

Assembly of First Nations

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Assemblée des Premières Nations

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SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
December 2-3-4, 2025, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 79/2025

TITLE: Renewing the AFN-NCAI Declaration of Kinship and Cooperation

SUBJECT: International Collaboration

MOVED BY: Chief Ira McArthur, Pheasant Rump Nakota Nation, SK

SECONDED BY: Chief Gordon Bluesky, Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, MB

DECISION: Approved by the AFN Executive Committee by consensus.

WHEREAS:

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

- i. Article 3: Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
- ii. Article 18: Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.
- iii. Article 20: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities.
- iv. Article 36: Indigenous peoples, in particular those divided by international borders, have the right to maintain and develop contacts, relations and cooperation, including activities for spiritual, cultural, political, economic and social purposes, with their own members as well as other peoples across borders.

B. Indigenous Peoples have moved freely across the lands now known as Canada and the United States of America (USA) since time immemorial, and our Nations, alliances, and trade routes have existed long before the imposition of colonial borders.

C. In 1999, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) met in joint assembly in Vancouver, British Columbia in what was then called the largest convocation of Indigenous leadership in North America in the 20th century.

Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 22nd day of January, 2026 in Ottawa, Ontario

Cindy Woodhouse

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- D.** On July 23, 1999 the AFN National Chief and NCAI President signed the *Declaration of Kinship and Cooperation among the Indigenous Peoples and Nations of North America through the Assembly of First Nations and the National Congress of American Indians* (Declaration of Kinship) on behalf of their respective organizations, affirming the commitment to inform, assist and support each other in areas of common concern.
- E.** In the years since the original Declaration of Kinship was signed, there have been significant developments in the advancement of Indigenous Peoples' rights and interests internationally, including the adoption of the UN Declaration by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007, and the *American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, adopted by the Organization of American States in 2016.
- F.** Like the AFN, the NCAI is a national organization serving the interests of tribal governments and communities in the USA.
- G.** Given ongoing and emergent threats to Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination on both sides of the Canada-USA border, it is an opportune time to renew the 1999 *Declaration of Kinship* to reaffirm and strengthen the relationship between the AFN and NCAI, establish new areas of common concern, and create mechanisms for continued collaboration between the two national organizations and the nations that they represent.
- H.** The NCAI passed a resolution supporting the signing of a renewed Declaration of Kinship and Understanding at their 82nd Annual Convention in November 2025.

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

- 1. Affirm their commitment to working in the spirit of solidarity, kinship and collaboration with the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and their membership.
- 2. Direct the National Chief to sign a renewed Declaration of Kinship and Understanding with the NCAI.
- 3. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to seek resources to support the implementation of a renewed Declaration of Kinship, once signed, including meetings between leadership from both national organizations and working tables at various levels of the organizations.

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