



CANADIAN ETHNOCULTURAL COUNCIL - CONSEIL ETHNOCULTUREL DU CANADA

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Dear Mr. Silva

Re: Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism

The Canadian Ethnocultural Council (CEC) would like to express its support for the Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism in Canada by the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism (CPCCA). We acknowledge this as an important step in the official recognition that, unfortunately, Antisemitism continues to exist within society and in our communities. It is vital that a comprehensive approach be taken by the Parliamentary Inquiry to examine what measures we can *all* take to break this cycle and thereby create leadership at all levels to address the problem. We strongly believe that civil society plays a vital and pivotal role in this endeavor as noted in **The London Declaration, Resolution No. 26 of the** Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism (ICCA). It states:

“Parliamentarians should engage with civil society institutions and leading NGOs to create partnerships that bring about change locally, domestically and globally, and support efforts that encourage Holocaust education, inter-religious dialogue and cultural exchange”.

The CEC, a non-profit, non-partisan NGO, was created over 30 years ago and has become a forum for dialogue for diverse ethnocultural populations in Canada. It is an umbrella organization whose membership includes the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC). While we are not in a position to make a comprehensive report on Antisemitism, we are dismayed at its increase and we support the CJC’s struggle to eradicate Antisemitism. The CJC has equally

supported other CEC member organizations' quest to combat hate and racism. The CEC has been a common forum for member organizations to collaborate, share ideas and concerns affecting our communities. Through our dialogues with member organizations the CEC has become acutely aware of the need to speak out and our organization has publicly stated that Antisemitism has no place in any society, especially in democratic countries like Canada.

We continue to support the CJC's efforts to take steps and actions to deal with and combat Antisemitism. We believe as do many others that not taking action and not providing forums for collective condemnation can damage the frail nature of intercommunity dialogue and social cohesion which is so vital in today's multicultural Canada and pluralistic world. Accordingly, it is vital that positive measures and proper mechanisms be employed to engage all ethnocultural civil society leaders and communities to effectively deal with discrimination, racism, xenophobia and Antisemitism. We strongly believe that one of the most important means in combating hate in general and Antisemitism in particular is by providing opportunities for diverse ethnocultural communities to meet regularly, build relationships, learn and understand from each other, discuss issues of mutual concerns and support one another. Building capacity and developing leadership in Canadian ethnocultural civil society must be one of the fundamental principles and steps in this challenge. Community support can more easily be harnessed when civil society is engaged through NGO institutions which recognize equality, accommodation, democratic governance and mutual respect based on Canadian values and laws, as espoused in our Multiculturalism Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The CEC believes that it is vital that the Parliamentary Inquiry examine how to best engage Canadian ethnocultural civil society, identify best practice models to determine and create environments for sustained, continued dialogue, and intercultural interaction. This includes an examination of the Federal Government's role in creating neutral venues where social and political trust are nurtured amongst Canada's ethnocultural leadership and ethnocultural communities, based on the common principle of mutual respect and of working together in resolving issues for the betterment of all communities. As an example, one of Canada's lesser known successes is indeed the establishment of the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, the only national umbrella organization of ethnocultural groups. The CEC's Board of Presidents provides a forum for communication amongst and between ethnocultural communities. Over 30 national ethnocultural organizations representing every province and major city and numerous mid-size, small and rural towns have been developing networks for the past thirty years. The CEC has

created opportunities for ethnocultural NGOs to come together via its structure and through the Board of Presidents. This has formed communication conduits, essential for the transmission and sharing of information and values. Discussion on the range of issues of concern to member organizations has bridged geographic and cultural distances across Canada. In addition, the CEC member organizations have connections to their own local, regional and international communities, including ethnic mass media. Networks of support from national political to local social groups have developed and contributed to social discourse offering opportunity for community leaders to learn about racism, hate, bias and Antisemitism. The CEC is a vehicle for creating overlapping networks in which ethnic communities would not normally connect. It serves as a bridging organization, which social scientists recognize as a way to contribute to cohesion and civic participation.

It is this strength and a contribution to the social fabric and social stability of Canada that the CEC has established and continues to promulgate which at present is unfortunately, undervalued and as such needs to be recognized and reinforced. Sustained support for the CEC as a national umbrella organization has virtually been eliminated. Over the past ten years, the CEC's opportunities for discussion and dialogue are mainly driven by "project de jour" funding, which, however important, engage only a number of selected communities on a limited subject matter. As a result it has been difficult to coordinate efforts and responses to acts and manifestations of Antisemitism, hate, discrimination and racism in a timely and sustained manner. At this juncture, opportunities for continued dialogue and civil engagement remains tenuous.

We respectfully submit, therefore, that the Inquiry takes an in-depth look at how federal funding has impacted the opportunity for ethnocultural civic leaders and NGOs to respond quickly to manifestations of hate and Antisemitism, to work collaboratively and collectively in order to educate their respective communities and to create safe forum for dialogue for Canada's diverse populations, thus supporting the efforts of Parliamentarians and organizations to bring to fruition the Resolution No. 26 of the London Declaration.

