



National Association
of Friendship Centres
Association nationale
des centres d'amitié

Urbanization and Indigenous Peoples in Canada

Responses for the Questionnaire from the Special Rapporteur on the
Rights of Indigenous Peoples

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In Friendship.



SUBMISSION TO: United Nations

**Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
(OHCHR)**

**Mr. Francisco Calí Tzay
Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of
Indigenous peoples**

Date: February 27, 2021

**Purpose: To provide input from the National Association of
Friendship Centres (NAFC) in reference to Canada's urban
Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) into
Questions from the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of
Indigenous Peoples.**

Introduction

The National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) is a national Indigenous non-governmental organization that represents a network of over 100-member local Friendship Centres (FCs) and Provincial/Territorial Associations (PTAs) across Canada. For more than fifty years, Friendship Centres have aided Indigenous peoples in Canada - First Nations (status and non-status), Inuit, and Métis - living in urban (populations of over 5000) environments, including rural (populations of under 5000), remote (no year-round road access), and northern. Friendship Centres are Canada's most significant urban Indigenous service delivery infrastructure and are providers of culturally relevant programs and services by and for urban Indigenous community members.

Friendship Centres are grassroots organizations that provide services to all members of their respective communities, regardless of their Canadian legal status as an Indigenous person, and have done so since their inception. Last year, ninety-three Friendship Centres served approximately 1.4 million First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and non-Indigenous people across over 1200 programs in 238 buildings across Canada and employing over 2,700 staff.

These programs and services span a range of areas, including health, housing, education, recreation, language, justice, employment, economic development, culture, and community wellness. Friendship Centres are a lifeline for many Indigenous people living in urban environments. Today, approximately 61% of the Indigenous population in Canada lives in urban communities (with over 1000 population). Friendship Centres are known within urban Indigenous communities for creating much-needed support structures that are not available anywhere else.

Urbanization and Indigenous Peoples

**What are the key factors driving the urbanisation of Indigenous peoples?
How has this impacted the social, economic and cultural cohesion of
Indigenous communities throughout the world?**

The Indigenous population in Canada is young, growing, and largely urban-based. The early roots of the urbanization of Indigenous people in Canada began roughly in the early 1950s and has not slowed down. Nationally, approximately 61% of Indigenous people are living in urban settings. Depending on the region, Indigenous people living in urban settings make up 85% of the Indigenous population.

Indigenous people are urban based for many reasons, including the fact that the city is where they were born and raised.

Reasons also include:

- Family – marriage or to be closer to children due to breakdown of marriage or relationships, or want to be closer to access time with a child or children removed by the child welfare system;
- Employment - due to systemic and structural lack of employment opportunities in their respective home communities;
- Access to health care - sometimes due to lack of health care in their respective Indigenous communities, including for Indigenous people with disabilities, palliative, maternal, prenatal, seniors, and long term care;
- Education -due to lack of early childhood education, culturally relevant child care, primary school, elementary school, secondary school, or post secondary school;
- Engagement with the justice system – once released from incarceration, some Indigenous people are unable to return to their home community
- Incarceration - Indigenous people in Canada are vastly overrepresented in incarceration in Canada;
- Child welfare – colonial practices of removing Indigenous children from their homes and communities;
- Safety and Social supports – Indigenous people escaping intimate partner violence, bullying, structural violence, or homophobia;
- Mobility - Indigenous people travel and move frequently between urban centres and their respective home communities.

The 2011 Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study (UAPS) entitled “City as Home” found that, while a majority of Indigenous people retain links with their community of origin (either their own or that of their parents or grandparents), when asked “where is home for you?” 71% of the UAPS participants say that home is their current city of residence, 16% said it was their community of origin, and 12% indicated another community other than their city of residence or home community. Most participants did not intend to return to their communities of origin to live permanently in the future, although some either planned to return or remained undecided.

The same UAPS study found that while urban-based, Indigenous peoples are seeking to become significant and visible within the urban landscapes, 60% felt they could make their city a better place to live, 40% felt that no single Indigenous organization or national political party best represented them or could not say.

