



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak Calls for Gendered Lens in COVID-19 Economic Response Plan

OTTAWA, ON., Friday, March 27, 2020 – Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak’s (LFMO) is calling for additional resources to ensure that a gendered lens is used in implementing the federal government’s COVID-19 Economic Response Plan.

The Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services, has announced \$305 million will be allocated to Indigenous-specific funding, with \$215 for First Nations; \$45 million for Inuit and \$30 million for Métis, with a remaining \$15 million for regional, urban and off-reserve Indigenous organizations.

President Melanie Omeniho of LFMO stated, “While the Indigenous set-aside is an important announcement that will result in enhanced supports throughout the Métis Nation, we call upon the federal government to consider additional funding to address the impacts of COVID-19 and the resulting economic, health, social and security hardships that will be experienced by Métis women, girls and gender-diverse people”. “We will work with the Métis Nation in ensuring that Métis women’s interests are addressed but the \$15million proposal driven funding to which we are expected to apply, is clearly not sufficient and we are concerned that the process will take too long to navigate”, continued Omeniho.

Métis women’s and girls’ physical, cultural and security needs are not being considered in the development of this funding. In areas with insufficient access to medical care, Métis women risk contracting the virus through the use of public transportation. In households with domestic violence, Métis women in isolation are at increased risk of abuse; while \$50 million has been approved for women’s shelters and sexual abuse centres, rural and remote Métis women have considerably less access to these resources. “While Canada’s initial \$50million plan expressly called for support to Indigenous women, we have not been able to secure any assistance, and we are concerned that the needs and necessary supports of Metis women will be ignored again”, said Omeniho.

Furthermore, Métis women are often caregivers to multiple family members, creating multi-generation households that are compounded by the fact that their school-age children are now home as well. In these cases, and where Métis women are employed in the healthcare field, they risk rapid transmission of COVID-19 to vulnerable family members.

Métis families caring for young infants and babies are experiencing issues in accessing diapers and those who are expecting children are now forced to give birth alone in the hospital.

Additionally, Métis families who rely on school-based meal plans as a source of nutrition for their children no longer have access to this source.

As further conversations take place, LFMO alongside the other representatives of the Métis Nation, hopes to be a guiding voice so that Métis women, girls, and gender-diverse people's realities are considered in any federal response to COVID-19. "We simply must have an inclusive strategy and plan in order to fight one of the greatest threats facing all Canadians including Metis women, families, girls and gender-diverse peoples, we must have the tools and resources to make this happen", concluded Omeniho.

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Media Requests

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