
Assembly of First Nations

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ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
July 9, 10, 11, 2024, Montreal, QC

Resolution no. 57/2024

TITLE: Inherent Right to Community Development Planning

SUBJECT: Economic Development, Treaties

MOVED BY: Chief Larry Ahenakew, Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation, SK

SECONDED BY: Chief Peter A. Beatty, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, SK

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 26 (1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.
 - ii. 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.
 - iii. Article 26 (3): States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.
 - iv. Article 39: Indigenous peoples have the right to have access to financial and technical assistance from States and through international cooperation, for the enjoyment of the rights contained in this Declaration.
- B. First Nations have the inherent right to self-government including the right to plan, develop and maintain communities for their members.
- C. Prior to the imposition of the *Indian Act*, First Nations were excellent community planners.
- D. First Nations face complex challenges in their communities which impact both the lives of their members and the ability to allocate and coordinate inadequate resources to support their members.
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- E.** Indigenous Services Canada established the Community Development Initiative (CDI) in 2016 to assist First Nations to develop grassroots-level community plans intended to address these challenges through a participatory process guided by community navigators.
- F.** There are 43 First Nations in Saskatchewan that are successfully using the CDI.
- G.** Indigenous Services Canada cut CDI funding to First Nations by 50% in 2023-24 and has not made a commitment to fund the initiative in 2024-25.
- H.** Failure to adequately fund community development planning creates a disparity in capacity compared to towns and cities and is a human rights issue contrary to the spirit of reconciliation.

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

- 1.** Support Saskatchewan First Nations in calling on Canada to rectify the impacts caused by underfunding, and commit to comprehensive, needs-based funding to the Community Development Planning Initiative for the 2024-25 fiscal year.
- 2.** Support Saskatchewan First Nations in calling on Canada to commit to the long-term, predictable and sustainable funding for this initiative to enable sustainable planning and development for any First Nation choosing to opt into this funding initiative.

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