
Assembly of First Nations

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Assemblée des Premières Nations

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**ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
JULY 11, 12, & 13, 2023; HALIFAX, NS**

Resolution no. 66/2023

TITLE: Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Funds Management in Breach of the UN Declaration

SUBJECT: Housing

MOVED BY: Chief Rachel Manitowabi, Wikwemikong Unceded First Nation, ON

SECONDED BY: David Pratt, proxy, James Smith Cree Nation, SK

DECISION Carried; 1 abstention, 1 opposed

WHEREAS:

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

- i. Article 4: Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.
- ii. 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.
- iii. 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.
- iv. 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.

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- v. Article 26 (2): Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.
- B. Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) has failed to respect the principle of co-development since 2018, following First Nations-in-Assembly adopting the jointly developed National First Nations Housing and Related Infrastructure Strategy (Housing Strategy) that established expectations for joint implementation.
- C. The Housing Strategy is based on the right and jurisdiction of First Nations to provide housing and other services to their members no matter where they live. 58% of urban Indigenous Peoples are First Nations citizens.
- D. Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Resolution 60/2022, First Nations Involvement in the Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy, calls on Canada to ensure First Nations co-develop the Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing (URN) Strategy with Canada in a distinctions-based process.
- E. ISC ignored this call and neglected to respect First Nations jurisdiction in an April 2023 letter that authorizes the National Indigenous Collaborative Housing Incorporated to administer the URN funds committed in 2022 for urgent needs.
- F. Federal Budget 2022 committed \$300 million over five years to fund urgent URN housing needs. The term was later shortened to two years.
- G. The federal government's 2023 budget committed \$4 billion over seven years starting in 2024-25 for the implementation of the URN Strategy, with details of how this funding will be administered yet to be discussed with the AFN and First Nations despite the AFN's invitation to ISC to do so.
- H. ISC has violated at least two clauses of the UN Declaration, including:
 - i. Article 23, by failing to establish a distinctions-based process in which First Nations and their representative organizations co-develop how housing funds for First Nations citizens living away from their communities are administered and allocated, and
 - ii. Article 26, by failing to respect First Nations' rights to their traditional and unceded lands that include exclusive jurisdiction and control over all federal funding directed to the benefit of First Nations citizens and Indigenous Peoples not affiliated with the Metis or the Inuit on those First Nations territories.
- I. The housing crisis in First Nations is the most significant factor driving URN housing needs.

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- J. Through 10-year agreements under the National Housing Strategy and Federal/Provincial/Territorial Housing Partnership Framework, provinces and territories receive millions of dollars in federal funding for social housing intended to benefit First Nations citizens living away from their communities.

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

1. Call upon the Government of Canada to respect the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by affirming First Nations jurisdiction over housing in their traditional and unceded territories, including:
 - a. First Nations' control of allocation of federal Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing (URN) funds to organizations that provide off-community housing services to First Nations citizens and Indigenous Peoples not affiliated with recognized Metis or Inuit organizations and communities;
 - b. Co-developing, through a distinctions-based process with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and First Nations, any programs, initiatives or policies that will direct both urgent, short-term and long-term Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy implementation funds directed to benefit both First Nations citizens; and
 - c. Allocating sufficient funding for First Nations urban, rural, and northern housing management, administration, and program delivery.
2. Call upon the Government of Canada and all provincial and territorial governments to acknowledge that resolving the First Nation on-community housing crisis will also address a large part of the urban Indigenous housing crisis.
3. Express appreciation to the many urban and rural Indigenous housing providers that provide housing programs and services for First Nations citizens.

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