

# Online consultations with Member States



**“Best practices, challenges and lessons learned concerning integrated approaches to the promotion and protection of human rights and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at national level”**

## Survey

### 1. Background information

- Name of the State:

Canada

- The institution responding to the survey:

Global Affairs Canada

- Name and contact email address of the respondent:

GENEVGR@international.gc.ca

Please confirm that you do agree that the responses to the survey will be made publicly available on OHCHR's website?

Choose one of the following answers

- Yes
- No

### 2. Do you have a National Development Plan or equivalent document to guide SDG action?

Choose one of the following answers

- Yes

- No, the country does not have a national development plan or equivalent document to guide SDG action.

*Moving Forward Together: Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy*, was published in February 2021. This strategy sets Canada's vision to achieve the world envisioned in the 2030 Agenda. It promotes a whole of society effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals through widespread, collaborative engagement and action. The strategy aims to create and foster an enabling environment for ongoing dialogue and participation to encourage all those living in Canada to learn about the SDGs, take action to implement the 2030 Agenda and to make progress in advancing its 17 SDGs. It builds on the feedback received from the consultations that informed the interim strategy, *Towards Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy*.

Overall, there is limited specific reference in *Moving Forward Together* to human rights (this is also true of the 2019 interim document).

*Moving Forward Together* identifies five core objectives for engagement and action to advance the 2030 Agenda. The following section will report on progress made on each of the five core objectives of *Moving Forward Together*:

- Objective 1: Fostering leadership, governance and policy coherence
- Objective 2: Raising awareness, engagement and partnerships
- Objective 3: Accountability, transparency, measurement and reporting
- Objective 4: Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and the 2030 Agenda
- Objective 5: Investing in the SDGs

In addition, the Federal Implementation Plan for the 2030 Agenda was published in July 2021. This plan articulates the Government of Canada's commitment and contribution to meeting the objectives of the National Strategy. The Plan communicates to Canadians how the federal government will contribute to the advancement of the National Strategy. The Plan articulates how federal departments and agencies will work together to improve whole-of-government collaboration to advance the Sustainable Development Goals, and commits to report back annually to Canadians on progress. It also highlights avenues to involve and engage Canadians and stakeholders in support of advancing the Sustainable Development Goals.

3. Does the national development plan (NDP) or equivalent document(s) adopt an "integrated approach" to the implementation of protection and promotion of human rights and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda? If so, please describe how.

Key issues: (a) How does the NDP promote the universally-applicable and interrelated nature of all SDGs and through this treats all human rights as inter-dependent and indivisible? (b) Does it use human rights standards applicable to different SDGs as a guidepost? (c) Does it draw upon / use relevant general comments and country recommendations by international human rights mechanisms (Treaty-based bodies, Universal Periodic Review, Special Procedures, ILO expert bodies)? Could you provide lessons learned and best practices?

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The Government of Canada collaborates with stakeholders and partners at home and abroad to secure and promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions, and uphold the human rights principles of due diligence.

Canada's implementation of the 2030 Agenda aims to support reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, with full regard for their rights. Advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples is embedded in

*Moving Forward Together: Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy*, as one of the five core objectives.

The SDGs are grounded in human rights principles, as is the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Together they provide a common guide for conversations among Canada's diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities and non-Indigenous people. Indigenous peoples are frequently at a disadvantage compared to the rest of the population. Thus, the overall focus of the 2030 Agenda on human rights principles and standards, leaving no one behind and reducing inequalities is highly relevant. Upholding the rights of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination will enable Canada to help achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda. The document notes that the Canadian Gender Budgeting Act ensures that every federal budget considers gender and diversity, and that the Gender Results Framework helps guide federal policy decisions and is a tool to monitor and analyze progress on gender equality (p. 17).

In terms of SDG-relevant data collection, the document notes that the Centre for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics includes sex-disaggregated indicators that address factors such as education, economic participation and prosperity, leadership, gender-based violence and health and well-being. At the same time, the document indicates that much work remains to be done on data disaggregation (pp. 30, 34)."

4. Does the NDP or equivalent document(s) guiding national SDG action include a commitment to reduce discrimination and inequality including through a focus on groups at risk of being left behind? If so, please explain and share promising practices, lessons learned and remaining challenges.

