

Outcome Statement from the National NGO Sector Forum (July 10, 2015) - Joint Call to Action for the Establishment of a Canadian Commissioner for Children and Youth

On Saturday July 10, 2015 a number of Canadian NGOs, professional associations, child rights advocates, youth representatives and philanthropic organizations met in Moncton, New Brunswick to discuss the need for a Canadian Commissioner for Children and Youth.

The National NGO Sector Forum for a Canadian Commissioner for Children and Youth was co-sponsored by the New Brunswick Child and Youth Advocate's Office, UNICEF Canada, the Canadian Paediatric Society, the Child Welfare League of Canada, the Canadian Student Association for Children's Rights, and the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children. It was hosted at the Université de Moncton's Law Faculty, and the invitation list extended to non-profit organizations and child-serving agencies across the country.

The Forum was an opportunity to begin a dialogue around a Commissioner for Children and Youth in Canada, and what Canadian non-profit organizations believe this Office ought to look like. A discussion document had been prepared outlining the different principles and functions that this Office should hold, based on best practices of independent human rights institutions at an international level.

In light of this Forum, as well as the repeated recommendations to Parliament from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights and the many Canadian representatives of civil society, the undersigned now form common cause and issue this joint call to action for the federal government to take swift legislative action to establish a new Parliamentary Officer for Canada's children and youth. This Officer should act as an oversight body responsible for the protection and promotion of children's fundamental human rights under the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. All parties undersigned agree that the time has come for Canada to meet its international obligations to its children and youth, and that the establishment of a National Commissioner should be undertaken at the earliest moment.

We confirm our support for the federal government opening a national dialogue with all interested Canadians in the coming months to better define the office, mandate and powers of such a Parliamentary Officer in the best interests of all children and youth within Canada. We will make concerted efforts to work through our collective networks to actively promote this institutional development to relevant authorities. We will also circulate this *Outcome Statement*, together with our companion *Joint Call to Action for the Establishment of a Canadian Commissioner for Children and Youth: Elements for Discussion regarding Key Principles, Functions and Powers*, among stakeholder groups, including child serving agencies and organizations, professional associations, Indigenous communities and Canadian children and youth. The circulation of these two documents will be directed towards supporting a broad dialogue and eliciting feedback from multiple stakeholders and constituencies regarding the roles and functions that a Commissioner may play.

Dated at Moncton, July 10 2015,

Cheryl Milne, Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children

Marv Bernstein and Lisa Wolff, UNICEF Canada

Norm Bossé, Child and Youth Advocate for the Province of New Brunswick

Marie-Adele Davis, Canadian Paediatric Society

Gordon Phaneuf, Child Welfare League of Canada

Candice Pollack, Canadian Student Association for Children's Rights

Christian Whalen and Sarah Dennene, International Summer Course on the Rights of the Child