While the reasons for Indigenous people being in urban settings are many, there remains a gap between the availability of services and the accessibility of those services for urban Indigenous community members. While there is an ever-present and growing Indigenous middle class, unfortunately, poverty remains high for urban Indigenous people. The need for culturally safe and accessible urban Indigenous-specific and led community supports is high and continually growing.

Friendship Centres (FCs) are an excellent example of Indigenous self-determined non-political and non-representative structures led by Indigenous people that have been created by and for Indigenous peoples in urban settings. Indigenous people should not feel 'less Indigenous' because they are urban based.

Due to the varying reasons an Indigenous person in Canada relocates to an urban environment, the social, economic, and cultural cohesion also varies. For those who were not born and raised in urban settings, social, economic and cultural cohesion can be particularly challenging as the journey of finding one's place in their new community is often tainted by racism and overall settler community rejection. This remains true, even for those who were born and raised in urban settings – discrimination based on race, ancestry, creed and gender impacts day-to-day interactions within urban communities from purchasing groceries to education and employment, child welfare, housing and beyond. It remains a reality in Canada that colonialism has created views of urban space as, "fundamentally incompatible with Indigenous identities."¹

The NAFC and its network of member FCs and Provincial/Territorial Associations (PTAs) is a direct result of and an effective response to the growing urbanization of Indigenous peoples in Canada. FCs are not only community staples, but also an expectation. Any Indigenous person moving to a town or city anywhere in Canada know to find out 1) if there is a Friendship Centre in their community, and 2) what that Friendship Centre offers. Indigenous people know that FCs are a first and constant contact to connect to other community members, participate in cultural activities, and to get support for any key moment in their life.

Our inclusive programming is open to all Indigenous people and there are often specific programs for: women, parents, children, youth, elders/seniors, families, 2-Spirit LGTBQQIA, men, people involved with the child welfare system, people involved with the justice system, and people accessing health care services, among others. If the urban Indigenous community were to lose access to Friendship Centres it would be devastating to an urban Indigenous community's social, economic and cultural cohesion as Indigenous people are already recovering from colonization, systemic discrimination and the lingering effects of the early federal assimilation policies and residential schools.

Please provide examples of Indigenous peoples continuously occupying traditional territories that have developed into metropolitan areas over time and the impact of the urbanisation on their collective rights.

All land in Canada is Indigenous land. This means that every major city in Canada is built on Indigenous traditional territories that have developed into metropolitan areas over time. The same is true for many rural and remote areas as well.

¹ L.C. Senese, K. Wilson / Social Science and Medicine 91 (2013) 219-228

In addition to First Nations reservations and Inuit and Métis traditional land bases, there is also unceded territory and traditional territory that spans North America that Indigenous peoples belong to and practice Aboriginal rights on. Aboriginal rights are protected by s.35 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and *Constitution Act 1982* and Aboriginal people can assert these rights anywhere in Canada.

Discrimination

What are the effects of racism and racial discrimination on urban Indigenous peoples? Consider access to essential services, employment, healthcare, education, child welfare, domestic violence services, law enforcement and incarceration.

As mentioned above, the perception of Indigenous people being incompatible with urban spaces, a perspective rooted in discrimination and racism, has left the Indigenous community in Canada with high rates of suicides, overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, poverty, domestic violence and low levels of educational attainment.² The Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study (UAPS), conducted research of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in eleven major Canadian cities: Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax. The study, published in 2010, found that there are common negative stereotypes that Indigenous people believe non-Indigenous people have of them such as: addictions problems - 74%, lazy and lack of motivation - 30%, lack of intelligence and education - 20%, relying on social assistance - 20%, constantly unemployed - 18%, homeless and panhandlers - 13%, abuse the system - 12%, engage in criminal activities - 12%, and do not pay taxes or “free ride” at 12%.³

It is because of the above racist perceptions of Indigenous people in Canada that Indigenous people in urban settings experience racism with respect to employment, housing, child welfare, law enforcement, incarceration, and access to essential services.

