



Office of the Grand Chief Nishnawbe Aski Nation

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May 31, 2019

Ms. Leilani Farha
Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Dear Ms. Farha,

RE: CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS: THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) represents 49 First Nations across Treaty 9 and Treaty 5 areas in northern Ontario, Canada. In 2014, the NAN Chiefs declared a collective housing emergency that described what their First Nations were facing: deplorable conditions, shortages, limited housing lifespans, overcrowding, extreme mould growth and others. Again in 2018, the Chiefs reiterated their concerns by endorsing the development of a NAN Housing Strategy. For many member First Nations of NAN, the right to adequate housing is currently not being met and the existing standard of housing has profound impacts on people's physical, mental and emotional health.

Enclosed is an overview of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Housing Strategy and the *Nishnawbe Aski Nation response to the First Nations National Housing and Infrastructure Strategy* developed and created in partnership with Together Design Lab at Ryerson University.

The NAN Housing Strategy, which began in Fall 2018, is a three-year project creating occupant-focused housing assessments, determining localized housing need, and developing housing action plans and solutions at the community and regional level. Centred around First Nation knowledge and lived experience, the Strategy will support and advocate for First Nation self-determination in the planning, governance and design of housing systems. The NAN Housing Strategy will support First Nations' Right to self-determination in housing systems by working at the community and regional level developing solutions and action plans that recognize the unique need, geographies, and culture of First Nations.

The *Nishnawbe Aski Nation response to the First Nations National Housing and Infrastructure Strategy* outlines the need to move beyond creating stop-gap solutions for housing and community infrastructure and strive for occupant-focused, community-led housing systems. NAN communities require housing and infrastructure solutions that are supportive of individual and community wellness. The response to the *First Nations National Housing and Infrastructure Strategy*, co-authored with Together Design Lab at Ryerson University, is structured into six issue areas:

- Governance and Planning
- Funding Structures
- Inclusive Housing Systems
- Design and Materials
- Capacity Development and Training
- Infrastructure

The response explores the related housing issues, potential solutions with recommendations and a case study to demonstrate how the ideas presented are possible in action. Supporting the paper are statements from the NAN Women's Council, Oshkaatisak Council (the NAN Youth Council), NAN Health Transformation team and Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority on the importance of addressing housing and its impacts on physical and mental health, safety and well-being.

We look forward to your report reaffirming the right of Indigenous peoples to adequate housing globally.

Sincerely,

NISHNAWBE ASKI NATION

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Fiddler', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler