



March 30, 2023

Via email: justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca, hcminister.ministresc@hc-sc.gc.ca, karina.gould@parl.gc.ca,
hon.pablo.rodriguez@canada.ca, mcu@justice.gc.ca.

The Right Honourable Justin P. J. Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
Langevin Block
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0A3

The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Health
Health Canada
Address Locator 1801B
Ottawa ON K1A 0K9

The Honourable Karina Gould, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Families, Children and Social
Development
140 Promenade du Portage
Gatineau (Québec) K1A 0J9

The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Canadian Heritage and Quebec
Lieutenant
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

The Honourable David Lametti, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
284 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0H8

Dear Prime Minister and Ministers:

Re: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

I write on behalf of the Canadian Bar Association (CBA) to enjoin the Government of Canada to make a detailed action plan to effectively implement the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UN Committee) constitute a road map that could prove transformational in improving the lives of Canadian children. We urge you to follow this in tabling a detailed Government Action Plan.

The CBA is a national association of over 37,000 lawyers, law students, Québec notaries and law teachers. Our primary objectives include improvement in the law and the administration of justice, promoting the rule of law and public respect for the law and legal process.

In June 2022 the Canadian government received the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on Canada's Fifth and Sixth Reports on the UNCRC. We were pleased that government representatives repeated the strong commitment to fulfill all of Canada's obligations under the UNCRC in the review process. This commitment follows from Canada's role as a key proponent and one of the first states to

sign and ratify the UNCRC, one of the most universally ratified UN treaties. Canada's commitment to fulfill its obligations under the UNCRC includes recognition of a special obligation to Indigenous peoples of Canada and Indigenous children in particular. The UN Committee's Concluding Observations followed a careful examination of government reports and evidence submitted by other experts including the CBA and Canadian organizations who work with children across the country. Many of the recommendations made by the CBA's Child and Youth Law Section can be found in the UN Committee's Concluding Observations.

The Concluding Observations expressed serious criticisms of Canada's failure to more fully implement the Convention and provided detailed and general recommendations for areas of significant improvement including recommendations that it described as needing urgent measures. More specifically, the UN Committee expressed to Canada its concerns with the lack of national implementing legislation for the UNCRC. It pointed to the need for a National Children's Commissioner. It also expressed concern that s. 43 of the *Criminal Code* continues to condone corporal punishment of children. Perhaps most urgently, the UN Committee urged Canada to take measures to put an end to structural discrimination against Indigenous groups and children of African descent, and the implementation of the Calls to Action made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

While certain of their recommendations address matters within provincial and territorial jurisdiction, the federal government remains obligated to show leadership in the areas where it can effect change and to work in partnership with provinces and territories in others. The Government of Canada has had since June 2022 to consider the most recent recommendations of the UN Committee. The CBA calls on you to table a detailed Government Action Plan in response to the UN Committee's recommendations.

The CBA, and in particular our Child and Youth Law Section, would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to discuss how we can help achieve these goals. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

(original letter signed by Steeves Bujold)

Steeves Bujold, he/him-il/lui