

**Speaking Notes
for
The Honourable Ahmed Hussen**

**Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion and Minister
Responsible for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation**

**Standing Committee on Human Resources,
Skills Development, Social Development and the Status
of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA)**

Minister's Mandate Letter

**Ottawa, Ontario
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Mr. Chair,

It's a pleasure to speak to the Committee today.

As the Prime Minister noted in his mandate letter to me, this decade has had an incredibly difficult start. But this is the moment to rebuild a more resilient, inclusive and stronger country for everyone.

Housing has a critical role to play in ensuring that we seize this moment and continue to progressively realize the right to adequate housing.

Unfortunately, the cost of housing continues to escalate at alarming rates. The pandemic has only made matters worse.

The federal government has set out an ambitious agenda to make housing more affordable for everyone in Canada, tackling the issue from every angle that will have an impact.

Our main focus is addressing the severe lack of housing supply in this country, and improving housing outcomes for our most vulnerable populations.

We'll do this by making further investments in programs that are already making a difference through our National Housing Strategy, a 10-year plan, backed by more than \$72 billion in investments, to give more Canadians a place to call home. This includes more funding to the National Housing Co-Investment Fund, and enhancements to the hugely popular Rental Construction Financing Initiative and the Federal Lands Initiative.

These programs to create more housing are working. But we need to free up roadblocks at the municipal level. That's why we'll be launching a Housing Supply Accelerator Fund to increase the housing supply in Canada's large and most rapidly growing urban regions.

It will include financial incentives for incremental new housing units and measures such as upzoning for transit-oriented communities, modernized permitting systems, and more generally fostering a more responsive housing supply to improve housing affordability.

Better coordination within the housing system will also help. Later this month I will be co-hosting a National Housing Supply Summit with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to bring together all orders of government and all sectors.

Boosting supply is crucial. But we will also be tackling other issues impacting housing affordability, including a measure to make it easier for renters to move into homeownership.

I will also be working with the provinces, territories, municipalities and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to develop a Fairness in Real Estate Action Plan. We'll ensure there's more protection and transparency for homebuyers and renters.

Mr. Chair, as I mentioned at the outset, housing can help address other issues that matter to Canadians.

For example, more and more Canadians are feeling the effects of climate emergencies. In the past year, thousands of families were forced to leave their homes due to forest fires, heatwaves and floods. We'll work with Natural Resources Canada to make sure that more Canadians can access loans through the Canada Greener Homes Initiative to retrofit their properties so that they're more resilient to climate change.

Canadians have also said clearly that they want a recovery that leaves no one behind. We know that better housing outcomes can help those most vulnerable.

Through Reaching Home, Canada's Homelessness Strategy, we will continue support communities in across Canada to prevent and reduce chronic homelessness.

Similarly, through the Rapid Housing Initiative, we will continue to create more urgently needed housing for those in precarious housing in the context of the pandemic.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit people face some of the worst housing conditions in the country. We will be working with Indigenous partners to co-develop a Northern, Urban and Rural Indigenous Housing Strategy to complement the National Housing Strategy, as was recommended by this Committee last year.

Finally, in my role as Minister of Diversity and Inclusion, I know just how important an equitable housing system is to creating communities where everyone feels they belong.

Even as we celebrate Black History Month, recent events have made clear that the fight against racism requires vigilance, allyship, and a sustained commitment. This government will continue to combat racism and discrimination in all its forms so we can build a stronger and more inclusive Canada.

We'll be working through the Federal Anti-Racism Secretariat, and departments across the Government, to establish a National Action Plan on Combating Hate, and renewing Canada's Anti-racism strategy.

Mr. Chair, at this point, I'd be happy to take any questions from the Committee.