Yours truly,

Peter Ferreira
President



THE CANADIAN ETHNOCULTURAL COUNCIL

Established in 1980, the Canadian Ethnocultural Council is a non-profit, non-partisan, non-governmental organization representing over 30 national ethnocultural organizations, which in turn represent over 2,000 local chapters across Canada. Its mandate is to work towards equality of access and opportunity for all Canadians and to promote the understanding of the multicultural reality of Canada as defined in The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and The Canadian Multiculturalism Act. The CEC conducts programs and activities to support the vision of an inclusive and multicultural Canada. These include organizing events, conferences, seminars, workshops or developing community-based research and training resource material. It also advocates for ethnocultural communities on common issues and concerns to affect change and policy development. For details see www.ethnocultural.ca

The CEC has worked in partnership with national and regional organizations, government departments, and the private sector. The following is a sample of organizations the CEC has partnered with:

- Alternative Dispute Resolution Centre (Ottawa)
- Association for Canadian Studies
- Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of British Columbia
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency
- Canadian Liver Foundation
- Correctional Services Canada
- Department of Justice
- Department of Canadian Heritage
- Elections Canada
- Invitation: The Quilt of Belonging – a national project
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- OMNI TV Rogers Media
- O'Brien Publishing: The Canadian Technology and Business Magazine
- YOUCAN

The CEC has also produced manuals, training material and reports. Some examples include:

Preventing Type 2 Diabetes in Ethnic Youth: Strategies and Resources

Intergenerational Dialogue and Conflict Resolution: Resource Guide

Capacity Building and Strengthening for Ethnocultural Communities: A Tool Kit
Bias Free Parenting: A Resource Guide
Ethnic Seniors and Healthy Aging: Perceptions, Practices, and Needs

The CEC is the sole distributor of *Transforming Our Organization: A Tool Kit for Planning and Monitoring Anti-Racism Multicultural Change*. The CEC has developed a outreach capacity based on the following contacts:

1. CEC member organizations with over 2000 provincial and local chapters across Canada
2. A database of over 3,500 organizations including new Canadian communities
3. A database of over 300 social and health services across the country

Canadian Ethnocultural Council - Initiatives and Projects 2004 –2009

Engaging Ethnocultural Communities on Hepatitis C (Part 1 to 4)

Four part project with the Canadian Liver Foundation for the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Qualitative Study on Program and Services Access by Ethnocultural Offenders in the Federal Correctional System for Correctional Services of Canada

Resolving Conflict Through Intergenerational Dialogue and Cross-cultural understanding;

A Community Training Initiative, in partnership with YOUCAN and funded by Canadian Heritage Training of youth and adults on conflict resolution and production of resource guide for action plans.

Strategic Engagement of Youth in Ethnocultural Communities on Diabetes Awareness

Community symposium and briefing, demographic analysis, community awareness report, resource guide, youth forum and YOUTUBE video.

Strategies for Outreach to Ethnocultural Communities on the Reintegration of Offenders

A national consultation and report for Correctional Services Canada

An Outreach Plan for Ethnocultural Communities on the Travelers Awareness Campaign

Research on ways to reach ethnic communities in Canada for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Cultural Diversity Special, for the Canadian Technology Business Magazine,

Capacity Building and Strengthening for Ethnocultural Communities: three-year project which included:

Training Tool Kit *Capacity Building and Strengthening for Ethnocultural Communities* a guide.

National Conference: Looking back, Looking Forward: Building Strong Ethnocultural Communities and **Training workshops with** communities across the country

Forum on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Youth, Children and Women

The CEC held a forum in conjunction with Status of Women and the Justice Department to inform communities and develop strategies to deal with trafficking of women and children.

Diabetes and Ethnic Older Adults: Best Practice Models for Prevention and Management Project

A report "Starting and Maintaining an Ethno-Specific Diabetes Support Group" has been developed by the Canadian Ethnocultural Council to provide a basic working model for the implementation of an autonomous "Diabetes Self-Directed Support Group" for aging ethnic adults in Canada.

Elections Canada Outreach

The CEC completed a project on behalf of Elections Canada to determine the effectiveness of the multilingual/ethnic advertising and outreach campaign before the 38th general election.

Culturally Appropriate Best Practices for Healthy Aging Project

Based on the needs assessment study, a report entitled "Ethnic Seniors and Healthy Aging: Perceptions, Practices and Needs" a report has been developed which includes a province-wide list of health care agencies providing successful and innovative service programs for ethnocultural seniors.

'PSA'-Public Service Announcement with OMNI -TV

The PSA was aired on OMNI 1 and 2 in southern Ontario with a message to promote multiculturalism.