

Assembly of First Nations

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Assemblée des Premières Nations

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 33/2025

TITLE: Affirming the Oil Tanker Moratorium Act and Supporting Coastal First Nations
Rejection of any Proposed Pipeline from Alberta to British Columbia's Northwest
Coast

SUBJECT: Rights, Environment

MOVED BY: Chief Donald Edgars, Old Massett Village, BC

SECONDED BY: Merle Alexander, Proxy, Heiltsuk First Nation (Bella Bella), BC

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations hold inherent and constitutionally protected title and rights to their lands, waters, and resources, which cannot be delegated, overridden, or bypassed by federal or provincial governments, delegated agencies or advisory bodies.
- B. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) which the Government of Canada has adopted without qualification and has passed legislation committing to implement, affirms:
- i. Article 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.
 - ii. 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.
 - iii. Article 26(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.

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Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

33 – 2025

Page 1 of 3

- iv. Article 26(2): Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.
- v. Article 26(3): States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.
- C. In 1972, the Government of Canada, with the support of the Province of British Columbia announced a moratorium on oil tanker traffic in the Hecate Strait, Dixon Entrance and Queen Charlotte Sound, driven by Coastal First Nations opposition and extreme weather and ocean conditions creating high spill risk.
- D. Bill C-47, the *Oil Tanker Moratorium Act* (OTMA), received Royal Assent on June 21, 2019, and restricts oil tankers carrying more than 12,500 tonnes of crude oil or persistent oil products from stopping, loading or unloading at ports or marine installations on British Columbia's (BC) North and Central Coast including Fitz Hugh Sound, Hecate Strait, Queen Charlotte Sound, Haida Gwaii, and the Dixon Entrance.
- E. Bill C-5, the *One Canadian Economy Act* (OCEA), received Royal Assent on June 26, 2025. This Act enacts the *Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act* and the *Building Canada Act* (BCA) with the objective to "remove federal barriers to internal trade and labour mobility, expedite national interest projects, and improve domestic productivity".
- F. Under 6(1) of the OTMA, the Minister may, by order, exempt an identified oil tanker from the above prohibited transportation "on any terms and for any period that he or she considers appropriate, if he or she is of the opinion that the exemption is essential for the purpose of community or industry resupply or is otherwise in the public interest." Under the BCA, the OTMA could be added by Cabinet order through Schedule 2 to exempt a designated national interest pipeline, should the Major Projects Office assert this designation.
- G. At the First Nations Major Project Summit hosted by the Government of Canada in July 2025, Prime Minister Carney stated that no project under the BCA would proceed without First Nations' free, prior, and informed consent. Moreover, in the House of Commons on Tuesday November 25, 2025, Prime Minister Carney stated, "the MOU we are creating with Alberta creates necessary conditions but not sufficient conditions because we believe in cooperative federalism... we believe First Nations rights holders have to agree".
- H. On November 5, 2025, the Province of British Columbia and Coastal First Nations signed the North Coast Protection Declaration, affirming the collective need for a continued tanker ban as affirmed by the OTMA.
- I. On November 27, 2025, the Government of Canada and the Province of Alberta entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) affirming joint political support for Alberta to advance collective energy interests, including a new oil pipeline to provide access to Asian Markets through a deep-water port on BC's coast.
- J. The MOU declares that an Alberta bitumen pipeline project is of national interest under OCEA, suspends or overrides existing regulations, and proposes to amend the OTMA with a deadline to submit an application to the Major Projects Office on or before July 1, 2026.

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Cindy Woodhouse

- K. The MOU does not provide for any mechanisms for a project identified under the agreement to uphold the UN Declaration as legally required by the Government of Canada, under the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, nor does it identify First Nations' free, prior and informed consent as a threshold for designation of any project.
- L. Through the MOU, the Government of Canada has abandoned its national and international climate commitments, including its cap on oil and gas emissions and clean energy regulations in favour of deregulated resource extraction through fast-tracking legislation. This abandonment undermines Canada's legally-enshrined net-zero and 2030 emissions-reduction obligations while accelerating greenhouse gas pollution and intensifying climate-driven disasters causing irreversible harms to First Nations, and our lands, waters, wildlife, and broadly, all Canadians.
- M. Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Resolutions 41/2021, *Marine Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs)*, 05/2019, *Declaring a First Nations Climate Emergency*, and 109/2017, *Supporting First Nations Environmental Protections* jointly affirm that the climate and ecological crises constitutes an urgent First Nations emergency requiring immediate, transformative action to prevent further harm; reaffirm First Nations' Inherent, Treaty, and constitutionally protected rights and jurisdiction to steward, conserve, and protect their lands, waters, coasts, and marine life; and direct that Canada uphold rights-based environmental protections and seek First Nations' free, prior, and informed consent for any proposed project on First Nations' territories.

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

1. Affirm full support for the North Coast Protection Declaration, as well as the Coastal First Nations', and any other affected First Nations' strong rejection of any proposed oil and bitumen pipeline running through British Columbia's North, Central and South Coast and other affected territories.
2. Affirm support for the *Oil Tanker Moratorium Act* (OTMA) and firmly reject any exemptions to this moratorium proposed under Section 6(1) of the OTMA and through Schedule 2 of the *Building Canada Act*.
3. Call on the Government of Canada, the Province of Alberta, and the Province of British Columbia to fully uphold the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as a legal threshold and set of minimum standards for any project deemed to be in the "national interest" in First Nations' territories.
4. Call for the immediate withdrawal of the Canada-Alberta Memorandum of Understanding and any project contemplated or designated under the agreement that may infringe First Nations' rights, including the right to self-determination.
5. Call on the Government of Canada to recognize the climate emergency and recommit to, strengthen, and fully implement its national and international climate obligations in full partnership with First Nations rights and title holders, including to ensure adequate, sustainable, and long-term funding for First Nations-led climate action.
6. Affirm support for First Nations laws that govern their territories and hold paramouncy over colonial laws.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

33 – 2025
Page 3 of 3

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 34/2025

TITLE: Calling on Canada to Criminalize Indian Residential School Denialism

SUBJECT: Indian Residential School Denialism

MOVED BY: Chief David Monias, Pimicikamak Cree Nation, MB

SECONDED BY: Chief Kelsey Jacko, Cold Lake First Nation, AB

DECISION: Carried by consensus

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

- i. Article 1: Indigenous peoples have the right to the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration Human Rights and international Human Rights law.
- ii. Article 15(2): States shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among Indigenous peoples and all other segments of society.
- 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 21: Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.

B. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) documented the genocide committed against Indigenous Peoples through the Indian Residential School (IRS) system, where thousands of children were forcibly taken from their families, subjected to abuse, and many never returned home.

C. Unmarked graves of children continue to be confirmed at former IRS sites across the country, validating the truths survivors have shared for generations.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

34 – 2025

Page 1 of 3

- D. Denial, minimization, or justification of the harms of the IRS system retraumatizes survivors, dishonours the memory of the children who never made it home, fuels racism, and undermines truth and reconciliation.
- E. In 2022, Canada amended the Criminal Code (Bill C-250) to make Holocaust denial unlawful, recognizing the profound harm caused by public denial of genocide.
- F. The Office of the Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites Associated with Indian Residential Schools Final Report (2024) calls on the federal government to fight efforts of IRS denialism and rewriting Canada's history. Obligation 36 and 37 of the Report require the federal government to include provisions in Bill C-63: *An Act to Enact the Online Harms Act*, to address the harms of denialism, and to amend the *Criminal Code*, making it an offence to promote hatred against Indigenous Peoples by "condoning, denying, downplaying, or justifying the IRS system or misrepresenting facts related to it."
- G. Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Resolution 84/2024, *Support Special Interlocutor's Indigenous-Led Reparations Framework* mandates the AFN to advocate for the full implementation of Reparations Framework, including Obligations 36 and 37.
- H. In 2024, New Democrat Party (NDP) Member of Parliament (MP) Leah Gazan introduced Bill C-413, which sought to criminalize the public condoning, denial, or justification of the IRS system, but the bill died on the Order Paper. In 2025, MP Gazan re-introduced Bill C-246, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (promotion of hatred against Indigenous peoples)*, which similarly proposes to criminalize condoning, denying, downplaying or justifying the IRS system in Canada.
- I. AFN Resolution 85/2024, *Support Bill C-413 to Provide Protection Against Anti-Indigenous Hate Speech and Residential School Denialism*, mandates the AFN to support Bill C-413 and to call upon Canada to prioritize Bill C-413 in the parliamentary process.
- J. Survivors, the First Nations Leadership Council, and other First Nations organizations have consistently called on Canada to take legislative action against IRS denialism.

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

1. Call upon the Government of Canada to amend Bill C-9, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (hate propaganda, hate crime and access to religious or cultural places)*, or failing that, to introduce and adopt stand-alone legislation to criminalize the public condoning, denial, justification, or minimization of the Indian Residential School (IRS) system and the unmarked graves of Indigenous children, recognizing such denialism as equated to a hate crime against Indigenous Peoples.
2. Direct the National Chief to immediately advocate with the Prime Minister, Minister of Justice, and Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations for the introduction or amendment of a government-sponsored bill, ensuring it is not left to private member's legislation.
3. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to work with survivors, Elders, and First Nations leadership across the country through the AFN's Advisory Councils to ensure the drafting or amending of such legislation reflects lived experiences, provides clear legal definitions, and withstands constitutional challenges.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

34 – 2025
Page 2 of 3

4. Call on the Government of Canada to affirm that denialism is an attack on truth, healing, and reconciliation and must be met with the same legal protections provided to Holocaust survivors and their families.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

34 – 2025
Page 3 of 3

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 35/2025

TITLE: National-Provincial All Inclusive First Nations Survivors' Day

SUBJECT: Women's Commission

MOVED BY: Chief Dan Wilson, Okanagan Indian Band, BC

SECONDED BY: Chief Edwin Ananas, Beardy's & Okemasis First Nation, SK

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. Articles 1, 7, and 22 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) affirm that Indigenous Peoples have the right to full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, that they shall not be subjected to violence or discrimination, and that special attention shall be paid to the rights and needs of Indigenous Elders, women, youth, children, and 2SLGBTQQA+ individuals in addressing historical and systemic injustices.
- B. The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls produced a final report containing 231 Calls to Justice, revealing that persistent and deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations and abuses are the root cause of the crisis of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQA+ people in Canada.
- C. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada issued 94 Calls to Action in response to the ongoing legacy of residential schools, highlighting systemic injustices, intergenerational trauma, and the continued overrepresentation of First Nations children in the child welfare system.
- D. Survivors of these injustices exist across all Treaty territories in Saskatchewan and beyond, and no First Nations person has been untouched by the impacts of colonialism, forced assimilation, and systemic oppression.
- E. Despite the widespread impact, there is currently no all-inclusive day that formally recognizes and honours survivors of the Indian Residential School system, the Sixties Scoop, gender-based violence, child welfare involvement, and other colonial and state-led harms experienced by First Nations people.

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Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

35 – 2025

Page 1 of 2

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

1. Support the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) in calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to establish June 30th as an annual Provincial All-Inclusive First Nations Survivors' Day, dedicated to honouring the strength, healing, and resilience of all First Nations survivors.
2. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to urge the Government of Canada to designate June 30th as a National First Nations Survivors' Day, to be recognized and observed annually as a federal statutory holiday in honour of all survivors of colonial and systemic injustices across Turtle Island.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

35 – 2025
Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 36/2025

TITLE: Support for a National Day for Indigenous Child Removal Survivors by the Government of Canada

SUBJECT: Sixties Scoop

MOVED BY: Kukpi7 Michael Christian, Splatshin First Nation, BC

SECONDED BY: Troy MacBeth Abromaitis, Proxy, Boston Bar First Nation, BC

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) should be the framework for improvement to address the harmful legacy of Residential Schools, Sixties Scoop, and the Child Welfare system that forced the removal of children, the disproportionate number of First Nations children in care, the consequences of involvement in child welfare systems, and the related loss of language and denial of culture and human rights.
- B. The UN Declaration states:
- Article 2: Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their indigenous origin or identity;
 - Article 22 (2): States shall take measures, in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, to ensure that Indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination;
 - 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 programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

36 – 2025
Page 1 of 3

- C. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action # 1 to # 5 call on federal, provincial, and territorial governments to take actions to improve First Nations child and family services.
- D. The Sixties Scoop was an ongoing practice in the 1960s and 1970s that saw the removal of large numbers of First Nations children from their families and communities and placed them in the care of Canadian and International foster or adoptive homes.
- E. First Nations children continue to lose their identity, culture and kinship links as they continue to be removed from their homes, families, and Nations by the federal, provincial, and territorial child welfare systems.

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

1. Acknowledge that this resolution is brought forward by Kukpi7 (Chief) Michael Christian of Splatshin First Nation, a Sixties Scoop Survivor himself, who carries this sacred motion forward on behalf of all Survivors—the children taken through these colonial child removal systems, the families who still carry that loss, and the generations who continue to feel the deep intergenerational impacts of these removals. As a Sixties Scoop Survivor who spent 11 years of his youth in a government institutional foster system, Kukpi7 (Chief) Michael Christian brings a deeply personal understanding of the intergenerational impacts of child removal, which continues to fuel his lifelong commitment to cultural reclamation, healing, and the revitalization of his community. This resolution is also brought forward by Chief Pamela Robertson of Boston Bar First Nation, who stands in strong support of this sacred call for national recognition. Chief Robertson's leadership reflects the collective voice of many families and Nations who continue to carry the lived impacts of child removal across generations, and who are walking the path of healing, belonging, and cultural restoration for all Survivors.
2. Acknowledge that this resolution is also grounded in the lived experience and advocacy of Troy MacBeth Abromaitis, a Sixties Scoop Survivor and proud member of the Nlaka'pamux Nation, who, after being separated from his family and community for more than thirty years, returned home and dedicated his skills to support the rebuilding of his Nation—including his service on the Lytton First Nation Economic Development Board following the devastation of the 2021 wildfires. In recognition of his quiet commitment to serve in a good way, Troy was honoured by his family in 2023 through a sacred blanket ceremony and given the ancestral name Lex7em'ken—symbolizing his full return to kinship, belonging, and identity. Before her passing, Troy's mother shared one final wish: that Survivors be honoured nationally, not only in name, but through sacred ceremony, so that all who were taken may one day be fully welcomed home. Through Troy's ongoing personal advocacy and leadership, formal provincial proclamations have already been secured recognizing June 30 as a day to honour Survivors of Indigenous child removal systems—including the Sixties Scoop, Millennium Scoop, foster care, and birth alerts—in the Provinces of British Columbia, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.
3. Call upon Canada to acknowledge and honour the Survivors, families, and Nations whose strength, courage, and sacred journeys have carried forward this profound work, and to recognize the growing circle of support that already exists across this country. This includes formal proclamations issued by the Provinces of British Columbia, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, who have designated June 30 as a day to honour Survivors of the Sixties Scoop, Millennium Scoop, foster care, and birth alerts—and to bear witness to those returning home after years and decades of separation. Canada is called upon to

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Cindy Woodhouse

recognize this growing movement as an expression of national readiness to address both historical and ongoing child removal systems, and to stand with First Nations in ceremony, healing, and belonging.

4. Call upon Canada to formally establish the National Day of Recognition for Indigenous Child Removal Survivors—to be known in ceremony as National Blanket Ceremony Day–Indigenous Survivors—as a federally recognized day of ceremony, healing, and sacred commemoration, to be observed annually on June 30. Further call upon Canada to work in full partnership with Survivors, Elders, and First Nations leadership to advance and enact federal legislation to enshrine this day in Canadian law—ensuring that Survivors are honoured not only in name, but through sacred ceremony, belonging, and restoration to family, community, and Nationhood.
5. Call upon Canada to provide dedicated and sustained funding to support Survivors, families, communities, and First Nations in the full development, ceremonial implementation, and public education necessary for the National Day of Recognition for Indigenous Child Removal Survivors (National Blanket Ceremony Day–Indigenous Survivors) to be fully established and upheld across the country. This work shall be led in full partnership with First Nations leadership, and guided by Indigenous laws, teachings, and ceremonies—including the sacred blanket ceremony—ensuring that every Survivor is seen, honoured, and welcomed home in a sacred way that restores dignity, belonging, and intergenerational healing.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

36 – 2025
Page 3 of 3

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
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Resolution no. 37/2025

TITLE: Development of a National First Nations-led HIV Prevention Strategy

SUBJECT: Health

MOVED BY: Chief Alex (Sonny) Batisse, Matachewan First Nation, ON

SECONDED BY: Chief Jennifer Constant, Mattagami First Nation, ON

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. Article 24 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) affirms the right of Indigenous Peoples to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.
- B. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection rates are increasing at a concerning pace in many First Nations communities, particularly in rural, remote, and northern regions, where health infrastructure and preventative services are significantly lacking.
- C. Proven and effective HIV prevention strategies, such as harm reduction strategies, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post exposure prophylaxis (PEP), remain largely inaccessible in these communities due to limited prescribers, poor integration into existing health delivery models, lack of awareness, and systemic barriers across jurisdictions.
- D. Community health centers, nursing stations, and public health units serving First Nations are under-resourced and overstretched, lacking the capacity to address the growing need for culturally appropriate HIV education, testing, and treatment.
- E. Stigma surrounding HIV, combined with inadequate public health outreach, continues to impede prevention efforts and reduce uptake of existing services in First Nations communities.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

37 – 2025

Page 1 of 2

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

1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to urge Indigenous Services Canada, Health Canada, and the Public Health Agency of Canada to immediately increase funding for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) prevention, testing, treatment, and community-led education in First Nations, with a specific focus on remote and rural communities.
2. Direct the AFN to support the development and dissemination of a national, First Nations-led HIV prevention strategy, rooted in cultural safety, which builds on the outstanding work already being done by regional health service providers. A national, First Nations-led HIV prevention strategy would include targeted outreach, stigma reduction campaigns, and enhanced service delivery capacity in high-risk regions.
3. Direct the AFN Secretariat to work with regional health authorities, First Nations organizations, and public health networks to identify gaps and advocate for scalable models of care such as mobile outreach, telemedicine prescribing, and community-based distribution of HIV prevention, treatment, and harm reduction tools.

Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 2nd day of December 2025, in Ottawa, Ontario

Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

37 – 2025
Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
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Resolution no. 38/2025

TITLE: Advancing the Rights and Well-being of First Nations Persons with Disabilities

SUBJECT: Health, Accessibility

MOVED BY: Chief Dan Wilson, Okanagan Indian Band, BC

SECONDED BY: Sue Sterling-Bur, Proxy, Lower Nicola Indian Band, BC

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. The Inherent title and rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada are recognized and affirmed by Sections 25 and 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, which guarantee that the rights and freedoms of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada shall not be abrogated or derogated and that "the existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed."
- B. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) states:
- i. Article 21(1): Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.
 - ii. Article 21(2): States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of Indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.
 - iii. Article 22(1): Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of Indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration.
 - 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

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Woodhouse.

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

38 – 2025

Page 1 of 4

programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.

- C. In 2010, Canada ratified the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD), which is an international human rights treaty aimed at protecting the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. Of particular relevance to this resolution are CRPD:
- i. Article 4(3): In the development and implementation of legislation and policies to implement the present Convention, and in other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities, States Parties shall closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations; and
 - ii. Article 33(3): Civil society, in particular persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, shall be involved and participate fully in the monitoring process.
- D. Parties to the CRPD are therefore required to promote and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights of persons with disabilities including full equality under the law; active participation in the development and implementation of legislation and policies to implement the Convention; and active participation in Canada's reporting under the Convention.
- E. Indigenous persons with disabilities often experience multiple forms of discrimination and face barriers to full enjoyment of their rights, based on their Indigenous identity and disability status which is recognized in the preamble of the CRPD. The CRPD stresses that persons with disabilities "are subject to multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic, Indigenous or social origin, property, birth, age or other status." The CRPD is the only United Nations (UN) human rights instrument with an explicit sustainable development dimension.
- F. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Shadow Report to the CRPD was submitted in February 2025 and serves as a critical advocacy tool to call on Canada to account for decades of defunding and undermining the fundamental human rights of First Nations persons with disabilities (FNPWD) and the rights of First Nations governments.
- G. The World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014 called on relevant UN entities and bodies to take action to include Indigenous Peoples/persons with disabilities in their respective areas of work and to support the creation, strengthening and capacity development of organizations of Indigenous Peoples/persons with disabilities.
- H. An Inter-governmental federal framework established in 1997, *IN UNISON: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues*, committed to the following vision: "Persons with disabilities participate as full citizens in all aspects of Canadian society. The full participation of persons with disabilities requires the commitment of all segments of society. The realization of the vision will allow persons with disabilities to maximize their independence and enhance their well-being through access to required supports and the elimination of barriers that prevent their full participation."

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

38 – 2025
Page 2 of 4

- I. Over the past several decades, there has been scarce activity with no major investments in disability and injury prevention to effectively address First Nations unique disability needs and rights in a meaningful or sustainable manner.
- J. Disability rates among Indigenous Peoples are over twice that of the national rate and increasing. Across the lifespan, Indigenous Peoples are more likely to have disabilities as compared to the general Canadian population. The 2022 Indigenous People Survey found that disability prevalence is higher for First Nations people living off reserve and Métis (around 30%) compared to Inuit (19%) and non-Indigenous populations (22%).
- K. The Canadian Mental Health Association recognizes that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is considered a disability, which creates a greater responsibility to address the complex issues facing FNPWD.
- L. AFN Resolution 55/2016, *First Nation Federal Accessibility Legislation*, calls on the AFN to work with the federal government to support a First Nations specific engagement process to develop distinct First Nations accessibility legislation, and Resolutions 75/2015, *Support the Economic, Social, Cultural, Spiritual, Civil and Political Rights of Indigenous Persons with Disabilities*, and 48/2014, *Support for Persons with Disabilities*, mandates the AFN to raise awareness and create opportunities for FNPWD.

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

- 1. Call upon the Government of Canada to work with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to align with recommendations of the AFN Shadow Report to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) to advance the rights, inclusion, and well-being of First Nations persons with disabilities in all aspects of community and national life.
- 2. Direct the AFN to leverage the AFN Shadow Report to the CRPD to hold Canada to account for decades of neglect and amplify advocacy efforts to raise awareness and promote understanding of disability rights within First Nations communities, and to challenge ongoing stigma, discrimination, and ableism.
- 3. Call upon the federal government, provincial, and territorial governments, and relevant agencies to engage in respectful partnership with First Nations governments, organizations, and persons with disabilities to jointly develop policies, programs, and funding that address the unique needs and priorities of First Nations persons with disabilities.
- 4. Call upon Indigenous Services Canada and other federal departments to support and fund a distinction-based approach to build First Nations capacity to navigate disability benefits and services in First Nations that will address repeated concerns where pan-Indigenous groups continue to be funded to carry out work on behalf of First Nations on disability benefits and services.
- 5. Call upon the Government of Canada to support funding to develop a national First Nations Disability Strategy, guided by the voices and leadership of First Nations persons with disabilities, women, Elders, and knowledge keepers, and grounded in the principles of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the CRPD.
- 6. Call upon the Government of Canada to fund and support the creation of accessible infrastructure, culturally safe services, and inclusive education and employment opportunities in First Nations communities, and sustained funding to ensure inclusive and equitable access.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

38 – 2025
Page 3 of 4

7. Direct the AFN to urgently increase advocacy efforts to secure funding and capacity to carry out ongoing research and data collection, led by First Nations, to better understand the experiences, needs, and barriers faced by First Nations persons with disabilities, and to inform evidence-based policy and program development.
8. Direct the AFN to work with regionally-identified First Nations organizations, disability advocates, and community leaders to monitor progress and report annually to First Nations-in-Assembly on actions taken and outcomes achieved.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

38 – 2025
Page 4 of 4

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 39/2025

TITLE:	Reform of the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program to Eliminate Exclusion Policies and Address Service Gaps
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SUBJECT:	Health
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MOVED BY:	Chief Lorie Whitecalf, Sweetgrass First Nation, SK
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SECONDED BY:	Chief Erica Beaudin, Cowessess First Nation, SK
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DECISION:	Carried by consensus
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WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) states:
- 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 involve in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.
 - Article 24(2): Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right.
- B. The Indian Health Policy (1979) committed Canada to strengthen capacity and support First Nations-led health systems; however, the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program has failed to keep pace with evolving models of care or First Nations community needs and continues to impose restrictive exclusion policies that deny access to medically necessary care.
- C. NIHB coverage restrictions violate First Nations' Inherent and Treaty Rights to equitable healthcare and must be rescinded as per Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) Resolution 1094/2001 and AFN Resolutions 42/2024, *Treaty Medicine Chest Clause Political and Legal Strategy*, and 75/2024, *Non-Insured Health Benefits Medical Transportation Policy Discriminatory to First Nations*.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

39 – 2025
Page 1 of 3

- D. NIHB's exclusion policies deny coverage for medical care, and related supports based on location or circumstance, forcing First Nations to self-fund or forgo care, which undermines the portability of health rights and places Elders and citizens at risk, especially in situations involving medical transportation needs.
- E. NIHB's exclusion policies are not subject to transparent appeal or review, leaving First Nations with no recourse or creating inconsistent access across regions. Furthermore, exclusions contradict NIHB's mandate to provide access to medically necessary benefits that cause additional suffering to First Nations people and contribute to systemic service gaps that must be identified, tracked and remedied immediately.
- F. The 2025 Auditor General's Report entitled *Follow-up on Programs for First Nations* found that Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) has made unsatisfactory progress in closing health gaps and lacks accountability in addressing program deficiencies, including NIHB.
- G. The recent restructuring of ISC, effective September 2, 2025, was undertaken without prior engagement of First Nations leadership. Despite the stated objective of establishing a "one-ISC, single-window approach," this restructuring conflicts with the ISC department's mandate to support First Nations self-determination and service delivery, creating uncertainty regarding the governance and delivery of the NIHB program and risking further recentralization, reduced accountability, and service fragmentation.
- H. While the ISC restructuring relocated NIHB under the new Services to Individuals sector, First Nations have received no clear plan on how NIHB policy reform, including exclusions, will be addressed within this new structure.

