
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. 58/2023

TITLE: A Study on First Nations Guaranteed Liveable Income

SUBJECT: Social Development, Poverty Reduction

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 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 5: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.
 - 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.
- B. The 2019, Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women states:

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- i. Calls for Justice 4.5: We call upon all governments to establish a guaranteed annual livable income for all Canadians, including Indigenous Peoples, to meet all their social and economic needs. This income must take into account diverse needs, realities, and geographic locations.
- C. First Nations experience poverty at rates that are disproportionately higher than non-Indigenous Canadians. These experiences have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic due to inflation of goods, high rates of food insecurity, inadequate access to clean water and poorer living conditions, highlighting the urgency for First Nations communities to be supported to explore the option of a culturally appropriate guaranteed livable income, to improve First Nations quality of life.
- D. Mainstream poverty alleviation strategies and approaches are not adequate for First Nations. They fail to account for First Nations understandings of the world which emphasize land and resources as well as a relationship to language, culture, and ceremonies as central determinants of individual and community wellness.
- E. A guaranteed livable income is a government-benefit system where every individual and family, should their income fall below a pre-determined amount, and is not conditional on meeting employment criteria, receives a monthly payment to cover basic necessities required to support a healthy quality of life.
- F. In April 2023, Bill S-233, An Act to develop a national framework for guaranteed livable basic income, had its second reading in the Senate of Canada in April 2023. The Bill calls on the Minister of Finance to conduct a study to develop a national framework for the implementation of a guaranteed basic livable income so that every person has access to a basic livable income regardless of age or participation in education or training in the labour market.
- G. In February 2023, the House of Commons passed Bill C-22, An Act to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of persons with disabilities by establishing the Canada disability benefit and making a consequential amendment to the Income Tax Act. In May 2023, the Bill began its third reading in the Senate of Canada. Bill C-22 calls on the Minister of Employment and Social Development to pay a Canada disability benefit to a person who is eligible for the benefit, applies or has an application made on their behalf, in accordance with the regulations, and meets any other conditions set out in the regulations.
- H. Bill S-233 and C-22 do not consider the socioeconomic realities of First Nations. A study to identify First Nations-specific considerations for guaranteed livable income may inform a First Nations position on this matter, provide recommendations on First Nations' concerns and priorities, and adapt the First Nations disability lens of including Persons with Different Abilities (PWDA).

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

1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Technical Working Group on Social Development (TWGSD) to conduct and oversee a research study to identify First Nations' concerns and priorities as it relates to guaranteed livable income, including the fiscal impacts and policy opportunities for the On-reserve Income Assistance Program.
2. Direct the AFN to seek funding from the Government of Canada for the TWGSD to conduct and oversee the study.

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