Key issues: Does the NDP or equivalent document(s) (a) include a strategy and set out related actions to tackle discrimination and inequalities and ensure that no one is left behind? (b) How did the plan map disadvantaged groups in its analysis and its interventions based on all prohibited grounds of discrimination under international human rights law (c) Does it use disaggregated data, including sex-disaggregated data beyond gender, geography and age to monitor the situation of groups at risks of being left behind in the context of national development efforts (d) How does it make use of the recommendations of international and regional human rights mechanisms relating to inequalities and non-discrimination?

(Max 2000 characters)

Canada explored what it means to 'leave no one behind' in the Canadian context in [Towards Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy](#). Widespread collaborative efforts and public engagement assessed Canada's situation. They considered what a Canadian strategy might include. Those insights, the lessons emerging from experiences with COVID-19 and other considerations have resulted in *Moving Forward Together: Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy*. In addition, the Government of Canada's Federal Implementation Plan establishes clear roles on the horizontal crosscutting objectives embedded in each SDG:

- support the core principle of leaving no one behind by advancing gender equality, empowering women and girls, and advancing diversity and inclusion
- advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples by working in partnership to support Indigenous voices, views, and traditional knowledge and highlighting the accomplishments of Indigenous partners.

Canada's ambitions for SDG 10 are to reduce inequalities and ensure Canadians live free of discrimination. To work towards this ambition, the Government of Canada has strengthened the implementation of Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) to support the development of responsive and inclusive initiatives, including policies, and programs that meet the needs of diverse groups of

people. In addition, the Gender Results Framework (GRF) is a whole-of-government tool to help guide future policy decisions and to track developments in gender equality and diversity across a number of identified policy priorities. Moreover, Statistics Canada launched the Centre for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics in 2018. The Centre houses quick facts, statistics and recent analysis related to gender equality and diversity, as well as detailed data tables related to the Gender Results Framework indicators.

In terms of the core objectives for engagement and action identified in *Moving Forward Together*, the most extensive references to human rights appear in relation to Objective 4, which discusses reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Under this section, the document indicates that “Canada’s implementation of the 2030 Agenda must support reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, with full regard for their rights” (p. 23; see also pp. 10 and 34). There is specific reference to an objective of respecting the right of Indigenous peoples to self-determination. The section notes that the SDGs are grounded in human rights principles, as is the UNDRIP.

Under Objective 4, the document further notes that Indigenous peoples in Canada are frequently at a disadvantage compared to the rest of the population and that in this regard “the overall focus of the 2030 Agenda on human rights principles and standards, leaving no one behind and reducing inequalities is highly relevant” (p. 23).

from the Aboriginal Law Centre:

“The only thing I can add would be to note that the preamble to the *UN Declaration Act* (which came into force in June 2021) notes:

Whereas the implementation of the Declaration can contribute to supporting sustainable development and responding to growing concerns relating to climate change and its impacts on Indigenous peoples;

The UNDA provides a framework for the Government of Canada, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples, to implement the UN Declaration. It could therefore be noted as another step that contributes to the overall efforts towards reconciliation.”

5. Faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, has your country been able to adopt economic and financial policies and measures to avoid human rights setbacks and to bring your country back on track to achieve the SDGs? How has your country approached aligning SDG financing with its human rights obligations? What have been the main challenges and lessons learned?

Key issues: Please share examples of good practices and lessons on: (a) Ways in which macroeconomic policies aimed at generating the necessary resources both domestically and internationally have been guided by obligations on economic, social and other human rights? (b) Approaches to rebalance public expenditure and fiscal policies with the aim of tacking pre-existing inequalities; (c) Examples of how stimulus packages have been designed and assessed with a non-discrimination and equality lens? (d) Methodologies to monitor the impact of loans and grants from international financial institutions on states’ ability to meet ESCR core obligations? (e) Approaches used to integrate a human rights perspective into national SDG financing strategies/frameworks.

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In Canada, pandemic responses were often specifically designed to leave no one behind and support a sustainable recovery path. The Government of Canada and its departments and agencies understood that the pandemic made action consistent with the SDGs even more compelling, not something to be set aside to a future time.