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

1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to call upon Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to conduct and present an immediate, transparent review of all Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) exclusion policies, including Sections 12E and 12G of the NIHB Medical Transportation Framework, in full partnership with First Nations leadership and technical experts, and to demonstrate legislative, policy, and administrative factors that may limit or create barriers to implementing necessary program reforms.
2. Call upon ISC to suspend the application of NIHB exclusion policies in instances where they create barriers to accessing medically necessary care, particularly where ISC cannot clearly demonstrate that alternative public services are available and accessible within the affected region(s).
3. Call upon ISC to work in partnership with the AFN to establish an independent First Nations-led review and appeal mechanism within NIHB to ensure decisions related to coverage and exceptions are transparent, fair, and culturally safe.
4. Call upon ISC to track and publish denial and exception data by region and benefit type to identify systemic service gaps, and to communicate any current shortcomings in data tracking along with clear, time-bound action plans to address and mitigate these gaps immediately, ensuring policy reform is guided by community need.
5. Call upon ISC to provide dedicated resources to the AFN to contract an independent consultant to perform a cross-program evaluation of existing program exclusions, available resources elsewhere and identify gaps in service that must be remedied by ISC.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

39 – 2025
Page 2 of 3

6. Direct the AFN to urge ISC and the NIHB program to review, monitor, and analyze Jordan's Principle claims and utilization data to identify trends, highlight systemic gaps in NIHB coverage, and reduce reliance on Jordan's Principle as a workaround, ensuring that unmet health needs of First Nations children are met and that NIHB program gaps are addressed and mitigated, with findings reflected in publicly reported utilization statistics.
7. Direct the AFN to request ISC to report annually to the First Nations-in-Assembly on progress made toward NIHB exclusion policy reform, data transparency, and equitable service delivery.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

39 – 2025
Page 3 of 3

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 40/2025

TITLE:	Reinstatement of Ozempic as an Open Benefit under the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program
SUBJECT:	Health
MOVED BY:	Chief Shawn Longman, George Gordon First Nation, SK
SECONDED BY:	Chief Karen Bell, Ojibways of Garden River First Nation, ON
DECISION:	Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration), which Canada has a legal and moral obligation to implement, states:
- Article 24(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals. Indigenous individuals also have the right to access, without any discrimination, to all social and health services.
 - Article 24(2): Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right.
- B. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) *Calls to Action* states:
- Call to Action #19: We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long-term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.
- C. Due to historical and ongoing government-imposed health policies, First Nations people continue to face disproportionately high health challenges compared to the general population. The federal government

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

40 – 2025
Page 1 of 2

has an obligation to uphold its commitments to ensure First Nations people have non-discriminatory, timely, and equitable access to comprehensive health services, including preventative and chronic disease management.

- D.** The Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program provides registered First Nations and recognized Inuit people with coverage for a range of health benefits, including pharmaceuticals.
- E.** Ozempic (semaglutide) is a clinically proven glucagon-like-peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonist that stimulates insulin secretion and promotes fullness to reduce appetite. When used along with diet and exercise, it improves blood sugar control, reduces cardiovascular events (such as heart attack, stroke) and further kidney complications in adults diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.
- F.** A growing body of clinical evidence, including studies published in the Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology and British Columbia Diabetes Clinical Summary, demonstrates that Ozempic (semaglutide) provides significant benefits in weight loss, reducing risk of progression of type 2 diabetes and other weight-related chronic illnesses thereby improving health outcomes.
- G.** The reclassification of Ozempic (semaglutide) from the NIHB Program's open benefit to a limited benefit without an immediate acceptable GLP-1 receptor agonist alternative such as Wegovy (semaglutide), Saxenda (liraglutide) or Mounjaro (tirzepatide) introduces new access barriers that will lead to poorer health outcomes and increase health related costs associated with chronic diseases.

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

- 1.** Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to call upon Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and relevant pharmaceutical advisory committees (e.g., Canada's Drug Agency, ISC's Drugs and Therapeutics Advisory Committee, and the Indigenous Pharmacy Professionals of Canada) to immediately assess and evaluate the recent change in Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program coverage of Ozempic (semaglutide), and other glucagon-like-peptide-1 (GLP-1) agonist drugs, including its implications for access, affordability, and chronic disease management in First Nations communities, and to prioritize First Nations' health equity in all NIHB coverage decisions.
- 2.** Call upon the federal government to recognize the growing evidence that Ozempic (semaglutide) is an effective medication that supports cardiovascular protection, promotes weight loss, and helps prevent progression of type 2 diabetes and other chronic illnesses, and to reinstate its NIHB coverage as an open benefit until an acceptable GLP-1 receptor agonist alternative is available.
- 3.** Direct the AFN to engage First Nations communities and conduct a comprehensive assessment on how access to preventative medicine affects diabetes and other chronic disease outcomes, with a focus on equity, prevention, and long-term health impacts.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

40 – 2025
Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 41/2025

TITLE: Affirm Non-Insured Health Benefits Dental Program Independence from the Canadian Dental Care Plan

SUBJECT: Health

MOVED BY: Chief Edwin Ananas, Beardy's & Okemasis Cree Nations, SK

SECONDED BY: Proxy, Brian Hardlotte, Sturgeon Lake First Nation, SK

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007) (UN Declaration), outlines the rights and protections for Indigenous Peoples globally and was passed legislatively by Canada on June 21, 2021, particularly:
- i. 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 programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.
 - ii. Article 24(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals. Indigenous individuals also have the right to access, without any discrimination, to all social and health services.
 - iii. Article 24(2): Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right.
 - iv. Article 39: Indigenous peoples have the right to have access to financial and technical assistance from States and through international cooperation, for the enjoyment of the rights contained in this Declaration [including health services].

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

41 – 2025

Page 1 of 3

- B.** The *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* (2015) outlines specific steps to address the legacy of residential schools and advance reconciliation in Canada, specifically Calls-to-Action:
18. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties.
 19. We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess longer trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.
- C.** The *Summary Report on the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) National Dialogue Session* (2023), emphasizes the need for culturally safe, accessible, and preventative oral health care for First Nations by addressing systemic barriers.
- D.** The Office of the Auditor General of Canada (2025) found that Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) failed to make sufficient progress in improving health outcomes for First Nations and emphasized that federal programs must be strengthened to support First Nations-specific delivery models.
- E.** The NIHB Dental Program is a federally funded benefit, administered by ISC, to serve First Nations people as a distinct and culturally-appropriate oral health benefit and is rooted in the recognition of Treaty and constitutional rights to health services.
- F.** The Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP), introduced in May 2024, is designed to expand access to oral healthcare for Canadians, however, it does not reflect the same legal, cultural, or historical foundations as the NIHB Dental Program.
- G.** There are growing concerns about the NIHB Dental Program ever merging with the CDCP. Should this merger occur, the Government of Canada risks undermining First Nations people's distinct rights to self-determined, culturally-appropriate healthcare, diluting its legal obligations of the Crown, leading to a further erosion of trust by First Nations people.
- H.** The House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs 2022 report, *Moving Towards Improving the Health of Indigenous Peoples of Canada: Accessibility and Administration of the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program* (2022) reinforced the importance of maintaining the distinct nature of NIHB dental care to ensure culturally responsive care for Indigenous communities and aligns with First Nations' concerns about the erosion of Treaty rights and constitutional recognition, if NIHB dental services were merged into the CDCP.
- I.** The *Report for the Joint Review of Non-Insured Health Benefit* (2016) highlights significant systemic challenges, barriers to access, lack of transparency, and administrative inefficiencies that are relevant today, that will be exacerbated by merging the NIHB dental program into the CDCP.

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

1. Urge the Government of Canada to affirm its ongoing commitment and guarantee that the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Dental Program retains a distinct, First Nation-specific benefit, separate from the Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP), and reject any integration within the CDCP that may compromise the Government of Canada's legal and moral obligations to First Nations health and wellbeing.
2. Mandate the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to collaborate with the Indigenous Services Canada NIHB Dental Program and First Nations regional partners to strengthen this program by addressing and strengthening the longstanding and ongoing oral health access barriers and cultural safety challenges, as identified in the 2016 Joint Review report and the 2025 Auditors General report.
3. Mandate the AFN to ensure all federal health reforms, such as the CDCP, are guided by the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, and other reconciliation-aligned policy frameworks, to ensure First Nations peoples retain full authority to design, deliver, and govern their own health services, such as oral health.

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41 – 2025
Page 3 of 3

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 42/2025

TITLE: The Health of All Our Relations – First Nations Animals and Food Systems Health

SUBJECT: Environment, Health

MOVED BY: Byron Louis, Proxy, Lower Similkameen Indian Band, BC

SECONDED BY: Chief Robert Charlie-Tetlich, Inuvik Native Band, NT

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

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

- i. Article 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.
- ii. 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.
- iii. Article 20(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities.
- iv. Article 24(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals. Indigenous individuals also have the right to access, without any discrimination, to all social and health services.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

42 – 2025
Page 1 of 4

- v. Article 24(2): Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right.
 - vi. Article 29(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for Indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination.
 - vii. Article 31(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.
 - viii. Article 32(2): States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the Indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.
- B.** Zoonoses, animal diseases, and other diseases that are transferred to and amongst animals, alongside associated federal, provincial/territorial responses, disproportionately affect First Nations health, cultural and ceremonial practice and continuity, food sovereignty and safety, economic stability and security, and directly impact our Inherent and Treaty rights and rights protected by Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. These impacts are compounded by barriers to data access and culturally appropriate monitoring systems.
- C.** The links between animal health and human health, as well as the impacts of zoonoses and animal diseases on First Nations, have been recognized and affirmed by United Nations organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organization on Animal Health (WOAH) through the Quadripartite Secretariat for One Health.
- D.** Numerous circumstances increase animal vulnerability to diseases such as climate change, chemical contamination, infrastructure development and sewage release, habitat and biodiversity loss and degradation due to forestry, invasive species, mining, lagoons, and industrial agriculture and agri-food, which are pathways for disease spread and lead to stress and weakened immune systems in animals.
- E.** First Nations have, since time immemorial, relied on the animals, plants, and fungi we gather and consume for sustenance and ceremonial purposes. These wildlife resources given to First Nations by the Creator have important purposes in our ceremonies, songs, prayer, and traditional ways handed down from generation to generation.
- F.** First Nations are connected to all living things, we have upheld balance and sustainably managed our actions within our environments, lands, waters, and the biodiversity within since time immemorial, through

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exercising our Inherent rights and responsibilities, associated knowledge systems, processes involving Elders and youth, and traditional laws. This relational understanding forms the foundation of First Nations-led conservation and health frameworks.

- G.** First Nations have not been fully involved in the development of regulations and policies surrounding animal and plant health and diseases. To secure, maintain, and protect First Nations rights and interests, full, informed, equitable and meaningful participation in all policy and regulatory processes regarding animal, plant and fungi health and diseases with all levels of government is vital.
- H.** First Nations-in-Assembly have previously adopted Resolution 70/ 2010, *First Nations-Controlled Awareness, Training and Surveillance Programs for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)*, Resolution 13/2017, *Chronic Wasting Disease*, and Resolution 58/2018, *First Nations Responses to Chronic Wasting Disease*.
- I.** The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) has actioned these resolutions by coordinating with federal departments and agencies, calling for the closure of all game farms, and developing First Nations-specific communications tools.
- J.** There is a need to review and strengthen national responses to animal, plant and fungi health and diseases and for full partnership and the equitable and meaningful participation of First Nations with all levels of government in their efforts on biodiversity health and diseases that reflect First Nations priorities and knowledge.

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

- 1.** Call on the Government of Canada to recognize the multi-dimensional, interconnected, and interrelated nature of these critical issues and work in partnership with First Nations to develop comprehensive approaches to address each issue, in coordination with Ministers responsible for climate change, environmental protection, stewardship, conservation, animal health, and food sovereignty.
- 2.** Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to work collaboratively with First Nations, regional representative bodies, non-government organizations, industry, and all orders of government to:
 - a.** Call on the relevant federal Ministers and departments to provide adequate, long-term, and equitable funding to support First Nations, regions, and provincial and territorial organizations to develop, maintain, and strengthen their own surveillance, and wildlife, human, and food systems health programs as well as emergency response capacity for zoonotic outbreaks, Chronic Wasting Disease, and Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease across our lands and waters;
 - b.** Promote ongoing research to better understand the risks associated with animal, plant and fungi health and their links with food safety, sovereignty, and security, including climate-related and cross-border disease transmission, drawing on First Nations and Western sciences and ensuring research ethics uphold Indigenous data governance standards and respect First Nations data sovereignty, including through the First Nations principles of Ownership, Control, Access, Possession (OCAP®); and
 - c.** Develop and advocate for First Nations-specific communication tools and workshops to raise awareness about animal, plant, and food-systems health, ensuring that information is culturally

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relevant and accessible through sharing circles and story-telling, for example, to reach harvesters, Elders, and youth.

3. Direct the AFN to continue to deepen engagement with the appropriate Ministers and departments, such as the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Rural Economic Development, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Health, to work in full partnership and with the meaningful inclusion of First Nations to address animal health, advance food sovereignty, and support First Nations' full participation in all related dialogues.
4. Direct the AFN to report to the Advisory Committee on Climate Action and the Environment as well as the First Nations-in-Assembly on progress achieved under this resolution, including funding opportunities, remaining gaps, and recommendations.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

42 – 2025
Page 4 of 4

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 43/2025

TITLE: Support for First Nations-led Engagement on Medical Assistance in Dying

SUBJECT: Health, Justice, Accessibility/Disability, Medically Assisted Dying

MOVED BY: Chief Sheldon Kent, Black River First Nation, MB

SECONDED BY: Chief Mark McCoy, Batchewana First Nation, ON

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

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

- i. 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.
- ii. Article 24(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals. Indigenous individuals also have the right to access, without any discrimination, to all social and health services.
- iii. Article 24(2): Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right.

B. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, particularly Calls to Action #18 through #24 on Health, urge all levels of government to recognize and address the distinct health needs and rights of Indigenous Peoples. These Calls to Action emphasize closing the gaps in health outcomes between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people, recognizing the value of Indigenous healing practices, and upholding Indigenous Peoples' healthcare rights as identified in international law and under Treaties, in order to advance reconciliation and eliminate persistent health inequities.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

43 – 2025

Page 1 of 3

- C. In 2016, the Parliament of Canada amended the *Criminal Code* to legalize medical assistance in dying (MAID) under defined circumstances for adults suffering from grievous and irremediable medical conditions through Bill C-14, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make related amendments to other Acts (medical assistance in dying)*. In 2021, it enacted further amendments through Bill C-7, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying)* to expand eligibility beyond end-of-life contexts. These legislative changes removed the requirement that a person's natural death be reasonably foreseeable and created a two-track system of MAID safeguards, broadening access to MAID while introducing new safeguards for those not near end of life. Both of these legislative changes were enacted in response to court decisions that found the law unconstitutional.
- D. Parliament initially excluded persons suffering solely from a mental illness from eligibility for MAID, pending further study. Whereas that exclusion, originally set to be lifted in March 2023 was extended to March 2024, has been further extended and is now scheduled to be lifted on March 17, 2027. The Government appointed an Expert Panel on MAID and Mental Illness to review and make recommendations regarding MAID requests where mental illness is the sole underlying medical condition. Their 2022 Final Report of the Expert Panel on MAID and Mental Illness indicated that existing MAID eligibility criteria and safeguards, taken in conjunction with existing laws, standards and practices in related areas of health care provide an adequate structure for MAID and mental disorder so long as they are interpreted appropriately, while also identifying the need for the development of clinical guidance, education and training materials, and prospective review and oversight, would be critical to support the safe assessment of MAID in complex cases.
- E. As required by former Bill C-7, a Special Joint Committee on MAID (AMAD) conducted a Parliamentary review of the *Criminal Code* MAID provisions and their application, and issues relating to mature minors, advance requests, mental illness, the state of palliative care in Canada and the protection of Canadians with disabilities. AMAD released two reports in June 2022 and February 2023. In its two reports, AMAD recognized the importance of standards of practice, clear guidelines, adequate training, comprehensive assessments, and meaningful oversight for the safe implementation of MAID where mental illness is the sole underlying medical condition. In its 2023 report, AMAD stated that individuals whose sole medical condition is a mental disorder should have access to MAID provided they meet the eligibility criteria and practice standards are in place. AMAD also noted that people with disabilities need financial supports, better access to social supports, disability supports, and healthcare so that MAID is not seen as a way to relieve suffering due to poverty and lack of services.
- F. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN), in its 2025 Shadow Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN-CRPD), observed a severe lack of protection and culturally safe engagement for First Nations persons with disabilities in the context of MAID. The AFN noted that the absence of any First Nations-specific consultation on MAID represents a failure to uphold the principle of free, prior, and informed consent as affirmed in the UN Declaration. The Shadow Report further warned that insufficient health and social supports can effectively push some First Nations persons with disabilities toward MAID as an alternative to living with inadequate care, exposing a grave gap in Canada's implementation of its obligations under the CRPD.
- G. The UN CRPD expressed significant concerns about possible discrimination and bias in Canada's MAID regime in its Concluding Observations published in March 2025. The UN CRPD has urged the

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Government of Canada to halt the expansion of MAID and condemned the regime, raising concerns that the existing framework may be influenced by ableist assumptions that devalue the lives of persons with disabilities. The Committee emphasized that systemic failures, including inadequate access to health care, housing, and social support services, may lead individuals with disabilities to consider MAID not out of genuine choice, but due to lack of viable alternatives.

- H. Since 2023, Health Canada has disbursed over \$3.2 million to various First Nations, Inuit, and Métis organizations to support Indigenous-led community engagement on palliative care and MAID, and allocated a further \$1.2 million to convene a series of national dialogues, a national Indigenous knowledge exchange and an online survey. The objective of this engagement was to hear the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples in order to inform MAID policy and legislation. Involvement in discussions on MAID policy development by First Nations leadership and a coordinated national First Nations-led engagement process has yet to occur. This means that First Nations voices, perspectives and rights have not been adequately heard or addressed in the shaping of federal MAID policies and legislative amendments that impact First Nations individuals, families, and communities.
- I. There is no comprehensive, whole-of-government engagement approach with respect to MAID that reflects free, prior and informed consent and true nation-to-nation accountability to First Nations. The failure to undertake a First Nations-specific, coordinated engagement across federal departments on MAID is inconsistent with Canada's stated commitments to a nation-to-nation relationship and shared development of health policies. This gap undermines the ability of First Nations to exercise their jurisdiction over health and end-of-life matters and does not uphold the standards of consultation and consent required by the UN Declaration and the Government of Canada's own obligations to First Nations.

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

- 1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to seek and secure funding from Health Canada, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), and all other relevant federal departments to support a national First Nations-led engagement process of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID).
- 2. Direct the AFN, contingent upon the availability of such funding, to initiate, coordinate, and co-develop with First Nations-in-Assembly this process in a manner that upholds First Nations rights to self-determination in health, be rooted in the First Nations values, including life promotion, cultural safety, ancestral knowledge, and equitable access to care across the lifespan, and include distinctions-based engagement sessions, to enable the full participation of First Nations (including persons with disabilities, caregivers, parents, grandparents, Indigenous women, matriarchs, seniors, and Elders) in these dialogues and to create space and resources for First Nations to participate in regional processes to inform the national dialogue.
- 3. Direct the AFN to publish a comprehensive report summarizing the outcomes of the First Nations-led engagement on MAID.
- 4. Direct the AFN to collaborate and work across federal departments, including but not limited to Health Canada, ISC, Justice Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada, and Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada to ensure that all MAID-related federal policies, programs, and legislative initiatives incorporate and reflect cultural protocols, perspectives, needs, and recommendations articulated through this First Nations-led engagement.

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 44/2025

TITLE:	Restoring and Enhancing First Nations Elementary and Secondary Education Funding
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SUBJECT:	Education
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MOVED BY:	Chief Don Smoke, Dakota Plains First Nation, MB
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SECONDED BY:	Tyrone McNeil, Proxy, Sq'ewlets (Scowlitz) First Nation, BC
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DECISION:	Carried by consensus
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WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) states:
- 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.
 - Article 14(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
 - Article 14(2): Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.
 - Article 14(3): States shall, in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for Indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.
 - 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.

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44 – 2025
Page 1 of 4

- B. Education is a fundamental human right. For First Nations, this right is uniquely situated within a framework of Inherent Rights that are constitutionally protected under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.
- C. From 1996 to 2015, the federal government maintained a 2 percent (%) annual cap on the national funding formula for all programs and services for First Nations. This restrictive measure exacerbated the chronic underfunding of First Nations education systems, despite the rapid demographic growth of communities.
- D. The decades of educational inequities have had lasting impacts on the socio-economic conditions of First Nations. Education remains a critical investment to close these historical gaps and stimulate economic development. Equitable access to education and training for First Nations would, according to the 2022 National Indigenous Peoples Economic Development Strategy, generate an additional \$8.5 billion in annual revenues and increase Canada's gross domestic product by \$27.7 billion annually, confirming that education is a lever for sustainable growth.
- E. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Call to Action #7 calls upon Canada to “develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.”
- F. The TRC Call to Action #8 calls upon Canada to “eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on reserves and those First Nations children being educated off reserves.”
- G. The Government of Canada implemented First Nations K-12 Transformation in 2019 according to the principles outlined in the *Policy Proposal: Transforming First Nations Elementary and Secondary Education, 2017*, which was co-developed between the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and the Government of Canada. The first phase was to implement the Interim Regional Funding Formula (IRFF), which ensured First Nations receive core funding for K-12 education on a similar cost basis as provincial schools, with adaptations. The second phase is for First Nations to negotiate Regional Education Agreements (REAs) based on their unique programming needs and designed to be flexible and responsive to communities’ specific realities.
- H. In accordance with AFN Resolution 65/2017, *New Interim Funding Approach for First Nations Education*, AFN Resolution 20/2021, *First Nations Control of Federal Funding* and, the *Policy Proposal: Transforming First Nations Elementary and Secondary Education, 2017*, the Government of Canada is required to work directly with First Nations to ensure that regional education funding approaches are agreed upon and reflect the diverse needs and circumstances of First Nations learners, schools, communities, and education organizations.
- I. Since 2022, the Government of Canada has failed to allocate an adequate amount of money toward signing and implementing new REAs, resulting in a growing backlog of fully negotiated but unimplemented REAs. Consequently, only 10 REAs have been signed to date, while the Government of Canada had initially committed to signing 20 agreements by 2023.
- J. Indigenous Services Canada’s (ISC) ongoing inability to organize and sustain the REAs tables is further reflected by the withdrawal of 10 groups from the process of signing REAs and the disengagement of 29 others, underscoring the urgent need for renewed commitment and coordination from ISC.

