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First Annual Report of the Minister's Advisory Council on Aboriginal Women

Submitted to the Honourable Ida Chong,
Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation

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Minister's Advisory Council on Aboriginal Women

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Minister's Advisory Council on Aboriginal Women

Creation of the Minister's Advisory Council on Aboriginal Women (MACAW)

- The Province of British Columbia's Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation and the Native Women's Association of Canada co-hosted the Collaboration to End Violence: National Aboriginal Women's Forum in Vancouver in June 2011. The Forum brought together more than 250 participants from all provinces and territories in Canada representing provincial and territorial government departments and agencies, national Aboriginal organizations, First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities, and community-based organizations.
- Following the Forum, the former Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation minister Mary Polak, announced the creation of the Minister's Advisory Council on Aboriginal Women (MACAW) and that Wendy Grant-John had agreed to chair the new council.
- Nine more members were selected by the minister and Chair based on criteria of diversity, experience, and regional representation. See Appendix I for the biographies of all 10 council members.
- The council is intended to provide advice to government on how to improve the quality of life for Aboriginal women across BC. The province is committed to work with Aboriginal women and key informants to develop the necessary framework and support systems to address the risks and violence that many Aboriginal women are currently exposed to. Tasks can include: provide advice to government to ensure programs supporting Aboriginal women will respond to their needs, build on effective practices and success, and be supported by key partners; review, revise and help implement an engagement plan if required (e.g. co-hosting discussions with partners and communities); and review, revise and maintain a progress report on outcomes.
- The council reports to government through the Hon. Ida Chong, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation. See Appendix II for the council's Terms of Reference.
- The first meeting of the council was held in Vancouver on November 30, 2011 with the Honourable Mary Polak. Subsequent meetings were held in Musqueam (March 2012); Vancouver's Downtown Eastside with the Honourable Mary Polak (June 2012); *ᐱᐱᑦᐱᐱ* (St. Mary's Indian Band) (August 2012); and Musqueam (September 2012).

Vision of MACAW

A world where all Aboriginal people live free of violence and are empowered to achieve their full human potential.

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Mission of MACAW

MACAW will work with Aboriginal leaders, all levels of government and other partners to encourage development and implementation of ongoing and culturally appropriate approaches to:

- prevent all forms of violence,
- increase access for victims and perpetrators of violence to a full range of services, and
- strengthen the implementation of laws, policies & programs to end violence

Principles of MACAW

MACAW's guiding principles include:

- **Community Driven and Community Based:** The voices of Aboriginal women, men and children must be heard and this will ensure that strategies and initiatives are truly responsive; services are accessible and where appropriate community based.
- **Integrity:** Drawing on Aboriginal cultures and traditions is essential to creating culturally appropriate policy and programs.
- **Partnership:** Collaboration, partnership and coordination at the community, regional, provincial and federal levels is needed to end violence.
- **Awareness:** Sharing our knowledge, history, skills and understanding will build support and momentum for ending violence.
- **Safety:** special attention must be made to ensure that all services and supports for Aboriginal women and girls are provided in ways that support their physical and emotional safety.

Strategic Priorities of MACAW

In March 2012, MACAW held a strategic planning session with facilitator Cheryl Brooks. As a result, MACAW identified seven recommended priorities as the basis for an Action Plan to be delivered over the next two years. The priorities include:

- Giving Voice (regional sessions, video project);
- Education and Awareness;
- Focus on Men;
- Holistic Model;
- Commitment/Ownership;
- Partnerships; and
- Communication Plan/Framework.

See Appendix III for more information about the council's strategic planning session.

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Actions to Date of MACAW

- To inform their work, the council requested and received an inventory of current provincial programs that broadly support Aboriginal women, including related budget information.
- Council also requested and has undertaken a schedule of meetings with ministries to support deeper understanding of their work. The Ministries of Justice, Energy and Mines (Housing), Children and Family Development, Health, Social Development, and Jobs, Tourism and Skill Development have made presentations to the council.
- Representatives from the Stikine Wholistic Working Group presented on their Initiating Change Project (March 2012). The council also met with the Ending Violence Association of BC (June 2012), the Representative for Children and Youth (September 2012), and the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence (September 2012).
- Council met with Geoff Cowper, Review Chair of the BC Justice Reform Initiative (July 2012).

Key Accomplishments of MACAW

- As part of MACAW's commitment to develop partnerships and work holistically, members of the council met in July 2012 with Geoffrey Cowper, Chair, BC Justice Reform Initiative. Given the breadth and depth of Aboriginal interests in and concerns with the justice system, the MACAW recommended to Mr. Cowper that an Aboriginal specific review of the justice system be undertaken to ensure that any actions arising from the Cowper review are informed from an Aboriginal perspective. The *BC Justice Reform Initiative Report: A Criminal Justice System for the 21st Century* (or Cowper Report) was released in August 2012. Cowper noted that while there was no specific mandate for the Review to inquire into First Nations dimension of the criminal justice system, the over-representation of First Nations people...in the system...is obvious and a concern for everyone. His report mentions his meeting with the MACAW and the council's recommendation to conduct a review "into the distinct needs and opportunities for innovation in criminal justice in First Nations communities." He further noted that this is an important area for analysis, but that the complexity of the issue would require far more investigation and consideration – as such, he made no specific recommendation. MACAW intends to follow-up with the Ministry of Justice directly to recommend an Aboriginal review of the justice system.
- MACAW has developed an advisory relationship with the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence (PODV), ensuring that special considerations were given to the needs of Aboriginal women and girls. The PODV was announced on March 1, 2012, and became operational on March 26, 2012 in response to the recommendations made by the Representative for Children and Youth in her report on the tragic deaths of Kaitlynne, Max and Cordon Schoenborn. The office will be the permanent lead for government on strengthening the services and supports available for children and families affected by domestic violence. A

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key accomplishment is that there is a commitment to develop a BC Aboriginal specific strategy as part of a three-year comprehensive provincial plan to address domestic violence which will be ready for implementation in 2013. Anti-violence organizations and government partners, including some council members, participated in full day planning session hosted by the PODV to develop the domestic violence plan in November 2012.

- Chastity Davis attended the National Aboriginal Women's Summit III (NAWS III) with Minister Ida Chong, November 1&2 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Provinces and Territories agreed to examine changes that would further strengthen protections for Aboriginal women and girls, and encouraged federal engagement. The outcomes of the summit will be shared with the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group towards development of a national framework of action to support ongoing collaborative work on violence against Aboriginal women and girls by the provinces, territories and Aboriginal organizations.

Next Steps of MACAW

- Building on the foundational work of MACAW's first year, the council's primary focus in the second year will be developing a set of recommendations for government that would improve the quality of life for Aboriginal women across British Columbia as specified in the Terms of Reference.
- As identified in its Strategic Priorities, MACAW recognizes the necessity of commitments from both Aboriginal and provincial leadership. As such, MACAW is seeking endorsement of their *Declaration to Stopping Violence Against Aboriginal Women and Girls* from Aboriginal political organizations (Union of BC Indian Chiefs, First Nations Summit Society, BC Assembly of First Nations and Métis Nation British Columbia). Once these political organizations have endorsed the *Declaration*, MACAW will ask Aboriginal political organizations to enter into an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the province to work together to stop violence against Aboriginal women. See Appendix IV for the *Declaration*.
- MACAW is undertaking the planning and implementation for the Giving Voice Project in 2012/13. The purpose of this project is to support regional sessions that give Aboriginal women, men, youth, and Elders a safe opportunity to give voice to issues of violence and abuse within their lives, their families, and communities; to learn from each other successful strategies to address these issues; and to be inspired to create change. A key component of the project will be the production and distribution of DVD featuring motivational stories from Aboriginal women, men, youth, and Elders, and support next steps in communities. A resource guide will also be produced that outlines information about currently available services and supports. The project has received funding through the Ministry of Health.
- MACAW is partnering with the HealthyAboriginalNetwork (Sean Muir) on the development of a comic that will tackle the sensitive issue of domestic violence geared toward Aboriginal youth, with a special focus on young men. Potential funding sources are being identified.

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- MACAW will follow-up with the Ministry of Justice directly to recommend an Aboriginal review of the justice system. MACAW will also follow-up with other ministries to reinforce the importance of working with Aboriginal people, and women in particular, when developing appropriate policies, programs and services.
- MACAW will continue to work with the PODV to develop a BC Aboriginal specific strategy as part of the three-year comprehensive provincial plan to address domestic violence. The provincial plan will be ready for implementation in 2013.

