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MEDIA RELEASE

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Public Legal Education Network Tackling Access to Justice

The Public Legal Education Association of Canada (PLEAC) endorses the urgent call to action in a report that found the country's legal system is too complex, too slow and too expensive.

The report was issued by the Action Committee on Family and Civil Justice, chaired by Supreme Court of Canada judge Thomas Cromwell. The report concludes that the country needs a dramatic culture shift to a legal system that is accessible, responsive and citizen-focused.

PLEAC is a national association of non-profit organizations helping the public understand and access the justice system. "We have long advocated for the need to start with the experiences of the public and to help people deal with legal issues early and in affordable ways" said PLEAC President Terresa Augustine.

At its recent national conference, PLEAC's member organizations agreed to build on the Action Committee's recommendations by being part of collaborative solutions to the challenge of access to justice for Canadians.

The momentous culture shift the Action Committee calls for offers an exciting opportunity to expand the reach of current public legal education and information initiatives and to build new partnerships with legal institutions.

"The commitment of the legal institutions that are part of the Action Committee to accessible legal information and education is a positive step toward addressing people's everyday legal needs," said Sarah McCoubrey, a keynote speaker at the PLEAC conference. "It's time to make major improvements in the way Canadians interact with the justice system."

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