
TITLE: First Nations Oversight of Canada's National Poverty Reduction Strategy

SUBJECT: Economic Development, Social Development

MOVED BY: Chief Bernice Martial, Cold Lake First Nation, AB

SECONDED BY: Chief Nelson Toulouse, Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nation, ON

DECISION Carried by Consensus

WHEREAS:

A. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 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.

B. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states:

- i. Article 27: States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. States Parties shall safeguard and promote the realization of the right to work, including for those who acquire a disability during the course of employment, by taking appropriate steps, including through legislation.

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- ii. Article 28 (1): States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions, and shall take appropriate steps to safeguard and promote the realization of this right without discrimination on the basis of disability.
- C. The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's Goals (SDGs) are a collection of seventeen global goals meant to address social and economic development issues related to poverty, hunger, health, education, climate change, gender equality and social justice. Goal #1 of the Agenda is to 'end poverty in all its forms everywhere'.
- D. First Nations have been actively working to address poverty and its numerous effects, often with little support and limited resources, and often face legal challenges from the federal and/or provincial governments. First Nations in Canada have innovative solutions to address their socio-economic conditions, and are seeking an opportunity to establish a comprehensive and long-term strategy that will provide them with the resources to address poverty in their communities and Nations, while also respecting their cultural, geographic, political and legal differences.
- E. Both the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Social Development Sector and the Economic Sector have long standing mandates to oversee and provide advice and recommendations relating to socio-economic policies, programs, and legislation affecting First Nations.
- F. Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) released its Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) in late Summer 2018. It contains Canada's official strategy to reduce poverty in Canada, including the development and establishment of federal legislation, official poverty reduction targets, official poverty lines (regionally specific), expanded funding regimes, expanded programming and services, data recording mechanisms, an online dashboard to view the PRS's progress, and the establishment of a National Advisory Council on Poverty.
- G. The Minister of ESDC introduced Bill C-87, *An Act respecting the reduction of Poverty*, to the House of Commons in early November 2018. The *Poverty Reduction Act* states the Minister of ESDC will appoint between 8-10 members to the National Advisory Council on Poverty. A First Nations representative has yet to be identified or appointed to the National Advisory Council on Poverty.
- H. ESDC also stated that before the PRS is to be implemented in First Nations, Canada will consult with First Nations regarding their perspectives on poverty, their main priorities and concerns with respect to poverty and its larger impacts, as well as the systematic gaps and barriers that produce poverty in their communities and Nations.

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

1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to call on the federal government to ensure the National Advisory Council on Poverty includes First Nations representation to ensure the unique needs and rights of First Nations are recognized and respected as Canada implements its Poverty Reduction Strategy.
2. Direct the Chiefs Committee on Economic Development, the Technical Working Group on Social Development, and the First Nations Technical Working Group on Human Resource Development to work together in identifying a First Nations candidate to be recommended as the representative to the National Advisory Council on Poverty.
3. Direct the Technical Working Group on Social Development and the Technical Working Group on Labour Force Development, to work with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) officials on the implementation of its Poverty Reduction Strategy in First Nations.

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