
Assembly of First Nations

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Assemblée des Premières Nations

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**SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
DECEMBER 6, 7, & 8, 2016; GATINEAU, QC**

Resolution no. 105/2016

TITLE: Establish a First Nation Office on Disability Issues Unit at the AFN

SUBJECT: Disabilities

MOVED BY: Chief Randall Phillips, Oneida Nation of the Thames, ON

SECONDED BY: Chief Byron Louis, Okanagan Indian Band, ON

DECISION Carried by Consensus

WHEREAS:

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

- i. Article 22 (1): Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of Indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.
- ii. 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. AFN Resolution 55/2016 calls on the AFN to work with the federal government to develop a First Nations specific engagement process to develop federal accessibility legislation; and, AFN Resolutions 75/2015 and 48/2014 mandates the AFN to raise awareness and create opportunities for Indigenous persons with disabilities.

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PERRY BELLEGARDE, NATIONAL CHIEF

105 – 2016
Page 1 of 3

- C. Indigenous peoples/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 Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (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 UN human rights instrument with an explicit sustainable development dimension.
- D. The World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014 called on relevant United Nations 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.
- E. An Inter-governmental federal framework established in 1997, *IN UNISON: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues*, demonstrated a commitment 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."
- F. Over the past several years, there has been scarce activity with no major investments in disability and injury prevention to effectively address First Nations disability needs, meaningfully or sustainably.
- G. 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. Social Policy statistics in 1991 indicated that the 14.3% of Canadians with disabilities are more than twice as likely to live in poverty. Those statistics reported that the disability rate for Aboriginal people was 31%.
- H. The Canadian Mental Health Association recognizes that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is considered a disability, which creates a greater responsibility to address the issues facing Indigenous peoples with disabilities.

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

1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to seek resources from the federal government to establish an AFN Office on Disability Issues Unit to meaningfully advance work on disabilities and to build necessary capacity to enable the AFN to work effectively with First Nations and the federal government including the larger disability community.
2. Direct the National Chief of the AFN to urge the federal government to work with the AFN in securing resources for the long term, with the purpose of working to support the prevention of disabilities and injuries.
3. Direct the AFN to explore and engage in collaborative efforts with appropriate partners that will elevate the status of First Nation disability issues as a national priority.
4. Direct the newly created AFN Office of Disability Issues Unit to establish a Regional Advisory Disability Task Force and mechanisms to develop a strategic plan/ framework that will highlight key priorities and advance the rights and awareness of First Nations persons with disabilities to better inform legislative developments, socio-economic developments and/or policy changes as they evolve.

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