October 13, 2017

Hon. Carolyn Bennett
Minister of Crown - Indigenous Relations
and Northern Affairs
Room 173, East Block
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Bennett:

RE: The Exclusion of Métis People from the Federal Government’s Sixties Scoop Settlement

Métis Nation British Columbia (“MNBC”) is dismayed and very disappointed by your government’s continued disrespect and sustained approach to deny Métis people true reconciliation. With the recent announcement of compensation for First Nation and Inuit survivors of the 60s scoop, Métis remain the forgotten people.

A number of our Métis people who were unjustly scooped, faced horrendous abuses while in care—both as foster children and as adoptees. These victims of physical and sexual abuse, and of cultural genocide, were dealt a further blow on October 6th, when they learned of compensation being provided to other Aboriginal peoples.

When our children were taken, it did not matter that they were not “status Indians”, and that same distinction should not matter now. In Saskatchewan where I was born, the government promoted the adoption of Indian and Métis children through what was known as the AIM (Adopt Indian and Métis) initiative. This highlights the institutionalized racism and discrimination our people faced.

Through AIM and similar programs across the Métis homeland, our children were indeed stolen. Through freedom of information requests, MNBC has documentation showing mothers with stable and loving homes were desperately trying to get their children back, only to be denied. Many of our people did not give up the fight, finally being reunited with family as adults, only to learn they were not abandoned, and the abuse suffered was for not. They had siblings who grew up in healthy homes with their parents - a right which our scooped children were vehemently denied.

Much like the impact of Residential Schools, the wounds inflicted by the 60s scoop run deep, and many of our families are scarred by this process. While the 60s scoop is defined by a forty-year period, it continues to be perpetuated by colonial attitudes that permeate the Ministry of Children and Families here in British Columbia to this day.
It is my hope that you will acknowledge all victims of the 60s scoop, and cease to treat Métis as second class Indigenous people. Our children who were stolen deserve the same acknowledgement and compensation as First Nations and Inuit, and we must ensure that these harmful practices finally cease. While the word reconciliation is used often by government to describe the process of righting the wrongs of the past, this is clearly not reconciliatory. These past wrongs must be accounted for, and the continued discrimination must cease.

Sincerely,

Clara Morin Dal Col
President

c.c: The Rt. Hon Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada
Hon. Jane Philpott, Minister of Indigenous Services
Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould, Minister of Justice
MNBC Board of Directors
Board of Governors, Métis National Council