included:

- avoiding bureaucratic language in public awareness materials;
- making materials available in Indigenous languages; and
- using various media to communicate, including social media. For example, when targeting youth, use the medium that appeals to them most and in a manner that they can relate to.

Conclusion

This report provides a summary of what we heard reflects our commitment to listen and act. The GNWT will take the ideas and concerns shared into consideration when developing the GNWT Action Plan in response to the Calls for Justice. The specific suggestions noted in the appendix are meant to improve how the GNWT does business, which should include specific deliverables, timelines, and measures.

Overall, participants reported they were pleased with the format of the engagement sessions. They relayed that they felt safe to share their ideas and concerns, were happy with the level of engagement and the depth of discussions that took place, and that they felt heard.

Many participants commented on feeling as though there is much work going on behind the scenes and appreciated that the GNWT is working hard to prepare an Action Plan with community involvement.

The participants expressed that nothing discussed over the course of the preliminary engagement workshops was new. Discussions around these same issues have been long-standing and the people of the NWT have long been at the table looking for solutions and answers.

“we have gotten nowhere after all this talk and a whole lot of spending”

There was sentiment, however, that the current engagement process felt promising. Participants relayed the importance of keeping the momentum going.

“we can’t do all this work and have this report end up on a shelf collecting dust, like so many other things”.

Next Steps

Following the release of this report, the GNWT will begin the development of their responses to the Calls for Justice, with a focus on those areas that are not currently being fully addressed. Responses along with input from this report will be used to develop the Draft GNWT MMIWG Action Plan, which will be tabled in the Legislative Assembly in the Fall of 2021.

Following the tabling of the Draft MMIWG Action Plan, the GNWT will undertake community engagement before finalizing the Action Plan. A trauma informed approach will be taken and based on direction received, that every effort will be made to ensure a decolonized approach when engaging communities and residents.

Once completed, the GNWT Action Plan will be tabled in the Legislative Assembly in June 2022.

The GNWT Action Plan will be an evergreen document and will be adapted as required so that changes can reflect changing environment and priorities. As was also previously committed to, annual reporting will be provided by the GNWT on the implementation of the GNWT Action Plan.

Appendices

- A. Participating Groups
- B. Engagement Approach
- C. Specific Recommendations

A. Participating Groups

Native Women's Association of the NWT

The Native Women's Association of the NWT (NWA NWT) is a not-for-profit organization that was incorporated in 1977 to power and support Indigenous women and their families throughout the NWT. Affiliated with the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), NWA NWT is committed to building relationships with all levels of government and other organizations to ensure all Indigenous women and their families live free from social and economic distress; to promote their sacred roles as valued and respected members in the community; and to preserve their culture, language and heritage.

NWA NWT is a network of Indigenous women consisting of nine employees, fourteen Board Members (including two Youth Representatives) representing all regions of the NWT, two Elders, and fifty-one members, as well as numerous partner organizations and agencies. Together, this network works to achieve equality and justice for Indigenous women, their families, and communities.

Status of Women Council of the NWT

The Status of Women Council of the NWT has a long history of advocating for the rights of women, dating back to 1982 when the GNWT appointed the first Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. Previously called the Women's Secretariat, the council has evolved over the years; In 1990, the enactment of the *Status of Women Council Act* led to the creation of the Status of Women Council.

The Status of Women Council envisions a society that celebrates the equality and inclusion of all genders and one that respects and embraces women's diverse experiences, skills, and knowledge in all spheres of society. Its six board members represent various regions of the NWT.

The Status of Women Council is committed to advancing gender equality in the NWT through public awareness initiatives, community engagement and development activities, research, reviewing and reporting on government policies, legislations, programs and services, collaborating with relevant organizations with similar objectives, and advocating for change.

Community Contacts

Community Contacts are appointed representatives from the Indigenous governments of the Northwest Territories. Each contact was identified by an Indigenous government to work with the Gender Equity Division on MMIWG. Monthly teleconference calls have been held with the community contacts to provide updates on MMIWG-related issues and to encourage dialogue amongst the communities.

