

EXCOM Aug 3, 2021 - Speaking Notes

Thank you Deputy,

Before I begin, I just wanted to highlight a few important dates which highlights the importance of equity work:

- **We saw the Public Service Employment Act receive Royal Assent on June 29.**
 - o **expand the preference for Canadian citizens in staffing processes open to the public to include Permanent Residents.**
 - o add an explicit commitment by the Government of Canada to a public service that represents Canada's diversity
 - o require that the establishment or review of qualification standards include an evaluation of bias and barriers, and that reasonable mitigation efforts be made
 - o require that the design and application of assessment methods include an evaluation of bias and barriers, and that reasonable mitigation efforts be made
 - o ensure that investigation and audit authorities encompass bias or barriers
- **August 1st** was Canada's first Emancipation day when 187 years ago slavery was outlawed throughout the British Empire, including in what is now Canada.
- **September 30** is the recently passed legislation to make September 30th a federal statutory holiday called the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Finally, one more date and that is the Task Force's one year anniversary in July!

Today, I would like to touch on:

- IRCC's response to the Call to Action
- Mainstreaming anti-racism at IRCC and;
- A preview into the Fall months

IRCC Call to Action

Call to Action <https://www.canada.ca/en/privy-council/corporate/clerk/call-to-action-anti-racism-equity-inclusion-federal-public-service.html>
Appel à l'action <https://www.canada.ca/fr/conseil-priv%C3%A9/organisation/greffier/appel-action-faveur-vieille-contre-racisme-equite-inclusion-fonction-publique-federale.html>
Guidance <https://www.canada.ca/en/privy-council/corporate/clerk/call-to-action-anti-racism-equity-inclusion-federal-public-service/message-guidance-letters-implementation.html>
Orientation <https://www.canada.ca/fr/conseil-priv%C3%A9/organisation/greffier/appel-action-faveur-vieille-contre-racisme-equite-inclusion-fonction-publique-federale/message-orientations-lettres-mise-en-oeuvre.html>

- We received a message from the interim clerk that invited all departments to provide an open letter which addresses how we are implementing the Call to Action. They particularly want us to take stock of what we are doing, what is working, what is not, and how we are measuring progress.
- The goal is for organizations to learn from each other, surface key challenges, and identify best practices to tackle barriers and generate and sustain the momentum necessary.
- Thank you to the sectors who provided input
- Bringing it home to IRCC, we have written the letter to touch on three themes: Culture and mindset shift, People Management and Accountability.
- Of the 9 actions listed in the Call to Action, IRCC is most strong on:

- **Committing** to personally learning about racism, reconciliation, accessibility, equity and inclusion, and fostering a safe, positive environment where these conversations are encouraged throughout our workplaces
- **Including** voices from diverse backgrounds in the identification of systemic racism, discrimination and barriers to inclusion, and the design and implementation of actions to address them

While we've identified, room for improvement:

- **Appoint** Indigenous employees and Black and other racialized employees to and within the Executive Group through career development and talent management
- **Recruit** highly qualified candidates from Indigenous communities and Black and other racialized communities from across all regions of Canada

Some of the identified success are focused on laying the foundation:

- Our organizational maturity in the way we are evolving the way we report through disaggregated data and the way we talk about racism
- Consistent, frequent and intentional efforts to normalize conversations on racism, discrimination, equity and inclusion
- Acknowledging our role, our values and our resolve in our value statement and sector actions

Some of the identified challenges include:

- Fear - Marginalized groups fearing they are left behind
- Discomfort from leaders in tackling the issues
- Perception of it competing with organizational priorities (thus inertia tempting us)
- Range of mindsets on the issue and a knowledge gap on the topic
- The establishment of key performance indicators to measure progress

We will be routing the draft response letter to your office for feedback/input. Turn around will be tight as the letter is due to PCO by Aug 31

Mainstreaming Anti-Racism

Meeting with Sector Leads on Anti-Racism

- We had our first meeting with sector's Anti-Racism leaders to begin identifying their scope, develop commitment strategies and set deadlines.
- Many are ready to take on mandates; many are also nervous.
- We are confident that this group can rely on each other for moral support, to collaborate on initiatives and find solutions to complex problems

Racial Impact Assessment Tool

New tools for GBA Plus and anti-racist policy and program design:

EN: <http://cicintranet.ci.gc.ca/connexion/annoncements-annonces/2021/july/20210730a-eng.aspx>

FR : <http://cicintranet.ci.gc.ca/connexion/annoncements-annonces/2021/july/20210730a-fra.aspx>

- This is a tool developed by several policy staff at IRCC that tries to assist in policy and program design
- It is currently being circulated within the department for comments. It will work its way through the Policy and Issues Management Committees and then here at EXCOM on October 6.

Preview to the Fall Months

Representation Targets – Sept 22, 2021

- 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

Policy/Program and Service Delivery Recommendations – October 6, 2021

- Our anti-racism sub-committees on Programs, policies and service delivery – comprised of individuals from across the organization – have been looking at more specific and targeted recommendations for how IRCC can address bias within our outward facing work.
- We are working with governance bodies to have them get apprised on the recommendations before coming to EXCOM on Oct 6.

EXCOM COMMENTS

Deputy Minister

- On the call to action, I need you to really pay attention when it gets to your office about what we've learned this past year.
- Our work has been impressive but wanted to caution that we have tough conversations ahead of us
 - Representation at all levels and how we need to be more deliberate /strategy on how to get there
 - Policy / Programs – We will need a concerted push. We have folks that have written policy or administers programs that will be defensive "I am not a racist" – whereas it is about looking at what are the biases that have been baked in to policies over time

- Shout out to R&E – [REDACTED] – for looking at the historical context of racism within our programs (referring to the literature review)
- I also want to highlight what you're doing as a Champion at EX town halls

[REDACTED] (CFO)

- Thank you for setting up the coaching services. I have my team setting up group coaching with [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (ADM-SPP)

- On the call to action: Fear factor is also the fear of the unknown or making a mistake. People want to do it perfectly and they want to move it forward but the reality is some of what we do might not work at all. Some of the fear is also not knowing how to do it with the added pressures of multiple priorities and not having the mental space to figure it out.
- We need to encourage folks not to get stuck in paralysis, to give permission to try things and learn from mistakes
- Had a coffee chat with employees – Convo was and it was neat to hear that what we're doing isn't good enough. Need to do more
- In my role as Champion – it is different – I am the Champion of champions – planning a round table with other DEI Champions in August to celebrate and amplify our efforts.

[REDACTED] (AADM-SPP)

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