

Governing Board Briefing Note for Meetings with MPs – May 2014

Human Trafficking: Canada's Prostitution Laws; Pan Am Games; Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Children

Both labour trafficking and sex trafficking have emerged as an area of broad concern. Labour trafficking continues to be an issue related to migrant workers and more recently temporary foreign workers. Faith community efforts on sex trafficking both within Canada and through migration are focused on 1) prostitution laws in Canada, sometimes known as sex work law reform, 2) awareness campaigns related to Canada hosting the Pan Am Games, and 3) acknowledging Canada's long history of human trafficking related to indigenous women, now taking shape through calls for a parliamentary inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and children.

Questions:

1. Will you support the recommendations listed in the April 15 letter to Justice Minister McKay (see the letter and backgrounder and select the recommendations you feel most strongly about). Focus on # 7: *Engage the provincial governments, territorial governments, municipal governments, nongovernmental organizations and other public and private partners in the development of a comprehensive national plan or strategy with the objective of ending prostitution.*
2. What support will you (or your party) provide for a public awareness campaign around Canada's hosting of the Pan Am Games and preventing the frequent association of trafficking with large scale sporting events?
3. How will you advance efforts by indigenous peoples organizations such as the Native Women's Association of Canada and other human rights bodies to hold a parliamentary inquiry on the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in Canada?

Canadian Council of Churches involvement

The Human Trafficking in Canada working group at The Canadian Council of Churches has completed a useful Leadership and Learning Kit for Churches on the topic (which you have seen, print copies will be available at the meeting. Order more copies for \$15 each!

On April 15, a letter was sent to Justice Minister McKay inquiring about support for 8 recommendations regarding new prostitution laws in Canada. The letter included a helpful backgrounder noting that we need to be extremely concerned with the word consent when the dynamics of power are unequal. Sex work is inherently violent and dangerous regardless of location. "We need to stop viewing prostitution as a vocation of choice and instead view it as an affront to gender equality and violence against women, children and marginalized populations."

Currently, members of the Human Trafficking Canada working group including its Chair, Jennifer Lucking, are preparing a website awareness campaign related to Canada's hosting the Pan Am games: www.buyingsexisnotasport.ca will hopefully be populated by the end of this week.

Finally, the CCC has not played an active role in supporting the parliamentary inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women and children beside raising this same issue in meetings with MPs and government officials in 2013 Governing Board meetings. Of note, MP Carolyn Bennett encouraged the CCC to follow-up and strengthen support for this issue.

For more details see:

- Letter to Minister McKay on prostitution legislation with backgrounder:
<http://www.councilofchurches.ca/fighting-human-trafficking-by-ending-demand-for-prostitution/>
- Pan Am Games awareness campaign website (to be populated shortly):
<http://www.buyingsexisnotasport.ca>
- Native Women's Association of Canada 2013 Report:
http://www.nwac.ca/files/2013.10.09_Why%20Support%20a%20National%20Inquiry_FINAL02.pdf
- A May 2014 CBC article on recent developments, after the RCMP estimated more than 1,000 missing:
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/missing-aboriginal-women-ottawa-ignored-draft-report-s-inquiry-recommendation-1.2628886>
- Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada on Human Trafficking:
<http://www.wicc.org/programs-events/human-trafficking/>
- The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada report and recommendations on prostitution laws in Canada:
<http://files.efc-canada.net/si/Prostitution/Out%20of%20Business.pdf>