



**FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC INC.**  
**QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN INC.**

**Press release**  
**For immediate distribution**

**Federal Budget 2021-2022: Quebec Native Women applaud Ottawa's decision to invest an additional \$18 billion over 5 years for Indigenous people**

**Kahnawake, April 22, 2021** — It looks like Ottawa has finally heard our voices and is taking action to support the health, safety and prosperity of every community. Trudeau's government announced on Tuesday that it will provide an additional \$18 billion over five years for Indigenous people. This is 300% more than the last budget in 2019. Working with Indigenous partners, these investments will help close the glaring gap between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous people.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the activities of many of us, but it has also highlighted the many flaws in the system that have been present for too long and that are having a significant impact on Indigenous communities. Ottawa intends to take action to help re-establish healthy and vibrant communities. In the same vein, the declared investments will allow for the prompt pursuit of measures related to infrastructure and drinking water.

These investments will also translate into concrete action on the new approach needed to end the national tragedy of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, an approach that addresses the root causes and scope of systemic violence and racism.

Following the report of the *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* (NIMMIWG), Quebec Native Women (hereafter QNW) welcomes the investment of \$2.2 billion over 5 years to address the root causes of the violence experienced by these women and girls. The areas of action that the government has targeted are representative of the different aspects related to these tragedies. That said, QNW will continue to represent the voice of the survivors and families of these victims to ensure that their rights are finally recognized.

Funding for justice, in the form of support for policing and community safety, is also an important part of our daily struggle. The \$74.8 million over three years will provide Indigenous women with greater access to justice so that they can assert their rights and seek justice. The implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) is an issue that we are working on with our Indigenous partners. For us, its implementation will be another step towards reconciliation and self-determination, especially for women and communities.

While QNW welcomes the funding allocated to the development of a racism-free health care system, we are determined to continue to press for the adoption of *Joyce's Principle* and for the recognition of systemic racism by the Quebec government. It is clear that the health care system cannot be improved without this recognition: "*As long as the government denies the existence of systemic racism in Quebec, we will not be able to move forward,*" says Viviane Michel, President of QNW.

These historic new investments are intended to support meaningful reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation. That said, while Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland says this budget increase is about righting historic wrongs in the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples, she emphasizes, as does QNW, that there is still much work to be done to get there.

QNW is pleased with the announcement of funding for Indigenous women, but still hopes that concrete actions will be taken to bring about this much-needed reconciliation.

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