



National Secretariat Against Hate and Racism in Canada **(NSAHRC)**

Minutes of Meeting **March 6, 2005**

Present : Dianne Corbiere, Germaine Langan, Soni Dasmohapatra, Ruby Dhand, Karen Mock, Patrick Case, Avvy Go, Michael Kerr, Don McIntyre, Vanessa Yu, Liz Panighal

Regrets : Ellen Gabriel, Kim Pickard, Fo Niemi, Zahra Binbrek, Mannie Dick, Margaret Froh

1) Minutes of the Previous Meeting :

The minutes of the January 28, 2005 meeting were approved

2) IBA Issues for NSAHRC Consideration :

Dianne reported on the discussions within the IBA and the Indigenous Peoples Councils regarding the IBA's relationship with the NSAHRC. The following points were raised :

- It was good to see anti-racist activists interested in collaborating with Aboriginal peoples and taking direction from Aboriginal leadership. This is a unique opportunity which must be developed;
- In keeping with the above, the title for the group may need to be reconsidered. Perhaps it would be best to choose one based on Aboriginal language and custom. It would also be good to phrase in a forward-looking, visionary way to consider future generations;
- There is a need for the NSAHRC to look at concerns regarding Aboriginal governance, particularly in terms of human rights and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. First Nations have substantively different views of these approaches to equality that will likely differ from anti-racist activists. The NSAHRC may wish to work with Aboriginal leaders in educating the public about these differences and why they are important;
- Canada accepts many new immigrants each year and Aboriginal peoples do not know what these individuals learn about First Nations peoples, concerns,

histories, etc. The NSAHRC may wish to consider this as well, particularly respecting how First Nations might influence immigration policy and immigrant/refugee education.

NSAHRC members welcomed these comments. Several responses were offered to these suggestions

- i. The issue of immigration was raised at the 2004 conference in Montreal. Perhaps it is time to advocate that First Nations have a say in immigration legislation and policy. Right now the Federal government either has or is negotiating arrangements for immigrant and refugee settlement with provinces and territories. Should this not also be happening with First Nations?;
- ii. It would be a good idea for NSAHRC to coordinate meeting between IBA and Canadian Council on Refugees to discuss the above;
- iii. For other issues, the NSAHRC will discuss at its next meetings;
- iv. The NSAHRC should seek regular updates from the IBA at the start of its meetings so as to ensure it is focused on issues of concern to Aboriginal peoples;
- v. Regarding the potential change of name, the IBA should consider the message it wants sent through the NSAHRC and then some discussion on naming can occur

Actions Required : (1) The IBA wil update the NSAHRC at the start of each meeting on priority issues facing Aboriginal peoples; (2) NSAHRC will consider at future meetings how best to coordinate collaborative activities between Aboriginal leadership and anti-racist organizations; (3) The IBA will consider the issue of changing the organizations name and bring this to the NSAHRC. In the meantime, the NSAHRC will be referred to as a working title.

3) Advocacy on Appointment of Aboriginal Judges

The IBA has met with Justice Minister Cotler to express its position on this matter. The NSAHRC letter on this has been forwarded to the Justice Minister as well. The Minister was invited to the NSAHRC March 6 meeting but indicated he was unable to attend. Effort will be made to have him attend a future meeting.

Activities of members include the following :

- The CRRF will bring this to their Aboriginal Advisory Committee and then to its Board of Directors;
- CCNC has approved the NSAHRC direction and will forward a letter on this to the Justice Minister;
- NARCC has approved and will be discussing how to address this in action with its members at its meeting in early April;
- The Student Commission is in the same position as it was at the previous meeting;
- CASSA is supportive and will forward a letter to the Justice Minister.

Charles will provide the letter sent by the NSAHRC to all members to use as a template for their own organization's letter to the Justice Minister. It was suggested that members ensure letters are sent to their local MPs. It was also suggested that the NSAHRC needs to consider the ongoing public education work needed to address this issue in the long-term.

Action Required : (1) All organizations will report at the next meeting on the status of actions taken; (2) Charles will circulate the template letter to all organizations; and (3) NSAHRC will consider at its next meeting what it can do to educate the public on this matter.

