



December 8, 2015

The Right Honourable Prime Minister Trudeau
Government of Canada
Langevin Block 80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A3

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

We wish to extend our sincere congratulations on your election and swearing in as the 23rd Prime Minister of Canada. We look forward to working together in the months ahead to advance issues of importance to Yukoners. Specifically, we welcome your government's commitment to call an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Last February, a National Roundtable on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls was held in Ottawa following a commitment by Premiers and national Aboriginal leaders to convene a dialogue with the Government of Canada on this important issue. Yukon Premier Darrell Pasloski, along with Kwanlin Dün Chief Doris Bill and Teslin Tlingit Council Chief Carl Sidney, attended the roundtable as part of the Yukon delegation, which also included representatives of the three Yukon Aboriginal women's organizations, Assembly of First Nations, a family member and government officials.

In the discussions during and since the national roundtable, members of the Yukon delegation made two key recommendations: to hold a Yukon Regional Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and to host a Yukon Family Gathering.

This fall, we were pleased to announce the coordination of a Yukon Regional Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The Roundtable, to be held in February 2016, will include family members of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, elders and youth, government leaders, Yukon Aboriginal women's organizations, Council of Yukon First Nations, Assembly of First Nations, the Association of Yukon Communities and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle, on behalf of Yukon Aboriginal Women's organizations, will also host a Yukon Family Gathering for the loved ones of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. The Family Gathering, planned for December 12, will provide an opportunity for families to share their stories and honour the loss within their families and communities. Our hope is that the perspectives of Yukon families are meaningfully reflected at the Yukon Roundtable and are integrated within actions going forward to the National Roundtable.

In Yukon and across the North, we know firsthand the tragic scope of this issue. The prevalence of violence against Aboriginal women and girls is a national tragedy that requires a collective approach involving multiple stakeholders. The aim of the Roundtable is to create dialogue among governments, communities and family members to share information on the Yukon context and culturally-relevant best practices, and to collaborate on initiatives to improve safety and support for Indigenous women and girls in the territory.

Both of these events complement work that is being undertaken in some provinces and territories and builds on community-based initiatives that Aboriginal women's organizations have been leading for many years. The Sisters in Spirit project, the Brothers in Spirit initiative and the culturally-relevant programming that has been initiated in Yukon this past decade has and continues to make a real difference.

Together with families and the many caring and passionate leaders in our communities, we have begun to break the silence on violence against Indigenous women and girls. There is, however, more work to be done. The Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council, Government of Yukon, Yukon First Nations, Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon Legislative Assembly and others have been calling for a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. We thereby welcome the opportunity to engage with your government on Canada's commitment to establish a national inquiry on murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls. We would like to also extend an invitation to participate in the Yukon Regional Roundtable in February 2016.

Addressing violence is a priority for each of us and for all Yukoners. The work we do together over the next few months will be critical to our shared future. It is our hope that these two events in Yukon will enable us to work collaboratively with all levels and all orders of government and with those most affected by this issue.

Sincerely,



Elaine Taylor
Deputy Premier
Minister responsible for the
Women's Directorate



Doris Bill
Chief Kwanlin Dün First Nation



Doris Anderson
President of the Yukon
Aboriginal Women's Council

- c.: Hon. Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous & Northern Affairs
- c.: Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
- c.: Hon. Patricia Hajdu, Minister of Status of Women