Appendices

Appendix I: MACAW Council Members

(as of October 31, 2012)

The council's Chair is Wendy Grant-John, a former chief from the Musqueam Nation and the first woman to be elected as vice-chief to the Assembly of First Nations.

As Chair, Grant-John will work with nine council members to examine how to improve the lives of Aboriginal women in BC and address the social and economic challenges that expose Aboriginal women and girls to violence.

In addition to the Chair, the council consists of members from all parts of BC. As part of the selection process, government consulted with BC's Aboriginal leadership and a diverse range of Aboriginal people and advocacy organizations to identify women who could bring a variety of experience and wisdom to the role of advising government.

Charlene Belleau, Esketemc First Nation

Charlene Belleau of the Esketemc First Nation is from the Interior of British Columbia. She is a former Chief of her First Nation and is currently Director of the Residential Schools Unit of the Assembly of First Nations.

Mary Tegee, Takla Lake First Nations

Mary Tegee is from the Takla Lake First Nations in north-central B.C. She is the Carrier Sekani Family Services Director and provides cross-cultural training to agencies and individuals who offer services to the Carrier Sekani people. She believes that community wellness depends on nurturing tradition, cultural values and the environment.

Chief Kim Baird, Tsawwassen First Nation

Chief Kim Baird is from the Tsawwassen First Nation on the Lower Mainland. Chief Baird has served as Chief of the Tsawwassen First Nation since 1999. She successfully negotiated B.C.'s first urban treaty and has the distinction of being the first Aboriginal woman to address the B.C. Legislature in October 2007 when the Tsawwassen Treaty legislation process was initiated.

Sophie Pierre, St. Mary's Indian Band

Sophie Pierre is the current Chief Commissioner of the BC Treaty Commission. She led the St. Mary's Indian Band for 30 years as elected chief and was the administrator of the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council for 25 years. She has also served on the boards of many major organizations, including BC Hydro and the First People's Congress.

Darlene Shackelly, Kwakiutl First Nation

Darlene Shackelly is the Executive Director of the Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of BC. Darlene is from the Kwakiutl First Nation on Vancouver Island and is a member of the Nooaitch Indian Band. She has dedicated the last 28 years to working with the Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of British Columbia, and has been the Executive Director for the past 10 years.

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Paulette Flamond

Paulette Flamond, the Executive Director of the Northeast Aboriginal Business Centre, is from Fort. St. John. Paulette sat on the Native Economic Development Advisory Board for the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation before it was disbanded, and is currently Vice-President of the B.C. Aboriginal Business Service Network Society and a national board member of the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (CANDO). In 2007, she was appointed to the Northern Development Initiative Trust and in 2009 was awarded an Aurora Award of Distinction as the Aboriginal Women of the Year as well as the Economic Developer of the Year by the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers. Paulette is committed to assisting Aboriginal people in becoming self-sufficient through business development.

Debbie Williams, Cowichan Tribes

Debbie Williams is the Executive Director of the Hiiye'yu Lelum House of Friendship Association in Duncan on Vancouver Island, and has an urban Aboriginal focus. Debbie also serves as the Representative to the National Association of Friendship Centres Board of Directors, an ex-officio position to the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres Executive Committee.

Chastity A. Davis, Tla'amin Nation

Chastity Davis is the Principal and Lead Consultant with Chastity Davis Consulting. Previously, she was a Key Account Manager with BC Hydro and prior to that, a Project Manager with Refinery Leadership. She is active in the community and is a Director on the Industry Council of Aboriginal Business and a Council and Board Member on the Minerva Foundation. In the past, she was the Vice President of the Aboriginal Women's Leadership Association of BC and is a frequent speaker at a wide range of events and conferences. She holds her Diploma in Marketing Management and Professional Sales from BCIT and her Bachelor of Arts in Professional Communications from Royal Roads University.

Marjorie White, Huu-ay-aht First Nation

Marjorie White is an Elder Advisor and former Executive Director of Circle of Eagles Lodge Society. Currently, she serves as Founder and member of the BC Association of Friendship Centre Elder Council, President of Aboriginal Mother Centre, Senator of the National Association of Friendship Centres, Vice President of Luma Native Housing, Chair of the Vancouver Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee, and a member of the Pacific Association of First Nation Women, the Vi Fineday Transition Society, Urban Spirit Foundation, Huu-ay-aht Government, and Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Service Society.

