

## Anti-Racism Task Force: Ministerial Information Briefing #2 (Dec. 2, 2021)

### █ Speaking Notes

#### Key Message:

- We need to continue to listen, and work in the open even if it's hard, take some hits along the way, but keep going, with humility, courage. Learn through action.

#### "Asks" to the Minister:

- (1) **Listening externally:** As you go to stakeholders, we need your help to listen to people's views and experiences, to help ensure the departmental response be grounded in ultimately improving the lived experience of those affected by systemic racism at IRCC.
- (2) **You're going to take some hits** along this journey: AR is part of the department's mandate, and we need your help to keep this going despite these challenging moments.

#### Format: 30min, 2-part briefing, English only:

- (1) ARTF █ on departmental efforts to advance anti-racism, with a focus on racialized employees' focus groups (8-10min)
- (2) IN █ on IRCC processing in Africa (10min)
- (3) Q&A: 10-12min

#### Materials:

- ARTF Deck: [\[F-01206929\] ARTF Minister Briefing 2021-11 - Anti-racism](#)
- █ Speaking notes:
  - Short version (without examples) 1096 words – 8.4min
  - Long version (with examples) 1618 words – 12.4min
- IN Placemat <https://gcdocs2.ci.gc.ca/otcs/cs.exe/link/435881048>

## Slide 0 – Cover Page

## Slide 1 – Purpose of the Session (177 words, 1.4min)

I am here to update you on our **journey to date** as we started to address systemic racism here at IRCC.

- But first I want to start by acknowledging that this is “**generational work**” to undo centuries of systemic racism that we have inherited in this country, at this institution.
- We won't be finished with one action, or 1 year, but we can start today.
- Anti-racism is about building and rebuilding **trust**, especially with people who have been harmed by racism for a lifetime, or even generations.
- With that, let me:

1. **First**, to introduce you to the **Mandate** of the Task Force;
2. **Second**, to update you on the **Work accomplished to date**, including how we've invested in listening to racialized people's lived experience of racism as an important starting point;
3. **And finally**, to share the **Next steps** that the department will be taking in the coming months – to develop a Departmental Anti-Racism Strategy to address the issues we've uncovered, while continuing to listen to and work with diverse stakeholders both inside and outside our department.

## Slide 2 – Our Story: Why we were created (204 words, 1.6min)

- The murder of George Floyd has created a heightened public attention on systemic racism in public institutions globally.
- In response, our Deputies created the Anti-Racism Task Force in July 2020 – one of the first within the federal family.
- Our mandate was to develop a strategy to tackle systemic racism in our work, including:
  1. How we Manage our People,
  2. How we Design our public-facing Policies and Programs, and
  3. How we Deliver Services to our clients.
- This work is core to the department's mandate to "build a stronger Canada that is economically, socially, and culturally prosperous", and where diversity is our strength.
  - This is important especially in the context of increasing immigration levels, and increasing diversity of newcomers coming to Canada.
- This work also supports the Government-wide priorities for diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism, for example:
  - Clerk's Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion , as well as the
  - Recent Speech from the Throne, which named anti-racism/equity as a priority.
- We work with the premise that Canada has a history of racism and colonialism.
  - Given this historical reality we have inherited, we have a responsibility to take positive action today – so we can help shape a more equitable future.

### Slide 3 – Our Vision: An Anti-Racist Institution (117 words, 0.9min)

- Our Vision is to become an Anti-Racist Institution.
- To get there, first we needed to listen and understand the reality of racism at IRCC today.
  - This is why we started by first listening to our employees, and to our clients and stakeholders.
  - We don't shy away from this uncomfortable reality, even if it can come with criticism from stakeholders who want to see the long history changed today.
  - We believe we must first acknowledge the reality in order to find effective, thoughtful solutions that we can implement well.
  - We also approach this work with humility and courage, and to work in the open, and to keep our focus on the long-term institutional change.

### Slide 4 – Work To Date: Late summer 2020-Nov 2021 (184-314 words, 1.4-2.4min)

- This is what we have accomplished so far since we were created last summer.
  - (1) **First we set up governance** to ensure **diverse voices inform** our strategy and action.

We:

    - ✓ Created the Anti-Racism Advisory Board and Sub-Committees focusing on 3 areas (People, Policy, Service);
    - ✓ Established collaborative relationships with Employees Networks (like BEN and IPC), Managers, and Executives, Allies – because it takes a village.
  - (2) **We broke the silence** on race and racism, so we can start **listening and understanding** the real issues at IRCC.

Because, before that, it was like a “taboo” to say the “R word”. A huge culture shift was required.

So we:

    - ✓ Organized Trust Circles, so racialized and Indigenous employees can share their experiences in a safe space.
    - ✓ Ran the first-ever workforce survey on racism, and followed it up with focus groups so we can get to deeper, nuanced understanding of employees' experiences, so we can come up with tailored solutions.

- ✓ Externally, included a new question on racism in the Levels Consultation Survey this summer to start getting a sense of stakeholders' views.

**(3) We made public commitments to find institutional solutions** to the problems we've been uncovering.

For example, we issued:

- ✓ Departmental Anti-Racism Strategy 1.0 [more in the next slide],
- ✓ ADM-level Action Commitments that we published to all staff,
- ✓ IRCC Value Statement on our external website to reaffirm our commitment to racial equity for all

**(4) And we started taking action**, to build a forward momentum while continuing to learn from experience, mistakes, and bumps on the road, so we can keep refining our strategy and action.

Some examples are:

- ✓ New AR training and coaching pilots for Executives and Middle Managers,
- ✓ Set new, ambitious Workforce Representation Targets for the next 3 years,
- ✓ Created a new Racial Impact Assessment Tool for Policy, and
- ✓ Started assessing bias in decision-making (OSIMA).

