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CANADA

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Chair and Members
Corporate Services Committee

RE: Report of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Board of Directors Meeting – Whistler, BC, March 13 – 17, 2017

SUMMARY

The FCM Board of Directors met in Whistler, BC, from March 14-17. Board members spent four days addressing vital national issues playing out at the local level as well as the increasingly central role municipal leaders are playing in shaping the national agenda. Below is a brief summary of the key meeting highlights, which you can relay to your council.

The meeting occurred just one week before Federal Budget 2017—a highly-anticipated and potentially watershed moment for the municipal sector. It marked the culmination of two years of unprecedented dialogue between FCM and the federal government in the lead-up to the budget; dialogue that has already yielded historic results for municipalities.

Board members used the occasion to make one final push for key municipal priorities such as public transit, affordable housing, green infrastructure, and thriving rural, northern and remote communities. Board members continued to make the case that Budget 2017 represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build a better Canada by empowering cities and communities. They agreed that, in order for this to happen, the budget would need to include key tools for municipal leaders, namely predictable allocations and reasonable cost-sharing. Board members pointed out that these tools are critical for unlocking local potential to achieve national goals like job creation, economic growth, and sustainability.

The Board also took a number of internal steps to ensure that FCM has a strong organizational foundation to meet future demands. Board members reviewed and approved the 2017-18 corporate plan and budget. They also discussed the importance of recapitalizing the Legal Defense Fund to ensure that FCM is able to continue to defend the legal interests of the municipal sector. Board members adopted a number of resolutions on issues including the new provisions to reduce train idling and on protecting federal facilities in rural communities, such as the IRCC Case Processing Centre in Vegreville, AB.

Looking forward, the Board discussed the importance of remaining focused on the work ahead. The incredible momentum of FCM and the municipal sector—including anticipated gains in Federal Budget 2017—signal a fundamental shift in how orders of government work together. Board members heard how municipal leaders have begun to take their place at the nation-building table. They also heard that this emerging role would require a renewed resolve of the Board to help ensure that the municipal sector remains strong, engaged, and united, with the right tools and resources to deliver results for members.

Finally, on a personal note, I would like to offer my sincere appreciation to Adam Thompson, Manager, Government and External Relations, who provided advice and recommendations throughout the board meeting.

Respectfully submitted by:

Harold Usher
Councillor, Ward 12
FCM Standing Committee Member

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Standing Committee Vice-Chair Marie-Eve Brunet opened the meeting by introducing new committee members and Vice-Chair Lynda Rydholm and offering regrets from Committee Chair Randy Goulden.

Following approval of the agenda and the report of the November 2016 meeting, staff provided an update on FCM's engagement in the development of a legalization framework for marijuana and FCM's analysis of the Task Force's recommendations to government. Committee members discussed the importance of the federal government's role in overseeing product quality and safety and supporting municipalities in their growing role in enforcement, inspections and the remediation of illegal grow operations. Staff also updated members on the advocacy efforts of FCM leadership and staff in the lead up to the next federal budget and the publication of FCM's pre-budget submission, *Seizing the Moment*.

Committee members were then updated on the National Municipal Rail Safety Working Group's engagement on possible funding options for first responder training and equipment. Members emphasized the importance of ensuring first responders, particularly volunteer firefighters, are adequately resourced to respond to dangerous goods incidents in their communities and that shippers and railways remain responsible for providing specialized equipment to first responders. Members also emphasized that Transport Canada must work closely with municipalities as they implement the Emergency Response Task Force's recommendations. The Committee recommended that FCM's Board of Directors adopt a series of recommendations to ensure first responders are better equipped and trained to respond to rail incidents.

