

In a post-apology era, the honour of the Crown must be a defining feature in the new relationship where legal obligations are vigilantly observed, where First Nations are diligently consulted and accommodated on all matters affecting our lives, and our right to free, prior and informed consent is respected.... Let it be clear that First Nations care deeply about our human rights—the human rights of the women in our communities, our children, our families and our communities.

The principles of reconciliation, such as mutual respect, coexistence, fairness, meaningful dialogue, and mutual recognition, are not empty words. These principles are about action; that is, they give shape and expression to the material, political and legal elements of reconciliation. It has been an eventful year in Canadian and global politics, society and the economy since last June. First Nations have been affected by the decisions of the Government of Canada during this time.... Given the level of poverty among First Nations, our economies and communities are at an alarmingly high risk of sinking further into the bleakness and despair of poverty. We, as a society, must not let this happen....

If this partnership between all founding peoples of the federation is to be meaningful, mutual responsibility and accountability must also define the relationship.... Reconciliation then, implies a solemn duty to act, a responsibility to engage, and an obligation to fulfill the promises inherent in an advanced democratic and ethical citizenship. That is, the Government of Canada—in fact, all, all members of Parliament in both houses—has a responsibility ... to bridge the past to a future in which the gap in the quality of life and well-being between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people vanishes, where First Nations poverty is eradicated, where our children have the same opportunities and life chances as other children, and the promises of our treaties are fulfilled.

Reconciliation must mean real change for all of our people in all the places we choose to live, change that addresses the wrongs in a way that brings all of us closer together. Human rights, hope, opportunity and human flourishing are not the privilege of one group or one segment of Canadian society; they belong to all of us. Achieving an apology is not an end point.⁶⁸

National reconciliation involves respecting differences and finding common ground to build a better future together. Whether Survivors' hopes on the day of Canada's apology will ultimately be realized rests on our ability to find that common ground.

Therefore, we believe that all levels of government must make a new commitment to reconciliation and accountability. The federal government, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, and all Canadians will benefit from the establishment of an oversight body that will have a number of objectives, including assisting discussions on reconciliation and making regular reports that evaluate progress on commitments to reconciliation. Progress on reconciliation at all other levels of government and civil society organizations also needs vigilant attention and measurement to determine improvements. In terms of public