While *In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care* was specifically addressing allegations of racism and discrimination within the B.C. healthcare system, the report’s findings echo much of what we as Indigenous people have experienced across Canada.

“Indigenous people told us that they encounter racism and discrimination in the B.C. health care system, including stereotyping, unacceptable personal

² Dr. McCaskill, Don, [2012]. *Discrimination and Public Perceptions of Aboriginal People in Canadian Cities*, February 2021, retrieved online

³ https://www.uaps.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/UAPS-Main-Report_Dec.pdf

interactions and poorer quality of care. Many Indigenous people said they do not feel safe when accessing health care services and interacting with health providers – some noting that they “never” feel safe, and many sharing that they “always” have negative experiences. Indigenous women spoke up more than any other Indigenous people, and shared their particular feelings of unsafety.”⁴

The contributing factors of racism and discrimination experienced by Indigenous peoples in general, let alone while accessing essential services, are complex. Colonization, the *Indian Act 1876*, residential schools, sixties scoop, are all systems of oppression that have braided systemic racism into Canadian institutions as well as racist views in those that work within these institutions in various capacities. These racist views persist amongst the general public and are easily shared through social media platforms and subject Indigenous people in Canada to racism while in their own homes.

Through examining the experiences of Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants in their research, Browne et al. (2011) learned that Indigenous patients actively avoid much needed healthcare to avoid experiencing racism in seeking healthcare.⁵

The complex Canadian legal system, intended to serve as a mechanism for redress once an individual has experienced racism and discrimination remains largely inaccessible to Indigenous people for several reasons including, but not limited to, fear of retribution, literacy issues and distrust in the Canadian legal system. Additionally, internal mechanisms of complaint within institutions tend to be modeled after colonial ideas of dispute resolution and appear to be more focused on preserving the institution as opposed to the rights and safety of persons claiming discrimination. Indigenous people are subjected to working within a legal system that is historically oppressive for Indigenous peoples. Currently, there is no Indigenous specific ground of discrimination within provincially or federally regulated human rights law. Instead, an Indigenous person is required to apply to the respective tribunal within their province or territory, select several grounds of discrimination such as race, ancestry, creed and gender, and then make written submissions for each of the grounds of discrimination and explain how they relate to the unique circumstances of experiencing discrimination as an Indigenous person in Canada.

Urban Indigenous people continue to experience negative and sometimes deadly interactions with law enforcement in Canada, owing much to the above mentioned racist stereotyping of Indigenous people in Canada. Urban Indigenous people are

⁴ Turpel-Lafond, M.E, “In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care”, November 2020, p.31, retrieved online

⁵ Browne, A.J., Smye, V., Rodney, P., Tang, S., Mussell, B. & O’Neil, J. (2011). Access to primary care from the perspective of Aboriginal patients at an urban emergency department. *Qualitative Health Research*.

subjected to racial profiling, carding (the practice of stopping, questioning, and documenting individuals when no offence is being investigated), and are also over-represented in the criminal justice system. Statistics Canada reported in 2016 that while Indigenous adults represent roughly 3% of the adult population in Canada, they represent roughly 26% of admissions to provincial and federal incarceration facilities, while Indigenous women account for roughly 38% of those admitted. Although there have been amendments to the *Criminal Code* and an increased awareness of the Gladue principle, these and other measures have done little to combat the reality of over-representation of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system.

The child welfare system in Canada perpetuates colonial harm among children. In Canada's urban settings many urban Indigenous people have nowhere to go after aging out of the child welfare system and foster care and, therefore, find themselves in urban settings with a disconnect to their own Indigenous cultures and languages. NAFC's advocacy reminds governments and all leadership that urban Indigenous children in Canada have a right to receive programs and services geared towards them, that are culturally safe, regardless of their location in Canada; especially given our history of colonization, racism and legislated discrimination that Canada is in the process of reversing now.