Committee members then discussed FCM's participation in the Fifth Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas in Montreal, QC. The Committee also considered three resolutions, including one resolution on changes to the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA) cost-sharing formula, one resolution on medical marijuana grow operations and one resolution on remediation standards for properties used for drug-related properties. Given the critical importance of these issues to municipalities, the Committee recommended that the first two resolutions be adopted. Members deferred the resolution on remediation standards back to staff to clarify the intent of the resolution and conduct additional research on this issue for presentation at the September Board of Directors meeting.

Members also discussed the launch of the Big City Mayors' Opioid Task Force and FCM's engagement with federal counterparts to ensure municipalities are adequately resourced to respond to the growing opioid crisis in cities and communities. Members expressed the need for FCM to work with the federal government to ensure first responders across Canada are equipped to respond to overdoses.

Committee members then reviewed proposed changes to the Committee's Policy Statement that better reflect current policy and advocacy priorities. In particular, amendments were made to better reflect FCM's position on Phase 2. Staff also committed to further refining the Policy Statement in the coming year to better align it with the Committee's ongoing advocacy work. It was stressed that FCM should make references to all local governments in public documents and government submissions.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for adoption:

1. Direct staff to continue FCM's engagement with the federal government to:
 - a. Work with provinces, territories and industry partners to identify and provide the necessary resources to ensure first responders can access operational and specialized training adapted to their local needs and realities, if necessary;
 - b. Ensure municipal perspectives are considered in the evaluation and continuous improvement of the Emergency Response Assistance Plan program, including amendments to Part 7 of the Transportation of Dangerous Goods regulations;
 - c. Work with shippers and carriers to improve access for first responders, particularly volunteer departments in small and remote communities, to participate in response exercises and specialized training programs and facilities to improve emergency preparedness and to test and evaluate the effectiveness of the Emergency Response Assistance Plan program; and
 - d. Continue working with FCM to improve awareness and outreach efforts with municipalities to improve understanding of the resources available to them during incidents involving dangerous goods.
2. Adopt the policy statement, as amended.

The Standing Committee recommends this report be received.

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON MUNICIPAL FINANCE AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL ARRANGEMENTS

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Committee Chair Sav Dhaliwal opened the meeting by welcoming committee members to Whistler, introducing Vice-Chair Sandra Desmeules and Vice-Chair Doug Dobrowolski.

Following approval of the agenda and the report of the November 2016 meeting, members were updated on FCM's overall advocacy efforts around the 2017 federal budget, and discussed strategic priorities and opportunities for the upcoming fiscal year.

The Committee was then provided with an update on the status of the Canada Infrastructure Bank. FCM has been supportive of a well-designed infrastructure bank concept that could help municipalities maximize their existing borrowing capacity. FCM is working to ensure that the financing available through the bank not replace infrastructure funding, that using an infrastructure bank remain the choice of local governments, and that municipalities be a key part of the discussions on its design. The Committee heard that FCM has retained the International Institute for Sustainable Development for technical input on international examples and key design considerations for the bank to support municipal projects.

Staff then provided the Committee with an update on the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). The agreement has been signed and is now in the process of being ratified. Members discussed what the implementation of CETA would look like and implications for municipalities. The Committee indicated that it remains concerned about the implications of the agreement on municipal procurement and servicing obligations for municipalities. Additional information will be provided to the committee as implementation progresses.

The Committee then heard about a decision made by the Supreme Court in *Windsor v. Canadian Transit Company*, a dispute between the City of Windsor and the federally regulated corporation that operates the international bridge crossing between Windsor and Detroit. The dispute was over the application of municipal bylaws to the derelict condition of more than 100 properties expropriated to make way for a future crossing. The court ruled in favour of the City of Windsor, indicating that issues relating to the application of municipal bylaws to federal undertakings should be decided by the Superior Courts of each province, not by the Federal Court of Canada. Staff expressed FCM's support for this decision.

Members then reviewed and discussed proposed changes to the committee's policy statement, which are intended to better reflect current policy and advocacy priorities.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation for adoption:

1. Adopt the policy statement, as presented.

The Standing Committee recommends that this report be received.