Both the NWA NWT and the SWCNWT are also invited to participate in these monthly calls. To date, the following Indigenous governments have appointed community contacts:

- NWT Métis Nation
- Gwich'in Tribal Council
- Inuvialuit Regional Corporation
- Sahtu Secretariat Inc
- Dehcho First Nations
- Tłıchǫ Government
- Kátł'odeeche First Nation
- Salt River First Nation

B. Engagement Approach

The preliminary engagement workshops took place in-person over two days and were facilitated by the Special Advisor to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. Notetakers were also on hand to accurately capture all discussions and recommendations.

Due to the sensitive subject matter, information was provided for mental health supports if needed. The workshops focused on reviewing the summary reports of the GNWT's self-assessment on how it is currently addressing the 231 Calls for Justice. Summary reports were sent in advance of the workshops to allow participants time to review. Due to the volume of information contained in the Summary Reports, breakout groups were formed, and sections of the reports were assigned to each group. Once the breakout sessions were completed, the groups reconvened and reported their findings back to the entire group.

As noted above, because of the volume of information, the Summary Reports were not reviewed in its entirety. However, it was agreed that when the GNWT begins working on their responses to the Calls for Justice, that all the Calls for Justice be taken into consideration and addressed, even those that have been assessed as currently being implemented. Participants asked for this because they felt that even though the GNWT may be providing programs and services that address the Calls for Justice, that steps still need to be taken to ensure that these existing programs are being reviewed to determine where improvements can be made and built in indicators that can be used to measure progress. It was also recommended that departments seek and incorporate input from people with lived experience and from the community perspective.

C. Specific Recommendations

The information contained in the tables below reflect specific recommendations the participants shared during discussions that flowed over the course of all three workshops. Some of the recommendations are specific to departmental programs and services and others pertain systematically to the whole of government approach. It is important that the voices of the participants are heard as they have wisdom to share, and that we listen.

I. Culture
<i>Indigenous Representation in GNWT</i>
<p>Affirmative action policy is not working.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need more enforcement and more Indigenous Senior managers. • Indigenous organizations can begin providing oversight to the Human Resources appeal process.
<p>Fully support the use and retention of paid elders and knowledge keepers to establish community based and trauma informed responses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elders mentor youth, which in an investment in the building of strong, Indigenous leaders.
<p>GNWT needs to actively promote and seek out job applicants with lived experience with a template developed as to what lived experience can look like (not left to the discretion of the hiring committee).</p>
<p>Development of awareness programs to eliminate cyberbullying towards women in positions of leadership.</p>
<p>The initiatives listed in the calls to action under “Indigenous-led Prevention Initiatives” are not Indigenous-led (Except for the On-the-land Collaborative).</p>
<i>Strengthening Cultural Ties</i>
<p>Living Well Together</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course needs to be updated as needed to make sure the information includes the new things that have happened. • Needs to have accountability mechanisms built into it. Measure for true cultural awareness missing. • No checks and balances, managers have no way of verifying if the employees did actually review the courses in its entirety. A suggestion was made to built in a quiz to test the employee’s knowledge of each module before they are able to proceed to the next module. • No dialogue component.