NAFC's network of member FCs bridges the urbanization gap in resources for Indigenous children and families within urban settings through prevention of racism, discrimination and violence through training and educational workshops, food security and employment programs, even health clinics and important information about accessing Indigenous rights to programming and services at FCs across Canada.

Urban Indigenous children in Canada in urban settings often face additional barriers accessing culturally safe programs and services including racism and discrimination that can often be difficult to discuss or point out without fear of harm and further racism. NAFC asserts that urban Indigenous children, youth and families should never have to experience or fear any form of discrimination; including racism and systemic discrimination in Canada based on race, gender and sexual orientation, age and/or Indigenous belief systems.⁶

⁶ National Association of Friendship Centres. *Justice and Safety for Urban Indigenous Children and Youth in Canada. National Association of FCs – Civil Society Submission. 5th and 6th Review of Canada's Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.* (2020) **[NAFC Alternative Submission]**

Identity, Recognition and Culture

In what ways have Indigenous peoples' collective culture and identity changed by adapting to living in urban areas? How can Indigenous peoples maintain their traditional knowledge, language and connection to their traditions and ancestral lands when living in urban environments?

In the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, it was noted that, " *Crossing the city limits does not transform Aboriginal people into non-Aboriginal people; they go on being the particular kind of person they have always been – Cree, Dene, Mohawk, Haida. The intention of Aboriginal people to go on expressing their Aboriginal identity and to pass it on to their children was a consistent theme in presentations by urban Aboriginal people at the round table and in hearings across the country.*"⁷

Through our extensive culturally relevant supports, programs, and services, we create safer and welcoming spaces for Indigenous people in urban settings. In this way, Indigenous people feel greater connection to urban Indigenous communities in which they call home, reside or visit for access to education, housing, or health care (among other reasons). FCs also do outreach and partnership development with the broader public, community organizations, municipalities, and governments to foster better understanding of Indigenous history and circumstances. This work fosters greater anti-racist understanding and acceptance of Indigenous people in urban settings.

Many FCs also host cultural teachings, on the land programming, and work to foster greater connection to local lands and waters.

At risk populations

Some Indigenous peoples are at even greater risk of human rights violations due to intersecting forms of discrimination including but not limited to women and girls, persons with disabilities, LGBTI persons, and children. Please explain the specific situations and views of these groups and the requirements needed to ensure that their rights are recognised and protected.

Urban Indigenous children, youth and families, including Indigenous Elders, are at a significantly greater risk of human rights violations in Canada such as racial and systemic discrimination in healthcare, education, child welfare and social settings by virtue of belonging to an Indigenous grouping in Canada such as being First Nations,

⁷ Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), retrieved online

Inuit and/or Métis. All forms of discrimination that international human rights instruments such as the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) articulate, and that Canada's domestic laws are meant to protect Indigenous peoples from, are still sometimes either not utilized or ineffective in preventing and addressing racial and systemic discrimination in Canada as there are still incidents of racial and systemic discrimination surfacing in Canada.

There have been recent examples of ongoing discrimination, as well as outright wrongful behaviours, directed at Indigenous peoples in urban settings in Canada while attempting to access healthcare. Some forms of discrimination have resulted in the initiation of principles to counteract systemic abuses over the past decade, such as Jordan's Principle, to prevent and address healthcare discrepancies among the urban Indigenous population.⁸

Other forms of mistreatment have been directed at Indigenous women seeking healthcare in the form of forced and coerced sterilization as well as racist commentary such as in the case of Joyce Echaquan in Canada's province of Quebec. On September 28, 2020, Joyce, a 37-year-old Atikamekw woman and mother of seven died in Centre hospitalier de Lanaudiere amidst racist, horrendous and degrading comments from healthcare staff. Events such as Joyce's passing highlight Indigenous regional health survey data findings; where it has been reported that there is still a fear of seeking supports in urban settings among urban Indigenous peoples for various reasons.