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Committee Chair Pauline Quinlan opened the meeting by welcoming the committee to Whistler, and introducing Vice-Chairs Paul Pirri and Edgar Rouleau.

Following approval of the agenda and the report of the November 2016 meeting, staff updated members on the advocacy efforts of FCM leadership and staff in the lead up to the next federal budget and the publication of FCM's pre-budget submission, *Seizing the Moment*.

The Committee then discussed recommended components for a submission by FCM to the National Energy Board (NEB) Modernization Review Expert Panel, which are based on the work of FCM's National Energy Infrastructure Task Force. The Committee heard that the recommendations focus on how the NEB public hearing process could be reformed to give local government a greater voice, and how municipal interests could be adequately considered in the construction, operation and decommissioning of federally-regulated energy transportation infrastructure. The Committee proposed two changes to the recommendations. First, the Committee adopted a motion to add the words "so that hearing timelines are determined prior to the beginning of a hearing on a project by project basis" to recommendation #11. Second, the Committee adopted a motion to add the following recommendation:

Demonstrate the commitment to enacting the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the NEB Modernization process, including that the process put in place for the review, approval and compliance verification process contributes to reconciliation efforts with indigenous peoples. Staff then provided an update to the Committee on the legislative review of the *Fisheries Act*. Members discussed five proposed recommendations to the federal government pursuant to this review, which expand on the submission that FCM made to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans in November 2016. Members approved the recommendations, and directed staff to engage in the second phase of the *Fisheries Act* consultation process, including responding to legislative options being considered by the government prior to the tabling of the new legislation. During the discussion it was noted that the Harmful Alteration, Disruption and Destruction (HADD) provision should not apply to the replacement of existing municipal infrastructure, and that it will be important to set an appropriately high threshold for how "low-risk" projects are defined.

A brief update on the Green Municipal Fund (GMF) and the new [Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program \(MCIP\)](#) was delivered by GMF Council Chair Councillor Ben Henderson.

As well, Councillors Brian Pincott and Bob Long provided an update on the work of the National Zero Waste Council.

Members discussed two resolutions, and then reviewed and discussed proposed changes to the committee's policy statement, which are intended to better reflect current policy and advocacy priorities.

The Committee also discussed the issue of Asian Carp, which are an aquatic invasive species recently identified in Quebec waterways. Members agreed to share information and best practices about this serious issue.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for adoption:

1. Approve the recommendations for the National Energy Board (NEB) Modernization Expert Panel contained in Annex A of the Standing Committee on Environmental Issues and Sustainable Development agenda package, as well the additional recommendation and amendment to recommendation #11 noted in this report,
 2. Approve the following five recommendations, which are in addition to the recommendations made to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans in November 2016, in order to inform FCM's advocacy to the federal government during Phase 2 of the Fisheries Act review:
 - a. Increase federal resources to ensure that applications are reviewed and processed as quickly as possible and include proper science-based assessments;
 - b. Look for ways to improve the efficiency and efficacy of compliance, for instance by establishing a public database of affected water bodies and projects that are seeking and have received approval under the Act;
 - c. Seek to restore the former Harmful Alteration, Disruption or Destruction (HADD) provision in a way that will adequately protect fish and fish habitat without unnecessarily applying to low-risk municipal infrastructure and in water bodies that do not constitute fish habitat.
 - d. Clarify the application of the Act to wastewater discharges and establish clear authorization mechanisms for routine maintenance and repair works.
 - e. Work with FCM to find an alternative to requiring financial instruments as a means of binding.
3. Direct staff to engage in the second phase of the Fisheries Act consultation process and respond to any legislative options being considered by the government prior to the tabling of new legislation.
4. Adopt the policy statement, as amended.

The Standing Committee recommends this report be received.

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE NORTHERN AND REMOTE FORUM

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Forum Chair Diana Rogerson opened the meeting by welcoming Forum members to Whistler, and introducing Vice-Chair Charles Furlong.

