

## Anti-Racism Task Force: Ministerial Information Briefing (Feb 19, 2021) – Speaking Notes

- Video: Call to Action: Anti-Racism efforts at IRCC  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WL8n2gZYREs> (3:02 minutes, plus transition time)
- Speaking notes = Approx 11 min
- Questions & answers = extra

### 5W1H of AR Task Force (NOT part of speaking notes, only to help organize our story)

- **Why:** In 2020, murder of George Floyd mobilized public attention on the brutal violence and pervasiveness of systemic racism – in govt policies, programs, and practices. In line with GC priorities on diversity, inclusion, systemic racism (e.g., PM mandate letters to Ministers and TBS/PCO Clerk’s directives to Deputy heads).
- **What:** In response, in summer 2020, IRCC Deputies set up dedicated full-time AR Task Force to come up with a multi-year strategy to address systemic racism at IRCC, with a focus on 3 areas: People Management, Policy and Programs, and Service Delivery.
- **Who:** Task Force led by [REDACTED], now a team of 10 as of Dec. 2020. Launched internal governance framework so that all parts of IRCC, across business lines, ‘own’ this journey towards becoming an AR institution (e.g., Internal Advisory Board, 3 Sub-Committees, Allies Network, also working with Employee Networks, functional communities eg Middle Managers Community, etc.).
- **Where:** Across Org, but started with inside org, before we can venture out to external because the journey starts within. Need to cultivate the foundation within the Dept (People) where talking about racism is normalized, before we can make changes in public-facing areas (Policy, Program, Service).
- **When:** Active since late summer 2020, first focusing on bringing people together across the Department, recruiting and forming the team, and keeping the momentum through staff engagement and starting the conversation on race and racism. Now shifting gears into more strategic planning mode to mobilize various grassroots efforts under more coherent top-down priorities, on where best to target our resources.
- **How:** Task Force as a platform and focal point to mobilize action and traction, but our approach is to embed the work across the org, through participatory, collaborative, iterative approach. Also top-down and bottom up. Setting the high-level, long-term goals to drive sustainable change.
- **What Next:** Internal consultation Feb-March, External consultation gears up in Spring into Summer, and finalize the second iteration of Strategy by Fall 2021. Roll out the 3-Year Strategy with Annual Action Plan in the next 3 years. (Some ‘ripe’ actions to start while we finalize the Strategy Iteration #2 so we can build on the forward momentum, esp. in People Management).

Glad to meet you Minister Mendicino,

Upon reflection, as challenging as this pandemic has been, it has offered us a real opportunity: Building back better as our Deputy would say.

Especially, as we turn our attention to ramping up our efforts to our economic recovery and meeting our ambitious immigration plan.

Tackling systemic racism has to be an integral part of that plan given our nation-building role for Canada.

We know that systemic barriers get in the way of maximizing newcomers' and racialized Canadians contributions to our social fabric and the economy.

## Slide 1 – Purpose of the Session

Today, I am here to:

1. **First**, to introduce the Anti-Racism Task Force's **mandate** and **objectives** in support of Government of Canada priorities on diversity, inclusion, and addressing systemic racism. Our work directly supports the priorities as laid out in the Throne Speech, Mandate Letters, and TBS and PCO Directives to Deputy Heads.
2. **Second**, to share our **initial plan** for the **Departmental Anti-Racism Strategy** and our approach to developing it in collaboration with internal and external stakeholders.
3. **And finally**, to provide our **next steps** – both to (1) develop and refine the Strategy, and (2) our early vision for its implementation over the next 3 years.

## Slide 2 – How Did This Start?

- In the middle of a pandemic, May 2020, I'll never forget it. The world was shaken to its core, when the murder of George Floyd along with others, too many others, mobilized public attention on police brutality.
- It also highlighted the pervasiveness of systemic racism – including in government institutions, policies, and practices.
- As a direct response, IRCC Deputies set up a dedicated full-time Anti-Racism Task Force.
- Instead of me talking about it, I would like to show you a video of when it all began.

