



## Office of the Provincial President

August 17, 2021

Dear Minister LeClair,

Maarsii. Thank you for agreeing to serve with me as we share the role of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) Minister of Inter-Nation Relations. The opportunities for growth and advancement in the next four years of the important goals in this portfolio are exciting.

This mandate letter describes the progress made to date in this portfolio and our responsibilities and priorities moving forward. It also outlines how I expect all of us to conduct ourselves as Ministers and how we should work with other Ministers, members of the Provincial Métis Council (PMC), and fellow citizens. As accountability and transparency are the cornerstones of good government, I am making these letters public, so all citizens are informed of how their government is working for them.

### PROGRESS TO DATE

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#### Working Partnership with Canada

The progress our government has made over the past three years is a testament to the strong working partnership we have developed with the Government of Canada. With the signing of the *Canada-Métis Nation Accord* in 2017 by all Governing Members of the Métis National Council (MNC), we have seen a shift in how the Métis are treated in this country and acknowledged as Indigenous peoples with inherent rights.

Our progress on education, early learning and child care (ELCC) and housing are examples of this strengthened relationship. These areas are identified in the Accord as priorities for our governments to collaboratively work on together to close the gap between Métis citizens and non-Indigenous Canadians. Through our conversations and negotiations, MN-S stressed the need for any new programming and services to be designed, developed, and administered by our government. This was Louis Riel's vision, and one I constantly promote. This is what self-government and self-determination mean.

Our tireless advocacy and close working partnerships with federal Ministers, the Prime Minister and public servants paid off as we have been able to secure agreements and substantial multi-year funding on each priority. Our ten-year agreements on post-secondary education, housing and ELCC provide stable funding for our government to design, develop and administer programming and services to meet the needs of our citizens.



## **Working Partnerships with the Métis Nation of Ontario and the Métis Nation of Alberta**

Since signing the Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement (MGRSAs) in June 2019, our government has worked closely with the Métis Nation of Ontario and Métis Nation of Alberta as we work to implement our respective MGRSAs. Collaboration and unity benefits all three governments. By sharing best practices and allowing for information sharing where appropriate, we have increased efficiency and effectiveness in moving to self-government. These joint efforts have included sending a letter in December 2019 to the Prime Minister, outlining priorities including developing mutually agreeable Federal Recognition legislation, co-developing a Federal Métis Claims policy, and negotiating stable, long-term fiscal financing agreements. In January 2020 in Edmonton, we held a historic tri-council meeting. We issued a joint declaration to continue to work together, and a resolution to call for transparency from the MNC.

## **Working Partnerships in Saskatchewan**

Our government's response to COVID-19 has proven that collaboration works in order to deliver for Métis citizens. To best utilize resources and expertise and ensure we were meeting the unique needs of each Region, we built and strengthened valuable partnerships with the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN), Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC), the Saskatchewan Health Authority, the cities of Saskatoon and Regina, municipalities, provincial officials and the Government of Canada. By working together, we were able to ensure our response was aggressive and proactive and that no community was left behind.

In addition to this, we have been working with the Battle River Industrial Relations Council (BRIRC) as we find common cause and benefit to a united front on duty to consult issues. As we have shared experiences in dealing with the resource extraction and development industries, as well as the Province of Saskatchewan, we find we will be better able to defend Métis rights by working together with First Nations. This partnership has the potential to expand over the coming years.

## **Improving Relationships with the RCMP**

Historically, the RCMP and Indigenous peoples have had a poor and untrustworthy relationship marked by colonial policies and attitudes. Such policies have impacted Métis communities in Saskatchewan in particular through systematic discrimination.

The MN-S is committed to improving our relationship with the RCMP so that we can work effectively together for the health and safety of our citizens. On August 1, 2019, the MN-S signed a protocol agreement with the RCMP "F" Division to establish a trusting and reciprocal relationship. This agreement recognizes the MN-S as the government for Métis citizens in Saskatchewan and affirms the need for the parties to work together to build stronger and safer communities. The agreement outlines how the parties will work together to deliver culturally appropriate training to RCMP members and avert or resolve conflict.



## MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

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As Ministers of Inter Nation Relations, we are jointly responsible for the following areas:

- Working with Ministers to maintain and further enhance working partnerships with First Nations/Indigenous Governments, Tribal Councils, and other MNC Governing Members; and
- Working with Ministers to maintain and further enhance working relationships with the Government of Canada, the Government of Saskatchewan, the RCMP, and municipalities.