I. Culture
<i>Strengthening Cultural Ties (cont.)</i>
Residential school awareness and the blanket exercise needs to be mandatory for all employees, not just teachers.
<p>Education from a northern perspective for all who come from outside NWT is critical and essential.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities to develop community specific orientation packages to make sure people who are new to the community are aware of the local history. • In-depth orientation for people who move from the south that allows for people to recognize their own discrimination and biases (IE: teachers to “new to the north” orientation for all new teachers that move to the north). • A program to allow for a cultural exchange should be offered to new people coming into a community in the NWT.
<p>Create Elder and Knowledge Keeper lodges so people can access hands on traditional teaching. Some communities successfully use elders and it is going well – engage to find out what is currently working.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural spaces should be provided in learning institutions and opportunities for dialogue between elders and students supported (supporting cross-cultural exchanges as well).
Help organizations establish family camps (good example: Beaufort Delta – lots of camps were built due to Covid, Ft. Res. Mission Island, FGH Culture Camp). Family camps are the key to strong cultural foundations.
<i>Arts and Media</i>
Ensure the NWT Arts Council funding provides the funding for the creation of art but does not take ownership of the art produced.
<p>More funding and application support required so Indigenous people are represented in the media.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding criteria and awarding needs to be reviewed at the regional and local level to ensure it is appropriate for the realities and needs of those accessing the funding. • Easier application process is required for arts & culture funding. It would be good to provide assistance during the funding application process to those whose first language is not English.
Government Service Officers should be knowledgeable to connect people and organizations to funding and support needed to write proposals for funding (sometimes requires technical support). Provide outreach to communities to showcase funding available.

I. Culture
<i>Arts and Media (cont.)</i>
Every region needs workspaces to create as well as a space for performance and the sale and promotion of arts and culture.
<p>Communications and media organizations could begin to establish mentorship programs for Indigenous youth to get involved with media related work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools and media outlets should be more robust and collaborate to improve Indigenous recruitment to media careers.
<i>Education</i>
Criteria developed for what “on the land” is from the community people – right now it is established by the GNWT.
<p>Accountability for individual teachers and schools to implement cultural-based programs like Dene Kede and Inuuqatigiit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous teachers must be used to teach Indigenous specific content and language.
So many of the calls to justice require our own people to serve our own people. We need training for our people to deliver services (teachers, social workers, health care providers) yet we have limited local access to this education and training. Not everyone wants to go south to school.
<p>Indigenous language development in schools needs to be more robust.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language instruction is available in NWT communities, but the retention of qualified individuals has been a problem. • Increase access to Indigenous language instruction in schools, even consider the creation of Indigenous language schools. • Create on-land immersion camps for young people and for families.
<i>Miscellaneous</i>
Policy for GNWT bilingual bonus should be reviewed.
Increased recognition of Indigenous achievements and accomplishments (i.e. Special Constables).
People in positions of leadership should have to go out on the land. This should be mandatory.
Public engagement sessions that are not set up in a colonial style but are done in a more traditions-based manner.

I. Culture

Miscellaneous (cont.)

Ensure Indigenous children in care continue to have access to culture, traditions and language to ensure the connection to home communities remains strong.

Practice of custom adoption while not practiced in all jurisdictions, it needs to be recognized and supported.

Surveys often ask country of origin and Indigenous status, but it would be helpful to include the specifics of the Indigenous groups that people identify as.

II. Health and Wellness
<i>Service Access</i>
Better literacy and language support for people going through the health care and court systems.
The NWT needs treatment centres including the development of a progressive aftercare program, where participants must take an active role in their recovery to move through the next steps of the program (milestones). Aftercare programming for people who have just been through treatment is important, especially in the communities.
Look to providing funding and services for shelters in a proactive manner rather than just in response to urgent and last-minute incidents.
Communities need crisis workers.
<i>Human Rights/Indigenous Rights</i>
Any initiatives related to UN Declaration must be Indigenous led.
Cultural and traditional ways of doing things needs to be respected.
A “one shoe fits all” approach doesn’t work for everyone; Circles don’t fit into a square box.
Need more equitable human rights for Indigenous people.
Education requirements make it hard to employ local wellness staff.
Need mentorship programs on Indigenous rights and human rights.
Initiatives need to be community-led and community-based.
<i>Indigenous Experts in Healing</i>
Ensure on-the-land funding is going to Indigenous groups/people.
Indigenous wellness groups need to be more mobile and get into the communities.
<p>Counselling in communities is complex</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources available (Child and Youth Counsellors) are being used by all community members, including adults. All communities need in house counsellors where drop-in counselling is available. • The GNWT should be putting in programs and opportunities that encourage local training (for example, the Dene Wellness Warriors training local counsellors).