Following approval of the agenda and the report of the November 2016 meeting, staff updated members on the advocacy efforts of FCM leadership and staff in the lead up to the Budget 2017 and the publication of FCM's pre-budget submission, *Seizing the Moment*. Discussion focused on areas with the most interest to northern and remote communities, including the Rural and Northern Communities Fund, the Green Infrastructure Fund, and a northern carve out from the Trade and Transportation Fund.

Staff then provided detailed analysis to the Forum on funding programs for northern and remote broadband, including an update on FCM's engagement with the Ministry of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development to ensure that the needs of rural municipalities are considered in the roll out of the new \$500-million *Connect to Innovate* program.

The historic Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) universal service objective announcement was also discussed. Staff noted that the CRTC will be starting a public engagement process on the design of the new \$750 million broadband infrastructure funding. This process will include discussions regarding the eligibility and assessment criteria, eligible costs, governance, accountability and jurisdictional responsibilities. Forum members discussed their different experiences with broadband funding programs and highlighted a range of issues that they would like to see raised during the consultation process.

Following, the Forum received a presentation from Curtis Shaw, Vice President of Consumer Markets at Northwestel, on Future Challenges and Opportunities for Northern and Remote Broadband in Canada. The presentation garnered discussion about the various business models and technologies that could be used to improve broadband service in northern and remote communities, with particular emphasis on reducing redundancy, improving internet speeds and affordability.

Members then reviewed and discussed proposed changes to the Forum's policy statement, which were intended to better reflect current policy and advocacy priorities. An addition was made to better reflect the importance of addressing mental health issues as part of an overall effort to improve community wellbeing, consistent with existing policy.

Also discussed was the transition to renewable energy in northern and remote communities. Staff highlighted a \$10.7 million program run by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) called Northern REACHE designed to help northern communities transition from diesel power generation to renewable energy. FCM staff noted that they will follow-up with INAC officials regarding questions raised by Forum members regarding this program.

Finally, staff presented a brief analysis of a recently released Senate report on Inuit housing entitled *We Can Do Better: Housing in Inuit Nunangat*. The Forum discussed some key aspects of the report including the high cost of servicing land in order to develop new housing, the need for a long-term northern housing funding strategy and to have a northern-specific component included in the federal government's Northern Housing Strategy.

FORUM RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation for adoption:

1. Adopt the policy statement, as amended.

The Forum recommends this report be received.

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Committee Chair Brian Pincott opened the meeting by welcoming the committee to Whistler, and introducing Vice-Chairs Councillor Pam McConnell and Councillor Tom Taggart

Following approval of the agenda and the report of the November 2016 meeting, staff updated Committee members on the advocacy efforts of FCM leadership and staff in the lead up to the 2017 federal budget and the publication of FCM's pre-budget submission, *Seizing the Moment*.

While more detail on these items are anticipated in the forthcoming budget, Committee members were provided a status update on the federal government's commitment to develop a National Housing Strategy (NHS) and to renew the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. The Homelessness Partnering Strategy was also discussed in the context of the NHS.

An extensive conversation on the recommended components of a submission from FCM to the federal government's poverty reduction strategy consultation process then took place. The Committee agreed with the recommended components, which reflect both existing FCM positions that relate to poverty reduction, as well as new positions. Access to appropriate telecommunications per existing FCM policy was included as an additional recommendation.

In the context of the recommended components, members raised issues which will be incorporated into the narrative of the poverty reduction strategy submission, including, but not limited to, food security issues, gender-based analysis, mental health, reconciliation and the need for the federal strategy to not focus only on poverty alleviation. The Committee requested that the submission emphasize the need for the federal government to act urgently, broadly define poverty, include lived-experience perspectives and distinctly consider the rural and remote context of poverty. The Committee agreed to review a draft of the submission before it is finalized.