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Cindy Woodhouse

- K.** In nearly seven years, ISC has failed to take the necessary steps to update its IRFF to reflect a real needs-based funding approach, as demonstrated in signed REAs. This inaction has prevented the IRFF from meeting the unique needs of First Nations and achieving the minimum provincial comparability required to meaningfully improve First Nations education systems.
- L.** In July 2025, Prime Minister Carney announced plans to reduce departmental operational spending by up to 15 percent by 2029. The Government has committed that these reductions will not apply to provincial and territorial transfer payments, citing that transfer payments are necessary to support essential health, education, and child welfare services. However, despite their role in funding the same essential services for First Nations, ISC is set to face a 2% cut.
- M.** ISC communicated to First Nations that both funding protection for communities whose education budgets decreased post-Transformation and targeted ancillary student supports would be terminated immediately, weeks after the 2025-26 school year had already begun.
- N.** ISC has halted several REA negotiation tables after years of work.
- O.** These recent developments regarding education funding cuts directly affect the educational success of First Nations students and further exacerbates regional inequities by compromising equitable access to quality education for all First Nations youth, regardless of where they live.
- P.** The 2025 AFN *First Nations K-12 Education Transformation Review and Costing Analysis* demonstrates that existing funding enhancements to the IRFF underestimate the true costs of delivering education for First Nations by more than \$10,000 per student, with larger gaps in remote fly-in communities.
- Q.** The AFN 2025 Pre-Budget Submission identifies that an investment of \$4.23 billion is needed to implement REAs that meet the actual funding and program needs of First Nations education systems.

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

- 1.** Reaffirm that jurisdiction over First Nations education remains with each First Nation.
- 2.** Call on the Government of Canada to:
 - a.** Support existing regional educational models/approaches;
 - b.** Restore support for all Regional Education Agreements (REA) negotiation tables;
 - c.** Provide the necessary funding to finalize and implement education agreements that reflect First Nations' unique circumstances and needs;
 - d.** Ensure no further reductions are made to First Nations' education funding in subsequent years; and
 - e.** Support needs-based models, including but not limited to funding approaches.
- 3.** Call on the Government of Canada to maintain previous commitments for 'funding protection' policies, including the 1.5 percent annual reduction.

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44 – 2025
Page 3 of 4

4. Call on the Government of Canada to reinstate the targeted student ancillary support for all students at the \$500 (in 2021 dollars) per student funding level for the 2025-26 school year to help students access essential materials.
5. Call on the Government of Canada to continue working with regional technical tables to ensure the Interim Regional Funding Formulas are updated to capture the true costs of First Nations education.
6. Call on the Minister of Indigenous Services Canada to meet with the Chiefs Committee on Education to discuss and co-develop decision-making protocols by August 2026 on any changes to Indigenous Services Canada education program funding.
7. Affirm that nothing in this resolution is meant or shall be interpreted to diminish, limit, impact or supersede the ability of a First Nation or Region to exercise their inherent jurisdictions, to exercise and fulfill their rights and authorities under Treaties, or to engage in their unique relationship with Canada.
8. Call upon the Government of Canada to immediately revise and enhance the First Nations education funding formula to fully recognize and reflect the realities of remote and fly-in First Nations, including: significantly higher operational costs, northern transportation challenges, staffing shortages, specialized learning needs, and the urgent requirement for increased funding to support students living with disabilities, development syndrome, learning differences, and other special needs, and to provide sustained resources to hire qualified educational assistants, mental-health workers, therapists, and support staff necessary to ensure our students receive needs-based, sustainable, and adequate funding.

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44 – 2025
Page 4 of 4

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 45/2025

TITLE: Support for a First Nations Approach to Artificial Intelligence

SUBJECT: Data Sovereignty, Languages, Culture, Health

MOVED BY: Chief Jennifer Brake, Qalipu First Nation, NL

SECONDED BY: Chief Ira McArthur, Pheasant Rump Nakota First Nation, SK

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

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

- i. Article 3: Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
- ii. Article 21(1): Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.
- iii. 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 programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.
- iv. Article 31(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

45 – 2025
Page 1 of 4

- B. Article 1 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development* stipulates “the right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized.”
- C. The *Indigenous Languages Act* states that the Government of Canada recognizes that the rights of Indigenous Peoples are recognized and affirmed by Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, including rights related to Indigenous languages.
- D. Some regions may recognize First Nations language rights through regional language regulations.
- E. Education and language are a fundamental human right. For First Nations, these rights are uniquely situated within a framework of Inherent and Treaty Rights that are constitutionally protected under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.
- F. In the last decade, artificial intelligence (AI) has been responsible for breakthroughs in medical research, cultural preservation, scientific analysis, and economic development.
- G. The use and valuation of AI has grown exponentially since 2020 and is predicted to continue to do so in the coming years. The technology is now well established and unlikely to become less relevant.
- H. Non-First Nations actors, institutions, and companies have begun showing interest in the commercial development of AI for First Nations’ intellectual, scientific, and cultural property.
- I. Building First Nations’ capacity in computing science takes decades; partnerships with researchers and developers who respect First Nations’ ways of being can provide immediate support. However, without specific regulations, non-First Nations researchers have appropriated First Nations knowledge and data for profit, offering little back to communities. In some cases, non-First Nations individuals have used data without authorization to produce products that misrepresent First Nations languages and culture.
- J. AI enables easy analysis of massive amounts of data; as a result, an economy based around the collection and use of data has emerged.
- K. However, data centers that are required for the generation of AI technology require significant amounts of water and electricity, with potential negative impacts on the lands, waters, resources, and ecosystems of First Nations.
- L. United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/78/265 underscores the need to respect human rights throughout the lifecycle of AI systems. There is a critical need to ensure the respect of the rights of First Nations in this regard to avoid the perpetuation of colonial harm.
- M. The Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador adopted a position on AI and digital ethics in 2025 through their paper *The Digital Territory of First Nations Quebec-Labrador*, focusing on transparency, risk mitigation, benefit sharing, promotion of First Nations knowledge and culture, digital sovereignty, authorization, accountability, and democratic participation.
- N. In May 2025, the first Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation, the Honourable Evan Soloman, was appointed. In September 2025, the Minister, through Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), announced the formation of an AI Strategy Task Force.

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- O.** Canada is currently building a national AI strategy. During October 2025, ISED held an open invitation for consultation. The department also convened an AI Strategic Task Force comprising leaders in the field of AI technology and ethics. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) does not have representation on this council.
- P.** Currently, few regulations exist in Canada regarding the use of, development of, and profiting from AI systems. While Canada did, on February 11, 2025, sign onto the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law (Framework Convention), the Framework Convention does not consider the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

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

- 1.** Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Chiefs Committee on Languages to work with other relevant AFN sectors and Chiefs Committees to develop a national strategy on the use and governance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and First Nations data, that includes the identification of areas of benefit and concern, by December 2026.
- 2.** Call on the AFN to submit to the Government of Canada a First Nations developed policy with strict regulations to protect and empower the use of First Nations data/data governance in AI, in line with First Nations principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP®). These regulations should:
 - a.** Ensure transparency of how any AI is created and operated;
 - b.** Guarantee that First Nations are compensated for the use of their data and knowledge;
 - c.** Promote the responsible sharing of First Nations knowledge and culture; and
 - d.** Secure data and digital sovereignty.
- 3.** Call on the Government of Canada to ensure any regulations regarding AI respect First Nations autonomy and self-determination.
- 4.** Call on the Government of Canada to acknowledge and collaborate with First Nations to address the instances—particularly in international contexts—where First Nations’ unique rights and perspectives are not considered, such as Canada’s signing onto the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law.
- 5.** Call on the Government of Canada to ensure, as it looks to expand the use of AI to create efficiencies in the delivery of government services, that it obtains the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of any First Nations who may be impacted by that use, particularly as it relates to First Nations accessing benefits and essential services (e.g., Access to Information requests, Jordan’s Principle, and Non-Insured Health Benefits).
- 6.** Affirm that First Nations will control what data of theirs is shared and how it is governed, and who may access data products.
- 7.** Affirm that a national strategy on AI is not intended to detract or hinder First Nations from advancing their regional or local AI approaches.
- 8.** Call upon the Government of Canada to prioritize and designate dedicated funding for First Nations-led AI and Natural Language Processing (NLP) language revitalization projects across all national AI investment

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programs, including those administered through Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), the Canada Research Coordinating Committee, and the Pan-Canadian AI Strategy. Such funding should:

- a. Be consistent with, and adequate to uphold, the principles of OCAP®; and
 - b. Recognize Indigenous languages as requiring equitable inclusion within Canada's national investment priorities.
- 9. Call upon Global Affairs Canada and the Canadian Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (CCUNESCO) to work collaboratively with First Nations to advance international partnerships, research networks, and policy frameworks that strengthen the global AI industry's support for Indigenous languages, including:
 - a. Championing Indigenous language revitalization within the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) AI ethics, digital heritage, and Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) programs; and
 - b. Promoting international standards that protect Indigenous linguistic data from misuse, misrepresentation, and extraction.

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45 – 2025
Page 4 of 4

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 46/2025

TITLE: Re-establishing Inter-Tribal Harvesting Protocols

SUBJECT: Rights, Environment

MOVED BY: Chief Cheryl Casimer, ʔaq̓am, BC

SECONDED BY: Chief Heidi Gravelle, yaq̓it ʔa·knuq̓il'it, BC

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

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

- 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 24(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals. Indigenous individuals also have the right to access, without any discrimination, to all social and health services.
- iii. Article 25: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.

B. The Ktunaxa Nation Governments have collectively issued a Land Declaration affirming the Ktunaxa Peoples' Inherent, sovereign rights, and inalienable title to the whole of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa; lands that the Ktunaxa have used and occupied since time immemorial. Further, declaring the Ktunaxa right/responsibility to govern and steward Ktunaxa territory in accordance with Ktunaxa laws and traditions, and the right to use and occupy Ktunaxa lands and waters to decide how Ktunaxa lands will be used, and share in the wealth that comes from our lands.

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46 – 2025
Page 1 of 2

- C. Ktunaxa Peoples are stewards of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. Ktunaxa people know their responsibilities and assert that they are accountable to: ʔa·knumuʔtiʔiʔ (Ktunaxa law), ʔa·kxamʔis qapi qapsin (all living things) and ʔamak Ɂ wuʔu (land and water), the ancestors, youth, and the Creator.
- D. Ktunaxa people are intimately connected to the flora, fauna and resources; to the waterways and those that live within. Ktunaxa people are on the land and waters, acting as guardians and are responsible for reporting abuses of ʔa·knumuʔtiʔiʔ to the Ktunaxa Governments.
- E. An unprecedented number of non-Ktunaxa peoples have been found harvesting resources such as medicinal plants and other materials within ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa without authorization and in a manner that has caused harm to the resources.
- F. Ktunaxa medicines are integral to the Ktunaxa health and wellbeing, spirituality and integrated into daily life. Ktunaxa have strict rules on how medicines are to be used.
- G. These non-Ktunaxa harvesters have disregarded traditional protocols between Nations, disrespected Ktunaxa rights to protect and conserve Ktunaxa medicines and failed to respectfully seek permission for harvesting.

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

- 1. Recognize and affirm the Inherent right of First Nations Peoples to defend their territories, govern according to their own laws, establish and uphold inter-tribal protocols governing access to, and limitation of, harvesting of plants, animals and other materials, within their territories.
- 2. Call upon all First Nations to recognize historic treaties between Nations by offering education to their people on how to respect the harvesting laws and protocols of other Nations, and how to seek consent before accessing resources within another Nation's territory.
- 3. Direct the Assembly of First Nations to gather samples of educational materials on harvesting laws and protocols that can be used to raise awareness and promote respect for inter-tribal protocols, and to share best practices rooted in First Nations' law and stewardship.
- 4. Direct the National Chief and Assembly of First Nations to advocate for recognition of inter-tribal harvesting protocols in federal, provincial, and territorial policy and law, consistent with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

46 – 2025
Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 47/2025

TITLE: Federal Support for First Nations-led Off-Reserve Data Collection through the First Nations Information Governance Centre and its Regional Partners

SUBJECT: Data Governance, Health, Education, Treaty Rights,

MOVED BY: Chief Calvin Bruneau, Papaschase First Nation, AB

SECONDED BY: Marcel Donio, Proxy, Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek (Sand Point), ON

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) affirms the right of Indigenous Peoples to participate in decision-making on matters that affect them (Article 18); the right to the improvement of their economic, social and health conditions (Article 21); the right to determine their own priorities for development (Article 23); the right to be consulted and to give free, prior and informed consent before activities affecting their lands and resources (Article 32(2)); and, the right to maintain and develop their own institutional structures, systems, and practices (Article 34).
- B. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (UNDA) Action Plan (2023) commits Canada to concrete measures for advancing reconciliation and implementing the rights affirmed in the UN Declaration—including those aimed at addressing injustices, prejudices, violence, systemic racism and discrimination, upholding self-determination and self-government, recognizing and implementing Treaties, and realizing the economic, health, and social rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- C. Measure 30 of the UNDA Action Plan commits Canada to support First Nations-led survey and data collection strategies that directly contribute to the implementation of the UN Declaration—by strengthening the ability of First Nations to collect, govern, and use their own data in accordance with their laws, priorities, and worldviews.
- D. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, through Calls to Action #18 and #19, urges governments to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Indigenous Peoples as affirmed in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties, and to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

47 – 2025
Page 1 of 2

- E. The First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) was incorporated in 2010 following the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Resolution 48/2009, *First Nations Information Governance Stand Alone Centre*, to promote, protect, and advance the First Nations Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP®) principles, and the Inherent right to self-determination and jurisdiction in research and information management.
- F. The FNIGC envisions that every First Nation will achieve data sovereignty in alignment with its distinct world view. First Nations need accurate reliable culturally relevant data on all First Nations persons in all regions, regardless of residence.
- G. The FNIGC has successfully supported First Nations in the development, design, and collection of national surveys that are culturally relevant and reflective of the needs and priorities of First Nations persons living on-reserve including the First Nations Regional Health Survey, the First Nations Labour and Economic Development Survey, the First Nations Regional Early Childhood, Education and Employment Survey, and is currently developing the First Nations Regional Social Survey.
- H. The Indigenous Peoples Survey (IPS) is national survey delivered by Statistics Canada for Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) on the social and economic conditions of families and children of First Nations persons living off-reserve, Métis and Inuit, aged one year and older.
- I. ISC has paused funding for the development of the 2027 IPS.

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

1. Call on Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to use the pause in funding to the Indigenous Peoples Survey (IPS) to remove First Nations data collection from the IPS.
2. Call on ISC to direct adequate resources to the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) to work with its regional partners to expand its current data collection initiatives to include First Nations persons living off-reserve to address an impending critical gap on the First Nations data landscape.
3. Direct the FNIGC to act as stewards of the regional data from all past iterations of the IPS as well as the new First Nations-led data collection efforts that will replace the First Nations component of the IPS and, where appropriate, to repatriate all past community-specific IPS data to each respective First Nation in Canada through FNIGC's partners.
4. Direct Statistics Canada and ISC to work with the FNIGC to support the new approach to data collection that would replace the First Nations component of the post-Census IPS until the First Nations-led approach to enumeration has been realized.
5. Call on the Government of Canada to provide sufficient, sustainable funding for the full implementation of the First Nations Data Governance Strategy, prioritizing the establishment of a national network of fully functional Regional Information Governance Centres, along with a fully functional National Centre to coordinate the network at the national level, enabling all First Nations to govern and use their own data and information locally, regionally, and nationally with the necessary capacities to facilitate First Nation-led enumeration and other long-term First Nations data priorities.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

47 – 2025
Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 48/2025

TITLE:	Honouring the Legacy of Elijah Harper through a Monument and AFN Advocacy
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SUBJECT:	Culture, Heritage, Commemoration
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MOVED BY:	Chief Samuel Knott, Red Sucker Lake Anisininew Nation, MB
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SECONDED BY:	Chief Walter Harper, Wasagamack Anisininew Nation, MB
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DECISION:	Carried by consensus
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WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* affirms the right of Indigenous Peoples to maintain, protect, and develop the past, present, and future manifestations of their cultures, including historical sites, monuments, and memorials.
- B. Elijah Harper, of Red Sucker Lake Anisininew Nation, stood with quiet strength and moral clarity during the Meech Lake Accord debates, at a time when the voice of First Nations was too often silenced. His single word, "NO", became a defining affirmation of the sovereignty and dignity of First Nations peoples across this country.
- C. Elijah Harper's leadership transcended politics; it embodied humility, integrity, and service to his people. He demonstrated that even one First Nations leader, guided by the wisdom of his ancestors and the strength of his Nation, could alter the course of Canadian history.
- D. Across Canada, monuments have been raised to colonial figures whose legacies are marked by harm to First Nations peoples. It is both just and fitting that First Nations leaders who embodied courage and integrity, such as Elijah Harper, be publicly honoured with the same permanence and prominence.
- E. A monument to Elijah Harper will not only mark his legacy but will stand as a beacon to future generations reminding them that the voices of First Nations peoples can and must shape the future of this Land.
- F. To bring this vision to life requires a coordinated national effort, with the full weight of the Assembly of First Nations and its regional leadership engaged in advocacy and partnership with governments and philanthropic allies.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

48 – 2025
Page 1 of 2

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

1. Call on all levels of government to formally honour the late Elijah Harper by supporting the establishment of a permanent public monument in Winnipeg, Manitoba, to be developed in consultation with the Harper family, proponents, and the appropriate jurisdictions.
2. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to call on the Government of Canada, the Province of Manitoba, the City of Winnipeg, and philanthropic partners to secure dedicated funding for the monuments design, construction, and long-term stewardship.
3. Direct the AFN to work jointly with the Regional Chief for Manitoba to support the Harper family and proponents in advancing this initiative and leading lobbying efforts for funding, ensuring the process reflects humility, respect, and the highest regard for Harper's legacy.
4. Direct the AFN to report back to the First Nations-in-Assembly on progress, ensuring that this work is advanced with transparency, accountability, and reverence.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

48 – 2025
Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 49/2025

TITLE: Protecting the Sacred Calving Grounds of the Porcupine Caribou Herd from Oil and Gas Development

SUBJECT: Environment, Rights

Moved BY: Chief Pauline Frost, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, YT

SECONDED BY: Chief Elizabeth Wright, Teetl'it Gwich'in Band Council, NT

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) states:
- i. Article 3: Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
 - ii. 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.
 - iii. Article 20: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities.
 - iv. Article 32(2): States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the Indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.
- B. The Gwich'in Nation, spanning what is now known as Alaska, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories, and the Na-Cho Nyäk Dün and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in in the Yukon, have relied on the Porcupine Caribou Herd to meet their nutritional, cultural, and spiritual needs.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

49 – 2025
Page 1 of 3

- C. The Porcupine Caribou Herd, with between 100,000 and 200,000 animals, is one of the last healthy migratory barren ground caribou herds in North America.
- D. The Gwich'in, Na-Cho Nyäk Dün and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, have the Inherent right to continue their way of life, and this right is recognized and affirmed by Article 1 of both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which reads, in part, "In no case may a people be deprived of their own means of subsistence."
- E. The vital importance of the continued well-being of the Porcupine Caribou Herd through management of the herd and its habitat is acknowledged in the Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement (1985) and the Agreement Between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States of America on the Conservation of the Porcupine Caribou Herd (1987); both of which the Government of Canada is a signatory.
- F. The Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in northeastern Alaska, the critical calving and post-calving grounds of the Porcupine Caribou Herd, has been under threat from proposed oil and gas development for decades in the United States.
- G. The entire Gwich'in Nation was called together by their Chiefs in Arctic Village in 1988 to carefully address this issue and to seek the advice of Elders. This resulted in Gwich'in of every community from Arctic Village, Venetie, Fort Yukon, Beaver, Chalkyitsik, Birch Creek, Stevens Village, Circle, and Eagle Village in Alaska; and from Old Crow, Teet'it Zheh, Tsiigehtchic, Aklavik, and Inuvik in Canada, deciding by consensus to oppose proposed oil and gas development in the sacred calving grounds of the Porcupine Caribou Herd.
- H. The Parties to the Porcupine Caribou Management Agreement (1985) representing users of the herd in Canada, have collectively spoken in opposition of oil and gas development in the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.
- I. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) First Nations-in-Assembly passed multiple resolutions expressing their unanimous support for the Gwich'in Nation and their protection of the Porcupine Caribou Herd, including resolution 61/2015, *Prohibit Development in the Calving and Post-Calving Groups of the Porcupine Caribou Herd*; 110/2016, *Support the Protection of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge*; 24/2017, *Prohibit Oil and Gas Exploration and Development in the Sacred Calving Grounds of the Porcupine Caribou Herd*; and 17/2020, *Support for First Nations Climate Leadership, Food Sovereignty, Environmental Protection, Stewardship and Conservation*.
- J. Since the first term of United States (US) President Trump, oil and gas development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge has been mandated through US legislation, initially via the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, and subsequently through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025 during his second term.
- K. While former Prime Minister Trudeau committed to helping safeguard the Porcupine Caribou Herd calving grounds in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge through the Roadmap for a Renewed United States-Canada Partnership, the same commitment has not yet been made by Prime Minister Carney and his government.
- L. The current renewed threat facing the Porcupine Caribou Herd and its habitat by the US Government is serious and urgent. Oil and gas development is mandated under US law despite the lack of free, prior and informed consent of the Gwich'in, Na-Cho Nyäk Dün and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, and the Trump

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

49 – 2025
Page 2 of 3

Administration has declared a National Energy Emergency that enables the fast-tracking of permits for energy and critical mineral projects, further weakening environmental protections and accelerating industrial development, even in ecologically and culturally sensitive areas.

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

1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to support efforts aimed at upholding the Inherent rights of the Gwich'in, Na-Cho Nyäk Dün and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, to self-determination and providing permanent protection of the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.
2. Direct the AFN to advocate with Prime Minister Mark Carney to commit to safeguarding the Porcupine Caribou Herd calving grounds in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

49 – 2025
Page 3 of 3

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 50/2025

TITLE: Direct Funding to the Dene Nation (NWT Region) for All Fiscal Transfers Including Child Welfare Compensation and Long-term Reform

SUBJECT: Child Welfare, Fiscal Relations

Moved BY: Chief Lorraine MacDonald-Tthebatthie, Denesūliné Dene First Nation, NT

SECONDED BY: Chief Robert Charlie-Tetlich, Inuvik Native Band, NT

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) recognizes the Inherent and Treaty rights of Dene First Nations, as affirmed in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, particularly Articles 3, 21, and 23, emphasizing the right to self-determination and equitable access to resources.
- B. The Crown has historically acknowledged the sovereignty of First Nations through the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and subsequent treaties established on a Nation-to-Nation basis.
- C. The Dene Nation entered international peace and friendship Treaties #8 and #11, affirming that direct Indian reservations would not be established north of 60°, as confirmed in the "Paulette case" of 1973.
- D. Current funding structures in the Northwest Territories funnel Dene funding through the Government of the Northwest Territories, which distributes these funds according to public government priorities, often misaligned with the immediate needs and wishes of Dene communities.
- E. The Dene Nation has consistently asserted the necessity for direct access to funding, particularly regarding child welfare compensation and long-term reforms.
- F. The Dene Nation acknowledges and respects the rights of its member communities, Regions, and Self-Governing Nations, committing to not impede or interfere in any way with rights holders regarding timely and transparent distribution of funds received directly.
- G. The First Nations-in-Assembly passed Resolution 87/2024, *Ensuring Fair and Equitable Inclusion of the Northwest Territories in the Child Welfare Compensation and Long-Term Reform Final Settlement Agreement*, at the AFN Special Chiefs Assembly in Ottawa, Ontario, in December 2024, calling for the

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

50 – 2025
Page 1 of 2

AFN and the National Children's Chiefs Committee (NCCC) to fully include the Northwest Territories (NWT) in any National Final Settlement Agreement addressing child welfare compensation and long-term reform, and Jordan's Principle recognizing the unique needs and rights of Dene communities in these critical discussions.