II. Health and Wellness
<i>Indigenous Experts in Healing (cont.)</i>
<p>The GNWT must find a way to employ locally within health services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECE should be campaigning regularly regarding local educational options available to Indigenous people (Aurora College and SFA). • Education equivalencies need to be developed and considered for hiring. • Recruitment and retention of people with lived experience within health care system, community wellness workers (more training can always happen, lived experience is valuable). • NWT residents who obtain required education for positions need to be not only supported but actually hired.
<i>Trauma Response</i>
<p>The connection between government services and programs and the impacts of residential schools must be made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts should inform objectives for GNWT programs and services. • Everyone needs to recognize that normalization of violence is tied to the residential school experience.
<p>The communities need acute/emergent trauma assistance available to all communities.</p>
<p>There is an ongoing need for residential school trauma response – with all that is happening with the discovery of unmarked burial sites, the national action plan, and MMIWG. People are being triggered and need support.</p>
<p>Compassion, respect, and understanding needs to be the primary response in all interactions with families and in communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma informed practice needs to be a priority in the training of frontline workers to ensure further trauma is not inflicted on patients accessing healthcare.
<p>There needs to be more support for the families of MMIWG.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GNWT should check in regularly with families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls to see if any counselling, therapy, or other supports are needed. • Counselling and treatment might be available but often people who need it can't take the time off work or afford the transportation to travel to these services.
<p>Considerations also need to be taken into account for those who cannot afford to travel outside of them home community to access the services – either because they can't afford the transportation costs or cannot afford to rake an extended period off work.</p>

II. Health and Wellness

Child Protection

Child welfare programs and services need to be owned by Indigenous government, not GNWT. Communities have the understanding and knowledge required to assist with helping child welfare initiatives – Consult with communities.

The GNWT should understand that cultural and traditional ways need to be respected.

More resources should be provided to help immediate and extended family keep children out of foster care by casting a wider net and putting more rigor into their search for extended family members who can take the children in.

- Child and Family Services needs to be more responsive to the families when children are placed in foster care. Reunification must be central.
- In addition, criminal records of family members should not be a blanket decision to not allow them to take in children in their household, especially for extended families. A grandfather with a 20yearold criminal record should not automatically be barred from taking care of his own grandchildren.
- Greater availability of resources for Indigenous families that serve as foster families. Foster families are supported financially to take in children in foster care however, family members who step up often do not receive financial support and are unable to cover the needs of the children so cannot take them in, resulting in the children living with non-Indigenous foster families.
- Build housing that will allow for families to bring children in care into their homes so children can stay within their home communities.

Accountability should be regularly reported on when approving foster homes

Decisions about what happens to children involved with child and family services should be made in consultation with the Indigenous people, not just by people in Yellowknife.

A lot of NWT women that go missing in other provinces and territories have children.

- NWT CFS needs to be working with other jurisdictions to make sure these children are not ending up in the foster care system in other jurisdictions.
- NWT CFS should be working with NWT families to get these children back to their families in the North.
- Child and Family services needs to have agreements in place with other provinces and territories to have custom adoptions recognized and to facilitate the return of NWT children to the north.

II. Health and Wellness
<i>Child Protection (cont.)</i>
Child and youth advocate (should be Indigenous) – Why isn’t there one of these considering we have such high rates of Indigenous children in care? Publicize the existence and role of the office of the children’s lawyer – is this accessible to the public?
Children in the sex industry – focus on keeping the children in their home communities and out of foster care to prevent them from falling victim to the sex industry. Look into the Spirit Bear Plan and develop guiding principles based on that.
<i>Mental Health</i>
There is a need for an Indigenous suicide prevention strategy with cultural and traditional considerations. The mental health field should be targeted for traditional healing components
<p>Access to mental health supports needs to be increased for those in the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is more awareness of mental health issues, which is great, but access to mental health programs and services in the smaller communities is lacking (need to go to Yellowknife to access most services and in some cases, out of territory). • Having mental health workers based in the communities is preferred however, increasing visits to communities by mental health workers is recommended • The GNWT needs trained counselors in schools with the appropriate supports. • Ensure program availability for all in the community and not just to members of the organization spearheading the program (and receiving the funding). • Programs and services in communities should be offered in neutral, safe spaces.
<p>Community Wellness Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A renewed focus on Community Wellness Plans as a foundation for all initiatives with the community. • Community Wellness Plans should be the basis for all GNWT funding and programs, and HSS should be accountable for the plans. • Annual reports should be required for Community Wellness Plans. Communities should be able to access these reports. • Community wellness coordinators – who manage the wellness plans – need to be accountable to a board and not a particular group who writes the job description, hires, and gives direction. • Community wellness plans were last updated in 2018. HSS should bring authors and community members together to refresh plans, report on progress to-date, and create programs and services that respond to community priorities.