Members also directed staff to seek opportunities to engage with the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development on the poverty reduction strategy beyond the online consultation opportunity. A brief update on the two FCM programs focused on municipal – First Nation partnerships, the [Community Economic Development Initiative \(CEDI\)](#) and the [Community Infrastructure Partnership Project \(CIPP\)](#), was also provided.

The Committee discussed the federal government's plans to develop accessibility legislation. They reviewed a copy of a letter sent from the FCM President to the Honourable Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, on this issue, based on the recommendation of the Committee from its November 2016 meeting.

A brief conversation regarding the settlement of Syrian refugees took place, along with issues faced by refugees more broadly, including in rural communities and as it relates to retention.

Urban Aboriginal Working Group Chair Councillor Ben Henderson provided a summary of items discussed at the meeting of the Working Group, and encouraged all Board and Committee members to participate in the Working Group.

Members discussed one resolution, and then discussed proposed changes to the committee's policy statement, which are intended to better reflect current policy and advocacy priorities. They recommended additions to the policy statement, focused on housing and poverty, both of which reflect existing policy. Finally, the committee learned about the employment impacts of the planned closure of the federal Case Processing Centre in Vegreville, Alberta.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for adoption:

- 1) Approve a submission to the consultation process being led by the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development pursuant to the development of a Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy detailing existing FCM policy on affordable housing, homelessness, the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, child care, income supports, access to appropriate telecommunications and transit as it relates to poverty reduction, and including the following recommendations not currently reflected in FCM policy:
 - a. Ensure municipal representation on the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Poverty;
 - b. Distinctly support the housing needs of newcomers to Canada, especially government-assisted refugees;
 - c. Ensure a poverty reduction strategy that aligns with the federal government's planned accessibility legislation, including components which particularly impact services and supports accessed by low-income Canadians living with a disability;
 - d. Monitor the impact of increased benefits under Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement to address efficacy at reducing poverty among seniors, and consider enhancements if needed;
 - e. Through FCM, engage municipalities to understand current constraints around transit accessibility for Canadians living in poverty, and options to improve access through federal-municipal partnership;
 - f. Through FCM, formally engage the municipal sector alongside provincial/territorial governments in the development, implementation and evaluation of the Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy;
- 2) Direct staff to seek out opportunities beyond the online consultation to engage with the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development to ensure municipal considerations are appropriately reflected in the planned Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy;
- 3) Adopt the policy statement as amended.

The Standing Committee recommends this report be received.

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION POLICY

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Committee Chair Bob Long opened the meeting by welcoming committee members to Whistler, B.C., and introducing Vice-Chair Anne Marie Gillis and Vice-Chair David Price.

Following approval of the agenda and the report of the November 2016 meeting, members were updated on FCM's overall advocacy efforts around the 2017 federal budget, and discussed strategic priorities and opportunities for the upcoming fiscal year.

The committee then heard a presentation on Phase 2 Asset Management and Data Collection Strategy, in which staff updated members on FCM's engagement with Infrastructure Canada and Statistics Canada to ensure that the municipal perspective is included in the design of a national core public infrastructure survey, as well as on efforts to work with Infrastructure Canada to help align various asset management-related initiatives, including FCM's Municipal Asset Management Program. Committee members provided feedback on the proposed design of the national core public survey, particularly the need to ensure its methodology recognizes the diversity of local governments across Canada. Third Vice-President Bill Karsten then provided an update on the activities and current status of FCM's Municipal Asset Management Program (MAMP), including an overview of upcoming activities and how the program will benefit communities of all sizes. Committee members emphasized that the MAMP program should complement provincial and territorial asset management initiatives.

The committee then received an update on the advocacy efforts of FCM leadership and staff since the last committee meeting. Staff outlined developments in key policy areas of interest to the Committee, including Municipal Rights-of-Way – Calgary's Bylaw, and Transport Canada Policy and Regulatory Initiatives.

