

Assembly of First Nations

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ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
September 3-4-5, 2025, Winnipeg, MB

Resolution no. 30/2025

TITLE: Implementation of the First Nations Data Governance Strategy

SUBJECT: Self-determination, Data Sovereignty, Governance

MOVED BY: Chief Andy Alook, Bigstone Cree Nation, AB

SECONDED BY: Chief Chantal Kistabish, Pikogan First Nation, QC

DECISION Approved by the AFN Executive Committee by consensus

WHEREAS:

- A. Articles 3, 4, 5, 18 and 34 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) affirm First Nations' Inherent rights to self-determination, to rebuild and sustain their political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, to participate in all decision-making through their own representative bodies, and to preserve and promote their distinct customs and governance systems.
- B. Meaningfully exercising these rights demands full ownership and control over the information that defines and guides First Nations' lives. This control—data sovereignty—is itself an Inherent right and an essential governance capacity.
- C. National and regional leadership have repeatedly affirmed the need to establish fully functional regional information governance centres (RIGCs) to deliver shared data and statistical services – empowering First Nations governments to own, control, and leverage their data through the work of centres that are governed by, and accountable to, the First Nations themselves.
- D. The First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) was established through a mandate from First Nations-in-Assembly in 2009 to promote, protect and advance the First Nations Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP®) principles, and the Inherent right to self-determination and jurisdiction in research and information management.
- E. Resolution 57/2016, *Funding for Regional First Nations Information Governance Centres*, recognized data sovereignty as the cornerstone to nation rebuilding, and directed Canada to fund engagement with leadership, establishment of data champions in each region, development of fully functional RIGCs, and

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the coordination of a national First Nations data governance strategy as a viable pathway to asserting First Nations' rights over their data.

- F. In response, FNIGC and its regional partners submitted the community-driven and Nation-based national First Nations Data Governance Strategy (FNDGS) to Indigenous Services Canada in March 2020, outlining the plan to establish a national network of fully functional RIGCs that provide information governance and shared data and statistical services to every First Nation, ensuring no First Nation is left behind.
- G. In Federal Budget 2021, the Government of Canada committed to funding FNIGC and its regional partners to implement the first phase of the FNDGS, starting with the establishment of 10 regional data champion teams to engage First Nations and leadership on the form and function of their RIGC and define priority data and statistical services, supported by a national data champion team at FNIGC responsible for coordinating implementation, ensuring alignment, and planning at the national level.
- H. Implementation of the FNDGS is progressing in every region at a pace set by leadership and in line with community-driven and First Nation-based capacity building priorities.
- I. Federal funding expired on 31 March 2025, and a renewed federal commitment is needed to support a second phase of funding, which will focus on demonstration projects that will accelerate the establishment of fully functional RIGCs supporting key data needs in priority areas.
- J. Action Plan Measure #30 of Canada's *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* Action Plan (June 2023) commits Canada to provide sufficient sustainable support for Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous-led data strategies ensuring First Nations have the capacity to control and use their data to deliver effective services to their peoples, tell their own stories, participate in federal decision-making processes on matters that impact them, and realize their respective visions for self-determination.

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

- 1. Affirm that First Nations Data Sovereignty—the right of First Nations to own, control, access, and possess First Nations data—is an Inherent right integral to self-determination and self-government, and must be recognized, respected, and implemented by all levels of government and their agencies.
- 2. Call on the Government of Canada to adhere to Action Plan Measure #30 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* Action Plan.
- 3. Call on the Government of Canada to provide sufficient, sustainable funding for the full, multi-stage implementation of the First Nations Data Governance Strategy, prioritizing the establishment of a national network of fully functional Regional Information Governance Centres, along with a fully functional National Centre to coordinate the network at the national level.
- 4. Direct the Assembly of First Nations to work with the First Nations Information Governance Centre and its regional partners, where appropriate, to support the implementation the First Nations Data Governance Strategy.

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