II. Health and Wellness
<i>Mental Health (cont.)</i>
<p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical training programs available in all communities• HSS regional manager position JD should require lived experience and be split into two positions, another to provide technical support.• Regional manager position should also be accountable to the communities because they are the link between the plan, coordinator & govt.• Job competitions should always be open competitions and not filled through internal transfer.
<p>More information is needed in communities to understand role of the Indigenous Advisory Board established by HSS (membership, role, influence on services, accountability for HSS)</p>
<i>Family Violence</i>
<p>The new Family Violence Strategy needs feedback from those with lived experience.</p>
<p>Normalization of violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This needs to be addressed through education and prevention programs created to teach that this is unacceptable.• Our communities and our territory need to own up to the fact that family violence is present in our communities and that it is not acceptable, and victims need our help.• Our leaders must start speaking against family violence and stop the normalization of it. It is not normal, and it needs to stop. Everyone plays a role.
<p>Education on healthy relationships and what they look like needs to occur beyond the classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include information on lateral violence when developing programs on healthy relationships,• Develop age-appropriate material on healthy relationships for young children (such as starting from ages 6-7 years old).• Videos on family violence and related topics should be available for viewing at home or at the convenience of individuals within the community.

II. Health and Wellness
<i>Miscellaneous</i>
Keep what is working and get rid of the rest.
Breakfast and lunch program need to be put back into schools.
Indigenous-led advocacy groups for all social GNWT departments – including child and youth advocates.
Develop and discuss the building of terminology/vocabulary in all Indigenous languages.
Recognize that family camps can be the key to a strong foundation.
NWT needs disaggregated data for non-Indigenous women (non-Indigenous is nonspecific). <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NWT needs to ensure disaggregated data is being collected for NWT residents in other provinces (friendship centres rely on this data to access government funding).• Data for Indigenous people in NWT and other jurisdictions needs to be provided to Indigenous government so they understand where their membership is and can get them the services and benefits they need, wherever they are.
Benefits for on-reserve/off-reserve people work differently than NWT Indigenous benefits and services.

III. Justice
<i>MMIWG Specific</i>
Continue outreach and contact with the families of the unsolved MMIWG cases to provide information, even just to know the cases are still being pursued and remains open.
MMIWG – National Action Plan – A lot of mistrust with the government. Will they follow through? More accountability needed.
Look at legislation for opportunities to amend/add missing person considerations.
<i>Alternatives to Court</i>
Delayed court processes are hurting families. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The prospect of waiting for a year to have your charges dealt with in a court of law by Circuit Court is hurting families. Some people are pleading guilty even when they're not because they don't want to wait for their court date.• When people are waiting for charges to be heard, the stress of the wait is contributing to family violence and substance abuse.• Youth who must wait for court are also stressed, leading to substance abuse and suicide. This is a very serious issue, especially in the far north.
Communities should decide how to address offender needs because it differs widely based on regions. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The court circuit is often rushed; people are rushed through to get appearance is done in a day so that the Justice staff from Yellowknife can fly out of the community.
DVTO and Wellness Court are great but only accessible in some communities, expansion is needed.
Regarding the impacts of Gladue reports on sentencing – We need to use the Gladue principles as intended. Find resources to determine and research information going into the report to evaluate the impacts. Recognize that every case needs to be judged by its own merits.

