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**AN OVERVIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA'S APPROACH TO LEGALIZE,  
REGULATE AND RESTRICT ACCESS TO CANNABIS**

# An Overview of the Government of Canada's Approach to Legalize, Regulate and Restrict Access to Cannabis

Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD)  
Sixty-Second Regular Session

December 14, 2017



## *I'm here today to provide...*

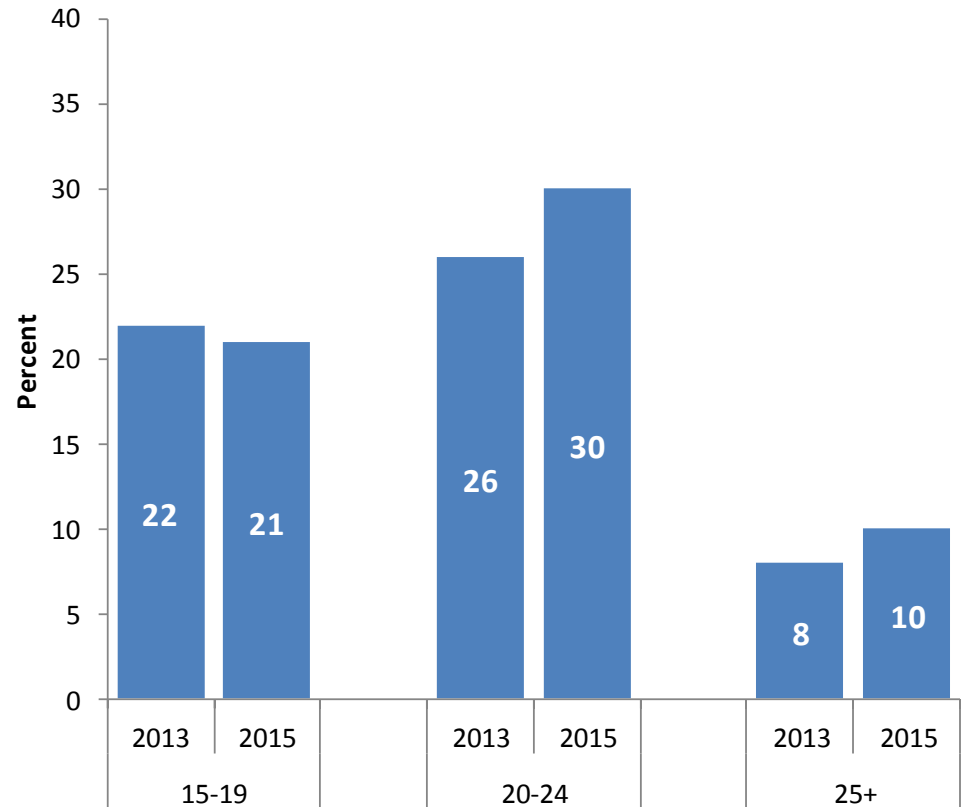
- 1** Context for the Government of Canada's plan to legalize, regulate and restrict access to cannabis
- 2** An overview of the proposed Cannabis Act
- 3** Information on Government of Canada activities in support of this initiative