Staff also provided an update on the development of FCM's submission for the upcoming Railway Safety Act Review. Committee members discussed the consultation process underway, as well as the key issues and general direction that FCM will adopt for its submission once the RSA Review is officially underway. Committee members gave their feedback to staff to refine the list of key issues and approach that will eventually be presented to the Executive Committee for approval. Members highlighted the need to recognize the impact of crossing closures on municipalities and possible technologies to address traffic congestion at blocked crossings.

The committee considered three resolutions on issues including train idling, federally governed marina lease rates, and high speed internet. The Committee agreed with recommendations to categorize the former "Category A – concurrence" and "Category B – not within municipal jurisdiction" respectively. The resolution on high speed internet was referred back to staff for further analysis.

Members then reviewed and discussed proposed changes to the committee's policy statement, which are intended to better reflect current policy and advocacy priorities. An amendment was added to recognize that the implementation of the Emergency Response Task Force's (ERTF) recommendations must be done in close consultation with municipalities.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Standing Committee recommends this report be received.

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE RURAL FORUM

Forum Vice-Chair Al Kemmere opened the meeting by introducing new forum members and Vice-Chair Scott Pearce and offering regrets from Rural Forum Chair Ray Orb.

Following approval of the agenda and the report of the November 2016 meeting, staff updated members on the advocacy efforts of FCM leadership and staff in the lead up to the next federal budget and the publication of the rural companion piece for FCM's pre-budget submission, *Seizing the Moment for Rural Canada*. Members expressed concerns with the design and roll-out of the new Connect to Innovate program and emphasised the need for renewed engagement with the federal government on developing a national strategy to enhance broadband in rural areas. The Forum directed staff to develop new policy on requesting the federal government to develop a national strategy on comprehensive communications in rural areas.

The Forum received an update on rural-specific programming at the annual conference and were presented FCM's proposed approach to a renewed Rural Secretariat and FCM's updated approach to issues related to rural economic development. Building on productive discussions with Parliamentarians at the November 2016 Advocacy Days, Forum members reviewed and approved FCM's proposal for a renewed Rural Secretariat. Members agreed that a renewed Rural Secretariat should support all federal departments and agencies in designing federal policies and programs that meet the diverse range of needs and priorities of rural, remote and northern communities. Members also emphasised the need to build partnerships with stakeholders to develop rural-specific programming for the 2017 Annual Conference and to publish a report discussing "The Next 150 Years of Rural Canada." The Forum's ad-hoc working group will continue to advise FCM staff as they move forward with this work.

The Forum considered two resolutions 1) site selection criteria for federal offices and facilities; and 2) the appointment of a minister responsible for rural areas. Given the critical economic importance of federal facilities to rural communities, members recommended that the first resolution be adopted. The Forum directed FCM to write to the federal government that this resolution was being brought forward at the Annual Conference and to request a moratorium on the closure of the Vegreville Case Processing Centre pending a review as per the resolutions directions. It was later agreed by the full Board of Directors that the timing of passing the resolution on federal facilities was pressing and that it would be passed at the March Board meeting as well as forwarded for consideration by the full membership at the Annual Conference in June as per FCM by-law. The direction to write the federal government before the resolutions was passed at the June Conference was withdrawn and action on the resolution will be taken immediately. The Forum agreed that the second resolution should not be adopted as it does not reflect FCM's proposed policy recommendations for the renewed Rural Secretariat.

Forum members then reviewed proposed changes to the Forum's Policy Statement that better reflect current policy and advocacy priorities. In particular, amendments were made to better reflect FCM's position on Phase 2. Staff also committed to further refining the Policy Statement in the coming year to better align it with the Forum's ongoing advocacy work. Forum members then discussed how the Rural Forum can elevate rural issues in national media coverage, particularly during the 2017 Annual Conference.