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Appendix II: MACAW Terms of Reference

(Updated March 7, 2012)

Background:

The Province of British Columbia wishes to work respectfully and in partnership with Aboriginal women, organizations and leadership to improve the quality of life for Aboriginal women. Following the June 15 – 17, 2011 *Collaboration to End Violence: National Aboriginal Women's Forum* and respecting the theme **x^wsimiwən ct ʔiʔ θəyθət ct** (We are courageous and we are healing ourselves), the province is committed to work with Aboriginal women and key informants to develop the necessary framework and support systems to address the risks and violence that many aboriginal women are currently exposed to. The overarching goal of the advisory council is to provide advice to government on how to improve the quality of life for Aboriginal women across British Columbia. The establishment of the advisory council will support the successful implementation of this commitment and work to empower those women.

Members:

Core membership will include key British Columbia Aboriginal leadership, organizations and women, and other organizations or individuals based on their unique ability to contribute to the work of the council.

Goals:

1. Develop and review an inventory of current programs available to support Aboriginal women.
2. Identify outcomes needed to improve quality of life for Aboriginal women.
3. Develop targets to achieve outcomes of Goal 2.
4. Maintain the baseline and update outcomes annually.

Tasks:

1. Provide advice to government to ensure programs supporting Aboriginal women will respond to their needs, build on effective practices and success, and be supported by key partners.
2. Review, revise and help implement an engagement plan if required (e.g. co-hosting discussions with partners and communities).
3. Review, revise and maintain a progress report on outcomes.

Governance

- The council will report to government through the Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation.
- The Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation will appoint the chair and council members.

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- The council will consist of up to ten members, including one position designated for an Elder.
- The council will utilize a consensus decision making model founded on the principles of shared responsibility and cooperation.
- The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation will provide administrative support for the council with support from a cross-ministry team.

Term

The term will be for up to two years and the council will meet quarterly, or as determined by the chair, and at least twice a year with the minister.

Appendix III: MACAW Strategic Planning Session

(March 27, 2012)

I. Vision

A world where all Aboriginal people live free of violence and are empowered to achieve their full human potential.

This draft vision statement was derived from the following input provided by the participants at the planning session:

- Where violence in our families no longer exists – we don't talk about it because it isn't there
- There is no need for a group to come together to talk about violence in our families
- Keep our young girls safe and ensure they are empowered and can live up to their full potential
- There is no more poverty
- For Aboriginal voices to be heard and to be taken seriously
- See the end to violence when women are restored to their traditional roles (women as life givers, men as providers and protectors)
- Children are secure about their future
- Men treat their family with respect
- Creating a safe place for Aboriginal women and children
- Break the cycle of abuse and violence – how do we resolve the past?
- Aboriginal people coming together with Government to find a new way to move forward – doing things differently with a new relationship
- Finding ways to make our communication effective and heard
- Services are available throughout the whole province
- We have an inventory of the programs and services that are successful

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II. Mission

We will work with aboriginal leaders, all levels of government and other partners to encourage development and implementation of ongoing and culturally appropriate approaches to:

- *prevent all forms of violence,*
- *increase access for victims and perpetrators of violence to a full range of services, and*
- *strengthen the implementation of laws, policies & programs to end violence*

This draft mission statement was developed from the following inputs of participants at the planning session.

- We will make a difference in the experience of violence faced by our people
- Changing government policies
- Create partnerships
- The Provincial Government, in consultation with Aboriginal communities, leadership and women's organizations must identify, and commit to making progress on, the necessary short, medium and long term actions to address the current gaps in service provision and improve the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal women and girls in BC
- Utilize traditional approaches
- Creating an inventory of all of the organizations that serve Aboriginal women
- Ensuring there is support and collaboration by leadership – make recommendations to leadership
- Upholding all our traditional roles
- Enhanced provision of local, community-driven and community-developed programs: government support for local programs, designed and delivered where possible by Aboriginal community-members will help to build community capacity and resilience and ensure local responses to local needs
- Inventory of Aboriginal foster care support – communicate value of healthy Aboriginal foster care
- Courage
- Elder abuse

III. Principles

Our guiding principles include:

- *Community Driven and Community Based: The voices of Aboriginal women, men and children must be heard and this will ensure that strategies and initiatives are truly responsive; services are accessible and where appropriate community based.*
- *Integrity: Drawing on Aboriginal cultures and traditions is essential to creating culturally appropriate policy and programs.*