# Current Context


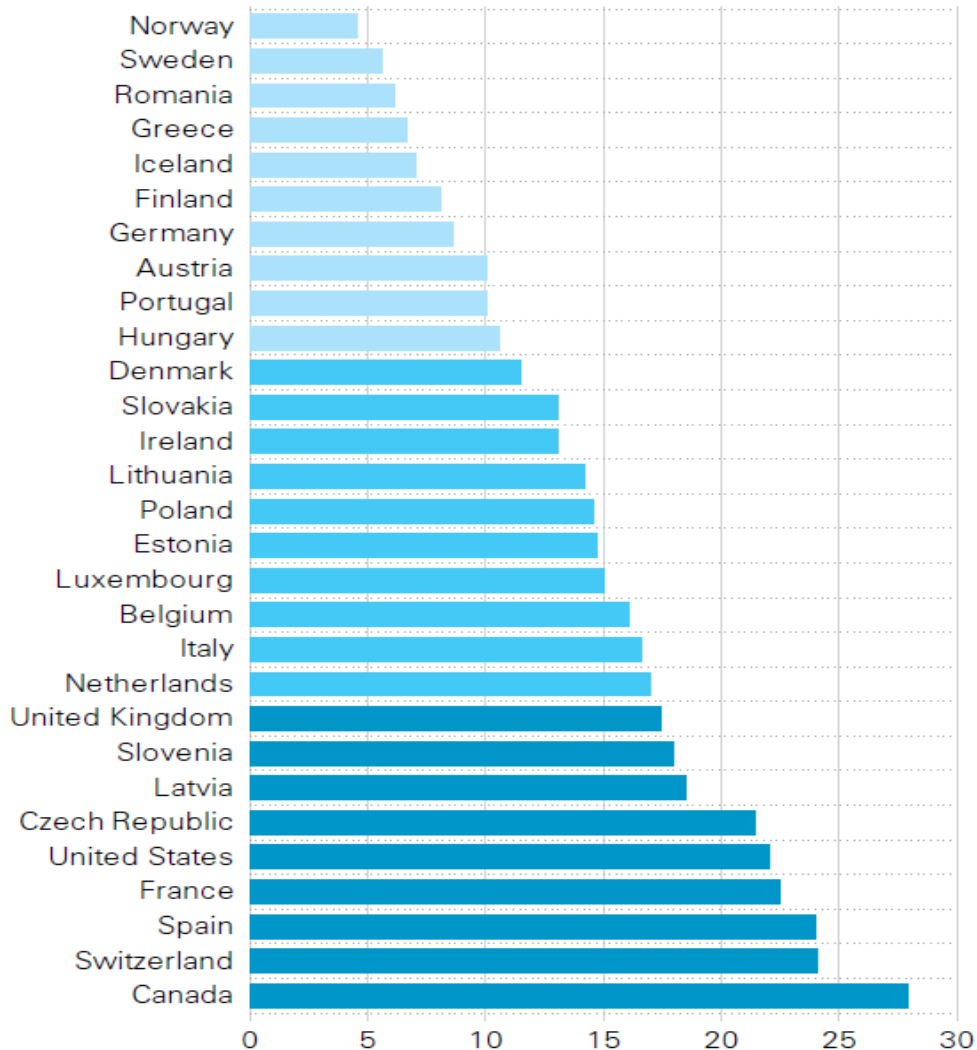
Cannabis is the most used illicit substance in Canada...

Past year cannabis use, by age group, 2013-2015



# Current Context (cont.)

% of children aged 11, 13 and 15 who report having used cannabis in the last 12 months



... and Canadian youth use cannabis more than their peers in most developed countries.

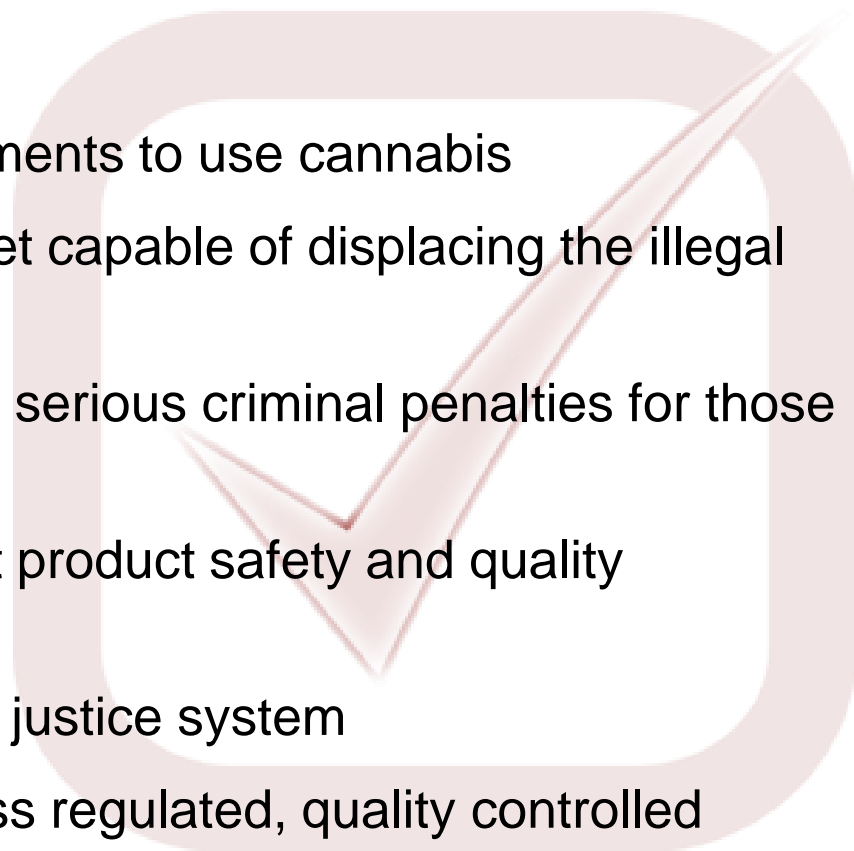
## Current Context (cont.)

