



# Progress on Realizing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action

## OVERVIEW

In its final report, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) instructed governments, educational and religious institutions, civil society groups and all Canadians to take on the 94 Calls to Action (CTA). As per Resolution 01/2015, *Support for the Full Implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action*, Chiefs-in-Assembly call on Federal, Provincial, Territorial and Municipal Governments to take immediate steps to fully implement all the Calls to Action.

## UPDATE

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) provided preliminary comments to the Interim Board on the structure of the National Council for Reconciliation (NCR) prior to the release of the June 2018 report. The AFN requested the voices of the survivors must be reflected in the NCR's work, and that the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) should be the framework for the NCR to measure government commitments.

## NEXT STEPS

The AFN will continue to monitor progress and advocate for full and meaningful implementation of all the Calls to Action. Commitments and action are needed particularly in areas of justice, equity in the legal system and missing children.

## OTHER RESOURCES

The following list of external resources provides a bulk of up-to-date information on the federal governments progress towards the implementation of the TRC Calls to Action. The AFN has used these resources to guide its grading in order to conduct its assessment of the federal government's implementation.

- [Indigenous Watchdog](#)
- [CBC News Beyond 94](#)
- [Yellowhead Institute 2019 Status Update](#)
- [Government of Canada](#)



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Below is the Assembly of First Nations' general assessment of the progress the Government of Canada and other levels of government have made in meeting the goals set out by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action released in December 2015. See here for a full list of the Calls to Action: [Delivering on Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action](#).

## Child Welfare (1-5)

**Moderate progress** has been made in this area. Notable progress has been made on CTAs #3 and #4. Between July 2016 and April 2020, more than 594,000 products, services and supports were approved under Jordan's Principle. Although a protocol agreement to assist with implementation of the legislation was signed between ISC and the AFN on July 7, 2020, funding remains an issue for implementation.

## Health (18-24)

**Moderate progress** has been made in this area. Action #23, through universal participation of the parties involved, has been completed. Further progress on Action #22 is possible should the government commit to universal access to traditional healers and knowledge keepers.

## Royal Proclamation & Covenant of Reconciliation (45-47)

**Little progress** has been made in this area. Further progress can be made by moving forward from preliminary discussions. The Committee is committed to a renewed relationship with Indigenous Peoples. Further progress can be made on Action #46 by moving forward with preliminary discussions on its implementation.

## Education (6-12)

**Moderate progress** has been made in this area. Most notably, the ongoing efforts towards the completion of Call to Action #11. Future budget announcements must continue to commit further funding as there is still a persistent backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education. Further progress on Action #8 is possible if the government reduces funding discrepancies between on- and off-reserve First Nations.

## Justice (25-42)

**Little progress** has been made in this area. Progress has been made on Action #26 where in several cases, the decision was made not to appeal or seek judicial review. There has been a number of cases where governments have not sought appeal or judicial review, signaling some progress. However, this remains an ongoing issue as seen with Crown arguments in phase two of the Robinson Huron Treaty case hearings. There appears to be possible progress for Action #30 with continued reporting by the Correctional Investigator. Annual reporting will indicate and monitor the progress on eliminating the overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in custody.

## Settlement Agreement Parties & the United Nations Declaration (48-49)

**Little progress** has been made in this area. Repudiation of the doctrine of discovery and terra nullius is needed from more religious groups. While religious groups have adopted UNDRIP as a framework for reconciliation, they are still struggling with implementation.

## Language and Culture (13-17)

**Significant progress** has been made in this area. The most progress is seen on Action #15, with the March 12, 2020 announcement that the appointment process for the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages and Directors has begun. There appears to be possible progress for Action #17 by way of full provincial participation in waiving identification fees so that survivors and their families can reclaim their traditional names.

## United Nations Declaration (43-44)

**Moderate progress** has been made in this area. In the 2019 Speech from the Throne, the Government of Canada committed to introducing legislation implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the end of 2020. Discussions between the Government of Canada and the AFN have progressed regarding the implementation of the Declaration.

