

Prime Minister's remarks on additional support for Indigenous peoples

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Morning everyone.

The first thing I want to talk about today is what we're doing to support Indigenous people during the pandemic.

Since day one, our government has been engaging with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation leaders in the fight against this virus.

We've been listening to people's concerns and working with local leadership to ensure that communities are getting the right support.

And so far, we've taken a number of important steps.

We're investing in emergency shelters to help Indigenous women and children fleeing violence.

We're offering interest-free loans and non-repayable contributions to help Indigenous businesses weather this storm.

We're helping First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation students and recent grads find a job this summer.

And last week, we announced more funding to support the most urgent needs of Indigenous communities dealing with a COVID-19 outbreak.

While all communities have had to wrestle with COVID-19 these past few months, the everyday realities of this crisis are different for everyone.

To mount an effective response to this crisis, we must adapt our approach and our programs to recognize and meet the particular needs of all Indigenous peoples, including those living in urban areas and off reserve.

To this end, we announced \$15 million back in March to support Indigenous organizations that deliver services to these populations as part of the Indigenous Community Support Fund we had set up to help prevent and mitigate the impact of this virus.

With this money, organizations have been able to give meals, groceries, clothing, and supplies to those in need, prevent domestic violence, and offer mental health counselling.

They've also provided personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies for supportive housing, and computers and laptops so kids can keep up with their schoolwork.

This funding is helping vulnerable people like youth, women, and elders.

Indigenous community organizations in our cities and off reserve do crucial work year-round, but these days, their services are in high demand because of the pandemic.

We need to make sure they have the resources to adapt and grow their services, so they can fulfill their important mission.

So today, our government is announcing an additional \$75 million in new funding for organizations that address the critical needs of the over one million Indigenous people living in urban centres and off reserve.

This is critical work.

If you live off reserve or in a city, we're working to make sure you don't fall through the cracks.

You need and deserve services that are culturally appropriate.

And that's what we're doing with today's investment.

I would now like to address employers and business owners.

There is a lot of talk these days about reopening the economy, which is good news for everyone.

But if you had to slow down or stop operations over the past few months, opening up again will also present a number of challenges.

So we are putting measures in place to support you.

If you need help rehiring your employees, you can use the Canada Emergency Wage subsidy. We have just extended the program until the end of the summer.

If you are having cash flow problems or if you have expenses to pay, you can apply for a loan through the Canada Emergency Business Account.

And if you are not eligible for either of these programs, I encourage you to contact

your regional development agency. It will be able to help.

We are also working with the provinces, the territories, property owners, and their tenants to reduce small businesses' rent.

Property owners can apply on the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's website as of Monday.

We are all anxious for life to get back to normal. But for that to happen, everyone has to do their part, and employers especially have an important role to play.

When people think of things getting back to normal, one of the first things they think of is getting back to work.

Regaining some financial stability. Seeing their friends and colleagues again. Getting back into a routine.

Your employees are counting on you. And so is your community.

So, if you need help, but you don't know where to start—visit the COVID-19 page at Canada.ca.

There, you will find information on all the programs available to you and how to get some help.

Our government is here for you.

We're already getting ready to restart the economy, and I know that, together, we will come back strong at the end of this crisis.

As we gradually and carefully restart some activities, it's never been more important to follow public health instructions.

COVID-19 remains a very serious health threat.

Yesterday, Dr. Tam said that whenever physical distancing is not possible, Canadians should wear a non-medical mask or face covering when they go out.

I want to remind everyone that physical distancing means keeping a two-metre distance with others.

As we start to reopen the economy, it might be more difficult to maintain that distance at all times, so please follow Dr. Tam's advice.

Keep washing your hands, stay home, and if you need to, wear a mask.

This is the best way to protect both yourself and others.

I want to end today with a piece of good news.

Today, more than 230 new officers are graduating from the Royal Military College of Canada.

They are part of a new generation of exceptional women and men ready to serve our country with distinction.

You have chosen to step up and serve your country and we could not be more proud of you.

Thank you for your example.

Thank you for your dedication.

Thank you for your love of this extraordinary country.

And mostly, thank you for everything you will do for us in the coming years.

Congratulations to the class of 2020.

Thank you.