- 🍁 Public health and safety concerns
  - Health risks from early and heavy use
  - No control on product safety, potency and quality
  - Drug-impaired driving
- 🍁 Broad, entrenched illicit market
- 🍁 Burden on justice system, and associated social impacts
- 🍁 Laws not well understood, inconsistently applied

# Government of Canada Objectives

A new control framework for cannabis that will:

- restrict youth access to cannabis
- protect young people from enticements to use cannabis
- provide for a legal cannabis market capable of displacing the illegal market
- deter criminal activity by imposing serious criminal penalties for those breaking the law
- protect public health through strict product safety and quality requirements
- reduce the burden on the criminal justice system
- allow adults to possess and access regulated, quality controlled cannabis



# Lessons Learned

One other country (Uruguay) and 8 U.S. states and the District of Columbia have taken steps to legalize and regulate cannabis.



## Key Takeaways:

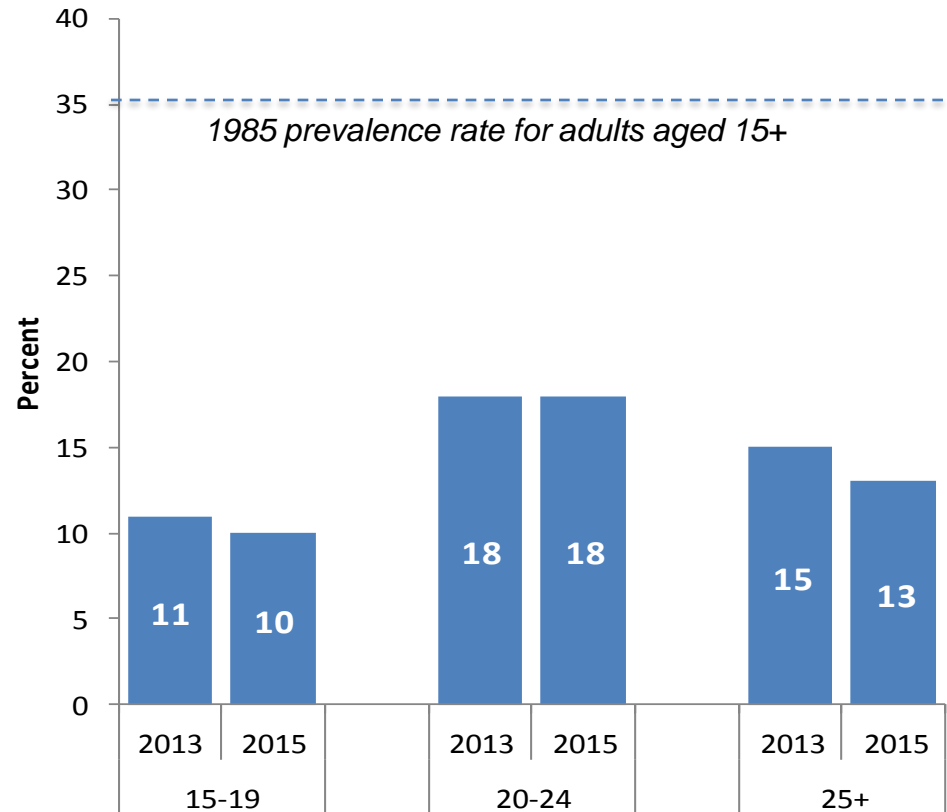
- ✓ Complex, multi-year initiative
- ✓ Adaptability and flexibility
- ✓ Public education
- ✓ Consultation and collaboration
- ✓ Enforcement
- ✓ Monitoring and ongoing system refinement



## Lessons Learned (cont.)

- Canada has experience regulating access to alcohol, tobacco, pharmaceuticals and medical cannabis.
- Experience with tobacco: a comprehensive program that includes legislation, regulation and outreach can result in a decrease of smoking prevalence over time.

