



CANADA – LES FEMMES MICHIF OTIPEMISIWAK DECLARATION

THIS DECLARATION IS EFFECTIVE FROM THE AUGUST 9th 2021

BETWEEN:

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN IN RIGHT OF CANADA
AS REPRESENTED BY THE MINISTER OF CROWN-INDIGENOUS
RELATIONS CANADA ("CANADA")

- and -

LES FEMMES MICHIF OTIPEMISIWAK/WOMEN OF
THE MÉTIS NATION ("LFMO")

WHEREAS section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, states that "the existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed" and "the 'aboriginal peoples of Canada' includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples";¹

AND WHEREAS the Métis Nation is one of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada within the meaning of section 35 of the Constitution Act 1982;

AND WHEREAS discussions will be informed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples including article 5 which affirms that, "Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State";

AND WHEREAS the Métis Nation is one of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada within the meaning of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

AND WHEREAS the Métis Nation emerged as a distinct people with its own collective identity, language, culture, way of life and self-government in the historic Northwest prior to Confederation;

AND WHEREAS section 35 Aboriginal and Treaty rights "are guaranteed equally to male and female persons";²

AND WHEREAS Métis Nation women have historically and continue to experience gender-based violence that results from intersectionality including the impacts of colonization, residential schools, the 60's scoop, poverty, disabilities and criminalization amplified by a long history of non-recognition by various levels of government in Canada and a general lack of awareness of the unique

¹ Charter of Rights and Freedoms, s 15, Part 1 of the Constitution Act, 1982, being Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK), 1982, c 11 at ss.35(2) and (4)

² Ibid.



Canada

and vibrant Métis Nation culture, history, and ways of knowing and being;

AND WHEREAS LFMO is the recognized voice of Métis Nation Women across the Métis Nation Motherland including the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario;

AND WHEREAS LFMO operates in a democratic, transparent and fiscally accountable manner to influence public policy and decision-making related to concerns and aspirations of Métis Nation women;

AND WHEREAS the mission of LFMO is to ensure that Métis Nation women from across the Métis Nation Motherland are safe, connected, empowered and have capacity to work with Indigenous and Canadian organizations to help create the conditions for healthy, vibrant and productive communities throughout the Métis Nation;

AND WHEREAS LFMO is the only representative body nationally that has been recognized and supported through the Assembly of the Métis National Council and by Governing Members of the Métis Nation, to advocate on behalf of Métis Nation women within the Motherland at the national and international level;

AND WHEREAS the direction of LFMO is determined and informed by grassroots Métis Nation women and through the provincial women's councils of the Métis Nation governments or representative bodies across the Motherland;

AND WHEREAS Métis Nation women are distinct from First Nations and Inuit women, and have unique political and organizational approaches;

AND WHEREAS "Métis Women" and their concerns and interests is a future priority area identified within

Annex 1 of the April 2017 Canada-Métis Nation Accord, LFMO is well placed with expertise, that includes culturally-informed Métis Nation-first GBA+ tools, data and research and extensive engagement networks, to advance this important priority;

AND WHEREAS Canada is committed to establishing a renewed relationship with the Métis Nation on a distinctions-basis that is inclusive of the unique needs and interests of Métis Nation women;

AND WHEREAS LFMO is guided through actions and advocacy by their 10 primary objectives:

1. Advocate for the priorities and needs of Métis Nation women within Métis Nation, Canada and internationally.
2. Be caretakers and stewards of the land and waters.
3. Be caretakers of the traditional knowledge of Métis Nation women.
4. Advocate for social justice and equality.
5. Increase opportunities for Métis Nation women to develop leadership skills.
6. Help Métis Nation people lead healthier lives and support healthy and vibrant communities.
7. Ensure that the perspectives and priorities of Métis Nation women are included in economic development initiatives and opportunities and support Métis Nation women's entrepreneurship.
8. Foster culturally appropriate early learning environments and lifelong learning to improve educational outcomes for Métis Nation children, women and all Métis Nation learners.
9. Develop a relevant research strategy and build a disaggregated data evidence base.
10. Build a strong, successful, inclusive, responsible, and transparent organization; and

AND WHEREAS LFMO seeks to:

1. Maintain the cultural distinctiveness and preserve the cultural identity of Métis Nation women;
2. Enhance and develop strong leadership capabilities, individual and collective skills and talents so that Métis Nation women can play a central role in their own communities; and
3. Undertake projects that improve the social and economic conditions of Métis Nation communities.

NOW THEREFORE CANADA AND LFMO AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

1. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Declaration are to:

- 1.1 Affirm a relationship between Canada and LFMO to address the issues of common concern that impact the full and equal participation of Métis Nation women across the Métis Nation Motherland in the spirit of trust, respect and co-development;
- 1.2 Create and collaboratively establish Li Shmayn⁷ as set out in section 3 below, to help advance the priorities of Métis Nation women and to support the broader goal of reconciliation and healing with all Indigenous Peoples;
- 1.3 Work to end the legacy of colonialism, colonial attitudes, systemic racism, discrimination and gender-based violence, inequalities and inequities wherever they may remain in federal legislation, policies and practices;
- 1.4 Work to improve equity, the socio-economic conditions and health and wellness of Métis Nation women and their access to social and economic programs and services that address their needs;

- 1.5 Create a whole-of-government coordinated approach to the implementation of this process through which policy, research and practices are co-developed on matters that affect Métis Nation women across the Motherland; and
- 1.6 Support LFMO's role as experts on Métis Nation GBA+ in fulfilling the objectives of the Canada-Métis Nation Accord and on specific priority areas identified by the Métis Nation, including housing, homelessness, and IELCC (Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care strategy).