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- **Partnership: Collaboration, partnership and coordination at the community, regional, provincial and federal levels is needed to end violence.**
- **Awareness: Sharing our knowledge, history, skills and understanding will build support and momentum for ending violence.**
- **Safety: special attention must be made to ensure that all services and supports for Aboriginal women and girls are provided in ways that support their physical and emotional safety.**

IV. Challenges/Constraints

The key obstacles or challenges we expect to encounter are:

- The lack of safe homes and shelters/transition housing for Aboriginal women – how do we get the funding to develop them?
- Lack of ongoing commitment by Government to ensure all of the recommendations are followed through – EG. Hwy of Tears Symposium (We need to know what has happened and what commitments have been fulfilled)
- Lack of ownership of the problem by Government
- It can be threatening when we talk about reallocating resources – those who hear about it fear losing control and/or losing funds
- Having our Aboriginal voice heard – ensure that the people that are making the decisions are at the table
- Pan-Indianization of services and programs – it is important that government and policy makers recognize that there are numerous Aboriginal cultures and traditions
- Our aboriginal ownership of this problem – working with our leadership
- There is a disconnect between youth and elders which is inhibiting dialogue
- Create trust with youth
- How we will communicate everything to the leadership – engage in a respectful way
- Create a communications plan to help us have effective communications with all demographics/segments
- Change the mindset/thinking of our communities – create hope and positivity
- Need for early education (preschool and elementary) on what violence is
- Need to create support for men around healthy relationships
- There is a lot going on in our province and the work is piece meal – we need to work on integration and a comprehensive strategic approach to using resources
- There is no safe place to talk about the issues of violence and abuse
- Working with law enforcement

V. We will overcome/address these challenges by:

- Development of a provincial framework on prevention, intervention, post incident
- Focussing on regional strategies for youth

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- Assigning responsibilities to different levels of government
- Holding honouring ceremonies in communities
- Having aboriginal leadership accountable to addressing the issue – declaration, etc. (physically getting up and standing together – symbolic – traditional commitment)
- Focus our strategy on hearing the women we represent – their stories and their advice on what must be done
- Bringing awareness to youth
- Bringing people in communities together to share their experiences
- Building safe dialogue

V. Strengths

The strategic areas where our strengths as members of the Council will be most beneficial to this process are:

- We are strong Aboriginal women
- We know our communities
- We have knowledge and experience – combination of education/expertise
- Our women make up the majority of the Aboriginal population
- We have political influence – are well connected
- We are diverse – with many different experiences
- Perseverance – won't take no
- We are moms, grandmas, aunts, sisters, etc.
- We are pragmatic ('do'ers)
- We have experienced of all forms of abuse and violence either firsthand or family and we have recovered -survivors
- We are leaders and we have allies
- We know our traditions, language, culture
- Can speak from both traditional and contemporary approaches
- We have balance, courage, take risks & meet challenges, we are young.
- We have a mandate from Government

VI Council's Recommended Priorities to support development of an Action Plan

These recommended priorities were developed by the Ministers Advisory Council on Aboriginal Women as the basis for an Action Plan to be delivered over the next two years. It was developed based on the understanding that many of the activities could and in many cases should extend well beyond the two years, that a number of "early wins" for communities and government could be realized, and that the Council may still develop further recommendations for action over time. At a minimum the implementation of these recommendations would strengthen awareness of the issue, empower Aboriginal women to speak out and take action against violence, develop partnerships to work together and build stronger commitments to ending violence.

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1. Holistic Model

Create a new model for addressing and ending violence in aboriginal communities which reflects the following aboriginal world views:

- Clearly valuing and incorporating the use of ancestral knowledge.
- Focussing on restoring a balanced well - being within the individual and within the context of relationships to others and the natural world.
- Recognizing that Aboriginal peoples are in the best position to make decisions about to end violence in their communities.

