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September 28, 2018

OHCHR REGISTRY

Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing
OHCHR
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10

- 2 OCT. 2018

Recipients : **SPD**

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Enclosure

Dear Special Rapporteur,

Canada received a communication dated June 22, 2018, from you on adequate housing as a component of the right to adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context, OL CAN 2/2018 (Communication) concerning legislation relating to the National Housing Strategy.

Canada takes its obligations under international human rights law seriously and is committed to upholding its obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, including to progressively realize the right to adequate housing protected under Article 11(1).

Canada is a strong supporter of the United Nations and its founding values. Canada is committed to its international human rights treaty obligations, and to maintaining a constructive dialogue with the United Nations human rights bodies and those in the special procedures system, which are vital elements of a strong and effective international human rights system.

The launch of Canada's National Housing Strategy was a watershed moment for Canada and all Canadians. The Strategy, and its unprecedented housing investments, demonstrate that Canada's federal government is serious about its leadership role in affordable housing. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), on behalf of the Government of Canada, are involved in every aspect of this renewed role. They are either directly administering, or working with others to deliver more than \$40 billion in investments over the next 10 years to help ensure that Canadians have access to housing that meets their needs and that they can afford.

The Government has proposed several new initiatives, which are key elements to continue to take a human rights-based approach to housing as part of the Strategy, both at present and into the future.

These include:

- new Legislation that would require future federal governments to maintain a National Housing Strategy and report publicly on its progress in meeting key targets;
- a Federal Housing Advocate to work with vulnerable populations and relevant organizations to identify systemic barriers that Canadians face in accessing an affordable place to live;
- a National Housing Council to enable people from different backgrounds, including those with lived experience of housing need, to have a voice in housing policies and programs and research related to the National Housing Strategy;
- a Community-Based Tenant Initiative that provides funding to local organizations that help tenants access information on their housing options, participate in on-site consultations for major new developments, and improve financial literacy; and,
- a Public Engagement Campaign that will seek to reduce stigma and discrimination and highlight the benefits of inclusive communities and inclusive housing.

In line with a human-rights based approach, inclusion, accountability, participation and non-discrimination are guiding the Strategy. These principles are also guiding our overall commitment that all Canadians should have access to safe, adequate, and affordable housing. By adopting a human rights-based approach to housing, and in upholding its obligation to progressively realize the right to adequate housing under the *International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights*, the Government of Canada is striving to ensure that every Canadian has a place to call home for generations to come.

Canada has sought views, opinions, comments, and feedback from Canadians as to how the Government can build a Strategy that will improve their housing outcomes. In March 2018, the Government also launched both in-person and online consultations with Canadians, seeking feedback on the proposed human rights-based approach to housing. We have received hundreds of online submissions and heard first-hand from Canadians, including individuals with lived experience of housing challenges and people in remote northern areas, through targeted sessions.

We also heard from provincial and territorial partners and municipal representatives, housing rights advocates, legal experts and academics, experts in the field of housing and service providers, experts and representatives in homelessness and poverty. We heard from individuals and organizations representing vulnerable groups, such as people with lived experience of housing need and homelessness, older persons,

newcomers, women who are victims or at risk of domestic violence, Indigenous peoples, racialized groups, people with disabilities, including developmental disabilities, veterans, at risk youth, LGBTQ2 communities and people who are dealing with mental health or addiction issues. We recognize your participation in our consultation.

The input is currently being compiled, and will be summarized in a *What We Heard* report that will be published shortly.

The important and diverse feedback that we have received from Canadians will help to shape the elements of the human rights-based approach to housing, including the legislation which will be introduced in Parliament this year.

Canada appreciated receiving your input to the submissions, and participation in a number of meetings and discussions with Government officials. The Government of Canada also remains committed to constructive engagement with the international human rights system and views the Special Procedures mandate holders as a key element of a robust international human rights monitoring and implementation system.

Legislative and policy development is ongoing as we consider what we have heard through the consultations. The Government of Canada would be pleased to update you on this matter as required.

We trust that the above information will be of assistance to you in clarifying the information contained in the Communication.

Sincerely,



H.E. Ms. Rosemary McCarney
Ambassador and
Permanent Representative