Cigarette smoking prevalence\*, by age group, 2013-2015



*\*Prevalence refers to the percentage of "current smokers" in a specified group, and includes daily and occasional smokers.*

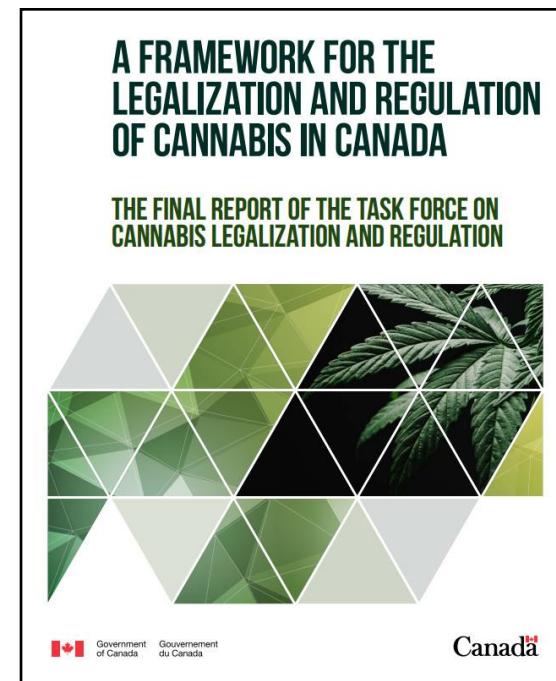
# The Task Force on Cannabis Legalization and Regulation

June 30, 2016 - Task Force created to advise on new system for cannabis.

The final report includes more than 80 recommendations.

## Guiding Principles

- *Precautionary approach* - start restrictive; monitor and adapt
- *Public health* - reduce harms and risks of use
- *Public safety* - focus on serious offences, enforceability



## Proposed legislation – Bill C-45

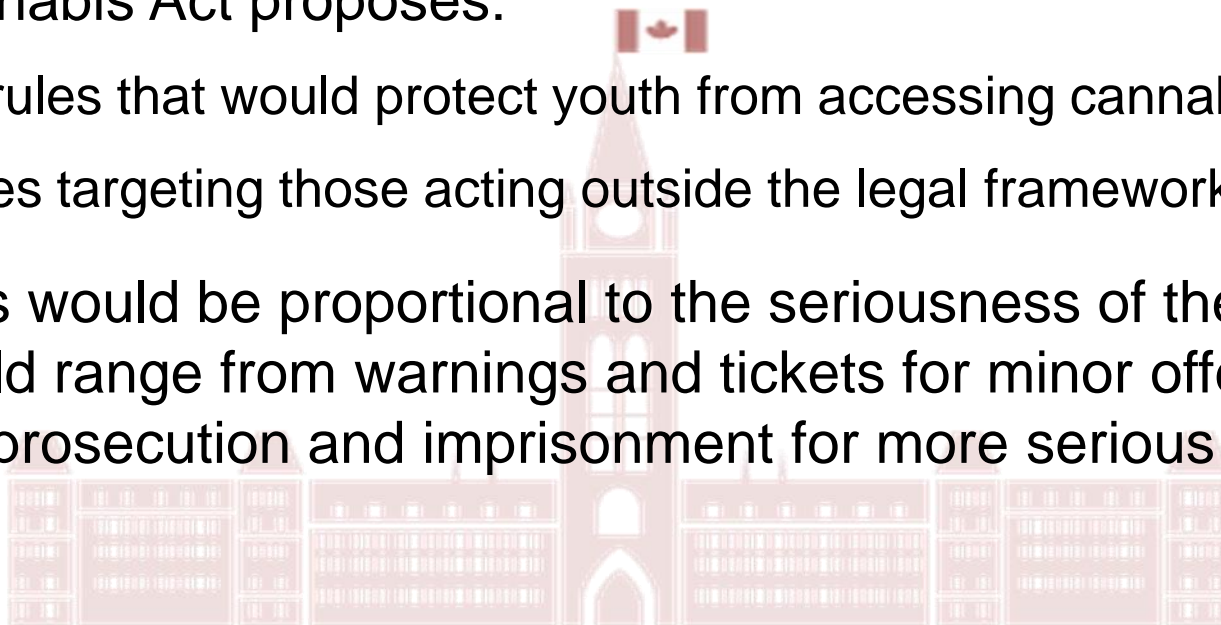
On April 13, 2017, Bill C-45 (the Cannabis Act) was introduced in the House of Commons by the Minister of Justice.

The Act would use federal criminal law power to create a strict framework to control and regulate the production, distribution, sale and possession of cannabis.