**[SHOW THE TASK FORCE VIDEO to explain why and how we started]**

Video: Call to Action: Anti-Racism efforts at IRCC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WL8n2gZYREs> (3:02 minutes, plus transition time)

## Slide 3 – Our Mandate

We were given an initial mandate of one year to **recommend a multi-year Anti-Racism strategy** to address systemic racism at IRCC, and to reduce inequities for Black, Indigenous and racialized people.

Our work is both internal and external.

- **Internally**, we look at our **People Management** and identifying systemic, negative impacts on our racialized employees.
- **Externally**, we are tasked to identify and address systemic racism built into our **Policy and Programs**, and **Service Delivery** that affect our racialized clients and newcomers.

## Slide 4 – Our Guiding Principles

this work requires long term commitment, humility and courage.

We thought long and hard about our compass as we take on this complex endeavor.

And so, these are the draft principles to guide our work on this humble journey.

## Slide 5 – Our Three (3) Areas of Focus

There are three distinct but interrelated areas of work.

- ❖ **People & Capacity Building** are the foundation for enabling change.
  - Because without building the capacity of our people, we won't be able to make any meaningful, sustainable change in our policies, programs, or services.
  - This is why we have started first with this piece.
- ❖ In the **Policy-Operations Continuum**, if there is racial bias in policy (upstream), that will negatively impacts our service delivery to clients (downstream). Recognizing this, we will work across this continuum by collaborating with branches across IRCC.
- ❖ It's also important to remember that the **timelines for change** will be different for each area.
  - For example, tangible changes may come faster in People Management partly because we have more direct control and levers as opposed to policies or

programs by where Legislative or regulatory change can take time or because of interconnections with other departments and our external stakeholders.

❖ *(Whereas for policy and service delivery we also work with other departments (e.g., GAC, CBSA, Public Safety), and external partners (e.g., Service Providers Organizations for the Settlement Program).*

### Slide 6 – The Future We Want...

In defining our future,

We want structural change – we want to transform our institution and ultimately our society

How we do it? This question leads to the next slide...

... on our Draft Anti-Racism Strategy.

### Slide 7 – Anti-Racism Strategy at a Glance (2021-2023)

This is a draft, a skeleton piece.

- In the half circle at the top, you see **4 pillars of objectives** ..... and **outcomes** under each objective at the bottom.

4 Objectives	Outcomes
1. Inclusive Work Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Anti-Racism Awareness &amp; Cultural Understanding</li> <li>✓ Healthy and Supportive Workplace</li> </ul>
2. Workforce Reflecting Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Increased Representation at Intermediate &amp; Senior Levels</li> <li>✓ Elimination of Barriers in Staffing</li> </ul>
3. Inclusive Policy & Operations Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Reduced Racialized Disparities in Client Experience &amp; Outcomes</li> </ul> <p>Based on early feedback from our stakeholders, here are some high-level examples of what this could look like:</p> <p><b>Operations/Service:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Longer processing times</b> and <b>higher refusal rates</b> for applicants from Black African or Caribbean countries. We need to do a deep dive.</li> <li>• There could be <b>bias in how we define and apply "risk"</b>, esp. how <b>country-level risks</b> get applied to individual cases (e.g., you could be a low-risk individual from a high-risk country. Your visa application shouldn't be <i>automatically</i> refused <i>simply</i> because your country is considered high risk).</li> </ul> <p><b>Policy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Visa eligibility criteria</b> may favour those who already have passports and travel history. This seemingly neutral requirement might be have unintended</li> </ul>

	<b>racialized implications</b> for clients (e.g. wealthier white applicants from Latin American/Caribbean countries may have greater access but not Black Caribbeans who tend to be poorer).
<b>4. Leadership Accountability at all Levels</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Clear Expectations that Drive Change &amp; Results</li> <li>✓ Model Inclusive Leadership</li> </ul>

- We are taking an **iterative, collaborative approach** to developing this Strategy, in consultation with diverse stakeholders both within and outside IRCC.
- **We have begun the internal consultation** (starting with the ADMs) with a greater focus on the internal People Management. We will continue to engage others across the Department, as well as externally especially starting in the Spring.

