ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
July 15, 16, & 17, 2008, Quebec City, QC

Resolution no. 01/2008

SUBJECT:	First Nations Language Strategy Implementation
MOVED BY:	Chief Bill Cranmer, Namgis First Nation, BC
SECONDED BY:	Chief Tim Thompson, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, QC
DECISION:	Carried by consensus.

WHEREAS:

A. On June 11, 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a statement of apology to former students of Indian residential schools including recognition of the profoundly negative consequences and the lasting and damaging impact on Aboriginal culture, heritage and language of the Indian residential schools policy including the Indian day schools policy;

B. The United Nations has declared 2008 as International Year of Languages in response to the disappearance of approximately 600 languages in the last century and the prediction by linguistic experts that 96 percent of the 6,000 currently living languages will die during the next century; further that the threat to First Nations languages in Canada is such that only 3 out of 54 languages are anticipated to survive;

C. In July 2007, the Assembly of First Nations accepted in principle, the 2007 First Nations Language Strategy and in December 2007 an Implementation Plan for the First Nations Language Strategy was accepted by the Special Chiefs Assembly;

D. The Implementation Plan for First Nations Languages contains the following vision and policy objectives:

- By 2027 First Nations languages will be revitalized and in common use in First Nations homes, communities and nation wide. Canada will respect and ensure the protection of our languages as evidenced through legislation and long-term sustainable investment;

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- First Nations have jurisdiction over First Nations languages that are recognized and affirmed consistent with Section 35 of the Constitution Act;
- First Nations seek legislated protection via a First Nations Languages Act that would be consistent with First Nations and Government of Canada laws dealing with languages;

E. The Implementation Plan for First Nations Languages further contains the following major goals:

- Increase the number of First Nations people who speak their language by increasing the opportunities to learn their language;
- Increase the opportunities to use First Nations languages by increasing the number of circumstances and situations where First Nations languages can be used;
- Improve the proficiency levels of First Nations citizens in speaking, listening to, reading and writing First Nations languages;
- Increase the rate of which First Nations languages can be enhanced, revitalized and developed so that they can be used in the full range of modern activities; and
- Foster among First Nations and Non-First Nations a positive attitude towards, and accurate beliefs and positive values about First Nations languages so that multi-lingualism becomes a valued part of Canadian society;

F. In 2002, the Government of Canada made a commitment of $172.5 million over 11 years towards the revitalization and preservation of Aboriginal languages and cultures which was viewed by First Nations as an important, though minimal, commitment to begin addressing the serious needs of First Nations languages;

G. In November 2006, Minister Oda reversed this commitment and announced that the allocation originally intended for First Nations languages had been removed from the fiscal framework by the federal government; and

H. The Government of Canada has not re-instated the funding to this point despite the development by AFN of the 2007 First Nation Strategic Plan, Implementation Plan and now within the context of the apology to the survivors of Indian Residential Schools.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that:

1. The Chiefs-in-Assembly hereby assert, the Government of Canada has a legal and moral obligation to address the negative impacts on First Nation communities of the Indian Residential Schools policy, particularly in terms of language loss and as such, must invest immediately in the preservation, protection, revitalization and promotion of First Nations languages and the implementation of the 2007 First Nations Language Strategy and Implementation Plan.

2. The Chiefs-in-Assembly affirm the right to languages preservation through the implementation of the foundational task force's 25 recommendations.

3. That the Chiefs in Assembly commit to the full implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples within their own agreements, arrangements, laws and Nations as it pertains to the preservation, promotion, protection and revitalization of First Nations Language and within the context of the UN 2008 International Year of Languages.

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4. That the Chiefs-in-Assembly direct the AFN Chiefs Committee on Languages to design a direct action strategy to fight for the preservation of language by Canada.

5. The First Nations Confederacy of Cultural Education Centres (FNCCEC) be recognized as a national organization working continuously since 1970s on the preservation, enhancement and revitalization of languages, to serve as an advisory body to the Chiefs Committee on Languages.

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