

Assembly of First Nations

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Assemblée des Premières Nations

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ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
July 14-15-16, 2026, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 09/2026

TITLE: First Nations' Priorities for a First Nations–First Ministers' Meeting

SUBJECT: Rights

MOVED BY: Ogimaa Tim Ominika, Wikwemikong Unceded First Nation, ON

SECONDED BY: Chief Leroy Denny, Eskasoni First Nation, NS

DECISION Carried by Consensus

WHEREAS:

A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) states:

- i. Article 4: Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.
- ii. Article 5: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.
- iii. Article 19: States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.
- iv. Article 23: Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programs affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programs through their own institutions.

B. First Nations and the Crown have entered into sacred Treaty relationships with mutual, perpetual obligations and commitments and these cannot be swept away or modified without the express consent of affected First Nations.

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- C. International human rights law, including but not limited to the UN Declaration, has affirmed repeatedly the international status of First Nations as peoples, our collective rights of First Nations as peoples and including the right to self-determination.
- D. Free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) is a key aspect of the right to self-determination under international law, as affirmed by the UN Declaration, resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, as well as specific guidance, observations and recommendations from UN human rights bodies respecting Canada's binding obligations under the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the UN Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the UN Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and other international instruments.
- E. The Crown holds many other binding consent obligations and consultation obligations under Treaty, the Constitution of Canada, and the common law of Canada.
- F. First Nations have inherent rights and Treaty rights affirmed and entrenched in the Constitution of Canada.
- G. First Ministers' Meetings (FMM) are meetings convened by the Prime Minister that include the Premiers of the provinces and territories. They are meant to foster collaboration on matters of federal, provincial, and territorial importance. First Nations have historically been excluded from these meetings despite the fact that many of the discussions often impact First Nations rights and interests.
- H. There has never been a First Nations specific FMM. Previous FMM meetings, such as the Kelowna or Charlottetown Accords included some participation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis organizations.
- I. In the summer of 2025, National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak met with the Council of the Federation (COF) which is a yearly meeting of the Premiers of the provinces and the territories. Through strong advocacy, National Chief Woodhouse Nepinak secured a commitment from the Premiers to request that the Prime Minister hold the very first First Nations-specific FMM.
- J. During the 2025 AFN Special Chiefs Assembly, the Prime Minister announced that a First Nations-First Ministers Meeting (FNFMM) would be convened in 2026 and confirmed that First Nations would set the agenda, with the process intended to support dialogue and establish shared priorities between First Nations, the federal government, and provincial and territorial governments on issues of national significance.
- K. In anticipation of a Fall 2026 FNFMM, the AFN organized a series of virtual townhalls, attended regional assemblies, and met with AFN Councils and Chiefs Committees to solicit input from First Nations on the structure, content, and outcomes of an FNFMM.
- L. First Nations leadership underscored the importance of grounding the FNFMM in ceremony and to seek the guidance of Knowledge Keepers and Elders in the planning of the FNFMM.
- M. First Nations leaders stressed that the FNFMM should be a start to an ongoing conversation and not a one-time event, and that key objectives at the FNFMM would be to ensure First Nations' exercise of their rights and responsibilities, improving their quality of life, and participation in decision-making.
- N. There was consensus among many that a strategic outcome of the FNFMM would be to secure commitment to a renewed process of addressing multi-jurisdictional issues with clear accountability and implementation mechanisms and timelines.

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- O. First Nations leadership expressed the importance of ensuring balanced representation and the need to ensure inclusive representation of Knowledge Keepers, Youth, Women, 2SLGBTQQIA+ and communities facing crises.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the First Nations-in-Assembly:

1. Support a First Nations First Ministers' Meeting (FNFMM), to be convened in Fall 2026 in Ottawa, Ontario, as an initial discussion with federal, provincial, and territorial leaders.
2. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to ensure that FNFMM discussions are grounded in affirmation and recognition of First Nations Treaty and inherent, unextinguished, and s.35 rights and jurisdiction.
3. Direct the AFN to ensure that the primary agenda item at the upcoming FNFMM is the establishment of a jointly governed process with First Nations to develop a national First Nations-Crown table on confederation and constitutional change, including both political and technical tables, to advance constitutional discussions that support the recognition, affirmation, and implementation of First Nations inherent, Treaty, and human rights.
4. Direct the AFN to advocate for the inclusion of federal fast-tracking legislation, pipeline development, major project approvals, the Canada-Alberta Memorandum of Understanding and associated Implementation Agreement, environmental oversight, and the upholding of First Nations' Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) as priority issues for discussion at the 2026 FNFMM and, where such issues are not addressed at the meeting, to pursue appropriate opportunities to advance First Nations priorities on these matters with federal, provincial, and territorial government.
5. Affirm that the role of the AFN will be relegated to coordination and administrative duties only, with no authority to negotiate or discuss First Nations Treaties, rights, lands, jurisdiction, or Crown relationships independently of affected First Nation rights holders.
6. Direct the AFN to advocate at the FNFMM for sustained and adequate regional funding to support ongoing constitutional discussions.
7. Direct the AFN to ensure that First Nations are represented with full inclusion in other FMMs on matters of national importance and any other matters which First Nations identify a need to participate in fully.
8. Direct the AFN to ensure government representatives participate in ceremony, guided by Knowledge Keepers and Elders in the FNFMM process.
9. Affirm that the proposed separation of Alberta or another province, or other restructuring of Canada, requires a distinct First Nations-Crown process separate from the FNFMM.

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