Another form of systemic discrimination persists in the form of lower rates of success in accessing justice within the legal system. A recent study in Canada from Yellowhead Research Institute's Dr. Shiri Pasternak indicates that First Nations people in Canada experience systemic discrimination when seeking the legal remedy of the injunction in the courts. A 2018 study reviewing legal case law across Canada, *Injunctions By First Nations: Results of a National Study*, found that First Nations are significantly less likely to be awarded an injunction (the courts will not order for another party to stop an activity that First Nations see as violating their legal and Aboriginal rights). In fact, only 18.5% of injunctions sought by First Nations are awarded in Canada.⁹

In comparison to other counterparts, such as corporations and non-Indigenous parties, the legal injunction remedy is more successful as the balance of convenience step of the Canadian legal test for injunctions, as set by *RJR-MacDonald Inc. v. Canada (Attorney General)*, [1995] 3 SCR 199, more often shifts in favour of judgment for the non-Indigenous party. For example, in *Land Back: A Yellowhead Institute Red Paper* in 2019, it was found that 76% of injunctions filed against First

⁸ Indigenous Services Canada. *Jordan's Principle*. Accessed online on February 21, 2021 at: <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1568396042341/1568396159824>)

⁹ <https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2019/11/14/injunctions-by-first-nations-results-of-a-national-study/>)

Nations by corporations were granted, 81% of injunctions filed against corporations by First Nations were denied, and 82% of injunctions filed against the government by First Nations were denied.¹⁰

In Canada, eliminating all forms of racism and discrimination experienced by urban Indigenous peoples requires a unique solution due to Canada's history of legislated colonialism forming the root of the systemic discrimination. In Canada, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada articulated and responded to Canada's well-documented history of colonization and racism with a series of *Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action* (TRC Calls to Action)¹¹ that initiate support from local Canadian Indigenous peoples and leadership, as well as the Canadian governments at all levels, and the United Nations' supportive bodies in order to reverse systemic discrimination in Canada as an important, long-term process to improve Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations within Canada's domestic borders and diverse cultural landscape.

Currently, there is little data to provide a clear picture of human rights violations experienced by 2SLGBTQ+ people who holding multiple stigmatized and historically oppressed identities. The study, *2SLGBTQ Migration, Mobility and Health Research Project*, discussed some of the challenges of life, "in a big city", such as finding housing and employment, dealing with racism and exploitation and barriers in accessing services, all of which points to 2SLGBTQ+ persons experiencing heightened difficulties in the urban setting.

Canada is a federation and responsibilities are divided amongst federal and provincial responsibility. Under Canada's constitution, "Indians and the lands reserved for the Indians" are federal responsibility, however, many services such as health, education, and social services fall under provincial responsibility. Urban Indigenous people are often caught in jurisdictional wrangling between federal and provincial governments. Each believing that the other level of government is responsible.

¹⁰ (<https://redpaper.yellowheadinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/red-paper-report-final.pdf>)

¹¹ (http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

Indigenous-led Initiatives and State Responses

Please provide examples of resilience, best practices and strategies employed by Indigenous movements or organisations to improve the living conditions of urban Indigenous peoples.

In Canada, the TRC Calls to Action provides specific guidance and recommendations and a framework for mobilizing “all levels of government, organizations, as well as individuals to make concrete changes in society. They list specific actions to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation.” TRC Calls to Action also adopts UNDRIP as a framework for the establishment and maintenance of respectful relations in Canada among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples within its first principle of reconciliation. The fourth principle of reconciliation outlined by the TRC Calls to Action articulates that, “Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples’ education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity.”¹²

The NAFC responded to the egregious case of [Joyce Echaquan](#) with a commitment to an ongoing campaign to address racism in health care, including with an online forum to address racism in the healthcare setting in Canada on behalf of urban Indigenous children, youth, families and Elders. The forum, *Urban Indigenous Forum: Addressing Racism in Healthcare*, was held in 2020, and posted on NAFC’s public website to educate and prevent racism in the future; and spur dialogue for NAFC’s national advocacy on behalf of Indigenous women accessing healthcare rights in Canada. (<https://www.nafc.ca/en/news-media>)