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

1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to advocate to the Government of Canada for direct funding to the Dene Nation and the Northwest Territories Region for all fiscal transfers, including but not limited to, child welfare compensation and long-term reform and Jordan's Principle.
2. Emphasize the Inherent right of Dene communities to receive funding directly, without intermediaries, in alignment with their Treaty rights and Inherent sovereignty.
3. Urge ongoing dialogue and negotiation with relevant federal and territorial bodies with the Dene Nation and Dene communities to establish direct funding agreements that honor the rights and responsibilities of Dene communities.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

50 – 2025
Page 2 of 2



SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 51/2025

TITLE:	Recognition and Respect of First Nations Inherent Right to Jurisdiction over Child and Family Services across Regional Boundaries
SUBJECT:	Children and Families
MOVED BY:	Kukpi7 Michael Christian, Splatsin, BC
SECONDED BY:	Chief Lynn Kenoras-Duck Chief, Adams Lake Indian Band, BC
DECISION:	Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

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

- i. 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.
- ii. Article 7(2): Indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and shall not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence, including forcibly removing children of the group to another group.
- iii. Article 8(2): States shall provide effective mechanisms for prevention of, and redress for:
 - (a) any action which has the aim or effect of depriving them of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities.
- iv. Article 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.
- v. Article 22(1): Special attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of Indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration.
- vi. 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

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

51 – 2025
Page 1 of 4

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.

- vii. Article 37: Indigenous peoples have the right to the recognition, observance and enforcement of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements concluded with States or their successors and to have States honour and respect such treaties, agreements, and other constructive arrangements.
- B. First Nations have a sacred responsibility for their children and possess the Inherent right of jurisdiction over the care and wellbeing of their children and families that arises from their pre-existence as sovereign and self-governing peoples, pre-dating the establishment of the colonial state in Canada.
- C. The Inherent right of First Nations to oversee the wellbeing of their children, youth and families is affirmed and protected under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.
- D. Through a process of legislative genocide, Crown governments justified the forced removal and assimilation of First Nations children under federal, provincial, and territorial laws, resulting in the vast overrepresentation of First Nations children and youth in the child welfare system and the oppression of First Nations traditional methods of child rearing and legal orders.
- E. In response to the ongoing removal of their children, the Splatsh Indian Band passed the *By-law for the Care of Our Indian Children #3-1980* to reaffirm and assert Splatsh jurisdiction over the care and welfare of their own children, and First Nations in British Columbia (BC) organized to oppose Crown jurisdiction over their children through the Indian Child Welfare Caravan. For over 45 years, Splatsh and other First Nations in BC and across Canada have continued to assert their Inherent rights and jurisdiction over the care and wellbeing of their children, youth and families.
- F. Through the process of devolution, delegated Indigenous child welfare authorities were created and intended to support First Nations to have greater authority over the care and wellbeing of their children and families. However, these authorities have been restrained by provincial and territorial child welfare legislation and inequitable funding from Canada, resulting in the ongoing removal of First Nations children and a misalignment with First Nations legal orders.
- G. *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families* (the Federal Act) came into force on January 1, 2020, affirming the Inherent right of First Nations to enact laws in relation to child and family services and that such Inherent rights are protected under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.
- H. The Federal Act requires that an Indigenous Governing Body give notice and make reasonable efforts to enter into a coordination agreement with Canada and the government of each province or territory in which it intends to exercise legislative authority and jurisdiction over child and family services, for the First Nation's child and family services law to be recognized as paramount over the provincial or territorial law. This has created a patchwork of First Nations laws across provincial and territorial boundaries that are not uniformly recognized.
- I. Despite having Inherent and legal jurisdiction over child and family wellbeing, First Nations who have enacted child and family services laws continue to have their jurisdiction and laws ignored by provincial governments and by Indigenous child welfare authorities operating under provincial laws.

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- J.** The disregard and disrespect for First Nations child and family services laws by certain provinces, and Indigenous child welfare authorities operating under provincial laws, has the effect of further displacing and disconnecting First Nations children and their families from their culture, identity and communities, and in some cases, fracturing Nation-to-Nation protocols by bolstering 'divide and conquer' processes.
- K.** The cultural genocide and assimilation of First Nations children and families will not be remedied until First Nations inherent jurisdiction, rights, and legal orders in relation to child and family services and wellbeing are fully recognized and respected by all Crown governments and Indigenous child welfare authorities operating under provincial laws, regardless of regional boundaries.

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

- 1.** Call on Canada and all provinces and territories to recognize and respect the Inherent and legislative jurisdiction of First Nations who have enacted child and family services laws, regardless of regional boundaries, and to immediately collaborate with willing First Nations on the development of interprovincial and territorial coordination agreements through the establishment of a streamlined process, and to remove arbitrary and systemic barriers to First Nations exercising their jurisdiction regardless of geographical location.
- 2.** Call on the Government of Canada, provinces, and territories to provide long-term, sustainable, stable, and predictable funding and resources to First Nations who are exercising their inherent and legislative jurisdiction under the *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families* (the Federal Act) to ensure they may exercise this jurisdiction across regional boundaries.
- 3.** Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to urge the Government of Canada, provinces, and territories to recognize, respect, and uphold the inherent and legislative jurisdiction of First Nations over their children and families, and to advocate for adequate and sustainable resources for First Nations to exercise this jurisdiction.
- 4.** Call on the Government of Canada, all provinces and territories, and direct the AFN to ensure that implementation of the Federal Act across all regions recognizes and respects the inherent jurisdiction and authority of First Nations child and family services laws regardless of geographical location and without delays or interference from provincial and territorial governments, or Indigenous child welfare authorities operating under provincial laws.
- 5.** Affirm that First Nations rights, title, and jurisdiction shall be recognized and respected by Indigenous child welfare authorities providing child and family services on behalf of First Nations and Indigenous governments.
- 6.** Call upon the Judiciary of Canada, including all provincial and territorial courts, to recognize and affirm the inherent and legislated jurisdiction of First Nations over their children, youth, and families in all judicial proceedings regardless of regional boundaries.
- 7.** Urge Canada, in full partnership with First Nations, to establish mandatory judicial education for all courts on First Nations inherent jurisdiction, legal orders, Nation-based kinship systems, customary law, and child and family wellbeing laws.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

51 – 2025

Page 3 of 4

8. Call on Canada and the provinces and territories to work directly with First Nations to ensure that they are affirming and recognizing the paramountcy of First Nations laws over conflicting provincial or territorial legislation.
9. Demand all provinces and territories, when engaged, to ensure that any placement, guardianship, and permanency decisions involving First Nations children uphold First Nations' legal orders and Inherent rights, and that such decisions must not be made without consultation and cooperation, and the free, prior, and informed consent of the child's First Nation government or Indigenous Governing Body.
10. Advocate for the creation of mechanisms to address situations where courts or provincial/territorial systems fail to recognize First Nations jurisdiction, to ensure First Nations' Inherent rights are upheld and that children are not further displaced from their families, communities, cultures, and Nations.
11. Call on the AFN to report on this resolution's progress annually to the First Nations-in-Assembly to ensure improvement for, and accountability to, our children.
12. Call on the Prime Minister to convene a First Ministers' meeting as per the Prime Minister's commitment to the First Nations-in-Assembly on December 3, 2025, and to include Indigenous governing bodies at this meeting to ensure that their issues will be discussed.
13. Call on provincial and territorial governments to work respectfully with Indigenous governing bodies to ensure the recognition and implementation of First Nations laws in provincial and territorial legislation related to child welfare.
14. Call on Canada, the provinces, the territories, and all Indigenous child welfare authorities to recognize and uphold First Nations' inherent jurisdiction over data relating to their children and families, including ownership, control, access, possession (OCAP) and stewardship of such data, consistent with the First Nations principles of OCAP® and the standards set out in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

51 – 2025
Page 4 of 4

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 52/2025

TITLE:	Opposition to “Treat and Release” Toxic Tailings and all Environmental Racism
SUBJECT:	Environment, Lands, Water, Rights, Governance
MOVED BY:	Chief Billy-Joe Tuccaro, Mikisew Cree First Nation, AB
SECONDED BY:	Chief Kelsey Jacko, Cold Lake First Nation, AB
DECISION:	Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. All First Nations are the Indigenous Peoples of what is now Canada, and they exercise political authority through their own Inherent governments and Nation processes.
- B. All First Nations have a direct Nation-to-Nation relationship with the Crown and, as such, are the representatives of their Nations in all Crown-First Nation relations.
- C. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is a not-for-profit corporation, which was established on September 29, 1970, through a letters patent and articles of incorporation, as an advocacy body not a representative political or decision-making institution.
- D. Through this advocacy body, the AFN, the First Nations are seeking strategic and political support to combat environmental racism and industrial contamination across what is now Canada.
- E. Several First Nations in Alberta, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories have depended on the Peace Athabasca Delta and the Athabasca River system since time immemorial.
- F. Contaminants, toxins, and carcinogens from the Athabasca Oil Sands have been identified in the Athabasca River since at least 2012.
- G. Cancer rates in Fort Chipewyan, where Mikisew Cree First Nation and Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation have their reserves, are increasingly elevated as compared to the general population.
- H. There are 1.4 trillion litres of toxic tailings in tailings “ponds” which the province of Alberta is seeking federal approval to “treat and release” into the Athabasca River.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

52 – 2025
Page 1 of 2

- I. There are other threats to water and land across Canada that disproportionately affect First Nations in a form of environmental racism.
- J. Many First Nations, including Mikisew Cree First Nation, are calling for a coordinated and national advocacy against environmental racism in all its forms, focused on the proposed “treat and release” of toxic tailings that could affect several First Nations downstream from the oil sands.
- K. The matters in this Resolution are emergent in nature, impacting the Treaty Rights and survival of all First Nations, and implementation must be addressed.
- L. The AFN has agreed not to speak for First Nations except where and how explicitly authorized to do so.

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

- 1. Oppose the proposed treat and release of toxic tailings into the Athabasca River and oppose environmental racism in all its forms.
- 2. Call-upon the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to meet with all First Nations affected by environmental racism (“Affected First Nations”), including Mikisew Cree First Nation, and not to allow these meetings to occur without direct representation from the Affected First Nations.
- 3. Request that the AFN arrange meetings between those Affected First Nations and federal government officials and not allow any such meetings without direct representation, as requested, from the Affected First Nations.
- 4. Direct the AFN to advocate for direct funding to First Nations’ technical, legal and advocacy capacity, to shift the resource imbalance between affected First Nations and industry/government.
- 5. Direct the AFN to provide a copy of this Resolution to the federal government as soon as possible, prior to the next Assembly.
- 6. Require the AFN to obtain explicit consent from any Affected First Nations to assist in advancing their interests.
- 7. Direct the AFN to commit to full transparency with the Affected First Nations.
- 8. Record the outcomes of this Resolution consistent with AFN’s existing procedures to ensure transparency and accountability.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

52 – 2025
Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 53/2025

TITLE: Support for International Partnership with Indigenous Peoples on
Joint Climate and Biodiversity Action

SUBJECT: Environment, Rights

MOVED BY: Judy Wilson, Proxy, Osoyoos Indian Band, BC

SECONDED BY: Chief Robert Charlie-Tetlich, Inuvik Native Band, NT

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

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

- i. Article 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own Indigenous decision-making institutions.
- ii. Article 25: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relations with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters, and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.
- iii. Article 29(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection without discrimination.
- iv. Article 32(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.

B. Indigenous Peoples worldwide have experienced consistent patterns of historical injustices resulting from the colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories, and resources, and the doctrines, policies and practices that continue to the present day.

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53 – 2025

Page 1 of 3

- C. International solidarity and collaboration amongst Indigenous Peoples have been immensely important in a shared struggle against colonialism, including the drafting, advocacy, and eventual adoption of the UN Declaration in 2007 by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly.
- D. Dialogue and collaboration between Indigenous Peoples worldwide continue to be a source of inspiration and strategy in support of the struggle to end all forms of colonialism, to seek redress for the injustices suffered by Indigenous Peoples to date, and to realize the full implementation and respect for the UN Declaration.
- E. There is global recognition that our world is facing a climate crisis, interlinked with crises of biodiversity loss and pollution, which is articulated in several reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), as well as the First Nations-in-Assembly's Declaration of a First Nations Climate Emergency, reaffirmed in 2023.
- F. The climate crisis is significantly altering First Nations' relationships with the lands the Creator has bestowed upon First Nations and upon which First Nations have inalienable rights as entrenched in Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, affirmed in the UN Declaration, and confirmed in Treaties and other constructive arrangements between First Nations and the Crown.
- G. On a global scale, the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss are borne disproportionately by Indigenous Peoples, threatening the physical, cultural, and spiritual well-being of Indigenous communities, particularly rural and remote communities, women and children, those identifying as two spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual (2SLGBTQIA+), as well as persons with disabilities.
- H. In the face of this crisis, First Nations have been active leaders, both domestically and internationally, drawing on the science, knowledge, and ways-of-life shared by Elders, Knowledge Keepers, men, women, youth, and leadership to advance First Nations-led solutions that restore balance with the natural world, including through numerous resolutions from the First Nations-in-Assembly.
- I. Through Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Resolution 36/2023, *Urgent and Transformative Climate Action through the AFN National Climate Strategy*, the First Nations-in-Assembly called for the AFN, among other directives, to use the AFN National Climate Strategy in international contexts as an advocacy tool.
- J. The AFN has been amplifying First Nations priorities through the AFN National Climate Strategy at international fora such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), as well as other multilateral negotiations on plastic pollution and biodiversity beyond national jurisdictions.
- K. Based on Canada's commitment to both the Paris Agreement and the G7 2030 Nature Compact, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) has established the Partnering for Climate initiative, a portion of which allocated \$15 million over 5 years that support Indigenous climate action through partnerships between Indigenous Peoples in Canada with Indigenous Peoples in developing countries.
- L. The Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) is a regional organization founded in 1992 by Indigenous Peoples' movements, committed to the promotion and defense of Indigenous Peoples' rights and human rights and articulating issues of relevance to Indigenous Peoples in the Indo-Pacific region.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

53 – 2025
Page 2 of 3

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

1. Reaffirm that First Nations' knowledge systems, teachings, and ways of life serve as valuable contributions in addressing climate change strategies and form the foundation of First Nations climate and biodiversity action.
2. Support the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to advocate for First Nations internationally in line with the AFN National Climate Strategy, guided by the Advisory Committee on Climate Action and the Environment, and other relevant AFN Chiefs Committees, and to report back to the First Nations-in-Assembly on relevant updates and outcomes.
3. Direct the AFN to call on Canada to fund the full and effective participation of First Nations in multilateral agreements, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and to conduct regional information sessions to support their direct involvement, capacity building, strengthen coordination, and to expand the diversity of First Nations representation in multilateral processes.
4. Support the AFN to partner with the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) to create dialogue between First Nations and Indigenous Peoples in the Indo-Pacific on biodiversity, climate action, and nature-based solutions, considering the importance of:
 - a. Strengthening the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' knowledge systems, worldviews, and values as contributions to addressing the climate and biodiversity crises;
 - b. Advancing the recognition and protection of Indigenous Peoples' rights, particularly their right to self-determination;
 - c. Prioritizing the voices of Indigenous women, youth, and gender-diverse peoples in climate and biodiversity action; and
 - d. Strengthening Indigenous Peoples' representation in climate change and biodiversity forums and intergovernmental fora.
5. Call on Canada to provide stable, direct funding to First Nations for biodiversity and climate actions and to develop meaningful partnerships with Indigenous Peoples globally, including through international climate and biodiversity finance mechanisms.
6. Express solidarity with Indigenous Peoples around the world as they advocate for the recognition, protection, and implementation of their inherent rights, re-affirmed in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

53 – 2025
Page 3 of 3

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 54/2025

TITLE: Affirming First Nations Rights to Identify their Citizens: Bill S-2, *An Act to Amend the Indian Act*

SUBJECT: Indian Act, Citizenship

Moved BY: James Cutfeet, Proxy, Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug, ON

SECONDED BY: Allan Brown, Proxy, Wapekeka First Nation, ON

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) Articles 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 33, and 37, affirm that Indigenous Peoples have the right to self-determination; the right to autonomy and self-government; the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social, and cultural institutions; the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation; the right to belong to and determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their own customs and traditions; and the right to treaties, agreements, and constructive arrangements with States to be recognized and honoured.
- B. The UN Declaration states:
 - i. Article 33(1): Indigenous Peoples have the right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions.
 - ii. Article 33(2): Affirms the right of Indigenous Peoples to determine the structures and responsibilities of their institutions.
- C. The *Indian Act* registration provisions under Sections 6(1) and 6(2), known as the “second-generation cut-off rule,” continue to impose colonial definitions of identity that undermine First Nations’ inherent jurisdiction over Indian Status, create division within families and First Nations, erode Treaty responsibilities owed by Canada, and place significant fiscal strain on First Nations governments.
- D. On May 29, 2025, Bill S-2, *An Act to Amend the Indian Act (new registration entitlements)*, was introduced in the Senate. Bill S-2 aimed to address some of the ongoing inequities in registration and band membership by:

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

54 – 2025
Page 1 of 3

- i. Restoring or extending registration eligibility for many descendants of people who were enfranchised under previous provisions of the *Indian Act*;
 - ii. Providing an option for individuals to deregister from the Indian Registrar;
 - iii. Supporting the restoration of natal band membership for some women and their descendants who lost membership due to discriminatory provisions of the *Indian Act*; and
 - iv. Removing certain outdated terms from the *Indian Act*.
- E. On November 25, 2025, the Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous Peoples (Committee) concluded its study of Bill S-2 and recommended that the Senate pass Bill S-2 with key amendments to the *Indian Act* to address the issue of the second-generation cut-off rule. These amendments:
 - i. Deemed individuals previously registered under subsection 6(2) to be registered under the new paragraph 6(1)(f), effectively making all 6(2) individuals eligible for 6(1) Indian Status; and
 - ii. Established a one-parent rule for Indian Status transmission, thereby eliminating the second-generation cut-off rule.
- F. In addition to these legislative amendments, the Committee included non-binding observations recommending that the Government of Canada:
 - i. Remove the statutory bar to compensation for First Nations who have experienced discrimination under the *Indian Act*, enabling them to seek compensatory measures from the Government of Canada without resorting to litigation; and
 - ii. Establish a statutory commitment to provide adequate, sustainable, and predictable funding to First Nations to administer the new regulations regarding new registrants for Indian Status, citizenship, and membership.
- G. If the Senate and House of Commons agree to these amendments, the changes will restore legal Indian Status and benefits to individuals previously excluded under discriminatory provisions of the *Indian Act*.
- H. Bill S-2 does not resolve Canada's longstanding infringement on First Nations' Inherent and Treaty rights to define citizenship and membership according to First Nations laws, customs, and decision-making structures. Full implementation of First Nations' jurisdiction and self-determination is required for the *Indian Act* to be fully compliant with First Nations' Inherent and Treaty rights, title, and jurisdiction, as affirmed in Section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, and the UN Declaration.
- I. First Nations affirm that any national change to the registration provisions must be guided by regional First Nations-led processes and must not infringe upon First Nations' inherent jurisdiction over citizenship and membership.
- J. First Nations also affirm that the Inherent right to self-government, recognized and affirmed by Section 35, of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, includes jurisdiction in relation to citizenship and membership. This includes power and authority to create, implement, and enforce First Nations' own laws relating to Indian Status, citizenship, and membership.
- K. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Resolution 68/2024, *Call for Prioritization of Collaboration on the Second-Generation Cut-Off Rule* reaffirms that First Nations, not Canada, hold the exclusive authority to

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determine citizenship. It further states that amendments to Bill S-2 must be developed in full partnership with First Nations and include stable, long-term, and adequate funding for implementation.

- L. First Nations assert that any amendments to Bill S-2 must proceed with appropriate First Nations-led implementation structures, and that federal changes must not infringe upon First Nations' jurisdiction over citizenship.

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

1. Acknowledge that Bill S-2 addresses one of the most harmful discriminatory provisions in the *Indian Act*, including enfranchisement and the second-generation cut-off, that will lead to legislative extinction of First Nations, but affirm that these changes do not fully eliminate sex- and race-based discrimination in the *Indian Act*.
2. Call on Canada to immediately and without delay end any and all sex- and race-based discrimination in the *Indian Act* to prevent the legislative extinction of Status Indians and First Nations, and take steps to recognize and facilitate the exercise of First Nations' inherent jurisdiction over citizenship and membership.
3. Assert that any federal changes to Indian registration must not infringe upon First Nations' sovereign authority to determine citizenship and membership, and further that any amendments will not proceed without adhering to the constitutional principle of the duty to consult and free, prior, and informed consent.
4. Call upon the House of Commons, the Senate, and the Government of Canada to ensure that any amendments or implementation of Bill S-2 proceed with the understanding that First Nations have inherent jurisdiction over citizenship and membership.
5. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to advocate for the immediate co-development of a First Nations-led, federally funded National Implementation Framework once Bill S-2, as amended, passes. The Framework must include established timelines, responsibilities, dispute resolution mechanisms, funding, and accountability measures, co-governed by First Nations rights-holders to determine how best to implement First Nations jurisdiction over membership and citizenship. The development of this framework will be guided by opt-in National and Regional First Nations Tables, to be determined by First Nations.
6. Demand that Canada commit to targeted, ongoing, stable funding to offset any potential fiscal impacts of increased registration, including transitional, short-term, and long-term funding for governance, registration administration, housing, health, education, social services, infrastructure, and other essential supports.
7. Call upon Canada to resource a First Nations-led national communications and outreach strategy for impacted families and rights-holders, including legal supports, culturally appropriate information materials, and public education led by First Nations.

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54 – 2025
Page 3 of 3

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 55/2025

TITLE: Support for the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance Standard

SUBJECT: Environment, Mining, Rights

MOVED BY: Melvin Hardy, Proxy, Namaygoosisagagun/Collins First Nation, ON

SECONDED BY: Chief Jenny Brake, Qalipu First Nation, NL

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

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

- i. Article 21(2): States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of [Indigenous peoples'] economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of Indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.
- ii. Article 26(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.
- iii. Article 29(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for Indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination.
- iv. Article 29(2): States shall take effective measures to ensure that no storage or disposal of hazardous materials shall take place in the lands or territories of Indigenous peoples without their free, prior and informed consent.
- v. Article 32(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.
- vi. Article 32 (2): States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with Indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources,

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

55 – 2025

Page 1 of 3

particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.

- B. Since time immemorial, First Nation peoples have held rights to our lands and resources, including water and air. Similarly, we also hold sacred responsibilities to govern, care for, and steward our territories and resources. This includes the right to be informed and to participate in decision-making processes that impact upon our rights and responsibilities.
- C. The Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA) is a global non-governmental organization focused on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards in mining. IRMA is committed to protecting people and the environment directly affected by mining by providing assessment standards that:
 - i) support the creation of conditions in which the mining industry respects the human rights and aspirations of affected communities;
 - ii) provide safe, healthy and supportive workplaces;
 - iii) minimize harm to the environment;
 - and iv) leave positive legacies.
- D. IRMA's membership includes seven auto manufacturers, some of the world's largest mining companies, jewelers, global trade unions, Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and representatives of the investment and finance sectors unified in their vision to develop and use the most robust mining standard in their activities for the energy transition.
- E. The IRMA Standard for Responsible Mining ('IRMA Standard') was developed over more than 10 years, with input from First Nations and numerous other organizations. The IRMA Standard defines best practices for what responsible mining should look like at the industrial scale. It provides the list of expectations that independent auditors will use as the benchmark for responsible mines.
- F. The IRMA Standard requires independent audits to assess social and environmental performance at mine sites globally. These audits are built on transparency, inclusive governance, and thoroughness that speak directly to the fulfilment of ESG requirements and provide audits that are unmatched for reliability in the assessment of all key components of producing mines.
- G. The IRMA Standard requires proponents of new mines to demonstrate their securing of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) of First Nation communities, as set out in the UN Declaration.
- H. In 2024, the Chiefs-in-Assembly of three province-wide First Nations organizations in British Columbia (the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs; the First Nations Summit; and the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations) passed resolutions endorsing the IRMA Standard.
- I. On July 22, 2025, IRMA released, for worldwide consultation, a draft update to its mining standard titled, *IRMA Standard for Responsible Exploration, Extraction and Processing of Minerals*, also known as "IRMA Standard V2.0". The consultation period ends October 22, 2025. Revision and finalization of the revised IRMA Standard V2.0 is expected in early-mid 2026.

