



February 6th, 2023

The Hon. Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.
Deputy Prime Minister of Canada and Minister of Finance
House of Commons
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0A6

Re. PBC Government Priorities Consultation

On December 2nd, 2022, and January 20th, 2023, the Parliamentary Black Caucus hosted over forty Black-led, Black focused and Black serving organizations in Ottawa, as well as virtually. Every organization had the opportunity to share their ideas and perspectives on actions the Government of Canada should take to improve the lives and well-being of Black Canadians.

This event was the culmination of a months long process where submissions to the Caucus were solicited from throughout Canada. In total, the Caucus received over sixty submissions from diverse organizations across the country. What we heard, from both the meetings and the submissions, was a rich, thoughtful and detailed account of what Black Canadians are facing and where they need the federal government to step up on their behalf.

Appended to this document is all of the submissions we have received from Black Canadians from coast to coast to coast. We urge you to seriously consider how the ideas within these submissions can be approached and ultimately implemented. We also urge you to reach out directly to these organizations to seek further clarifications and build relationships with these crucial members of our communities.

We would like to offer to you our opening thoughts to support your consideration of these submissions. We hope these themes will help you have a strong initial understanding of the precise areas for action. We are available to support you and discuss these items further.

United Nations Decade for People of African Descent

In January 2018, Prime Minister Trudeau announced that the Government of Canada would officially recognize the United Nations Decade for People of African Descent. Since then, the Government has engaged in numerous commitments and investments to improve the social and economic conditions of African-Canadians, recognize their rights and acknowledge historic racism.



We heard from many participants that the acknowledgement of UNDPAD was a crucial step forward, and that going into the last few years of the decade, steps are needed to ensure ongoing and sustained action in line with the goals and principles of the decade. Black Canadians expect the progress of the past years to lead to greater recognition of and action on the behalf of themselves and their communities. This would mean making current grant and contribution programs for Black communities related to the decade, permanent and expanding and reviewing all programs to ensure they are more inclusive for communities. Furthermore, the Government of Canada should continue to consider the spirit and core principals of the United Nations Declaration for People of African Descent in its policy making process beyond its conclusion in 2024.

Reforms to the Public Service

Public servants play a crucial role in the policy process, whether in policy design, implementation and evaluation. Unfortunately, there is a lack of understanding of the nature, mandates and roles of many Black organizations and businesses, which results in an inability for these entities to receive the support they need from the government. We heard from many stakeholders that the public service must evolve to better understand their needs and align programs and supports with the infrastructure and capacity of Black-led organizations.

This also included the need for systemic change to target racism within policy making, through, for example, the creation of a Black Equity Commissioner, mirroring the roles of the Special Envoy for Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism and the Special Representative on Combatting Islamophobia.

Funding

An important theme we heard from all sectors is the need for sustained, long-term funding for Black organizations. Many participants referred to the Unfunded¹ report published in late 2020. This report speaks to the severe underfunding of Black community groups by both public and private sources. Stakeholders expressed the need for fulsome investments into the crucial work they are doing, including funds to ensure long-term core funding that would enable organizations to take a more strategic approach to their mandates, scale up their initiatives to support a broader number of Canadians, and bring in more staff resources to share the burden of work that is often challenging.

¹ The report can be found here: <https://www.forblackcommunities.org/assets/docs/Unfunded-Report.pdf>



Inclusive Economic Development

The current labour market is fraught with change and growth. In addition to shortages, the Government and partners in the private sector are seeking to evolve towards a 21st century economy marked by sustainability. Black Canadians represent an important avenue to bolster this labour force and must be included as Canada grows new sectors and develops its workforce, or else the inequities of the past will be reproduced in the future.

We heard a call from organizations for training in the sciences, engineering, mathematics, and technology to ensure Black youth are full parts of the emerging economy. We also heard that supplier diversity is a key issue, where government action would directly benefit small black businesses.

