EXCOM May 12, 2021 - Speaking Notes

Thank you Deputy,

Today's meeting is an important one –

Over the course of the last year, and even earlier today, we've been hearing from IRCC employees, leaders and even some of our stakeholders.

A few weeks ago, we heard firsthand accounts of racism from settlement provider organizations and clients at the National Settlement and Integration Council's Town Hall on Anti-Racism.

We've had conversations, here at EXCOM, on the multiple sources of data that helped us delve deeper and pin point the systemic issues that our department faces. Of course, we are still collecting data as we peel the layers.

Many of you have actively listened to the lived experience of racialized employees in trust circles or other forums.

We have also seen the vast differences in mindsets, seen the risks involved and grasping the complexities of structural racism.

We've leaned into ourselves, reflecting on our own biases, being vulnerable in the process and leading our teams through rapid changing times.

Together, we have shifted our thinking. Taking this on as an opportunity for good on a united front… led by Deputies who are in it for the long term.

I'll be honest – I'm currently feeling nervous and excited at the same time. It feels like we are on the *brink of an important milestone as we near George Floyd's one year anniversary.*

A milestone will send waves through the organization and beyond…

One that unequivocally defines who we are as an organization, who we are as leaders and what we believe is right.

It has been to community effort to define this in the two products that you have before you

1) The IRCC Value Statement
2) The Anti-Racism Sector Actions

Today, I also want to get your early views on upcoming products that will further firm up our commitments

1) Iterative 3-year anti-racism strategy followed by departmental action plan as sector action plans start to form

2) the establishment of a Baseline for Representation by 2023 – setting a new higher standard for IRCC

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Alright, jumping into the products themselves:

IRCC Value Statement

- The value statement is a foundational signal not only to IRCC but our external stakeholders that anti-racism is core to our work at IRCC.
- Its purpose is to:
  1. Set a shared goal and encourage positive behaviour in our staff; and
  2. Inform our clients and stakeholders of this change in work culture to instill trust and confidence.
- You have seen this statement last fall. It was much longer then and so it has been shortened. There are three main elements:
  1. A Departmental commitment to active anti-racism which is the responsibility of all employees
  2. A recognition of racism, it's legacy and continued impacts at IRCC
  3. The 10 actions we are taking to resolve the issue collectively.

- **Next steps:**
  1. The value statement is starting to move through approvals.
  2. It will be reviewed again by Communications, the DMs, and the Minister as an internal and external facing statement.
  3. We would like to publish in the early summer.

Moving on to the second product, the

Actionable/sector commitments

- We have completed the latest updates from your sectors
- We are ready to go through Communications to release all internal documents
- This is a concrete accountability element that will guide the efforts of our staff
- We appreciate your commitment in terms of actions you plan to take for the current year. This will help us define the path for next year. (Although we are still missing one or two answers).
- Special hats off to Operations, Communications and Corporate Services! Not only did the choose their Year 1 commitments, they also made significant progress in developing their action plans

Next steps:

- We are still waiting for a number of responses indicating your choice of anti-racism leader by sector
- They will be key people to help you enhance your action plan for each sector
- We would like to meet with all officials by the end of May so that we can begin to determine their scope of action, develop commitment strategies and set timelines

IRCC Anti-Racism Strategy

- Before you is the first draft of the IRCC Anti-Racism Strategy.
- This document is in full expansion expansion of the ideas found in the value statement and provides the framework for the Department's drive toward racial equity.
- Next steps:
    - We have sent the strategy out for internal consultation through the AR Advisory Board and committees, and a number of employee networks.
    - We plan to also consult externally over the summer months.
    - We fully expect many changes to this document before its last iteration.
    - We are aiming to publish in the fall. A one-pager of only the strategy itself may be published externally for transparency.

Baseline Representation Targets for the Workforce

- The Taskforce is actively working with HR Branch to provide greater clarity on the representation progress made thus far and to propose a new methodology for baseline representation of racialized people for a workforce that is reflective of Canada by March 2023

- This is a proposal that aligns with the commitments in the Clerk's Call to Action and the DM's commitments.

- The new baseline representation method:
    1. Shifts from using work force availability (WFA) to using labour market availability (LMA) which sets a higher baseline target.
    2. It disaggregates "visible minorities" into separate racialized groups for more targeted representation goals that will focus and improve equity outcomes.
    3. It focuses on career levels by setting baselines for entry, intermediate and EX groups to ensure representation at all levels.