The Advisory Council recommends that a new approach to addressing the issue of violence be developed and this model should be based on the cycle of life. Policies, programs and initiatives need to be tailored to responding to the needs at each of the following stages of Life- Early Years, Youth, Adulthood, Elders

2. Giving Voice

- a. In a spirit of sharing and caring, host community-led gatherings in a safe and confidential environment that bring together women who are currently enduring abuses and those who have overcome violence and abuse. Bring together those who wouldn't otherwise be heard (create sessions around regional activities ie. Canning fish, beading, tea, whatever is appropriate to local cultures) 7 regions – look at multiple (possibly 3) sessions per region over a two year time frame.
- b. Develop Video project with the theme “I Survived ” to profile survivors and their stories and motivate and inspire others.
- c. Reach out to local groups – gathering and sharing stories and experiences – also see what they need in terms of resources and support
- d. Create inventories of existing groups and sharing the information so that stronger networks can be built at the community level
- e. Capture best practices in education/prevention/intervention etc.
- f. Conduct analysis and create a summary of all related recommendations/reports from conferences and events e.g. Highway 17
- g. Create safe places for women and children – more facilities and housing

3. Education and Awareness

- a) Develop and distribute an anti-violence/women's empowerment education and awareness program specific to each age group, based on Indigenous philosophy and adaptable to culture specificity. Simple language and clear messaging, demographic specifics (Girls to Grannies)
- b) Develop and deliver a prevention initiative – education and awareness campaign that educates our young people etc. as to what is violence, what to do if suffering from violence, etc. (integrate into school curriculum, based on tradition and values)
- c) Develop a safety campaign utilizing social media (Twitter and Facebook) for Aboriginal youth (Stopping violence on social media, also teaching people how to use social media safely)
- d) Focus on providing education in institutions – captive audience that could benefit from longer term education initiatives around ending violence

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- e) Educating other agencies – government, police, justice system, etc.
- f) Build on existing resources and practices – i.e. Safety toolkit
- g) Create more resources to support community communications regarding ending abuse and violence
- h) Build formal support for drawing upon our traditional beliefs and ways to heal our people and our communities.
- i) Ensure that all support, programs and opportunities are made available to remote and isolated communities, not just to major population centres.
- j) Get a detailed breakdown of funding by various BC Ministries that shows what \$ are being allocated to aboriginal people
- k) Obtain available data and information from sources such as the Coroner's office, and MCFD on:
 - # of children injured/dying in care
 - # of missing and murdered women
 - # of aboriginal suicides
 - Statistics on elder abuse
 - # of aboriginal foster parents (what resources they have)

4. Commitment/Ownership

- a) Talk to other groups such as the Health Council (and other major Aboriginal organizations and councils, treatment programs) about the need for aboriginal ownership of this issue
- b) Contact local leaders – make them aware they need to take responsibility for what is happening in communities
- c) Develop a Chief's/leaders declaration
- d) Ask Aboriginal leaders to stand together
- e) Sign a formal commitment or MOU to ending violence with the Premier

5. Focus on men

- a) Provincial or regional event for men – Leadership council could bring this together (need Champions for the cause – recruit high profile celebrities and community champions who will speak about & against violence)
- b) Train champions
- c) Create network/support opportunities (i.e. journey of men against violence)

6. Partnerships

- a. Commit to work with other Aboriginal women's organizations
- b. Partner with other government departments
- c. Partner with other organizations (eg. Ending Violence Associations)
- d. Use major gatherings to profile the topic and distribute resources – Elder's Gathering, Gathering of Voices, Labour unions, etc.
- e. Identify funding partnerships (foundations, etc.)

7. Communication Plan/Framework

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- a. Communicate the work of the Council – Telling our Story
- b. Create 'elevator speech' for use of Council members
- c. MACAW Website area (on MARR site or?)
- d. Social media – blog, Twitter, Facebook
- e. Document and distribute success stories
- f. Communicate our recommendations to all Ministers
- g. Set up communications guidelines and protocols for Advisory Council, key messages, FAQs and responses
- h. Track communications/media that has happened around the work of the Council

It was agreed by the Advisory Council that Coordination of existing programs, policies and initiatives is essential for ending violence, as is secure and long term funding. It is anticipated that some of the framework for better coordination and the identification of the required funding levels and approaches will become apparent as the Action Plan is implemented.

VII Next steps:

- ICG to produce draft work planning document and send to MARR for distribution to Advisory Council Members by April 2.
- Council Members to provide comments/suggestions for changes or additions to document by April 10.
- MARR representatives to incorporate high-level costing numbers and proposed timeframes for the work plan by April 13th
- MARR representatives seek meeting between the Minister and the Advisory Council members for April 12th or April 13th
- The first priority action is for the Advisory Council to seek a formal commitment from the Premier that the Government will work with the Council's recommendations to stop violence against women
- Next the Council Members and MARR will identify those opportunities that can be implemented in the near future and move forward on them to create some quick wins and build credibility for the work
- Council Members will seek the commitment of Aboriginal leaders to supporting/working on the issue of ending violence, and will acknowledge and publicize this commitment through traditional ceremony.