NAFC responds to a range of policy areas to advocate for the elimination and reversal of systemic discrimination and racism in all its forms in Canada. These policy areas include: child welfare, languages, reconciliation, employment, housing and homelessness and criminal justice. When events of racism and discrimination that violate Canadian domestic human rights legislation, UNDRIP and the TRC Calls to Action arise; NAFC is able to support urban Indigenous children, youth and families with public advocacy and, where appropriate, follow up with lobbying at a national level through its policy chains in Canada’s capital city of Ottawa with the Canadian government. For more information on NAFC’s policy and advocacy work please visit: (<https://www.nafc.ca/en/policy-advocacy>)

All of NAFC’s advocacy around the elimination of racism and discrimination in Canada is guided by the TRC Calls to Action and supports the implementation of international instruments in Canada such as UNDRIP and the CRC. Our collective work reaches millions of points of contact in a year and hundreds of thousands of people every single day from coast to coast to coast for roughly the past fifty years.

¹² (<http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls to Action English2.pdf>)

Friendship Centres provide critical wrap-around supports in childcare, job creation, employment and training, social economy, justice, holistic health, housing/shelter, anti-violence/violence prevention, and education – including early childhood education. Through our extensive culturally relevant supports, programs, and services, we create safer and welcoming spaces for Indigenous people in urban settings. As a result, Indigenous people feel greater connection to urban Indigenous communities in which they call home, reside or visit for access to education, housing, or healthcare (among other reasons). Friendship Centres also do outreach and partnership development with the broader public, community organizations, municipalities, and governments to foster better understanding of Indigenous history and circumstances. This work fosters great anti-racist understanding and acceptance of Indigenous people in urban settings.

What are States currently doing to address the needs of urban Indigenous peoples in both law and practice? Examples may include protocols to guarantee political representation, participation of urban Indigenous peoples in decision making, social programs, urban planning, land use regulations, or support for Indigenous-owned businesses and service providers. Please explain how the impact of these measures has improved the situation.

The NAFC, in Canada, advocates for increased funding for programs and services for urban Indigenous children, youth, families and Elders. NAFC provides urban Indigenous programming, funded by Indigenous Services Canada, for the urban Indigenous population across Canada. For more information on NAFC's Urban Indigenous Programming see <https://www.nafc.ca/en/programs-initiatives/urban-programming-for-Indigenous-peoples>.

To support urban Indigenous peoples in Canada, NAFC performs ongoing advocacy for more permanency around governmental funding for urban Indigenous programs.

The elimination of racism and systemic discrimination in Canada is an ongoing process as described by the TRC Calls to Action and upholding Indigenous rights in Canada requires a permanent commitment to programming and services for the urban Indigenous population; including work to implement UNDRIP and to reverse and eliminate systemic discrimination. The fact that there are incidents of racism and discrimination still being reported in Canada's healthcare and legal system means that there is more work to be done towards reconciliation in Canada today and in the future.

Currently, through urban Indigenous programming at NAFC that reaches local Friendship Centres across Canada, there are several program areas available to assist several intersecting Indigenous populations: women (with access to transition homes and shelter), vulnerable populations (projects for persons with disabilities, addictions and seniors), youth (projects and mentoring around land-based cultural

teachings), transition services (navigators to help access programs and services), outreach programs (cultural awareness training for non-Indigenous organizations), and community wellness (housing plans or studies, anti-racism, pre-employment supports) and other urban Indigenous programming and cultural events including learning about Indigenous languages. (<https://www.nafc.ca/en/programs-initiatives/urban-programming-for-Indigenous-peoples>)

What measures or policies can be adopted to remove existing obstacles facing urban Indigenous peoples? For example, what is being done (by States or Indigenous organisations) to ensure that urban Indigenous peoples have access to: adequate healthcare; employment opportunities; culturally appropriate education and language instruction; housing, drinking water, sanitation, and other critical infrastructure? Please specify if such measures exist but are not being adequately implemented.

