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Exhibit: National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls		
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Submitted by: <u>O'Soup, SK ACY</u>		
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Recommendations for consideration by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth¹

To the Commissioners of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls:

1. A child's rights lens should be applied when formulating recommendations specifically targeted toward Indigenous youth², measured against the four foundational principles of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC). The best interests of Indigenous children and youth must be a primary consideration.

For consideration when making recommendations to government:

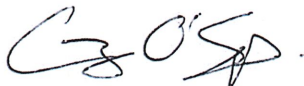
2. Ensure special consideration and special measures are provided to Indigenous youth to eliminate the causes of discrimination and ensure they can fully enjoy their rights at the same level as other children and youth.
 - a. Taking into account the interrelatedness and indivisibility of children's rights under the UNCRC, a holistic and multisectoral approach is required to ensure the protection of Indigenous youth's rights by ensuring culturally-appropriate access to quality services in areas including, but not limited to health, protection from violence (including suicide), education, recreation, social services, housing, sanitation and juvenile justice.
3. Ensure the education system is appropriate for all children and youth and meets the unique needs of Indigenous children, youth and their families. Access to quality primary and secondary education is a way to empower Indigenous children, youth and communities and prevent violence when used as a preventive tool.
4. Within the newly released national poverty reduction strategy, implement a dedicated focus on eliminating child poverty, incorporating specific indicators and annual targets in this regard. This strategy should place particular attention on the elimination of Indigenous child poverty.
5. All levels of government and public services must conduct a Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) when making changes to policy, practice or legislation to systematically consider how children's rights and interests are, or will be, affected by their decisions and actions. Particular attention should be paid to the rights and interests of Indigenous youth. These assessments should take place whether the proposed changes directly or indirectly affect children. There must also be continuous process of assessment evaluating the actual impact of their implementation.
6. Indigenous youth must be given opportunities to participate and have their voices heard in all matters that affect them, pursuant to their right under Article 12 of the UNCRC. All levels of government should ensure effective and meaningful processes for this participation.
 - a. For example, strengthening the quality of interventions to prevent Indigenous youth suicide should incorporate the participation of Indigenous youth. Specific consideration should be given to the .../2

¹ Please note: These recommendations mirror those submitted by Corey O'Soup while testifying in his personal capacity on the Expert & Knowledge Keeper Panel: Human Rights Framework (Part III, Vol. 6, Exh. B12 – Exhibit Code P03P02P0301), with a minor amendment to Recommendation 4 to reflect the national poverty reduction strategy released subsequent to his testimony.

² For brevity, the term "Indigenous youth" is used in this document to be inclusive of Indigenous girls, transgender, LGBTQ and Two-Spirited Indigenous young persons.

- Calls to Action regarding youth suicide prevention identified by Indigenous youth in the report *Shhh...LISTEN!! We Have Something to Say* (2017)³ and other bodies of work inclusive of youth voice.
- b. Creation of a national Indigenous children and youth participation initiative, with training on child and youth rights, leadership, voice, and civic participation, to fully implement the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* and reduce vulnerability.
7. Federal and provincial governments work with national and regional Indigenous organizations to develop culturally-appropriate programming and initiatives for Indigenous youth, including but not limited to youth suicide prevention strategies. This process must include the participation of Indigenous youth.
 8. Canada must take immediate steps to sign and ratify the *3rd Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure*.
 9. Effort and coordination is required by federal and provincial/territorial governments to improve education and awareness of the UNCRC and its Optional Protocols among the general public, children and youth themselves, and various professionals working with children and youth.
 10. Jordan's Principle be fully implemented, through collaboration between the federal and provincial/territorial governments and First Nations communities, to ensure all rural and remote communities are aware of the process and have the capacity to make claims for services under the principle.
 11. All levels of government establish effective budgetary frameworks that incorporate the needs of children, particularly vulnerable groups such as Indigenous children and youth. They must ensure protections for the rights of children are given priority, are well-resourced and sustainable, and include budgetary safeguards in situations of fiscal restraint.
 12. Create a statutory "National Children's Commissioner" independent from the federal government, but accountable to the Parliament, with particular emphasis on Indigenous children and youth and the national dimension of the work on programs, evaluation and outcomes. This body should adhere to the Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (Paris Principles).
 13. A national initiative to measure and report on child welfare, education and health outcomes for Indigenous children and youth. This will require creation and coordination of data, and clear assignment of roles and accountabilities.
 14. That the federal government adopt all necessary measures to ensure the full inclusion of the *Optional Protocol to the UNCRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography* into its domestic legal system.
 15. The federal government should provide adequate training to law enforcement officials and prosecutors with the aim of protecting all child victims of trafficking and improving enforcement of current legislation. Training should incorporate enhancing awareness on legislation criminalizing child trafficking, best practices in investigation processes, and specific instructions on the rights and protections of child victims.

Respectfully,



Corey O'Soup

Advocate for Children and Youth of Saskatchewan

MM/wg

³ Part III Vol. 6 Exh. B11 (Exhibit Code P03P02P0301)