## Slide 8 – Building the Strategy and Action Plan

On the left, you see our **high-level Framework** of AR Strategy that is:

- (1) We'll go **where the data takes us**,
- (2) invests in **Capacity Building** of our people,
- (3) so that they can take **Concrete Action** with urgency, and
- (4) Continuously **Evaluate and Report** on our progress overtime, to hold ourselves accountable.

On the right, as we move forward, we will delve into developing concrete **Action Plans**

- This is where the rubber hits the road.
- We will be pushing each business area of IRCC to set concrete action plans will help turn our objectives into more tangible, measurable results that we will track over time.
- Our **draft Action Plans** also include conducting **systemic reviews** of policies and programs, where we will take a deeper dive to identify the extent of systemic racism present in specific policy and program lines, tease out the other factors that may be at play, and then come up with mitigation responses.
- This will also require **mapping out the data** that's currently available, **data gaps** that we may need to fill – and we should also look at **potential bias** built into the data itself.

## Slide 9 – The Journey Begins Within Work to Date (End of Summer 2020 – Now)

The Journey on Anti-Racism starts within.

This timeline shows **what we have accomplished to date** since the Task Force was first created.

- In order to make meaningful changes in our policies, programs or services that touches the public, first we have to normalize having conversations about racism within our workplace.
- Much of the Task Force's efforts thus far has been internally focus – engaging our employees, starting the conversation, building a momentum.

For example (**highlight – pick one of two, if pressed for time**):

- We've organized "Let's Talk Racism" Town Halls for close to 5,500 IRCC employees (and 2,500 more in other federal departments).
- We established the Allies Network, internal Advisory Board, and 3 Sub-Committees.
- We launched the first baseline Anti-Racism Workforce Survey. Moving forward, this will be repeated annually so that we can track our progress in the area of People Management.
- Since December, we have given short presentations to external stakeholders through existing channels to share our mandate and work to date (e.g., like the Youth Advisory Group that you attended last week).
- **The video that you saw earlier, was released last week on social media by PCO.** This will help raise awareness that this work is happening at IRCC and it showcases the embodiment of the Beyond 2020 vision for the Public Service.

## Slide 10 – Looking Ahead: Developing the 3-Year Strategy (Now – Fall 2021)

Looking ahead to the **next 6 months**, here are the steps we envision to get to finalizing the 3-Year Strategy by this fall.

Some highlights:

1. **Winter:** Analyze the Baseline Workforce Survey results. Start the Internal consultation series on Draft Strategy (Iteration #1).
  2. **Spring:** Media release on AR Value Statement. Start External engagement.
  3. **Summer:** Refine the Strategy based on consultation results, and the performance indicators and reporting mechanisms.
  4. **Fall:** Release Iteration #2 of the Strategy. (And a report on the work of the Task Force on its first year of existence).
- Of course, some 'ripe' actions are ready to start implementation even *before* the second iteration of the Strategy is finalized in the fall. We will work simultaneously so we don't miss out on the momentum that's building (especially in People Management).

## Slide 11 – From Strategy to Action: Proposed Year to Year Milestones (2021/22 – 2023/24)

Looking further ahead to the **next 3 years**, this is a rough vision of what the implementation phase of the 3-year Strategy may look like.

- This is a truncated list of some of the *possible* actions and milestones we will begin consulting on to build the Action plan.
- We expect them to change, and more to be added as we consult the business line experts and external stakeholders.

We know this work will come with its fair share of challenges but were in it for the long term impacts of building a more equitable society.

On that note, I would like to thank you Minister and I will now turn to you if you have any questions