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

- 1. Encourage dialogue amongst First Nations to review and assess the implications of the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance Standard for Responsible Mining (IRMA Standard) prior to any endorsement by the First Nations-in-Assembly, and call on the Government of Canada to support and adopt the IRMA Standard in collaboration with First Nations.

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55 – 2025
Page 2 of 3

2. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to seek funding to engage with Canada in a timely manner to promote consistency between mining laws, related policies, and directives are consistent with the IRMA Standard.
3. Direct the AFN to call on the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to fully recognize and uphold First Nations' Inherent and constitutionally-protected Aboriginal title and rights, self-determination and governance in all matters related to mining, including the right of free, prior, and informed consent, before any exploration, development, or extractive activities on or near First Nations lands and waters.
4. Direct the AFN to provide a progress report on endorsements of the IRMA Standard by First Nations to the First Nations-in-Assembly at the earliest opportunity.

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55 – 2025
Page 3 of 3

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 56/2025

TITLE: First Nations-led Critical Minerals Strategy

SUBJECT: Economic Development, Environment

MOVED BY: Chief Kelsey Jacko, Cold Lake First Nation, AB

SECONDED BY: Chief Jenny Brake, Qalipu First Nation, NL

DECISION: Carried; 7 opposed; 6 abstentions

WHEREAS:

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

- i. Article 3: Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
- ii. 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.
- iii. Article 20 (1): Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities.
- iv. Article 26 (1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.
- v. Article 26 (2): Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.
- vi. Article 32(1): Indigenous Peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands, territories and other resources.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

56 – 2025

Page 1 of 3

- vii. Article 32(2): 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 prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.
 - viii. Article 32(3): States shall provide effective mechanisms for just and fair redress for any such activities, and appropriate measures shall be taken to mitigate adverse environmental, economic, social, cultural or spiritual impact. This section provides the background information for the resolution.
- B. First Nations have the Inherent right and responsibility to steward and govern their lands, waters, and natural resources, including critical minerals, according to their laws, customs, and values.
 - C. The federal government of Canada has identified critical minerals as a key strategic sector in its 2022 Critical Minerals Strategy, prioritizing resource development to meet global demand for clean energy transition, defense, and high technology applications.
 - D. Despite being disproportionately impacted by extractive activities, First Nations continue to be excluded from key decision-making processes, revenue sharing, and benefit agreements related to critical mineral exploration, extraction, and processing.
 - E. The British Columbia (BC) First Nations Energy and Mining Council's Critical Minerals Strategy, developed through extensive engagement with over 250 First Nations leaders and technicians in BC, outlines 50 recommendations to ensure First Nations' leadership and benefit in critical mineral development, emphasizing environmental protection, socio-economic development, clean energy, and land rights.
 - F. There is an urgent need for a national, First Nations-led Critical Minerals Strategy that positions First Nations to lead and benefit from critical mineral development on their lands and waters through mechanisms such as equity ownership, environmental oversight, workforce development, and knowledge-sharing.
 - G. A national First Nations-led Critical Minerals Strategy will enhance First Nations' economic participation in the critical minerals value chain through mechanisms including equity ownership, revenue sharing, impact benefit agreements, Indigenous procurement policies, workforce training and certification programs, and the creation of First Nations-owned processing infrastructure.

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

1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to immediately develop a national First Nations Critical Minerals Strategy that is grounded in the principles of self-determination, free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC), as based on our right to self-determination and environmental stewardship with guidance from First Nations, relevant Chiefs committees such as the Chiefs Committee on Economic Development (CCED) and the Advisory Committee on Climate Action and the Environment (ACE), and relevant technical experts.
2. Direct the AFN to seek funding for and establish a First Nations Critical Minerals Task Force comprised of regional First Nations leaders, technical experts, youth, and Elders to guide the development and

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

56 – 2025
Page 2 of 3

implementation of the Strategy in a manner that includes regional knowledge, perspectives, and best practices, and to provide updates on the development of the Strategy to the First Nations-in-Assembly.

3. Call upon the federal government to fully recognize First Nations inherent jurisdiction and governance over their lands, waters, and resources, and to engage in co-development of any national policy or legislation related to critical minerals with First Nations rights- and title- holders.
4. Urge federal, provincial, and territorial governments to ensure that no critical mineral projects proceed without the FPIC of impacted First Nations, consistent with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and existing case law.
5. Direct the AFN to seek funding from Natural Resources Canada, Infrastructure Canada, and other relevant federal departments to support First Nations capacity building in mineral governance, environmental monitoring, and clean technology innovation.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

56 – 2025
Page 3 of 3

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 57/2025

TITLE: Condemning Canada's Specific Claims Research Funding Cuts

SUBJECT: Specific Claims, Lands

MOVED BY: Chief Dalton Silver, Sumas First Nation, BC

SECONDED BY: Judy Wilson, Proxy, Osoyoos Indian Band, BC

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

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

- i. Article 8(2)b: States shall provide effective mechanisms for prevention of, and redress for any action which has the aim or effect of dispossessing them of their lands, territories or resources.
- ii. Article 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own Indigenous decision-making institutions.
- 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 27: States shall establish and implement, in conjunction with Indigenous peoples concerned, a fair, independent, impartial, open and transparent process, giving due recognition to Indigenous peoples' laws, traditions, customs and land tenure systems, to recognize and adjudicate the rights of Indigenous peoples pertaining to their lands, territories, and resources, including those which were traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used. Indigenous peoples shall have the right to participate in this process.
- v. Article 28(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to redress, by means that can include restitution or, when this is not possible, just, fair and equitable compensation, for the lands, territories and

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

57 – 2025
Page 1 of 3

resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, taken, occupied, used or damaged without their free, prior and informed consent.

- vi. Article 28(2): Unless otherwise freely agreed upon by the peoples concerned, compensation shall take the form of lands, territories and resources equal in quality, size and legal status or of monetary compensation or other appropriate redress.
- B. The specific claims process is one of the few mechanisms available for First Nations to exercise their right to redress for historical breaches by the Crown, and specific claims research funding is a fundamental access to justice pathway to the process.
- C. According to data provided by Canada's specific claims research funding agency to the National Claims Research Directors, since at least 2021, total annual demand for the Specific Claims Research Funding Program has increased steadily to 34.5 million in 2025-2026 against a program envelope of \$12 million; this has left First Nations and their mandated Claims Research Units (CRUs) oversubscribed and underfunded.
- D. In the 2025/2026 fiscal year, Canada unilaterally altered allocation methods for the \$12 million in research funding available according to a unilaterally devised and non-transparent process which allocated funding to individual First Nation applicants, and then to mandated CRU applicants with the result that:
 - i. Individual First Nations applicants have received insufficient funding (25 percent less than the maximum claim allowance of \$40,000 per claim and, on average, 50-75 percent less than they requested); and
 - ii. CRUs have received severe and debilitating cuts to their budgets (up to 83 percent), directly impacting 80 percent of all First Nations claims in research and development.
- E. In October 2025, the National Chief wrote on an urgent basis to Prime Minister Mark Carney regarding the unilateral allocation of Specific Claims Research Funding. Deputy Minister of Crown – Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), Valerie Gideon wrote the National Chief indicating that CIRNAC had allocated an additional \$2 million for the 2025/2026 fiscal year, however, this top-up does not remedy systemic shortfalls.
- F. As of April 1, 2026, the Specific Claims Research Funding Program will revert to \$4 million per year due to sunseting of the already inadequate \$8 million top-up that First Nations have come to expect since 2019.
- G. This funding cut will curtail First Nations ability to research and advance specific claims, precipitate closures of First Nation–mandated CRUs, push unresolved grievances into costly litigation, and further undermine trust between First Nations and Canada.
- H. Canada's actions contravene the UN Declaration, breach the Honour of the Crown, and contradict public commitments to reconciliation and meaningful redress. Adequate, publicly-funded specific claims research and development is essential to remedy historic breaches of Crown promises, Treaties, and other agreements.

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

1. Unequivocally condemn Canada's decision to cut the Specific Claims Research Funding Program to \$4 million per year, which effectively denies meaningful access to justice for First Nations.
2. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief, the Portfolio Holder for Lands, and the Chiefs Committee on Lands, Territories and Resources to coordinate with First Nations and the National Claims Research Directors on an urgent advocacy campaign.
3. Direct the National Chief to call on Canada to commit to immediately increase the specific claims research funding envelope, starting in the 2026-2027 fiscal year, to reach a minimum of \$35 million to better reflect First Nations actual needs and to ensure First Nations are able to exercise their right to redress for their historical losses through their delegated claims research organizations or directly as they so choose.
4. Direct the National Chief to call on the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations to co-develop, in full partnership with First Nations, a reformed specific claims research funding model that is transparent, equitable, needs-based, and grounded in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Treaty rights, and First Nations' right to choose their own representatives and research mechanisms.
5. Call on Canada to maintain a \$35 million research funding envelope until a reformed specific claims research funding model has been fully co-developed and endorsed by First Nations.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

57 – 2025
Page 3 of 3

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 58/2025

TITLE:	Affirmation of Indigenous Jurisdiction and Recognition of the Quatsino First Nation Declaration of Title and Relationship
SUBJECT:	Rights, Governance, Nation-Building
MOVED BY:	Marilyn Morash, Proxy, Quatsino First Nation, BC
SECONDED BY:	Alkina Aleck, Proxy, Fountain Band (Xaxli'p Council), BC
DECISION:	Carried by consensus

WHEREAS

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) was formally endorsed by the Chiefs-in-Assembly through Resolution 37/2007, *Support and Endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which committed to its full implementation within First Nations laws, governance, and Nation-to-Nation agreements.
- B. First Nations-in-Assembly reaffirmed this commitment through Resolution 40/2021, *Recognition of Governance and Treaty Governance*, directing the Assembly of First Nations to support the development of a self-governed First Nations institution that would give force and effect to the provisions of the UN Declaration. The UN Declaration has since been affirmed by Canada and adopted into law in British Columbia and the Northwest Territories recognizing and affirming, amongst other rights, the Inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples to own, use, develop, and control their lands, territories, and resources.
- C. Quatsino First Nation upholds a sacred and ancestral relationship with its lands, waters, air, and all life within its territory—a relationship not based on ownership or dominion, but on person-to-person relationality as relatives, governed by principles of responsibility, care, and reciprocity.
- D. Quatsino First Nation has declared its inherent, pre-existing, and unceded jurisdiction through the Quatsino Declaration of Title and Relationship, which affirms that all elements of the natural world are living relations and that law flows from the obligations these relationships entail.
- E. Despite the commitments made by Canada and the provinces and territories, federal, provincial and territorial implementation has lacked operational clarity and has yet to embed First Nations' jurisdiction in a

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

58 – 2025

Page 1 of 2

manner that reflects First Nations laws, spirituality, and systems of governance.

- F. Supporting First Nations' declarations such as Quatsino's is essential to future-proofing reconciliation efforts and grounding them in the spiritual, legal, and cultural foundations of Nations themselves.

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

1. Recognize and affirm, in principle, the Quatsino First Nation Declaration of Title and Relationship as a sacred and sovereign expression of inherent Indigenous governance and law, rooted in kinship and spiritual relationship with land, water, air, and resources, and acknowledge the importance of self-determination in defining such relationships.
2. Call upon the federal, provincial and territorial governments to co-develop, with the full participation and leadership of First Nations' rights holders, operational frameworks under the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and relevant legislation, that recognize and give effect to First Nations laws, authorities, and jurisdiction as foundational to shared governance and legal pluralism.
3. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to seek funding to initiate, within one year, a national First Nations-led roundtable series on spiritually grounded governance systems, and to establish a working group to support the development and implementation of title declarations and their legal application across Nations.
4. Encourage all First Nations to continue advancing and affirming their own declarations of title and relationship, grounded in their distinct legal orders and governance systems, as expressions of Nationhood and care for future generations.
5. Acknowledge that many First Nations are already advancing declarations of title and relationship grounded in their distinct legal systems and sacred responsibilities to land.
6. Direct the AFN to advocate for the full legal recognition, enforceability, and resourcing of First Nations' jurisdiction.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

58 – 2025
Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 59/2025

TITLE: Strategic Direction on Land Restitution and Compensation

SUBJECT: Lands, Specific Claims, Additions to Reserve

MOVED BY: Chief Dalton Silver, Sumas First Nation, BC

SECONDED BY: Judy Wilson, Proxy, Osoyoos Indian Band, BC

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

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

- i. 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.
- ii. Article 26(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.
- iii. Article 27: States shall establish and implement, in conjunction with Indigenous peoples concerned, a fair, independent, impartial, open and transparent process, giving due recognition to Indigenous peoples' laws, traditions, customs and land tenure systems, to recognize and adjudicate the rights of Indigenous peoples pertaining to their lands, territories, and resources, including those which were traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used. Indigenous peoples shall have the right to participate in this process.
- iv. Article 28(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to redress, by means that can include restitution or, when this is not possible, just, fair and equitable compensation, for the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied, used or damaged without their free, prior and informed consent.

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59 – 2025
Page 1 of 3

- v. Article 28(2): Unless otherwise freely agreed upon by the peoples concerned, compensation shall take the form of lands, territories and resources equal in quality, size and legal status or of monetary compensation or other appropriate redress.
- B. For generations, First Nations have advocated for fair, independent, impartial, open and transparent processes to resolve the Crown's outstanding legal obligations related to First Nations' lands, territories and resources. First Nations have also expressed deep frustration with the Government of Canada's failure to return lands in an efficient and timely manner in fulfilment of outstanding legal obligations and community needs.
- C. Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Resolution 09/2020, *Jointly Develop a Fully Independent Specific Claims Process*, mandates the AFN to co-develop with the Government of Canada and First Nations a fully independent specific claims process that reflects the UN Declaration and the Honour of the Crown by removing the Minister's conflict of interest.
- D. In November 2022, then Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) Minister Marc Miller publicly committed the Government of Canada to co-developing a fully independent specific claim process with First Nations and the AFN through the establishment of an Independent Centre for the Resolution of Specific Claims (the Independent Centre).
- E. In July 2024, in recognition of the diminishing timeline to establish the Independent Centre under the previous government, First Nations-in-Assembly directed the AFN to pursue immediate policy-based reforms alongside continuing to work jointly with the Government of Canada to develop a fully independent specific claims process through Resolution 11/2024, *Ensuring Access to Justice for Specific Claims through Policy Reform*.
- F. AFN Resolution 10/2024, *Advancing Additions to Reserve Reform*, mandates the AFN to work with First Nations to advance transformative reforms to the Additions to Reserve (ATR) Policy to create a faster, more effective process that respects diverse land regimes, regional realities, and First Nations priorities such as those related to outstanding legal obligations.
- G. At the December 2024 Special Chiefs Assembly, then CIRNAC Minister Gary Anandasangaree announced interim changes to the ATR Policy to enable greater flexibility and committed to pursuing fundamental reform in collaboration with First Nations. There is an ongoing need to coordinate reform of the ATR and Specific Claims Policies and processes to ensure that First Nations can achieve financial compensation and land restitution in an efficient and timely manner.
- H. As directed by Resolution 10/2024, the AFN continues to participate in the CIRNAC Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to advance a transformative ATR Policy that respects First Nations' diverse priorities and land regimes.
- I. During the 2025 election campaign, Prime Minister Mark Carney reaffirmed Canada's commitment to implementing the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (UNDA) and the UNDA National Action Plan. Failure to fulfill this commitment perpetuates historical injustices and undermines reconciliation efforts.
- J. As of 2024, Canada reported \$26 billion in contingent liabilities related to its unresolved legal obligations to First Nations, with over 3 million acres owed to First Nations through Treaty Land Entitlement and specific

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Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

59 – 2025
Page 2 of 3

claim settlements. To advance its ambitious national growth agenda, Canada must first take meaningful steps to address its monetary and land-based obligations to First Nations including via the resolution of specific claims and the return of lands.

- K. The AFN, with the guidance of the Chiefs Committee on Lands, Territories and Resources (CCoLTR) and the Council of Experts in Indigenous Laws (CEIL), has convened two national gatherings of First Nations leadership, technicians, and knowledge keepers to advance the self-determined assertion of Indigenous laws, legal orders, and traditions in relation to land restitution and equitable compensation. These gatherings constitute a critical national forum for the revitalization and restitution of First Nations laws and legal orders.

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

1. Reaffirm the generational calls for a fully independent specific claims process that removes Canada's conflict of interest in the resolution of specific claims.
2. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to work directly with Canada, the Chiefs Committee on Lands, Territories, and Resources (CCoLTR), and First Nations to advance transformative reform of Canada's Specific Claims Policy and process including through:
 - a. Policy-based reforms previously called for by the First Nations-in-Assembly;
 - b. Identifying and removing barriers in the Specific Claims Policy and *Specific Claims Tribunal Act* that prevent land and other equitable remedies in compliance with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*; and
 - c. Continuing to identify and co-develop reforms to increase process independence, including the establishment of an independent specific claims process.
3. Direct the AFN, with the guidance of the CCoLTR, to engage directly with First Nations to identify transformative approaches to land restitution in the context of the Additions to Reserve (ATR) policy reform.
4. Direct the AFN to call on Canada to address the fiscal and moral costs of not resolving outstanding monetary and land-based obligations to First Nations through co-developed reforms to the ATR policy and the Specific Claims Policy as a fundamental requirement for reconciliation and in respect for the diversity of First Nations priorities and regional realities.
5. Direct the AFN, contingent upon the provision of necessary resources, and guided by the CCoLTR and the Council of Experts in Indigenous Laws, to continue to convene annual national gatherings of First Nations leadership, technicians, and knowledge keepers dedicated to advancing Indigenous laws, with a particular focus on land restitution and compensation principles.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

59 – 2025
Page 3 of 3

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 60/2025

TITLE: Repatriation of First Nations Items and Sacred Artifacts

SUBJECT: Culture and Heritage

MOVED BY: Kúkwpi7 Rosanne Casimir, Tk'emlups te Secwepemc, BC

SECONDED BY: Marletta Kaloucokovale, Proxy, Ahousaht First Nation, BC

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) states:
- i. Article 12(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practise, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to the irreligious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains.
 - ii. Article 12(2): States shall seek to enable the access and/or repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains in their possession through fair, transparent and effective mechanisms developed in conjunction with Indigenous peoples concerned.
- B. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (UNDA) Action Plan commits the Department of Canadian Heritage to:
- i. Co-develop with First Nations, Inuit Treaty Organizations or their designates, and the Métis a distinction-based comprehensive approach, which will include legislative, programming and/or service measures, to enable the repatriation/rematriation of Indigenous cultural belongings and ancestral remains.
- C. First Nations-in-Assembly have provided the following mandates with respect to repatriation and cultural heritage, including:
- i. Resolution 01/2015, *Support for the Full Implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action*, calls upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

60 – 2025

Page 1 of 3

- ii. Resolution 31/2016, *Recognizing and Protecting First Nations Sacred Heritage Sites and Ancestral Burial Grounds*, calls upon the federal government to include First Nations as decision-makers in managing First Nations heritage.
 - iii. Resolution 106/2017, *Support for International Repatriation of Sacred Items*, calls upon the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to support First Nations in repatriating objects from international repositories.
 - iv. Resolution 16/2018, *Support for the Indigenous Heritage Circle*, directs the AFN to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration and to ensure that the repatriation of Indigenous cultural property is done with the participation of First Nations and upholds the UN Declaration.
- D. First Nations have the Inherent and sacred right to care for, protect, and govern their cultural heritage, including sacred objects, ceremonial items, ancestral remains, and knowledge systems.
- E. Many sacred and cultural artifacts belonging to First Nations are held in national and international institutions, some of which are in the process of returning these belongings to First Nations.
- F. The Canadian Museums Association (CMA) developed a report on how museums can implement the UN Declaration. Their recommendations include funding the repatriation process and Indigenous cultural centres. The CMA, alongside the Indigenous Heritage Circle, created the Indigenous Cultural Heritage Rights Task Force to advance Indigenous cultural heritage rights and support the return of cultural belongings to their rightful communities.
- G. The continued use, display, and ownership of artifacts belonging to First Nations without their consent violates the rights of First Nations to free, prior and informed consent. To comply with the UN Declaration, museums and institutions must identify and return items and artifacts to the appropriate rights holders.
- H. As the Government of Canada seeks to fast-track major projects across First Nations territories, the protection and conservation of artifacts, cultural items, and burial sites is an increasing priority for First Nations.

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

1. Affirm that First Nations have the sole and Inherent right to lead and govern the stewardship, care, and interpretation of their sacred and cultural belongings, both repatriated and existing.
2. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to seek resources to support the creation of a First Nations-led task force, composed of First Nations leaders, knowledge keepers, youth, legal experts, and cultural practitioners, to guide the development, governance, and implementation of a national repatriation strategy.
3. Call upon the Government of Canada to implement the Canadian Museums Association's (CMA) 2022 *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* Report recommendations, including providing sustained, long-term funding to support First Nations in repatriation.
4. Call on the AFN—through the First Nations-led task force—to work with First Nations, the Department of Canadian Heritage, provinces where necessary, and the Indigenous Cultural Heritage Rights Task Force

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

60 – 2025
Page 2 of 3

to establish a draft Cultural Heritage Rights Framework that recognizes First Nations' sovereignty over First Nations' cultural rights, and encompasses restitution, redress, repatriation, and repatriation.

5. Direct the AFN to put forward a Cultural Heritage Rights Framework for endorsement at a subsequent AFN Assembly.
6. Call on the Government of Canada, international museums, provinces, and funding bodies to provide comprehensive ongoing funding to support repatriation activities before, during, and after the process, including community infrastructure and capacity building.
7. Direct the AFN to advocate to the federal government to take legislative measures to strengthen repatriation efforts, repatriating ancestral remains, and ancient artifacts.

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60 – 2025
Page 3 of 3

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 61/2025

TITLE:	Clarifying Approaches to Métis Rights in First Nations' Territories
SUBJECT:	Rights and Treaties
MOVED BY:	Chief Dennis Pashe, Dakota Tipi First Nation, Unceded Oceti Sakowin Territory, MB
SECONDED BY:	Chief Wilfred King, Kiashke Zaaging Anishinaabek First Nation (Gull Bay First Nation), ON
DECISION:	Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is mandated to advocate for the recognition, affirmation, and protection of First Nations' Inherent rights, Treaty rights, and Aboriginal title, consistent with Section 35 and 25 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, and AFN First Nations-in-Assembly Resolutions.
- B. First Nations are rights holders who hold Inherent and Treaty rights set out in our own governance and legal systems, as well as constitutionally protected rights under Section 35 and 25 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982. First Nations alone interpret and describe our Inherent rights through our laws and legal traditions, customary law, and international law. In practice, this means that First Nations rights cannot be undermined by colonial interpretations of these rights.
- C. First Nations' Inherent rights exist regardless of treaties, and for many Nations—including the Dakota Oceti Sakowin in Manitoba—territorial rights are unceded and based on continuous occupation, governance, and law prior to and after the formation of Canada.
- D. The federal and provincial governments have committed to a distinctions-based approach in their relationships with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, yet in practice have failed to adequately define and reconcile Métis rights when such claims overlap with the territories and rights of Treaty First Nations or unceded Inherent rights holders.
- E. In Manitoba, the Crown recognizes Numbered Treaty territories (Treaties 1–5), Dakota Oceti Sakowin traditional territory (unceded), and the Manitoba Métis Federation's assertions of rights and jurisdiction—

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

61 – 2025

Page 1 of 4

all within overlapping geographic regions—yet has no clear, transparent, or rights-based process to identify, prioritize, and reconcile the spectrum of rights holders in the context of Aboriginal Title, resources, and economic participation.

