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Archived - September 2016 Mandate letter: Anti-Racism Directorate

Premier's instructions to the Minister on priorities.



September 23, 2016

The Honourable Michael Coteau
Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism
Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate
56 Wellesley Street West, 14th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
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Dear Minister Coteau:

Welcome back to your role as Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism. As we mark the mid-point of our mandate, we have a strong and new Cabinet, and are poised to redouble our efforts to deliver on our top priority — creating jobs and growth. Guided by our balanced plan to build Ontario up for everyone, we will continue to work together to deliver real benefits and more inclusive growth that will help people in their everyday lives.

We embark on this important part of our mandate knowing that our four-part economic plan is working — we are making the largest investment in public infrastructure in Ontario's history, making postsecondary education more affordable and accessible, leading the transition to a low-carbon economy and the fight against climate change, and building retirement security for workers.

Building on our ambitious and activist agenda, and with a focus on implementing our economic plan, we will continue to forge partnerships with businesses, educators, labour, communities, the not-for-profit sector and with

all Ontarians to foster economic growth and to make a genuine, positive difference in people's lives. Collaboration and active listening remain at the heart of the work we undertake on behalf of the people of Ontario — these are values that ensure a common purpose, stimulate positive change and help achieve desired outcomes. With this in mind, I ask that you work closely with your Cabinet colleagues to deliver positive results on initiatives that cut across several ministries, such as our Climate Change Action Plan, Business Growth Initiative, and the Highly Skilled Workforce Strategy. I also ask you to collaborate with the Minister Responsible for Digital Government to drive digital transformation across government and modernize public service delivery.

We have made tangible progress and we have achieved the following key results:

- Established relationships with partners in the anti-racism community and worked to develop strong, productive relationships.
- Began a series of public meetings across the province to receive feedback and ideas needed to inform the government's anti-racism work.
- In collaboration with the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, announced the government's commitment to engage with Indigenous communities on the development of an Indigenous focused Anti-Racism Strategy that fights racism against Indigenous people throughout Ontario, as part of Ontario's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report.
- Hosted the second annual pan-Canadian Black Government Leaders Summit, which brought together federal and provincial Black legislators from across the country to discuss shared policy and systemic racism issues impacting Black Canadians.

Your mandate is to work to address racism in all its forms, with a focus on systemic racism, and ensure that everyone in Ontario has the opportunity to fulfill their potential and participate equally in society. Your specific priorities include:

Developing a Cross-Government Approach to Combat Systemic Racism Including, but Not Limited to, Indigenous Racism, Anti-Black Racism and Islamophobia

- Ensuring that the development of the cross-government approach, and all work that the directorate does, is informed through engagement with anti-racism leaders, experts, and community partners.
- Working with the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation to develop and implement an Indigenous focused Anti-Racism Strategy, as announced in Ontario's action plan to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Report.
- Developing and operationalizing a Racial Equity Impact Assessment Tool through which the directorate can work with and advise government on how to effectively assess legislation, policies, programs and services in terms of impact on racialized communities.
- Working with other ministers to provide an anti-racism perspective that will inform policies and programs, particularly in key sectors such as justice, children and youth services, education and immigration.

Providing Anti-Racism Leadership and Expertise Focused on Systemic Issues, in Collaboration with Ontario Government Partners, the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the Community and Business Organizations

- In your capacity as Minister of Children and Youth Services, engaging the Anti-Racism Directorate's expertise on the outcomes of the disaggregated data feasibility study and pilots (the collection of demographic data), as well as recommendations on broader government-wide implementation strategies.

- As committed to in spring 2016, assisting the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services in the selection of an independent reviewer to complete a review of the regulation prohibiting the arbitrary collection of identifying information by police within two years of the full regulation coming into force, and in the launch of a multi-year academic study to better understand the impact on community safety of collecting identifying information through police interactions.
- Assisting the Attorney General in developing the government's response to the forthcoming Tulloch review. The review is expected to be completed in March 2017 and will provide recommendations on enhancing transparency and accountability in the province's police oversight bodies.
- Leading and participating in a range of government initiatives focused on anti-racism, including hosting an Anti-Racism Directorate Conference.
- Developing and issuing an annual report which highlights efforts within the government and the broader community towards reaching racial equity as well as perceptions of inclusion, tolerance and community safety among racialized communities.

Increasing Public Education and Awareness of Racism to Create a More Inclusive Province

- Developing an ongoing communications and outreach framework, including public education, to raise awareness of racism and advance anti-racism and inclusion in Ontario.
- Working with the Minister Responsible for Digital Government to develop a digital presence and digital outreach strategies to share leading anti-racism information with partner organizations, other levels of government, academic and business organizations.

In addition to the priority activities above, I ask that you also deliver results for Ontarians by driving progress in the following areas:

- Work to ensure the sustainable governance and organizational capacity of the directorate to ensure government continues to fight racism in all its forms over the long-term.
- Support other ministers in ensuring effective engagement with Indigenous and racialized communities.
- Continue to advance the federal-provincial-territorial Black Government Leaders' priorities.

As you know, taking action on the recommendations contained in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report is a priority for our government. That is why we released *The Journey Together*, a document that serves as a blueprint for making our government's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples a reality. As we move forward with the implementation of the report, I ask you and your fellow Cabinet members to work together, in co-operation with our Indigenous partners, to help achieve real and measurable change for Indigenous communities.

Having made significant progress over the past year in implementing our community hubs strategy, I encourage you and your Cabinet colleagues to ensure that the Premier's Special Advisor on Community Hubs and the Community Hubs Secretariat, at the Ministry of Infrastructure, are given the support they need to continue their vital cross-government work aimed at making better use of public properties, encouraging multi-use spaces and helping communities create financially sustainable hub models.

Responsible fiscal management remains an overarching priority for our government — a priority echoed strongly in our 2016 Budget. Thanks to our disciplined approach to the province's finances over the past two years, we are on track to balance the budget next year, in 2017–18, which will also lower the province's debt-to-GDP ratio. Yet this is not the moment to rest on our past accomplishments: it is essential that we work collaboratively across every sector of government to support evidence-based decision-making to ensure programs and services are effective, efficient and sustainable, in order to balance the budget by 2017–18, maintain balance in 2018–19, and position the province for longer-term fiscal sustainability.

Marathon runners will tell you that an event's halfway mark is an opportunity to reflect on progress made — but they will also tell you that it is the ideal moment to concentrate more intently and to move decisively forward. At this halfway mark of this government's mandate, I encourage you to build on the momentum that we have successfully achieved over the past two years, to work in tandem with your fellow ministers to advance our economic plan and to ensure that Ontario remains a great place to live, work and raise a family.

I look forward to working together with you to build opportunity and prosperity for all Ontarians.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Wynne
Premier

Updated: August 9, 2019

Published: September 23, 2016

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