

UPDATE: A COMMISSIONER FOR CANADA'S CHILDREN - Montreal Council of Women

Preamble: In 2001 an emerging resolution calling for a Commissioner for Canada's Children was adopted as policy (2001:02EM). Over 30 policies directed to protecting children or relating to their wellbeing have been developed in the twenty years since and yet no Commissioner or independent body has been established to address our appeal for action that would uphold the international agreements Canada has signed on to. The appointment of an independent, non-partisan Commissioner for Canada's Children, accountable to Canadians through Parliament is as critical today as it was in the past.

Whereas #1 in 2001 the National Council of Women of Canada urged the Government of Canada to appoint an independent and non-partisan Commissioner for Canada's Children, accountable to Canadians through Parliament, with a mandate to:

1. promote an effective and coherent approach to children in federal government policies and legislation; and
2. ensure that the federal government lives up to the commitments made to children at the national and international level; and
3. ensure that children's voices are heard in decisions affecting them made at the federal level

Whereas #2 in December 1991, Canada ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, committing to establish policies and programs and to adopt the necessary legislation and create monitoring mechanisms and respect for these rights; and

Whereas #3 the federal government has made commitments to work together with provinces and territories to improve the well-being of Canada's children and has adopted an active role in promoting the Children's Agenda; and

Whereas #4 there continues to be no institution or appointed individual responsible for ensuring the monitoring of children's rights at the federal level despite criminal justice, family law in the context of divorce, immigration and citizenship, services to Indigenous peoples and telecommunications all falling under federal jurisdiction; and

Whereas #5 the protection of children is not mentioned or addressed directly in the mandate letter of the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and there is no federal independent public mechanism to review decisions, investigations, and recommendations related to the protection of all children; and

Whereas #6 children from indigenous or racial communities are over-represented in the youth protection/criminal systems in Canada; therefore be it

RESOLVED #1 that the National Council of Women confirm as policy our call for an independent and non-partisan Commissioner for Canada's Children, accountable to Canadians through Parliament; and

RESOLVED #2 that the National Council of Canada urge the Government of Canada to honour their international commitments and

- ensure Canada's compliance with its international obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; and
- mandate the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and the Minister of Indigenous Services, working together, to enact legislation creating an independent Children's Commissioner of Canada to be selected and mandated in accordance with the recommendations of:
 - i) the 2007 Report of the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights, *Children: the Silenced Citizens*, and
 - ii) the Paris Principles Related to the Status of National Rights Institutions (UNGA 1993)

Background Notes :

<http://www.ncwcanada.com/2014/03/04/policies-2001/>

Senate Report Standing Committee on Human Rights '**Children: The Silenced Children**' 2007

<https://sencanada.ca/content/sen/Committee/391/huma/rep/rep10apr07-e.pdf>

UN Convention on the Rights of The Child, <https://www.unicef-irc.org/portfolios/crc.html>

<https://www.parl.ca/LegisInfo/BillDetails.aspx?Language=E&billId=10803478>

https://www.unicef.ca/sites/default/files/imce_uploads/DISCOVER/OUR%20WORK/ADVOCACY/DOMESTIC/GOVERNANCE/DOCS/Commission%20booklet%20English%20Final.pdf

PDF UN Human Rights – 1993 Paris Agreement

https://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/application/pdf/english_paris_agreement.pdf

The Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates

http://www.cccya.ca/Images/english/pdf/0616_CCCYA_EN_Children's_Commission_NR_FINAL.pdf

PDF UNICEF Canada, Indigenous Children

UNICEF Canada, The Rights of the Child and United Nations Human Rights Committee

<https://www.unicef.ca/en/node/1054>

UNICEF Canada Call for Federal Commissioner on Children and Youth <https://www.unicef.ca/en/press-release/unicef-canada-supports-call-federal-commissioner-children-and-youth>

Ottawa Must Act Now To Protect Canada's Children and Youth

July 15, 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/opinion/opinion-federal-commissioner-for-youth-1.5638853>