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Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Building
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

June 15, 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW), we acknowledge the Government of Canada's commitment to reconciliation and willingness to embrace systemic reforms to end systemic racism in Canada.

In unprecedented times like this, the Government of Canada must act to put in place far-reaching measures intended to support the safety and security of all Canadians, including the knowledge and expertise of social workers.

Recent events affirm, once again, that we have far to go in pursuing social justice for racialized people, including fighting for safety from violence and discrimination, access to a living income, adequate housing and accessible health care and many other basic human rights. We cannot move forward without recognizing and learning from the mistakes of our past; bearing humility and a willingness for true collaboration and change.

CASW is calling for the Government of Canada to take immediate and tangible action to remedy our need for structural change by:

- Addressing the history of enslavement in Canada through a formal apology recognizing the enslaving of Black Canadians and the continued perpetuation of deep systemic racism;
- Upholding its commitments to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, as well as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action;
- Ending Mandatory Minimum penalties for drug offences which directly lead to the disproportionate incarceration of racialized groups within the criminal justice system;
- Decriminalizing the personal use of psychoactive substances;
- Collecting disaggregated, race based data related to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Reviewing the role of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and local policing departments with the goal of redirecting funds to community supports without the use of excessive force;
- Requiring the RCMP and local police departments to wear body cameras and require continuing education and training in de-escalation; especially when issues of mental health and/or substance use and race intersect; and
- Implementing a national Universal Basic Income Guarantee.

Sincerely,

Jan Christianson-Wood, MSW, RSW
CASW President

cc. Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the New Democratic Party
The Honourable Andrew Scheer, Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada
Yves-François Blanchet, Leader of the Bloc Québécois