- F. Without clear definitions and reconciliation of rights in such overlapping contexts, Crown decision-making risks infringing upon First Nations' constitutionally protected rights, creating conflict, undermining the honour of the Crown, and perpetuating the infringement and displacement of First Nations from their territories.
- G. In 2003, the *R. v. Powley* case resulted in the Supreme Court of Canada establishing a test to determine Métis Aboriginal rights under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. It requires a claimant to prove membership in a historic Métis community that continued into a contemporary community, with a practice integral to that community's culture that existed prior to colonial control. The test also examines if the right was extinguished and if a current infringement is justified.
- H. Bill C-53, *An Act respecting the recognition of certain Métis governments in Alberta, Ontario and Saskatchewan to give effect to treaties with those governments* provided a proposed framework for the future implementation of treaties and self-government agreements between Canada and the Métis. First Nations repeatedly called for the rejection of Bill C-53 making clear numerous concerns including the lack of clarity within the Bill as to how overlapping First Nations rights, jurisdiction, and interests with the Métis were to be addressed. As a result of First Nations' advocacy, Bill C-53 did not receive royal assent.
- I. The AFN has several resolutions relating to concerns regarding Bill C-53 including:
 - a. Resolution 55/2024, *Continued Rejection and Denouncement of Métis Illegitimate Rights Assertions*;
 - b. Resolution 81/2023, *Urgent Protection of First Nations Inherent and Treaty Rights from Ongoing Illegitimate Rights Assertions*; and
 - c. Resolution 44/2023, *Protect First Nations Rights and Interests from Unfounded Métis Rights*.
- J. There have been an increased number of challenges in rights recognition between First Nations and the Métis. First Nations, often asserting historical and territorial claims, have taken legal recourse to address issues related to land use, resource management, and cultural heritage. The legal disputes arise from disputed overlapping historical and geographical connections, prompting First Nations to seek clarity and recognition within Canada's legal framework.
- K. Canada has committed to addressing these fundamental challenges through the following Action Plan Measures (APMs) of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* Action Plan:
 - a. APM # 24 (Shared Priority), which commits the Government of Canada to "remove and address jointly identified barriers to settlement and co-develop approaches for the implementation of the right to self-determination through treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements, as well as through new policies and legislative mechanisms."
 - b. APM # 31 (Shared Priority), which commits the Government of Canada to "work in collaboration with Indigenous partners to identify opportunities to reform and strengthen the foundational elements that support rights-based negotiations and approaches."

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- L. To date, Canada has not meaningfully implemented these commitments.
- M. The lack of a process to resolve such conflicts amounts to the Government of Canada offloading its responsibilities onto First Nations. First Nations do not have sufficient financial resources to engage in litigation to protect their rights and interest. Further the offloading of the Government of Canada's responsibilities onto First Nations has the potential to create a range of adverse effects and challenges.
- N. National, regional, and First Nations consultation processes are needed to develop respectful processes to recognize Inherent rights and jurisdiction while ensuring adequate safeguards to address overlapping claims and infringement of First Nations rights. Canada must establish fair, open, and timely mechanisms to secure recognition of First Nations' inherent and Treaty rights.

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

1. Reaffirm Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Resolution 55/2024, *Continued Rejection and Denouncement of Métis Illegitimate Rights Assertions*, including continued calls to the Government of Canada to immediately develop and implement public, comprehensive, appropriate, consistent and whole of government distinctions-based approaches and frameworks with respect to Canada's relations with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, in consultation and cooperation with First Nations rights holders.
2. Call upon the federal government to ensure that any approach to recognition does not diminish, infringe, or supersede existing Treaty First Nations' rights or unceded Inherent First Nations' rights in the same territory.
3. Call upon the AFN to support First Nations for engagement with Canada through the development of tools, guidance, and supporting materials to engage with Canada on the development of these approaches and or frameworks.
4. Direct the AFN to advocate that any federal framework for defining and recognizing Métis rights must:
 - a. Be grounded in Section 35 and 25 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982, Supreme Court jurisprudence, and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*;
 - b. Include a transparent, distinctions-based process for identifying and verifying rights holders in overlapping territories;
 - c. Require the Crown to engage in formal consultation and consent processes with First Nations before extending rights recognition to other groups in those territories;
 - d. Provide the necessary resources and sustainable, needs-based funding for consultation and negotiation;
 - e. Be based on independent research and evidence; and
 - f. Ensure that political bodies involving legitimate Métis are recognized and accepted by the First Nations in those respective regions.
5. Call upon all provinces, including the Province of Manitoba and the Province of Alberta, to immediately disclose its current process for identifying rights holders in territories where numbered treaties, unceded inherent First Nations territories, and asserted Métis territories overlap, and to suspend any rights

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recognition processes that risk infringing upon First Nations' rights until the distinctions-based framework is in place.

6. Direct the AFN to provide a report at a future Assembly, summarizing implementation of this resolution, including through informing First Nations on existing Crown practices across Canada in overlapping rights contexts to support future First Nations policy positions to safeguard First Nations' jurisdiction, title, and Treaty rights.
7. Direct the National Chief to stop engaging, attending events, and being photographed with the president or representatives of the Métis National Council (MNC), as this fundamentally undermines the work and position of the Ontario region. The MNC currently only represents the Métis Nation of Alberta and the Métis Nation of Ontario. All other Métis bodies have left the National Council.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

61 – 2025
Page 4 of 4

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 62/2025

TITLE:	Ensuring Rights-based Negotiations and Economic Accommodations are Mandated and Directed by Rights-bearing First Nations, not Provincial-Territorial Organizations without Authority
SUBJECT:	Governance, Rights Protection, Economic Benefits
MOVED BY:	Chief Kelsey Jacko, Cold Lake First Nation, AB
SECONDED BY:	Eric Tootosis, Proxy, Poundmaker First Nation, SK
DECISION:	Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A.** The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) states:
- Article 4: Indigenous peoples, in exercising their rights 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.
 - Article 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own Indigenous decision-making institutions.
 - Article 28(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to redress, by means that can include restitution or, when this is not possible, just, fair and equitable compensation, for the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, taken, occupied, used or damaged without their free, prior, or informed consent.
 - Article 28(2): Unless otherwise freely agreed upon by the peoples concerned, compensation shall take the form of lands, territories and resources equal in quantity, size and legal status or of monetary compensation or other appropriate redress.

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62 – 2025

Page 1 of 3

- B. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is mandated to advocate for and protect the Inherent, Treaty, and Aboriginal rights of First Nations, and to ensure that any negotiations, agreements, or accommodations involving those rights are directed and authorized by the rights-bearing Nations themselves.
- C. Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* recognizes and affirms the existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of First Nations, which are collective rights held by the Nation and not by political or service delivery organizations.
- D. Provincial/Territorial Organizations (PTOs) are political or advocacy bodies that, while often serving important roles in coordination and representation, are not themselves rights-bearing entities and have no inherent legal standing to negotiate or settle rights-based matters without explicit and documented mandates from the rights holders.
- E. Across Canada, instances have arisen where PTOs have entered into rights-based negotiations or accepted economic accommodation measures from governments or industry without transparent, prior, and informed legal mandates from the impacted First Nations, resulting in:
 - i. Undermining of First Nations' Inherent and Treaty rights;
 - ii. Erosion of Nation-to-Crown relationships; and
 - iii. Diversion of economic benefits away from directly impacted First Nations.
- F. The lack of a mandated, transparent process for PTO involvement in rights-based negotiations risks violating the principle of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) under the UN Declaration and undermines the integrity of Section 35 rights protections.

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

- 1. Affirm that rights-based negotiations with the federal or provincial governments, as well as participation in economic accommodation measures arising from the infringement of Section 35 rights, must be conducted only by, or under the express legal authority of, the rights-bearing First Nations whose rights are directly impacted.
- 2. Call upon all governments (federal, provincial, territorial) to immediately cease entering into rights-based negotiations or granting economic accommodations with Provincial/Territorial Organizations (PTOs) unless such organizations are acting under a clear, documented, and legally enforceable mandate from the rights holders.
- 3. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to develop and advocate for a national policy standard that:
 - a. Requires governments to verify the mandate of any organization claiming to negotiate or receive benefits on behalf of First Nations;
 - b. Establishes that all economic accommodations arising from infringements must flow directly to the impacted rights-bearing First Nations, not to PTOs or third-party entities without rights-holder authorization; and
 - c. Ensures transparency and accountability in all rights-based negotiation processes.

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4. Call upon the federal and provincial governments to respect the Nation-to-Crown relationship by engaging directly with the rights holders in any negotiations, settlements, or accommodations affecting their Section 35 rights.
5. Direct the AFN to report back at a future Assembly on positive examples of PTOs engaging with appropriate mandates, the impacts on rights holders, and recommended strategies to protect the direct rights-holder relationship with the Crown.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

62 – 2025
Page 3 of 3

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 63/2025

TITLE: Baeleigh's Law

SUBJECT: Justice

MOVED BY: Chief Kelsey Jacko, Cold Lake First Nation, AB

SECONDED BY: Eric Tootoosis, Proxy, Poundmaker First Nation, SK

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) states:
- i. Article 2: Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their indigenous origin or identity.
 - ii. Article 7(1): Indigenous individuals have the rights to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security of person.
 - iii. Article 22(2): States shall take measures, in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, to ensure that Indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.
 - iv. Article 40: Indigenous peoples have the right to access to and prompt decision through just and fair procedures for the resolution of conflicts and disputes with States or other parties, as well as to effective remedies for all infringements of their individual and collective rights, Such a decision shall give due consideration to the customs, traditions, rules and legal systems of the Indigenous peoples concerned and international human rights.
- B. First Nations have an inherent right to justice, safety, and well-being, particularly for their children, and these rights must be respected and upheld through Canadian legal and judicial systems.
- C. On March 29, 2018, the Government of Canada introduced Bill C-75, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*. Bill C-75 (the Act) received Royal Assent on June 21, 2019. The Act streamlines the classification of offences,

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Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

63 – 2025

Page 1 of 2

expands judicial case management power, and provides additional measure to reduce criminal justice system delays to make the criminal law and the criminal justice system clearer and more efficient.

- D. In September 2021, Baeleigh Maurice, a nine-year-old First Nations child, was tragically struck and killed by a non-Indigenous impaired driver. Despite the seriousness of the incident and evidence presented, the resulting legal process was marked by repeated delays not caused by the Crown or the family.
- E. On December 13, 2024, the Provincial Court stayed the charge against the accused, citing the *R. v. Jordan* Supreme Court decision, which sets an 18-month limit on delays in provincial court proceedings. This decision resulted in the case being dismissed without trial, causing renewed harm to the family and community and denying justice to a First Nations child.
- F. This outcome contradicts First Nations' Inherent rights and fails to uphold obligations under the UN Declaration, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action, and the 231 Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), all of which call for justice reform and meaningful protections for Indigenous children and families.
- G. The Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) Indian Justice Commission has identified this case as an example of systemic failure and has recommended six amendments to Bill C-75, aimed at preventing future injustices against First Nations children in the justice system.

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

- 1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to conduct a thorough review and ensure full understanding of "Baeleigh's Law," which consists of amendments to Bill C-75 aimed at prioritizing impaired driving cases involving harm to First Nations children and preventing their dismissal due to procedural delays.
- 2. Upon completion of this review, and with clear support from the First Nations in Assembly, urge the federal government to adopt "Baeleigh's Law" to better protect First Nations children from impaired driving harms.
- 3. Request that the AFN advocate for federal investment in legal reform efforts that protect First Nations children, reduce procedural inequities, and align the Criminal Code of Canada with the principles of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice.
- 4. Call on the federal government to recognize and fund culturally appropriate legal supports and justice services to ensure First Nations families are not further traumatized by delays or systemic barriers within the justice system.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

63 – 2025

Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 64/2025

TITLE: Supporting First Nations through the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council

SUBJECT: Emergency Management

MOVED BY: Chief Kelsey Jacko, Cold Lake First Nation, AB

SECONDED BY: Eric Tootosis, Proxy, Poundmaker First Nation, SK

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* (UN Declaration) states:
- i. Article 21(1): Indigenous people have the right, without discrimination to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, areas of education, employment, vocational training, housing, sanitation, health and social security.
 - ii. Article 29(1): Indigenous people have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands and territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programs for Indigenous Peoples for such conversation and protection, without discrimination.
- B. First Nations across Canada continue to face critical gaps in emergency services, including delays and communication breakdowns in dispatch services, which can result in increased risk to life, property, and the environment.
- C. Culturally appropriate, First Nations-led emergency management organizations could support First Nations in emergency management through addressing longstanding issues in:
- i. Emergency response infrastructure, ensuring timely, coordinated, and community-informed responses that respect First Nations' governance, languages, and traditional knowledge;
 - ii. Responding to the lack of coordination during national incidents or regional incidents to support urgent and long-term community requirements with federal, provincial and territorial agencies; and

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64 – 2025
Page 1 of 3

- iii. Occupational risks, including exposure to carcinogens, mental health challenges, and post-traumatic stress.
- D. The First Nations Fire Protection Strategy 2023 to 2028, co-developed by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and Indigenous Services Canada aims to support a decrease in the national rate of First Nations fire incidents, improve fire response time, and address infrastructure gaps that impede emergency response on-reserve. The Strategy was developed with input from First Nations technical organizations, tribal councils, First Nations leadership, the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council (NIFSC), and other fire service professionals.
- E. The NIFSC is an Indigenous-governed organization with the mandate and expertise to advance fire and life safety for Indigenous communities. The NIFSC has made significant progress in the development and delivery of standards, training, and accreditation programs tailored to First Nations' fire service needs.
- F. There is an urgent need to continue to develop and implement opt-in supporting policies and programs such as:
 - i. A National Indigenous Dispatch Centre, to enhance emergency response coordination, improve health and safety outcomes, and align with First Nations' self-determination and support jurisdiction over community safety and emergency management;
 - ii. A national incident management training program that strengthens First Nations' leadership in emergency operations and community-led response systems; and
 - iii. Managing fire-related Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) initiatives, including identified injury, medical and mental health risks.
- G. Funding is required for First Nations' and emergency management organizations such as the NIFSC to support fire prevention initiatives and the implementation of First Nations' own emergency management related priorities, where First Nations may opt in to the programs and services provided by the NIFSC.

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

1. Support the leadership of the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council (NIFSC) to:
 - a. Initiate and facilitate a national dialogue with interested First Nations on the creation of an opt-in National Indigenous Dispatch Centre;
 - b. Manage and expand First Nations' fire service programs, including those focused on structural fires, wildfires, and interface fires for First Nations who request it; and
 - c. Support the development of opt-in community standards and implementation of accredited training to respond to fires.
2. Direct the Assembly of First Nations to work in partnership with the NIFSC to engage interested First Nations, leaders, and emergency service stakeholders in consultation on the design, scope, and operational capacity of emergency management.
3. Urge the federal government to provide funding and technical support to First Nations and the NIFSC to support emergency management, including feasibility studies, regional engagement sessions, and planning activities necessary for the mandate provided by First Nations-in-Assembly.

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4. Declare that any planning and implementation for activities for the NIFSC must be opt-in, include consideration of regional service models, First Nations' languages, traditional knowledge, and interoperability with existing emergency response frameworks.
5. Call upon Indigenous Services Canada, Public Safety Canada, and other relevant federal departments to recognize and prioritize First Nations-led emergency service infrastructure, as part of reconciliation and the implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

64 – 2025
Page 3 of 3

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 65/2025

TITLE: Support for First Nations' Multilateral Negotiations and Implementation of
Emergency Management

SUBJECT: Emergency Management

MOVED BY: Chief Kelsey Jacko, Cold Lake First Nation, AB

SECONDED BY: Eric Tootoosis, Proxy, Poundmaker First Nation, SK

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A.** The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) states:
- i. Article 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own Indigenous decision-making institutions.
 - ii. 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.
 - iii. 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 programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.
- B.** Climate-driven disasters are increasing in frequency and severity. The 2015-2030 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction calls for inclusive, people-centered, multi-hazard approaches. First Nations are disproportionately impacted and require adequate, self-determined resources to prepare for, mitigate, respond to, and recover from emergencies:

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

65 – 2025

Page 1 of 3

- i. Guiding Principle 19(d): Disaster risk reduction requires an all-of-society engagement and partnership. It also requires empowerment and inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation, paying special attention to people disproportionately affected by disasters, especially the poorest.
 - ii. Guiding Principle 19(g): Disaster risk reduction requires a multi-hazard approach and inclusive risk-informed decision-making based on the open exchange and dissemination of disaggregated data [...] complemented by traditional knowledge.
- C. First Nations in British Columbia, the Government of Canada, and the Province of British Columbia created a Multilateral Emergency Management Negotiation Team to transition from a bilateral services agreement to a new multilateral agreement that recognizes First Nations as equal partners and formalizes roles, responsibilities and funding across all four pillars of emergency management.
- D. The 2019 Emergency Management Services Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Canada, the Province of British Columbia, and the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, British Columbia Assembly of First Nations and the First Nations Summit, recognizes that First Nations governments and their institutions need stable resources to exercise jurisdiction in all four pillars of emergency management.
- E. Despite these commitments, federal core-capacity funding remains ad-hoc, application-based and insufficient, forcing First Nations to rely on short-term contribution agreements that do not support long-term planning, staffing, training, or culturally grounded emergency services.
- F. First Nations leadership in British Columbia has repeatedly directed that emergency-management capacity be sustainably funded, including through the following mirrored resolutions:
 - i. Union of BC Indian Chiefs 2024-16: *Model for Multilateral Emergency Management Services Funding Negotiations*;
 - ii. BC Assembly of First Nations 14/2024: *Model for Multilateral Emergency Management Services Funding Negotiations*;
 - iii. First Nations Summit 0622.08: *Support for First Nations Involvement in Negotiations on a New Tripartite Agreement for Emergency Management Services Funding*; and
 - iv. First Nations Summit 0424.07: *Model for Multilateral Emergency Management Services Funding Negotiations*.
- G. The BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan and the Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction by First Nations in BC (2023-2030) calls for sustained, distinctions-based funding to implement mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery measures.
- H. The Office of the Auditor General of Canada's 2022 report, *Emergency Management in First Nations Communities*, concluded that Indigenous Services Canada's support remains reactive and does not meet First Nations' needs for preparedness and mitigation.

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

1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to support the work of the First Nations Leadership Council Multilateral Emergency Management Negotiation Team, and other regions, where requested, in the development and implementation of their own multilateral negotiations with federal, provincial and territorial governments to ensure the full jurisdiction of First Nations in emergency management.
2. Direct the AFN to call upon Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), Public Safety Canada, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, and other relevant federal departments to support full and effective First Nations participation in the development and implementation of multilateral negotiations, including through supporting any Memorandums to Cabinet and/or Treasury Board Submissions, where requested by AFN regions, with the goal of securing long-term, distinctions-based emergency management funding.
3. Call upon relevant federal departments to ensure that Memorandum to Cabinet and Treasury Board submission provides:
 - a. Predictable, flexible core-capacity funding for First Nation governments to implement the Sendai Framework priorities of understanding disaster risk, strengthening disaster risk governance, investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience, and enhancing disaster preparedness for effective responses and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction, including connecting the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements to ISC programs to ensure First Nations benefit from Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements as provinces and territories do;
 - b. Sustained operational funding for regional and national First Nations emergency-management bodies, and other First Nations mandated service institutions;
 - c. Resources for infrastructure, training, equipment and culturally appropriate programming; and
 - d. Flow-through, distinctions-based funding governed by First Nations, indexed annually by no less than the Consumer Price Index, First Nations population growth, and aligned with *the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* Articles 18, 19 and 23.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

65 – 2025
Page 3 of 3

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 66/2025

TITLE:	Affirming the Role of First Nations in Shaping Canadian Immigration Policy and Entry Decisions
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SUBJECT:	Truth and Reconciliation
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MOVED BY:	Chief Kelsey Jacko, Cold Lake First Nation, AB
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SECONDED BY:	Eric Tootoosis, Proxy, Poundmaker First Nation, SK
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DECISION:	Carried by consensus
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WHEREAS:

- A. The Creator placed the First Nations on Turtle Island with Inherent rights, responsibilities, and jurisdiction over their lands, waters, and Nations, which predate the formation of the Canadian state.
- B. Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, recognizes and affirms the existing Aboriginal and Treaty rights of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada, including First Nations.
- C. The Royal Proclamation of 1763, historical treaties, and international instruments such as the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration), which Canada has adopted and committed to implement, affirm the Inherent rights of First Nations to self-determination and to participate in decisions that affect them.
- D. Canada's immigration policies have historically excluded First Nations voices and perspectives, despite the direct impact immigration has on the rights and interests as well as the political, economic, social, and cultural fabric of First Nations territories.
- E. Many newcomers to Canada are not supported to be educated on the nation-to-nation relationships between Canada and First Nations, leading to misunderstandings, perpetuation of colonial narratives, and marginalization of First Nations rights and interests.
- F. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action #93 and #94 call upon the federal government to revise the information kit for newcomers to Canada and its citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, including information about the Treaties and the history of Residential Schools. It also calls upon the Government of Canada to replace the Oath of

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

66 – 2025

Page 1 of 2

Citizenship with language to affirm and uphold First Nations Treaties and agreements made with the Crown.

- G. On June 21, 2021, Canada passed C-8, *An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's call to action number 94)* fulfilling TRC Call to Action #94.
- H. Call to Action #93 remains outstanding. The Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada has not indicated when it intends to release the updated Citizenship Guide and accompanying materials.
- I. First Nations have a right to be informed and consulted about who is permitted to enter and reside in their territories and to help shape the values, processes, and priorities that guide immigration policy.

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

- 1. Affirm that First Nations, as self-determining Nations with Inherent rights and jurisdiction, must have a meaningful role in shaping immigration policies and decisions regarding who is granted entry into Canada.
- 2. Call on the Government of Canada to formally recognize First Nations' jurisdiction and interest in immigration matters as part of a nation-to-nation relationship and reconciliation efforts.
- 3. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to engage with First Nations and seek funding to develop a First Nations-led framework for participation in immigration policy, including consultation on immigration levels, settlement priorities, and an updated Citizenship Guide and materials to orient newcomers on Treaty obligations and First Nations Inherent rights.
- 4. Urge the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to establish a formal mechanism for ongoing consultation and cooperation with First Nations governments.
- 5. Instruct the AFN to report back to the First Nations-in-Assembly on progress made toward these objectives at the next Assembly.

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66 – 2025
Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 67/2025

TITLE: Advancing the Recognition, Implementation, and Enforcement of Pre-1975 Treaties

SUBJECT: Treaties, Lands, Justice

MOVED BY: Chief Kelsey Jacko, Cold Lake First Nation, AB

SECONDED BY: Eric Tootosis, Proxy, Poundmaker First Nation, SK

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) states:
- i. Article 26(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.
 - ii. Article 26(2): Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.
 - iii. Article 37(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the recognition, observance and enforcement of treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements concluded with States or their successors and to have States honour and respect such treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements.
 - iv. Article 37(2): Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as diminishing or eliminating the rights of Indigenous peoples contained in treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements.
- B. The *Royal Proclamation of 1763* recognizes First Nations land rights and title, establishing general principles for Treaty-making and affirming First Nations' rights to the land and self-governance.
- C. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* Action Plan Measure #2 (First Nations' priorities), commits Crown and Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada to:

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

67 – 2025

Page 1 of 3

- i. Re-affirm pre-1975 Treaty relationships based on the principles of mutual respect, self-determination and the nation-to-nation relationship; and
 - ii. Engage Treaty Nations in co-developing approaches, including reconvening Treaty Councils if Nations wish to do so, for the renewal and honourable implementation of pre-1975 Treaties and Treaty relationships, including a shared vision to guide actions and a common understanding of the spirit and intent of pre-1975 Treaties.
- D. Prior to 1982, pre- and post-Confederation Treaties were signed between the British Crown and First Nations.
- E. In 1982, Canada repatriated the Canadian Constitution, resulting in the *Constitution Act, 1982*. Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* recognizes and affirms the existing Aboriginal and Treaty rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada.
- F. First Nations assert and reaffirm that they are sovereign Nations with Inherent rights and title to their lands, as recognized under international law. It has never been suggested or established that Canada held sovereignty over First Nations and First Nation-lands prior to its establishment as a country.
- G. Pre-1975 Treaties between First Nations and the Crown are, and always have been, agreements between sovereign Nations, as affirmed by principles of international law and the UN Declaration.
- H. Canada's signing of agreements with organizations or corporate bodies is within Canada's prerogative but does not alter the nature or status of First Nation Treaties with the Crown.
- I. Many pre-1975 Treaty First Nations continue to report that their Treaties are not being fully honoured, respected, or implemented, highlighting significant gaps in Canada's fulfillment of its Treaty obligations.
- J. The full implementation of Treaty rights – forming the cornerstone of Crown-First Nations relationships – remains incomplete, as Canada has yet to embrace a truly comprehensive nation-to-nation approach that fully recognizes and upholds First Nations' Treaties. Instead, existing frameworks continue to subordinate First Nations' authority and Treaty rights to federal, provincial and territorial systems, undermining Treaties and the principles of self-determination and mutual respect.
- K. Canada has a Cabinet Directive on the Federal Approach to Modern Treaty Implementation, which outlines an operational framework for the management of the Crown's Modern Treaty obligations, guiding federal departments and agencies to fulfill the Crown's obligations. No similar Cabinet Directive exists for pre-1975 Treaties.

