



ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
July 9, 10, 11, 2024, Montreal, QC

Resolution no. 27/2024

TITLE: Full and Effective Participation of First Nations in Canada's Nature Agenda

SUBJECT: Conservation & Biodiversity - Environment

MOVED BY: Chief Byron Louis, Okanagan Indian Band, BC

SECONDED BY: Judy Wilson, Proxy, Osoyoos Indian Band, BC

DECISION Carried by consensus.

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 32(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.
- B.** The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has assessed the global state of biodiversity and ecosystem services provided to society and determined that nature is declining at rates unprecedented in human history. One million plant and animal species are now threatened with extinction.
- C.** First Nations have protected, conserved, and sustainably managed our environments, lands, waters, and the biodiversity therein since time immemorial, through the exercise of inherent rights and responsibilities, associated knowledge systems, and traditional laws.
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- D. Up to 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity is located on the traditional lands and territories of Indigenous Peoples, despite Indigenous Peoples comprising 6.2% of global population.
- E. There is a growing recognition, domestically and internationally, of the critical leadership role of First Nations and Indigenous Peoples in achieving positive conservation outcomes.
- F. Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Resolution 64/2018, *Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas – Pathway to Canada Target 1: Conservation 2020 Initiative*, and Resolution 41/2021, *Marine Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas*, direct the AFN to engage with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to support establishment, implementation, and recognition of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas in terrestrial and marine environments
- G. First Nations are responsible for ensuring that our traditional knowledge systems and practices are appropriately acknowledged, respected, considered and incorporated in all related decision-making.
- H. The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) set new global biodiversity and conservation targets to the year 2030 at COP-15 in Montreal; known as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework ('GBF'). The GBF requires signatories to update their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP) in line with the newly agreed biodiversity and conservation targets.
- I. Canada's NBSAP has been developed in tandem with a *Nature Accountability Act* to legislate certain portions of the Strategy and Action Plan. The Bill was tabled in the House of Commons in June 2024.
- J. The First Nations Nature Table was developed as a bilateral mechanism to ensure First Nations involvement in the implementation of the NBSAP, and Canada's broader Nature Agenda.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the First Nations-in-Assembly:

1. Call on the Government of Canada to ensure the full involvement of First Nations, including the First Nations Nature Table, in the development and implementation of Canada's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, and the broader Nature Agenda.
2. Call on the Government of Canada to ensure that the proposed *Nature Accountability Act* provides for the full recognition and safeguarding of First Nations Inherent and Treaty rights, traditional spiritual laws, knowledge systems, and jurisdiction, as well as alignment with the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.
3. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to continue to advocate for First Nations leadership in conservation, including through affirmation that the conservation of land and water cannot be divided.
4. Direct the AFN to develop a First Nations Conservation Strategy and host a National First Nations Conservation Gathering.

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