
Assembly of First Nations

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Special Chiefs Assembly
December 7, 8, 9, 2021, Ottawa (Ontario)

Resolution no. 45/2021

TITLE: Support for the Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership

SUBJECT: Environment

MOVED BY: Chief Greg Louie, Ahousaht First Nation, BC

SECONDED BY: Wapastim Harper, Proxy, Chemawawin Cree Nation, MB

DECISION Carried; 2 abstentions

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 (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.
- 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 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

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develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

- B. Canada has made commitments through the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Pathway to Canada Target 1 to increase its conservation targets from 17 percent of all lands and waters by 2020, to 25 percent by 2025 and 30 percent by 2030.
- C. To achieve these goals, Canada has undertaken the development of a broad Nature Agenda which will guide planning, decision-making, and strategies relating to the conservation of biological diversity, and attempt to link synergistically with national climate contributions.
- D. In 2018, the Indigenous Circle of Experts (ICE) released the internationally recognized "We Rise Together" report and made 28 recommendations to foundationally change colonial conservation practices and promote the establishment of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) as a means to achieve Canada's international and domestic conservation targets.
- E. Conservation partnerships are a key component in supporting the critical capacity building necessary to sustain the establishment and maintenance of IPCAs and Indigenous-led conservation more broadly. Working with academic partners can help to identify real and practical capacity solutions at all levels in support of First Nations-led conservation and stewardship efforts.
- F. The Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership (CRP) was established in 2019 to act on the ICE recommendations through the creation of a conservation through reconciliation network, promotion of ethical research, and the strengthening of capacity across nations, communities, sectors, and the general public. The CRP is a coalition of over 30 Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders and organizations, scholars, conservation agencies and organizations, and knowledge mobilization specialists.
- G. Through AFN Resolution 64/2018, *Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas – Pathway to Canada Target 1: Conservation 2020 Initiative*, the Advisory Committee on Climate Action and the Environment (ACE) has established an IPCA Working Group to advocate within the Pathway to Canada Target 1 process for First Nations inherent rights, Treaties, title and jurisdiction, including First Nations' knowledge systems, laws, governance, and management systems.
- H. The AFN Environment Sector is a member of the Pathway National Steering Committee (NSC) responsible for the direction and guidance of the Pathway to Target 1 initiative, and co-chair of the NSC's IPCA Working Group.

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- I. The AFN's "Healing Path Forward" calls for supporting the establishment and maintenance of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas, permanent support for Indigenous Guardians to assist in achieving Canada's international biodiversity commitments, and to integrate efforts toward conservation, reconciliation, and climate action.

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

1. Express support, in principle, for the Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership (CRP).
2. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), led by the Environment Sector and with guidance from the Advisory Committee on Climate Action and the Environment (ACE), to develop a partnership with the CRP to advance this initiative and further support Indigenous-led conservation, including through the establishment of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs).
3. Direct the AFN Environment Sector to provide updates on the CRP and related Indigenous-led conservation initiatives to the Chiefs-in-Assembly, as appropriate, at subsequent Assemblies.

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