"We don't want to see any more inquiries into murdered and missing women or any forums on the Highway of Tears – that is why we are here – we must ensure that people talk about and commit to taking action to end abuse and violence"

APPENDIX 1 - General Discussion Points

- Engage and create awareness to prevent more women from going missing

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- Build formal support for drawing upon our traditional beliefs and ways to heal our people and communities
- Ensure that all support, programs and opportunities are made available to remote and isolated communities, not just to major population centres
- Create inventories and contact information for existing programs and initiatives
- Document and share best practises
- Reach out to local & community based women's groups to see needs in terms of support
- Obtain available data and information from sources such as the Coroner's office, and MCFD on
 - # of children injured/dying in care
 - # of missing and murdered women
 - # of aboriginal suicides
 - Statistics on elder abuse
 - # of aboriginal foster parents (what resources they have)
- Reconciliation ceremonies – honouring women & men
- Child first focus – remove parents/ not child
- Make recommendations to First Nations leaders
- Involving community members in planning
- Creating our own set of actions to support children in care, or people in treatment or programs staying connected to their families and communities. E.g. parents making calls to their children in care
- Regional strategies that are focussed on those in direct need
- Analysis of all recommendations/ reports from conferences/events eg Hway 17
- Ask our FN leaders to stand with us and make a commitment to action in ceremony
- Create solid communication plan including social media
- Share stories, experiences & best practises
- Develop and share tools such as presentations on 'what is victimization
- Create awareness of and responses to elder abuse
- Develop a Chief's declaration
- Sign a formal MOU or commitment with the B C government that will endure past the election
- Create community based ownership of the issues – develop skills such as 'train the trainers'
- Create safe places for aboriginal women and children.
- Help people find and express their courage and be risk takers
- Build partnerships – (eg Esketemc & Betty Ford)

Appendix IV: Declaration on Stopping Violence Against Aboriginal Women and Girls

Purpose

This Declaration is intended to broadly and publicly signal that Aboriginal peoples, communities and organizations in British Columbia are uniting with a common vision and purpose – to act individually, collectively and with all interested parties – to stop all forms of violence against Aboriginal women and girls.

This Declaration respects the United Nations **Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** which was adopted by the [United Nations General Assembly](#) during its 62nd session at [UN Headquarters](#) in New York City on September 13, 2007; and specifically, Article 22 which states:

- 1. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration.*
- 2. States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.*

As the original Peoples of this land, WE DECLARE:

We respect and honour women and girls;

We are sustained by the values, teachings and laws passed to us by our ancestors who cared for and protected all of our peoples;

We recognize the damage and disruption colonization brought to our communities and families through residential schools, foster care and other assimilation policies that replaced our ancestral ways;

We acknowledge that lateral violence, domestic violence, systemic violence, stranger violence and racism are not “normal” behaviours for our communities to experience but have become “normalized”;

We recognize that all forms of violence require action, and that a holistic approach that provides support across the life-span is required;

We are strong, resilient and courageous and we will heal ourselves and lift our families up; we will reclaim our healthy ways of caring for each other and create safe families and communities wherever we may live;

We will empower our Aboriginal men and women to take up our rightful and traditional roles and to be the solution to healing ourselves, our families and our communities;

Minister's Advisory Council on Aboriginal Women

We acknowledge that if we do not stand up against violence we are condoning it through our silence and inaction; as such....

...we commit to standing up to end violence against Aboriginal women and girls and call on political, organizational and community leadership everywhere to join us.

What can we do?

1. Take a public stand against violence.
2. Identify and support community champions.
3. Identify partners; find ways to work together.
4. Find out what resources, people and supports are available in your community, region, provincially or beyond.
5. Start a men's support group.
6. Listen to your women, young men, young women, children and Elders – they will tell you what is needed.
7. Celebrate success.

Signatories:

First Nations Summit Society

Union of BC Indian Chiefs

BC Assembly of First Nations

Métis Nation British Columbia

This Declaration may be adopted by all other leaders, communities, organizations or individuals who commit to stopping violence against Aboriginal women.