## Equity in the Legal System (50-52)

**Little progress** has been made in this area. Most notable is the progress of Action #50 through the University of Victoria's new dual degree program in Canadian Common Law and Indigenous Legal Orders. The University of Alberta has also followed this example. There appears to be possible progress for Action #51 as the government speaks in a broader context of open communication to support reconciliation versus litigation in the "Directive on Civil Litigation Guidelines Involving Indigenous Peoples" issued by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada. This is an opportunity to openly communicate and discuss the possibility of "publishing legal opinions" in support of reconciliation.



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## National Council for Reconciliation (53-56)

**Little progress** has been made in this area. Some progress includes the final report presented by the Interim Board of Directors providing advice and recommendations on the National Council for Reconciliation and the related endowment fund for Action #53. Action #54 has received a commitment from Budget 2019 announcing \$126.5 million in fiscal year 2020-21 to establish a National Council for Reconciliation and endow it with initial operating capital. This commitment will impact the status of progress once outcomes of funding show it was spent accordingly.

## Education for Reconciliation (62-65)

**Little progress** has been made in this area. The Government is working with the Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC) to enhance knowledge and awareness pertaining to Action #62. Although the CMEC released its Indigenous Education Plan for 2019-2020, it has since provided no update and some provinces have withdrawn plans to implement curricula. There is also room for Action #65 to progress on the national research program by advancing reconciliation through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). With SSHRC's "Advancing Knowledge for Canada's Future 2016-2020" reaching its end, there is an opportunity to document the progress of its work from 2016-2020.

## Missing Children (71-76)

**Moderate progress** has been made in this area. The completion of Action #72 is met by the government funding the establishment and unveiling of a National Memorial Register on September 30, 2019 listing all children who are known to have died in Indian Residential Schools. Progress can be made on Action #74, with other provinces following Ontario's initiative of returning remains to Indigenous communities.

## Training for Public Servants (57)

**Significant progress** has been made in this area. The Canada School of Public Service progress in creating its Indigenous learning series for all federal public servants increases learning opportunities, cultural competency, and awareness for knowledge about First Nations, therefore completing this action. An assessment of the impact of the program and funding should be undertaken.

## Youth Programs (66)

**Moderate progress** has been made in this area. National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation has yet to be established as per Action #66. An assessment of the impact of the program and funding should be undertaken.

## National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (77-78)

**Little progress** has been made in this area. There are no recent updates pertaining to Action #78. The government has not made any recent announcement indicating progress or achievements made from its \$10 million funding to support the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation in 2016.

## Media & Reconciliation (84-86)

**Significant progress** has been made in this area. While CTAs #84 and #85 have been completed, action on CTA #86 remains outstanding.

## Business & Reconciliation (92)

**Little progress** has been made in this area. There needs to be more inclusion with Indigenous Organizations to advance the status of this Call to Action.

## Church Apologies and Reconciliation (58-61)

**Little progress** has been made in this area. For CTA #58, The Pope and Catholic Church still have yet to apologize. The completion of Action #61 is met mainly by three churches funding and working on numerous of projects for reconciliation. There have been no updates on Action #60 since 2018, when Churches in Canada started work on implementing programs to help educate church members on the history and legacy of residential schools.

## Museum & Archives (67-70)

**Significant progress** has been made in this area. All items for Action #69 have been met by Library and Archives Canada.

## Commemoration (79-83)

**Moderate progress** has been made in this area. The Government has made progress on Action #80 with the recent introduction of Bill C-5, An Act to amend the Bills of Exchange Act, the Interpretation Act and the Canada Labour Code (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation), which is at Committee at time of publishing. Although the CMEC released its Indigenous Education Plan for 2019-2020, it has since provided no update and some provinces have withdrawn plans to implement curricula.

## Sports & Reconciliation (87-91)

**Significant progress** has been made in this area. Action #88 is complete, and recommendations are met. The Government has shown progress by including Indigenous athletes in sports halls of fame and increased funding for Indigenous sport programming.

## Newcomers to Canada (93-94)

**Moderate progress** has been made in this area. The Government has shown progress on Action #94, with the recent introduction of Bill C-8, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's call to action number 94), which is at First Reading at the time of publishing. For Action #93, initial discussions have taken place with work yet to materialize concrete results.



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## ASSESSING COMPLETION PROGRESS BY CATEGORY

Below is a diagram that illustrates the AFN's assessment of progress in each category of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

