

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. 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-Thebathie, Denesuline Dene First Nation, NT

SECONDED BY: Chief Robert Charlie-Tetlichi, 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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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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