III. Justice

Alternatives to Court (cont.)

- We need to have more restorative justice and community justice hearings referred. People trust the process and find that it works. Community Justice Committees should not be on a volunteer basis because in some communities, sitting on boards and committees are the only source of income so people don't prioritize sitting on the community justice committees if they have other things to do.
- It would be good to expand and support existing community justice committees so that they work better. This would include ensuring adequate and proper training is provided to committee members by properly trained facilitators. The seriousness of the crime should not be the determining factor. It should be up to the committee to determine whether the crime can be dealt with restoratively. The good thing about restorative justice is that things can be taken care of right away.
- Criminal Justice Committee volunteers don't receive honorariums so it's hard to stay committed when there are no other sources of income for people in some communities. People on committees, boards, etc. choose to engage more in the paying gigs because it's a source of income.

Corrections

Resources and services for those in correctional facilities need to be more accessible.

- Inmates should be able to access in-community services and cultural training, to reconnect with the language and the culture.
- Opportunities for these people to better themselves and better the community, like in the past (work crews, carving program, other arts programs) should be started again.
- There should be work programs that connect inmates to jobs that they can be compensated for and keep when they get out.
- There is no reintegration now or on the land opportunities anymore.
- Without these programs and supports and planning for transition back to the community these people are frozen in time and not equipped for life outside the corrections facility. And their families are not prepared to support them.

The "Indigenous programming" offered in corrections is not appropriate – there are so many different cultural groups just in the NWT alone and each with their own traditional ways.

DOJ should have an individual plan for each inmate and their families that coordinates corrections, victim services, social services, child and family services, education.

- Each inmate should be assessed and their and their families' needs planned for when they return to the community and their families after the 2 years.

III. Justice

Corrections (cont.)

Correctional facilities need to be inclusive of 2SLGBTQQA+ people.

Corrections Data - The GNWT has indicated that it does not provide corrections and inmate data to Indigenous governments because of privacy reasons. This is not acceptable.

- Many Indigenous governments have MOU in place with the RCMP who provide monthly, in person briefings with leadership on what crimes are occurring and what members of the community are in the system.
- The RCMP even have a community policing liaison person that provides data and information to the chief and council monthly. If the RCMP can do this why can't the GNWT?
- Without this detailed data, how is leadership supposed to make change in their community to protect their people and address social problems?

Miscellaneous

Criminal records are hurting the people. The process for applying for pardons needs to be improved; this should be a free service for the betterment of those who have moved on from their pasts.

If someone has not been successfully prosecuted in a court of law on a charge, those charges should not be on their criminal records. Perhaps we need a separate list of what a criminal record is and what chargeable record is.

IV. Human Security
<i>Survivor Safety</i>
<p>Vulnerable women and girls are left being targeted because of unsafe transportation options. It is not sufficient to say this is a municipal issue – it is a public health issue that the GNWT needs to ensure there is always a 24/7 victim services line, worker and transportation or shelter available to women and girls. In many communities, there are no RCMP or taxis and women and girls are left stranded.</p>
<p>Need for fair compensation within contribution agreements with the Department of Justice. The current contract requires over 500 hours of unpaid volunteer services to deliver 24/7 victim services and does not cover overtime for NWA staff if volunteers are unavailable.</p>
<p>Work with regional and community organizations to determine a need for missing person’s legislation.</p>
<i>Access to Funding</i>
<p>Community and Indigenous organizations need more support/help with funding applications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There needs to be an interdepartmentally coordinated collection of funding opportunities available for all programs and services. Perhaps an online database so that applying organizations can filter search results. • Ensure funding to communities is not being separated between groups (community government, Indigenous governments, Indigenous organizations), this leads to between-organizational conflict over funding. • Help with funding application processes to those whose first language is not English as this often leads to obstacles to accessing the funding. • Simplification of funding application at both territorial and federal level.
<i>Recruitment and Capacity Building of Indigenous People</i>
<p>University, college, and professional certificate programs for medical, health and wellness workers (nursing, social work, doctors, counselors, correction services workers) need to require credits/learning about MMIWG, impacts of residential school.</p>
<p>Look to provide solutions that are more than just financial – money is not always what is needed in each situation.</p>
<p>51% of the NWT population is Indigenous and the public service must be reflective and represent the population.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More staff for Indigenous Governments and organizations so they are on par with the GNWT.