With [Canada’s COVID-19 Economic Response Plan](#), the Government has invested in targeted income support to individuals, business, key sectors, and community organizations on the frontlines of serving Canadians to help reduce social inequalities and support vulnerable groups. That includes:

- Providing \$305 million for a new distinctions-based Indigenous Community Support Fund to address immediate needs in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation communities.
- Placing a six-month interest-free moratorium on the repayment of Canada Student Loans for all individuals currently in the process of repaying these loans.
- Reducing required minimum withdrawals from Registered Retirement Income Funds (RRIFs) by 25% for 2020, in recognition of volatile market conditions and their impact on many seniors' retirement savings. This will provide flexibility to seniors that are concerned that they may be required to liquidate their RRIF assets to meet minimum withdrawal requirements. Similar rules would apply to individuals receiving variable benefit payments under a defined contribution Registered Pension Plan.
- Providing the Reaching Home initiative with \$157.5 million to continue to support people experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 outbreak. The funding could be used for a range of needs such as purchasing beds and physical barriers for social distancing and securing accommodation to reduce overcrowding in shelters.
- Supporting women and children fleeing violence, by providing up to \$50 million to women's shelters and sexual assault centres to help with their capacity to manage or prevent an outbreak in their facilities. This includes funding for facilities in Indigenous communities.

Supporting the charities and non-profit organizations through the Emergency Community Support Fund. The Fund supports local community-based organizations working with vulnerable populations, including seniors, persons with disabilities, members of LGBTQ2 communities, veterans, newcomers, women, children and youth, and members of Indigenous communities and racialized communities, such as Black Canadians. 6. Has your country been able to use the Voluntary National Review (VNR) under the umbrella of the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) to strengthen the integration of human rights in national development efforts? If so, please describe how and provide examples?

Key issues: (a) Has the country received support from the UN System on using the VNR to help address human rights issues? (b) What approaches were used to make best use of the analysis and recommendations of international and regional human rights mechanisms when preparing the VNR? (c) Where consultations with stakeholders, including with vulnerable groups, held in preparation of the VNR? If so, how was the information used by ministries/ institutions to advance human rights implementation and accelerate SDG progress?

(Max 1350 characters)

7. Does the national development plan establish a monitoring and accountability mechanism where civil society and other stakeholders, including representatives of vulnerable are included and which offers the possibility for feedback, complaints and contributing inputs into policy-making?

Key issues: (a) Does the NDP or equivalent document guiding national-level SDG action provide for an ad-hoc or formal monitoring mechanism? (b) Are civil society and other stakeholders, including representatives of vulnerable groups, participating in decision making and monitoring processes? What methodologies have you developed to ensure their active and meaningful participation? (d) Does the strategy envisage any possibility for non-judicial/judicial recourse (including with the support of NHRIs) should human rights concerns emerge in the context of national development efforts?

(Max 1350 characters)

The Federal Implementation Plan commits to reporting on progress to Canadians through the publication of an Annual Report. Canada's first Annual Report to track progress on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals is expected to be released in summer 2022.

Measurement is essential for monitoring progress made towards achieving the SDGs. The Global Indicator Framework, which includes 169 targets and 231 unique indicators, is intended for the review of the 2030 Agenda for all UN Member States in a global context. Statistics Canada has launched the [SDG Data Hub](#) to report on Canada's progress at the global level.

To support domestic monitoring and reporting, countries are also encouraged to develop country specific indicators that are relevant to their particular context. Statistics Canada has developed the Canadian Indicator Framework (CIF), in collaboration with other federal departments. The CIF, which complements the Global Indicator Framework, was released in June 2021 and includes 76 indicators specific to Canada to measure progress on the SDGs in the Canadian context.

Statistics Canada compiles, monitors and reports on the data and statistics for both the Canadian and Global SDG indicator frameworks. The department works with departments and agencies to:

- identify data gaps and priorities of federal departments and agencies for disaggregation for the SDGs within departments' purview, and
- address gaps in data disaggregation for marginalized groups and people in vulnerable situations where applicable, to support the core principle of leaving no one behind

Civil society and other stakeholders have the possibility to provide comments through the Government of Canada Sustainable Development Goals Data Hub, hosted by Statistics Canada.

Furthermore, Statistics Canada's Disaggregated Data Action Plan aims to increase statistical information for specific population groups, such as women, Indigenous Peoples, racialized populations and people living with disabilities. This initiative will lead to increased analytical insights on diverse groups of people, shed light on inequities and promote fairness and inclusion in decision-making.

9. Is there any other information that you would like to share on integrated approaches to the promotion and protection of human right and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

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