

Toronto, August 9, 2018

Hon. Navdeep Bains, PC, MP
Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister:

We are writing to request your support in obtaining important data about a significant sector of the Canadian economy, a sector of job creators and innovators.

Canada's 167,000 charities and nonprofits employ more than two million people in communities across the country and contribute more than 8% to the national GDP. That is more than both the automotive and retail sectors. However, comprehensive data about the sector is more than a decade old. This means the Government of Canada is making policy decisions about the sector using data generated before the 2008 economic crisis. We cannot imagine a scenario in which important decisions about any other sector are taken in the absence of comprehensive and up-to-date data. It is essential to have current data about charities and nonprofits, especially given the sector's role in helping the government achieve its policy objectives around inclusive innovation and economic growth.

Charities and nonprofits help your department deliver better outcomes. Our contributions to community economic development help individuals and communities adapt to the realities of economic change and disruption. We provide needed skills training and services for women, new immigrants, youth, seniors, and people with disabilities so that all Canadians can participate in the workforce. We create investment opportunities through social finance and new businesses through social enterprise. Our innovations in health, the environment, and social service provision help to ensure that our country is equipped to meet the demands of tomorrow. Our communities are great places to live, work, and play - which helps attract global talent to Canada - because of the work we do in areas like arts and culture, religious observance, and amateur sport.

As you know, Statistics Canada historically collected and disseminated data about the size, scope, financing, and human resources of the charitable and nonprofit sector. They have long been a trusted source for timely, accurate, and relevant data and our sector continues to benefit from much of the data that Statistics Canada collects. The national Census

Program and the General Social Survey, for example, provide much-needed and well-utilized data on a range of social issues important to charities and nonprofits, including poverty, children and youth, and giving and volunteering.

Unfortunately, Statistics Canada no longer collects data about the sector as a whole. The now discontinued Satellite Account of Non-Profit Institutions and Volunteering and the National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations once provided important data regarding the size, scope, health and well-being of the charitable and nonprofit sector.

Over the last year, we have been working with Statistics Canada to begin collecting this information once again. Statistics Canada has recently committed to doing a one-time update of the Satellite Account for Non-Profit Institutions and Volunteering. Although this update has not yet been scheduled, we are encouraged by the renewed interest in our sector and look forward to having the data once again.

We recognize that Statistics Canada rightly has discretion over the data it collects. However, we also believe that your department has a role to play in supporting Statistics Canada in its work by signaling priority areas for data collection and ensuring the agency has sufficient resources to meet the Government's goals.

We are asking you to take action to ensure that statistical information about the charitable and nonprofit sector is prioritized and funded by the Government of Canada and that it becomes a regular and permanent part of Statistic Canada's data program.

Thank you in advance for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bruce MacDonald', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Bruce MacDonald, President & CEO

cc: Mr. Anil Arora
Chief Statistician of Canada

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos, PC, MP
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

Hon. Patty Hajdu, PC, MP
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour

Co-signatories

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Bruce Lawson, President & CEO
The Counselling Foundation of Canada

John Gregory, President
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Rick Hansen Foundation

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