## PRIORITIES

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I expect you to work constructively with your colleagues, members of the PMC, and citizens to deliver on the following priorities:

- We want to renew the strong alliances we had with First Nations/Indigenous Governments prior to colonialism so we can work together on shared priorities and capitalize on lessons learned. To accomplish this objective, over the next year:
  - Foster diplomatic relations to include mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefits with First Nations/Indigenous governments across Saskatchewan and Canada. This must include developing and respecting proper protocols;
  - Maintain significant ties with First Nations/Indigenous governments that have been developed in our COVID-19 response in order to continue to respond to the pandemic crisis and work towards other priority areas for our government;
  - Continue to build partnerships with First Nations/Indigenous governments and organizations where our interests align. Currently, significant work with First Nations/Indigenous governments and organizations in the near future is needed on the following issues:
    - Residential school graves and our lost children; and
    - Duty to Consult and expanding the relationship with the Battle River Indigenous Resource Council (BRIRC).
- After recently passing legislation on UNDRIP (the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People), Canada is now obliged to develop an implementation action plan with two years. We will lead the MN-S participation in this national effort including consultations with our citizens to ensure the national action plan reflects the distinction-based priorities and views of the Métis of Saskatchewan and achieves its ambitious goals on our behalf;



- Support the Ministers of Women and Gender Equality and Justice in the development of a plan to address the situation of violence against Métis women, female Elders, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons in Saskatchewan.
- As we lead the Constitutional Reform process to update and modernize our *Constitution of the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan* and related legislation, we must ensure it is grounded on our Métis laws and that we create legislative frameworks that will continue to serve our citizens and Métis Nation as we move towards self-government.

## EXPECTATIONS FOR MINISTERIAL CONDUCT

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All Members of the Executive must act with honesty and uphold the highest ethical standards in their personal and professional lives. Métis citizens' confidence and trust in the integrity of government is essential. Our Executive Handbook was updated in November 2019 by the PMC. It affirms that all Ministers must adhere to strict standards of conduct guided by the principles of integrity, accountability, responsibility, leadership, respect and openness. I encourage you to routinely consult the Executive Handbook and use it as a guiding resource in your work.

In addition to the roles and responsibilities listed above, there is also an obligation to support and advance the overall priorities of this government. Confidentiality, solidarity and collective responsibility are critical to good governance and must be the foundation of how we work together. Our Executive Handbook outlines the meaning of solidarity. Ministers may disagree and state their personal opinions during private meetings. At the same time, to the public, they must present a unified front on all decisions and support all decisions made by their fellow Ministers. Collectively, Ministers are accountable for these decisions, even if they do not personally agree with them.

All Ministers must work collaboratively with each other and all members of the PMC to establish good communication. We will ensure policies and programs reflect the needs and aspirations of Métis citizens. The unique challenges that rural and urban citizens face are considerations in decision-making. Every attempt should be made to consult with and obtain the views of Members of the PMC, local Presidents, community members, Métis women, youth, 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons, Elders, and other experts.

As we strengthen our working partnerships with First Nations, the Government of Canada and the Government of Saskatchewan, you are expected to conduct yourself in a respectful and cooperative manner. Delivering success for our citizens requires good working partnerships with external partners and being solutions-oriented.

Our government has zero-tolerance for unethical behaviour. All Ministers are obligated to question any request or decision that they think may be unethical or unlawful. Rules and the proper protocol for addressing alleged breaches can be found in section 7.0 of the Executive Handbook.



As we rebuild our Nation, we know we have a lot of work to do. Part of this journey must include recognizing the devastating impact colonialism and land dispossession have had on our communities, kinship, and governance. Lateral violence is endemic across the Métis Nation. We need to understand how we are going to discard colonial attitudes and re-invigorate Métis laws and ways of living together. In particular, we need to critically examine how we will reinstate the vital role Métis women, girls and two-spirit persons traditionally played in our societies. This work must include addressing and ending systemic violence against Métis women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons. We must also continue to ensure equal representation of women in all levels of our government, and that these perspectives and needs be reflected in decision-making.

Our people have fought for over a century for recognition, respect, and our rightful place as a self-determining people. Over the past three years, we have made substantial progress towards realizing the visions of Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont. From signing the Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement with Canada, investing in housing, education and economic development, making real progress on the negotiation of the North-West land claim, and strengthening our internal governance, we have made momentous strides in a relatively short time. This year, our communities have faced a significant challenge to our health and safety: COVID-19. We came together to support citizens, deliver PPE and provide critical support for housing, childcare, and Métis businesses. While we must remain vigilant to ensure everyone's safety, we should all be proud of how we have supported each other during such unprecedented times.

Thank you again for agreeing to serve the MN-S and its citizens. I am here to work in partnership with you and to support you in your role as Minister of Inter-Nation Relations. Together, we will continue to carry the torch of those great leaders who came before us. We can, and we will, succeed in fully realizing the vision of a strong, self-determining, accountable government for all of us as Métis people in this province.

Much respect,



Glen McCallum  
*President*