- Reasons for this new method:

1. Current method doesn't present an accurate picture of disparities for racialized employees since they are all grouped under visible minority. Different racialized groups face different employment barriers.
2. Workforce availability sets a low bar. Demographics have changed largely due to immigration since the 2016 census.
3. Workforce availability does not take into account the fact that members of racialized groups often hold jobs well below their qualification, due to discrimination or that their credentials are not Canadian.

Considerations (Not mentioned):

- This work is primarily led by HR Branch who is responsible for setting the baseline for all EE groups
- Work on representation will also be complemented with the Inclusivity, Diversity and Official Languages Framework which outlines current and upcoming initiatives to achieve meaningful inclusion
- A representation snapshot of before (April 2020) to now (April 2021) will also be included to assess progress thus far
- Next Steps:
  - Supporting HRB in setting the baseline, developing a communication strategy (likely to get lots of questions) and obtaining necessary approvals
  - Publishing of this baseline on Connexions in the coming months
  - Current Proposed Timeline for the achievement of the baseline – March 2023 (approx. 2 years)

Discussion Questions

1) What are your thoughts on the value statement?
2) Do you have any ideas for the value statement and sector actions to be socialized and endorsed by staff?
3) How can we collectively prepare for potential resistance and confidently navigate through it?

1) What do you think of the Value Statement?
2) Do you have any ideas on how to get the value statement and the actions of the sector socialized and endorsed by staff?
3) How can we collectively prepare for and overcome resistance with confidence

EXCOM COMMENTS

DM:

- Assume that it will be public facing

████████████ (AADM-OPS):

- Continue to be impressed by the work your team is doing, the support to all of us, navigate through pretty murky grounds at times.
- Pretty alarmed the first time I read it – a broader frame of diversity and inclusion – manage potential resistance – help frame in the broader context so people can see themselves within it.
- Not just to the statement and even the broader strategy – natural docking station to stay in
- It might be helpful to pair it with approached, guiding principles, values, outcomes, but a bit of a placement that accompanies it – how the pieces fit together – Annex A stab at that –
- The other thing – where it comes down to commitment, statement, strategy – while there are certain people that have certain commitments – implementing this is the responsibility of every individual (advisory in ADMO, mailroom) – not just leadership table – make it clearer to get ownership
- Cross walk to other Champions for amplification – detailed around governance – membership

████████████████████ (DG, SPPB and Champion, Pride @ IRCC):

- I very much support the product – directly related to change
- I think about how to talk about this product within the diversity and inclusion context.
- Looking at equity work done it the department – many networks have done this for years, off side of desk, many don't feel it is being acknowledge by all
- It is important to engage folks to join this work – I see them as ground work warriers and I recognize how much they contribute
- Equity is an ever growing landscape – mapping in the department is needed – LGBTQ2 action plan coming soon, GBA+ tools are evolving via WAGE, a lot of people to comprehend – we want to advance on all fronts.

████████████████ (DG, IAA, Chief Audit Executive and Internal Disclosure Officer)

- Support the statement – demonstrating continuous progress to make sure employees understand all the efforts on all levels;
- In meetings, it is often mentioned near the end of the list need to mention it at the front of the list.
- Officer of internal disclosure – it would be helpful to complement this with lessons learned on real life events – where the system has failed; act of inequity

(witnessing events; would be helpful to understand the issue the department is dealing with)

██████████ (A/ADM-SIS):

- Truly impressed; its coming together
- SIS is thinking through how to deepen strategy in the settlement sector; should this be public – it puts pressure on us; need to be ready to answer questions (CFP process and funding to SPO)
- Intersectionality, it is a decision for this table – commitment to anti-racism separately then to LGBTQ and disability. It can work but needing to be mindful of it. It doesn't seem that it is taking away from attention of other groups.
- With the rise of anti-asian racism – adjust the language – more specific reference to that
- DM: In the we acknowledge section, it does point out global events (i.e. 9-11 islamic communities); I REALLY like that statement and it gets to some of what you were talking about as well

██████████████ (ADM-CSS):

- A LOT to do in HR – great leader to advance this work – a year ago, that's bold – is it edgy enough?
- Might not have all the quantitative metrics just yet, but we have is quanlitative
- Need to talk about individual racism – micro-aggreessions – need to be unequivocal – need to come down hard – sever consequences – systemic racism – where have we coded bias
- Working with ██████ on Employment Systems review (selection, promotion)
- Presentation about people management – need to define culture – aspirational and inspirational – we are a welcoming department. Can't have peeing in a non-peeing section of the pool. We need an action every day by every employees