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

1. Call on Canada to convene a First Ministers' Conference with pre-1975 Treaty First Nations who opt-in to create a legitimate, collaborative platform for the honouring and implementation of Treaties and to support the implementation of Aboriginal and Treaty rights recognized and affirmed under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, as this process would address historical gaps and challenges that hinder the recognition, realization, and exercise of First Nations' Treaty rights.
2. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to work collaboratively with Canada and participating First Nations to support pre-1975 Treaty First Nations who wish to work with the AFN in a process that ensures

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Cindy Woodhouse

the full honouring, recognition, implementation, and enforcement of pre-1975 Treaties, establishing a renewed relationship based on mutual respect and adherence to the rule of law.

3. Call on Canada to work with pre-1975 Treaty First Nations to support the creation of a comprehensive framework for the recognition, implementation, and enforcement of pre-1975 Treaties, similar to the Cabinet Directive on Modern Treaty Implementation, ensuring all Treaty obligations, including those made with First Nations, are fulfilled with fairness, accountability, and transparency.
4. Direct the AFN to collaborate with Canada and pre-1975 Treaty First Nations who opt-in to co-develop and co-draft a Cabinet Directive that provides a framework for the recognition, implementation, and enforcement of pre-1975 Treaties.
5. Call on Canada to formally recognize the status of pre-1975 Treaties as agreements between sovereign Nations and to reaffirm its obligations to fully honour and implement these Treaties in alignment with First Nations Inherent rights, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, and the principles of international law.

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67 – 2025
Page 3 of 3

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 68/2025

TITLE: Advancing Indigenous Justice Transformation and Ending the Use of Isolation in Federal Institutions

SUBJECT: Justice, Corrections Reform

MOVED BY: Jennifer Duncan, Proxy, Acho Dene Koe First Nation, NT

SECONDED BY: Chief Joseph Tsannie, Hatchet Lake First Nation, SK

DECISION: Carried by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration), affirms the rights of Indigenous Peoples to life, security, health, and culturally appropriate services, including.
- i. Article 7(2): Indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and shall not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence, including forcibly removing children of the group to another group.
 - ii. Article 21(2): States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.
 - iii. Article 22(2): States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.
 - iv. Article 24(2): Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right.

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Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

68 – 2025

Page 1 of 4

- V.** Article 34: Indigenous peoples have the right to promote, develop and maintain their institutional structures and their distinctive customs, spirituality, traditions, procedures, practices and, in the cases where they exist, juridical systems or customs, in accordance with international human rights standards.
- B.** The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Mandela Rules) prohibit the use of solitary confinement beyond 15 consecutive days, recognizing such practices as cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment.
- C.** The Government of Canada replaced “administrative segregation” with Structured Intervention Units (SIUs) in 2019; however, independent oversight bodies, national media investigations, and the experiences of incarcerated Indigenous citizens continue to demonstrate that SIUs function as isolation-by-another-name, perpetuating the same harms under a different framework.
- D.** Indigenous Peoples remain vastly overrepresented in federal custody, representing approximately 33 per cent of all federally incarcerated persons while comprising less than 5 per cent of Canada’s population, with Indigenous women representing nearly half of federally sentenced women.
- E.** Evidence from the SIU Implementation Advisory Panel and the Office of the Correctional Investigator confirms that Indigenous inmates are placed in SIUs at disproportionately high rates, remain there for longer periods, and continue to experience limited human contact, inadequate access to culturally-based programming, and systemic denial of Elders and healing services.
- F.** Black Lake Denesuline First Nation member Joey Tousaint has spent over 3,000 days (8 years) in either segregation or SIU and has all the symptoms of prolonged solitary confinement, including self-harm.
- G.** These practices stand in direct contradiction to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action 30–36, which call for the elimination of Indigenous over-incarceration, increased use of healing-based justice systems, and meaningful Indigenous participation in corrections oversight.
- H.** First Nations have Inherent and Treaty-based authority to exercise jurisdiction over justice, healing, rehabilitation, and the well-being of their citizens, including those who are incarcerated or subject to dangerous offender proceedings or long-term confinement decisions.
- I.** First Nations communities, families, and leadership continue to raise concerns regarding the lack of transparency, lack of access to culturally appropriate reintegration supports, and the failure of correctional institutions to uphold minimum human rights standards for Indigenous inmates.
- J.** Chiefs, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers across the country have consistently called for the recognition of First Nations law, ceremony, and healing frameworks as the foundation of justice transformation and corrections reform in Canada.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

68 – 2025
Page 2 of 4

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

1. Call on the Government of Canada to immediately end the ongoing use of isolation and segregation practices in federal correctional institutions, including the current implementation of Structured Intervention Units (SIU) where they operate contrary to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration), the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners ('Mandela Rules'), and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action.
2. Call on the federal government to undertake legislative reform to the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* and the SIU framework to ensure full alignment with the UN Declaration, the Mandela Rules, and Indigenous human rights standards.
3. Call on Canada to fulfill the commitments it made in 2024 during Canada's 4th Universal Periodic Review by the United Nations Human Rights Council, and the 2025 Indigenous Justice Strategy which is to equitably invest in community-based, Indigenous-led alternatives to incarceration, and transfer one-third of Correctional Service Canada's annual \$3 billion budget, approximately \$1 billion dollars, directly to Indigenous governments and organizations to support autonomous, Indigenous-operated alternatives to incarceration and independent Indigenous services for Indigenous Peoples in custody and on conditional release.
4. Call on Canada to end the delegation of powers from the Minister of Public Safety to the Correctional Service Canada to negotiate and decide admission criteria and other requirements for the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* s. 81 agreements.
5. Call on Canada to fund and resource activities to establish a First Nations-led body with members selected by First Nations governments and organizations to administer equitable funding and agreements under ss. 81 and 84 of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, and to administer equitable funding and agreements for Indigenous independent in-reach services for incarcerated Indigenous Peoples based on Indigenous laws and the right to self-determination.
6. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to advocate for mandatory notification and formal standing for Chiefs and First Nations governments in all cases involving:
 - a. Dangerous Offender designations under section 753 of the Criminal Code;
 - b. Long-term supervision orders; and
 - c. Parole processes involving their Nation's members.
7. Direct the AFN to support the development of national standards requiring Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Indigenous spiritual services, and culturally based healing to be made fully accessible to all First Nations inmates, including those in high-security and long-term confinement settings.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

68 – 2025
Page 3 of 4

8. Direct the AFN to advocate for the establishment of First Nations-led corrections oversight mechanisms, with authority to monitor conditions of confinement, access federal data, and audit treatment standards for Indigenous inmates.
9. Direct the AFN to work with First Nations, federal partners, and First Nations justice experts to advance a national framework, that builds from the National First Nations Justice Strategy, enabling First Nations jurisdiction in justice and corrections, including community-governed healing lodges, reintegration programs, and Section 81/84 expansion based on equitable funding and authority based on the right to self-determination.
10. Direct the AFN to transmit this resolution to the federal Minister of Public Safety, Minister of Justice, Minister of Indigenous Services, the Correctional Service of Canada, and all regional First Nations organizations to coordinate national action toward ending isolation and advancing First Nations-governed justice transformation.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

68 – 2025
Page 4 of 4

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 69/2025

TITLE: Asserting our Inherent Right to Hunt in our Traditional Territories

SUBJECT: Inherent Rights, Hunting

MOVED BY: Chief Lisa Young, Bloodvein River First Nation, MB

SECONDED BY: Chief Sheldon Kent, Black River First Nation, MB

DECISION: Approved by the AFN Executive Committee by consensus.

WHEREAS:

- A. All First Nations, including the members of Bloodvein River First Nation, have occupied, used, and cared for our traditional territories since time immemorial, maintaining a sacred relationship with the lands, waters, and all living beings within them.
- B. Moose harvesting is an integral part of many First Nations' cultural identities, spiritual practices, food sovereignty and security, and traditional economies, and is essential to the intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge and the wellbeing of our people.
- C. First Nations have Inherent rights to govern and manage our traditional territories, including, for Nations such as Bloodvein River First Nation, the right to determine, regulate, and protect sustainable moose harvesting practices consistent with our own laws, customs, and stewardship principles.
- D. Article 26 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) recognizes the right of First Nations to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that we have traditionally owned or occupied.
- E. Article 32 of the UN Declaration further affirms that States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with First Nations to obtain our Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) before approving any project affecting our lands, territories, or resources, particularly in connection with resource development, land use, and conservation initiatives.
- F. Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, recognizes and affirms the existing Aboriginal and Treaty rights of First Nations in Canada, including rights to traditional hunting and harvesting.
- G. Many First Nations, including Bloodvein River First Nation, continue to face threats to our traditional territories and wildlife from industrial development, overharvesting by non-Indigenous hunters, habitat degradation, and government policies that fail to respect First Nations governance and FPIC.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

69 – 2025

Page 1 of 2

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

1. Reaffirm First Nations' Inherent and constitutionally protected rights to govern and protect our traditional territories, in accordance with our own laws, values, and stewardship responsibilities.
2. Assert the rights of the Bloodvein River First Nations, and other First Nations with a traditional connection to moose harvesting, to determine and regulate moose harvesting within our traditional territories as an integral aspect of our cultural survival and way of life.
3. Call upon the Government of Canada, and all provinces and territories to recognize and respect First Nations' jurisdiction and laws governing moose harvesting and wildlife stewardship within our traditional territories.
4. Demand that all levels of government, including Crown agencies and proponents who undertake any activity, development, or enforce policy within our traditional territories, obtain our Free, Prior and Informed Consent, in accordance with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) and the Honour of the Crown.
5. Call upon all First Nations, national and regional First Nations organizations, and allies to support our assertion of rights and protection of our traditional territories, and to advocate collectively for full implementation of the UN Declaration across all levels of government.
6. Direct the Assembly of First Nations to engage in dialogue with Canada, the provinces and the territories, to advocate for co-management or recognition agreements that affirm First Nations' governance over wildlife and land use within our traditional territories.
7. Commit to continuing First Nations stewardship responsibilities and ensuring the sustainable protection of moose populations and habitat for future generations.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

69 – 2025
Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 70/2025

TITLE:	First Nations Access to Archival Metadata with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation
SUBJECT:	Truth and Reconciliation
MOVED BY:	Kúkwpi7 Rosanne Casimir, Tkémilúps te Secwépemc, BC
SECONDED BY:	Marletts Kaloucoovale, Proxy, Ahousaht First Nation, BC
DECISION:	Approved by the AFN Executive Committee by consensus.

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations in British Columbia (BC) are leading critical work to identify, document, and honour children who died or went missing while attending Indian Residential Schools (IRS) and associated institutions, including research into unmarked burials and student deaths, work that is foundational to truth, justice, and healing.
- B. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), established through the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), holds and manages records documenting the history and legacy of the residential school system and has the mandate to make these records accessible to Survivors, their families and communities, researchers, educators, and the public in accordance with privacy and access legislation.
- C. The BC Indian Residential School Technical Working Group (TWG) has raised serious concerns that the NCTR has eliminated community researchers' ability to access and download archival metadata, descriptive information essential to identifying and organizing records, thereby undermining the efficiency and integrity of First Nations-led research and creating barriers to exercising the right to truth.
- D. The TWG has also identified concerns with the NCTR's Missing Children Project, including insufficient and inconsistent community consultation, duplication of work already being carried out by First Nations research teams, and lack of clarity regarding datasets on burial sites reportedly held or transferred by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).
- E. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which the Government of Canada has adopted without qualification and committed to implement, affirms:

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C Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

70 – 2025

Page 1 of 2

- i. Article 18(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures.
 - ii. Article 26: Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired, including the right to control and protect cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and intellectual property.
- F. The TWG, composed of representatives from BC First Nations conducting IRS investigations, provides collective technical support and coordination to lead communities across the province and is actively working to secure access to NCTR records and to safeguard First Nations-led research.
- G. Supporting documentation, including the June 18, 2025, Briefing Note from the TWG regarding the NCTR, outlines detailed concerns and recommendations and is attached to this resolution for reference.

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

1. Fully support the British Columbia Indian Residential School Technical Working Group (TWG) and any interested First Nations in their efforts to protect First Nations' access to archival metadata and to ensure that all research regarding missing children and unmarked burials is led by and accountable to First Nations.
2. Calls upon the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) to immediately restore and maintain full community researcher access to download archival metadata in its internal database, subject to privacy severance provisions under section 9 of the *National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act*, and to clearly identify any legal restrictions on records.
3. Urges First Nations with existing Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) with the NCTR to amend their agreements to explicitly guarantee access to and the ability to download metadata.
4. Directs the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to work with the TWG, NCTR, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), Survivors' organizations, and other like-minded partners to:
 - a. obtain clarity and access regarding any burial site datasets;
 - b. ensure NCTR community consultation processes are led by and accountable to First Nations; and
 - c. advocate that federal resources prioritize and support First Nations-led research teams and not duplicate their work.
5. Directs the AFN to seek federal and provincial funding, including from CIRNAC, ISC, and other appropriate sources, to support these advocacy efforts and to ensure that First Nations have the technical and financial resources necessary to carry out this critical research.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

70 – 2025
Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 71/2025

TITLE:	European Union Ban on Seal Products
SUBJECT:	Economic Development, Fisheries
MOVED BY:	Chief Jenny Brake, Qalipu First Nation, NL
SECONDED BY:	Chief Dalton Silver, Sumas First Nation, BC
DECISION:	Approved by the AFN Executive Committee by consensus.

WHEREAS:

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

- i. Article 20(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities.
- ii. Article 26(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.
- iii. Article 26(2): Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.
- iv. Article 29(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination.
- v. Article 32(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources. If the rationale cannot be explained in five clauses or less due to the complexity of the issue, then background or supporting documentation may be attached.
- vi. Article 32(2): States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

71 – 2025

Page 1 of 2

the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.

- B.** The Senate Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans completed a multi-year parliamentary study on seals and their effect on Canadian fisheries, tabling its final report in May 2024. The report, titled *Sealing the Future: A Call to Action*, made nine recommendations to the Government of Canada, including international market access and development.
- C.** The European Commission (EC) implemented a ban on the sale of seal products in the European Union (EU) in 2009, prohibiting most trade in seal products with the exception of those derived from Inuit and other Indigenous communities. This exemption, however, has not allowed for meaningful access to the EU market.
- D.** Currently the European Commission is drafting a detailed Fitness Check Report, the EC Working Document and an Executive Summary is expected to be published in 2025. Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1850, [that replaces Commission Regulation (EU) No 737/2010]] provides for the recognition of government bodies mandated to certify compliance with the conditions for benefiting from the "Inuit and other indigenous communities" exception and issue the attesting documents that should accompany the seal products. So far Greenland, Nunavut and Northwest Territories of Canada hold these exceptions.

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

- 1.** Call on the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to engage directly with the European Commission to advocate for the full cessation of the ban on seal products from Canada, subject to available funding and resources for that advocacy.
- 2.** Direct the AFN to support the Qalipu First Nation and other coastal First Nations in seeking an exception from the European Union (EU) Implementing Regulation 2015/1850 as an interim measure.
- 3.** Direct the AFN to collaborate directly with organizations already working towards removing these barriers to trade, namely the Fur Institute of Canada/Seals and Sealing Network.
- 4.** Call on Global Affairs Canada and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to implement the Senate report's nine recommendations including calls for better seal population management, increased marine research (including Indigenous knowledge), addressing misinformation about seal populations and harvests, and developing new markets for seal products to help First Nations participate in ocean's economy.

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71 – 2025

Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 72/2025

TITLE:	Confronting Indigenous Identity Fraud and Safeguarding First Nations Rights
SUBJECT:	Citizenship, Rights
MOVED BY:	Chief Troy Knowlton, Piikani Nation, AB
SECONDED BY:	Chief Dennis Pashe, Dakota Tipi First Nation, MB
DECISION:	Approved by the AFN Executive Committee by consensus.

WHEREAS:

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

- i. 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.
- ii. Article 8(1): Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture.
- iii. Article 8(1): States shall provide effective mechanisms for prevention of, and redress for:
 - a. Any action which has the aim or effect of depriving them of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities;
 - b. Any action which has the aim or effect of dispossessing them of their lands, territories or resources;
 - c. Any form of forced population transfer which has the aim or effect of violating or undermining any of their rights;
 - d. Any form of forced assimilation or integration; and
 - e. Any form of propaganda designed to promote or incite racial or ethnic discrimination directed against them.

B. First Nations have the right to determine their own identities and systems of membership in accordance with their customs and traditions.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

72 – 2025

Page 1 of 2

- C. Individuals and groups across Canada are increasingly making fraudulent and illegitimate claims to First Nations' identities. These fraudulent claims undermine First Nations' Inherent and Treaty rights.
- D. Fraudulent claims of First Nations identity divert limited program funding, benefits and services away from eligible citizens and undermine the integrity of federal, provincial and First Nations-administered programs.
- E. Inadequate verification systems and federal and provincial engagement with illegitimate groups amplifies the negative impacts of identity fraud on First Nations.
- F. The Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs affirm the Inherent and legitimate rights of Treaty First Nations and communities to define their citizenship and identity in accordance with historical, legal, and cultural continuity.

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

- 1. Affirm the Inherent and legitimate rights of First Nations to define their citizenships and identities in accordance with historical legal and cultural continuity.
- 2. Call upon the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to advocate at all levels of government to establish and enforce rigorous verification processes and to cease recognition or funding of entities whose Indigenous identity claims are disputed by established Indigenous governments.
- 3. Direct the AFN to seek resources to support advocacy by First Nations and their representative organizations and governments to expose and challenge fraudulent identity claims.
- 4. Direct the AFN to disseminate this resolution to all levels of government, educational institutions, and the public to raise awareness and promote accountability in the protection of First Nations' identity.
- 5. Support ongoing collaboration among Indigenous governments to uphold the integrity of First Nations' identities and ensure that reconciliation efforts are rooted in truth, respect, and accountability.
- 6. Denounce all forms of First Nation identity fraud, including false claims made by individuals or organizations for personal, academic, political, or financial gain.
- 7. Urge academic institutions, employers, and funding bodies to adopt transparent, community-validated criteria for assessing First Nations' identity in hiring, admissions, and grant-making processes.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

72 – 2025
Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 73/2025

TITLE:	Natural Resource Transfer Agreement Technical Table and Advocacy Committee
SUBJECT:	NRTA, Rights, Environment
MOVED BY:	Chief Shaun Longman, George Gordon First Nation, SK
SECONDED BY:	Chief Calvin Sanderson, Chakastaypasin Cree Nation, SK
DECISION:	Approved by the AFN Executive Committee by consensus.

WHEREAS:

- A.** The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) states:
- Article 26(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.
 - Article 26(2): Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.
 - Article 26(3): States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.
 - Article 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.
- B.** First Nations have Inherent and Treaty Rights to their lands and resources. First Nations have consistently asserted Inherent and Treaty Rights to their natural resources, challenging the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement (NRTA) and calling on the Government of Canada to take action, including through Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Resolution 39/2023, *Repeal or Amend Legislation that Breaches First Nations Inherent and Treaty Rights to Natural Resources*; AFN Resolution 54/2022, *Political and Financial Support for the Western Treaty Nations on the Natural Resource Transfer Agreement Summit*; AFN Resolution 31/2017, *Natural Resource Transfer Act*; and AFN Resolution 26/2016, *Natural Resource Transfer Act Violation of Aboriginal and Treaty Rights*.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

73 – 2025

Page 1 of 2

- C. First Nations did not relinquish, cede, or surrender rights to their lands and natural resources during Treaty negotiations, but rather agreed to share the land for settlement, sharing six inches into the ground - or a plough depth for agricultural purposes.
- D. In 1930, the federal Crown transferred the administration and control over the lands and natural resources to the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta pursuant to the *Natural Resource Transfer Act, 1930*, via the *Constitution Act*.
- E. The transfer of the administration and control to the provinces was done without the consent of nor consultation with the First Nations in the three aforementioned provinces.
- F. The NRTA has caused significant economic, social, and cultural harm to First Nations in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta by undermining their access to lands and resources, infringing upon Inherent and Treaty rights to hunt, fish, trap and gather, and by excluding First Nations from decision-making authority.
- G. There have been numerous First Nations-in-Assembly Resolutions adopted since 1980, directing the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) to advocate for resource revenue sharing.
- H. On October 24, 2024, the FSIN adopted a motion directing it to collaborate with Alberta and Manitoba First Nations to develop a Research Table and Advocacy Committee.
- I. On April 15, 2025, the Southern Chiefs Organization (SCO) adopted a motion, directing the SCO to collaborate with Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba First Nations to develop a Research Table and Advocacy Committee.
- J. The mandate of this Research Table and Advocacy Committee is to work toward a potential legal challenge; to assess potential damages; to investigate land titles and resource claims; to review the legislative history; and to advocate for Treaty Governance.
- K. The SCO and FSIN have further directed the Committee to undertake historical research and use this information to strategize and develop a collective approach to challenging the NRTA, which would include First Nations leadership, legal experts, academics, economists and allies from the three provinces.

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

- 1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to collaborate with Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta First Nations on the establishment of a Research Table and Advocacy Committee, which will consist of First Nation leadership, legal experts, academics, economists and allies mandated to strategize on and develop a collective approach to challenging the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement (NRTA).
- 2. Direct the AFN to provide technical and political support to the Research Table and Advocacy Committee to work toward a potential legal challenge, assess potential damages, investigate land titles and resource claims, review legislative history, and advocate for Treaty Governance.
- 3. Affirm that this Resolution does not bind any Nations, including those Nations that are already engaged in this work and/or currently in negotiations with the provincial and/or federal governments.

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 74/2025

TITLE:	Repatriation of First Nation Artifacts and Documents from the Hudson's Bay Company and Court Injunction Against Sale
SUBJECT:	Repatriation of Artifacts
MOVED BY:	Chief Sylvia Weenie, Stoney Knoll First Nation, SK
SECONDED BY:	Chief Edwin Ananas, Beardy's & Okemasis First Nations, SK
DECISION:	Approved by the AFN Executive Committee by consensus.

WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) affirms the Inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples to practice, revitalize, protect, and maintain their cultural heritage, including artifacts, ceremonial objects, and historical records. Specifically:
- Article 11(2): States shall provide redress through effective mechanisms, which may include restitution, developed in conjunction with indigenous peoples, with respect to their cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free, prior and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions and customs.
 - Article 12(2): States shall seek to enable the access and/or repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains in their possession through fair, transparent and effective mechanisms developed in conjunction with indigenous peoples concerned.
- B. On March 7, 2025, the Hudson's Bay Company group (HBC) applied for protection from their creditors under the *Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act* (CCAA). Justice Peter Osborne of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice granted the initial CCAA order. The insolvency firm of Alvarez & Marsal Canada Inc. was appointed the CCAA Monitor.
- C. The HBC has held, since its founding in 1670, a significant collection of Indigenous artifacts, sacred items, documents, and cultural property obtained through colonial trade, coercive acquisition, and extraction from Indigenous Nations across Turtle Island.
- D. These items carry deep spiritual, ceremonial, historical, and cultural significance to their respective First Nations, and their continued possession by HBC violates the rights of Indigenous Peoples to manage, protect, and access their own cultural property.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

74 – 2025

Page 1 of 2

- E. Such actions contradict the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action on the repatriation of Indigenous cultural property, which calls upon all levels of government and institutions to recognize Indigenous Peoples as the rightful stewards of their cultural heritage.
- F. AFN Resolution 106/2017, *Support for International Repatriation of Sacred Items*, directs the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to advocate on behalf of First Nations across Canada to ensure that the issue of repatriation is addressed nationally and internationally.
- G. In a November 17, 2025, report, the CCAA Monitor has identified approximately 24 artifacts in the Art Collection that are believed to be of Indigenous origin, including three artifacts of Indigenous origin currently on long-term loan at a Museum. These items will be temporarily excluded from the ongoing Art Collection auction, pending consultation with Indigenous communities and others for possible returns or donations.
- H. The lack of federal regulatory protection, mandatory consultation processes, or repatriation frameworks enables the ongoing removal, sale, or private transfer of Indigenous cultural property without the free, prior, and informed consent of the original Nations.

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

1. Call upon the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to urge the Government of Canada to immediately intervene to stop any auction, sale, transfer, or disposal of Indigenous artifacts, documents, ceremonial items, or cultural property currently held by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) or its affiliated entities.
2. Demand that First Nations are immediately informed of any items that are believed to be of First Nations origin and that any process of consultation, cataloguing or any other activity undertaken with respect to those items only proceed with the free, prior and informed consent of those First Nations.
3. Demand that First Nations items of deep spiritual, ceremonial, historical, and cultural significance to their respective First Nations are returned to First Nations.
4. Direct the AFN to request that the Government of Canada work collaboratively with First Nations to establish a national repatriation framework, grounded in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration), ensuring the return of all Indigenous cultural materials held by HBC to their rightful First Nations owners.
5. Call upon the AFN to urge all museums, auction houses, private collectors, cultural institutions, and corporate entities to suspend all transactions, and provide documents related to historical transactions, involving cultural items of Indigenous origin pending a Nation-specific repatriation assessment.
6. Direct the AFN to support First Nations seeking legal remedies, including injunctions and claims, to prevent the unauthorized sale or transfer of their cultural property, and to advocate for federal legislation preventing corporations or private entities from selling Indigenous artifacts without First Nations' consent.
7. Request the AFN to coordinate, with relevant experts and partners, on the creation of a national inventory and identification strategy, led by First Nations Knowledge Keepers and cultural experts, to catalogue items held by HBC and other corporate or private entities and to support repatriation prioritization.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

74 – 2025
Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 75/2025

TITLE:	Historical Treaty Signing Sites
SUBJECT:	Treaty
MOVED BY:	Chief Larry Ahenakew, Ahtahkakoop First Nation, SK
SECONDED BY:	Chief Edwin Ananas, Beardy's & Okemasis First Nations, SK
DECISION:	Approved by the AFN Executive Committee by consensus.

WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) affirms:
- Article 26(1): Indigenous Peoples have the right to the lands, territories, and resources they have traditionally owned, occupied, or otherwise used or acquired.
 - Article 26(3): States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the Indigenous peoples concerned.
 - Article 27: States shall establish and implement, in conjunction with indigenous peoples concerned, a fair, independent, impartial, open and transparent process, giving due recognition to indigenous peoples' laws, traditions, customs and land tenure systems, to recognize and adjudicate the rights of indigenous peoples pertaining to their lands, territories and resources, including those which were traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used. Indigenous peoples shall have the right to participate in this process.
- B. The lands now known as Canada were first inhabited, occupied, and stewarded by First Nations since time immemorial, and these Nations entered into Treaties with the Crown on a nation-to-nation basis grounded in peace, mutual respect, and shared responsibility.
- C. The historical Treaty signing sites for Treaties 1–11 — including Fort Carlton, Fort Pitt, Fort Qu'Appelle, and others — hold deep cultural, spiritual, legal, and historical significance, and remain central to the interpretation, implementation, and defence of Treaty rights across Turtle Island.

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Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

75 – 2025

Page 1 of 2

- D. Ongoing impacts of colonialism, including forced displacement, land dispossession, and development pressures, have limited First Nations' access to, stewardship of, and jurisdiction over these historic Treaty-signing sites.
- E. Restoring First Nations governance, ownership, and control over Treaty-signing sites is essential to upholding the spirit and intent of the Treaties and ensuring that these sites are protected, respected, and preserved for future generations.

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

1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to support First Nations in asserting their Inherent and Treaty rights to full ownership, stewardship, access, and governance over the 18 historical Treaty-signing sites across Canada, consistent with Articles 26 and 27 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.
2. Call upon the Government of Canada, provincial and territorial governments, and relevant municipal authorities to work directly with impacted First Nations to restore jurisdiction, control, and legal recognition of these historic Treaty-signing sites, including any lands or structures situated upon them.
3. Direct the AFN to advocate for federal funding, land-transfer mechanisms, and heritage-protection frameworks that enable First Nations to reclaim, protect, and manage Treaty-signing sites according to their own laws, customs, and governance systems.
4. Support the recognition of First Nations sovereignty in determining how each Treaty-signing site is used, preserved, interpreted, and shared, ensuring that all educational, cultural, tourism, or commemorative activities reflect First Nations authority, protocols, and historical accuracy.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

75 – 2025
Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 76/2025

TITLE:	Invitation To His Majesty King Charles III – 150th Anniversary of Treaty 6 Signing at Fort Carlton
SUBJECT:	Treaty
MOVED BY:	Chief Larry Ahenakew, Ahtahkakoop First Nation, SK
SECONDED BY:	Chief Lorie Whitecalf, Sweetgrass First Nation, SK
DECISION:	Approved by the AFN Executive Committee by consensus.

WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) affirms the Inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social, and cultural institutions (Articles 3–5), and the right to uphold nation-to-nation Treaties concluded with the Crown (Articles 37–40).
- B. First Nations across what is now Canada are sovereign Nations who entered into sacred Treaties with the British Crown, grounded in principles of peace, mutual respect, coexistence, and shared responsibilities between Nations.
- C. Treaties 1 through 11, signed between 1871 and 1921, were solemn international agreements made between First Nations and the Crown, establishing enduring relationships that bind both parties “as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the rivers flow”.
- D. Treaty 6, signed on August 23, 1876, at Fort Carlton and other locations, represents one of the foundational Treaty agreements between the Crown and First Nations, including the Cree, Stoney, and Assiniboine (Saulteaux) peoples.
- E. The year 2026 marks the 150th Anniversary of the Signing of Treaty 6, a historic milestone for Treaty Nations and the Crown, and an opportunity to reaffirm the sacred Treaty partnership.
- F. Chiefs from Treaties 6 and 7 were received at Buckingham Palace fifty years ago, demonstrating the longstanding nation-to-nation relationship between First Nations and the British Crown.
- G. His Majesty King Charles III, as representative of the Crown and successor to the original signatory, carries the enduring responsibilities and commitments embedded within the Treaties.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

76 – 2025

Page 1 of 2

- H. First Nations across Canada continue to uphold their Treaty rights and responsibilities and seek to strengthen the Treaty relationship with the Crown through renewed diplomatic engagement and acknowledgment at the highest levels.

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

1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to formally extend an invitation to His Majesty King Charles III to attend the 150th Anniversary Commemoration of the Signing of Treaty 6, to be held at Fort Carlton, Saskatchewan, on August 23, 2026, one of the original signing locations, using appropriate diplomatic channels, such as Governor General Mary Simon's office.
2. Call upon the AFN to request that His Majesty also host a formal reception at Buckingham Palace to honour and reaffirm the historic and ongoing Treaty relationship between the British Crown and all First Nations across Canada.
3. Direct the AFN to urge the federal government to support and facilitate this diplomatic engagement, recognizing the Crown–First Nation Treaty relationship as foundational to Canada.
4. Direct the AFN to work with Treaty organizations, First Nations leadership, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers across the Treaty territories to ensure that the commemoration reflects the cultural, legal, and spiritual significance of Treaties 1–11 and all historic Crown–First Nation agreements.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

76 – 2025
Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 77/2025

TITLE:	Support for First Nations Healthcare Workers
SUBJECT:	Health
MOVED BY:	Chief Ira McArthur, Pheasant Rump First Nation, SK
SECONDED BY:	Chief Sylvia Weenie, Stoney Knoll First Nation, SK
DECISION:	Approved by the AFN Executive Committee by consensus.

WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) recognizes the right of Indigenous Peoples to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and the right to access without discrimination all social and health services (Articles 21, 23, and 24).
- B. First Nations across Canada hold an Inherent and Treaty Right to health, recognized and grounded in Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, and reflected in Treaties 1–11, which obligate the Crown to provide health supports and services.
- C. The Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action 18-24 provide a roadmap on actions that will improve health, including cultural safety training, recruitment, and retention of Indigenous healthcare workers.
- D. Several humanitarian laws and international instruments protect the human rights of healthcare workers, including but not limited to, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, among others.
- E. First Nations in all regions continue to experience severe health disparities compared to the general population, linked to chronic underfunding, systemic racism in healthcare systems, and inequitable federal policy approaches.
- F. First Nations communities across Canada are facing a national health –human resources crisis, including instability in funding, a lack of federal investment, high turnover rates, recruitment challenges, and limited access to trained health professionals.
- G. Health workers on-reserve experience high burnout and turnover due to chronic underfunding by Indigenous Services Canada, a situation mirrored nationally in First Nations communities across every region.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

77 – 2025

Page 1 of 2

- H. These workforce shortages directly impact the delivery of culturally safe essential health services to First Nations, including primary care, chronic disease management, maternal and infant health supports, mental health services public health programs, emergency response and distinct First Nations disability services delivered by First Nations for First Nations. There is a noticeable gap in research concerning the current state of health human resources in First Nations communities, and their perspectives.

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

1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to call upon Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and the Government of Canada to immediately address the national First Nations health human resource crisis by increasing recruitment and retention investments for First Nations health clinics and community health programs.
2. Call upon ISC to implement national recruitment incentives, to increase the number of First Nations Doctors, Physician Assistants, Registered Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, Advanced Practice Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurses, Midwives, and Doulas working in First Nations communities, through initiatives that include but are not limited to:
 - a. Scholarships;
 - b. Wage enhancements;
 - c. Relocation and housing supports;
 - d. Mentorship programs;
 - e. Community-based training pathways and incentives; and
 - f. A culturally safe accessibility/disability trained workforce, by First Nations for First Nations.
3. Direct the AFN to advocate for a national First Nations Health Workforce Strategy, co-developed with First Nations, that includes sustainable funding for salaries, housing, safe working conditions, travel supports, continuing education, and improved pathways to practice in remote, northern, and rural First Nations.
4. Demand that ISC and relevant research entities conduct a comprehensive national First Nations Health Workforce Environmental Scan, in partnership with First Nations, to identify critical shortages, training gaps, regional disparities, infrastructure barriers, and the root causes of turnover within First Nations health systems.
5. Call upon the Government of Canada to make meaningful, long-term investments to support retention and workplace wellness for First Nations health staff, including mental health supports, flexible funding models, and infrastructure investments.
6. Direct the AFN to advocate for federal investments and policies arising from this work to uphold First Nations self-determination, community-based decision-making, and Treaty and Inherent Rights to health.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

77 – 2025
Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 78/2025

TITLE: Call for Advocacy on Cuts to First Nations Programs

SUBJECT: Health, Education, Specific Claims

MOVED BY: Chief Shelley Bear, Ochapowace Cree Nation, SK

SECONDED BY: Chief Mark Fox, Piapot First Nation, SK

DECISION: Approved by the AFN Executive Committee by consensus.

WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration), Articles 3, 4, 20, 21, and 23, recognizes the right of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination, to maintain their political, economic, and social institutions, and to have access to adequate financial and technical assistance for the enjoyment of their economic and social rights.
- B. First Nations across Canada continue to experience chronic underfunding in essential areas such as health, education, mental wellness, infrastructure, and specific claims research, resulting in ongoing disparities between First Nations and non-Indigenous populations.
- C. The 2025–2026 Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) Departmental Plan forecasts a 2% reduction in federal spending, which will further strain First Nations' ability to deliver critical services and uphold the health, safety, and well-being of their citizens.
- D. First Nations have endured generations of imposed poverty and systemic underfunding since being dispossessed of lands and resources, and historical government actions—including deliberate starvation policies in the 1880s—reflect a long pattern of discriminatory fiscal decisions that continue to echo today.
- E. Federal program reductions in health, education, mental health, and specific claims research will disproportionately impact First Nations children and youth by reducing suicide prevention programming, mental health supports, post-secondary opportunities, and the capacity of First Nations to pursue justice through specific claims research.
- F. ISC's reductions to specific claims research funding—by as much as 70% in some regions—undermine First Nations' pursuit of redress and Canada's obligations under reconciliation and Treaty implementation.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

78 – 2025

Page 1 of 2

- G.** Provinces and Territories have benefited from stable health escalators averaging 6% annually, with no accountability and reporting mechanisms, First Nations populations are growing faster than health funding envelopes, capped at 3%, resulting in a widening gap now approaching 35 cents on the dollar compared to provincial and territorial health systems.
- H.** First Nations leadership across Canada must be prepared to take precautionary steps to respond to significant federal reductions and to protect the Inherent and Treaty rights to health, education, and natural justice.

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

- 1.** Demand that the 2025–2026 reductions in federal funding for First Nations constitute a violation of Inherent and Treaty Rights and are inconsistent with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights on Indigenous Peoples* and Canada's reconciliation commitments.
- 2.** Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to urgently advocate to the Prime Minister of Canada, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Indigenous Services, and the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations to immediately reverse all planned cuts to First Nations funding in health, education, mental health, and specific claims research.
- 3.** Mandate the AFN to initiate national and international awareness efforts regarding the impacts of federal funding reductions, including engagement with the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and other international bodies.
- 4.** Call on the AFN, should the Government of Canada fail to reverse the cuts, to formally request international assistance and intervention from global partners, human rights and humanitarian organizations, to ensure First Nations' basic human rights and Treaty rights are upheld.
- 5.** Direct the AFN to support First Nations in developing regional and national preparedness plans to mitigate the impacts of federal reductions, ensuring community safety, continuity of services, and protection of vulnerable populations.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

78 – 2025
Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 79/2025

TITLE:	Renewing the AFN-NCAI Declaration of Kinship and Cooperation
SUBJECT:	International Collaboration
MOVED BY:	Chief Ira McArthur, Pheasant Rump Nakota Nation, SK
SECONDED BY:	Chief Gordon Bluesky, Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, MB
DECISION:	Approved by the AFN Executive Committee by consensus.

WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) states:
- Article 3: Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
 - Article 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.
 - Article 20: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities.
 - Article 36: Indigenous peoples, in particular those divided by international borders, have the right to maintain and develop contacts, relations and cooperation, including activities for spiritual, cultural, political, economic and social purposes, with their own members as well as other peoples across borders.
- B. Indigenous Peoples have moved freely across the lands now known as Canada and the United States of America (USA) since time immemorial, and our Nations, alliances, and trade routes have existed long before the imposition of colonial borders.
- C. In 1999, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) met in joint assembly in Vancouver, British Columbia in what was then called the largest convocation of Indigenous leadership in North America in the 20th century.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

79 – 2025

Page 1 of 2

- D. On July 23, 1999 the AFN National Chief and NCAI President signed the *Declaration of Kinship and Cooperation among the Indigenous Peoples and Nations of North America through the Assembly of First Nations and the National Congress of American Indians* (Declaration of Kinship) on behalf of their respective organizations, affirming the commitment to inform, assist and support each other in areas of common concern.
- E. In the years since the original Declaration of Kinship was signed, there have been significant developments in the advancement of Indigenous Peoples' rights and interests internationally, including the adoption of the UN Declaration by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007, and the *American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, adopted by the Organization of American States in 2016.
- F. Like the AFN, the NCAI is a national organization serving the interests of tribal governments and communities in the USA.
- G. Given ongoing and emergent threats to Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination on both sides of the Canada-USA border, it is an opportune time to renew the 1999 *Declaration of Kinship* to reaffirm and strengthen the relationship between the AFN and NCAI, establish new areas of common concern, and create mechanisms for continued collaboration between the two national organizations and the nations that they represent.
- H. The NCAI passed a resolution supporting the signing of a renewed Declaration of Kinship and Understanding at their 82nd Annual Convention in November 2025.

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

- 1. Affirm their commitment to working in the spirit of solidarity, kinship and collaboration with the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and their membership.
- 2. Direct the National Chief to sign a renewed Declaration of Kinship and Understanding with the NCAI.
- 3. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to seek resources to support the implementation of a renewed Declaration of Kinship, once signed, including meetings between leadership from both national organizations and working tables at various levels of the organizations.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

79 – 2025
Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 80/2025

TITLE: Unilateral Health Supply Restrictions Resulting in Service Disruptions

SUBJECT: Health

MOVED BY: Chief Kurvis Anderson, Pinaymootang First Nation, MB

SECONDED BY: Jeremy Fourhorns, Proxy, Nekaneet First Nation, SK

DECISION: Approved by the AFN Executive Committee by consensus.

WHEREAS:

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration), which Canada has a legal and moral obligation to implement, states:
- i. Article 24(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals. Indigenous individuals also have the right to access, without any discrimination, to all social and health services.
 - ii. Article 24(2): Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right.
- B. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Calls to Action state:
- i. Call to Action #19: We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long-term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.
- C. The narrowing of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) mandate runs contrary to the TRC's Calls to Action, particularly 18-19, as well as federal Treaty responsibilities and Canada's obligations under the UN Declaration, Jordans Principle, and C-92.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

80 – 2025

Page 1 of 2

- D. Due to historical and ongoing government-imposed health policies, First Nations people continue to face disproportionately high health challenges compared to the general population. The federal government has an obligation to uphold its commitments to ensure First Nations people have non-discriminatory, timely, and equitable access to comprehensive health services, including preventative, and chronic disease management.
- E. These procurement restrictions are not a minor administrative adjustment but represent a withdrawal of federal responsibility in communities where federal jurisdiction over health services remains both active and essential. These restrictions are delaying diagnostics, interrupting chronic disease management, and widening already unacceptable health outcome disparities.
- F. This decision was made without consultation, without transition planning, and without any regard for the realities for the health service delivery in First Nations and is contrary to the development and support of mandates and policies that should uphold First Nations rights to receive healthcare services closer to home.
- G. The absence of coordinated federal/provincial engagement to date has deepened the harm and confusion caused by ISC's procurement decision.
- H. Many health centres currently play a vital role in delivering primary healthcare services within their communities. Nations are being denied basic materials on the grounds that primary care falls within the provincial authority. At the same time, First Nations Health Centres routinely fill gaps left by the province that serves both First Nations and non-First Nations populations in the surrounding regions. The impact to community is severe.
- I. Communities cannot absorb the consequences of administrative disputes between governments, nor should they be forced to.

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

1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to work with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and Health Canada to determine an immediate and coordinated path forward to mitigate the short- and long-term consequences of this unilateral administrative change.
2. Direct the National Chief to convene an urgent meeting with the federal Minister of Indigenous Services Canada and Minister of Health Canada to immediately correct this procurement directive and streamline outdated mandates that are not reflective of realities of First Nations health service delivery.
3. Call upon the AFN and ISC to reconstitute the scope of health center designations and expand the scope of services to include both public health and primary healthcare services in First Nations communities.

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

80 – 2025
Page 2 of 2

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 81/2025

TITLE:	Advancing First Nations-Led Reporting, Standards, and Accountability in Health Systems
SUBJECT:	Health
MOVED BY:	Brian Hardlotte, Proxy, Sturgeon Lake First Nation, SK
SECONDED BY:	Chief Alvin Musqua Jr, Keeseekoose First Nation, SK
DECISION:	Approved by the AFN Executive Committee by consensus.

WHEREAS:

- A. Article 23 and Article 24(1) of the *United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) recognize the right of Indigenous Peoples to determine and administer their own health programs, services, and standards, and the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.
- B. First Nations hold an Inherent and Treaty-protected Right to Health, which includes jurisdiction to design, oversee, and govern complaint processes, standards, and accountability mechanisms within First Nations-led health systems.
- C. Existing provincial complaint pathways and medico-legal systems are widely experienced as unsafe, inaccessible, and re-traumatizing for First Nations patients and do not provide transparent, accessible, or culturally safe information about regulatory actions involving physicians serving First Nation communities.
- D. In 2023, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta and Siksika Nation signed a Memorandum of Understanding explicitly recognizing Siksika's Inherent jurisdiction in oversight of medical professionals, affirming that meaningful implementation of the Treaty Right to Health requires transparency, partnership, and First Nations-designed processes.
- E. Transparent reporting and First Nations-designed pathways are required to uphold patient safety, regulatory accountability, and the Treaty Right to Health within First Nations-led health systems.

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CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

81 – 2025
Page 1 of 2

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

1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to call upon provincial and territorial regulators and the Canadian Medical Protective Association to work with First Nations to co-develop First Nations controlled reporting pathways that ensure communities receive clear, timely information about regulatory or medico-legal actions involving physicians serving First Nations-led health systems, in ways consistent with First Nations jurisdiction and the Treaty Right to Health.
2. Direct the AFN to call upon Canada and the provinces and territories to support the development of First Nations-led pathways for determining physician mobility practice standards, recognition processes, and governance structures that implement the Treaty Right to Health, without prescribing any specific institution or model, and enabling First Nations to create the structures they determine are appropriate.

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81 – 2025
Page 2 of 2

Assembly of First Nations

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 82/2025

TITLE:	The Alberta Indigenous Games
SUBJECT:	Health
MOVED BY:	Chief Vernon Watchmaker, Kehewin Cree Nation, AB
SECONDED BY:	Chief Kelsey Jacko, Cold Lake First Nations, AB
DECISION:	Approved by the AFN Executive Committee by consensus.

WHEREAS:

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

- i. Article 24 (2): Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right.
- ii. Article 31: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

B. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) calls include:

- i. Call to Action 88: We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the NAIG, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.
- ii. Call to Action 90: We call upon the federal government to ensure national sports policies, programs, and initiatives are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples.
- iii. Call to Action 90(1): In collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, stable funding for, and access to, community sports programs that reflect the diverse cultures and traditional sporting activities of Aboriginal peoples.

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82 – 2025
Page 1 of 2

- C. The Assembly of First Nations recognizes that the Alberta Indigenous Games (AIG) have, for more than 15 years, brought together thousands of First Nation youth from across Treaty 6, 7, and 8 territories, and beyond, to celebrate sport, culture, and identity through a sovereign First Nation-led initiative.
- D. The AIG create pathways for youth to participate in the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) and World Indigenous Games, supporting high-performance development and cultural pride.
- E. The AIG have a proven record of economic and social impact, generating more than \$35 million (as of the 2025 AIG Games) in annual economic activity and contributing to reconciliation, youth empowerment, and intergenerational healing.
- F. Chiefs and Councils from Treaty 6, 7, and 8 Nations and beyond already provide support to youth and families participating in the AIG, demonstrating strong Nation-to-Nation unity and a shared commitment to cultural revitalization through sport.

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

- 1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to fully endorse and support the Alberta Indigenous Games (AIG) as a First Nations-led movement for youth empowerment, healing, and reconciliation.
- 2. Call on the relevant federal Ministers and departments to provide stable, adequate, and long-term funding to the AIG and its associated programs, including making any necessary adjustments to federal funding structures to ensure AIG is eligible for equitable support, in alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action #88 and #90.
- 3. The AFN commits to standing in solidarity with Treaty 6, 7, and 8 Nations and beyond in advancing the recognition of the AIG as a permanent, Treaty supported institution that uplifts youth, culture, and sport across all First Nations territories in Canada.

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82 – 2025
Page 2 of 2