Black communities should not only be able to produce in the 21st century economy, but be consumers. We heard from stakeholders that Black households often lack access to resources to live more sustainably, energy efficient and affordable lives. The Government of Canada should seek to identify, target and eliminate energy poverty as experienced by many Black families.

Arts and culture

Black Canadians in the Arts and Culture sector play an immense role in our community, by enabling Canadians, especially young people, to express themselves and grow in safe and healthy environments. These organizations and individuals also drive economic and social growth by fostering entrepreneurship, community, and solidarity. We note, with great appreciation, the significant presence and participation of this sector in our deliberations. This sector requires immediate dedicated investments and sustainable and permanent funding to support its initiatives, especially in the wake of issues faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Building Black Youth

Investments into Black Youth were an important recurring theme. Stakeholders spoke about specifically increasing Black participation in civil discourse, as well as supporting Black students in professional degrees such as law. Stakeholders also expressed the need for programs to enable Black Youth to engage in policy work, both locally and internationally, and the need to invest in upskilling and reskilling of Black youth to address inequality in Black youth employment. We agree that the Government of Canada should focus more attention on meaningfully engaging with young people, especially Black children, and youth.



Data

We heard repeatedly during our discussions the need for data to establish a clear understanding of the current landscape. In every sector, stakeholders expressed that data and funding for research is crucial to understand how to move forward as a community. This was especially true in the arts and charitable sectors, who hope to understand the full impact of COVID-19 on their organizations as they chart a path forward. We endorse requests for disaggregated data from Statistics Canada, and supports to allow organizations to undertake research into the crucial challenges impacting their sectors.

Francophones

Canada is home to many Black Francophones, including many who are in linguistic minority settings. These Canadians are full members of the francophone community and should be considered as such. We heard from many stakeholders who perform invaluable services to their communities, from social services and community building to research and policy making. These organizations should have full access to resources given to francophone organizations throughout the country.

Supports for Women

We heard in many presentations the need for additional supports for Black women. In every sector, programs focused on Black women and girls are few and far between, and this is a gap that can be addressed by the government of Canada.

There is a special need for further support for women who are victims of intimate partner violence, in particular the need for culturally appropriate health services for Black women. Stakeholders noted with great urgency that sexual health support for women, as well as HIV prevention and health care is an issue of great concern.

2SLGBTQ+ Supports

Stakeholders raised concerns about Black 2SLGBTQ+ programs in Canada. They note that there is limited funding available and that recent and ongoing projects do not consider intersectionality and ignore race, queerness, disability etc. Stakeholders hope to see dedicated federal funding streams that support programs and initiatives led by the Black LGBTQ+ community.

Jurisdictional Collaboration

Almost every issue facing Black Canadians is impacted by multiple jurisdictions. Stakeholders repeated a number of times the need for cross-jurisdictional support to make progress on initiatives related to education, health care, economic growth or justice. We support their



recommendations and encourage the Federal Government to take up meaningful opportunities for jurisdictional collaboration that advances the well-being of Black Canadians.

With regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rosemary Moodie'.

The Honourable Rosemary Moodie, Senator for Ontario

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Coteau'.

Michael Coteau, M.P. - Don Valley East

Co-Chairs, Parliamentary Black Caucus

CC.

The Right Honourable Justin P. J. Trudeau, Prime Minister

The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities

The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Health

The Honourable Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion

The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry

The Honourable Karina Gould, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

The Honourable Ahmed D. Hussen, Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion

The Honourable Seamus O'Regan Jr., Minister of Labour

The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Quebec Lieutenant

The Honourable Mary F.Y. Ng, Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development



The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Natural Resources

The Honourable David Lametti, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada

The Honourable Mona Fortier, President of the Treasury Board

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change

The Honourable Randy Boissonnault, Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance

The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

The Honourable Marci Ien, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth

The Honourable Helena Jaczek, Minister of Public Services and Procurement

Terry Beech, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance

Rachel Bendayan, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance