



National Secretariat Against Hate and Racism in Canada (NSAHRC)

Position on the Collection of Race-Based Data

In the past few years, the issue of the collection of statistics to identify discrimination, disadvantage and inequality on the basis of Aboriginal and racialized group status has been raised. Whether in education, employment, service delivery and law enforcement, communities, academics, politicians and others have expressed concerns about the importance of gathering, analyzing and using this data to promote legislation, policies and programs aimed at eliminating discrimination and disadvantage as well as enabling members of Aboriginal and racialized communities to achieve equal outcomes in all walks of life.

While the benefits of collecting racial statistics has been advocated quite consistently over the past two decades, there have also been privacy concerns raised about how such data is gathered, secured, used and released in the public domain. Concern has also been raised about who has access to this data and the implications/impact of both collecting and reporting publicly on this data to individuals and communities.

Several reports and model programs on race-based data have been issued and developed. These include the report of the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System, Ontario Human Rights Commission report on racial profiling *Paying the Price*, the ruling of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Tribunal in the Kirk Johnson case, the report of the African Canadian Legal Clinic *Anti-Black Racism in Canada*, the Canadian Bar Association's report on *Racial Equality in the Canadian Legal Profession*, the Toronto Star's series on racial profiling *Singled Out* and *Resolution on Racial Profiling* and the work of the former Toronto School Board's *Every Student Survey*. The Federal government also collects such statistics for the purposes of its employment equity program which covers all Federal departments, agencies and crown corporations and is a requirement for all organizations providing contracted services to the government.

The NSAHRC endorses the responsible collection of race-based data for the purposes of identifying and eliminating discrimination and disadvantage as it affects Aboriginal peoples and racialized groups. In adopting this position, the NSAHRC also promotes the importance of:

- 1) Educating members of the public and political decision-makers on the critical function of this data and how it is used to identify and eliminate discrimination and disadvantage;
- 2) Having institutions undertaking such data collection working with communities and academics to develop common approaches to how the data will be collected, used and reported;
- 3) Having institutions engaged in data collection be accountable to the public in regular forums on their actions to ensure the responsible collection, storage and use of this data, particularly the results in terms of eliminating discrimination and disadvantage.

For further information on this position or the NSAHRC, please contact Charles C. Smith Consulting at charlescsmith@sympatico.ca or (416) 924-3827.