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NEWS RELEASE
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BCAFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee and BCAFN Women’s Representative, Louisa Housty-Jones Statement for Gender Equality Week

(Lheidli T’enneh Territory, Prince George, BC – September 21, 2020) – September 21-25 marks Gender Equality Week in Canada. The purpose of Gender Equality Week is multidimensional. Through it, we acknowledge the significant contributions that women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people have made, and continue to make in our communities and society.

This week is also a time to renew dedication toward addressing the systemic issues of sexism, racism, colonialism, patriarchy, homophobia, and transphobia that result in poverty, homelessness, sexual exploitation, gender-based violence, isolation, social and political exclusion, abuse, incarceration, and barriers to education, employment, equal pay, social services, legal services, childcare, and positions of leadership. Indigenous women, transgender, and two-spirit people, those who are elderly, live with disabilities, or are visible minority women and gender diverse individuals, often experience these inequalities even more acutely.

Colonial policies and legislation have directly contributed to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People genocide. In a time when the status-quo is being disrupted and re-envisioned across society, now is the time to examine our relationships, priorities and actions as they relate to gender equality and justice.

Finally, we also bring attention to the ever-present need to confront harmful gender stereotypes.

“I want to honour and encourage all of the women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals in our communities who are reconnecting with their identities as strong First Nations peoples, and with the valuable roles we have to play in our families and communities. I know this is often challenging work, but you are not alone, and I truly believe this is the path to wellness,” stated BCAFN Women’s Representative, Louisa Housty-Jones.

“Urgent action is needed to ensure the human rights of Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are upheld, in particular. We need a MMIWG2S National Action Plan that is led by Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, survivors, and families, and coordinated among all levels of government, including Indigenous governments,” stated Regional Chief Terry Teegee.

To mark this week, each day the BCAFN is celebrating the accomplishments of diverse Indigenous women from across BC. Discover their stories on our [website](#) or on our social media pages ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)).

To learn more about how BCAFN is advancing and advocating for gender equity, visit our [website](#).

Bill C-309, the [Gender Equality Week Act](#), was introduced by Sven Spengemann, Member of Parliament for Mississauga–Lakeshore. It received Royal Assent on June 21, 2018. This legislation designates the fourth week in September as Gender Equality Week.

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