



Ask Me Anything – Representation in Leadership: Recap and Resources

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Ask Me Anything: Representation in Leadership



Featuring: **Nicole Elmy, Reginald Akem Aton Desjardins and Wendy Desir**
Co-Hosted By: **Samantha Moonsammy and Parthiban Muthukumarasamy**

The Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) hosted the event [Ask Me Anything: Representation in Leadership](#) on September 22, 2021 in collaboration with Health Canada (HC) and the Department of National Defence (DND). A special thank you to our courageous panelists **Wendy Desir** (Workforce Performance and Development, DND), **Reginald Akem Aton Desjardins** (Manager, Environment and Climate Change Canada) and **Nicole Elmy** (Director of Indigenous Relations, CCG), who graciously shared their insights and experiences with the audience. Over 725 participants tuned in from DFO-CCG and other federal departments and agencies across Canada to listen to this important conversation. DND's **Chris Scipio** offered thoughtful opening remarks and DND's **Samantha Moonsammy** and Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)'s **Parthi Muthukumarasamy** co-hosted the educational event.

Chris Scipio, Strategic Policy Advisor specializing in Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) and founding member of the Defence Team's Black Employees Network, opened the session, emphasizing the need for more equity, action and inclusion within the workplace. His remarks highlighted the importance of representation in leadership, but more notably the importance of diverse leaders who lead boldly and lovingly. Scipio was a valuable addition to the conversation and provided the audience with great opportunities for reflection.

Immigrating to Canada from Haiti, Wendy Desir never imagined she would one day become an Executive in the Government of Canada. As a woman and a visible minority, it has been difficult navigating the workplace. Although Wendy is extremely proud of who she is and where she came from, remaining authentic to her identity has not always been easy throughout her career. During the conversation, she noted the significance of allies, who have supported and encouraged her to be herself.

Throughout his career, Reginald Akem Aton Desjardins has held several management positions in both the private and public sectors. As a current manager, Reginald discussed the role mentorship plays in his career, acknowledging that he wouldn't be where he is today without the mentors in his life. Reginald noted that mentorship isn't a role one schedules in their calendar nor is it a title one wears, rather, it's the act of being yourself and inspiring people through your everyday actions. Mentorship can happen at any time.

Nicole Elmy is a proud member of the Mohawk of the Bay of Quinte First Nation and is currently the first Director of Indigenous Relations at CCG. Throughout the discussion, she spoke about her 15-year journey to the Executive cadre in the federal government and the challenges she's faced as a white-passing Indigenous woman. She passionately promotes the voice of Indigenous youth in the Public Service and advocates strongly for education and cultural awareness as meaningful demonstrations of Reconciliation commitments.

The honest conversation touched a variety of topics such as unconscious bias and the importance of equity and diversity. The three Government of Canada executives shared their experiences and provided advice on how we can all learn more and do better. Throughout the conversation, the audience was given words of encouragement and concrete actions to take beyond the live event. We were inspired to stay true to ourselves, remain bold and dream big. We were also challenged to reach out to people who don't look like us and who possess different layers and backgrounds. Seeking conversations like this one is a phenomenal way to develop understanding, compassion and empathy for others, ultimately prompting change.

For those who didn't get a chance to tune in live, we invite you to watch the event recording on [YouTube](#) and to share this event with members of your family, friends and community. We also invite you to check out the resource below to learn more and help you continue this important conversation:

- [Representation in Leadership Resource Guide](#)

You can provide your comments on the event by [filling out this questionnaire](#).

DFO-CCG events: Diversity and Inclusion and Ask Me Anything series

Have ideas for upcoming AMAs, want to share more of yourself with our organization, or share general feedback? Contact the [Internal Communications, Event Management and Publications Team](#)! We are committed to learning more and doing better and hope you join us on this challenge.

To get involved with the Ask Me Anything Community and access documentation from past events, join us on our new [Ask Me Anything site on GCcollab](#). Together, we're creating a safe space for these important conversations within the Government of Canada.