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# MESSAGE

**The Council of the Cree Nation of Chisasibi wishes to deliver the following message to denounce gender-based discrimination, support lateral kindness, and mark International Women's Day:**

"It is both inspiring and uplifting to see such a drastic increase in women taking on leadership roles in entities across Eeyou Istchee – as Managers, Directors, Executives, Commissioners, Councillors, Chiefs, Reverends, Traditional Healers, and much more. Women are courageously making their mark and taking steps to improve our Nations; however, at the same time, we recognize the fight for gender equality remains ongoing and much more work needs to be done to address it.

As *Eeyouch*, we collectively need to encourage, support, and lift women up to consider and keep these positions, because the hesitation and fears of pursuing leadership roles are valid and ever-present. The pressures and risks – sexual harassment, threats, intimidation, verbal and emotional abuse, body shaming, cyberbullying, sexist remarks (we could go on) – are ever-present and common. As *Eeyouch*, this should be unacceptable. The MMIWG epidemic, which impacts and threatens our Nations, should not only force us to take steps in eradicating the abuse *Iskwaau* face, but to treat all Indigenous women with care, dignity, and respect.

After all, women are life-givers. Think of the matriarchs in your family that inspire you: your *kookum*, your mother, your auntie. Think of your daughter, your granddaughter, your niece. As a community, we are raising strong, intelligent, Cree women who will one day bring skills, wisdom, and expertise as leaders to *Eeyou Istchee*. Wouldn't you only wish the best for them as they reach their goals?

Equality can be achieved, but we all have a part to play. Our Youth learn by observing our actions, by listening to our words. Set a good example. Patience, respect, compassion, and forgiveness are values and customs from our Ancestors. Actively practicing those qualities will ensure they live on for generations to come.

In solidarity, we, the Council of the Cree Nation of Chisasibi, collectively denounce gender-based discrimination and lateral violence. Instead, we stand together to encourage lateral kindness. On International Women's Day, we lift up and pray for *Eeyou Iskwaau* as they pursue their unique ambitions and dreams."

**FROM THE COUNCIL OF THE CREE NATION OF CHISASIBI**

Friday, March 8, 2024

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*"Building a strong and vibrant community for Chisasibi Eeyouch, today and aayaanischa."*