In addition to the NAFC programming outlined above, NAFC advocates at a national level on behalf of the urban Indigenous population in Canada including children, youth and families. NAFC is guided by a ten-year strategic plan and the Executive Director, Jocelyn Formsma, an Indigenous lawyer, regularly advocates to Parliamentary Standing Committees and ministers in Canada around policy and legislative reform and reconciling Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations. NAFC publicizes its advocacy as much as possible on its website and had covered a range of issues such as Jordan's Principle (the removal of jurisdictional barriers within Canada's healthcare system affecting Indigenous children, youth and families), Missing and Murders Indigenous Women in Canada, the COVID-19 Pandemic Planning and Vaccinations Rollout; Health; Legislation; Education and Respect for Indigenous Languages; Reconciliation and TRC Calls to Action; Mental Health and Suicide Prevention; the Friendship Centre Movement in Canada, and program and all-round service delivery for urban Indigenous children, youth and families. For more information on NAFC's policy and advocacy to Canadian Parliamentary Standing Committees, including its submissions in all policy areas on behalf of the urban Indigenous population, please visit NAFC's website: (<https://www.nafc.ca/en/policy-advocacy>)

The NAFC has identified a need for work in several areas and has submitted a budget proposal to the federal government of Canada, requesting funding to build on existing initiatives and expand essential work in the following areas:

- Child Care and Youth Supports – The NAFC would like a national urban Indigenous youth program to be reinstated that includes investments in urban Indigenous early learning, children's programming and childcare.
- Addressing racism in health care – Develop a national urban Indigenous health framework that maps out the continuity of health services across federal and provincial jurisdictions for urban Indigenous people.

- Health navigators and Jordan's Principle workers – Increase the availability of urban Indigenous health navigators and Jordan's Principle workers to increase the safety and accessibility of Indigenous people accessing health services in urban settings.
- Advancing Anti-Violence and Access to Justice – Resources to finalize and implement the NAFC national urban Indigenous action plan on anti-violence and national Access to Justice Strategy. When finalized and implemented, these holistic supports will reduce the instance of violence against Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGTBQQIA, provide tangible supports for interventions, and increase accessibility to remedies under the Canadian justice systems.
- Providing Culturally Relevant Employment and Training Supports – Scale up and out existing employment and training initiatives provided through Friendship Centres, develop, and implement new initiatives, and reduce barriers to employment for urban Indigenous people. These efforts, through Friendship Centres, intend to reduce barriers to employment, increase employment and retention of Indigenous employees, and provide wrap around supports for Indigenous employees.
- Advancing Indigenous language use and revitalization – Resources to implement Indigenous language programs in Friendship Centres, develop and share Indigenous language materials, and create accessible language learning tools. Friendship Centres already provide language programming in multiple Indigenous languages across Canada. These resources include recruiting and retaining Indigenous language teachers, implement children and youth language programming, and to advance the use of Indigenous languages in urban settings.
- Infrastructure, Homelessness and Housing – NAFC is actively seeking funding to be able to participate in addressing affordable housing, homelessness and providing shelter more effectively. Many Friendship Centres own housing initiatives and units, and also operate both anti-violence and homeless shelters.
- Research and Data Collection and Analysis – The NAFC successfully administered the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network (UAKN) through a grant. That grant has ended, but there is a strong desire from the existing UAKN partners, from both Academic institutions and Friendship Centres to continue the work. The NAFC seeks to build stronger community-driven research capacity at the community level to advance knowledge with urban Indigenous people.
- Greater Contribution to the Social Economy – The NAFC successfully administered the Investment Readiness Program as one of five funding partners. We were able to provide financial support for the development, advancement and scaling-up of Friendship Centre owned social enterprises. These social enterprises are wholly owned by Friendship Centres and the revenue of which are invested back into the community programs that Friendship Centres provide. These enterprises also employ community

members and provide important resources that are available to the community at large.

The NAFC thanks Special Rapporteur, Francisco Calí Tzay, for consideration of this submission on behalf of urban Indigenous peoples in Canada.