FORUM RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for adoption:

1. Direct FCM staff to develop policy on requesting the federal government to develop a national strategy on comprehensive communications in rural communities.
2. Approve the proposed approach to a renewed Rural Secretariat designed to meet the needs of rural municipalities and the following objectives:
 - a. Champion rural issues through an integrated, whole-of-government approach that ensures federal policies and programs reflect rural priorities;
 - b. Develop a practical, accountable policy framework for Rural Canada through the application of a "rural lens" to federal programs and policies. This "rural lens" should reflect fiscal and capacity limitations and sparse populations of rural communities, with the aim of enhancing rural economic development; and
 - c. Provide a forum for rural communities and other stakeholders to support the development of innovative tools and programs to address emerging issues facing rural Canada.
3. Direct staff to work with the ad-hoc rural conference programming working group to:
 - a. Integrate topics relevant to rural communities and rural economic development into the 2017 Annual Conference's rural programming stream;
 - b. Plan a rural-specific plenary session to discuss emerging challenges and opportunities in rural economic development and diversification; and
 - c. Prepare a report on the "Next 150 Years of Rural Canada" to be released at the 2017 Annual Conference if all Census data is available.
4. Adopt the policy statement, as amended.

The Forum recommends this report be received.

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON INCREASING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

The Committee Chair Chris Fonseca, Regional Councillor, Region of Peel, ON, introduced Councillor Darren Hill and Councillor Irene Dawson as the vice-chairs and welcomed committee members and staff. The committee approved the agenda and the minutes from the November 2016 Board of Directors' meeting in Ottawa.

Vice-Chairs Hill and Dawson updated the committee on the priority areas of the committee. The Diverse Voices for Change is now fully running in five municipalities across the country. Workshops are being designed in order to help lift the barriers addressed by the local focus groups and promote women from diverse backgrounds to engage in local politics, with the first workshop being held in Edmonton in April. The committee continues to award annually FCM's Ann MacLean Award, Mayor Andrée P. Boucher Memorial Scholarship and Canadian Women in Municipal Government Scholarships in recognition and support of women's leadership in local government. FCM received 82 applications, which is an increase from previous years, as a result of expanded promotion through social media and members of the committee.

The committee also received updates and exchanged on activities that took place across the country in celebration of International Women's Day, which took place March 8th. FCM promoted the role of women in local government through a series of outreach activities to profile members of its Board of Directors and its international and domestic programs. Councillor Tim Tierney presented an overview of an event hosted by FCM, in partnership with the City of Ottawa and Global Affairs Canada, to celebrate the empowerment of women as economic, social and political agents of change in building inclusive communities.

The committee reviewed the proposed revisions to the committee policy statement. The policy statement was updated to recognize the importance of engaging with a large cross-section of society to ensure all voices are heard. Further, additional language was included to support the aim of FCM's program to achieve gender equality or parity. The policy statement is now reflective of this language and of the aim of the programs to share and replicate the best practices and approaches that have helped to elect women to office at all levels.

In the fall, a survey was sent to the Provincial and Territorial Associations (PTAs) to better understand how the municipal sector has worked to increase women's participation in municipal government. Following the results of the survey, FCM staff prepared a concept note that outlined the objectives of the proposed project, including putting in place and beginning the implementation of a national strategy to overcome systemic barriers faced by women seeking to engage in elected municipal office in Canada. The national strategy will be designed and owned by the municipal sector, comprised of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and 18 provincial and territorial municipal associations (Provincial and Territorial Associations, or PTAs).

The committee signaled to staff their interest in pursuing conversations with Status of Women Canada to explore potential opportunities to move the program forward. To help inform the project, the committee workshop at the annual conference will host an interactive session with delegates to identify the barriers to overcome and the partner organizations who align with this work.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation for referral to staff:

1. The Committee is strongly supporting the development of a project proposal, with the objective to design a national strategy committing to increase women's participation in municipal government in all provinces and territories through a series of tools, approaches, and partnership models available across the country to support these efforts. Mandate staff to engage with Status of Women of Canada to discuss the availability of funding to support such project.

