MEDIA RELEASE

New vision calls for justice to be treated as a common good in Canada

OTTAWA, OCTOBER 13, 2026 - Released today, ***Towards Justice as a Common Good*** frames justice as a shared public foundation essential to democratic life, the rule of law and people's well-being. Justice is the foundation that allows us to live safely, resolve conflicts peacefully and live our best lives, free from unjust barriers. Yet many people meet justice only in a crisis, when a relationship breaks down, a home is at risk or their safety is threatened. For too many, justice feels like something that happens to them rather than something that works for them.

More than a decade after its Roadmap for Change recognized a crisis of access to justice in Canada, the Action Committee on Access to Justice is proposing a renewed vision for what comes next.

Justice as a common good means seeing justice not only as help for individuals in crisis, but as a shared system that helps everyone. It includes courts and tribunals, but also the network of community and public supports that help people understand their rights, navigate problems and meet their needs.

> "*The paper invites us to deepen our understanding of the relationship between justice, well-being and community, and to consider what it would take to make justice more accessible, prevention-oriented and focused on the outcomes that matter to people. Seeing justice as a common good invites us to ask how we can support people well before a problem becomes a crisis,*" said the Honourable Andromache Karakatsanis, Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada and Chair of the Action Committee on Access to Justice. "*When people understand their rights and can get help early, they are more likely to keep their homes, protect their families and stay connected to their communities. That is what justice as a common good looks like*."

The paper builds on the shift towards people-centred justice already underway across Canada. From Iqaluit to St. John's to Vancouver, the Action Committee on Access to Justice listened to how communities are meeting people where they are. Its findings range from public libraries becoming access points for legal help, navigators guiding people to the right support, and in the North, community food centres opening conversations about justice.

> "*Research and lived experiences continue to show the wide range and deep impacts of the complex legal needs people experience*," said Trevor Farrow, Dean of Osgoode Hall Law School and co-author of the paper. "*At this time in*

> *history, meaningful access to justice, framed as a common good, has the potential to make a transformational change in the lives and well-being of individuals and communities in Canada*."

At the heart of the vision is a collective responsibility to think boldly and creatively: building and sustaining justice is a shared task.

> "*No single institution can make justice work on its own*," said Justice Karakatsanis. "*Governments, courts, the legal profession, community organizations and the public all have a part to play. This paper is an invitation to act together, so that justice becomes part of people's daily lives and not only a door they knock on in a crisis*."

The Action Committee on Access to Justice invites Canadians to engage with the paper and help shape a living vision through dialogue, collaboration and action.

Read *Towards Justice as a Common Good*: English | French

About the Action Committee on Access to Justice

The Action Committee on Access to Justice brings together leaders from across Canada's justice ecosystem to advance people-centred justice. As a national convener, it connects the courts and tribunals, governments, the legal profession, community organizations, educators and researchers, funders, professionals across sectors and the public to support collaboration, shared learning and collective action.

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