

President
of the Treasury Board



Président
du Conseil du Trésor

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0R6

JUL 24 2014

The Honourable Mobina S. B. Jaffer, Senator
Chair
Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A4

Dear Senator Jaffer:

Pursuant to Senate Rule 12-24, on behalf of the Government of Canada, I am pleased to provide the Government Response to the second report of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, *Employment Equity in the Federal Public Service: Staying Vigilant for Equality*.

The Government of Canada appreciates the in-depth work of the Committee in examining and assessing the subject of employment equity in the federal public service and is in general agreement with the Committee's recommendations.

The federal government is committed to employment equity and to attaining its employment equity goals. Canada's diversity is a source of great strength and pride. We depend on the abilities of as many Canadians as possible to succeed in the 21st century.

As the Committee's report shows, the core public administration has made significant progress in achieving employment equity goals over the years. For 2013, the core public administration has the distinction of exceeding overall workforce availability for women, Aboriginal peoples, members of visible minority groups and persons with disabilities.

In addition, to ensure these goals are championed by the most senior levels of the public service, the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer in the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (the Secretariat) introduced a new Employment Equity Governance Model in the fall of 2011. Employees now have more direct access to senior management and deputy minister employment equity champions, who are in a position to act on recommendations.

All three employment equity committees (the Visible Minorities Champions and Chairs Committee, the Persons with Disabilities Champions and Chairs Committee and the Champions and Chairs Circle for Aboriginal Peoples) have established priorities and are evaluating progress and activities to address employment equity issues.

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With respect to Recommendation #1 (monitoring and evaluation of employment equity goals), the Committee made several recommendations regarding better tracking and making more employment equity-related data and information available to the public, including through the Secretariat's annual report on *Employment Equity in the Public Service of Canada*.

The Government of Canada currently produces and tracks a significant amount of data related to employment equity, both for public use and for internal management purposes. Information on programs, activities and best practices related to employment equity is also shared by the Secretariat and other organizations through internal and external online platforms.

For example, the federal government is leveraging its internal collaborative technologies and social media platforms (for example, GCForums, GCpedia and GCconnex) for more timely and participatory consultation of employees. These platforms also support the sharing of information and best practices among employees and various employment equity committees.

As part of its ongoing commitment to openness and transparency, the Government commits to sharing enhanced data and information on employment equity through platforms such as the Open Data Portal, the annual report on *Employment Equity in the Public Service of Canada* and the Secretariat's public website.

In particular, the Government will share on the Open Data Portal the employment equity workforce analysis tables that are provided to departments and agencies each year. The Secretariat will also explore opportunities – including with key stakeholders such as the Public Service Commission (PSC), the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC), the Interdepartmental Network on Employment Equity and the Employment Equity Champions and Chairs Committees – to increase the public availability of information on employment equity-related guidance, activities and best practices.

The Committee's first recommendation also addresses areas within the mandates of the PSC and the CHRC. The PSC is an independent entity with a statutory mandate under the *Public Service Employment Act (PSEA)*. The mandate of the PSC is to promote and safeguard merit-based appointments and, in collaboration with other stakeholders, to protect the non-partisan nature of the public service. The PSC includes information on employment equity in the appointment process in its annual report and provides guidance on this subject on its website. Secretariat and PSC officials have discussed the Committee's Report and those portions that implicate the PSC. The PSC will write to the Committee separately to respond to the recommendations related to its mandate.

The CHRC audits employers to ensure compliance with the *Employment Equity Act*. The CHRC monitors programs, policies and legislation affecting designated groups to ensure that their human rights are protected. In addition, the CHRC develops and conducts information programs to promote public understanding of the *Act* and of the role and activities of the Commission. The CHRC has also been consulted in the development of this Government Response. The Secretariat and the CHRC will work together to encourage departments and agencies to share enhanced information online.

With respect to Recommendation #2 (advocacy and employee participation on issues concerning employment equity), the Government agrees with this recommendation in principle. The Government of Canada supports the organization of public service employees to independently raise their concerns, address discrimination and advocate for employment equity. Historically, this organization has been facilitated by the various bargaining agents. The *Employment Equity Act* states that represented employees' bargaining agents are their representatives for employment equity purposes.

With respect to creating an Employment Equity Champions and Chairs Committee for women, it should be noted that women have not chosen to organize as an employment equity group within the federal public service as the other three designated groups have done. Should women in the federal public service decide to bring their collective concerns forward as a group, the Secretariat is receptive to the idea of supporting an Employment Equity Champions and Chairs Committee for this group.

Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the members of the Standing Senate Committee for your important work.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony Clement". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

The Honourable Tony Clement, P.C., M.P.