The Cannabis Act proposes:

- many rules that would protect youth from accessing cannabis
- offences targeting those acting outside the legal framework

Penalties would be proportional to the seriousness of the offence and would range from warnings and tickets for minor offences to criminal prosecution and imprisonment for more serious offences.



## Proposed legislation – Bill C-45 (cont.)

Federal, provincial and territorial governments would all have roles under the new system.

The federal government would:



- license and set strict requirements for producers who grow and manufacture cannabis



- set industry-wide rules and standards, such as:
  - types of cannabis products that will be allowed for sale
  - prohibiting the use of certain ingredients
  - restrictions on promotional activities

## Proposed legislation – Bill C-45 (cont.)

The provinces and territories would license and set strict requirements for the distribution and sale of cannabis, subject to federal conditions.

They could also:



- increase the minimum age in their province or territory (but not lower it)
- lower the personal possession limit
- create additional rules for growing cannabis at home, such as lowering the number of plants per residence
- restrict where adults can consume cannabis, such as in public or in vehicles

# Proposed legislation – Bill C-45 (cont.)

## Protecting Youth

Two new criminal offences with maximum penalties of 14 years in jail for:

- giving or selling cannabis to any person under the age of 18, and
- using a youth to commit a cannabis-related offence

The Act would also prohibit:

- selling products that are appealing to youth
- packaging or labelling cannabis in a way that makes it appealing to youth
- selling cannabis through self-service displays or vending machines
- promoting cannabis, except in narrow circumstances where the promotion is factual and could not be seen by a young person

# Proposed legislation – Bill C-45 (cont.)

## Other features

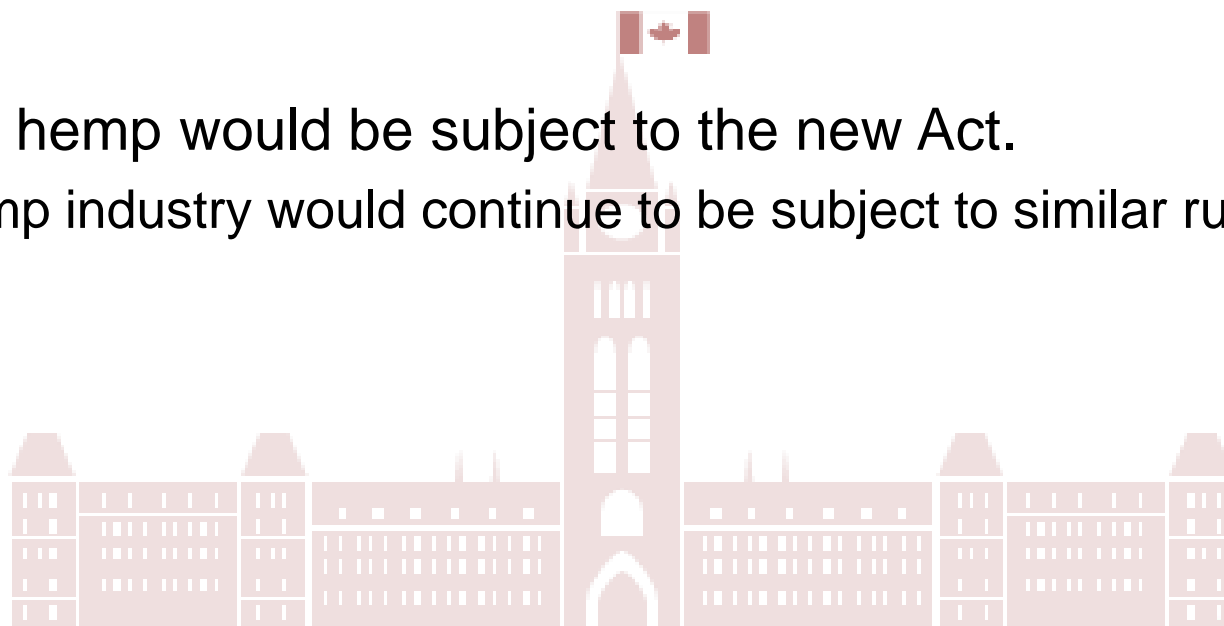
Access to cannabis for medical purposes would be maintained.

It would be illegal to import or export except for:

- medical and scientific purposes
- industrial hemp

Industrial hemp would be subject to the new Act.

