



National Defence

Défense nationale

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APR 27 2022

The Honourable John Williamson
Chair, Standing Committee on Public Accounts
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Williamson,

As requested, National Defence is pleased to present the House Standing Committee on Public Accounts the enclosed status update on the Canadian Armed Forces Retention Strategy, due by April 30, 2022.

Sincerely,

for Bill Matthews

Enclosures: 1

Canada 

**Response to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts'
Report 5, Canadian Army Reserve – National Defence, of the Spring 2016 Reports of the
Auditor General of Canada**

Recommendation 5

That National Defence provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with an interim report on its progress in meeting its action plan's first two milestones by 31 January 2018, and a final report assessing the effectiveness of its retention strategy by 30 September 2019.

On 04 April 2022, the Committee requested that National Defence provide an interim update on the status of the Canadian Armed Forces Retention Strategy by 30 April 2022.

Background

In the spring 2016 report on the Army Reserve, the Auditor General recommended that National Defence design and implement an Army Reserve retention strategy. National Defence agreed with the recommendation and committed to developing and implementing this strategy by September 30, 2019, through a four-stage process: orientation, strategy design, implementation, and validation.

In December 2019, National Defence reported that its decision to expand the scope and scale of the initial Reserve Force retention strategy to include the entirety of the Canadian Armed Forces had resulted in delays. National Defence further noted that it had accomplished phase one of the process (orientation) in March 2019, and was in the process of developing a strategic framework that identified high-level priorities. National Defence stated that it would finalize phase two (strategic design) and have a strategy and implementation plan in place by September 2020, and committed to following up with the Committee by December 31, 2020.

In December 2020, National Defence reported that work on phase two (strategy design) remained in progress and committed to provide the Committee with an update on the finalized strategy design and initial plans for implementation as part of its update in June 2021.

At the time of the last update in June 2021, National Defence reported that it remained on track to release a CAF Retention Strategy and the performance management framework in summer 2021, and that it would provide the Committee with the Strategy once published.

Update on phase two (strategy design)

While National Defence reported in the last update to the Committee that the CAF's Retention Strategy and the performance management framework would be published in summer 2021, the process was delayed to allow for additional consultation time with the Minister of National Defence's Advisory Panel.

Although the Strategy's publication has been delayed, numerous elements of the Strategy, or in support of the Strategy, are currently underway or in development, including:

- **Total Health and Wellness Strategy:** Launched in February 2022, the Total Health and Wellness Strategy is a new philosophy and initiative for National Defence to care for its

people and military families. The goal of the strategy is to improve the Canadian Armed Forces' work environment, better support military families, build resilience through effective health care services, and remove barriers to care.

- **Renewal of the CAF Ethos:** The new 'Trusted to Serve' ethos will include the concept of character, values of inclusion and accountability, expectations of leadership and readiness, as well as an emphasis on trust.
- **Chief, Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC):** CPCC was established in April 2021 to unify, inform, and coordinate culture change efforts across the organization and to ensure professional conduct meets the standards expected of the profession of arms and the Defence Team.

Future updates to the Committee

National Defence will provide the Committee with the Canadian Armed Forces Retention Strategy once published. The first Annual Report, which will include an assessment of the Strategy's effectiveness, will be provided to the Committee in 2023, thereby fulfilling all commitments related to recommendation five in *Report 5, Canadian Army Reserve – National Defence, of the Spring 2016 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada*, and concluding this update to the Committee.