4) Advocacy on Racial Profiling and Race-Based Discrimination in Education

Members agreed to table discussion on these two positions to future meetings. It was felt that the NSAHRC needs to focus on advocacy regarding the appointment of Aboriginal judges. This can then be reviewed and used as a model for future advocacy work.

5) IBA Leadership and NSAHRC:

As a follow-up to the discussion in Item #2, members agreed that the unique purpose of the NSAHRC was that it was an anti-racist coalition led by Aboriginal peoples and putting issues concerning Aboriginal peoples at the forefront of its agenda. In this regard, to further operationalize this, it was agreed that :

- i. The first item on the agenda for all meetings will be an update by the IBA concerning issues it wishes the NSAHRC to consider;
- ii. All meetings will be chaired by the IBA's representative;
- iii. Non-aboriginal members will consider how best to make connections between their organizations and Aboriginal leadership. For example, it would be useful for members to invite IBA representatives to their organizations to discuss issues of concern to Aboriginal peoples and actions being taken by the NSAHRC;
- iv. It is important to build on the structure currently in place and enhance it by the understanding articulated above. In this context, issues concerning Aboriginal peoples will be given priority and linkages to other communities will then be considered. Further, public education regarding these matters is critical to engaging the public on Aboriginal issues, perspectives and history. The networking provided through the NSAHRC membership can be very useful to reaching out to non-Aboriginal communities on these matters.
- v. In the event no IBA representative is present at NSAHRC meetings, no new business will be discussed and members will focus on actions agreed upon to implement NSAHRC positions.

6) Youth Representation

Soni led the discussion on the proposal she had developed. After review and discussion, it was agreed that the IBA will approach the three national Aboriginal organizations to request one youth representative for each organization. Liz suggested that the Student Commission may choose in the future to send one of its youth members to represent it at future meetings.

Action Required : Dianne will invite one youth representative from each of the three national aboriginal organizations. These youth will participate as full members of the NSAHRC.

7) Grant Proposals :

Members reviewed the proposal and agreed with its directions. It was, however, suggested that the proposal be amended based on the discussion in items 2 and 5.

Action Required : (1) Charles will revise the grant proposals. (2) Finalized applications will be sent by Dianne to funders.

8) Federal Budget

Members expressed concern about the lack of detail in the budget concerning the national anti-racism strategy and the provision of support to Aboriginal peoples. It was noted that Aboriginal leaders were concerned on these matters as well; however, there is no official position as yet articulated by the Assembly of First Nations or other national Aboriginal organizations. Given this, it was suggested that the NSAHRC consider this matter at its next meeting.

Action Required : This will be reviewed again at the next meeting.

9) Environmental Scan

The following issues were shared during the environmental scan :

- CCNC is engaged in ongoing action regarding redress in connection with the Chinese head tax;
- The federal government has now announced its national anti-racism strategy. This was discussed above in terms of the federal budget. Details of the strategy should be released soon;
- Access to legal education for Aboriginal peoples and individuals from subordinate racialized groups. Five law schools in Ontario have done an accessibility study and the issue was raised at the recent Chief Justice of Ontario's **4th Colloquium on Professionalism** held at the University of Windsor, Faculty of Law. The IBA has a very keen interest in this issue and will likely be putting it on the NSAHRC's agenda;
- HRSDC has convened consultations on employment equity in various urban centres. It is anticipated that a report will be released on the findings of these consultations;

- The African Canadian Disabilities Association in Winnipeg is engaging in litigation work to address the particular circumstances of their members and those of African descent who face double-jeopardy of race and disability;
- The CRRF will be soon addressing issues related to redress. It will also be e-launching its newsletter ***New Directions*** in the spring with a focus on employment equity;
- NARCC continues its work on its anti-racist analysis tool which will be designed to assist individuals and organizations in deconstructing organizational policies, programs and procedures from an anti-racist perspective;

10) Next Meetings:

✚ ***Friday April 15, 2005 -- 1 – 2 :30 p.m.***

✚ ***Friday May 27, 2005 – 1- 2 :30 p.m.***