

IQALUIT DECLARATION
OF THE FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL
STATUS OF WOMEN MINISTERS ON
ABORIGINAL WOMEN

Preamble

We are concerned that Aboriginal women continue to experience systemic discrimination, economic and social deprivation, alcohol and substance abuse, the intergenerational cycle of violence, the impact of residential school upbringing, loss of language and culture due to historic events, and overcrowded and substandard housing.

We note that there are over half a million Aboriginal women and girls in Canada, making up half of the Aboriginal population, which is statistically the youngest population in Canada.

We recognize that family violence is one of the most important issues facing Aboriginal people. In 2004, the reported spousal assault rate for Aboriginal women was more than three times higher the rate for non-Aboriginal women. As well, health conditions for both on and off reserve Aboriginal women are worse than those of non-Aboriginal women and Aboriginal men.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal women in the North experience far higher rates of sexualized and family violence than the national average.

We want to eliminate violence, given that, over the last 20 years, the Native Women's Association of Canada estimates that over 500 Aboriginal women have been murdered or gone missing in this country.

We welcome the orientations and recommendations of priorities for actions presented to governments by the participants of the 2007 National Aboriginal Women's Summit, in the areas of health, safety and wellness; equality and empowerment; and the strength, balance and honour of Aboriginal women.

Declaration

Recognizing the urgent need to improve the lives of Aboriginal women and girls, the federal, provincial and territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women, come together in a declaration of their commitment to improve the social, economic and cultural well-being of Inuit, Métis and First Nations women, both on and off reserve, in Canada.

As federal, provincial and territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women, we envision safe, healthy and strong Aboriginal communities, both on and off reserve, where housing is safe, accessible and affordable and women are respected and valued regardless of their background or their residency.

We call upon Canadians to afford the same protections to Aboriginal women afforded to all women in our society.

We encourage efforts to ensure that all Aboriginal women, children and families have access to the same quality of life as other Canadians.

We are convinced that sustained action is needed to enhance Aboriginal women's equality in Canada.

We encourage culturally appropriate gender-based analysis.

We recognize that sustained and coordinated action is required, to reduce the poverty, sexualized violence, and discrimination against Aboriginal women. In this comprehensive effort, dialogue between all levels of government and Aboriginal women is essential.

We will continue to build on the wisdom and expertise of Aboriginal women and their organizations to ensure our actions are respectful, inclusive, and collaborative. In this way, we will be successful in true partnership.

We declare our determination to improve the social, economic and cultural situation of Aboriginal women. This commitment will be realized through the actions of each of our governments, within their respective jurisdictions. We commit to working towards the full participation of Aboriginal women in all aspects of Canadian society and stress the importance of culturally appropriate and community-based solutions that respect the diversity of Aboriginal cultures, values, and needs.