## Slide 5 – Anti-Racism Strategy at a Glance (2021-2023: “Strategy 1.0”) (100-278words, 0.8-2.1min)

- Building directly on the listening and the early actions, we created “Anti-Racism Strategy 1.0” in Spring 2021.
- This is how we think we'll get to our big vision (anti-racist institution).
- This is a first of the many iterations, but this is the “North Star” we set earlier in the year, as our compass to guide our ongoing action towards our vision.
- We are taking a collaborative approach, and keep refining it with partners all across the department as we put it into action.
- 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>
4. Leadership Accountability at all Levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Clear Expectations that Drive Change &amp; Results</li> <li>✓ Model Inclusive Leadership</li> </ul>

- Having a dedicated focus on anti-racism has inspired a lot of actions across many parts of the department.
- Some are top-down, like the DM Commitments on Diversity and Inclusion, and ADM Action Commitments – and others are grassroots, employee-driven.
  - The new Black Employees Network, is now working to create more career pathways for Black employees.
  - Indigenous Peoples' Circle is raising staff awareness about the impact of colonialism on Indigenous peoples.
  - Many branches have created their own anti-racism working groups and committees.
  - We have also created Anti-Racism Sector Leads for each Sector of IRCC, so they can develop Action Plans to turn ADM commitments into tangible action.

### Slide 6 – Looking ahead: Refining AR Strategy 2.0 (150 words, 1.1min)

- Our next step is to continue to listen to, and work with, diverse stakeholders and partners – with a little more emphasis on external stakeholders.
- We will channel that energy into a "Departmental Anti-Racism Strategy 2.0".
- To do so, we will build on all the emerging work being done across IRCC.
  - like
  - (1) the Recommendations from the Task Force's Advisory Board,
  - (2) the draft Sector Action Plans being led by Sector Leads, and
  - (3) the various employee-led initiatives.
- We aim to publish an updated Strategy by Spring 2020.

- We will continue the implementation of the strategy and evaluation of our action to hold ourselves accountable.
- Importantly, we want to make sure this is “not a moment”.
- We will continue to embed anti-racism institutionally to ensure sustainability of both the effort and the impact of this work over time (e.g., into performance management cycle, internal audit, departmental decision-making and accountability structures, etc.).

## Slide 7 – From Strategy to Action: Proposed Year to Year Milestones

(2021/22 – 2023/24) (104-348 words, 0.8-2.7min)

- Finally, this is a quick overview of how we envision the actions unfolding over the next three years.
- Black text is focused on internal management. **Red text is public-facing.**
- We are in **Year 1**. Much of this work has already been accomplished, to set the institutional foundation to begin anti-racism work:
  - Like creating the Strategy 1.0;
  - publicly issuing the Value Statement to signal our commitment to all staff and to the public;
  - the first-ever workforce survey on racism, and the focus groups, and
  - setting the new representation baseline for the next 3 years.
  - For public-facing policy and programs,
    - we created the new Racial Impact Assessment Tool so that policy teams can apply that to their business line to start identifying possible bias in policy.
    - For Service Delivery, an internal task force was created to start the identification of bias in immigration decision-making (OSIMA I).
- **In Year 2:** We will have the Strategy 2.0 in place, and continue its implementation, and ongoing evaluation data collection.

For example,

- We want to see Anti-Racism being embedded into more institutional mechanisms (financial planning, audit, and tying the representation targets (baselines?) to Executive Performance Management).

- For public-facing policy and programs, we want to see systems review done in at least one business line (like Citizenship Program), and for Service Delivery, the Racial Impact Assessment of risk management practices to continue (OSIMA II).
- **By Year 3:** We will have evaluation data collected so that we can assess which actions we've taken, and how effective they have been in addressing systemic racism.
  - We want to see a lot of the anti-racism work mainstreamed and continue as an ongoing practice in our internal People Management, Policy and Programs, and Service Delivery, and to have more tools and resources made available to our leaders, managers, and employees to do so.
  - We plan to publish a report on our anti-racism efforts in the first 3 years, and hopefully, to inform the creation of the next 3-Year Strategy to continue addressing this “generational work” of dismantling systemic racism.

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## BACKPOCKET

**Back pocket: Our guiding principles:**

- ✓ *Account for our shortcomings; share progress openly.*
- ✓ *Engage in open, honest, brave discussions about racism.*
- ✓ *Analyze evidence to identify & dismantle harmful structures, behaviours & norms.*
- ✓ *Learn from our history, failures & the lived experiences of BIPOC people.*
- ✓ *Promote anti-racist values, allies and initiatives.*
- ✓ *Respect each other's differences.*
- ✓ *Act consciously and consistently.*
- ✓ *Equip leaders and employees to be part of the solution.*

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Operations/Service Delivery – Backpocket info:

- OSIP developed “FY2021-2023 Policy and Programs Planned Actions” to implement Ops Sector 6 Commitments – though no details, milestones or timelines available, but if pressed:

- "OSIP will develop overarching Operations Change Management Strategy, clearly outlining Change Management expectations for Operations branches."
- SIS will "implement 3-Step Anti-Racism Initiative Theory of Change to explore what is currently known, learn and engage to fill in the gaps, and take tangible action to implement and fund AR in practice".

\* Based on early feedback from our stakeholders, here are some high-level examples of what this could look like:

**Operations/Service:**

- **Longer processing times** and **higher refusal rates** for applicants from Black African or Caribbean countries. We need to do a deep dive.
- There could be **bias in how we define and apply "risk"**, esp. how **country-level risks** 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 *automatically* refused *simply* because your country is considered high risk).

**Policy:**

- **Visa eligibility criteria** may favour those who already have passports and travel history. This seemingly neutral requirement might have unintended **racialized implications** 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).