2. POLICIES AND PRIORITIES

Policy and Priority areas will be addressed by Canada and LFMO as follows:

- 2.1 Define policy, research and practices that are co-developed with respect to matters that affect Métis Nation women across the Motherland to improve outcomes, create safe environments and encourage Métis women leadership both in Métis Nation and Canadian governments;
- 2.2 Policy and priority areas will be reviewed and renewed annually. Evolving or emerging priorities may be added to this Declaration as agreed upon by Canada and LFMO; and
- 2.3 Canada and LFMO commit to ensuring the inclusion of an anti-racist, culturally safe, gendered intersectional lens to policies and priority areas to facilitate improved outcomes for Métis Nation women.

3. LI SHMAYN

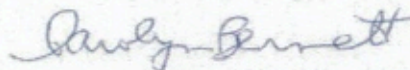
Canada and LFMO agree to embark on Li Shmayn to fulfill the objectives of this Declaration:

⁷Li Shmayn means 'the trail' in Michif. Pronounced "lee shemayne".

- 3.1 Canada, through the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations (CIR) and LFMO will meet on a bi-annual basis to review and discuss progress on distinctions and gender-based priority areas, and to identify emerging priority areas. Other key Cabinet Ministers may be invited to participate based on identified priority areas;
- 3.2 Bi-annual meetings, co-chaired by the Deputy Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), will occur with key/relevant federal Deputy Ministers to assess and evaluate progress and to ensure on-going momentum in priority areas. Meetings with relevant Assistant Deputy Ministers may also be scheduled throughout the year to support the advancement of priorities. Meetings may be organized by CIRNAC officials at the request of LFMO, or LFMO may organize meetings with other departments and provide updates to support the ongoing implementation of this Declaration;
- 3.3 Canada and LFMO will negotiate a multi-year resourced work plan based on existing, evolving and emergent priority areas to empower the full and effective engagement and participation of Métis Nation women across the Motherland, acknowledging that LFMO requires reasonable capacity to activate equitable participation in the objectives of this Declaration;
- 3.4 Terms of Reference will be established to govern the work of this process that includes a multi-year work plan and any other process or actions that are required to support the implementation of the objectives of this Declaration including a collaborative whole-of-government implementation table co-chaired by CIRNAC and LFMO;
- 3.5 Canada and LFMO agree to co-develop an annual joint report to federal departments and LFMO constituents setting out the progress of shared priorities in terms of objectives, milestones and outcomes to inform the ongoing implementation of this Declaration; and
- 3.6 Where the implementation of the objectives and subject matter of this Declaration requires new resources or policy authorities, these will be sought in accordance with Government of Canada authorities, policies, and applicable reporting requirements.
- #### 4. NON-DEROGATION
- 4.1 This Declaration shall not diminish, derogate, abrogate or infringe any existing Aboriginal, treaty, legal, inherent or any other rights of the Métis Nation.
- #### 5. GENERAL
- Canada and LFMO agree to the following terms:
- 5.1 That this Declaration may be revised in writing if agreed to by both Canada and LFMO;
- 5.2 That this Declaration is not a legally binding instrument but rather a statement of common resolve to establish a joint process to develop a multi-year whole-of-government strategy to enable and enhance Métis Nation women's full participation in the co-development of policy, program and legislation in issues that directly relate to their interests;
- 5.3 That this Declaration may be terminated by either Participant following 90 days written notice.

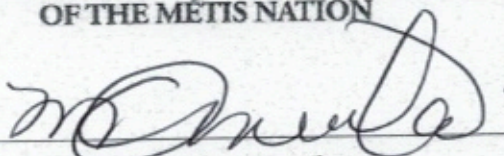
SIGNED THE 9th DAY OF AUGUST , 2021.

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN IN RIGHT OF CANADA



The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, M.D., P.C., M.P.
Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations

LES FEMMES MICHIF OTIPEMISIWAK/WOMEN
OF THE MÉTIS NATION



President Melanie Omeniho
Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak



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ANNEX 1 - PRIORITY AREAS

The Priority Areas are listed for the intent of initiating this Declaration and may be prioritized or added based on the evolving and emergent needs of Métis Nation women as agreed upon by Canada and LFMO. Priority Areas will be identified on an annual basis for focused collaboration to be set out in a multi-year work plan that aligns with the goals and mandates of both Canada and LFMO:

1. **Gender-Based Violence:** addressing gender-based violence through a Métis Nation lens;
2. **Education:** development of supports for Métis Nation women to pursue education;
3. **Economic Empowerment:** identification of opportunities to support the economic empowerment of Métis Nation women;
4. **Health:** identifying opportunities to improve Métis Nation women's health through programmatic responses, focused Métis Nation women's health research, preventative and proactive approaches/education, culturally safe approaches and outreach;
5. **Leadership:** identification of opportunities to encourage, promote and support the inclusion of Métis Nation women and girls to participate at all levels of public service and governance including political and community representation;
6. **Métis-specific GBA+ lens:** to ensure an enhanced contribution to Métis Nation women in policy and governance and the co-development of federal policy, programs, legislation and services;
7. **Justice:** identifying opportunities to support the fair and equal treatment for Métis Nation women victims or offenders and their families who are caught up in Canada's justice system;
8. **Closing the Gap:** enhancing the socio-economic and cultural wellbeing of all Métis Nation women;
9. **Organizational Capacity Development:** to support engagement and consultation with grassroots Métis Nation women, to support policy and advocacy work with Canada; and
10. **Recognition and Respect:** recognizing the contributions of Métis Nation women in Canada's military efforts, and commemorating the sacrifices and achievements of Métis Nation women Veterans.