██████████████ (CFO):

- Something you said in the beginning ██████ resonated with me: *We are in this for the long run* – should be included in the value statement
- Fully support that it should be public – I wonder if the statement lands equally well if you are an employee or a client of the department – make an audit towards that

██████ (DG, COMMS):

- This can also be used as a recruitment tool – values that we aspire as an organization
- Accepting of people of all forms and backgrounds – clear on our public face

Final DM Comments:

- Really to get this OUT
- One year anniversary of GFloyds unfortunate passing mark is right around the corner and it would be the ideal oppotunity
- Strong support for this – When we started, we were clear with ███: BIPOC focus – what I don't want to lose is that we are an inclusive and safe workplace. LGBTQ2 – equally important - women – don't want to lose that
- I take your point. We also have to acknowledge the work done in other equity groups (IRCC one of the best departments leading GBA+ work…heavy load…we should be proud, gives us a foundation for some of this fight)
- DM breakfast story: ██████████ was the Clerk at the time. We were talking about who was being promoted – bipoc, indigenous, people with disabilities? There was a throwaway statement: not an issue for women – pause for a moment on the power of that statement – 10 years ago, it would not have been the case, 35 years ago (when I started in the PS), it wasn't the case, just a moment that there has been some success.
- Our overriding ambition – inclusive safe workspace
- Consequences – we need to think about it – be prepared to address it – what are the consequences by bad behavior. People tell us, you have tolerated bad behavior in the organization – some people are PROTECTED in the organization. WHO are they? Given the way our system is set up, it is hard to show that justice has been served
- On the comment about being in it for the long run – we need a sustainable path forward, that it has traction. I agreed that in the ''we resolve'' – don't feel compelled to be Mosus, add an 11th action.
- Do we need to add?

EXCOM COMMENTS – previous presentations on 2020 Public Service Employee Survey Results and Official Languages Landscape

Deputy

- Tools to do my job – slide 13 – was surprised that the number wouldn't be higher – testatment to ▋▋▋ and her work
- Slide 12 – take it with a grain of salt / let's not dislocate our shoulder

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- Numbers that worry me – VM and Black employee
- Is it that they don't see action OR trust that we will take where it needs to go /that anti-racism is here to stay (EXCOM think it is number 2)
- Payroll perspective – not stressed about pay
- Trust where it is going to stick and places in the organization where it will be amplified

▋▋▋

- Really like how the presentation started with the positive / a lot of areas where we have excellence
- Employee engagement isn't easy to do well – testament to comms and EXCOM members (a lot of meetings, town hall – ppl feel engagement, communicated to and with
- Surprised about slide 6 – thought that number would have been higher
- Critical to demonstrate concrete action – how do we tend to do it – PSES action plan? Other commitments at other tables? Staff expects concrete actions after PSES
- When we get the disaggregated data by sector – expect to look at sector, branch basis, what do I need to focus on – wouldn't mind another conversation and where we want to double down on. Even things that we are good at and want to be better at

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Slide 9 – linguistic security – how do we continue to encourage usage of both official langues in virtual environment. Language training over zoom is really hard. Need to give some thougt in how we model language in everyday meetings

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Slide 4 concerns me. Subject to interpretation. Even around this table (EXCOM), I have to take more sp ace. A fixation on the level, but ultimately, in terms of the health of official languages, is that both lang uages are used. Make people comfortable.
 It doesn't matter if you have an accent. Promotion of a Francophone leader. Occasionally, invite Francophone leaders (no matter the subject i.e. town halls) strengthens French culture.

▋▋▋

Would like to cross walk EXCOM deck from ARTF and this presentation / language training in 3 or 4th training, when you are in a world that your self-esteem has been shattered, it isn't easy to switch and start using a new language right away.

███████

Really interesting for slide 4 – add the intersectionality with other EE groups to get better understanding for how that lines up. Will help us develop strategies for targeting the folks we do want to support. Slide 5 – remarkable work in training centre of expertise, it has enables us to support our people and staffing actions (worthwhile investment / not all depts have it.

Slide ? – results dip, then it goes up in 2020 – curious to know why

███████

Diversity and OL / receptive or passive bilingualism from ███████████████████████. One speak French, the other responds in English.