IV. Human Security
<i>Recruitment and Capacity Building of Indigenous People (cont.)</i>
<p>If recruitment and retention of Indigenous people is a priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positions should include housing and or higher cost of living allowances relative to the community they are living in. • We need to train our own people to provide support services in our communities. We need NWT programs to train social workers, teachers, health care service providers & correction services. • Training programs and workshops need to include western science and Indigenous knowledge and practices. This require instructors and curriculum with a background in both, ex. midwifery program. • Reduce barriers for Indigenous people in communities to participate in training so they do not need to leave their children and families to develop themselves.
<p>The NWT’s introduction of the ombudsman is good, it would be good to have Indigenous representation at a national level as well as an Indigenous ombudsman for the north.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous ombudsman in each province and territory to make the north a priority because the Territorial Indigenous perspective is so much different than any southern perspectives. • We need an Indigenous ombudsman person specific for NWT, speaks at least one Indigenous language and who should be knowledgeable in legal matters but not necessarily have to have a degree – equivalencies should be considered. • We need a relatable, approachable person with lived experiences here who will take into consideration what the north has to say. • Indigenous people should have a say in who this person is.
<i>Housing</i>
<p>Culturally appropriate Housing – Look at the IRC Model to see if it can be replicated in communities across the NWT. Current NWTHC/LHO model is NOT working.</p>
<p>The Housing Corp should be planning directly with local Indigenous Government and Organizations in advance of making decisions to meet the specific housing needs of each community.</p>
<p>Housing is a human right.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need shelters in every community (this can include the return of the use of safe houses – paid – would be an alternative for small communities though this “job” needs to be well compensated and training provided). • There is also a need for transitional housing for women and children to leave their homes so they can bring their possessions with them.

IV. Human Security
<i>Housing (cont.)</i>
<p>There should be individual housing plans made with tenants in public housing to prevent homelessness and housing problems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without individual service plans, decisions are limited by the strict guidelines and criteria of the GNWT policy and made without referring to the impacted individual (ex. • Instead, the LHO watches tenants closely for an opportunity to catch them make a mistake that they didn't even know was against policy). • There needs to be case management or social workers that work with the local housing organizations to connect people to services instead of just evicting them. • A supportive housing model which will allow people to access programs while they are in the transitional housing space.
<p>Create sustainable funding programs for shelters that serve longer term needs beyond a place to sleep.</p>
<i>Miscellaneous</i>
<p>Need Indigenous leaders to do a better job at sharing information or have a designates sit in on meetings and then distribute the information learned widely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the same leadership at all the intergovernmental forums (devolution, resource revitalization sharing, IGC, bilateral MOUs, Territorial council of leaders). • Leadership is lacking two things – grassroots representation from the communities affected by decision and a voice for Indigenous women.
<p>2SLGBTQQA+: when the communities apply for funding to host gathering, it is for everyone, inclusive of people who are Indigenous, regardless of whether you identify as 2SLGBTQQA+. Funding should not be separated for those events specifically – it makes it exclusive.</p>
<p>2SLGBTQQA+ General discussion – the appropriateness of broadening the GNWT's response to MMIWG to include 2SLGBTQQA+ terminology. 2 spirit perhaps but the long acronyms takes the point on a tangent away from the MMIWG focus.</p>
<p>Work must continue to improve the relationship between Indigenous people and law enforcement.</p>
<p>Data disaggregation – We want to know in advance of programs or policy changes, what data the change is based on and how it will impact the community.</p>