- hemp industry would continue to be subject to similar rules



## Proposed legislation – Bill C-45 (cont.)

Subject to approval by Parliament, the Act would come into force no later than July 2018.

At that time, adults who are 18 years or older would be able to legally:

**purchase** cannabis and cannabis oil from a provincially-licensed retailer



Other products, such as edibles, would be made available for purchase no later than 12 months after the Act comes into force

In those provinces that do not have a regulated retail framework, individuals would be able to purchase cannabis online from a federally-licensed producer



## Proposed legislation – Bill C-45 (cont.)

Should the Cannabis Act become law, adults who are 18 years or older would be able to legally:



**possess** up to 30 grams of legal dried cannabis, or an equivalent amount

**share** up to 30 grams of legal dried cannabis, or an equivalent amount with other adults



**grow** up to 4 cannabis plants per residence for personal use from legal seeds or seedlings

**make** cannabis products, such as food and drinks, at home provided that organic solvents are not used

## Data and Monitoring: Measuring the Impact

Proactive data collection, monitoring, surveillance and analysis prior and after legalization will be valuable for policy development and monitoring the health and safety impacts.

Work done in 2016 and 2017:

Development and implementation of a core and expanded set of baseline data indicators (ongoing)

### Canadian Cannabis Survey

- Conducted March-June 2017 to fill gaps in knowledge
- Nearly 10,000 respondents (majority have used cannabis)
- Topics include how cannabis is obtained, methods of use, perceptions of use, home growing, driving after use

### Project with Canadian Surveillance System for Poison Information

- collects baseline data of cannabis exposure calls
- monitors on an ongoing basis

Developing a Research Strategy on non-medical use of cannabis

# Public Education and Awareness Activities

Work has begun, with social media activities delivering credible, consistent, evidence-informed messages to:

- raise awareness of health and safety risks, especially for youth
- provide advice to parents for talking with their teens
- inform the public of the dangers of drug impaired driving
- convey what is legal and what is not (and when)

Government of Canada will invest **\$43 million over the next five years** for a cannabis education and awareness campaigns on the health and safety risks of cannabis use and drug-impaired driving

# Public Education and Awareness Activities (cont.)

## Activities so far:

- Paid digital advertising targeting parents of teens
- Updates to web content and social media posts
- Distributed Drug Free Kids Canada's "Cannabis Talk Kits" for parents
- Hosted Symposium with health groups and others to discuss partnerships and best practices for cannabis public education

## Next steps:

- Late 2017: Drug-impaired driving campaign
- Early 2018: Campaign on health effects of cannabis use, targeting youth and young adults
- Resources for health professionals



## Regulatory consultations

- To support implementation of the proposed Act, a series of regulations are needed, addressing a range of areas, including:
  - ✓ Licensing (for cultivation, processing etc.)
  - ✓ Personnel security
  - ✓ Types of cannabis products and standards
  - ✓ Packaging and labelling
  - ✓ Cannabis for medical purposes
- Health Canada has published a consultation paper outlining proposals in these and other areas. Feedback will guide the development of regulations to be published in the *Canada Gazette*, Part II, in Spring 2018.
- Visit [www.canada.ca/cannabis](http://www.canada.ca/cannabis) for information and to have your say (consultation closes January 20, 2018).

# Engagement and Collaboration

The design, implementation and evaluation of the new framework requires engagement and collaboration with a diverse and informed community.



# Indigenous Perspectives

The Government of Canada has placed a particular focus on the importance of its relationship with Indigenous Peoples

- The Government is committed to nation-to-nation engagement with Indigenous Peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership
- Will reflect distinct interests of First Nations, Métis and Inuit

With respect to cannabis legalization, Canada will engage closely with Indigenous communities and representative organizations on issues of particular concern, including:

- **Public health** (approximately one-third (32.3%) of First Nations adults used cannabis in the past year)\*
- **Economic perspectives**, with interest in participating in cannabis market
- **Public education**, with interest in a culturally appropriate approach

\*Source: First Nations Regional Health Survey, 2008/10

## Next steps

- Bill C-45 (the Cannabis Act) and Bill C-46 (on drug- and alcohol-impaired driving) is being debated in both the House of Commons and the Senate, and studied by Parliamentary committees.
- Work continues on regulations to support the proposed Cannabis Act.
- The results of the Canadian Cannabis Survey and other baseline data work will be released in the coming months.
- Public education and awareness activities to continue



# Thank You

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