



February 19th, 2021

Honourable Bob Rae, Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations
466 Lexington Ave
20th Floor, New York
NY 1 0017, United States
canada.un@international.gc.ca

Dear Ambassador Rae

The National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) is a non-governmental organization (NGO) currently composed of Local Councils in cities from Halifax to Vancouver and Provincial Councils in Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta, and British Columbia, along with several Nationally Organized Societies. We were incorporated by an Act of Parliament and have received our own Coat of Arms.

Since 1883, the NCWC has enjoyed a long, proud, and bold tradition of advocacy for women from coast to coast to coast so they are able to participate in, and influence, our society through political equality and full citizenship. We continue our work to press those in leadership positions to weave the strong tapestry of supports and programs necessary to improve the lives and living conditions for women, children, and families in Canada.

The NCWC is a federate of the International Council of Women (ICW), which was founded in 1888 and composed of National Councils in seventy-four countries. We hold Consultative Status (Category II) with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. The NCWC also participates as an Observer Non-Governmental Organization with the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States.

The NCWC's local, provincial, and national organizations are intricately connected with issues at all levels while also having a firm grasp of international issues and Canada's commitment to them. This broad base has enabled us to bring a unique Canadian perspective to the work of the Commission for the Status of Women during the past 24 years of our participation.

Therefore, on behalf of the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC), I am writing to you today to express our concerns with two major issues that are now negatively impacting the work of the UN Commission on the Status of Women:

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN women sessions were suspended; thus, the space for civil society has drastically shrunk. The opportunity for formal and informal interactions among member states and civil society has all but vanished as the UN NGO-CSW has encountered ongoing issues in attempting to reach out to arrange meetings with member states.

- Another important emerging concern is the ongoing struggle of the Commission on the Status for Women due to its current membership composition.

The NCWC believes you can be of great assistance in alleviating these two concerns. We are incredibly pleased that Canada will soon begin its mandate as a member of the CSW. It was also with pride that we learned the Chair of the UN NGO-CSW (Committee) believes that Canada is considered to be an important ally as it is one of the strongest member states supporting women and girls, and by extension, civil society.

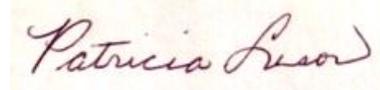
To further consolidate the relationship between global civil society and Canada, the NCWC is kindly asking for a meeting (Zoom or other) with you, the UN NGO-CSW (Committee), and our representative, at your earliest convenience, preferably before the beginning of the CSW65 session which begins on March 15th, 2021.

The NCWC representative will be Ms. Daniela Chivu, who is our Convenor for Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, and Global Affairs. She also serves as the liaison for Women, Peace, and Security. In 2019, Ms. Chivu was elected as one of Canada's representatives to the United Nations Not-for-Profit Organizations Committee on the Status of Women, New York (UN NGO-CSW NY), and to the Regional Caucus of Women for North America and Europe. I am confident you will find her knowledgeable, insightful, and passionate regarding Canada's upcoming role in the CSW.

We look forward to meeting with you, at your convenience, to discuss a way forward that will enhance Canada's permanent leadership role to the United Nations. These two situations I have described not only negatively impact women and girls in Canada, but they also affect women and girls around the world. We are confident these concerns can be alleviated with Canada's diligent leadership, good will, wisdom, and expertise. The NCWC would be honoured to be a part of the solution.

Let us continue to work together to ensure our vision of a fair, equitable, and inclusive society becomes a reality both in Canada and throughout the world.

Sincerely



Patricia Leson, President
National Council of Women of Canada

The National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) works in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, acknowledging Canada is the traditional territory of Indigenous and Metis People. We are grateful to join with others in peace and hope, advocating for an improved quality of life for women, children, families, and society.