Recommendation for adoption:

1. Adopt the policy statement, as amended.

The Standing Committee recommends that this report be received.

REPORT THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Councillor Garth Frizzell introduced Vice-Chair Councillor Bev Esslinger and welcomed committee members and FCM staff. The committee approved the agenda and the minutes from the November 2016 Board of Directors' meeting in Ottawa.

The Committee received an overview of the work plan of the International Relations Framework for the coming year. FCM will continue to work to strengthen its relationship with Global Affairs Canada to implement its programming and to identify areas of mutual interest for future collaboration through the Joint Working Groups on development cooperation and trade and investment and in discussion with ministerial offices. In addition, FCM will continue to implement five international programs and in the coming months, FCM will continue to celebrate the 30th anniversary of its international cooperation programming; as well as continue to identify opportunities for knowledge exchange and sharing of best practices among FCM's international and domestic programs.

Over the last several months FCM received approval to implement programming in Haiti, Jordan, and South Africa. Programs have started the inception phase and will be completing Program Implementation Plans in the coming months. FCM hopes to support the involvement of partners from these countries at its annual conference. Calls for expression of interest will be circulated to members in the coming months to engage members in these programs.

The Committee received updates on the international programs, including the Haiti-Municipal Cooperation Program (MCP2), the Caribbean Local Economic Development (CARILED) program, the Sustainable and Inclusive Communities of Latin America (CISAL), the Program on Local Economic Development and Democratic Governance (PLEDDG) in Ukraine, and the Partnerships for Municipal Innovation in Local Economic Development (PMI-LED). Later this year, the CARILED program, which aimed to strengthen the capacities of local governments to stimulate sustainable local economic development (LED) through the growth of the micro, small and medium size enterprise (MSME) sub-sector, will come to an end.

As part of the closing activities, the CARILED team is developing knowledge products to disseminate to partners and throughout the region; as well as hosting several high-level events to recognize the contributions of Caribbean and Canadian municipalities and municipal experts to the program. Committee members were also reminded of the Haiti Emergency Fund and the contribution of FCM members to the fund. To date, FCM has collected over \$60,000 from its members, and are currently in discussion with Haitian partners to begin to allocate the funds to areas affected by Hurricane Matthew. Members who donated will be kept informed of the roll-out of the initiatives and allocation of funds.

FCM's Governance, Policy, and Networks Advisor, Elena Pierce, presented an update on the implementation on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Over the last several years, FCM has supported and contributed to advocacy efforts to localize the SDGs and other United Nations frameworks. The presentation provided an overview of the SDGs and outlined opportunities to apply the SDGs to the local context in Canada. FCM will engage a small number of interested Canadian municipalities to build awareness of the SDGs in their communities and to begin to explore mechanisms to adapt the SDGs to their context.

Committee members received an update on the plans to celebrate FCM's 30th anniversary of international cooperation. The celebrations were launched during the Government of Canada's International Development Week at an event, entitled *Building Inclusive Communities*, organized in partnership with Global Affairs Canada and the City of Ottawa. Councillor Tim Tierney hosted the event where participants heard from the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, FCM President Clark Somerville, FCM 2nd Vice-President Sylvie Goneau, Ottawa Councillor Jan Harder, Chair of the Planning Committee, and representatives from civil society and academia. Other activities will be organized from February to November during FCM meetings, including its annual conference, and at the local level.

Councillor Chris Coleman shared a Victoria initiative, led by a civil society group, to place a granite memorial to the 164 Canadian Forces' members lost in the 12 year mission in Afghanistan. He spoke about how Canadians were perceived by other nations involved in the NATO led mission and shared many of the metrics of societal change that were achieved from Canada's mission to Afghanistan.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation for adoption:

1. Adopt the work plan of the International Relations Framework, as presented.

The Standing Committee recommends that this report be received.