TITLE:	Aboriginal Skills and Employment Strategy – Development of an Advocacy Strategy
SUBJECT:	Economic Development
MOVED BY:	Chief Joel Abram, Oneida Nation of the Thames, ON
SECONDED BY:	Chief Marianna Couchie, Nipissing First Nation, ON
DECISION:	Passed by the AFN Executive Committee

WHEREAS:

A. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states in 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. Based on these rights, First Nations peoples in Canada require a future that fosters improvements to the socio-economic circumstances of their communities and citizens by addressing personal and systemic barriers to labour market opportunities and thereby increases access to labour market opportunities.

C. Since 1992 First Nation organizations have successfully delivered programs and services through the strategies of "Pathways", Regional Bilateral Agreements (RBAs), Aboriginal Human Resource Development Strategy (AHRDS I and AHRDS II) and currently the Aboriginal Skills, Employment and Training Strategy (ASETS) to improve employment opportunities for its citizens.

D. Currently, Human Resource Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) and Service Canada are unilaterally imposing a number of unreasonable reporting requirements on Aboriginal Skills, Employment and Training Agreement (ASETA) holders, which affects the timely funding of critical employment program activities and jeopardizes achieving set performance targets, and also impacts the staffing to support and deliver the programs.

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E. Many ASETA holders and First Nation communities in Canada are bearing Canada's financial responsibility to sustain employment and training programs and services to their clientele.

F. Funding levels for the AHRDS/ASETS programs have remained status quo since 1999.

G. First Nations are part of the fastest growing working age population which requires support and resources to enter and maintain employment.

H. The First Nation Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI) allocation has been part of the AHRDS and ASETS based on the national Halifax formula.

I. AHRDA/ASETA holders have been requesting a separate Operations and Maintenance budget since 1999 and are still paying for these costs out of program funds, which impacts on amounts of funds available for clients.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Chiefs-in-Assembly:

1. Call on Canada to work with First Nation governments, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and the Aboriginal Skills, Employment and Training Strategy Agreement (ASETA) holders to develop a negotiation framework that respects First Nation jurisdiction over decision making regarding the implementation of the First Nation mandated ASETA.
2. Direct that the First Nation ASETA holders, in conjunction with the AFN, develop an advocacy strategy to ensure that First Nation jurisdiction is upheld and respects the autonomy of each ASETA holder and First Nation government.
3. Commit to this advocacy strategy to improve the current working relationship with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Service Canada and addresses immediate and critical issues facing each ASETA holder and First Nation government with respect to their human resource development.
4. Call on Canada to develop the appropriate mechanisms to address in this current year the national funding formula, the Childcare Allocation (Halifax Formula), and other funding increases that are needed.
5. Recognize that the proposed work does not limit or preclude First Nation governments from seeking and/or entering into new ASETAs or other agreements.

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