

STATEMENT BY CANADA HOM (INAC SADM JEFF MOORE)
FOLLOW UP ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PERMANENT FORUM
EMPOWERMENT OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples calls on states to improve social and economic conditions, with particular attention to the rights and needs of women. The spirit of this document is reflected in the traditional laws of Indigenous peoples. We respect women, AND we honour their many roles and their strength.

When settlers imported discriminatory attitudes and entrenched them in laws and policies, these rights were denied. Respect was lost. Disempowerment replaced strength. And the disempowerment was exploited.

We see the results of this in Canada today. Only 36% of Indigenous women have post-secondary education; and Indigenous women are less likely than men or non-Indigenous women to overcome economic barriers due to limited access to capital, financial literacy, and resources.

Violence against women and girls in all social strata is an epidemic that has sickened Canada as it has the rest of the world. This is evident in the fact that one in three women has experienced violence. This is unacceptable.

Re-empowerment of Indigenous women is the key to re-asserting their rights.

Safety is a basic foundation of human rights. As such, Canada has launched an independent inquiry into the systemic causes of all forms of violence endured by Indigenous women and girls. Economic empowerment is also essential to restoring the authority and respect which the rights of women imply.

These are facts, Indigenous rights are a fact, and Canada's federal government is facing the facts. Canada is moving beyond the 150 years of its history that have brought Indigenous women to where we are today. In the past two years, the Canadian government has committed nearly \$12 billion Canadian dollars in new funding over the next five years to close the gap in socio-economic outcomes for Indigenous people.

When the Commission on the Status of Women focused its attention on Indigenous women last month, Canadian leaders participated in large numbers. When like-minded states such as Mexico and the United States came together to eliminate violence against women and girls, we joined them. And when the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues recommends action to address the disadvantage of Indigenous women, we act.

Let us continue this very important effort.

Word count: 363